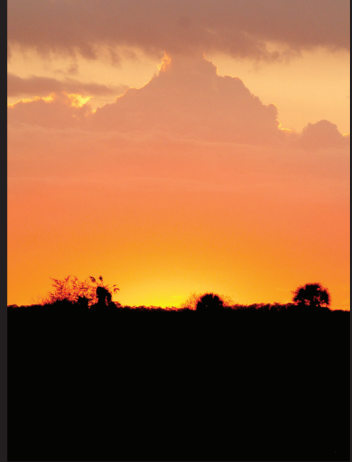




8th Edition

Hendry

County Guide





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On the cover ...

Hendry County Guide cover photos include (starting in left corner, clockwise): Roseate spoonbill, photo by Daniela Langley, Hendry-Glades Audubon Society; boat on Lake Okeechobee, photo by Chris Felker; skydiving, photo courtesy Skydive Spaceland Clewiston; sunset, photo by Dale Conyers; fishing on Lake Okeechobee, photo courtesy Hendry County Tourism; Hendry County Fair, photo courtesy Hendry County Fair & Livestock Show; Brown Sugar Festival, photo courtesy Glades Lives Matter; Memorial Day, photo by Chris Felker; LaBelle, photo by Waddy Thompson; alligator, photo by Dale Conyers.

Welcome to Our Communities

Hendry County is a special place. It is located in one of the most unique ecosystems in the world, and yet it draws – it does not shrink from – its sense of place. Here, beautiful sunsets against lakes and rivers impress on a daily basis, the opportunities to enjoy nature's offerings are nearly limitless, and the sense of community here drives a flourishing, growing community. Join us as we look at what makes Hendry County a destination for businesses, residents, and newcomers.

Guide to Hendry County

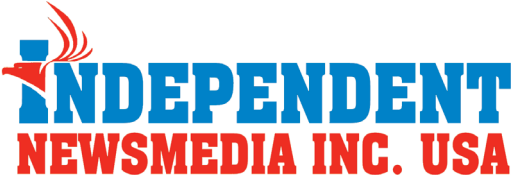
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Publisher	Katrina Elsen
Advertising Manager	Jaime Limoges
News and Ad Services	Dale Conyers
Pagination Artist	Kris Schwartz
Reporter/Editor	Chris Felker
Reporter/Photographer	Danika J. Hopper
Advertising Services	Barbara Calfee
	Jennifer Froman
	Stephanie Larson
	Thomas Shorter
	Kay Sheedy
	Patricia (Keli) Trimnal

Contact Us

Mail: P.O. Box 518, LaBelle, FL 33975
 Location: 22 Ft. Thompson Ave., LaBelle, FL 33975
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INI/Danika J. Hopper

From Coast to Coast

Explore the Lake Okeechobee Waterway

Florida boaters can travel from the east coast to the west coast via the Lake Okeechobee Waterway.

The 154-mile-long waterway extends from the Atlantic Ocean at Stuart, to the Gulf of Mexico at Fort Meyers. The

waterway runs through Lake Okeechobee and consists of the Caloosahatchee River to the west of the lake and the St. Lucie

Canal east of the lake.

Much of the waterway is man-made. Nature did not connect the St. Lucie River to the ocean. The connection between Lake Okeechobee and the St. Lucie is man-made, as is the channel connecting Lake Okeechobee to the Caloosahatchee River. In the days before paved roads, early pioneers used the waterways as liquid highways. Riverboats carried passengers back and forth between rural heartland and the coastal cities. Boats also hauled produce from rural farms to market and supplies back to the interior.

Today, instead of steamships hauling freight and passengers, the Lake Okeechobee Waterway is used for recreational boating and fishing, and most boaters use the ActiveCaptain application to navigate. Go to <https://active-captain.garmin.com/en-US/pois/17709> to learn more about it.

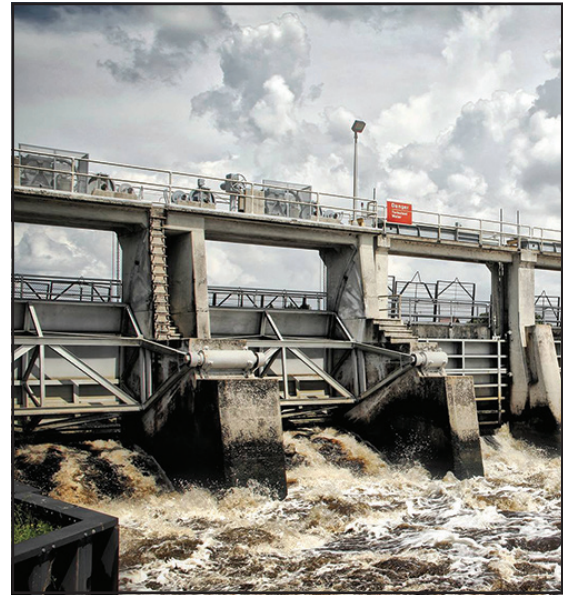
There are five locks on the waterway. From east to west they are the St. Lucie Lock, the Port Mayaca Lock, the Moore Haven Lock, the Ortona Lock and the W.P. Franklin Lock. These locks, operated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, are operated 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily. The last lockage of the day begins at 4:30 p.m.

The City of LaBelle offers three free days' dockage, including water and power service.

Twenty-five bridges cross various points along the Lake Okeechobee Waterway. Eleven of these bridges open for boat traffic. The lowest of the fixed bridges is the Port Mayaca Railroad Bridge with a vertical clearance of 49 feet. Sailboats that are too tall to clear the bridge are sometimes helped under the bridge by means of the "Okeechobee limbo." The website offshoreblue.com explains: "A crew out of the Indiantown Marina will meet your boat at the bridge and by use of plastic 50 gallon drums lined up along your rail and filled with water, list your vessel enough to pass under the Port Mayaca RR Bridge. Once through, the drums are emptied and removed from your boat and you are on your way. The whole process generally takes less than an hour."

The Okeechobee Waterway is usually open year-round, but during the dry season there are sometimes restrictions based on the depth of the water. Tropical storms and hurricanes can also result in some closures on the waterway.

Hendry County is home to U.S. Army Corps of Engineers South Florida Operations Office, 525 Ridgelawn Road in Clewiston, FL 33440-5399, telephone: 863-983-8101.



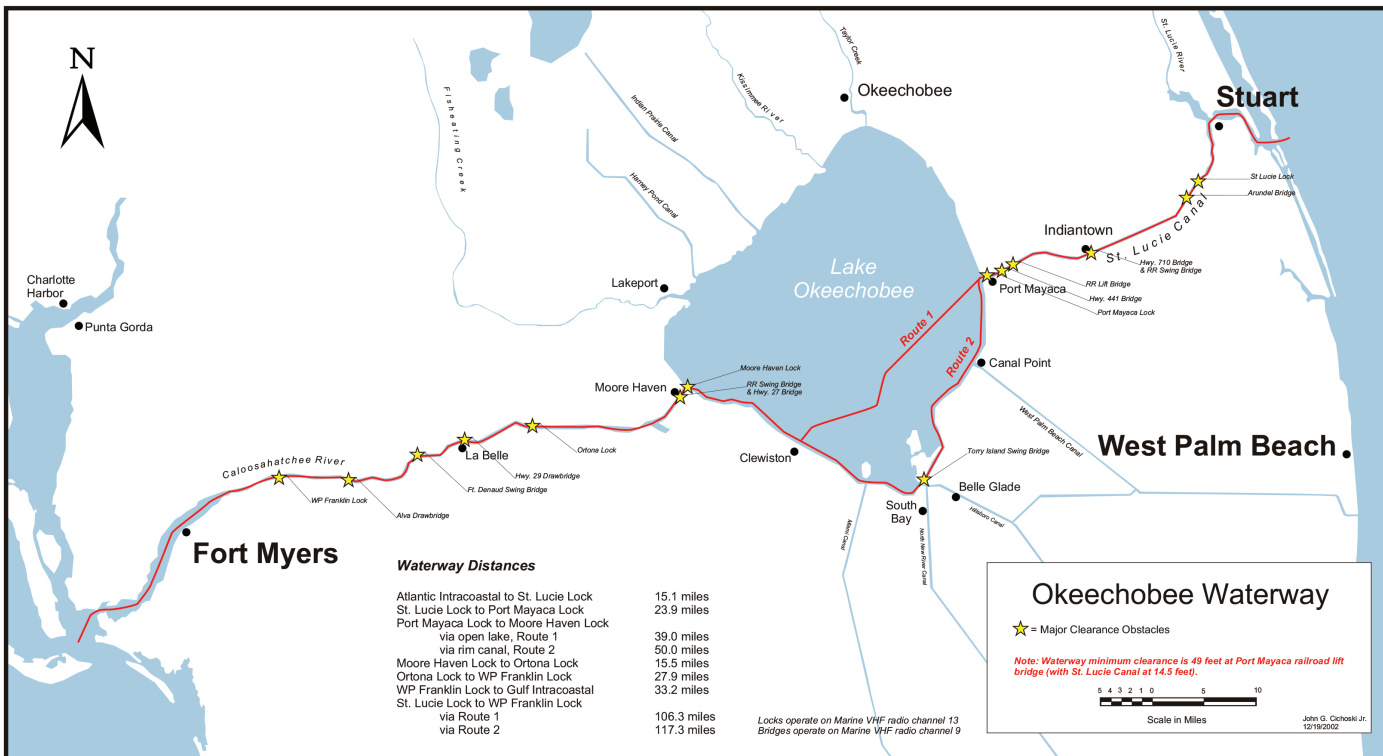
INI/Dale Conyers

Summer rains cause the Ortona Locks to be opened almost full time.

Lock Operators:

W.P. Franklin	239-694-5451
Ortona	863-675-0616
Moore Haven	863-946-0414
Port Mayaca	561-924-2858
St. Lucie	772-287-2665

Sources: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the website offshoreblue.com.



Courtesy US Army Corps of Engineers

ATTRACTIONS

Places to Visit

BIG 'O' GUIDE SERVICE A scenic Eco-Tour on Lake Okeechobee. See alligators, manatees, pelicans, exotic birds and more. Located at Roland Martin's Marina and Resort at 920 W. Del Monte Ave., Clewiston. You can reach them at 863-983-3151 or visit their website at rolandmartinmarina.com.

BILLIE SWAMP SAFARI Take a swamp buggy or airboat tour at Big Cypress Seminole Indian Reservation. They are located at 30000 Gator Tail Trail, Clewiston. You can reach them at 1-800-GOSAFARI. Their website is at billieswamp.com.

WALKING/BIKING TOUR Four self-guided trails all start from the Clewiston Inn and wander through residential areas of Clewiston at 108 Royal Palm Ave., Clewiston. For more information, please call 863-983-7979.

DINNER ISLAND RANCH Outstanding wildlife viewing awaits at this vast acreage site. It offers fishing, hiking, cycling, camping, hunting, horseback riding and scenic driving. They are located 29 miles southwest of Clewiston off of County Road 833.



STA 5 BIRD-WATCHING In partnership with Hendry-Glades Audubon, the South Florida Water Management District offers escorted birding tours at the South Florida Birding Trail. STA 5 is ranked one of the best bird watching areas in the country. No reservations required for walking or bicycling visits to these areas. For directions and information, please call 863-674-0695 or 863-517- 0202. The Clewiston Museum also offers a "Historical Eco-Tour" and STA 5 Fridays. For van tour schedules,

email clewistonmuseum@embarqmail.com.

AUDUBON SOCIETY Birding organization for Hendry, Glades and Okeechobee counties. Hendry County Tourism sponsors the annual Big 'O' Birding Festival in March. Memberships are available. For more information, please call 863-674-0695 or 863-517- 0202. Visit their website at hendrygladesaudubon.org.

