



***** FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE *****

Main Street Punta Gorda program “winding down”

Punta Gorda, Fla., August 1, 2011 -- The Main Street Punta Gorda board of directors recently decided to request no further funding from the Punta Gorda Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) and to begin a strategic “winding down” process of the organization. Board members sincerely appreciate the time, effort and contributions made by the citizens of the community to assist with the projects and objectives of the organization. This action is a result of projected financial issues in the Community Redevelopment Agency, which is Main Street’s primary funding source. The Board recognized that CRA funds should be put towards more critical CRA purposes, such as meeting debt service obligations. Many of the key functions provided by Main Street Punta Gorda will be assumed by the community organizations that are currently represented on the Main Street Board.

Main Street Punta Gorda was originally designated as the 51st Florida Main Street City in September 2007 under Enterprise Punta Gorda. The mission of the organization was to promote, encourage, facilitate and enhance growth, vitality and prosperity in downtown Punta Gorda while preserving its historic character to benefit the entire community.

With the later disbanding of Enterprise Punta Gorda, Main Street Punta Gorda then continued on as a stand-alone entity. It is felt by the 15 member board of directors that because of the work of the program - and the work of the other wonderful entities involved in assisting Punta Gorda - this mission has been very successful.

As noted by Board President Mark Martella, “Main Street Punta Gorda has succeeded in spreading the word of the re-birth of Punta Gorda throughout the state of Florida and nationally through promoting the reconstruction and redevelopment of the City to other Main Street Organizations culminating in our hosting of the Florida Main Street Convention in September of 2010.”

Not focusing on one particular street, block or membership requirements, 40 blocks of downtown Punta Gorda were included in the designation. Awards received by Main Street Punta Gorda from the Florida Secretary of State since its inception include Outstanding Business of the Year, Florida Main Street Program of the Month (3), Outstanding New Construction Project (2), Outstanding Special Event, Outstanding Promotion and Outstanding Public Improvement Project.

As stated above, in 2010, Main Street Punta Gorda was the youngest Florida Main Street program to be awarded the host designation of the Florida Main Street Annual Conference. This event not only showcased the community to the conference attendees and the Secretary of State, but also celebrated 25 years of Florida Main Street revitalizations.

The accomplishments of Main Street Punta Gorda were only possible as a result of the dedicated volunteers who donated countless hours of their time. “On behalf of the entire Board, I would like to thank our volunteers and former board members for their time and efforts in promoting Main Street as well as the CRA and our partner organizations for their support”- Mark Martella, President.

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