

Good morning, Commissioners, ladies and gentlemen.

Today, I'm proud to share that the Charlotte County Economic Development Office received a statewide award from the Florida Economic Development Council for our PCS Workforce Attraction Campaign, part of our broader Careers on the Coast initiative.

This campaign was designed to attract skilled workers, military families, and transitioning service members to Charlotte County by connecting meaningful career opportunities with the exceptional quality of life our community offers. We know that veterans and former service members bring leadership, discipline, teamwork, and dedication that employers value highly — and who wouldn't want to hire someone who has proudly worn the uniform of our country?

And who wouldn't want to live, work, and play in a Purple Heart Community that honors and admires our veterans and military families? Charlotte County proudly recognizes the sacrifices made by those who have served, and we remain committed to creating a welcoming community where they can continue to thrive.

Through targeted digital advertising, geofencing around military installations, relocation messaging, and workforce-focused storytelling, the campaign generated more than one million targeted impressions nationwide and more than 6,000 visits to our workforce attraction and relocation resources.

A major focus of the campaign was reaching military-connected audiences and positioning Charlotte County as a place where service members and their families can successfully transition into civilian careers, raise families, and build long-term futures.

This award is especially meaningful because it recognizes economic development marketing that directly supports workforce growth and long-term community competitiveness. Workforce availability remains one of the top factors companies consider when making location and expansion decisions, and initiatives like Careers on the Coast continue to strengthen

Charlotte County's reputation as a workforce-ready and veteran-friendly community.

I would like to recognize our talented Marketing Manager, Maria Vastola, for her hard work, creativity, and dedication in leading this campaign. Her efforts helped position Charlotte County among our peers across Florida and earned this distinguished statewide recognition. We are grateful for her commitment to promoting our community and telling the story of why Charlotte County is such a special place to live and work.

I'd also like to thank the Board for your continued support of economic development and workforce initiatives, along with our community partners, schools, employers, and staff who helped make this campaign possible.

We are honored to receive this statewide recognition and proud to continue promoting Charlotte County as a place where careers, opportunity, patriotism, and quality of life come together.

Thank you.