

FORT MYERS FLORIDA WEEKLY™

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INSIDE



'Sweet Baby James'

Entertainer Bob Stillman pays tribute to James Taylor at the Phil in Naples on Saturday, June 14. **C1** ▶



'Sex in the City' premier

And other events in Fort Myers' society. **C23-25** ▶



Happy Birthday

Shell Point Retirement Community celebrates 40th anniversary. **B1** ▶



Waterfront camping

It's not too hot to enjoy Florida's waterfront state parks. **A20** ▶

biotech boom

>>Inside:
See what Madden has planned for the old airport.
A8

BY EVAN WILLIAMS
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The emerging biotechnology market has real-estate developers and communities scurrying to get a piece of the lucrative business.

After all, it brings highly educated workers with big paychecks to the area, demands sophisticated and expensively constructed facilities, requires little in government services and the industry is environmentally friendly. It provides a solid tax base for government, disposable income for shop owners and restaurants and can be a boon to a university looking to expand its research.

It's a major growth industry and Lee County has its sights set squarely on it.

But governments rarely have the expertise or money to attract biotech firms. John Madden, however, does.

The Colorado-based developer with a home on Captiva Island, is launching a \$500 million development on county land near the old Southwest Florida International airport,

Developer John Madden is luring medical industry with a \$500 million park

FLORIDA WEEKLY
The Madden Research Loop will not be the only biotech game in town. FGCU has some top scientists working on ways to cure infectious diseases. See page A9.

SEE BOOM, A8 ▶

Florida Weekly writers win top honors

FLORIDA WEEKLY STAFF REPORT
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Florida Weekly took home five prestigious awards last Friday at the Florida Press Association's 2007 Better Weekly Newspaper Awards ceremony in Orlando.

Writer Roger Williams won first place for his Humorous Column dealing with "Going Green."

Florida Weekly's design staff also took a first-place award for Front Page Makeup.

"The design staff consistently turns out top-notch section fronts each and every

week," said Creative Director Jim Dickerson.

Williams won a second-place award for Community History for his story about pirates in Southwest Florida entitled "Pirates...extremists all."

Florida Weekly's Executive Editor Jeff Cull took third place in In-depth News Reporting for a story about silly laws on the books in the Sunshine State called "Illegal?"

In the Environmental or Conservation category, Williams took honorable mention honors for "Everglades Prophecy,"

"It's a real honor to be singled out by our peers," said Cull. "I believe that the quality of

our writing is what makes readers pick us up at newsstands. They've certainly shown that they can compete with any newspaper in the state."

The News-Press won seven awards in the Florida Society of Newspaper Editors contest for daily newspapers, awarded the same day, including first-place in the "Freedom of Information" category.

The Florida Press Association's Better Weekly Newspaper Awards are open to monthly, semi-monthly, weekly, semi-weekly, and tri-weekly newspaper members.

The work was published between Jan. 1 and Dec. 31, 2007. ■

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An artist's rendering of the proposed Madden Research Loop.

COURTESY RENDERING

BOOM

From page 1

calling it Madden Research Loop. The development was strategically planned in close proximity to the airport, Florida Gulf Coast University and Interstate-75 to lure medical researchers, pharmaceutical companies and other biotech industries said Steve Brown, Madden's vice president of project development.

"Normally, you pay someone to do it for you and they're doing it," said Lee County Commissioner Tammy Hall. "It's really exciting. It's a great way to utilize that property out there."

Madden has partnered with the Lee County Port Authority — the Lee County Commission oversees the Authority — to lease land at the former site of airport terminal and support facilities.

