

2023 | 11th Edition

HENDRY *County Guide*





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863-674-5600

Clewiston Office

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863-805-5000

Hendry County is a special place. It is located in one of the most unique ecosystems in the world, and yet it draws -- it does not shrink from -- its sense of place. Here, beautiful sunsets against lakes and rivers impress on a daily basis, the opportunities to enjoy nature's offerings are nearly limitless, and the sense of community here drives a flourishing, growing community. Join us as we look at what makes Hendry County a destination for businesses, residents, and newcomers.

Hendry County Guide

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11th Edition

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From Coast to Coast

**Explore the Lake
Okeechobee
Waterway**





Florida boaters can travel from the east coast to the west coast via the Lake Okeechobee Waterway.

The 154-mile-long waterway extends from the Atlantic Ocean at Stuart, to the Gulf of Mexico at Fort Meyers. The waterway runs through Lake Okeechobee and consists of the Caloosahatchee River to the west of the lake and the St. Lucie Canal east of the lake.

Much of the waterway is man-made. Nature did not connect the St. Lucie River to the ocean. The connection between Lake Okeechobee and the St. Lucie is man-made, as is the channel connecting Lake Okeechobee to the Caloosahatchee River.

In the days before paved roads, early pioneers used the waterways as liquid highways. Riverboats carried passengers back and forth between rural heartland and the coastal cities. Boats also hauled produce from rural farms to market and supplies back to the interior.

Today, instead of

steamships hauling freight and passengers, the Lake Okeechobee Waterway is used for recreational boating and fishing, and most boaters use the ActiveCaptain application to navigate. Go to activecaptain.garmin.com/en-US/pois/17709 to learn more about it.

There are five locks on the waterway. From east to west they are the St. Lucie Lock, the Port Mayaca Lock, the Julian Keen Jr. Lock (at Moore Haven), the Ortona Lock and the W.P. Franklin Lock. These locks, operated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, are operated 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily. The last lockage of the day begins at 4:30 p.m.

Twenty-five bridges cross various points along the Lake Okeechobee Waterway. Eleven of these bridges open for boat traffic. The lowest of the fixed bridges is the Port Mayaca Railroad Bridge with a vertical clearance of 49 feet. Sailboats that are too tall to clear the bridge are sometimes helped

under the bridge by means of the “Okeechobee limbo.” The website offshoreblue.com explains: “A crew out of the Indiantown Marina will meet your boat at the bridge and by use of plastic 50 gallon drums lined up along your rail and filled with water, list your vessel enough to pass under the Port Mayaca RR Bridge. Once through, the drums are emptied and removed from your boat and you are on your way. The whole process generally takes less than an hour.”

The Okeechobee Waterway is usually open year-round, but during the dry season there are sometimes restrictions based on the depth of the water. Tropical storms and hurricanes can also result in some closures on the waterway.

Hendry County is home to U.S. Army Corps of Engineers South Florida Operations Office, 525 Ridgelawn Road in Clewiston, FL 33440-5399, telephone: 863-983-8101.



These gear statues can be seen outside Clewiston Museum. [Photo by Richard Marion/Hendry County Guide]

Oh, the fun to be had!

ATTRACTIONS IN AND AROUND HENDRY COUNTY

Hendry County boasts a multitude of sights, sounds and scenes for tourists to explore. From hiking and biking to airboat tours, from skydiving to bird watching, there are so many things waiting to be explored at one's own pace. Here is a sampling:



Big 'O' Guide Service

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Roland Martin's Marina and Resort, 920 W. Del Monte Ave., in Clewiston. For more information, call 863-983-3151 or visit rolandmartinmarina.com.

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Walking/Biking Tour

Four self-guided trails all start from the Clewiston Inn and wander through residential areas of Clewiston at 108 Royal Palm Ave., Clewiston.

For more information, please call 863-983-7979.

Dinner Island Ranch

Outstanding wildlife viewing awaits at this vast acreage site. It offers fishing, hiking, cycling, camping, hunting, horseback riding and scenic driving.

They are located 29 miles southwest of Clewiston off of County Road 833.

STA 5 Bird-Watching

In partnership with Hendry-Glades Audubon, the South Florida Water Management District offers escorted birding tours at the South Florida Birding Trail. STA 5 is ranked one of the best bird watching areas in the country.

No reservations required for walking or bicycling visits to these areas. For directions and information, please call 863-674-0695 or 863-517-0202. The Clewiston Museum also offers a "Historical Eco-Tour" and STA 5 Fridays. For van tour schedules, email clewistonmuseum@embarqmail.com.

Audobon Society

Birding organization for Hendry, Glades and Okeechobee counties. Hendry County Tourism sponsors the annual Big 'O' Birding Festival in March. Memberships are available.

For more information, please call 863-674-0695 or 863-517-0202. Visit their website at hendrygladesaudubon.org.

Jacob's Flight Services

Experience beautiful Lake Okeechobee and surrounding areas from the sky. Offered are designed, packaged scenic tours for you to enjoy the most popular sights they have to offer. You can also customize your own tour and see the destinations you choose. They are located at 1090 Airglades Blvd., Clewiston. You can reach

them at 863-612-5294 or email info@jacobsflightservices.com. Visit their website at jacobsflightservices.com.

Silver Lake Preserve

This beautiful 1,876-acre tract offers a customized hunting program with some of the best year round native wildlife opportunities in South Florida. The Silver Lake Lodge can accommodate 10 guests and offers several amenities. They are located at 2860 Silver Lake Rd. N.W. in LaBelle.

You can reach them by phone at 863-273-7712. Visit their website at silverlakepreserve.com.

Florida Ridge Airports

A hang gliding and ultra-light facility offering a variety of tandem sky rides, pilot services and instruction. They are located at 12671 E. State Road 80 in Clewiston. You can reach them at 863-805-0440. Visit their website at thefloridaridge.com.

Skydive Spaceland

Experience the thrill of diving from 14,000 feet and taking in the view of Lake Okeechobee. This park is located at 1090 Airglades Blvd. in Clewiston. Call them at 800-533-6151 or visit their website at skydivespaceland.com.

Spirit-of-the-Wild Wildlife Area

Nature enthusiasts will want to visit this site because of the year round viewing of wildlife for which the area is known. The area offers fishing, hiking, biking, horseback riding and scenic driving. It is located 12 miles south of LaBelle on County Road 832. For information, visit myfwc.com/recreation/lead/spirit-of-the-wild/.

Clewiston Museum

The Clewiston Museum is located at 109 Central Avenue, Clewiston. It houses exhibits highlighting the local area, including: Fossils, Sugar, Cattle Industry Firsts, Commercial Fishing,

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Flying Brits, Killer Hurricanes and Seminole Indians. You can reach them at 863-983-2870. Visit their website at theclewistonmuseum.org. Email: clewistonmuseum@embarqmail.com.

Stargazing

Starry nights are a common occurrence in Hendry County. You don't need a telescope to stargaze. Just good weather. Walk out on the dike, or to the fields and you will see thousands of stars. For more info, please visit stargazers.org.

Captain Hendry House

Added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1993, Hendry House was the home of Francis A. Hendry, the "Father of LaBelle." It is located at 512 Fraser Ave in LaBelle. For more information, please call 863-675-2872. For more info on the history, please contact the LaBelle Heritage Museum at 863-674-0034. Visit their website at labelleheritagemuseum.org.

Uncle Joe's Fish Camp

Located in an off-the-beaten path area of Lake Okeechobee, Uncle Joe's offers cabins, plus groceries, tackle, live bait, docks and boat ramps with direct access to the lake. They are located at 1699 Griffin Road in Moore Haven. Reach them at 863-983-9421 or 863-983-4818.

Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum

Nestled in the heart of the Everglades, the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum is home to more than 30,000 unique artifacts selected to celebrate, preserve and interpret the rich history and culture of the Seminole Tribe of Florida. Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki means 'a place to learn, a place to remember' in the

Seminole language.

To learn more, please visit ahtahtiki.com.

LaBelle City Docks

Overlooking the south side of the Okeechobee Waterway, just west of the LaBelle bridge. The City of LaBelle provides these docks, complete with electric and water, free of charge. All vessels are welcome 3 days in, 8 days out. Close proximity (walking distance) to downtown LaBelle for shopping, restaurants, and fuel. For more information please call 863-673-1191. Visit the city's website at citylabelle.com.

Belle Hatchee Marina

Specializing in multi-hull haul out located in a hurricane protected area. Freshwater marina with no tides. Do-it-yourself boat work yard with 24 hour access. Inland boat storage in hurricane protected area. Ships Store on the premises. Shopping, restaurants and motels near by. Located at 121 Riverbend Drive in LaBelle. They can be reached at 863-674-1772 or 817-965-2302 or go to bellehatchee-marina.com.

LaBelle Fossil Camp

Fossil hunting and guided ecotours via sailboat, canoe, or kayak. Adventures take place along the Caloosahatchee River, where you're 100% guaranteed to find fossils. It's a once in a lifetime trip through Florida's ancient past. Learn about the history of the River, search for bivalves and gastropods from 6 million years ago, and fossils from ancient tortoises and turtles, garfish, paleo camels and horses, mammoths, glyptodonts, smilodons, and

giant ground sloths. Creatures that roamed the Earth nearly 2 million years ago! Social distancing practiced and masks worn. Located in the heart of LaBelle. Book your adventure by email or phone: LabelleFossilCamp@gmail.com, 863-417-9333 call or text.

Port LaBelle Marina

Located on Okeechobee (Intracoastal) Waterway East of the LaBelle Bridge. This secluded marina offers fuel, electricity at the main dock, pump-out facility at the main dock, laundry, and men/women restrooms and showers.

The marina is located at 1152 Marina Drive in LaBelle. You can reach them at 863-675-2261. Visit their website at portlabellemarina.com.

Clewiston Golf Course

A beautifully maintained, championship 18-hole golf course that is open to the public. Designed in the Donald Ross Style, the course is a classic and can be enjoyed by the amateur golfer or the seasoned professional. They are located at 1201 San Luiz Ave in Clewiston. You can reach them at 863-983-1448.

Roland Martin Marina & Resort

Roland and Mary Ann Martin's Marina and Resort provides everything for the fisherman and boater. The marina features 20 of the nation's top notch fishing guides, many lodging choices, ample float-ing dockage, a fleet of rental boats, 130 covered boat slips, fuel, bait, supplies, a tiki bar with live entertainment/ karaoke and a restaurant. They are located at 920 E. Del Monte Ave.

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in Clewiston. You can reach them at 863-983-3151 or 1-800-473-6766. You can visit their website at rolandmartinmarina.com.

Firehouse Community Theatre

The Firehouse Community Theatre has been providing a unique cultural experience in the area for over 21 years. The theatre is staffed completely by volunteers from our communities. They are located at 241 N. Bridge Street in LaBelle. You can reach them at 863-675-3066. You can visit their website at firehousecommunitytheatre.com.

Hendry County Motorsports Park

Get ready for thrilling excitement on the Everglades clay at the Hendry County Motorsports Park, the southernmost raceway in the USA. They are located at 9985 West Hwy. 27 (9.5 miles north of Clewiston on U.S. 27).