JACOB'S FLIGHT SERVICES Experience beautiful Lake Okeechobee and surrounding areas from the sky. Offered are designed, packaged scenic tours for you to enjoy the most popular sights they have to offer. You can also customize your own tour and see the destinations you choose. They are located at 3200 Airglades Blvd., Clewiston. You can reach them at 855-JFS-FLYS. Visit their website at jacobsflightservices.com.

FLORIDA RIDGE AIRPORTS PARK A hang gliding and ultra light facility offering a variety of tandem sky rides, pilot services and instruction. They are located at 12671 E. State Road 80 in Clewiston. You can reach them at 863-805-0440. You can visit their website at thefloridaridge.com.

SKYDIVE SPACELAND Experience the thrill of diving from 14,000 feet and taking in the view of Lake Okeechobee. This park is at 1090 Airglades Blvd. in Clewiston. Call them at 800-533-6151 or visit their website at skydivespaceland.com.

DEVIL'S GARDEN MUD CLUB Complete mud park with 1,200 acres of mud activities including mud holes, swimming holes, airboat track, mud flats, mud sand track, truck pulls, camping areas, family areas and miles of trails. You can

reach them at 1-800-551- 4375. You can visit their website at devilsyardmudclub.com.

SILVER LAKE PRESERVE This beautiful 1,876-acre tract offers a customized hunting program with some of the best year



round native wildlife opportunities in South Florida. The Silver Lake Lodge can accommodate 10 guests and offers several amenities. They are located at 2860 Silver Lake Rd. N.W. in LaBelle. You can reach them at 863-273-7712. You can visit their website at silverlakepreserve.com.

SPIRIT-OF-THE-WILD WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA Nature enthusiasts will want to visit this site because of the year round viewing of wildlife for which the area is known. The area offers fishing, hiking, biking, horseback riding and scenic driving. It is located 12 miles south of LaBelle on County Road 832.

STARGAZING Starry nights are a common occurrence in Hendry County. You don't need a telescope to stargaze. Just good weather. Walk out on the dike, or to the fields and you will see thousands of stars. For more info, please visit stargazers.org.

CLEWISTON MUSEUM The Clewiston Museum is located at 109 Central Avenue, Clewiston, Florida. It houses exhibits highlighting the local area, including: Fossils, Sugar, Cattle Industry Firsts, Commercial Fishing, Flying Brits, Killer Hurricanes and Seminole Indians. You can reach them at 863-983-2870. You can visit their website at clewistonmuseum.org. Email: clewistonmuseum@embarqmail.com.



AH-TAH-THI-KI MUSEUM Nestled in the heart of the Everglades, the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum is home to more than 30,000 unique artifacts selected to celebrate, preserve and interpret the rich history and culture of the Seminole Tribe of Florida. As a Smithsonian Affiliate, we welcome you to enjoy our engaging indoor exhibits and explore our mile-long boardwalk

through a natural cypress dome, leading to a Living Village featuring Seminole artisans. Discover Seminole crafts, books and memorabilia at the Museum Store. Located 17 miles north of 1-75 (exit 49) on the Big Cypress Seminole Indian Reservation. Visit ahtahthiki.com or call 863-902-1113 to learn more.



CAPTAIN HENDRY HOUSE Added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1993, Hendry House was the home of Francis A. Hendry, the "Father of LaBelle." It is located at 512 Fraser Ave in LaBelle. For more information, please call 863-675-2872. For more info on the history, please contact the LaBelle Heritage Museum at 863- 674-0034. You can visit their website at labelnaturepark.net.



LABELLE CITY DOCKS Overlooking the south side of the Okeechobee Waterway, just west of the LaBelle bridge. The City of LaBelle provides these docks, complete with electric and water, free of charge. All vessels are welcome 3 days in, 8 days out. Close proximity (walking distance) to downtown LaBelle for shopping, restaurants, and fuel. For more information please call (863) 673-1191. Visit the city's website at citylabelle.com.

BELLE HATCHEE MARINA Specializing in multi-hull haul out located in a hurricane protected area. Freshwater marina with no tides. Do-it-yourself boat work yard with 24 hour access. Inland boat storage in hurricane protected area. Ships Store on the premises. Shopping, restaurants and motels near by. Located at 121 Riverbend Drive in LaBelle. They can be reached at 863-674-1772 or 817-965-2302, or go to bellehatcheemarina.com.



PORT LABELLE MARINA Located on Okeechobee (Intracoastal) Waterway East of the LaBelle Bridge. This

secluded marina offers fuel, electricity at the main dock, pump-out facility at the main dock, laundry, and men/women restrooms and showers. Located at 1152 Marina Drive in LaBelle. You can reach them at (863) 675-2261. Visit their website at portlabellemarina.com.

ROLAND AND MARY ANN MARTIN'S MARINA & RESORT

Roland and Mary Ann Martin's Marina and Resort provides everything for the fisherman and boater. The marina features 20 of the nation's top notch fishing guides, many lodging choices, ample floating dockage, a fleet of rental boats, 130 covered boat slips, fuel, bait, supplies, a tiki bar with live entertainment/ karaoke and a restaurant. They are located at 920 E. Del Monte Ave. in Clewiston. You can reach them at 863-983-3151 or 1-800-473-6766. You can visit their website at rolandmartinmarina.com.

UNCLE JOE'S FISH CAMP Located in an off-the-beaten path area of Lake Okeechobee, Uncle Joe's offers cabins, plus groceries, tackle, live bait, docks and boat ramps with direct access to the lake. They are located at 1699 Griffin Road in Moore Haven. Reach them at 863-983-9421 or 863-983-4818.

RIVERSIDE RETREAT Florida United Methodist Camps and Retreat Ministries is located just east of For Myers with 150 acres of lodges, dorms, bunkhouses, RV/tent areas, conference rooms and more for family reunions, weddings, school groups, retreats and conferences. You can reach them at 863-675-0334. You can visit their website at umriversideretreat.org.



CLEWISTON GOLF COURSE A beautifully maintained, championship 18-hole golf course that is open to the public. Designed in the Donald Ross Style, the course is a classic and can be enjoyed by the amateur golfer or the seasoned professional. They are located at 1201 San Luiz Ave in Clewiston. You can reach them at 863-983- 1448.

HENDRY COUNTY MOTORSPORTS PARK Get ready for thrilling excitement on the Everglades clay at the Hendry County Motorsports Park, the southernmost raceway in the USA. They are located at 9985 West Hwy. 27 (9.5 miles north of Clewiston on U.S. 27). You can reach them at 863-983-3478. Or visit their website at hendryracing.com.

THE BARRON PARK HOUSE GALLERY AND GIFT SHOP is housed in the historic Christie House which was built in 1914. Local artists exhibit their oil, watercolor, acrylic, and mixed media paintings, sculptures, and photography. Exhibits are rotated monthly. Worth a visit for any art fan. It's hidden in the north east corner of Barron Park, at 471 N. Lee St. You can reach them at 239-843-2929. You can visit their website at artsinland.com/

FIREHOUSE THEATRE The Firehouse Community Theatre has been providing a unique cultural experience in the area for over 21 years. The theatre is staffed completely by volunteers from our communities. They are located at 241 N. Bridge Street in LaBelle. You can reach them at 863-675-3066. You can visit their website at firehousecommunitytheatre.com.

DOLLY HAND CENTER Located at the Palm Beach State College Campus, the Dolly Hand Cultural Arts Center and

Theatre holds a roster of performances designed to offer an “escape from the everyday.” They are located at 1977 College Drive in Belle Glade. You can reach them at 561-993-1160. Or visit their website at dollyhand.org.

OKEECHOBEE SCENIC TRAIL Designated as a segment of the Florida National Scenic Trail, this route circles the second largest freshwater lake in the contiguous United States. The trail runs on top of the Herbert Hoover Dike and provides views ranging from scenic lakeside to working agricultural landscapes. There are numerous locations for access by hikers and bikers, as well as equestrians. Not all areas are paved and some portions close at irregular intervals, so please call 863-983-8101 for the latest information.



BIG WATER HERITAGE TRAIL The trail’s name, the Big Water Heritage Trail, stems from the Seminole word for Okeechobee, which means, “Big Water.” This successful project, implemented in 2003, is a heritage trail that identifies, links and marks sites of historical, cultural, natural, recreational and

educational importance to the area. The Big Water Heritage Trail encompasses five counties surrounding Lake Okeechobee in Florida. For more information, please call 863- 983-7979.

OKALOACOOCHEE FOREST The Okaloacoochee Slough State Forest contains nearly 35,000 acres, mostly in Hendry County, which extends northward near the Caloosahatchee River and southward about 50 miles into Big Cypress Swamp. There are 38 miles of trails open for wildlife viewing, hiking, non-motorized biking, and horseback riding. Also available are four campgrounds. To learn more, call 863-612- 0776.

FISHEATING CREEK OUTPOST The licensed concessionaire of the Fisheating Creek Wildlife Management Area provides recreational and educational opportunities to the public under contract of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. Now offering camping, canoeing, paddling, hiking, and eco-adventures. RV/tent sites are available. You can reach them at 863-675-5999. You can also visit their website at fishheatingcreekoutpost.com.

GATORAMA Gatorama is a family-friendly Eco Adventure Park and licensed gator farm in the heart of the Everglades. The focus is on family, fun and education; food and drink, too, available from a food truck inside the park. The owners and staff invite you to play wild, get dirty and get up close and personal with Florida’s apex predators. Both alligators and crocodiles live here in the Sunshine State, the only place on Earth where they exist side by side in the wild. See the Big Gator Feed Show, try your luck at our Fast Hands or No Hands Challenge or participate in one of their “Gatorventures.” Located at 10665 N. U.S. 27 in Palmdale, Gatorama can be reached seven days a week at 863-675-0623. Or learn more by going online to gatorama.com.



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Ready, Set, Build

Hendry County is Prepared for Growth

By Keitha Daniels
Director of Hendry County EDC

Located in an ideal South-Central Florida location, and equipped with the foundational elements to advance as a premier business destination, Hendry County is poised for growth. With the coastal communities reaching capacity, more and more individuals are turning their attention inland. Our community offers a true quality of life, where homes are affordable, natural assets are abundant and available, and business is prosperous.

The Hendry community takes prides in their unique profile, and also has established long-term planning in place. Public and private leaders have worked together to enable the planned development of an estimated 43,000 residential units, and 34 million square feet of mixed retail, industrial and office space. The local transportation network in the

area is built out and enables any business key access to both domestic and international consumers via major ports, rail and roadways.

Local government is a committed partner to current and future businesses and residents, streamlining regulations and reducing development costs. The new processes have resulted in an increase in new building permits year-over-year.

The Hendry County Economic Development Council (EDC) is another well-established community asset focused on business, workforce and community enhancement. Through strategic partnerships with local, regional and state entities, the EDC is delivering on a promise to continually improve the community, and prepare for the tremendous growth to come.

All eyes are on Hendry County. The resources, leadership, planning and commitment are in place. It's time to build.

