



Compiled by: South Florida Water Management District
(for internal use only)

Total Clips: 2

Headline	Date	Outlet	Reporter
Port decision may come soon	07/24/2009	Clewiston News	Zaragoza, Jesus
Inland Port Possible in Hendry	07/23/2009	Southwest Florida Online	Browne, Don

Port decision may come soon

[Return to Top](#)

07/24/2009
Clewiston News
Zaragoza, Jesus
07-23-09

HENDRY -- After Governor Char-lie Crist pledged to consider Hendry County's pitch for the inland port concept, and that was the last that the area heard of it, County Com-missioner Karson Turner thought it was time that locals did something to push the idea forward.

In light of news that U.S. Sugar would be selling land to the state for a grand-scale rehabilitation project for the Everglades, few lo-cals found solace in the governor's words.

"I've heard nothing from Gov-ernor Crist," said Commissioners Turner. "All I've heard is that he's getting ready to run for senate."

So with just a few weeks before the Port of Palm Beach is expected to make a decision regarding where the inland port project -- a project that has the promise of creating thousands of jobs through a plan to route major commercial traffic through the area, along with the construction of a facility to serve as a main hub, warehouses and other manufacturing areas -- some in the area are focusing on getting the award.

One of the major sites being considered belongs to Florida Crystals and is located near the city of South Bay because of its proximity to U.S. 27 and railroad access. Local county officials, however, have urged the port to consider a site in Hendry Coun-ty, which shares the benefits of the Florida Crystals land, but would also help to offset any loss in jobs that might be created by Sugar's land sale to the state.

The two local sites include the Weekly Brothers Industrial Park and the Airglades Industrial Park, both in Hendry County.

Last week, Commissioner Turner invited members of a number of environmental groups and representatives of elected of-ficials to tour the area from Clewiston to Montura, to Port LaBelle to Ladeca to see just how well the area might be served by the project.

At the end of the tour, the biggest concern seemed to be how to deal with sprawl from such a project. Would, or could, Hendry County support the influx of thousands of new residents to the area should the inland port create the demand for it? How might municipal services be burdened beyond their ability to deliver to those new popula-tions, and where would new homes be built to support the workers?

"Between Clewiston and LaBelle, you can have a nice home for upper-level executives, workers, but you don't have that capability in Belle Glade or Pahokee," said Commis-sioner Turner. " We could fill up Port LaBelle and we could fill up any developments and I still think we can operate without an expan-sion of our infrastruc-ture."

This can be accomplished, he said, with-out destroying the natural resources that make the areas around Lake Okeechobee worth growing up in.

"We can readily take commercial ac-tivities overnight and not harm the environ-ment," he said. "I wanted them (the partici-pating members of the Sierra Club and other environmental groups) to see it first hand. Anytime we can develop something eco-nomically but it doesn't impede the environ-ment, then that's a good thing."

Despite this, the commissioner is cog-nizant that the project may not be sited in Hendry County, but promises that all hope is not lost to that possibility.

"I don't think that there's any reason for the residents of Glades or Hendry to stress if we're not chosen number one," he said. "I don't think the Palm Beach Port Authority will be able to develop this site all of their own. They're broke. They had to fire people this year because they had no more mon-ey."

If that is the case, then the other ports that might also be served, the Ports of Miami and the Everglades, would need to become involved. That's where Hendry County can come in, the commissioner promised.

"We're willing to be a go-between," Commissioner Turner said.

Inland Port Possible in Hendry

07/23/2009

Southwest Florida Online

Browne, Don

LABELLE, FLORIDA -- During a tour of Hendry County industrial sites, County Commissioner Karson Turner encouraged representatives of regional environmental organizations to support Hendry County's bid to become home to the proposed south Florida inland port facility. Any approval would mean big land sales for current agricultural and commercial land owners.

The tour of Hendry County was organized by Sierra Club staff member Marti Daltry and included leaders of the Caloosahatchee River Citizen Association, Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation, Everglades Foundation, Audubon Society, Collins Center, and Sierra Club.

The purpose of the tour was to provide an opportunity for participants to learn more about Hendry County and the areas that would be affected by the U. S. Sugar purchase, ask questions and express their concerns about the inland port sites.

Focal point for the tour was the Airglades Industrial Park west of Clewiston where Commissioner Turner explained the development vision. Cheryl Eby Gutjahr of Rawls Real Estate next guided the group through the Weekley Brothers warehouse & rail yard east of Clewiston before visiting the Big Cypress Seminole Reservation, Storm Water Treatment Area 5, and the Little Cypress Organic Farm operated by Chuck Obern in south Hendry County.

Advocates of an inland port say it is needed to relieve container storage, warehousing, rail, truck, and air cargo congestion at south Florida's deep water ports in Miami, Ft. Lauderdale and West Palm Beach. Traffic through these ports is expected to increase dramatically when improvements to the Panama Canal are completed, allowing larger ships from the Pacific to reach Caribbean and Atlantic harbors.

Sites in Hendry, Glades, Highlands, Palm Beach and Martin Counties are being considered for the new inland port facilities. But environmental advocates are worried that locating the inland port in Palm Beach County would conflict with Everglades restoration efforts and negate the value of the state's huge investments in EAA land purchases.

Groups like the Everglades Foundation have written to Governor Crist encouraging him to instead look favorably upon the candidate sites in Hendry and Glades Counties. The initial storage footprint is estimated to cost \$12 billion dollars for construction and create up to 25,000 jobs to the region during the next twenty years. But saying it doesn't make it so, and there's really no way of predicting such an impact far into the future.

Contrary to what the name may suggest, an inland port does not have to be connected or have access to a body of water. The formal name for the inland port is Intermodal Logistic Center or ILC. An ILC provides storage and

[Return to Top](#)

redistribution services that are supported by trucking highways, rail lines and airports. It would allow the deep water ports to store, reorganize, and transfer their cargo at a more rural location, away from the congested coasts.

A hot topic of discussion on the tour was how to avoid having ILC facilities at the Airglades, Hilliards, and Weekley Brothers sites becoming a trigger for uncontrolled sprawl in adjacent agricultural lands. Many in the tour group advocated protecting agricultural lands by adding a Sprawl Prevention Package to the Hendry County ILC industrial site proposal. They emphasized the need to center commercial and residential re-development in Clewiston, Moore Haven, Port LaBelle, Montura, Pioneer, and LaBelle to help revitalize these communities.