You can reach them at 863-983-3478. Or visit their website at hendryracing.com.

The Barron Park House Gallery and Gift Shop

Barron Park House Gallery is housed in the historic Christie House which was built in 1914. Local artists exhibit their oil, watercolor, acrylic, and mixed media paintings, sculptures, and photography. Exhibits are rotated monthly. Worth a visit for any art fan. It's hidden in the northeast corner of Barron Park, at 471 N. Lee St. You can reach them at 239-843-2929. You can visit their website at artsinland.com.

Dolly Hand Cultural Arts Center

Located at the Palm Beach State College Campus, the Dolly Hand

Cultural Arts Center and Theatre holds a roster of performances designed to offer an "escape from the everyday." They are located at 1977 College Drive in Belle Glade. You can reach them at 561-993-1160. Or visit their website at dollyhand.org.

Okeechobee Scenic Trail

Designated as a segment of the Florida National Scenic Trail, this route circles the second largest freshwater lake in the contiguous United States. The trail runs on top of the Herbert Hoover Dike and provides views ranging from scenic lakeside to working agricultural landscapes. There are numerous locations for access by hikers and bikers, as well as equestrians. Not all areas are paved and some portions close at irregular intervals, so please call 863-983-8101 for the latest information.

Big Water Heritage Trail

The trail's name, the Big Water Heritage Trail, stems from the Seminole word for Okeechobee, which means, "Big Water." This successful project, implemented in 2003, is a heritage trail that identifies, links and marks sites of historical, cultural, natural, recreational and educational importance to the area. The Big Water Heritage Trail encompasses five counties surrounding Lake Okeechobee in Florida. For more info, please call 863-983-7979.

Okaloacoochee Forest

The Okaloacoochee Slough State Forest contains nearly 35,000 acres, mostly in Hendry County, which extends northward near the Caloosahatchee River and southward about 50 miles into Big Cypress Swamp. There are

38 miles of trails open for wildlife viewing, hiking, non-motorized biking, and horseback riding. Also available are four camp-grounds. To learn more, call 863-612-0776.

Fisheating Creek Outpost

The licensed concessionaire of the Fisheating Creek Wildlife Management Area provides recreational and educational opportunities to the public under contract of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. Now offering camping, canoeing, paddling, hiking, and eco-adventures. RV/ tent sites are available. You can reach them at 863-675-5999. You can also visit their website at fisheatingcreekoutpost.com.

Gatorama

Gatorama is a family-friendly Eco Adventure Park and licensed gator farm in the heart of the Everglades. The focus is on family, fun and education. Food and drink is available from a food truck inside the park. The owners and staff invite you to play wild, get dirty and get up close and personal with Florida's apex predators. Both alligators and crocodiles live here in the Sunshine State, the only place on Earth where they exist side by side in the wild. See the Big Gator Feed Show, try your luck at our Fast Hands or No Hands Challenge or participate in one of their "Gatorventures." Located at 10665 N. U.S. 27 in Palmdale, Gatorama can be reached at 863-675-0623. Or learn more by going online to gatorama.com.

By **Alexis Crespo**
 Consultant
 Planning/Zoning,
 City of LaBelle



The City of LaBelle continues to see exciting development projects and public improvements coming to fruition. In 2023, new projects include Shady Oaks coach homes south of E. Seminole Avenue, continued progression of single-family homes in the “Belle Arbor” community of Shady Oaks Avenue, the opening of the Infiniti Steakhouse, and two (2) new 7-Eleven convenience store and gas stations with on-site dining options. Also of note is an approved multi-family project in Downtown known as the Begonia, offering 18 units and on-site recreational amenities.

Development and permitting applications continue to be reviewed by city staff under the direction of Superintendent of Public Works Gary Hull, and assisted by City Planner Alexis Crespo, AICP. The City is working on a streamlined and coordinated permitting process that incorporates Fire Department and

The future looks bright for the City of LaBelle

Building Department Review at the outset of projects to ensure a smooth process for Applicants. LaBelle’s staff remains committed to a high level of customer service and working with property owners to achieve workable solutions and consensus.

LaBelle’s development process and procedures are guided by the City’s Comprehensive Plan, which can be accessed on the city’s website, www.citylabelle.com, and the Land Development Code (LDC) located on Municode. Every property in the city is designated within a specific future land use category, that guide whether a property can be used for residential, commercial, industrial, public or a mix of land uses. Similarly, the zoning map classifies each property by zoning district and corresponds to district regulations in the Land Development Code that specify how development can occur on the property, including setbacks, minimum home sizes, landscaping requirements, and other development information. The City continues to update its codes to be up to date with current standards and ensure quality development. As an example, the City Commission is recently

strengthened the protection of the historical heritage oak trees throughout town to uphold the special character of LaBelle.

A key project by the City is final extension of sanitary sewer throughout several residential neighborhoods near Downtown. The City continues to focus on infrastructure improvements for sewer, water, drainage and roads to provide the citizens of LaBelle with a high level of service. The City was recently awarded millions in funding to complete the septic to sewer conversion projects within town. Also, the City has entered into an interlocal agreement with Hendry County and a private developer to extend utilities west to the Lee County line.

If you’re considering a project in LaBelle, or just need access to information, the city’s website is a key resource. City staff also offers pre-application meetings at no cost to the applicant to discuss development proposals and provide information regarding the applicable regulations and the permitting process.

For more information, please visit the city’s website at citylabelle.com.

What's on the horizon?

By **Keitha Daniels**

Director of Hendry County Economic Development Council

Residential growth continues to soar



Located in an ideal South-Central Florida location and equipped with the fundamental elements to become a premier business destination, Hendry County is poised for growth. With the coastal communities reaching capacity, more and more individuals are turning their attention inland. Our community offers a true quality of life where homes are affordable, natural resources are available and businesses are prosperous.

Hendry County experienced higher than normal levels of residential growth during the global pandemic. According to a report by Bloomberg City Lab in May 2021, Hendry County led the State with in-migration. The study compared the number of individuals moving in versus the number of those moving out between March 2020 and February 2021. The ability to work remotely combined with

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the attractiveness of a rural lifestyle led many to the area.

Industrial and commercial activity also saw tremendous growth County-wide. In 2021, Hendry welcomed several manufacturers relocating their businesses to the area. Hendry's location in the State provides connectivity both east and west and north and south thanks to the many State Roads that intersect the County placing Hendry within a 90-minute drive of either southern coast. In addition to no State income tax, Hendry has no impact fees. The availability of large tracts of land in a desirable location and the lower operating costs in Hendry made the decision to relocate an easy one.

What is on the horizon for Hendry? Residential development continues to soar in areas such as Port LaBelle, Wheeler Estates, and Montura leading the way for retail opportunities. The City of Clewiston's Industrial Park will soon see manufacturing facilities producing goods and the 650-acre Jack Paul Industrial Park in LaBelle is being readied for future development. Infrastructure projects have been planned and funded across the County providing more opportunities for residential and business growth.

The Airglades International Airport project will develop a state-of-the-art logistics complex that will

dramatically reshape the flow of goods from Latin American producers to United States consumers and vice versa. To date, the airport and the land surrounding it are undeveloped, providing a rare opportunity for businesses interested in importing and exporting of goods.

With all the new developments and growth, employment opportunities will be as high as they have ever been in Hendry. Providing a skilled workforce is a top priority for county leaders and educational institutes. The Hendry County Workforce Education and Adult School enrollment numbers continue to increase year-over-year as well as their course offerings and locations. In 2021, Governor DeSantis awarded the Glades Regional Training Center, a facility located less than 10 miles from the City of Clewiston, \$5.8 million dollars for technical training which will provide a training pipeline for future employment opportunities in the region.

The Hendry County Economic Development Council (EDC) will celebrate its 25th anniversary this year. The EDC is a community asset focused on business, workforce, and community enhancement. Through strategic partnerships with local, regional, and state entities, the EDC is delivering on a promise to continually improve the community and prepare for a better Hendry of tomorrow.

By **Kelly Boone**
 Executive Director
 LaBelle Downtown
 Revitalization Corporation
 (LDRC)

Indisputable Charm

Downtown LaBelle offers unique venues

Downtown LaBelle is an award-winning Florida Main Street Community nestled alongside the Caloosahatchee River. The LaBelle Downtown Revitalization Corporation (LDRC) is comprised of a board of directors working closely with the City of LaBelle and the Hendry County Tourism Department to create a leisurely experience for residents and visitors.

Dedicated businesses and individuals work daily to maintain a vibrant and economically successful downtown with unique venues throughout the district. The charm of this historic downtown is indisputable, with lush, aged oak trees lining our streets. While taking our self-guided historic walking tour, visit numerous shops and establishments for a one-of-a-kind experience. LDRC has proudly been an accredited Main Street Community by the National Trust for Historic Preservation Main Street Center since its development in 2014. LDRC was most recently recognized as the Secretary of State's Main Street Program of the Month in October 2022.

LDRC believes everyone deserves a beautiful, vibrant downtown. The district has a thriving local economy rich in character, featuring public spaces that make residents and visitors feel at home. We want to celebrate the rich history of our community while helping breathe new life into our downtown economy. We have added lighting, seating, and unique sculptures throughout the downtown district to create an inviting environment to achieve this goal. The LDRC created a great place to foster the growth of local entrepreneurs and small businesses with our seasonal Shop Downtown Outdoor Saturday Market. LDRC volunteers also host the Annual Howl-O-Ween & Downtown Doxie Dash, Wharf Walk Artisan Weekend, and the infamous Smoke Under the Oaks Rib Fest.

Spend a little time with us to find Downtown LaBelle is an authentic, thriving, great American downtown. This is where our history and our future connect. Be a part of it!



Clewiston: America's Sweetest Town

By **Randy Martin**
Clewiston
City Manager



“America’s Sweetest Town” is the City of Clewiston, Florida. Positioned on the southwest boundary of Lake Okeechobee, the second largest natural freshwater lake entirely contained within the continental United States, Clewiston is the gateway to Lake “O” as it is affectionately known in the area. Clewiston is centrally located between the shores of the Atlantic Ocean to the east and the waters of the Gulf of Mexico to the west.

The “Sweetest Town” label grew out of the abundant sugarcane agricultural interests in the vicinity and the City’s proud claim as home to the corporate headquarters of the U.S. Sugar Corporation. As one of the world’s largest sugar producers, the area’s top employer and given the company’s long

history of philanthropic support for the community at large, Clewiston is greatly indebted to U.S. Sugar for the plentiful contributions the company has made and continues to provide to the quality of life of this unique south central Florida region.