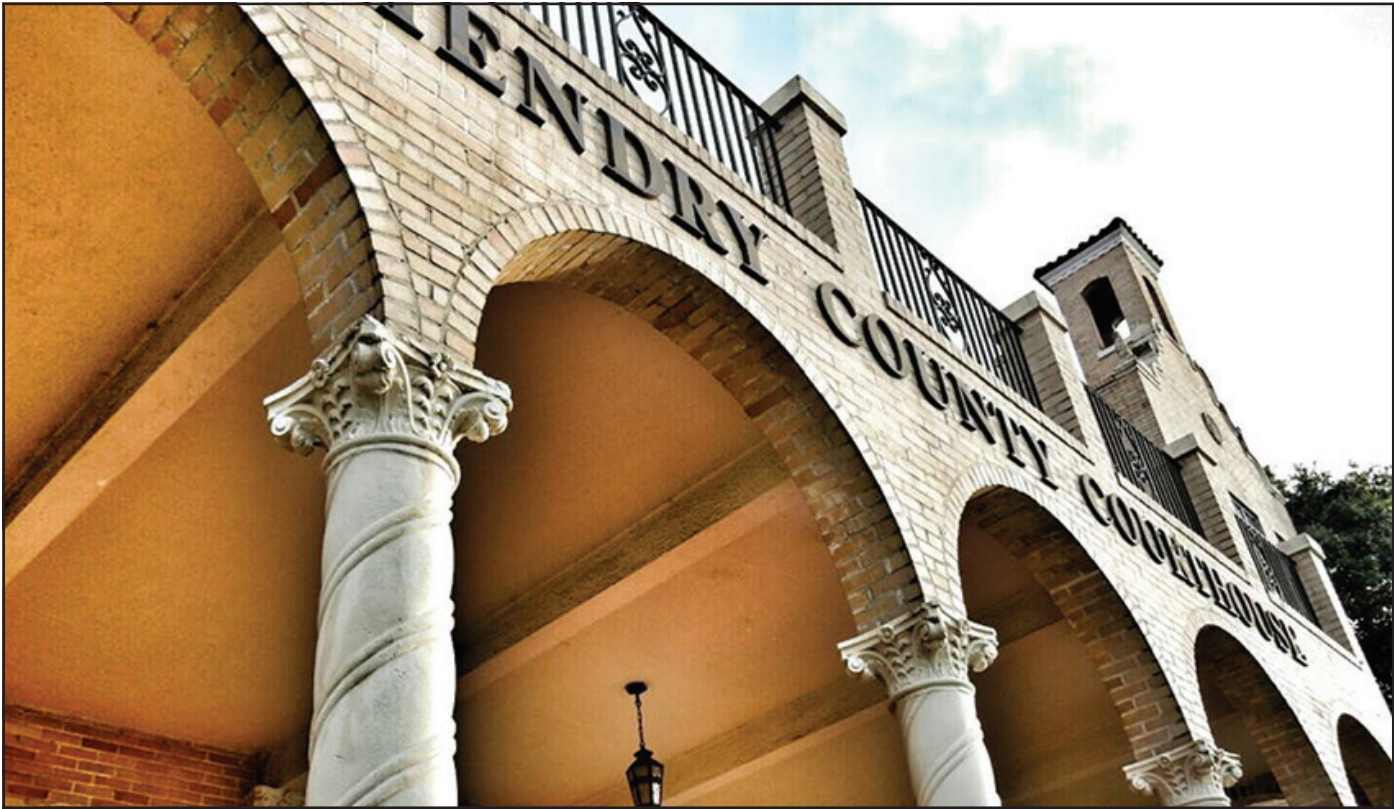


INI/Danika J. Hopper

Gov. DeSantis attended the official groundbreaking of the C-43 West Basin Storage Reservoir. The reservoir, on 10,700 acres south of the Caloosahatchee River, is not just part of an overall solution to improve water quality and reduce harm caused by Lake Okeechobee discharges, it eventually will also be a recreational area. Miles of trails for hiking, biking, and horseback riding, public parking areas, a boat launch, canoeing and kayaking facilities, shelters, restrooms, and an equestrian area with its own parking, paddock and wash racks are also in the project's plan. At right above, a U.S. 27 corridor beautification was finished, and a new Hampton Inn went up along Sugarland Highway.

INI/Chris Felker





Courtesy Photo/Hendry County
 The Hendry County Courthouse (constructed in 1926) was designed in the Mediterranean Revival-Mission Revival styles by architect Edward Columbus Hosford. On November 8, 1990, it was added to the U.S. National Register of Historic Places.



Heartland Neurology

Lenay Santana, M.D.

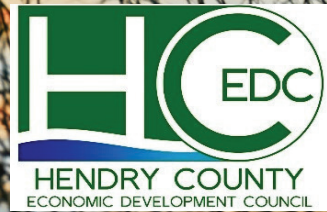
*Board-certified
Neurologist*

*Board-certified
Neuromuscular
Medicine*

Clinical Neurophysiology Fellow

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Hendry County

Benefits of Locating in Hendry County Include:

- Lower Operating Costs
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- Skilled Workforce
- Rural Incentives

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Best of LaBelle

By Alexis Crespo

Planning director, City of LaBelle

The City of LaBelle continues to see a steady stream of new development proposals and interest as the economy remains strong in Southwest Florida. Of note, the city is processing several rezoning applications for commercial development and redevelopment along the State Road 80 corridor, and new residential projects.

An exciting development is the newly opened LaBelle Brewing Company, a community-focused craft brewery and taproom in the heart of LaBelle, and a first piece of the larger, mixed-use “Belle Arbor” development under development at Shady Oaks Avenue and Hickpochee Avenue.

Development and permitting applications are reviewed by city staff under the direction of Superintendent of Public Works Gary Hull, and assisted by City Planner Alexis Crespo, AICP. LaBelle’s staff focuses on a high level of customer service and working with property owners to achieve workable solutions and consensus.

LaBelle’s development process and procedures are guided by the city’s Comprehensive Plan, which can be accessed on the city’s website, citylabelle.com, and the Land Development Code (LDC) located on Municode. Every property in the city is

designated within a specific future land use category, that guide whether a property can be used for residential, commercial, industrial, public or a mix of land uses. Similarly, the zoning map classifies each property by zoning district and corresponds to district regulations in the Land Development Code that specify how development can occur on the property, including setbacks, minimum home sizes, landscaping requirements, and other development information.

A key focus for the city is strengthening the downtown area and Barron Park through short- and long-term planning efforts. The LaBelle City Commission, in conjunction with the Downtown Revitalization Corporation, continues to fund improvements to the park to make it a highly usable recreational space for all city residents and visitors. The long-term goals include repurposing/ redeveloping the tennis court areas and integrating the passive and active recreational spaces with the natural environment and adjacent uses in downtown.

If you’re considering a project in LaBelle, or just need access to information, the city’s website is a key resource. City staff also offers pre-application meetings at no cost to the applicant to discuss development proposals and provide information regarding the applicable regulations and the permitting process. For more information, please visit the city’s website at citylabelle.com.



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On the town in LaBelle

Visitors to Downtown LaBelle will fall in love with its unique charm, one-of-a kind shops and Southern hospitality. Established in the early 1900s, the district formed along the Caloosahatchee River, and buildings from 1911 are still in commercial use today.

In recent years, the City of LaBelle recognized the importance of a vibrant downtown district to the overall economic health of the community and helped formed the LaBelle Downtown Revitalization Corporation (LDRC).



INI/Dale Conyers
Friday Night on Fort Thompson has become one of the biggest hits of the season in LaBelle's downtown district.

Through the work of the revitalization group, the downtown community is experiencing a renewed interest in the businesses, people, and events that can be found there. The humanities have become a large part of the district; attracting locals and visitors alike to its theater and art galleries. Six murals created by local artists can now be found throughout the district, giving homage to the nature and culture of LaBelle.

Outdoor events and activities, such as kayaking and street concerts have become a regular feature of the district and the largest festival of LaBelle, the Swamp Cabbage Festival, fills the streets with thousands of visitors each year. Beautification projects led by LDRC have added additional lighting and seating to the district which allows visitors to enjoy their stay in the district at



Courtesy photo/LDRC
LaBelle Downtown Revitalization Corporation commissioned local artist Marcos Ruiz to paint this mural on the Caloosa Belle building in downtown LaBelle.

any time of the day.

The City of LaBelle has also invested into projects that welcome visitors, such as the City Wharf which allows boaters to dock for 3 days at no charge. The downtown district greets thousands who visit by waterway each year.

LDRC has an office located in downtown LaBelle. Visitors are invited to stop by and read the "Happenings" board to learn about activities or businesses located there or just to learn more about LaBelle.

LaBelle Downtown Revitalization Corporation

Located at:
8 Park Ave, LaBelle, FL 33935.
Mailing Address:
P.O. Box 1844, LaBelle, FL 33975
Phone: 863-225-2749
Email:
Downtownlabelle@gmail.com
Website:
downtownlabelle.com



Courtesy photo/Waddy Thompson

LaBelle's City Wharf at the Caloosahatchee River is transformed each November into a lively hub of activity, fine foods, music and art by local artists at the Wharf Walk.

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280 North Bridge Street.

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Courtesy photo/Waddy Thompson

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www.CityLaBelle.com

est. 1923

The History of Florida's 63rd County

By Joe Thomas, president
LaBelle Heritage Museum

Hendry County, the 63rd of Florida's 67 counties, was established by the Florida legislature in May 1923 by taking approximately half of the area left to Lee County after the creation of Collier County, was named in honor of renowned Florida cattle man Francis Asbury Hendry. Hendry first came to the area as a scout for the U.S. Army during the Third Seminole War in the 1850s. He returned after the War Between the States to set up headquarters for a cattle ranch at old abandoned Fort Thompson that earned him the title of Cattle King of South Florida.

The Upper Caloosahatchee Valley became known to Americans of European heritage during the Second Seminole War (1835-1842) when supply depots were established along the pristine Caloosahatchee River and in the Everglades and Big Cypress - almost impenetrable regions to the south. They were periodically abandoned during the rainy season and also when U.S. troops were not systematically searching for Seminoles - the generic term for both Miccosukee and Cow Creek bands of Native Americans. U.S. troops sought to round up and forcibly move these Native Americans to the Trans-Mississippi West, making inland Florida safe for settlement by Americans steadily moving south from Georgia and the Carolinas into a promised Eden. Native Americans resisted encroachments on their lands while American settlers and troops refused to admit the validity

of Seminole claims to this virgin territory. Slowly but surely, American settlers moved into the Caloosahatchee Valley, lured by the promise of an area that would not only support tropical fruits and vegetables, but also their means of transportation - small supply boats plying the picturesque Caloosahatchee River taking them to market.

The Caloosahatchee River was both boon and bane to the hardy pioneers settling the Caloosahatchee Valley during the latter years of the 19th century. It was the source of irrigation for their crops as well as being their avenue to the Gulf of Mexico and northern markets. Yet, at the same time, the river's inability to quickly and successfully drain the area during Florida's unpredictable rainy season and after seasonal hurricanes caused settlers to abandon their homes, farms, and tropical groves along its banks. Requests to the Army Corps of Engineers to clear the Caloosahatchee of obstructions following the disastrous floods of 1878 only resulted in the U S Congress appropriating funds to clear the channel as far upriver as the small community of Fort Myers.

Shortly thereafter, hardy pioneers began carving a new settlement on the banks of the Caloosahatchee at the western edge of Captain F.A. Hendry's vast cattle ranch. This settlement, first known as Belle or Belle City, became LaBelle when Hendry platted the small settlement and named it in honor of two of his six daughters, Laura Jane Hendry Thompson and Carrie Belle Hendry Evans.

It was left up to Philadelphia entrepreneur Hamilton Disston



INI/Dale Conyers

The Capt. Francis A. Hendry House is a historic site in LaBelle. It is located at 512 Fraser St. On Feb. 5, 1998, it was added to the U.S. National Register of Historic Places. The frame vernacular house was built for Captain Francis Hendry, LaBelle's founder and county namesake. It is the only surviving building associated with Capt. Hendry in the county.

and his plans to reclaim the Everglades and construct a canal from the Gulf of Mexico to the Atlantic Ocean. Such a waterway had been dreamed of since the days of Spanish Florida — a canal that would fully connect the Caloosahatchee from its headwaters at Lake Hickpochee to Lake Okeechobee via the Three Mile Canal. Small paddle wheel steamers plied the Upper Caloosahatchee from the early 1880s until Caloosahatchee Irrigation and Navigation Locks 2 and 3 were dynamited to help release flood waters from the disastrous 1928 Okeechobee Hurricane. Dynamiting these locks did not achieve the desired result but did result in destroying the Caloosahatchee itself as the primary avenue for transportation and commerce between Fort Myers and the Upper Caloosahatchee Valley.

