

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

WEEK OF FEBRUARY 11-17, 2010

A GUIDE TO THE ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT SCENE

Community Redevelopment Agency endorses Artisan's Atelier project

SPECIAL TO FLORIDA WEEKLY

The Punta Gorda Community Redevelopment Agency has endorsed the Artisans' Atelier project to be housed in the Herald Court Centre building. In a previous presentation to the CRA, TEAM Punta Gorda CEO Nancy Prafke described an Artisans' Atelier as a studio or shop of an artisan or designer. The project will be operated in the part of the Herald Court Centre that had been previously designated as display space. The area is nearly 2,500 square feet in size and is on the south side of the building bordering Olympia Avenue.

On Feb. 3, Frank Mazur, TEAM's Community & Economic Task Force chair,

presented the business case that further clarified the role of the CRA in forming the Artisans' Atelier. The CRA agreed to invest up to \$15,000 in the build-out, providing the funding for signage and mesh partitions for artisan spaces. In exchange, 10 percent of the artisans' rent will be reimbursed to the CRA.

Alliance Design Group will donate the architectural construction documents and Owen-Ames-Kimbal will donate the labor and materials.

The project promotes Punta Gorda as an artisans' district by providing affordable space for working artisans. It will attract visitors year round to the downtown area and generate more traffic for existing galleries and other

area businesses. The TEAM Punta Gorda project has been a collaborative effort with participation from the Arts & Humanities Council, Downtown Merchants' Association and the Visual Arts Center. The project concept was reviewed and endorsed by the Punta Gorda and Charlotte County chambers of commerce as well as Main Street Punta Gorda. The project will be operated by the Downtown Merchants' Association, in a manner similar to the successful farmers market.

The DMA will promote the project, manage a juried selection process, ensure a fiscally sound operation and plan events to promote the Artisans' Atelier. ■