Clewiston visitors and locals alike are fortunate to be able to enjoy a natural environment with seemingly limitless outdoor recreational opportunities available in reasonably close proximity to the community. With the noted convenient access to the lake’s abundant fishing and wildlife attributes and close proximity to the wide variety of amenities offered in the more urban coastal areas on both shores, Clewiston is uniquely positioned as a south Florida hub location for all. The City is home to an amazing museum, an attractive library facility and maintains numerous passive and active parks and recreational facilities including an historic and well-groomed 18-hole public golf course and bountiful water access points featuring a boat launch and ramp facility with lake access. The City also hosts one of the major access venues for hiking and biking enthusiasts to the Lake Okeechobee Scenic Trail (LOST) that borders the 730-square mile lake. This 100-mile-plus paved trail sits atop the elevated Herbert Hoover Dike which encompasses the lake perimeter and is a major segment of the Florida National Scenic Trail system. Also, nearby in Hendry County are facilities of widespread interest to the birding community including the STA-5 Reservoir which is a focal point for the Hendry-Glades Audubon Society.

Clewiston is a well-designed John Nolen community with palm tree-lined and landscaped streets and abundant open space. The City is intersected by the major US 27 & 80 transportation corridor, dubbed “Sugarland Highway,” which handles most of the east-west traffic through central Florida south of the lake. City officials are focused on economic

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development initiatives to fortify and enhance existing commercial districts along the Sugarland Highway corridor, particularly efforts to revitalize the older “downtown” sections. Last year, Clewiston completed the sale of the last of the available parcels in its Park of Commerce, entirely composed of development sites for small and medium light industrial-type uses and the first of several planned industrial-type facilities has been recently constructed in the park.

The City is also experiencing significantly enhanced interest in residential and commercial growth in and around the community and particularly along the highway corridor.

This heightened interest is welcomed by Clewiston and has helped to promote the development of a strong partnership between the City and its municipal partner, Hendry County, to plan and expand access to necessary utility infrastructure to support larger scale industrial and commercial development along the highway corridor west of the City. This effort is in great part positively influenced by the planned Airglades International Airport project. Having received FAA concurrence for the sale of the public county-owned airport for private development, the buyers expect to close on the acquisition in the near term with the initial phases consisting of a major cargo and freight handling facility on the site.

Despite the City’s focus on economic development to generate a climate conducive for business investment and job creation in the Clewiston/Hendry County area, the City is equally committed to maintaining its highly valued small town quality of life. Clewiston is blessed with a wonderful citizenry and a deeply committed Board of Commissioners. The City also boasts an active faith-based community, a strong group of civic organizations and a diverse and eclectic commercial base of small businesses many of which are locally owned. As city manager, it is a genuine honor to lead a dedicated team of qualified and capable professional staff driven toward the goal of providing the highest caliber public services in the most cost-effective manner possible.

Whether you are a potential year-round resident, second home owner, real estate investor, business or service provider, or a visitor looking for a change of pace vacation or interesting daytrip experience, I encourage you to further consider Clewiston.



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est. 1923

*The history of
Florida's 63rd county*

*Article courtesy of
LaBelle Heritage Museum*

Hendry County, the 63rd of Florida's 67 counties, was established by the Florida legislature in May 1923 by taking approximately half of the area left to Lee County after the creation of Collier County, was named in honor of renowned Florida cattle man Francis Asbury Hendry. Hendry first came to the area as a scout for the U.S. Army during the Third Seminole War in the 1850s. He returned after the War Between the States to set up headquarters for a cattle ranch at old abandoned Fort Thompson that earned him the title of Cattle King of South Florida.

The Upper Caloosahatchee Valley became known to Americans of European heritage during the Second Seminole War (1835-1842) when supply depots were established along the pristine Caloosahatchee River and in the Everglades and Big Cypress - almost impenetrable regions to the south. They were periodically abandoned during the rainy season and also when U.S. troops were not systematically searching for Seminoles - the generic term for both Miccosukee and Cow Creek bands of Native Americans. U.S. troops sought to round up and forcibly move these Native Americans to the Trans-Mississippi

continued on Page 23

West, making inland Florida safe for settlement by Americans steadily moving south from Georgia and the Carolinas into a promised Eden. Native Americans resisted encroachments on their lands while American settlers and troops refused to admit the validity of Seminole claims to this virgin territory. Slowly but surely, American settlers moved into the Caloosahatchee Valley, lured by the promise of an area that would not only support tropical fruits and vegetables, but also their means of transportation - small supply boats plying the picturesque Caloosahatchee River taking them to market.

The Caloosahatchee River was both boon and bane to the hardy pioneers settling the Caloosahatchee Valley during the latter years of the 19th century. It was the source of irrigation for their crops as well as being their avenue to the Gulf of Mexico and northern markets. Yet, at the same time, the river's inability to quickly and successfully drain the area during Florida's unpredictable rainy season and after seasonal hurricanes caused settlers to abandon their homes, farms, and tropical groves along its banks. Requests to the Army Corps of Engineers to clear the Caloosahatchee of obstructions following the disastrous floods of 1878 only resulted in the U S Congress appropriating funds to clear the channel as far upriver as the small community of Fort Myers.

Shortly thereafter, hardy pioneers began carving a new settlement on the banks of the Caloosahatchee at the western edge of Captain F.A. Hendry's vast cattle ranch. This settlement, first known as Belle or Belle City, became LaBelle when Hendry platted the small settlement and named it in honor of two of his six daughters, Laura Jane Hendry Thompson and Carrie Belle Hendry



Evans.

It was left up to Philadelphia entrepreneur Hamilton Disston and his plans to reclaim the Everglades and construct a canal from the Gulf of Mexico to the Atlantic Ocean. Such a waterway had been dreamed of since the days of Spanish Florida — a canal that would fully connect the Caloosahatchee from its headwaters at Lake Hickpochee to Lake Okeechobee via the Three Mile Canal. Small paddle wheel steamers plied the Upper Caloosahatchee from the early 1880s until Caloosahatchee Irrigation and Navigation Locks 2 and 3 were dynamited to help release flood waters from the disastrous 1928 Okeechobee Hurricane. Dynamiting these locks did not achieve the desired result but did result in destroying the Caloosahatchee itself as the primary avenue for transportation and commerce between Fort Myers and the Upper Caloosahatchee Valley.

Vegetable farms, citrus groves,

and tropical fruit plantations dominated the area closest to the Caloosahatchee during this period of early settlement in the Caloosahatchee Valley. Cattle ranching was paramount in the lush grasslands that bordered the Caloosahatchee. However, the area south of the Caloosahatchee was home to large numbers of furbearers such as otter, fox, bobcat, and Florida Panther whose pelts were in demand for both gentlemen and ladies' hats, winter coats, and lap robes. Tropical birds were hunted for their plumes and sometimes entire carcasses that adorned not only ladies' finest millinery but also elaborate hairdos during the Gilded Age. Such high demand encouraged hunting and trapping for pelts and plumes that lasted well into the 20th century until changing fashions, wildlife conversation, and strict laws about poaching called an end to widespread trapping and fur trading on

continued on Page 24

the streets of LaBelle.

The majority of the early American settlers in the Caloosahatchee Valley came south from North Florida, Georgia, and the Carolinas in search of open frontiers just as many of their neighbors moved west into virgin lands in Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, Northern Louisiana, Texas, and the Great Plains. However, Midwestern land developers such as E.E. Goodno and - in some instances - land speculators like Rev. George F. Hall from the Midwest concentrated on luring yeoman farmers and artisans from Illinois, Missouri, Kansas, and Oklahoma.

Clewiston had its Japanese settlers in the years prior to World War II, and LaBelle boasted Polish, Czech, and Italian families becoming steadfast members of the community during the early years of the 20th century as well as a short-lived return to the land by Eastern European Jewish immigrants from the Shtetls of the Russian Empire in the early 1930s.

The Seminole Indians had been forced into the Big Cypress during both the Second and Third Seminole Wars from the mid- 1830s to the late 1850s. A reservation was set up in the southeastern corner of Hendry County, and the Native Americans were conveniently forgotten (for the most part) except for visits into Clewiston and LaBelle to trade their furs and buy groceries.

The Seminoles were cattle ranchers in North Florida before the United States obtained Florida from Spain by treaty and purchase in 1819 and continued to herd some cattle even after they were forced into



the Big Cypress. The plight of these Native Americans followed that of their cousins in other areas until entrepreneurs in the tribe decided to adopt the ways of their neighbors and became successful international businessmen with enterprises spanning the globe.

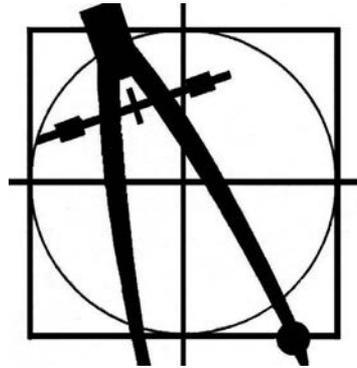
The possibility of raising sugar cane in the Upper Caloosahatchee Valley had been recognized as early as the 1870s. The possibility became a reality with the push for Everglades Drainage and Reclamation during the early years of the 20th century. It led to the establishment of Clewiston on the shores of Lake Okeechobee in the early 1920s, a community that would thrive off of the new sugar mill, United States Sugar Corporation. It had holdings in the

rich muck lands of Lakes Okeechobee and Hickpochee, as well as the Upper Caloosahatchee Valley. The Caloosahatchee, Lake Okeechobee, and the prime hunting lands in the area coupled with generally mild winter and spring weather, beckoned wealthy sportsmen from the North. Winter vacation homes began to spring up along the banks of the Caloosahatchee and on the Ridge in Clewiston. Many of these tourists became very active in their winter vacation communities, and some even became permanent residents.

The economy of Hendry County has been a mixture of agriculture, hunting and fur trading, and tourism since its early days. Who knows what the future has in store for our diverse population with its varied interests?

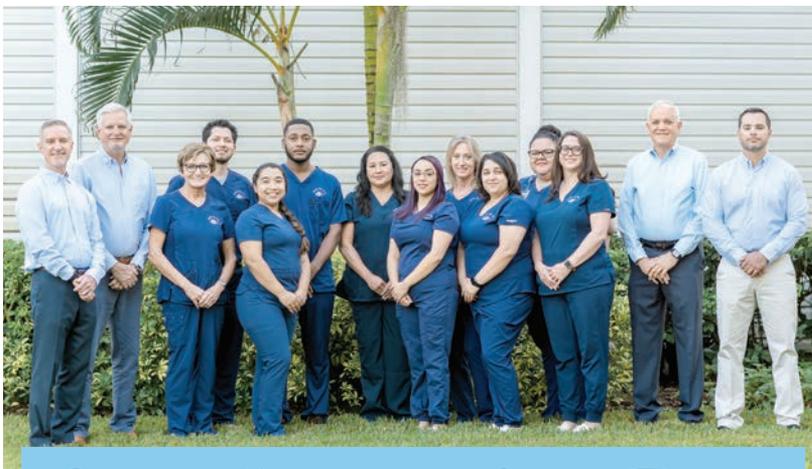
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By **Jennifer R. Young**

Media and Content
Coordinator
Florida SouthWestern
State College



Elevating opportunities for all

For more than 60 years, Florida SouthWestern State College (FSW) has been elevating the educational and career opportunities for those in the Southwest Florida area. If you've been to a doctor's office or medical facility, sat in an elementary school classroom, or supported a local business in Southwest Florida, chances are high that you've encountered FSW alumni.