Vegetable farms, citrus groves, and tropical fruit plantations dominated the area closest to the Caloosahatchee during this period of early settlement in the Caloosahatchee Valley. Cattle ranching was paramount in the lush grasslands that bordered the Caloosahatchee. However, the area south of the Caloosahatchee was home to large numbers of furbearers such as otter, fox, bobcat, and Florida Panther whose pelts were in demand for both gentlemen and ladies' hats, winter coats, and lap robes. Tropical birds were hunted for their plumes and sometimes entire carcasses that adorned not only ladies' finest millinery but also elaborate hairdos during the Gilded Age.

Such high demand encouraged hunting and trapping for pelts and plumes that lasted well into the 20th century until changing fashions, wildlife conservation, and strict laws about poaching called an end to wide-spread trapping and fur trading on the streets of LaBelle.

The majority of the early American settlers in the Caloosahatchee Valley came south from North Florida, Georgia, and the Carolinas in search of open frontiers just as many of their neighbors moved west into virgin lands in Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, Northern Louisiana, Texas, and the Great Plains. However, Midwestern land developers such as E.E. Goodno and - in some instances - land speculators like Rev. George F. Hall from the Midwest concentrated on luring yeoman farmers and artisans from Illinois, Missouri, Kansas, and Oklahoma.

Clewiston had its Japanese settlers in the years prior to World War II, and LaBelle boasted Polish, Czech, and Italian families becoming steadfast members of the community during the early years of the 20th century as well as a short-lived return to the land by Eastern European Jewish immigrants from the Shtetls of the Russian Empire in the early 1930's.

The Seminole Indians had been forced into the Big Cypress during both the Second and Third Seminole Wars from the mid- 1830s to the late 1850s. A reservation was set up in

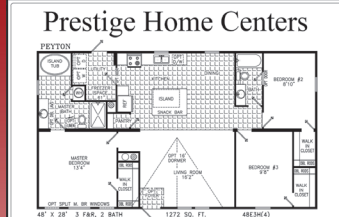


Courtesy photo

The Harold P. Curtis Honey building in downtown LaBelle has become a Hendry County landmark.

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LaBelle Location
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863-675-2125

Fort Myers Shores Location
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239-694-6444

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the southeastern corner of Hendry County, and the Native Americans were conveniently forgotten (for the most part) except for visits into Clewiston and LaBelle to trade their furs and buy groceries.

The Seminoles were cattle ranchers in North Florida before the United States obtained Florida from Spain by treaty and purchase in 1819 and continued to herd some cattle even after they were forced into the Big Cypress. The plight of these Native Americans followed that of their cousins in other areas until entrepreneurs in the tribe decided to adopt the ways of their neighbors and became successful international businessmen with enterprises spanning the globe.

The possibility of raising sugar cane in the Upper Caloosahatchee Valley had been recognized as early as the 1870s. The possibility became a reality with the push for Everglades Drainage and Reclamation during the early years of the 20th century. It led to the establishment of Clewiston on the shores of Lake Okeechobee in the early 1920s, a community that would thrive off of the new sugar mill, United States Sugar Corporation. It had holdings in the rich muck lands of Lakes Okeechobee and Hickpochee, as well as the Upper Caloosahatchee Valley. The Caloosahatchee, Lake Okeechobee, and the prime hunting lands in the area coupled with generally mild winter and spring weather, beckoned wealthy sportsmen from the North. Winter vacation homes began to spring up along the banks of the Caloosahatchee and on the Ridge in Clewiston. Many of these tourists became very active in their winter vacation communities, and some even became permanent residents.

The economy of Hendry County has been a mixture of agriculture, hunting and fur trading, and tourism since its early days. Who knows what the future has in store for our diverse population with its varied interests?



INI/Chris Felker

The Clewiston Inn is located on U.S. 27 and is the oldest hotel in the area of Lake Okeechobee. The building survived the great 1926 and 1928 hurricanes but was destroyed by a fire in 1937, and then the classical revival style structure was rebuilt in 1938.



Community Market

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Chapter 144

Community Market

Open Saturday 8:00 - 3:00



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MORE!!**

EVENTS

Festivals and Celebrations in the Area

EVERGLADES BOOGIE

Held at the end of January, this event gives skydivers the opportunity to jump out of all kinds of aircraft, like a De Havilland Otter, a Sky Van, a King Air and a helicopter. Nightly entertainment, bonfires, raffles, vendors and food. You can reach them at 800-533-6151 or 863-983-6151 or visit their website at skydivespaceland.com.

BIG CYPRESS SHOOTOUT

This event, held in March, includes a historically accurate Seminole War reenactment, cultural displays, Seminole food, music and more at the Big Cypress Reservation. You can reach them at 1-800-949-6101 ext. 12125. Visit their website at bcshoot.com.



FLW SERIES FISHING TOURNAMENTS

These national events often take place on beautiful Lake Okeechobee. Professional anglers come from across the country to compete for cash prizes. The event is held at the Roland Martin Marina & Resort in Clewiston. The season usually kicks off in January. For more information, visit flwoutdoors.com.

BLACK GOLD JUBILEE

Celebrating the end of harvest season, this unique festival held every April, shows off Belle Glade's agricultural roots and organic "black gold" soil. Food, entertainment, fireworks, a car show, a volleyball tournament, rides and more. For more information, call 561-996-2745.



SOUR ORANGE FESTIVAL

Held in Lakeport the second Saturday in February, this event features the Sour Orange local Bake-Off, boasting delicious sour orange pies; vendors; entertainment; arts and crafts; a quilt show; recipe contests; and a photography display. For more information, call 863-233-3014.

SWAMP CABBAGE FESTIVAL

The Swamp Cabbage Festival celebrates local heroes with fun activities beginning with the Old Timers Dance and continuing with the Swamp Stomp, the Adult Country Western Dance, the Ranch Rodeo, the Legends of the Road Show, the Miss Swamp Cabbage Pageant, a fishing tournament, parade, food, arts and crafts, armadillo races and more. The festival is held every year in late February in LaBelle. You can visit their website at swampcabbagefestival.org.



CLEWISTON SUGAR FESTIVAL

Country music concert, arts and crafts, farming, beauty pageants, dessert contest, farming exhibits, fishing tournament, car show and more. Held each year in mid-April at Clewiston's Sugar



Festival Park. You can visit their Facebook page at facebook.com/SugarFestival.

BROWN SUGAR FESTIVAL

Held in Harlem, just southwest of Clewiston on the first Saturday of May, this festival has arts and crafts, a pageant, music, games, exhibits and food. Funds raised during the festival help send local students to college. For more information, call 863-902-3322.



BRIGHTON SEMINOLE FESTIVAL

The festival grounds are next to the Fred Smith Rodeo Arena off State Road 721 in Glades County. This event, held in February, showcases Seminole and other Native American arts, crafts, food, dances and traditions. They also have a rodeo and XTreme Bull Riding. You can reach them at 863-467-6039. You can visit their website at REZRODEO.com.



CHALO NITKA FESTIVAL

Chalo Nitka is held on the first weekend in March in Moore Haven. Chalo Nitka is one of the state's oldest continuing festivals. The festival grounds are located in Chalo Nitka Park. There are midway games, rides, a pancake breakfast and vendor booths selling food, crafts and jewelry. Events also include the Big Bass Tournament, the Frontier Days Rodeo, the Kid's Day and Small Fry Fishing Contest, the Chalo Nitka Parade and the Chalo Nitka Queen Pageant. For more information, visit their website at chalonitka.com or call 863-946-0300.

HENDRY COUNTY FAIR AND LIVESTOCK SHOW

Celebrating local agriculture with a livestock show and sale, cake auction, petting zoo, exhibits, pageants, a parade, frog racing and more, this week-long event is held in Clewiston every February. You can visit their website at hendrycountyfair.com.

LIVESTOCK SHOW ARENA

Home to the "Raising Cane Rodeo," this site has events for youth development and adult recreation. Enjoy sanctioned barrel events and weekly roping throughout the year. They are located at 610 E. El Paso in Clewiston. You can visit their website at hendrycountyfair.com.



AMERICAN INDIAN ARTS CELEBRATION

Dance! Music! Arts! Culture! The first weekend in November, the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum hosts its annual American Indian Arts Celebration on the museum grounds at the Big Cypress Seminole Indian Reservation. Enjoy traditional and contemporary arts and crafts, dance and music of the Seminole, Southeastern and other Indian tribes from across the country. Along with the Native American vendors, special presentations and wildlife shows, admission to the festival includes free parking and entrance to our award-winning, American Alliance of Museums accredited museum. Visit ahtahthiki.com or call 863-902-1113 for more information.

RECREATION RODEO GROUNDS

Home to the annual Swamp Cabbage Festival and newly established Cattleman's Ranch Rodeo, this facility hosts multiple practice and sanctioned events throughout the year and is the site of the annual livestock sale.

CLEWISTON KIDS FALL FESTIVAL

It features games, food, costume and pet costume contests, local vendors, a car show and more on the Saturday before Halloween. For more information, call 863-983-1492.

RV GAMES

Presented by LDRC and Oakgrove RV Resort, LaBelle Woods RV Resort, Grandma's Grove RV Resort, Whisper Creek RV Resort, Riverbend RV Resort, Country Village and The Glades RV Resort hold an annual RV GAMES competition in Downtown Labelle in January. For more info visit their website at downtownlabelle.com.

DOWNTOWN LIVE!

Free street concerts on Fort Thompson Avenue from 6-9 PM on the first Friday of each month from October to April. Find out more on the LDRC event page: downtownlabelle.com

SHOP DOWNTOWN OUTDOOR

Saturday Market Held on the First Saturday of the month from November through March from 9am to 2pm locates at 8 Park Avenue, Downtown LaBelle Vendor booths, entertainment and interactive art classes! Find out more on the LDRC event page: downtownlabelle.com



The American Legion Post 130

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Hendry County Fair at sunset.

Courtesy photo



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Dining Guide

Hendry County is a dining destination! Visitors to the area come from near and far for award-winning barbecue, to enjoy a meal on the banks of Lake Okeechobee or to experience our unique locally owned eateries!



CLEWISTON

Beef 'O' Brady's
892 W Sugarland Hwy.

Big Eaters Café
110 W Ventura Ave.

Blue Cane Ale House
208 W Sugarland Hwy.
#3016

Burger King
1014 W Sugarland Hwy.

Café Tropical
307 E Sugarland Hwy.

China Taste Buffet
930 W Sugarland Hwy.

Domino's Pizza
503 E Sugarland Hwy.

Dunkin' Donuts
100 S Berner Rd.

Hawaiian Ice
444 W Sugarland Hwy.

Jalapeños
444 E Sugarland Ave.

Jalapeños #2
Grilled Chicken
728 US-27

KFC
411 W Sugarland Hwy.

Little Caesars Pizza
880 W Sugarland Hwy.

Main Street Subs
344 E Sugarland Hwy.



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Pizza Hut
921 W Sugarland Hwy.

Popeyes Louisiana Kitchen
504 E Sugarland Hwy.

Roland Martin Marina & Resort
920 E Del Monte Ave.

Scotty's Tiky Bar
920 E Del Monte Ave.

Sonny's BBQ
1030 W Sugarland Hwy.

Subway
1005 W Sugarland Hwy.

Subway
940 W Sugarland Hwy.

Sunrise Restaurant
842 E Sugarland Hwy.

Tacos
444 E Sugarland Hwy.

Thomas Diner
1019 Harlem Academy Ave.

Wendy's
800 W Sugarland Hwy.

