

Team Punta Gorda looks to build on past successes

This year continued to be marked by change and progress in our community. Team Punta Gorda's quest has made us an increasingly valuable partner not only to our government partners but also many other organizations with whom we work. From helping make a contact to forming ad hoc committees, Team's mission remains to serve as a collaborative resource uniting our citizens in accelerating revitalization to achieve the potential of our unique waterfront community.

In these challenging times, with the help of many, many volunteers we've been able to:

- Form a maritime committee and complete a waterfront master plan for a 2.4-mile stretch of Punta Gorda's waterfront from Fishermen's Village to Charlotte Regional Medical Center. This plan has become a foundation for the city to proceed with a promenade project that will have an economic impact on our community.
- Bring arts enthusiasts and professionals from all over our community together to

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further explore an artisans village concept. This team is pursuing both a virtual arts district and an arts incubator concept.

- Encourage the development of multi-use paths for recreation and touring the area that will link our waterfront and future linear parks with the rest of the community and other cities. The rails-to-trails committee is working with the City of Punta Gorda in attaining a "Bicycle-Friendly Community" designation.
- Solicit proposals from consultants that potentially may be retained to help identify additional higher education potential for Punta Gorda. The higher education committee is currently evaluating the

proposals.

- Helped finish the Hector House Plaza by laying 4 1/2 pallets of bricks in 95 minutes. It's a beautiful addition to Punta Gorda's downtown.
- Attend many, many regular city and county meetings including the City Council and County Commission to ensure Team remains a positive contributor and is in tune with latest developments.
- Hold our most successful annual golf tournament to date at St. Andrews South raising funds that help Team continue the pursuit of our mission. Put April 4, 2009 on your calendar for the next annual golf tournament and get your foursome together. I've already got mine.
- Hold a successful first Hibiscus Bicycle Tour that brought riders from many central and south Florida cities. Put June 20, 2009 on your calendar for the next Hibiscus Bicycle Tour that will offer events for riders of all abilities. We look for this event to become an economic generator for the community as it expands and attracts more

participants from outside of the area.

This is just a sample of the accomplishments in 2008. The work we've completed has been extremely rewarding and inspirational. However, we're far from finished with this journey. Team continues to seek new ideas and opportunities for collaboration. We continue to seek new ways to serve our community. We continue to invite you to join in this exciting venture.

For a complete listing of Team's accomplishments and more information on these projects, visit our Web site at www.teampuntagorda.org. To join Team Punta Gorda as a member and/or volunteer, call us at 637-8326, e-mail us at team@teampuntagorda.org, or visit our Web site. Your contributions are also welcome.

And finally, shop and dine locally! Our business community needs and deserves our support. Don't forget Think Thursdays. Invite all of your friends from other communities to come and see what's happening in Punta Gorda. Visit www.thinkthursday.com for more information.