Annually serving nearly 22,000 students at five locations and online, FSW offers more than 45 academic programs with two- and four-year degrees and professional certifications, several with 100 percent licensure pass and job placements rates. FSW's tuition is the lowest in Southwest Florida, and with scholarships and financial aid, 75% of FSW students graduate debt free.

FSW faculty bring world-class experience and a deep knowledge base to the classroom. Our course offerings prepare students to further their education or start their dream career with experiences that stretch far beyond the classroom. Honors courses, internships and undergraduate research opportunities

are available, and FSW students can even study abroad at the Lorenzo de' Medici Institute in Italy. Many others have traveled abroad to experience learning in countries including Ireland, France and the Galapagos Islands.

As a member of the Florida College System, FSW offers our students the benefits of articulation agreements established by the Florida Department of Education. Students graduating from FSW with an Associate in Arts (AA) degree are guaranteed by the state of Florida to "have the opportunity to earn a bachelor's degree at a state university or Florida college offering four-year degrees." Additionally, Destination FGCU, the FSW/FGCU Transfer Program, provides students with the tools and guidance they need to easily and successfully move from FSW upon completion of their Associate in Arts degree (AA) to Florida Gulf Coast University.

FSW's collegiate high schools, located on the Lee and Charlotte campuses; FSW's Collegiate Institute at Clewiston High School; and our dual enrollment

program provide Southwest Florida high school students the opportunity to accelerate their learning and earn an AA degree while they are still in high school.

FSW students have many ways to stay engaged on campus. Student clubs and activities, intramural sports, and a state-of-the-art fitness center provide opportunities for students to be socially and physically active. FSW is also known for its dedication to the arts with the Barbara B. Mann Performing Arts Hall, the Bob Rauschenberg Gallery at FSW, and the Rush Collections Gallery all located on the Lee Campus in Fort Myers.

Also, on the Lee Campus, sports fans can catch an FSW Bucs basketball or volleyball game at the Suncoast Credit Union Arena. Additionally, the arena hosts a variety of concerts, graduations, tournaments, and community events. The community can also catch an FSW Bucs baseball or softball game at City of Palms Park in Fort Myers.

To learn more about FSW, visit www.FSW.edu.

Hendry County Dining Guide

Hendry County is a dining destination! Visitors to the area come from near and far for award-winning barbecue, to enjoy a meal on the banks of Lake Okeechobee or to experience our unique locally owned eateries!

CLEWISTON

Beef 'O' Brady's

892 W Sugarland Hwy

Big Eaters Café

110 W Ventura Ave

Burger King

1014 W Sugarland Hwy

Café Tropical

307 E Sugarland Hwy

China Taste Buffet

930 W Sugarland Hwy

Domino's Pizza

503 E Sugarland Hwy

Dunkin' Donuts

100 S Berner Rd

Hawaiian Ice

444 W Sugarland Hwy

Gator Bait Pub & Grill

13983 FL-90

Jalapeños Taqueria #2

728 US-27

KFC

411 W Sugarland Hwy

Main Street Subs

344 E Sugarland Hwy

Nisbet Enterprises, Inc.

McDonald's

905 W Sugarland Hwy

Popeye's Louisiana Kitchen

504 E Sugarland Hwy

Roland Martin Marina & Resort

920 E Del Monte Ave

Scotty's Tiki Bar

920 E Del Monte Ave

Sonny's BBQ

1030 W Sugarland Hwy

Staghorn Kitchen

728 E Sugarland Hwy

Subway

1005 W Sugarland Hwy

Subway

940 W Sugarland Hwy

Sunrise Restaurant

842 E Sugarland Hwy

Thomas Diner

1019 Harlem Academy Ave

Wendy's

800 W Sugarland Hwy

LABELLE

7 Mares

415 S Main St.

Abbies Deli LLC

4060 NE Eucalyptus Blvd

Ana and Cindy's Cuban Café

36 E Hickpochee Ave

Amigos & Beer

675 W Hickpochee Ave

Beef 'O'Brady's

21 S Lee St

Big V Restaurant

32 Hall St

Bridge Street Coffee

23 Fort Thompson Ave

Burger King

61 S. Hall St

Cactus Mex

512 Cowboy Way

China Uno

90 W Hickpochee Ave

Chinese Fortune

Cookie Restaurant

505 W Hickpochee Ave #1000

Contreras Mexican Restaurant

125 FL-80

Domino's Pizza Store 5085

870 W Hickpochee Ave

Dunkin' Donuts

31 S Lee St

El Gran Taco Loco

863 W Cowboy Way

Forrey Grill

280 Bridge St

Hungry Howie's Pizza

180 S Main St

LaBelle Brewing Company

670 W Hickpochee Ave

Log Cabin BBQ

480 W Hickpochee Ave

Little Caesar's Pizza

75 Bridge St

McDonald's

21 E Hickpochee Ave

Papa John's Pizza

41 S Lee St

Pelican's SnoBalls of LaBelle

55 Yeomans Ave

Pizza Hut/Wing Street

505 W Hickpochee Ave

Popeye's Louisiana Kitchen

576 W Hickpochee Ave

Sal-Cal Pizza

732 S. Main St

Short Cakes

311 E Cowboy Way

Spuds

31 Fort Thompson Ave

Subway

139 E. Hickpochee Ave

Taco Bell

50 N Lee St

Two Peas Café

870 W Hickpochee Ave #500

The Cuban Deli

216 S Main St

The Quart House

100 S Main St

Exciting Things to Do

Festivals, events, celebrations & more



○ FLW Series Fishing Tournament

These national events often take place on beautiful Lake Okeechobee. Professional anglers come from across the country to compete for cash prizes. The event is held at the Roland Martin Marina & Resort in Clewiston. The season usually kicks off in January. For more information, visit flwoutdoors.com.

○ Black Gold Jubilee

Celebrating the end of harvest season, this unique festival will be held April 15, 2023, shows off Belle Glade's agricultural roots and organic "black gold" soil. Food, entertainment, fireworks, a car show, a volleyball tournament, rides and more. To be held at Torry Island Campground, 5000 W Canal St. N. in Belle Glade. For more info, please call 561-996-2745.

○ Sour Orange Festival

This event features the Sour Orange local Bake-Off, boasting delicious sour orange pies; vendors; entertainment; arts and crafts; a quilt show; recipe contests; and a photography display. For more info, please call 863-233-3014 or visit Sour Orange Festival on Facebook. The 2023 festival will be held on Saturday, Jan. 21, 2023 from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. at 1239 Red Barn Road in Lakeport.

○ Swamp Cabbage Festival

This festival celebrates local heroes with fun activities beginning with the Old Timers Dance and continuing with the Swamp Stomp, the Adult Country Western Dance, the Ranch Rodeo, the Legends of the Road Show, and more. The festival will be held Saturday, Feb. 25 and Sunday, Feb. 26, 2023, beginning at 1 p.m. at 8 Park Avenue in LaBelle. You can visit their website at swampcabbagefestival.org.



○ Hendry Co. Farm Tour

Hendry County — City Farm Tour Council and UF/IFAS Cooperative Extension Service will be holding its 42nd Farm Tour of the Hendry County agricultural industry, Saturday, Feb. 4 and March 11, 2023. Hendry County is one of the largest agricultural counties in the state and is the largest producer of oranges in Florida with over 75,000 acres of groves. Tickets are available on www.eventbrite.com.



○ Brighton Seminole Festival

The festival grounds are next to the Fred Smith Rodeo Arena, 17400 Sport Complex Road NE, Okeechobee, off State Road 721 in Glades County. This event, to be held Feb. 17-19, 2023, showcases Seminole and other Native American arts, crafts, food, dances and traditions. They also have a rodeo and XTreme Bull Riding. Call 863-467-6039 or visit their website at rezrodeo.com.

○ Hendry Co. Fair and Livestock Show

Celebrating local agriculture with a livestock show and sale, cake auction, petting zoo, exhibits, pageants, a parade, frog racing and more, this week-long event is held in Clewiston on Feb. 8-12. You can visit their website at hendrycountyfair.com.



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Hometown Healthcare providing personalized care in your own backyard

Hendry Regional Medical Center (HRMC) is a 25-bed critical access hospital delivering a personal touch through doctors and nurses whom you know and trust, in a warm and friendly environment.

Hendry Regional provides healthcare to the residents of Hendry, Southern Glades, and Western Palm Beach Counties. HRMC strives to meet the needs of the residents by incorporating modern technology with compassionate and competent medical staff to care for its patients. Convenient locations are available in Clewiston and LaBelle.

Hendry Regional Medical Center offers a modern emergency department, along with imaging services, surgery suites, laboratory services, and outpatient services.

HRMC also has 6 additional facilities located throughout Hendry County. In Clewiston the Dr. James D. Forbes Family Care Center hosts a dynamic team providing Family Medicine, Pediatrics, and Internal Medicine. Corporate Health Services offers preventative health programs for employers and their employees including worker's compensation management, testing, screenings,

site assessment's, and wellness education. Hendry Regional Rehabilitative Services offers a variety of rehabilitation and therapeutic services designed to evaluate and treat problems affecting mobility and function.

The Hendry Regional Convenient Care Center is located in the heart of LaBelle. The facility includes Family Medicine, Pediatrics, and specialty care including gynecology, surgery, and physical and occupational therapy services.

Hendry Regional Medical Center offers a wide array of specialty services for residents including cardiology, surgery, gynecology, and audiology.

Understanding the need of the community HRMC continues to add services and providers to its already expansive list. The most recent additions have been telehealth medicine, 3D Mammography, Infusion Services and additional Family Practice Providers.

At HRMC healthcare is a team effort. The staff is courteous, respectful, and enthusiastic in serving healthcare needs at any of the multiple locations. Hendry Regional has proudly been providing healthcare for over six decades, with roots that run deep within the community!



524 West Sagamore Avenue
Clewiston, Florida 33440
863.902.3000

Local surgical services in Hendry County reduce burden of travel



Common surgical procedures available at Hendry Regional Medical Center make recovery easier.

Traveling long distances can add to the stress and discomfort of surgery. The need to travel to and from a facility outside the community can also cause a burden for family members. Fortunately for Hendry County residents, common surgical procedures are available at Hendry Regional Medical Center (HRMC).

The trusted medical team at HRMC is able to perform a number of surgeries here in the community, providing convenience and comfort for patients and their families.

"Having your surgery performed in the local community is a smart decision," said Dr. Barry Davis, General Surgeon. "Knowing you are near home can provide peace of mind for your family and make the recovery process easier. The highly trained surgeons at Hendry Regional Medical Center can perform common general surgical procedures like tonsillectomy, laparoscopic cholecystectomy (gallbladder removal), hernia repair, and colonoscopy. In addition, our Specialists can perform gynecological procedures to include hysterectomies or cervical biopsy.

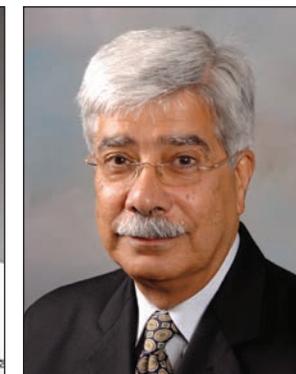
Many common procedures can be performed with laparoscopes or endoscopes which enable the surgeon to see inside the body without having to make large incisions. Other benefits of these techniques include shorter hospital stays and faster recovery times.