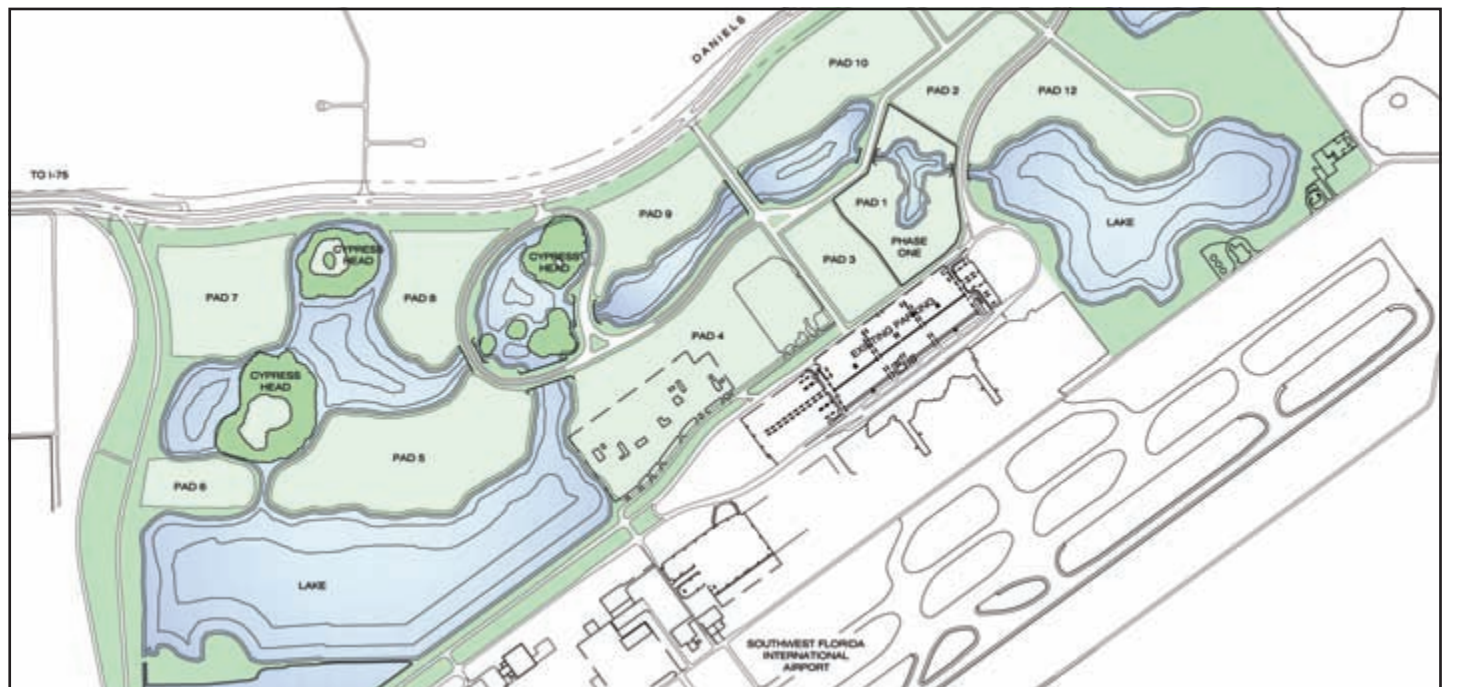
The agreement includes 25 acres of land owned by the Port Authority on which Madden will build 275,000 square feet of Class A office space: four buildings and a parking garage set around a lake at the north end of the airport's runway. There, scientists or executives visiting the site could land their jets and walk to work. The park will also include public nature trails and art, one of Madden's signatures.

"It's a very attractive location for research, for both U.S. and global medical device companies and pharmaceutical companies," said William Knab, chairman, Southwest Florida Chapter of BioFlorida. "When you look at areas like San Diego or the Boston area, this is exactly how they started — industry, academia, and location...I think when you add that number of highly educated professional people to the community it's gotta have positive effects all the way around. Their demands, from the school systems to everything else, will have higher standards and push the community to higher standards."



Brown

Brown said tenants at the park will



COURTESY RENDERING PARKER/MUDGETT/SMITH ARCHITECTS

Madden Research Loop on land at the old terminal at Southwest Florida International Airport.

enjoy a mutually beneficial relationship with local education and health care providers, and even others from around the region and the state.

"It's not a Lee County Project, it's a regional project," he said. "We do think this is a state project at the end of the day. We get the feeling that this part of the state has been neglected for too long."

The puzzle pieces

Ultimately it was Lee County's already solid base of growth, with an airport and schools like FGCU and Edison College, that sealed the deal for Madden, said Brown.

"That University is going to be a tremendous asset to the companies that come in here."

And vice versa, said Janusz Zalewski, Professor of computer science at FGCU.

"We'd have a much better opportunity to work on some interesting projects if that place really takes off," he said. "For me and for the faculty it would be a great way to connect to some potentially cutting edge research."

Commissioner Hall agreed.

"Now we can justify training biochemists because there's a job for them in this area," she said. "The goal is not

to have 75 percent of your economy in the Construction Industry. We want to see the opportunity for people to graduate from College and be able to have a job."

That's a point Lee County Commissioner Ray Judah underlined, calling the development's ramifications "monumental."

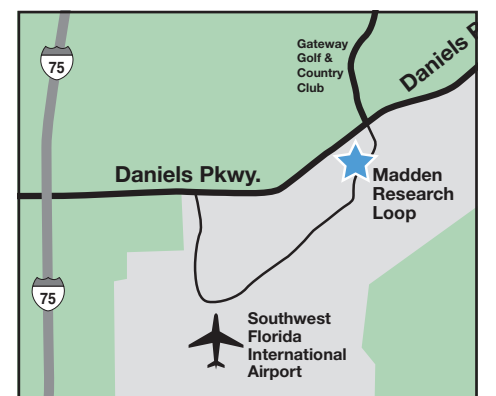
"Relying solely on agriculture, tourism and construction can be a very tenuous and vulnerable situation," he said. "Obviously the downturn in the housing market has demonstrated that fact. If one of the three legs to the stool propping up our economy falters, it hurts the entire economic base, so the Madden group really is a critical anchor in our efforts to broaden, deepen and diversify (the economy)."

