**Commercial businesses flock to Punta Gorda Airport Park**

Approximately eight businesses currently have commercial space under construction by PGD

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*Posted 6:50 PM, Jan 30, 2024*

PUNTA GORDA, Fla. — According to the Dave Gammon, Director of Charlotte County Economic Development, the Punta Gorda Airport Park could house nearly four-million square feet of commercial distribution centers, warehouses, and manufacturing facilities by 2026.

“It has changed a lot,” said Gammon. “We have worked on this for years and years and now it’s our time to shine in the sun.”

The coming businesses will add approximately 1000 jobs, and will add millions to the county tax base, according to Gammon.

“These aren’t just low wage jobs, these are high paying manufacturing jobs, distribution jobs that are very exciting, bringing in new people, a younger demographic to Charlotte County,” said Gammon. “And an ad valorem tax helps diversify our tax base so it’s not just residential based. Each of these buildings probably gets assesses at $100 a square foot easily, so we are looking at a tremendous increase to our tax base and ad valorem taxes coming in.”

According to businesses that have facilities under construction in the park, the lower land costs and easy access to the highway and airport were major selling points when deciding to build.

Lane Valente Industries, a manufacturer of EV charging stations among other products is constructing nearly 60,00 square feet of commercial space in the park that will create 10-15 new jobs. The company’s Vice President of National Programs, Dan Martindale, said the park was the perfect place for the expansion.

“What was attractive for us is that it’s close to the highway, its close to the airport so our technicians can come in and out, our executives can come in and out,” said Martindale. “It’s a growing community as well and as our company grows it allows us to grow with the community.”

Safa Goods, a wholesale distribution company is mid construction on a facility that will measure over 130,000 square feet when completed and add hundreds of new jobs.

“One of the things is its next to the airport, and very close to the highway, and this area is designed for distribution," said owner Taher Shriteh. “Here we think it will be over 200, probably 200 to 500 jobs.”

Balentine Builder Services does granite fabrication and makes counter tops, its building a 65,000 square foot facility in the park that will create around 40 jobs. Jack Balentine, owner and president of the company, said the business was expanding and was looking for space in Lee County, but found the airport park instead.

“I was looking for land in Lee County and I couldn’t find what I wanted, and I couldn’t afford what I found,” said Balentine. “I came up and drove around and called my real estate guy and said I’ll take it.”

According to Gammon, the unprecedented commercial growth isn’t expected to slow down in the Punta Gorda Airport Park, as more businesses are already looking at prospective developments.

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