According to Dr. Darayes Mobed, General Surgeon, patients sometimes delay having certain surgeries for various reasons, but doing so can prolong discomfort or raise the risk of complications. "Traveling for a surgical procedure can be inconvenient," Dr. Mobed said. "The need to travel can disrupt a person's life, so he or she may opt to wait. Having surgical services available locally makes it easier for people to get the surgeries they need, when they need them."

Dr. Mobed added that it is best to follow the recommendations of physicians when elective surgery is required. When a physician recommends surgery, choosing the right facility is also important. Dr. Mobed said that convenience is one of the reasons Hendry County residents choose Hendry



**Dr. Barry Davis,
General Surgeon**



**Dr. Darayes Mobed
General Surgeon**

Regional Medical Center. Additionally, the convenience of local recovery services can make the transition from hospital to home smoother. The in-patient rehabilitation program at HRMC allows patients, covered under Medicare who need extended care, to stay in a hospital setting without the need to change facilities. With a compassionate nursing team on hand around the clock, recovering at the hospital following a surgical procedure can provide comfort to patients and their families.

"In many rural areas, qualified surgeons can be hard to come by," R.D. Williams, CEO said. "We are fortunate to have a team of highly trained physicians and medical providers in Hendry County." Having access to the medical care you need here in the community is a huge asset and can help you get back to your everyday life quicker.

Talk to your primary care provider about choosing the right facility for your surgical procedure. To learn more about Hendry Regional Medical Center services, please call the hospital at (863) 902-3000 or visit www.hrmc.us.



○ Chalo Nitka Festival

Chalo Nitka will be held on March 3-4, 2023 (usually held the first weekend in March) in Moore Haven in nearby Glades County. Chalo Nitka is one of the state's oldest continuing festivals. The festival grounds are located in Chalo Nitka Park off U.S. Highway 27. There are midway games, rides, a pancake breakfast and vendor booths selling food, crafts and jewelry. Events also include the Big Bass Tournament, the Frontier Days Rodeo, the Kid's Day and Small Fry Fishing Contest, the Chalo Nitka Parade and the Chalo Nitka Queen Pageant. For more info, visit chalonitka.com or call 863-946-0300.

○ American Indian Arts Celebration

Dance! Music! Arts! Culture! The Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum will host the annual American Indian Arts Celebration Nov. 3-4, 2023 on the museum grounds at the Big Cypress Seminole Indian Reservation, 34725 West Boundary Road, Clewiston. Enjoy traditional and contemporary arts and crafts, dance and music of the Seminole, Southeastern and other Indian tribes from across the country. Along with the Native American vendors, special presentations and wildlife shows, admission to the festival includes free parking and entrance to our award-winning, American Alliance of Museums accredited museum. Visit ahtahthiki.com or call 863-902-1113 for more information.

○ Clewiston Fall Festival

Organized annually by the City of Clewiston, the Clewiston Fall Festival features games, food, kid costume and pet costume contests, local vendors, a car show and more on the Saturday before Halloween. For more information, call 863-983-1492 or visit their Facebook @CityofClewiston RecreationDepartment

○ Clewiston Sugar Festival

Country music concert, arts and crafts, farming, beauty pageants, dessert contest, farming exhibits, fishing tournament, car show and more. It will be on Saturday, March 18, 2023 at Clewiston's Sugar Festival Park, Civic Park, Osceola Avenue in Clewiston. You can visit their Facebook page @ClewistonSugarFestival.

○ Shop Downtown October

Saturday Market Held on the First Saturday of the month from November through March from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. located at 8 Park Avenue, Downtown LaBelle. Vendor booths, entertainment and interactive art classes! Find out more on the LaBelle Downtown Revitalization Corporation event page at downtownlabelle.com or on their Facebook @downtownlabelle

The Clewiston Museum

**The
place
to be to
learn
history!**



By **Leigh
Woodham**
Director,
Clewiston
Museum



On behalf of the Clewiston Museum's Board of Directors and members, I'd like to welcome you to Hendry County! You'll find that Clewiston is a warm and friendly place with a unique and interesting history that can be discovered and explored at the Clewiston Museum!

Since becoming the museum's director in February 2021, my time in Clewiston has been and continues to be a true learning experience for this University of Florida statistics major with an arts management background. I truly enjoy expanding my knowledge about Clewiston's and Hendry County's rich history and I love sharing it with those who

visit the museum! There is an impressive collection of fossils and historical artifacts for you to experience when you visit...a dugong that dates back 10 million years, mammoth and mastodon fossils among many others, and an exhibit about the prehistoric Native American culture that lived around Lake Okeechobee and is the earliest known culture of its kind on record in the state.

You'll see exhibits about the history of fishing in Lake Okeechobee, the construction of the Herbert Hoover Dike, the Royal Air Force flight training school at Riddle Field that was here during WWII, the Big Cypress Seminole Reservation, the cattle

and sugar industries and other interesting artifacts about the history of Clewiston. Take time to relax in the museum's theater and view films on the history of Clewiston and how sugar is made and then be sure to check out the virtual reality exhibit that will take you on a tractor through a sugar cane field and then into the sugar mill. This exhibit was donated to the museum by US Sugar in the fall of 2020. Look for new exhibits to be coming soon! These will showcase more of the area's Seminole heritage and more of the museum's numerous artifacts from the WWII Royal Air Force training base at Riddle Field. It is unusual to find this quality of a collection in

a small-town museum, and I feel the residents have great pride in what we have here.

In addition to the museum's fossils and historical exhibits and archives, we offer the community the opportunity to learn more through the Florida Humanities Council's Florida Talks Speaker Series and through other presentations by residents from the surrounding areas. We also have an outstanding student outreach program that is funded with a grant from the Batchelor Foundation. As the museum director, I go into Clewiston's schools to teach Florida history to fourth graders! Through eight sessions, the students learn about prehistoric Florida, Native American history in Florida, the European exploration and colonization of Florida, the storms of 1926 and 1928, the history of the cattle, catfishing and sugar industries in Florida and the history of Clewiston and Hendry County. In addition to our school outreach program, the museum also goes to our local festivals to share information with the community's residents and visitors. The fossil boards are a favorite as both children and adults explore the different artifacts from the prehistoric land and sea creatures that lived in Hendry County.

The museum is also here to help residents from the local area and beyond who are doing research or looking for historical photos or information. There is



a wonderful archive of photos from the area dating back to the 1910s, which has been utilized by local law enforcement, businesses, college students, professors, authors, and families who are looking for photos

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from past generations. The museum also houses the archives of the weekly editions of the Clewiston News from 1928 – 2009, which have also been utilized extensively for research and information.

But the museum is not just about history...the museum also values and exhibits local art. In the museum's theater, you'll find the Sue Corbin and Louise Sullivan Glades Art Gallery, which is specific to Glades area artists and showcases their talent. We also have the annual Fancy Pansy Arty Party each October, which recently allowed 18 local artists and photographers and the art students from both Clewiston Middle and High Schools the opportunity to share and sell their work. In addition, Julio DeCastro, who was a Clewiston resident for many years and is now an accomplished education publisher and photographer, was featured as a special guest photographer. He shared with event attendees a program about his life and his love for photography; everything from how he got his first camera to an education about his skills as a photographer.

This year, the museum has recently teamed up with the Florida Trail Association and the National Scenic Trail to become a Gateway Community Partner. As the southernmost city and trailhead on the Florida Trail section of the National Scenic Trail, Clewiston is a population destination for hikers. The museum is now the place to visit to receive your official Florida Trail/National Scenic Trail passport stamp for Clewiston!

When you visit the museum, be sure to check out the Picker's Corner as you come through the door. There are many interesting vintage items and antiques that just might pique your interest and they're available for purchase! You'll also want to visit the Museum Gift Shop, which is stocked full of local goodies and historical books.

While many of the programs mentioned here are free to the public, none of these great things happen without the community's support. The Clewiston Museum is a private not-for-profit organization. We rely on donations, grants, the support of the local business community and our valued members in order to operate. Anyone can become a member for as little as \$25!

To learn more, visit our website at www.theclewistonmuseum.org and be sure to follow and like us on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, Pinterest and Google My Business. The Clewiston Museum is located at 109 Central Avenue in Clewiston. The hours of operation of Monday-Friday from 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. and on Saturday by appointment. Admission is \$10 for adults, \$8 for seniors and \$5 for students and children. Contact us at 863-983-2870 or via email at clewistonmuseum@embarqmail.com.

All in, all the time



A message from Hendry County Schools Superintendent Michael Swindle

It has been a remarkable second year in office as Superintendent, leading Hendry County Schools into the future of our success, and the success of this year wouldn't have been possible without the hard work and support of our teachers, staff, and administrators. Our schools are growing and there are boundless opportunities offered inside the classroom as well as beyond the classroom setting. Our teachers are providing enriching learning experiences for our students at all levels.

Hendry County Schools is home to some of the best career and technical educational programs available. Our students have a variety of opportunities to learn industry-leading skills such as Health Care, Fire Academy, Criminal Justice Program and many others as well as opportunities to earn industry certifications that lead to rewarding careers. We also have a wide variety of athletic programs such as football, volleyball, basketball, as well as many other athletic opportunities that promote physical fitness and competitions that instill ethics and the dignity of hard work.

Additionally, we have many other clubs such as Future Farmers of America (FFA), Florida Public Service Academy (FPSA), National Honors Society (NHS) and other clubs which promote leadership and citizenship where students make a positive difference in our schools and in our community. Our

focus on driving up academic achievement, coupled with multiple educational opportunities, will ensure our students are college and career ready!

As Superintendent, my goals for Hendry County Schools are simple. We will continue to strive to be a high achieving school district. We will provide safe, orderly and inviting schools where students have every opportunity and can take full advantage of their capacity to learn. We will also continue to create an educational culture where teachers continue to grow their knowledge and wisdom to better benefit our students. We are focused on increasing student achievement and opportunities available to them in every school.

Hendry County is blessed with beautiful natural scenery, rich agriculture history and many diverse cultures. From Lake Okeechobee to the Caloosahatchee River, multiple state forests and beautiful farmlands, Hendry County is a great place to work, live and play!

Hendry County Schools is thankful to have the support of our communities, businesses, families and volunteers. Working together, we understand the importance of helping our students develop the essential skills needed so that their full potential can be realized.

As Superintendent, I will always maintain an open-door policy. Please feel free to contact me anytime at 863-674-4642.