LABELLE

7 Mares
415 S Main St.

Abbies Deli LLC
4060 NE Eucalyptus Blvd.

Amigos & Beer
675 W Hickpochee Ave.

The Barn
93 Hall St.

Beef 'O'Brady's
21 S Lee St.

Belle's Ice Cream Bar
31 Fort Thompson Ave.

Big V Restaurant
32 Hall St.

Bridge Street Coffee
23 Fort Thompson Ave.

Burger King
61 S. Hall St.

Cactus Mex
512 Cowboy Way

China Uno
90 W. Hickpochee Ave.

Chinese Fortune Cookie Restaurant
505 W. Hickpochee Ave #1000

Contreras Mexican Restaurant
125 FL-80

Dunkin' Donuts
31 S Lee St.

El Gran Taco Loco
863 W Cowboy Way



Forrey Grill
280 Bridge St.
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facebook.com/forreygrill/
Hours: Mon.-Sat. 9 a.m.-11 p.m, Closed
Sunday Located in historic downtown
LaBelle, our menu features some of the
best classic Italian & American, our
tomato sauce is made in house, fresh
pasta daily, we buy local produce when
available, and, of course, our specialty
desserts are scratch made!

Hungry Howie's Pizza
180 S Main St.

KFC
50 N Lee St.

LaBelle Brewing Company
670 W Hickpochee Ave.

La Victoria Paletteria Ice Cream Shop &
Restaurant
155 W Cowboy Way

Log Cabin BBQ
480 W Hickpochee Ave.

Little Caesar's Pizza
75 Bridge St.

McDonald's
21 W Hickpochee Ave.
Pizza Hut
505 W Hickpochee Ave.

Popeyes Louisiana Kitchen
576 W Hickpochee Ave.

Salcal Pizza
732 S. Main St.



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– 8 p.m., Sun. 8 a.m.-2 p.m.)

Subway
41 S Lee St.

Taco Bell
50 N Lee St.

Two Peas Café
870 W Hickpochee Ave. #500

The Quart House
100 S. Main St.



'Sweetest Town'

Welcomes Visitors and Growth

By Randy Martin

Clewiston City manager

"America's Sweetest Town" is the City of Clewiston, Florida. Positioned on the southwest boundary of Lake Okeechobee, the second largest natural freshwater lake entirely contained within the continental United States, Clewiston is the gateway to "Lake O" as it is affectionately known in the area. Clewiston is centrally located between the shores of the Atlantic Ocean to the east and the waters of the Gulf of Mexico to the west.

The "Sweetest Town" label grew out of the abundant sugarcane agricultural interests in the vicinity and the city's proud claim as home to the corporate headquarters of the United States Sugar Corporation. As one of the world's largest sugar producers, the area's top employer and given the company's long history of philanthropic support for the community at large, Clewiston is greatly indebted to U.S. Sugar for the plentiful contributions the company has made and continues to provide to the quality of life of this unique South Central Florida region.

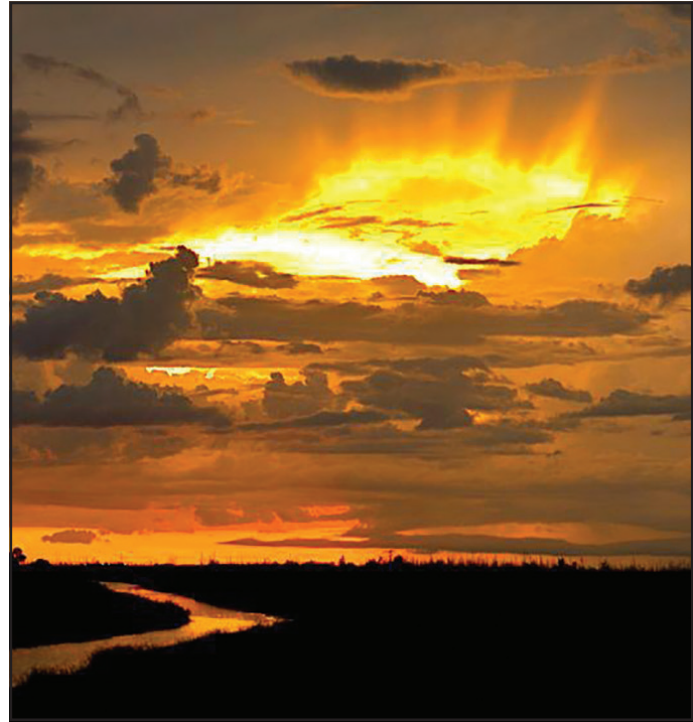
Clewiston visitors and locals alike are fortunate to be able to enjoy a natural environment with seemingly limitless outdoor recreational opportunities available in reasonably close proximity to the community. With the noted convenient access to the lake's abundant fishing and wildlife attributes and close proximity to the wide variety of amenities offered in the more urban coastal areas on both shores, Clewiston is uniquely positioned as a South Florida hub location for all. The city is home to an amazing museum, an attractive library facility and maintains numerous passive and active parks and recreational facilities, including an historic and well-groomed 18 hole public golf course and bountiful water access points featuring a boat launch and ramp facility with lake access.

The city also hosts one of the major access venues for hiking and biking enthusiasts to the Lake Okeechobee Scenic Trail (LOST) that borders the 730-square-mile lake. This hundred-mile plus paved trail sits atop the elevated Herbert Hoover Dike that encompasses the lake perimeter and is a major segment of the Florida National Scenic Trail system. Also, nearby in Hendry County are facilities of widespread interest to the birding community including the STA-5 Reservoir, which is a focal point for the Hendry-Glades Audubon Society.

Clewiston is a well-designed John Nolen community with palm tree-lined and landscaped streets and abundant open space. The city is intersected by the major U.S. 27 and State Road 80 transportation corridor, dubbed "Sugarland Highway," which handles most of the east-west traffic through central Florida south of the lake. City officials are focused on economic development initiatives to fortify and enhance existing commercial districts along the Sugarland Highway corridor, particularly efforts to revitalize the older "downtown" sections.

Clewiston is currently experiencing an uptick in interest in its Park of Commerce with available development sites for small and medium light industrial type uses. The city is also experiencing significantly enhanced interest in residential and commercial growth in and around the community.

This heightened interest is welcomed by Clewiston and has helped to promote the development of a strong partnership between the city and its municipal partner Hendry County to



Courtesy photo/Waddy Thompson

The Clewiston levee is a great place to capture sunsets.

plan and expand access to necessary utility infrastructure that will support larger scale industrial and commercial development particularly along the corridor west of the city. This effort is in great part positively influenced by the planned Airglades International Airport project. With recent FAA concurrence for the sale of the public county-owned airport for private development, the initial phases will consist of a major cargo and freight handling facility on the site with construction expected to commence in early 2020.

Despite the city's focus on economic development to generate a climate conducive for business investment and job creation in the Clewiston/Hendry County area, the city is equally committed to maintaining its highly valued small-town atmosphere. Clewiston is blessed with a wonderful citizenry and a deeply committed group of city commissioners. The city also boasts an active faith-based community, a strong group of civic organizations and a diverse and eclectic commercial base of small businesses, many of which are locally owned.

As city manager, I am also honored to lead a dedicated team of qualified and capable professional staff, driven toward the goal of providing the highest caliber public services in the most cost-effective manner possible.

Whether you are a potential year-round resident, second home owner, real estate investor, business or service provider, or a visitor looking for a change-of-pace vacation or interesting day trip experience, I encourage you to further consider Clewiston.

Clewiston Museum

Taking History into the Future

By Jason Sims

Director, Clewiston Museum

Welcome to Hendry County from a person who's new here, yet not so new, himself. I am the new director of the Clewiston Museum, and I am blessed to be an eighth generation Floridian. My connection to the area goes back multiple generations within my family. My great-great grandmother first came to the Glades from Tampa in the late 1910s, purchasing land in Moore Haven during the land boom.

During that time, mosquitoes came as thick as fog and she was unwilling to cope with the pests, so she and her husband thought it best to relocate back to Tampa. Fast forward two generations, and my grandfather (Gene Wilson) was assigned to supervise the railroad in Clewiston, so in the early 1950s, he, his wife (Joan Wilson) and my mother (Susan Sims) moved to America's Sweetest Town.

While living in Clewiston, Gene and Joan's family grew to four children, all of whom graduated from Clewiston High School. Upon my mother's graduation, she enrolled in college at Palm Beach Atlantic in West Palm Beach where she met and married my father, Dennis Sims.

I grew up in West Palm and would come to Clewiston for every holiday, over summer vacations, as well as the occasional weekend. I always enjoyed my time in the Glades and learned a lot about cattle, citrus, sugarcane, hunting, fishing and the history of the area. That love for history and the area blossomed as I grew older. Upon graduating high school from Dreyfoos School of the Arts in West Palm Beach, I decided to enter college as a history major.

Through tough work and dedication, I was able to graduate from Florida Atlantic University with honors and a bachelor's degree in public history. As an undergraduate I honed my craft by accepting internships at museums and historical societies

throughout South Florida. Through this time, I also was exposed to and participated in oral history projects and received a federal license to do so. This background in both education and local knowledge allotted me the opportunity to accept the director's position at the Clewiston Museum when the opportunity presented itself.

New ideas

Upon accepting the job at the Clewiston Museum, I knew I had big shoes to fill with the retirement of Butch Wilson. His student outreach programs and Florida Humanities Council Speaker Series are extremely valued and loved within the Glades. I accepted these commitments with excitement, and they are continuing to enrich the community.

The Clewiston Museum in the past month alone has been gifted a grant from both the Batchelor Foundation and the Florida Humanities Council to continue these programs. In addition to continuing these valued projects, in October I was privileged to open the Sue Corbin and Louis Sullivan Glades Art Gallery within the museum. This gallery is specific to Glades artists and showcases their talent. In addition to this accomplishment, the museum is also in the process of updating our website to be more user-friendly as well as in corporate social media and other interactive platforms for research and to allow the community to be more engaged with the museum.

The Clewiston Museum is also in the process of incorporating school-aged children to attend and be a part of museum activities. One example of this was during the museum's annual art show, where we for the first time ever encouraged art students from Clewiston High School to participate. They did so, and some of them had the privilege of selling their own artwork for the first time.

The museum is also starting a relationship with SouthWestern Florida State College. The goal of this project is to allow



Crowds gather for the opening of the Southern Sugar Company's new mill in Clewiston. (Image courtesy of State Archives of Florida)

duel enrollment students in Clewiston the opportunity to pick a local historical event, time or person, and research it with the help of the museum's archives and facilities, then present it to community members. Another project the Clewiston museum is focusing on is oral histories from local residents. Through this project we hope to catalog and archive the history of Clewiston by those who lived it, in their own words, and preserve the data for future generations. The museum is also updating some exhibits for the enjoyment of patrons. Those exhibits include our Riddle Field Royal Air Force exhibit and our Lake Okeechobee Fishing exhibit.

2020 plans

The Clewiston Museum's plans for 2020 include guest speakers in January, March and April. We will also be having our annual Bar B Q fundraiser in mid-February. The museum also plans on impacting about 5000 school-aged children with programs on local history between January and May. The museum is the focal point of the Raisin' Cane and Sugarland bus tours. In the past six weeks alone, we have received over 1,500 guest at the museum and are expecting over 8,000 by mid-April. This is in addition to the dual enrollment student projects.

The museum also has a wonderful archive of photos from the area dating back to the 1910s. These photos are being categorized by subject and date, the result of which will be pictorial history events within the museum in the coming year.

The museum is also reaching out to organizations such as the Rotary Club to connect and share ideas and assets to bring the community together.

While the programs I have mentioned are free to the public, none of these great things will happen without the community's help. The Clewiston Museum is a not-for-profit organization. We encourage all local residents to come and participate. We also encourage everyone to become a member of the museum. Membership is easy: Just fill out a membership form and donate as little as \$25, and you, too, can become a valuable part of the exciting things the museum can offer the community.



