



**From the November 17 Charlotte Sun:**

### **JOURNEY TO THE FUTURE**

The City of Punta Gorda has recently initiated a significant project to engage the community in the development of a City-wide Master Plan. When completed, the City-wide Master Plan will be a comprehensive vision document for our town. The process, which includes gathering public input will begin in early 2019. TEAM Punta Gorda was founded in the wake of the devastation of Hurricane Charley to lead the City through the first master plan process in 2005.

Before the public input phase begins, we thought it would be useful to provide some information to the public about the best principles in urban planning for small, special cities like ours. We also want to highlight best practices from other small cities that have already had success. Together, TEAM Punta Gorda and the City of Punta Gorda are embarking on a major public education strategy called *"Journey to the Future, Lets Learn Together."* The day-long event will be held January 7, 2019, at the Charlotte Harbor Event and Conference Center.

It will feature presentations by:

- Rick Severance, CEO of Babcock Ranch and former CEO of the Seaside, FL, one of the first communities in America designed on the principles of New Urbanism.
- Victor Dover, from the firm selected to assist with Punta Gorda's new City-wide Master Plan, will discuss best practices in urban planning and development.
- Lee Pitts, Host and Executive Producer of "Lee Pitts Live", will facilitate a discussion of four perspectives on Punta Gorda from panelists Gussie Baker, Martha Bireda, Chris Evans and Paula McQueen. They will relate their unique stories on the evolution and growth of Punta Gorda since its incorporation in 1887.
- Tim Hernandez, Principal of New Urban Communities Corporation, is a builder/developer focused on infill, redevelopment and traditional neighborhood development opportunities in South Florida.
- Lunch/Keynote Speaker, John Redmond, President of Allegiant Travel Company, will share why Allegiant selected Charlotte Harbor as the site for its first major resort and

the potential benefits he sees for Punta Gorda and Charlotte County arising from his company's significant investment.

In addition to co-hosts TEAM Punta Gorda and the City of Punta Gorda, *Journey to the Future* is being planned and implemented by a broad-based collaborative of community organizations including:

- The Punta Gorda Isles Civic Association
- The Charlotte County Office of Economic Development
- The Burnt Store Isles Civic Association
- Historic District Homeowners Association
- Smart Growth Punta Gorda

It is our hope that this event will stimulate new thinking and introduce new ideas into the master planning process, while bringing people together. The spirit of Punta Gorda is strong. It cannot not be dampened by hurricanes or elections. It is based on the principle that we are better if we work together, and keep the conversation going.

*Journey to the Future* is free, but you must sign up. To register visit: [www.teampuntagorda.org](http://www.teampuntagorda.org) or call 641-637-8326.

TEAM Punta Gorda is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Nancy Johnson is the CEO of TEAM Punta Gorda. Ideas or questions can be addressed to [team@teampuntagorda.org](mailto:team@teampuntagorda.org). Or, call 941-637-TEAM (8326). Find a complete schedule of all upcoming activities, as well as more information about TEAM Punta Gorda, membership, or to volunteer, visit our website, [www.teampuntagorda.org](http://www.teampuntagorda.org).