Hendry County School Board



Dwayne E. Brown
Vice Chairman

District 1
Post Office Box 684
Clewiston, FL 33440
district1@hendry-schools.net

Paul Samerdyke

District 2
653 Caloosa Estates Drive
LaBelle, FL 33935
district2@hendry-schools.net

Amanda Nelson
Chairman

District 3
Post Office Box 337
Felda, FL 33930
district3@hendry-schools.net

Stephanie Busin

District 4
429 Royal Palm
Clewiston, FL 33440
district4@hendry-schools.net

Jon Basquin

District 5
139 Oak Drive
Clewiston, FL 33440
district5@hendry-schools.net



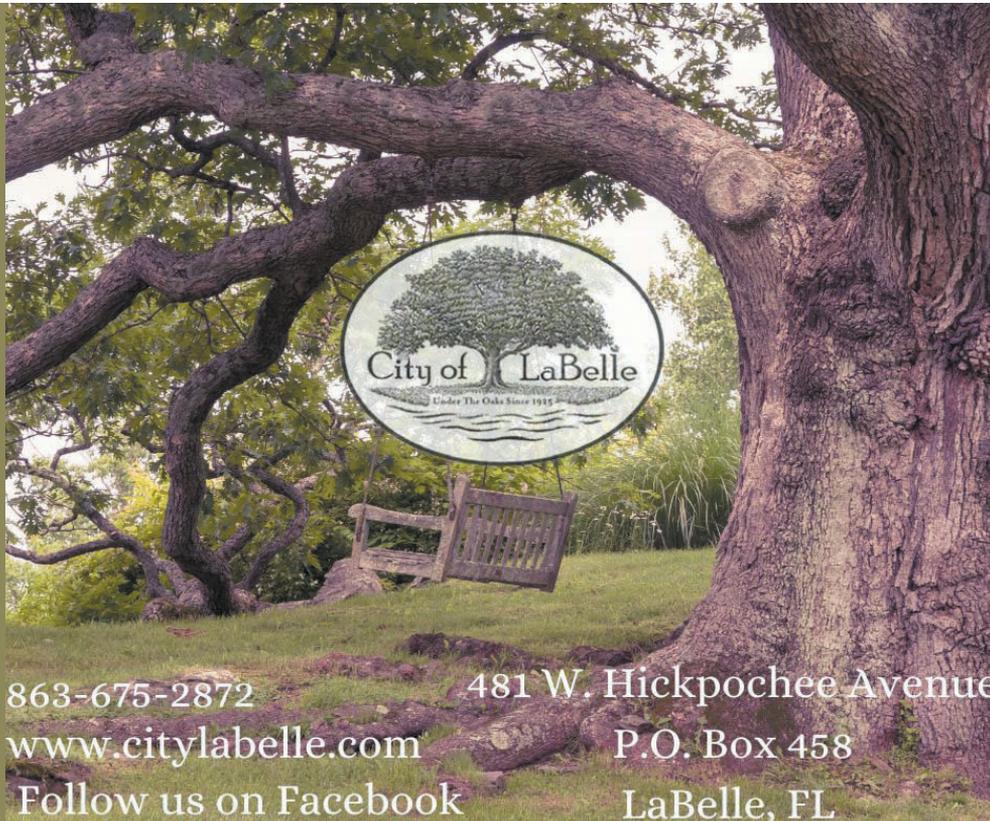
For school listings, see Page 40



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481 W. Hickpochee Avenue
P.O. Box 458
LaBelle, FL

Hendry County Schools

CLEWISTON

Central Elementary School

Principal: Melissa Carter
863-983-1550
Fax 863-983-1558
1000 S. Deane Duff Ave
Clewiston, FL 33440

Clewiston High School

Principal: Phillip Summers
(863) 983-1520
Fax (863) 983-2168
1501 S. Francisco Street
Clewiston, FL 33440

Clewiston Middle School

Principal: Tina Kelley
(863) 983-1530
Fax (863) 983-1541
601 W. Pasadena Avenue
Clewiston, FL 33440

Clewiston Youth Development Academy

School leader: Martin Espinoza
(863) 902-4216
475 E. Osceola Avenue
Clewiston, FL 33440

Eastside Elementary School

Principal: Denise Gibson
(863) 983-1560
Fax (863) 983-1564
201 W. Arroyo Avenue
Clewiston, FL 33440

Montura Early Learning Center

Director: Dr. Barbara Mundy
(863) 983-1417
225 N. Hacienda
Clewiston, FL 33440

Upthegrove Elementary School

Principal: Karra Rivas
(863) 983-1570
Fax (863) 902-4232
205 W. Arroyo Avenue
Clewiston, FL 33440

Westside Elementary School

Principal: Sarah Sanchez
(863) 983-1570
Fax (863) 902-4232
205 W. Arroyo Avenue
Clewiston, FL 33440

Harvest Academy Christian School

Headmaster: Jesse Windham
863-805-0485
Fax: 863-301-3272
370 Holiday Isles Drive
Clewiston, FL 33440

Clewiston Christian School

Principal: George Duckstein
863-983-5388
601 Caribbean Avenue
Clewiston, FL 33440

Clewiston Adult School

Principal: Kevin Lutkenhaus
863-933-1512
475 Osceola Avenue
Clewiston, FL 33440

LABELLE

Country Oaks Elementary

Principal: Robin Jones
(863) 674-4140
Fax (863) 674-4129
2052 Eucalyptus Drive NW
LaBelle, FL 33935

LaBelle Elementary School

Principal: Ansley Cockram
(863) 674-4150
Fax (863) 674-4155
150 W. Cowboy Way
LaBelle, FL 33935

LaBelle High School

Principal: Tammy Bass
(863) 674-4120
Fax (863) 674-4571
4050 Cowboy Way
LaBelle, FL 33935

LaBelle Middle School

Principal: John Klinger
863-674-4646
Fax (863) 674-4645
8000 E. Cowboy Way
LaBelle, FL 33935

LaBelle Youth Academy

School Leader: Shaunna Prope
863-674-4590
1100 Forestry Division Road
LaBelle, FL 33935

LaBelle Adult School

Principal: Kevin Lutkenhaus
863-933-1511
4050 Cowboy Way
LaBelle, FL 33935

For more information on any of the schools listed here please visit the Hendry County School District website at www.hendry-schools.org.

District Office: 863-674-4642 | Clewiston Sub-Office: 863-902-4244

H.E.R.E. (Home Educators Reaching for Excellence) of Hendry County

Home Support Group for Homeschoolers | Contact person: Gayle Davis 863-902-4244

To register: Hendry County School District/Home Education Program Office, 475 E. Osceola Ave, Clewiston

Enjoy the outdoors!

Parks and trails in Hendry County

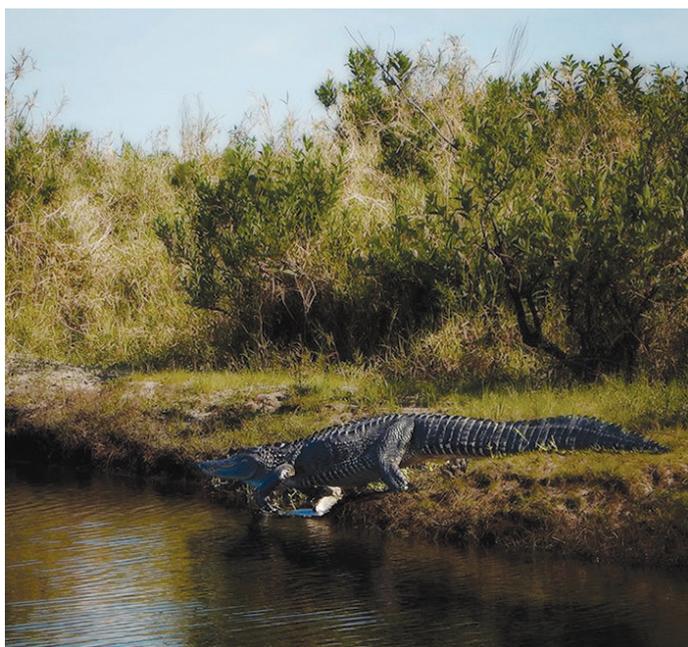
TRAILS

LAKE OKEECHOBEE SCENIC TRAIL

Designated as a segment of the Florida National Scenic Trail in 1993, the Lake Okeechobee Scenic Trail (LOST) is a 115-mile hike atop the Herbert Hoover Dike. The view is extraordinary — the 35-foot elevation allows the hik-er to enjoy the beauty of Lake Okeechobee, at more than 730 square miles the second largest freshwater lake in the United States. Other impressive sights are the fields of sugarcane with silvery tassels waving in the breezes, groves of orange trees, vibrant green crops growing in the black muck, and a variety of wildlife from egrets to alligators. You can even fish along the way. The LOST is open year-round for a variety of uses including hiking, biking, horseback riding, birdwatching, fishing and photography. Fourteen primitive camping sites are provided by the Corps of Engineers. For more information, log on to www.saj.usace.army.mil/LOST/.

CLEWISTON WALKING TOURS

The weather is perfect for taking one of four walking tours through the residential areas of Clewiston. Pick up a free map at City Hall or the Chamber of Commerce. The map provides Clewiston history and information about the homes as you pass by. All the tours start at the historic Clewiston Inn, and depending upon the trail you chose, you may wander by historic houses, the Roland Martin Marina, or the Clewiston Muse-um. Along the way, you will enjoy watching the birds native to our area such as the egrets, blue herons and ibises. Take the green trail and you'll see Lake Okeechobee, the second largest lake within the United States. The view is stunning and it's a great place for waterfront picnicking. The trails range from 1 mile to 2.9 miles and are



identified by different colored arrows on the sidewalks that correspond with the tour map. If you are not in the mood to walk, take a driving tour. The ride is relaxing and interesting. Whether you are walking or riding, this is the perfect way to become acquainted with “America’s Sweetest Town.”

BIG WATER HERITAGE TRAIL

Big Water Heritage Trail was officially opened in May 2003. It is a regional driving tour on state, county, and city streets that link historical, cultural, natural, recreational and educational points of interest in five counties surrounding Lake Okeechobee.

The counties are Hendry, Glades, Okeechobee, Martin and Palm Beach. The Heritage Trail connects to the Lake Okeechobee Segment of the Florida National Scenic Trail, offering visitors and community members an array of recreational, educational and historical opportunities. High-way signs and brochures direct the motorists to points of interest where they will find informative kiosks and outdoor interpretive and recreational activities at destinations such as Florida’s state parks and preserves, federal parks and reserves, and cultural points of interest.

For more information, stop by the Clewiston Chamber of Commerce, motels and other businesses and destination sites along the trail.

CITY & COUNTY PARKS

Clewiston Area

- Candy Cane Park, 600 S. Olympia St.
- City Pool, 113 W. Osceola Ave.
- Civic Park, 162 Royal Park Ave.
- Clewiston Municipal Golf Course, 1201 San Luiz Ave.
- Clewiston Recreation, 110 W. Osceola Ave.
- Clewiston Youth Center, 110 W. Osceola Ave.
- Hidden Park, West Sugarland Circle
- Leevee Park, Herbert Hoover Dike Road
- Ridgewood Park, 112 Ridgewood Ave.
- Saginaw Park, Saginaw Ave.
- Sikes Park, 515 Valencia St.
- Sugarland Park pavillion, West Arroyo Avenue
- Sweetest Town Playground (formerly known as Woodworks Park), 209 W. Osceola Ave.
- Triangle Park, Block 174 East Esperanza Avenue
- Trinidad Park, 520 E. Trinidad
- W.C. “Bo” Pelham Jr. Park, 1700 Red Road
- Water Spray Park, 113 W. Osceola Ave.
- John Stretch Memorial Park, 47225 U.S. 27



For more information on Clewiston parks, visit clewiston-fl.gov/ or the parks and recreation Facebook page at facebook.com/CityofClewistonRecreationDepartment/.