Courtesy photo/Clewiston Museum
 Before the former RAF pilot training ground became Airglades airport, it was Riddle Field during World War II.

Clewiston Muesum
109 Central Ave, Clewiston, FL 33440
HOURS: Monday- Friday 9AM-4PM
Saturday and Sunday Closed
Phone: (863) 677-9137



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Melanie McGahee, Commissioner • Kristine Petersen, Commissioner • Julio Rogriquez, Commissioner

For more information visit us online: www.clewiston-fl.gov



Schools

A Message from the Superintendent

By Paul K. Puletti
Superintendent of schools

Hendry County’s public school system serves more than 7,000 students in grades K-12 at six elementary, two middle, and two high schools. A wide range of educationally beneficial experiences awaits each student who enters our schools, and we take great pride in seeing students progress academically through the grade levels as they reach the ultimate goal of high school graduation.

We have instituted academically rigorous reading and math programs at the elementary and middle levels. Elementary schools are using a variety of push-in and enhancement programs. Middle schools are instituting new and rigorous math and science curriculums, and adding a number of classes that students can take for high school credit. High school students are finding increased opportunities to take Advanced Placement and Dual Enrollment classes, as well as having the ability to participate in many industry certification academies and programs in Clewiston and LaBelle.

Our teachers, principals, and administrators are working very hard to implement programs that will enhance student growth and achievement as we transition to Florida State Standards and new student assessments.

We are striving to further enhance educational experiences for our students by cultivating partnerships with parents, businesses, and other community stakeholders. We can give our students a better future by working together to provide our leaders of tomorrow with what they need today.



Hendry County School Board



Dwayne E. Brown
District 1



Sally Berg
District 2



Amanda Nelson
Vice Chairman
District 3



Stephanie Busin
Chairman
District 4



Jon Basquin
District 5

<p>Dwayne E. Brown P.O. Box 684 Clewiston, Florida 33440 Term expires 11/15/2020 Email - district1@hendry-schools.net</p>	<p>Sally Berg 125 Wilson Road LaBelle, Florida 33935 Term expires 11/15/2020 Email - district2@hendry-schools.net</p>	<p>Amanda Nelson Post Office Box 337 Felda, FL 33930 Term expires 11/21/2022 Email - district3@hendry-schools.net</p>	<p>Stephanie Busin Term expires 11/21/2022 Email - district4@hendry-schools.net</p>	<p>Jon Basquin 139 Oak Drive Clewiston, Florida 33440 Term expires 11/21/2022 Email - district5@hendry-schools.net</p>
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Clewiston

Clewiston Youth Academy
Principal Martin Espinoza
475 E. Osceola Ave.
863-902-4216 or 983-1577

Clewiston High School
Principal Roberto Sanchez
1501 S. Francisco Street
863-983-1520

Clewiston Middle School
Principal Kristi Durance
601 W. Pasadena Avenue
863-983-1530

New Harvest Academy
Principal Jesse Windham
370 Holiday Isle Blvd.
863-805-0485

Clewiston Adult School
Principal Michael Swindle
475 E. Osceola Ave.
863-983-1511

Central Elementary
Principal Melissa Carter
1000 S. Deane Duff Avenue
863-983-1550 or 983-1551

Eastside Elementary
Principal Sarah Sanchez
201 W. Arroyo Avenue
863-983-1560 or 983-1561

Westside Elementary
Principal Anthony Busin
205 W. Arroyo Avenue
863-983-1570 or 983-1571

Clewiston Christian School
Principal George Duckstein
601 Caribbean Ave.
863-983-5388

LaBelle

LaBelle High School
Principal David Kelley
4050 Cowboy Way
863-674-4120 or 674-4121

LaBelle Middle School
Principal Iris Borghese
8000 E. Cowboy Way
863-674-4646 or 674-4647

Country Oaks Elementary
Principal Robin Jones
2052 Eucalyptus Drive NW
863-674-4140 or 674-4141

LaBelle Elementary
Principal Sandra Taylor
150 W. Cowboy Way
863-674-4150 or 674-4151

Upthegrove Elementary
Principal Richard Talada
280 N. Main Street
863-612-0750 or 612-0751

LaBelle Adult School
Principal Michael Swindle
4050 Cowboy Way
863-983-1511

LaBelle Youth Development Academy
Adm. Marie Sprouse
1100 Forestry Division Rd.
863-674-4590

**For more information on any of the schools listed here please visit the Hendry County School District website at www.hendry-schools.org.
District Office: 863-674-4642
Clewiston Sub-Office: 863-902-4244**

H.E.R.E. (Home Educators Reaching for Excellence) of Hendry County
Home Support Group for Homeschoolers
Contact person: Melanie Rudd 863-228-7840
To register: Hendry County School District/Home Education Program Office
475 E. Osceola Ave, Clewiston

A College Education Close to Home

Florida SouthWestern State College

Florida SouthWestern State College (FSW or Florida SouthWestern) is a public college in Southwest Florida. FSW's main campus is in Fort Myers, in Lee County; with satellite campuses in Charlotte County and Collier County, and outreach programs in Hendry County and Glades County.

FSW was founded in 1962 as Edison Junior College, named after Thomas Edison, and was subsequently renamed Edison Community College in 1972, Edison College in 2004, Edison State College in 2008, and Florida SouthWestern State College in 2014.

Florida SouthWestern State College, originally known as Edison Junior College, admitted its first students in the fall of 1962. The college was named after the inventor and industrialist Thomas Edison, who frequently wintered in Fort Myers. The Lee Campus (now known as the Thomas Edison Campus) opened in 1965 on an 80-acre site with three buildings. The school's nursing program began on campus with a \$50,000 donation in 1968.

The college's name changed to Edison Community College in 1972, shortly after the first nursing class graduated. Ten years later, in 1982, a branch campus of the University of South Florida was dedicated. The college's primary arts center, the Barbara B. Mann Performing Arts Hall, opened its doors in 1986 and serves as the premier performing arts venue in Lee County.

Construction on the Collier County Campus at Lely lasted from 1991 into 1992, on a 50-acre site in Naples. Soon after that, the Charlotte County Campus opened in 1997, on a 204-acre plot of land in Punta Gorda. This is the largest campus to date. The college revised its mission by publishing a new strategic plan, The Decade of Promise, in 2002. The college again changed its name in 2004, to simply Edison College.

The college continued to expand through the 2000s with increased funding for the nursing program and the new Richard H. Rush Library on the Lee Campus. In 2008, the college saw its fourth name change to Edison State College, and a new torch logo with blue and yellow colors to reflect the college's new status as a baccalaureate-granting state college. Multiple new baccalaureate programs opened over the next decade, including middle grades mathematics, sciences, and language arts education; applied science in public safety management; elementary education; and secondary education biology and mathematics. The name, logo, and colors were changed for the fifth and most recent time in 2014. This name broke ties to Thomas Edison, who was the college's former namesake. The new name, Florida SouthWestern State College, was created in response to reflect the wide geographic region the college serves. Another reason for the change was to avoid confusion with Thomas Edison State College of New Jersey due to new online courses with a nationwide reach. — *Wikipedia.org*



INI/Dale Conyers

The FSW's Hendry Glades Center offers Hendry County students a chance to achieve a higher education while staying close to home.



Hometown Healthcare

Providing personalized care in your own backyard

Hendry Regional Medical Center (HRMC) is a 25-bed critical access hospital delivering a personal touch through doctors and nurses whom you know and trust, in a warm and friendly environment.

Hendry Regional provides healthcare to the residents of Hendry County, Southern Glades County and Western Palm Beach County. HRMC strives to meet the needs of the residents by incorporating modern technology with compassionate and competent medical staff to care for its patients. Convenient locations are available in Clewiston and LaBelle.

Hendry Regional Medical Center recently opened at the hospital a new modern emergency department, along with imaging services, surgery suites, laboratory services, and outpatient services.

HRMC also has 6 additional facilities located throughout Hendry County. In Clewiston the Dr. James

D. Forbes Family Care Center hosts a dynamic team providing Family Medicine, Pediatrics, and Internal Medicine. Corporate Health Services offers preventative health programs for employers and their employees including worker's compensation management, testing, screenings, site assessment's, and wellness education. Hendry Regional Rehabilitative Services offers a variety of rehabilitation and therapeutic services designed to evaluate and treat problems affecting mobility and function.

The Hendry Regional Convenient Care Center is located in the heart of LaBelle.

The facility includes Family Medicine, Pediatrics, and specialty care including gynecology, surgery, and physical and occupational therapy services.

Hendry Regional Medical Center offers a wide array of specialty services for residents including

cardiology, surgery, gynecology, audiology, and pain management.

Understanding the need of the community HRMC continues to add services and providers to its already expansive list. The most recent additions have been 3D Mammography, Infusion Services and additional Family Practice Providers. With the continued growth of services and providers HRMC built a new Medical & Rehabilitative Services building.

The new building provides additional space for rehabilitative services and dedicated medical space for future growth.

At HRMC healthcare is a team effort. The staff is courteous, respectful, and enthusiastic in serving healthcare needs at any of the multiple locations. Hendry Regional has proudly been providing healthcare for over six decades, with roots that run deep within the community!



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863.902.3000**

Parks and Trails

Enjoy the Outdoors

Trails

LAKE OKEECHOBEE SCENIC TRAIL

Designated as a segment of the Florida National Scenic Trail in 1993, the Lake Okeechobee Scenic Trail (LOST) is a 115-mile hike atop the Herbert Hoover Dike. The view is extraordinary — the 35-foot elevation allows the hiker to enjoy the beauty of Lake Okeechobee, at more than 730 square miles the second largest freshwater lake in the United States. Other impressive sights are the fields of sugarcane with silvery tassels waving in the breezes, groves of orange trees, vibrant green crops growing in the black muck, and a variety of wildlife from egrets to alligators. You can even fish along the way. The LOST is open year-round for a variety of uses including hiking, biking, horseback riding, birdwatching, fishing and photography. Thirteen primitive camping sites are provided by the Corps of Engineers. For more information, log on to saj.usace.army.mil/Missions/Civil-Works/Recreation/Lake-Okeechobee-Scenic-Trail/.

CLEWISTON WALKING TOURS

The weather is perfect for taking one of four walking tours through the residential areas of Clewiston. Pick up a free map at City Hall or the Chamber of Commerce. The map provides Clewiston history and information about the homes as you pass by. All of the tours start at the historic Clewiston Inn, and depending upon the trail you chose, you may wander by historic houses, the Roland Martin Marina, or the Clewiston Museum. Along the way, you will enjoy watching the birds native to our area such as the egrets, blue herons and ibises. Take the green trail and you'll see Lake Okeechobee, the second largest lake within the United States. The view is stunning and it's a great place for waterfront picnicking. The trails range from 1 mile to 2.9 miles and are identified by different colored arrows on the sidewalks that correspond with the tour map. If you are not in the mood to walk, take a driving tour. The ride is relaxing and interesting. Whether you are walking or riding, this is the perfect way to become acquainted with "America's Sweetest Town."

BIG WATER HERITAGE TRAIL

Big Water Heritage Trail was officially opened in May 2003. It is a regional driving tour on state, county, and city streets that link historical, cultural, natural, recreational and educational points of interest in five counties surrounding Lake Okeechobee. The counties are Hendry, Glades, Okeechobee, Martin and Palm Beach. The Heritage Trail connects to the Lake Okeechobee Segment of the Florida National Scenic Trail, offering visitors and community members an array of recreational, educational and historical opportunities. Highway signs and brochures direct the motorists to points of interest where they will find informative kiosks and outdoor interpretive and recreational activities at destinations such as Florida's state parks and preserves, federal parks and reserves, and cultural points of interest.

