



ANNUAL REPORT

Haines City Economic Development Council, Inc.

The Agreement for Services (Agreement) entered on November 20, 2014 between the City of Haines City and the Haines City Economic Development Council, Inc. has been extended for another five (5) year term unanimously approved by the City of Haines City Commissioners. Under the terms of the Agreement the Council, under the leadership of the President, Cyndi Jantomaso has performed activities to encourage, support and promote economic development and growth opportunities in the City of Haines City, Florida. The City of Haines City Commissioners believe the Council consistently advocates for this community, successfully convincing major corporations to relocate and to expand their existing facilities in the Haines City service area and have contributed in the recruitment of companies bringing in substantial capital investments with an approximate total of \$350 million and approximately 1000 jobs.

Over the last five years, the Council encouraged economic development with the recruitment, assistance of expansions and development as well as the assistance of incentive packages with the following companies: Sofidel America expansion of a 100,000 square foot warehouse; Aldi Corporate expansion of their facility to an additional 201,227-sq. ft.; JW Logistic and Pallet Company; Crown Linen a 72,000-square-foot commercial laundry facility, as well as the expansion of their facility; U.S. Paverscape purchase of the old Equipment Specialist Building located on U.S. Highway 17-92, the gateway into downtown, which was a dilapidated structure and eyesore has now become a clean, beautiful facility; and most recently Project Gumball a new project consisting of a 200,000 sq. ft. distribution center to open in 2020.

The Council's focus on growing the City's financial base is mainly in the recruitment of manufacturing, industry and distribution centers. In addition, the Council works with City staff, Development Services and CRA Departments in the recruitment of commercial and retail in Haines City. Culver's Restaurant which was recruited by the Haines City EDC. The 4,506 square foot restaurant located on US 27 and Bates Road intersection in front of Lowes seats 102 inside and 24 outside with 60 parking spaces, and a drive-through window.

To create a truly sustainable business environment, the Council partnered with Duke Energy, participating in the Duke Energy Site Readiness Program. The Council sponsored a roundtable discussion which included representatives from the Central Florida Development Council, Saunders Real Estate, and Florida Public Utilities, wherein City staff met with site selection consultants retained by Duke Energy to discuss the Lorenz property. Recently annexed by the City, the Lorenz property comprises 110 acres, is located south of the ALDI warehouse facility, east of Detour Road, and is zoned as Industrial Park. Partnering with Duke Energy of the availability of opportunities within the City of Haines City and within its utilities service area regarding their suitability to participate in the Duke Site Readiness Program on land in the HC Industrial Park. This added another tool in the EDC's toolkit for sites in Haines City Industrial Park that are under the site readiness program.

Knowing that companies looking to relocate place a high value on infrastructure, the Council has a consistent presence at board meetings advocating for improvements and formed a committee with our EDO partners known as the Infrastructure Advisory and Stakeholder Committee. The Council proactively engages community stakeholders and county leaders on transportation improvement, including investments to extend the Polk Parkway, north/south connector. Additionally, the Council informed infrastructure concerns on strategies designed to foster the best possible pro-business environment within the City by facilitating a roundtable discussion with stakeholders, city, county and state officials starting a dialog to address the substantial growth and impending need of road infrastructure in NE Polk. These roundtable discussions perked notice from FDOT – CFX and TPO to advance the need for the US 27 Study and the 17-92 Study. These studies were implemented and are both now in their second and third phases.

The Polk County Board of County Commissioners appointed Haines City EDC President, Cyndi Jantomaso to the Northeast Polk County Roadway Advisory Committee for a second term, where she now serves as Chair. On this committee, Cyndi has advocated with the Board of County Commissioners to strongly consider requests for additional funding or alternate funding sources to help deliver the multitude of identified roadway project needs in NE Polk County.

The Council facilitates site visits with CSX and industry and property owners on the rail spur, facilitates site visits with site selectors, brokers and developers bringing awareness to the HC Industrial Park and the recruitment of rail served target industry to locate in the industrial park.

The Council Co-Hosted, the Annual Economic Development Summit in October 2019. Securing Joseph Keating, Chief Investment Officer with CenterState Bank and H. D. "Jake" Pumbo, Founding Partner and Senior Consultant at Two Blue Aces.

As we continue to advocate, recruit and market doing business in the City of Haines City, the Council's positions will be on economic development, workforce housing, workforce and infrastructure issues, supporting and advocating for the following going into the State of Florida's Legislative Session 2020:

- Support full use of the Sadowski Act funding for affordable housing benefiting employers, the workforce and seniors. Lack of affordable housing has now been identified as a major barrier to attracting and retaining our workforce. We recommend full funding of the Sadowski Act for the purposes of affordable housing to do what it was intended to do; meet the housing needs of the very low, low- and moderate-income households; to expand production of and preserve affordable housing; and to further the housing element of the local government comprehensive plan specific to affordable housing.
- Reauthorization of the Qualified Target Industry Tax Refund program which is due to sunset in June of 2020. The FEDC Board of Directors provided DEO with reports from around the state on the effectiveness of QTI in facilitating job creation and capital investment.
- Operational Support for Student Services and Campus Safety and Security funding for Polk State College.
- Solutions and Funding for CareerSource Polk in obtaining federal, state and local to provide affordable workforce housing for Polk County families.
- Funding for the future expansion of Sunrail to the City of Haines City which could assist in promoting economic development and local tourism, plus provide alternate methods of transportation for citizens and visitors to Haines City, while removing thousands of automobile trips from many Central Florida roads.
- Polk County needs a North/South Connector and the Poinciana Parkway may be an option. We will advocate and support the following for funding of the : Central Florida Expressway for the Poinciana Parkway Extension PD&E Study, the Preferred Alternative and to proceed into project production phases; US 17/92 Corridor Study with District 1 of the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) is developing a Corridor Vision and Action Plan for a twelve-mile stretch of US 17/92 from US 27 to the Osceola County Line, through the cities of Haines City and Davenport; The NE Polk US 27 Mobility Study.