LaBelle Area

- Alton “Kid” Jones Park, 455 Withlacoochee Ave.
- Barron Park, 1559 De Soto Ave.
- Bob Mason Park, 497 Old County Road 78
- Davis-Pratt Park, 1287 Lillian St.
- Hendry Sports Complex, Forrey Drive
- Hendry LaBelle Civic Park, 800 Jaycee Lions Drive
- Hendry LaBelle Sports Park, 1101 Forestry Division Road

CLEWISTON

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- Joe Culliver Park, W. Lincoln Ave.
 - LaBelle Dog Park, 1200 Pratt Blvd.
 - LaBelle Nature Park, 440 Fraser Ave.
 - LaBelle River Park, Riverbend Drive
 - Main Street Roadside Park, State Road 29
 - Veterans Memorial Park, 26 E Hickpochee Ave.
- For more information on La-Belle parks, visit www.hendrylabellerecreation.org/parks/.

Felda Area

- Felda Park, 1100 County 830

AREA NATIONAL, STATE & REGIONAL AGENCY PARKS

BIG CYPRESS NATIONAL PRESERVE

Established in 1974, Big Cypress is America's first national preserve and consists of 729,000 acres. A freshwater swamp ecosystem, it welcomes

approximately 1 million visitors each year. It offers a diverse landscape where one can see cypress and mangroves, alligators and panther tracks all in one day. The Miccosukee and Seminole tribes call Big Cypress home. For more information on Big Cypress National Preserve, visit www.nps.gov/bicy/index.htm.

- Big Cypress National Preserve Oasis Visitor Center, 52105 Tamiami Trail East, Ochopee
- Big Cypress Swamp Welcome Center, 33000 Tamiami Trail East, Ochopee

DINNER ISLAND RANCH WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA

Large acreage and mix of wetlands and uplands. Onsite activities include hunting, wildlife viewing, fishing, hiking, camping, bicycling and horseback riding. For more information, visit my.fwc.com/recreation/lead/dinnerisland/.

17781 County Rd. 833, Clewiston

RV RESORTS & CAMPGROUNDS

Okeechobee Landings RV Resort
420 Holiday Blvd Clewiston

Roland Martin Marina & Resort
920 E Del Monte Ave Clewiston

Clewiston RV Resort
194 CR 720 Clewiston

Crooked Hook RV Resort
51700 US-27 #9789 Clewiston

Big Cypress RV Resort & Campground
34950 Halls Rd Clewiston

Oak Grove RV Resort 55+
500 S Main St LaBelle

Grandma's Grove RV Resort
2250 SR 80 Fort Denaud

LaBelle Woods Resort
620 S Main St LaBelle

Moss Landing on the River 55+
900 Aqua Isles Blvd LaBelle

Whisper Creek RV Resort
1887 SR 29 SW LaBelle

Riverbend Motorcoach Resort
5800 W SR 80 LaBelle

Riverside Camp and Retreat
7305 SR 78 Fort Denaud

RiverLandings – Florida Luxury Motorcoach Resort
5942 SR 80 W Fort Denaud

Ortona South Lock Campground
2410 Dalton Ln SW Moore Haven

Meadowlark Shores RV Park 55+
1880 Williams Rd Moore Haven

The Glades RV Resort
1679 Indian Hills Dr Moore Haven

Moore Haven KOA
17192 US 27 Moore Haven

Okaloacoochee State Forest
6265 CR 832 Felda

Palm & Pines RV Park
16225 SR 29 Felda

Fisheating Creek Outpost
7555 US 27 N Palmdale

Sabel Palm RV Resort
9505 Main St NW Palmdale

To have an RV park added to this listing, please call Angie Bridges at 863-824-5942

By **Hilary
Hyslope**

Executive Director,
Clewiston Chamber of
Commerce

Clewiston is poised for growth

Welcome to Hendry County! The Clewiston Chamber of Commerce invites you to discover “the liquid heart of Florida” and all that Hendry County has to offer. Situated on the southern shores of Lake Okeechobee, “America’s Sweetest Town” has a variety of businesses and amenities. Clewiston is best known for two things, our agricultural contributions and bass fishing! Here at the Chamber of Commerce, we know that our town is so much more. While we take tremendous pride in our agricultural heritage and our wonderful gem (Lake Okeechobee), it is our people and our community as a whole that has given us the title of “America’s Sweetest Town!”

Our economic climate here in Clewiston is absolutely poised for growth. Our largest employer, U.S. Sugar, boasts employment for roughly 2,500 people; other key employers include the Hendry County School District, Hendry Regional Medical Center, Walmart and a wide variety of small businesses and banking institutions. We have several exciting large projects on the horizon, including the expansion of Airglades International Airport (AIA). AIA’s location in our rural community and its proximity to U.S. 27 make it an ideal spot for an international perishable cargo hub. Here in Clewiston we consider ourselves “out in the middle of EVERYWHERE.” We have many of the amenities of the larger cities but maintain the rural, small-town feel we have come to love.

The heart of our community is Lake Okeechobee. “Lake O,” as



Sugar Express is an outreach, education, and tourism program of U.S. Sugar featuring restored steam locomotive No. 148. For a Toys for Tots event in December, it becomes the “Santa Express.” [Photo by Richard Marion/INI]

the locals call it, has fostered the careers of several bass fishing legends. Scott Martin, a Clewiston native, was awarded the 2015 FLW Angler of the Year award and was chosen to lead the USA Bass team competing in South Africa in 2017. Once you get out on Lake O, you’ll be hooked!

The services and amenities that you will find here in Clewiston are sure to meet all of your needs. Start your day with a morning walk on the Lake Okeechobee Scenic Trail (LOST). The trail sits atop the Herbert Hoover Dike surrounding the lake and built for flood protection. For this reason, the trail offers a grand vantage point to view everything from the scenic lake to agricultural landscapes. From there, swing on in to the Chamber of Commerce, where

we can direct you to a number of activities including airboat tours, fishing expeditions, swamp buggy rides or farm tours. If you are looking for an educational treat, visit the Clewiston Museum or the Seminole Tribe of Florida’s Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum. Looking to pamper yourself, we have a variety of local day and medical spa options. Dining here in Clewiston — well, that’s a tough choice. Breakfast, lunch or dinner, we’ve got you covered with a large variety of choices. We even have a local hangout or two for those night owls!

Whether you are relocating, starting a new business or vacationing, Clewiston is sure to be just the right fit for you! We here at the Clewiston Chamber of Commerce would love to see you stop in.

By **Diane E.
Fidanza**

Executive Director,
LaBelle Chamber of
Commerce

Our membership is LaBelle



Photography by Dale

LaBelle ... Huge, live oak trees line the streets of this quiet, graceful little town which is nestled alongside the Caloosahatchee River in Hendry County. This is quintessential small-town Florida, where the pace is slower, the pleasures are simpler, and the surrounding nature entices you to explore its natural beauty.

For many years, the Greater LaBelle Chamber of Commerce has proudly represented the businesses of LaBelle. The chamber was founded back in 1963, 49 years ago. Back then the goal of the original Chamber was to support and promote the business community of LaBelle. The businesses of LaBelle have changed a great deal over the past 49 years, but the LaBelle Chamber of today proudly maintains the founder's original goals – supporting and promoting LaBelle's business community.

Technology has certainly changed over the years, and the Chamber helps its membership by listing each of their 250-plus members on the Chamber's website. On the website, not only is the member's information listed, but if they have a website of their own their listing is linked to it. To assist their members even further, the Chamber "gets the word out" on their membership's upcoming events, or business specials, on their very active Facebook page. Both venues are excellent resources for locating information on LaBelle businesses.

The Chamber membership covers all types of businesses. The LaBelle Heritage Museum keeps alive our history, while the Firehouse Community Theatre has entertained us for 30 seasons. Local, family-owned shops like Harold Curtis Honey House, K & M Drugs, Me & My Girls Antiques, Legacy Printing, White's Furniture & Appliances all line our streets. Two Peas Café, Short Cakes, The Forrey Grill, The Quart House Restaurant, The Big V Restaurant, Bridge Street Coffee & Tea Café, The Cuban Dely, and Sal Cal's Pizza are all known for their local cuisine.



LaBelle, “The Beautiful,” offers spectacular nature trails. The Okaloacoochee Slough State Forest is a 32,270-acre facility approximately 20 minutes south of LaBelle which features hiking, horse trails, picnic areas, and the 15,400 acres slough marsh, for which the State Forest is named, is great for bird watching. Wildlife viewing opportunities are abundant, and the State Forest is part of the Great Florida Birding Trail. The slough is one of the few places in south Florida where the historic, natural landscape can be observed.

You won't want to miss our Swamp Cabbage Festival the last full weekend of February. Be sure to arrive early on opening day so you can enjoy the parade. At the festival, enjoy all the treats created from the swamp cabbage plant while you watch the LaBelle Rotary's Armadillo Races. Another great attraction during the weekend is the LaBelle Rodeo. Tuesday night leading up to the weekend you can enjoy the LaBelle Chamber's “Night on the Town,” where the Chamber membership is invited to set up booths on Fort Thompson Avenue to promote and introduce their business to the public. Music and local treats are part of the fun, so come one and all!

Not to be forgotten, LaBelle has always been, and continues to be, the fruit and vegetable basket for the country. This is where a great deal of the country's citrus and “row crops” such as watermelons, tomatoes, and bell peppers are grown. But vegetables and fruit are not the only foods produced here in LaBelle. The Hendry County Cattlemen provide a great deal of beef to area markets.

Rich bountiful land ... a lazy, winding river ... natural beauty ... friendly people. Whether “born and raised here” or “transplanted,” LaBelle is the place we call “HOME.”





Take advantage of Florida's favorable weather to take a boat tour of Lake "O" [Photo by Richard Marion/INI]

Clewiston sits on the southwest boundary of Lake Okeechobee and offers many opportunities to enjoy all the features of the second largest fresh-water lake in the United States.

Clewiston City Commission

The elected officials who serve as the Clewiston City Commission are a dedicated group of people with great pride for their community. The Mayor, Vice Mayor and City Commissioners are the governing body of the City. They set policies and rules by which the City is operated, including establishing goals and targeting issues as well as setting the tax rates.

Regular Commission meetings are held on the third Monday of each month, starting at 5 p.m. in the city hall commission chambers, 115 West Ventura Avenue. Special meetings may be held at the call of the Mayor or by a majority of the Commission.

If you have an issue you wish to discuss at a city commission meeting, submit a written request to be included on the next commission meeting's agenda. Direct your request to City Clerk Kathy Combass at Kathy.Combass@clewiston-fl.gov or telephone 863-983-1484.



