

Palm Beach County Department of Economic Sustainability

# SUSTAINABILITY FOCUS



**Our Mission: To advance community sustainability by increasing economic competitiveness and improving the elements that create a high quality of life for Palm Beach County's residents.**

## JOB GROWTH SEES STEADY IMPROVEMENT

In 2013, Palm Beach County economic development incentives and financial leveraging programs resulted in contractual commitments to create and/or retain more than 5,000 jobs.

Community business partner Workforce Alliance (WA) reports that Palm Beach County's unemployment rate dropped to 6.4 percent in November – the lowest rate in five years. WA



reports that overall, the county gained 12,000 jobs since November 2012.

Companies have access to additional capital for location and expansion through local, state and federal financial resources offered by the County. These funding programs maximize private investment, while improving employment opportunities for our residents.

**In FY 2013, DES managed more than \$85 million from county, state and federal programs to leverage business, housing and community development investments in Palm Beach County.**

## Hartman Window and Doors to Expand in Riviera Beach

On December 17, the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) gave approval for a \$1.1 million US Dept. of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Section 108 loan to **Hartman Windows & Doors, LLC**, which plans to expand its operations at a new site on Blue Heron Boulevard in Riviera Beach. The company is a specialty manufacturer of wood doors and windows. The loan will leverage more than \$4.8 million in private financing, and the project will result in the creation of 46 new full time jobs. DES estimates that the project will have a five-year economic impact of \$63.9 million.



**SBA Communications Corporation** – an independent owner and operator of wireless communications infrastructure across North, Central and South America - plans to invest \$37.2 million to purchase and renovate an existing facility in Boca Raton for its corporate headquarters. The project will be assisted by a \$200,000 economic development incentive grant approved by the County Commission on December 17, which requires the company to create 86 new full-time jobs within three years at an average annual salary of \$58,200. The new jobs, along with 352 existing jobs must be maintained for five years. The City of Boca Raton is providing a matching grant in the same amount. DES estimates that the expansion project will have a five-year economic impact of \$745 million.



Also expanding its financial headquarters in Boca Raton is **Red Hawk Fire & Security, LLC**, which provides life safety and security solutions to companies with over 1,400 employees and 50,000 clients across the country. Identified as a State qualified target industry, the BCC approved a \$24,500 incentive for the project. Red Hawk plans to create 35 new full-time jobs within the year at an average annual salary of \$110,000, and retain these jobs along with existing positions for five years. Estimates indicate a five-year economic impact of \$24 million.

## ***Industrial Revenue Bonds Provide Long-Term Capital at Favorable Rates***

Palm Beach County's Industrial Revenue Bonds Program provides financing to for-profit and non-profit entities in order to facilitate significant investment in the county. Bonds are typically used to raise capital in excess of \$1 million and provide access to low-interest and long-term financing. For borrowers who do not have an established working relationship with a bond underwriter and need assistance with facilitating their project, DES will provide a list of underwriting firms who have entered memoranda of understanding with the County. The County specifically works with underwriting firms that are registered with the Municipal Securities Review Board, which is the governing body for bond underwriters. For more information on the program, go to our website at <http://pbcgov.com/des/programs/Local/idrb.htm>.

## ***Brownfield Programs Help Business Projects Move Forward***



Among the tools employed by DES to leverage financing for economic development projects are funds designated specifically to assess and cleanup sites potentially contaminated by hazardous substances. Often, costs associated with these "brownfield" sites prohibit many worthy projects from taking root. Since 2010, DES has paired more than \$2 million in HUD Brownfield Economic Development Initiative grant funds with \$4.6 million in Section 108 loans to fund business development projects in the Glades Region. These projects will create in excess of 230 full-time jobs in an area that has suffered from high poverty and unemployment.

Additionally, Palm Beach County is a partner with the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council (TCRPC) and the cities of West Palm Beach and Fort Pierce in the Brownfield Assessment Coalition, which received a \$1 million EPA grant in 2011. The grant provided funding to conduct site assessments in target areas within the partner jurisdictions for the reuse and redevelopment of brownfields. Palm Beach County and TCRPC are partnering this year to submit a second application for an additional \$600,000.

The efforts of DES to secure additional brownfields financing have resulted in an award of \$1 million to Palm Beach County from the Environmental Protection Agency to establish a revolving loan fund. Loans from the fund will support cleanup activities for sites throughout the county that are contaminated with hazardous substances and petroleum, helping to revitalize communities and expand business enterprises.

