



HENDRY COUNTY
Board of County Commissioners
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

What Happened at the Board Meeting!

(January 27, 2017) – LaBelle, Fla. – The following is a highlight of the Hendry County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) meeting held on Tuesday, January 24 at the LaBelle Commissioner Chambers.

Awards, Appearances, and Presentations

1. Pan Florida Challenge, Maura Plante – Last year the Pan Florida Challenge had 110 bike riders who rode from Naples to West Palm with an overnight stay in Hendry County. Their efforts raised \$1.1 million to feed hungry children in SW Florida. The Pan Florida challenge has partnered with the Hendry County School System, Operation Back Pack, United Way, RCMA, United Methodist Church Clewiston, and Hendry County Tourism to feed 400 local youth every weekend with a power pack. They are working with Meals of Hope to create power packs that meet the USDA recommendations of quality and quantity so that children will have nutritional meals over the weekends. This year's Pan Florida Challenge will be held March 11-12. For more information: <http://www.panfloridachallenge.org/>
2. Current State of Economic Development – Achieving a different result requires a different approach. The Hendry County Economic Development Council (EDC) previously had backing from the community, but there was little to no effort at establishing a regional network. The approach to economic development was reactive, not proactive. In the first year as Economic Development Director, Brent Kettler and the EDC Board updated their website and has a better understanding of who their target audience is. They have hired a full time local business representative, Ruben Puente, to work with local businesses to help them grow and assist any other needs they may have. A look to the future shows Hendry County growth needs include creating 800 new jobs by 2020 and 1,200 new jobs by 2030. The EDC is improving a regional network by working closely with Florida's Heartland Economic Region of Opportunity (FHERO), CareerSource, and the Southwest Florida Community Foundation just to name a few. The EDC received a grant of \$30,000 from the State of Florida to create videos for LaBelle, Clewiston and Hendry County which will fund a great new way to tell the story of our area.

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Staff Reports

Courthouse Repairs – A request from staff for a change order to the Courthouse repairs due to an unexpected issue that was uncovered during the roof repairs on the Administrative Wing of the Courthouse. The BOCC approved the change order, and requested that staff be proactive and have the remaining portions of the project reviewed to try and avoid more change orders if possible.

Florida Department of Transportation Work Program Priorities – The Board of County Commissioners approved Transmittal of the Florida Department of Transportation Work Program Priorities list to the Heartland Regional Transportation Planning Organization (HRTPO). Hendry County has ranked in order of priority roads upgrades for the various funding programs available. For a full listing please see the attached FDOT Work Program paperwork.

Lease of Parcel off of Rodeo Drive to Caloosa Humane Society – The BOCC approved leasing county-owned land located off of Rodeo Drive to the Caloosa Humane Society. The lease has an initial term of 30 years and the rent is \$1.00 per year. This newly leased sight will be the home of the new Caloosa Human Society who is currently fundraising for their new facility. For more information: <http://www.caloosahumanesociety.org/>

Hearing of the Public

Settlement of delinquent solid waste liens – Until 2004, the County collected annual solid waste special assessments by sending invoices to landowners and recording liens if the land owner did not pay. The liens accrue interest which can reach substantial sums of money. Recently the County was approached by two landowners to forgive the delinquent interest if the landowner paid the principal amount. The BOCC approved forgiving delinquent interest amounts on solid waste liens if the principal amount of the lien is paid. If you are a landowner with a solid waste lien please contact the Special Districts Office at 863-675-5252.

LIHEAP Resolution – LIHEAP, which stands for Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, is a federal program that helps low income households pay for heating or cooling their homes. The BOCC approved a resolution requesting U.S. Congress follow the enabling laws of the program and increase funding for the entire program by \$100 million. If successful the State of Florida would increase their annual share from \$68.7 million to \$72.6 million and Hendry County would receive a proportionate share of these funds. To receive more information on Hendry County's LIHEAP program contact the Agriculture and Labor Program, Inc. at P.O. Box 3126, Winter Haven, Florida 33885, (863) 956-3491 Phone, (863) 956-3357 Fax, or Admin@ALPI.org.

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(Please feel free to contact us for an interview, discussion or questions.)