The Clewiston Board of Commissioners elected board member James Pittman as mayor in December 2022, and board member Greg Thompson vice mayor. (L-R); Board member Barbara Edmonds, Mayor James Pittman, Vice Mayor Greg Thompson, Board members Hillary Hyslope and Mali Gardner.

LaBelle City Commission



Mayor Julie Wilkins



Daniel Akin
Commissioner



Jackie Ratica
Commissioner



Bobbie Spratt
Commissioner



Hugo Vargas
Commissioner

LaBelle, "The Belle of the Caloosahatchee," had its beginning as a settlement in the 1880s. In May of 1923, the Florida Legislature created Hendry County named for early resident and "Cattle King of South Florida" Captain Francis A. Hendry with LaBelle as its county seat. In 1925, the Florida Legislature chartered the City of LaBelle,

The regular business meetings of the LaBelle City Commission are held on the second Thursday of every month 6 p.m. at City Hall which is located at 481 W. Hickpoochee Ave. Meetings are open to the public and everyone is invited to attend. If you want to be included on our agenda, call City Hall at 863-675-2872.

Hendry County Officials



CLERK OF COURT

Kim Barrineau

25 E. Hickpochee Ave.,
LaBelle, FL 33975 (Rep)
Tel: (863) 675-5217 or
(863) 983-1586
Term 2020-2024
www.hendryclerk.org

SHERIFF

Steve Whidden

101 S. Bridge St.,
LaBelle, FL 33935 (Rep)
Tel: (863) 674-5600 or
(836) 805-5600
Term 2020-2024
www.hendrysheriff.org

PROPERTY APPRAISER

Dena Pittman

25 E. Hickpochee Ave.,
LaBelle, FL 33935 (Rep)
Tel: (863) 675-5270 or
(863) 983-3178
Term 2020-2024
www.hendryprop.com

TAX COLLECTOR

Patrick B. Langford

25 E. Hickpochee Ave.,
LaBelle, FL 33935 (Rep)
Tel: (863) 675-5284 or
(863) 675-1593
Term 2020-2024
www.hendrycountytcc.com

SUPERVISOR OF ELECTIONS

Brenda K. Hoots

25 E. Hickpochee Ave.,
LaBelle, FL 33935 (Dem)
Tel: (863) 675-5230 or
(863) 983-13393
Term 2020-2024
www.hendryelections.org

SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

Michael Swindle

300 W. Cowboy Way, La-
Belle, FL 33935 (Rep) Tel:
(863) 674-4642
Term 2020-2024
www.hendry-schools.org

CIRCUIT JUDGE 20TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

James D. Sloan

25 E. Hickpochee Ave.,
LaBelle, FL 33935
Tel: (863) 675-5217
Term 2022-2028
www.ca.cjis20.org

COUNTY JUDGE

Darrell Hill

25 E. Hickpochee Ave.,
LaBelle, FL 33935
Tel: (863) 675-5227
Term 2020-2026
www.ca.cjis20.org

Hendry County Board of County Commissioners



Emma Byrd
Chairwoman

District 1
Term: 2020-2024
(DEM)



Emory Howard

District 2
Term: 2022-2026
(REP)



Mitchell Wills
Vice Chairman

District 3
Term: 2020-2024
(REP)



Ramon Iglesias

District 4
Term: 2020-2024
(REP)



Karson Turner

District 5
Term: 2020-2024
(DEM)

25 E. Hickpochee Ave., FL 33935 | (863) 675-5220 | www.hendryfla.net



Contacting the Hendry County Government

If you need assistance or are unsure of which Hendry County department you wish to reach, please call 863-675-5220 to talk to a live person.

If you would like to reach the County via email, please contact welcome@hendryfla.net



Clerk of Court

LaBelle - 863-675-5217
Clewiston - 863-983-1464

Tax Collector

LaBelle - 863-675-5280
Clewiston - 863-983-1460

Property Appraiser

LaBelle - 863-675-5270
Clewiston - 863-983-3178

Elections Supervisor

LaBelle - 863-675-5230
Clewiston - 863-983-3393

Sheriff

LaBelle - 863-674-5600
Clewiston - 863-983-1474

State Attorney

863-612-4920

Public Defender

863-675-5263

County Administrator

863-675-5220

Office of Management and Budget

863-675-5333

County Facilities

863-675-5260

Building Code Enforcement

863-675-5319

County Engineer

863-675-5222

County Extension office

863-674-4092

County Attorney

863-675-5295

Emergency Management

863-674-5400

Emergency Medcal Services

863-674-4075

G.I.S.

863-612-4725

Grants & Special Projects

863-675-5264

Information Technology

863-675-5242

Human Resources

863-675-5352

Planning & Zoning

863-675-5240

Port LaBelle Utilities

863-675-5376

Recreation

863-675-5347

Housing Program

863-675-5297

Social Services United Way

Salvation Army
LaBelle 863-674-1441
Clewiston 863-233-6190

Special Districts (Recycling)

863-675-5252

Veterans Services

863-675-5255

Health Department

863-674-4041

Library Systems

863-983-1493

Airglades Airport

863-675-1568

Important Numbers



In an emergency, call 9-1-1

Animal Control

Clewiston: 863-983-1474
LaBelle: 863-675-3381

Code Enforcement

Clewiston: 863-983-1500
LaBelle: 863-675-6355

Emergency Services

Clewiston: 863-983-1450
LaBelle: 863-674-4074

Fire Department

Clewiston: 863-983-1499
LaBelle: 863-675-1537

Law Enforcement

Clewiston Police Department: 863-983-1474
Hendry County Sheriff's Office
LaBelle: 863-674-5600
Clewiston Substation: 863-983-1440

Hendry County Emergency Operations Center

863-674-5400

Glades Electric Cooperative

863-946-6200

Clewiston Utilities

863-983-1454

Florida Power & Light

1-800-468-8243

Caloosa Belle Independent & Lake Okeechobee News

863-763-3134

Poison Control

1-800-222-1222

Hendry County Health Department

Clewiston: 863-902-4224
LaBelle: 863-674-4041

Hendry Regional Medical Center

863-902-3000

Hendry County School Board Office

Clewiston: 863-983-1530
LaBelle: 863-674-4100

FDACS Consumer Hotline

1-800-HELP-FLA (1-800-435-7352)

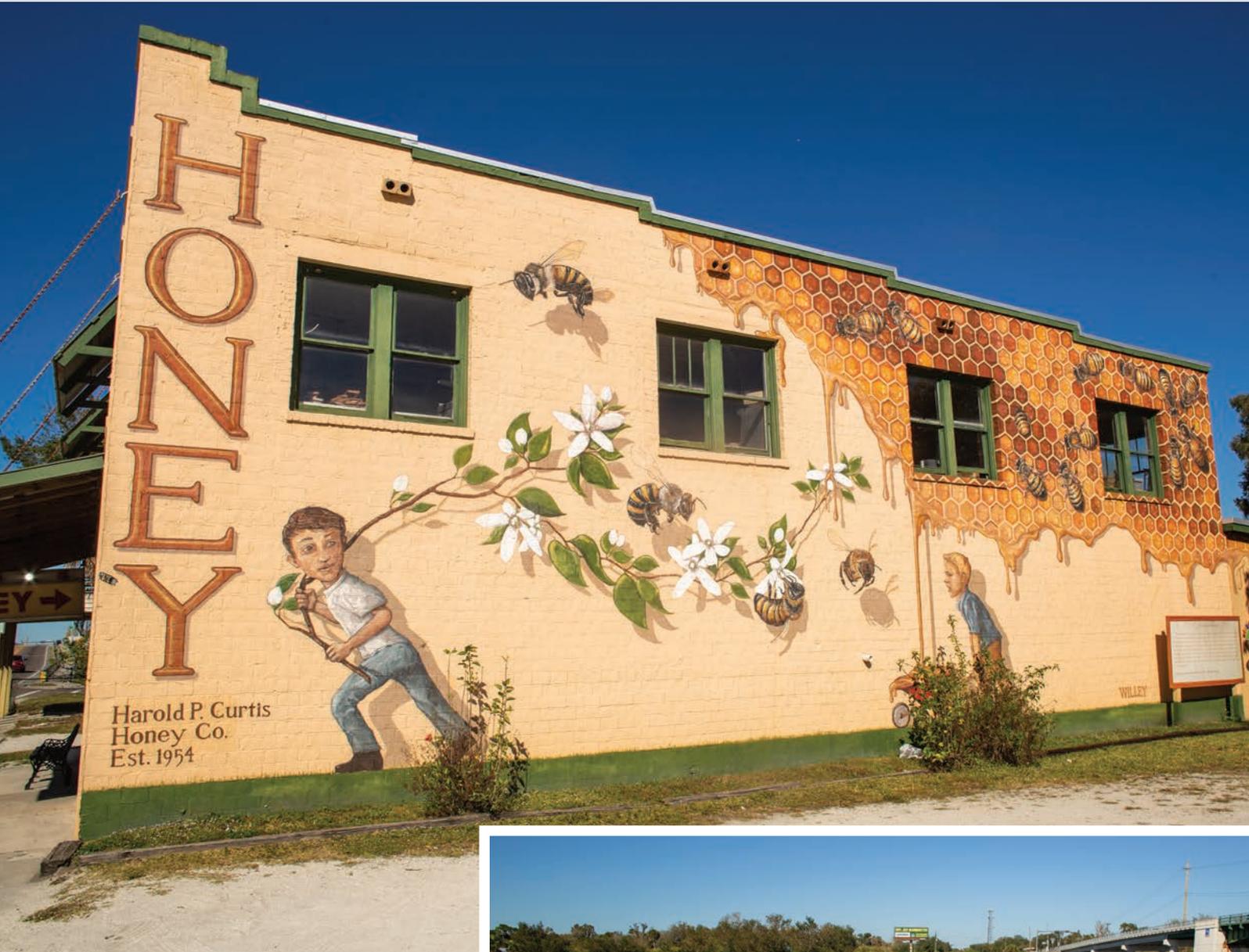


Above, the Cystic Fibrosis Fighters parade entry was named Best Overall and won the Nonprofit/Civic category in the 2022 Swamp Cabbage Festival Parade. For more parade winners and festival photos, see the SouthCentralFloridaLife.com website. [Photos by Katrina Elsken/INI]

Right, Pedro's Concrete Pumping won the Best Business Entry award in the 2022 Swamp Cabbage Festival parade.

**The 2022 theme was
Red, White & Moo!**





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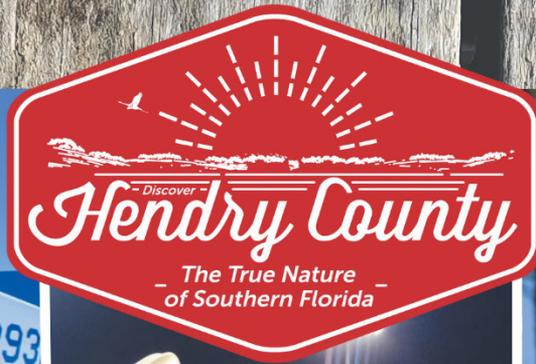


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