For more information, stop by the Clewiston Chamber of Commerce, motels and other businesses and destination sites along the trail or at visitflorida.com/en-us/things-to-do/florida-fishing/big-water-heritage-trail.html.

Source: clewiston-fl.gov

City and County Parks



Courtesy photo/City of Clewiston Parks & Recreation Department
Clewiston's City Pool.

Clewiston Area

Candy Cane Park, 600 S. Olympia St.
City Pool, 113 W. Osceola Ave.
Civic Park, 162 Royal Palm Ave.
Clewiston Municipal Golf Course, 1201 San Luiz Ave.
Clewiston Recreation, 110 W. Osceola Ave.
Clewiston Youth Center, 110 W. Osceola Ave.
Hidden Park, West Sugarland Circle
Levee Park, Herbert Hoover Dike Road
Ridgewood Park, 112 Ridgewood Ave.
Saginaw Park, Saginaw Avenue
Sikes Park, 515 Valencia St.
Sugarland Park pavilion, 211 W. Osceola Ave.
Sugarland Park pavilion, West Arroyo Avenue
Sikes Park, 515 Valencia St.
Sweetest Town Playground (formerly known as Woodworks Park), 209 W. Osceola Ave.
Triangle Park, Block 174 East Esperanza Avenue
Trinidad Park, 520 E. Trinidad
W.C. "Bo" Pelham Jr. Park, 1700 Red Road
Water Spray Park, 113 W. Osceola Ave.
John Stretch Memorial Park, 47225 U.S. 27

LaBelle Area

Alton "Kid" Jones Park, 455 Withlacoochee Ave.
Barron Park, 1559 De Soto Ave.
Bob Mason Park, 497 Old Country Road 78
Davis-Pratt Park, 1287 Lillian St.
Hendry Complex, Forrey Drive
Hendry LaBelle Civic Park, 800 Jaycee Lions Drive
Hendry LaBelle Sports Park, 1101 Forestry Division Road
Joe Culliver Park, W. Lincoln Ave.
LaBelle Dog Park, 1200 Pratt Blvd.
LaBelle Nature Park, 440 Fraser Ave.
LaBelle River Park, Riverbend Drive
Main Street Roadside Park, 1040 State Road 29
Veterans Memorial Park, 26 E Hickpochee Ave.

Felda Area

Felda Park, 1100 County Road 830

Area national, state, regional agency parks

BIG CYPRESS NATIONAL PRESERVE

Established in 1974, Big Cypress is America's first national preserve and consists of 729,000 acres. A freshwater swamp ecosystem, it welcomes approximately 1 million visitors each year. It offers a diverse landscape where one can see cypress and mangroves, alligators and pather tracks all in one day. The Miccosukee and Seminole tribes call Big Cypress home.

Big Cypress National Preserve, Oasis Visitor Center
52105 Tamiami Trail East, Ochopee
Big Cypress Swamp Welcome Center
33000 Tamiami Trail East, Ochopee



Courtesy photo/Big Cypress National Preserve

A look at the swamp in the Big Cypress National Preserve.



Courtesy photo

The Dinner Island Ranch Wildlife Management Area features fields of wildflowers.

DINNER ISLAND RANCH WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA

Large acreage and mix of wetlands and uplands. On-site activities include hunting, wildlife viewing, fishing, hiking, camping, bicycling and horseback riding.

17781 County Rd 833, Clewiston

OKALOACOOCHEE SLOUGH STATE FOREST, FELDA

Okaloacoochee Slough State Forest covers 32,039 acres. The property was originally logged for railroad crossties, and sawmills were built for lumber production. Okaloacoochee Slough State Forest is comprised of a 13,382-acre swale that carries water through the forest from the north to the south. A wide range of recreational activities are offered such as many miles of open forest roads available for hiking, hunting, fishing and bicycling. Several "hidden" areas can be found for those who enjoy a hike to an isolated fishing spot. The forest's wetlands provide opportunities for wildlife viewing. Hunting is a popular activity in Okaloacoochee Slough State Forest.

6265 Keri Road, Felda

ORTONA LOCKS CAMPGROUND, U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

This campground sits on the Okeechobee Waterway overlooking the Ortona Locks.

State Highway 80, LaBelle

SPIRIT OF THE WILD WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA

Wildlife viewing, hiking, bicycling, horseback riding and seasonal hunts. Located 12 miles south of LaBelle.

100 County Road 832, Felda

Privately owned bird, nature or wildlife parks

Bird Rookery Swamp, 1295 Shady Hollow Blvd W., Naples
Talkin' Monkeys Project, 1655 Panama Ave., Clewiston
Gatorama, 10665 N. U.S. 27, Palmdale

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City Commissioners



Courtesy photo/City of Clewiston
From left, Clewiston City Commissioner Julio Rodriguez, Vice Mayor Michael Atkinson, Mayor Mali Gardner, and City Commissioners Kristine Petersen and Melanie McGahee, who was elected in March.



INI/Dale Conyers
From left, LaBelle City Commissioners Thomas A. Smith and Hilda L. Zimmerly, Mayor David A. Lyons, LaBelle City Commissioners Julie C. Wilkins and Daniel W. Akin.



Courtesy photo/Hendry County

From left, Hendry County Commissioners Michael Swindle, District 4; Vice Chairwoman Emma Byrd, District 1; Chairman Mitchell Wills, District 3; Commissioner Darrell Harris, District 2; and Commissioner Karson Turner, District 5.

CONTACTING THE HENDRY COUNTY GOVERNMENT

If you need assistance or are unsure of which Hendry County department you wish to reach, please call 863-675-5220 to talk to a live person. If you would like to reach the County via email, please contact - welcome@hendryfla.net

Clerk of Court

LaBelle - 863-675-5217
Clewiston - 863-983-1586

Tax Collector

LaBelle - 863-675-5280
Clewiston - 863-983-1593

Property Appraiser

LaBelle - 863-675-5270
Clewiston - 863-983-1591

Elections Supervisor

LaBelle - 863-675-5230
Clewiston - 863-983-1592

Sheriff

LaBelle - 863-674-5600
Clewiston - 863-805-5000

State Attorney

863-674-4034

Public Defender

863-675-5263

County Administrator

863-675-5220

Office of Management and Budget

863-675-5329

County Facilities

863-675-5260

Building Code Enforcement

863-675-5245

County Probation

863-675-5340

County Engineer

863-675-5222

County Extension office

863-674-4092

County Attorney

863-675-5295

Emergency Management

863-674-5400

Emergency Medical Services

863-674-5412

G.I.S.

863-612-4725

Grants & Special Projects

863-675-5264

Information Technology

863-675-5242

Human Resources

863-675-5352

Planning & Zoning

863-675-5240

Port LaBelle Utilities

863-675-5376

Recreation

863-675-5347

Housing Program

863-675-5297

Social Services

863-675-5297

Special Districts (Recycling)

863-675-5252

Veterans Services

863-675-5250

Health Department

863-674-4041

Library Systems

863-902-3322

Airports – LaBelle & Airglades

863-675-1568

Public Information Officer

863-675-5304

HENDRY COUNTY PROPERTY APPRAISER DENA R PITTMAN CFA

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Contact us to ensure you receive your tangible exemption.

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Dear Taxpayer,
I am honored to serve you with utmost respect and integrity. I look forward to meeting you and trust that your experience with our office meets your needs and expectations. Please feel free to contact me by phone: 863-675-5270 or email: hcappraiser@hendrypa.com
Sincerely,

Dena R Pittman CFA

Welcome New Home Owners

Thank you for choosing Hendry County. Our goal is to ensure you receive all the tax savings you are entitled to.

Please visit one of our offices or for more information view us at hendryprop.com.

IF YOUR ASSESSED VALUE IS...	YOUR EXEMPTION WILL BE...
\$ 75,000 and up	\$50,000
\$ 50,000 - \$ 75,000	UP TO \$50,000
\$ 1 - \$ 50,000	UP TO \$25,000

Homestead Exemption does not automatically transfer to your new home, you must apply.
Don't miss out, apply now!

If you have recently purchased property and would like to apply for ag classification, we begin accepting applications in January.

NOTE: Ag classification is non transferrable.

OFFICE LOCATIONS

25 E HICKPOCHEE AVE
LABELLE FL 33935
863-675-5270

1100 OLYMPIA ST
CLEWISTON FL 33440
863-983-3178

OFFICE HOURS
8AM - 5 PM
WWW.HENDRYPROP.COM

Hendry County

A Unique Way of Life

By Jennifer Davis
Hendry County administrator

Hendry County is a quaint little place located in the interior of South Florida offering a unique way of life that is hard to find in the ever-changing blueprint of our state.

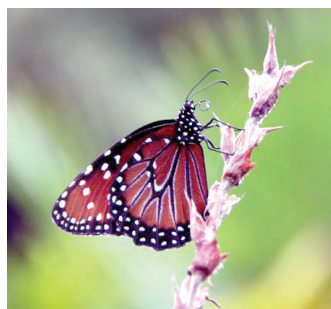
Beautiful arching oaks canopy throughout the City of LaBelle as you travel from the west coast headed east. In the same direction, the Caloosahatchee River connects to Lake Okeechobee, where the City of Clewiston is located, offering world-class angler and fishing opportunities.

Farm to table restaurants, local coffee shops, waterfront dining, and, just recently, a micro-brewery are among many opportunities to sit, relax and enjoy a great meal with family and friends. Specialty boutiques, spas and outdoor excursions offer a unique menu of services and shopping that you will only get in a special place such as this.

Agriculture being the number one economic driver fosters a beautiful environment and a breath of fresh air for those coming from the congested surrounding cities. With a population currently just over 40,000, the balance of growth and quality of life are steadily improving.

Growth brings opportunities, and leaders in the community are working hard to provide the proper infrastructure requirements and other tools required to grow in a meaningful way. It is equally important to us to maintain our heritage and what makes us unique. The recipe is still in the making, but the finished product will undoubtedly be one that you will not forget.

Come visit Hendry County and see for yourself. We would love to have you.



Hendry County Sheriff's Office

Serving and Protecting



*In God
We Trust*



*Sheriff:
Steve Whidden*



Main Office

101 South Bridge Street
Labelle, Florida 33935
863-674-5600



Clewiston Office

100 East El Paso Avenue
Clewiston, Florida 33440
863-805-5000

Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum

A Gem Deep in the Everglades



A world-class museum and anthropological research facilities exist where the county's remote farms and pastures give way to cypress swamps far to the south, where the Seminole Tribe of Florida celebrates its unique history among the hundreds of Native American tribal heritages of the United States.

The only tribe never to be defeated, nor surrender, nor to sign a peace treaty with Washington, the Seminoles of Florida have much to be grateful for, and they embrace that proud history with events throughout each year.

The annual American Indian Arts Celebration takes place on the tribal grounds inside the Big Cypress Seminole Indian Reservation every November. There are occasionally special celebrations put on at times that call for ancestral Native American rituals, such as the event staged surrounding the rare August 2017 total solar eclipse that was visible at about 82 percent of totality on the reservation.

During 2019, the tribe dedicated both a brand new school building (the Ahfachkee School, on Aug. 13, 2019) and a museum annex for anthropological and historical research (the Major Billy L. Cypress Building, dedicated Oct. 23, 2019). Tribal officials and members invite everyone to come and learn about the Seminoles' history and culture, and, if they care to, spend some time relaxing in their first-class campground and RV park and maybe even taking an excursion into the swamp, with Billie Swamp Safari just down the road a few miles.

Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum is located at 30290 Josie Billie High-



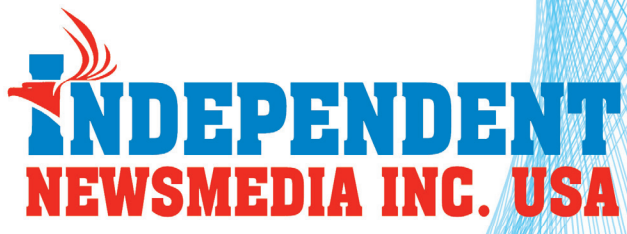
way in Clewiston. Go online to ahtahthiki.com to learn more.

Their last event of 2019 was the opening of a brand new alligator-wrestling exhibit in the museum, which debuted Monday, Dec. 16, and will be open to the public until December of the new year. The 2020 American Indian Arts Celebration is set for the weekend following Election Day 2020, Friday, Nov. 6, through Sunday, Nov. 8.

The constant Seminole refrain is, "Shap-he-chek aa-ta-cho-la-kash" — "We look to the future." — Chris Felker



**101+ Things to Do • Explore Okeechobee • Hendry County Guide 8th Edition
 Caloosa Belle • Immokalee Bulletin
 Lake Okeechobee News featuring Life in the Sun & Sweet Life in Hendry County
 Okeechobee County School Information Guide • Medical Information Guide
 Lake Okeechobee Real Estate Magazine**



**To subscribe,
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 subscribe@newszap.com**

Clewiston's Business Scene

Clewiston Chamber of Commerce

By Hilary Hyslope

Executive director, Clewiston Chamber of Commerce

Welcome to Hendry County! The Clewiston Chamber of Commerce invites you to discover “the liquid heart of Florida” and all that Hendry County has to offer. Situated on the southern shores of Lake Okeechobee, “America’s Sweetest Town” has a variety of businesses and amenities. Clewiston is best known for two things, our agricultural contributions and bass fishing! Here at the Chamber of Commerce, we know that our town is so much more. While we take tremendous pride in our agricultural heritage and our wonderful gem (Lake Okeechobee), it is our people and our community as a whole that has given us the title of “America’s Sweetest Town!”

Our economic climate here in Clewiston is absolutely poised for growth. Our largest employer, U.S. Sugar, boasts employment for roughly 2,500 people; other key employers include the Hendry County School District, Hendry Regional Medical Center, Walmart and a wide variety of small businesses and banking institutions. We have several exciting large projects on the horizon, including the expansion of Airglades International Airport (AIA). AIA’s location in our rural community and its proximity to U.S. 27 make it an ideal spot for an international perishable cargo hub. With spaces also available in the City of Clewiston’s Industrial Park, we are eager for the expansion that has historically shown to be moving inland in South Florida. Here in Clewiston we consider ourselves “out in the middle of EVERYWHERE.” We have many of the amenities of the larger cities but maintain the rural, small-town feel we have come to love.

The heart of our community is Lake Okeechobee. “Lake O,” as the locals call it, has fostered the careers of several bass fishing legends. Scott Martin, a Clewiston native, was awarded the 2015 FLW Angler of the Year award and was chosen to lead the USA Bass team competing in South Africa in 2017. Once you get out on Lake O, you’ll be hooked!

The services and amenities that you will find here in Clewiston are sure to meet all of your needs. Start your day with a morning walk on the Lake Okeechobee Scenic Trail (LOST). The trail sits atop the Herbert Hoover Dike surrounding the lake and built for flood protection. For this reason, the trail offers a grand vantage point to view everything from the scenic lake to agricultural landscapes. From there, swing on in to the Chamber of Commerce, where we can direct you to a number of activities including airboat tours, fishing expeditions, swamp buggy rides or farm tours. If you are looking for an educational treat, visit the Clewiston Museum or the Seminole Tribe of Florida’s Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum. Looking to pamper yourself, we have a variety of local day and medical spa options. Dining here in Clewiston – well, that’s a tough choice. Breakfast, lunch or dinner, we’ve got you covered with a large variety of choices. We even have a local hangout or two for those night owls!

Whether you are relocating, starting a new business or vacationing, Clewiston is sure to be just the right fit for you! We here at the Clewiston Chamber of Commerce would love to see you stop in.



INI/Chris Felker

Tour guide Bobby Pearce hands one guest a chunk of sugarcane “gum” after he used his cane knife to remove the hard, woody husk — a good dose of fiber to start the day right, to be washed down minutes later with orange juice. Regular Raisin’ Cane Tours are operated by U.S. Sugar Corporation in cooperation with the Clewiston Museum and the Chamber of Commerce.



Courtesy photo

The Ladies for Liberty pose outside of U.S. Sugar Headquarters in Clewiston. The USO-style tour sponsored by U.S. Sugar Corporation and Lake Okeechobee News honored veterans throughout Hendry County. The troupe returns in March 2020.

Greater LaBelle Chamber of Commerce

Our Membership is LaBelle

By Diane E. Fidanza

Executive director, LaBelle Chamber of Commerce

Huge, live oak trees line the streets of this quiet, graceful little town that is nestled alongside the Caloosahatchee River in Hendry County. This is quintessential small-town Florida, where the pace is slower, the pleasures are simpler and the surrounding nature entices you to explore its natural beauty.

For many years, the Greater LaBelle Chamber of Commerce has proudly represented the businesses of LaBelle. The chamber was founded back in 1963, nearly 47 years ago. Back then the goal of the original chamber was to support and promote the business community of LaBelle. The businesses of LaBelle have changed a great deal over the past 46 years, but the LaBelle Chamber of today proudly maintains the founder's original goals – supporting and promoting LaBelle's business community.

Technology has certainly changed over the years, and the chamber helps its membership by listing each of their 250-plus members on the chamber's website. On the website not only is the member's information listed, but if they have a website of their own their listing is linked to it. To assist their members even further, the chamber "gets the word out" on their membership's upcoming events or business specials, on their very active Facebook page. Both venues are excellent resources for locating information on LaBelle businesses.

The chamber membership covers all types of businesses. The LaBelle Heritage Museum keeps alive our history, while the Firehouse Community Theatre has entertained us for over 26 seasons. Local, family owned shops like Thistle & Thorn, Cottage Under the Oaks, Harold Curtis Honey House, K&M Drugs, Me & My Girls Antiques, White's Furniture & Appliances, all line our streets. Two Peas Cafe, The Log Cabin, The Forrey Grill, The Quart House Restaurant, The Big V Restaurant, Bridge Street Coffee & Tea Cafe, and Sal Cal's Pizza are all known for their local cuisine. Recently, LaBelle's newest business, LaBelle Brewing Company, a micro-brewery and restaurant, was warmly welcomed.

LaBelle, "The Beautiful," offers spectacular nature trails. The Okaloacoochee Slough State Forest is a 32,270-acre facility approx 20 minutes south of LaBelle which features hiking, horse

trails, picnic areas, and the 15,400 acres slough marsh, for which the state forest is named, is great for bird watching.

Wildlife viewing opportunities are abundant, and the state forest is part of the Great Florida Birding Trail. The slough is one of the few places in South Florida where the historic, natural landscape can be observed.

You won't want to miss our Swamp Cabbage Festival the last full weekend of February. Be sure to arrive early on opening day so you can enjoy the parade. At the festival enjoy all the treats created from the swamp cabbage plant while you watch the LaBelle Rotary's Armadillo Races. Another great attraction during the weekend is the LaBelle Rodeo. Tuesday night leading up to the weekend you can enjoy the LaBelle Chamber's "Night on the Town," where we invite our membership to set up booths on Fort Thompson Avenue to promote and introduce their businesses to the public. Music and local treats are part of the fun, so come one and all!!

Not to be forgotten, LaBelle has always been, and continues to be, the fruit and vegetable basket for the country. This is where most of the country's citrus and "row crops," such as watermelons, tomatoes and bell peppers, are grown.

Rich bountiful land... A lazy, winding river... Natural beauty... Friendly people. Whether "born and raised here" or "transplanted", LaBelle is the place we call "HOME".



Registration for Class of 2021 will begin May 2020



Leadership Hendry & Glades Counties, Inc. is designed to prepare community leaders to meet the varied challenges and opportunities facing Hendry & Glades Counties while providing a stimulating learning environment.



www.hendryedc.com
863-675-6007
office@hendryedc.com



A program of the Hendry County EDC

Airglades Airport

Jet Fueling the Economy in 2020

By Lillie Rodriguez

Assistant director, Airglades International Airport

In the heartland of Florida, between the shores of Lake Okeechobee and South Florida's sugarcane, vegetable farming and citrus country, Hendry County is focused on the future and will soon welcome a first-of-its-kind international airport and transportation and logistics hub to the region.

Following the final acceptance and Record of Decision (ROD) into the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) Airport Investment Partnership Program (AIPP) on Sept. 30, Hendry County can expect international commercial planes hauling perishable goods to begin landing at Airglades Airport in the not too distant future.

Airglades International Airport (AIA) will be the first privatized perishable cargo hub in the United States and bring efficiency and innovation to the trade and logistics industry of South Florida.

Airglades is strategically located on U.S. 27, a logistics corridor in South Florida and approximately 87 miles west of Miami. Once its expansion is completed, the airport will be situated on more than 3,000 acres, will include a new 10,000-foot runway and a one-stop-shop perishable cargo complex to send and receive perishable goods to all Latin American cargo hubs. The result will be shorter flight times for cargo airlines, reduced travel distances and less congestion for semi-trailer trucks.

Additionally, other perishable-cargo users, U.S. customs and Department of Agriculture inspectors, importers and growers will also gain a streamlined logistics chain as the new project will consolidate customs locations for timely product inspection and result in less wait time on the tarmac. Once completed, the

Airglades Airport expansion will help to reduce delays of domestic shipments of refrigerated cargo, which in turn leads to less product spoilage and longer shelf life for goods such as fresh cut flowers, seafood and other perishable items sold throughout the United States.

This exciting project presents the region with significant new economic opportunity. Airglades will be a game-changer for Hendry County and will not only create jobs for nearby families, but will also increase local tax revenues and diversify the region's economy by adding global trade, air commerce and logistics to its existing portfolio.

During construction, the project is expected to create more than 10,000 temporary jobs and, when completed, an estimated 1,700 long-term, sustainable jobs for the future.

Airglades will be a benefit to the entire Hendry area, as the county offers abundant and affordable land for warehousing,

distribution centers and other businesses that serve and support the perishable cargo industry.

"It's going to bring a lot of very positive growth to this rural area. It's a win-win for everybody and will make a significant difference in how we receive and process goods not only in South Florida, but also dramatically reshape the efficient flow of time- and temperature-sensitive goods from Latin America producers to U.S. consumers," said Fred Ford, Airglades LLC's CEO.

In the heart of Florida, Hendry County is poised to build on its reputation as a place with friendly people, natural wonders and deep agricultural roots.

To learn more about Airglades International Airport, visit their secure website at airglades.com or contact AIA at aiainfo@airgladesairport.com.



Airglades' current terminal building has an office for Skydive Spaceland on the left and Jacobs Flight Services on the right as you drive up.

INI/Chris Felker



Discover Southern Florida

Like Never Before

With a signature, bold flavor and raw natural beauty as far as you can see, Hendry County is unique, unforgettable and unlike any other destination in the state. A once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to connect with your surroundings and those that surround you, let Hendry County take you on a true escape into authentic Florida.

Explore Florida the Natural Way

discoverhendrycounty.com | [f/DiscoverHendry](https://www.facebook.com/DiscoverHendry) | [@/DiscoverHendry](https://www.instagram.com/DiscoverHendry)

THE RIVERS EDGE MOTEL



The Rivers Edge Motel has undergone an extensive renovation in order to better accommodate our guests. We have a wide range of available amenities including: updated suites with full kitchens, a heated pool, 24 hour fitness center, park access, private dock and water-sport equipment. We are located right on the Caloosahatchee River, walking distance from downtown, and close proximity to a public boat ramp for the weekend angler.

Book Your Room:
theriversedgemotel.com

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