**Looking for the best site for your business relocation or expansion? Our real-time research tool will help you locate future and existing land uses, zoning districts, North American Industry Classification Systems (NAICS) codes, enterprise zones, ownership and property tax information, and more. <http://maps.co.palm-beach.fl.us/edo>**

**Constantly upgraded to meet the needs of businesses and the public, recent additions include:**

- Planning overlays
- Public schools and school zones
- Countywide community revitalization target areas
- Zoning codes in all municipalities
- Population data through year 2035 by Traffic Analysis Zones (TAZ)
- Population by race and age for zip codes and census tracts



# Housing Highlights



The fourth quarter of 2013 also saw the completion of two outstanding affordable housing communities funded in part through US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) program funds –



**McClure Village**, located in the city of Pahokee, was constructed through a partnership of Palm Beach County, the Pahokee Housing Authority, and Housing Trust Group, LLC. The project, which cost more than \$5 million and was accomplished through a combination of Disaster Recovery Initiative and Neighborhood Stabilization Program funds, included new housing units and extensive hurricane-hardening improvements to existing homes.

The contractor for the 16 new units was Lutz Builders, Inc., a Belle Glade company.

**Pine Run Villas** is a new townhome-style affordable family rental community located on Melaleuca Lane west of Lake Worth. This \$13 million development also was a project of Housing Trust Group in partnership with Palm Beach County and was leveraged by more than \$5.5 million in HUD NSP and HOME program funds. The 63 attractive, energy-efficient units include three- and four-bedroom models with attached garages, providing larger families a quality housing option.



Pine Run is in close proximity to neighborhood schools and site amenities include a large clubhouse with a pool and recreational areas, a covered bus stop, and on-site property management. Resident services will incorporate after school and academic programming at the clubhouse in conjunction with Heritage Elementary and Tradewinds Middle schools.

Both projects were highlighted in the December 2013 issue of the Florida Community Development Association's newsletter, *The Intercom*.

## SHIP – Improving Housing, Making Ownership Attainable

The State Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP) program provides funds to local governments as an incentive to create partnerships that produce and preserve affordable homeownership and multifamily housing. The program was designed to serve very low, low and moderate income families. SHIP funds have been in short supply in recent years; however, this Fall, more than \$1.4 million was made available to Palm Beach County households. Applications were taken in December on a first come, first completed basis, with priority given to veterans and persons with disabilities.

During an intake process on December 16 with DES staff providing technical hands-on help, 48 complete applications were accepted to be evaluated for assistance in the following program areas:

- Payment for sewer and water service connection fees, secured by a five-year forgivable loan
- Funding for rehabilitation of owner-occupied housing to meet building code standards and create barrier-free structures
- Matching funds to the federal HOME program for purchase assistance for first-time homebuyers, which requires private sector permanent first mortgage financing

Over the past ten fiscal years, Palm Beach County has served more than 2,500 households through the SHIP Program to leverage financing, prevent foreclosures, construct home improvements and rehabilitate structures for populations with special needs.



Rehabilitated home in Lake Worth

# Community Development Update



The Glades Region Master Plan project is a community-driven process that will craft a blueprint for economic development and redevelopment, focusing on major employment centers, including the proposed Intermodal Logistics Center.

Public input is critical to the plan. As part of the outreach efforts, two public workshops were held during November; the first in Belle Glade and the second in Pahokee. More than 60 participants including residents, business owners, educators, elected officials, and non-profit organization representatives convened at each workshop to learn about the plan components and work in small groups to illustrate the needs and infrastructure they considered of greatest importance.



Spokespersons from each group presented their ideas on a variety of topics, including housing, transportation, pedestrian and street improvements, preservation of historic sites, marketing campaigns, job training, a trolley system, and many others. During the week following each workshop, project partner Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council and their

team remained on site to provide an open forum for members of the public to visit at their convenience to learn about the areas being studied and voice their input. The team studied areas of focus based on resident ideas. This culminated

in a recap presentation of the ideas and concepts expressed by the public which will become part of the master plan document, to be completed this year.



For more information about the plan elements, visit the DES website at [www.pbcgov.com/des](http://www.pbcgov.com/des) and click on this icon.



## Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program

CDBG is one of the longest running programs at HUD that provides communities with resources to address a wide range of unique community development needs. During the fourth quarter of 2013, Palm Beach County and DES worked with local cities and organizations to fund the following projects:

- Code enforcement officers for the cities of Belle Glade, Pahokee, and South Bay
- Public facility renovations and sanitary sewer improvements in Greenacres, Mangonia Park, and the Seminole Manor neighborhood
- Street improvements in partnership with the city of Lake Worth
- Park project in the Westgate community
- Professional services to provide technical assistance, advice and business support services for microenterprises and small businesses; and consulting and financial assistance to existing and start-up small businesses countywide

Palm Beach County is proud to work with a dynamic team of public and private business partners to increase economic development and create jobs.

