

Team Punta Gorda's partnerships make progress possible

At www.dictionary.com, "progress," as a noun, is defined as *movement toward a goal or to a further or higher stage*. Is there an end state that you will recognize when you have achieved it? Or is it a journey that evolves through time? As I learned in business school, the answer is "it depends."

As we look around our community we see many specific projects that definitely are being completed. The beautiful new Charlotte Harbor Event and Conference Center is one example. On the other hand, if we are talking about a continuum of projects to transform a community, then most likely we can agree that achieving progress is a long-term process.

There are also defining moments that bring about a continuum of progress. Historically speaking, if we could talk to Henry B. Plant who brought the Florida Southern Railway to Punta Gorda in 1886, I bet he would say it

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took dealing with many people and organizations to make that happen. It certainly brought change to a community that evolved over time. Advance to August 13, 2004, when Mother Nature also brought about significant change to our community. Many of us can say we've been progressing ever since. In the latter case it has definitely been one incredible community effort.

Regardless of how you view change, it takes people and groups working together to make change happen. That's the credo of Team Punta Gorda. After all, our name is an acronym meaning Together Everyone Achieves More. Our mission is to serve as a

collaborative resource uniting our citizens in accelerating revitalization to achieve the potential of our unique waterfront community. Our Higher Education, Maritime Development, Artisan's Village, and Rails-to-Trails committees each partner with other civic and government groups and individuals in the pursuit of their objectives.

The most recent example of a partnership at work is the new Think Thursdays tourism initiative in Punta Gorda. It's the epitome of what working together can achieve. It began with a core team of the Punta Gorda Chamber of Commerce, Main Street Punta Gorda, Downtown Merchants, Fisherman's Village, Village Fish Market, Charlotte State Bank, Travel Host magazine, Pies & Plates, and TEAM Punta Gorda and is rapidly expanding to include many businesses, clubs, civic organizations, and residents. Think about how much fun it would be to have something exciting happening in our community

each and every Thursday during season all day until 8 pm at night. You can find out more about this great project at www.puntagordashopping.com, and click on Think Thursday at the bottom of the page.

Please join me at TEAM Punta Gorda's annual meeting on Wednesday, November 5, 2008. We'll be celebrating "Progress through Partnerships." This is also the first soft opening event at the new Charlotte Harbor Event and Conference Center. The meeting begins at 6:30 pm and is open to the public. We'll feature an exciting presentation on our Waterfront Master Plan. Tours of this wonderful new facility will be available after the meeting. See you there!

If you would like to join Team Punta Gorda as a member and/or volunteer, call us at 637-8326 or visit our Web site at www.teampuntagorda.org. This is your chance to personally have an impact on our community. Your contributions are also welcome.