Jennifer Berg, spokesperson for Lee County Office of Economic Development, agreed.

"It fits perfectly with our mission and the types of businesses we want to attract," she said. "They're bringing dollars into the local community but they're not dependant on the cycles of the local community."

The plan

Madden Research Loop will only take up a small portion of the Skyplex



FLORIDA WEEKLY MAP

Commercial Center on which it will sit.

Skyplex will continue to be 750 acres of undeveloped Port Authority land, until Gulf Coast Technology breaks ground on its 25-acre parcel in about six months. They have the option of leasing up to 140 acres more, but agreed to give the county ample room to do as they wish with the land.

That's because Brown is betting that future developments on the site will be of a similar quality to Madden Research Loop.

"We don't want to be the only development here but we want to set the standard," Brown said.

They are leading the way by using

the space only for life science, research companies, or other "high quality tenants;" having buildings certified by the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership Energy and Environmental Design Program; and leaving 60 percent of the land as open space.

Other unique qualities of Madden's development may be dictated by the buildings tenants and their employees. An estimated 800 positions for PhD qualified candidates at the research park will add some new faces to Lee County's still growing population of over 600,000, the largest in the region.

"Our tenants are not looking for cookie cutter," Brown said. "The scientific community is different. They want some unique things, like reading nooks in their buildings."

FGCU scientists on biotech's cutting edge

FLORIDA WEEKLY STAFF REPORT
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Florida Gulf Coast University received a \$1.5 million grant in the Spring to continue research that will help develop the United States' biodefense potential and provide new technologies with civilian applications.

It could also spell the cure for Dengue fever, influenza and a variety of other infectious diseases.

Professor Jose Barreto, and associate professors of biotechnology Sharon Isern and Scott Michael are researching ways to keep viruses from attaching themselves to human cells.

Isern and Michael have already applied for one patent - FGCU's first in its brief history. It could, after years of testing and government approvals, be the basis of a new drug.

The scientists work with low risk viruses - parts of infectious viruses that won't make you sick - out of the university's biosafety level-2 labs. When they need to have tests done on the real virus, a safe lab - where scientists don space suits in highly secure facilities, similar to the labs in the film "Outbreak" - does the work. Most of it goes to the University of Texas at Galveston, which houses one of the four level-4 labs in North America.

FGCU has established the capability to develop and test new biocides, platform sensor technologies, and binding/inactivating complexes that can be utilized both individually, and as combined technologies. These new technologies can be used to develop new pathogen detection, capture and destruction instruments. The Biotechnology Research Group at Florida Gulf Coast University has assembled a team of chemists, molecular biologists, and virologists to address these questions.

FGCU scientists believe their work will further develop research opportunities for students, contribute to meeting the national need for the pursuit of quantitative sciences and math, increase technologies that improve public health around the nation, enhance understanding of issues that will affect life for the rest of the century, and contribute to developing an informed public. ■

There might be libraries built into the lobby, for example. And the location is out of the way, at the end of meandering Chamberlain Road off Daniels Parkway. The millions of dollars worth of research equipment that will be kept there - Brown called the numbers "staggering" - will be kept secure by Port Authority and Lee County law enforcement.

BioFlorida Chairman Knab predicts the development will take off quickly.

"Once you light the match, things really go," he said

But although the project has practically unanimous support among public officials, it still must contend with Florida's tough development regulations. Brown said the project's momentum has gone through ups and downs as it waits to pass inspection by agencies like the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Bureau and U.S. Army Core of Engineers.

"Because of the process (in Florida), we have lost tenants," he said. "With water and environmental impacts it's a huge issue."

And since it's built at the airport, the company must pass inspection by at least one more level of bureaucracy, the Federal Aviation Administration, on its way to laying the first brick.

The first tenant, yet to be announced, is already waiting to move into the first 60,000 square foot building, Brown said.

Madden's credits

The John Madden Company, which was founded in the mid-1960s in Omaha, Neb., has developed nearly 10 million square feet of office and related space in Colorado, Nebraska, Arizona, California, Michigan, Wyoming and Iowa. Past clients include Prudential, Information Handling Services, Chevron USA, Rockwell Automotive, Allstate Insurance, Equitable Real Estate and Eastdil Advisors. The company offers integrated real estate development services including land acquisition, construction management, brokerage and leasing, asset management and property management.

The company has been headquartered in Denver's Greenwood Plaza since 1970, and has received national attention for the plaza's innovative approach to master planning and development and its mix of art, architecture and landscaping. Other award-winning projects developed by John Madden Company include the Harlequin Plaza in Denver, which is included in the architectural book "Plazas of the 20th Century;" Plaza Tower One, the tallest building in Southeast Denver and the winner of the Building Owners and Managers Association's Building of the Year Award; and the 150 West Jefferson building in Detroit, which has won several awards for its distinctive architectural character.

And Madden is no stranger to Southwest Florida. His team often invokes the spirit of Fort Myer's most famous historic researcher and entrepreneur, Thomas Edison.

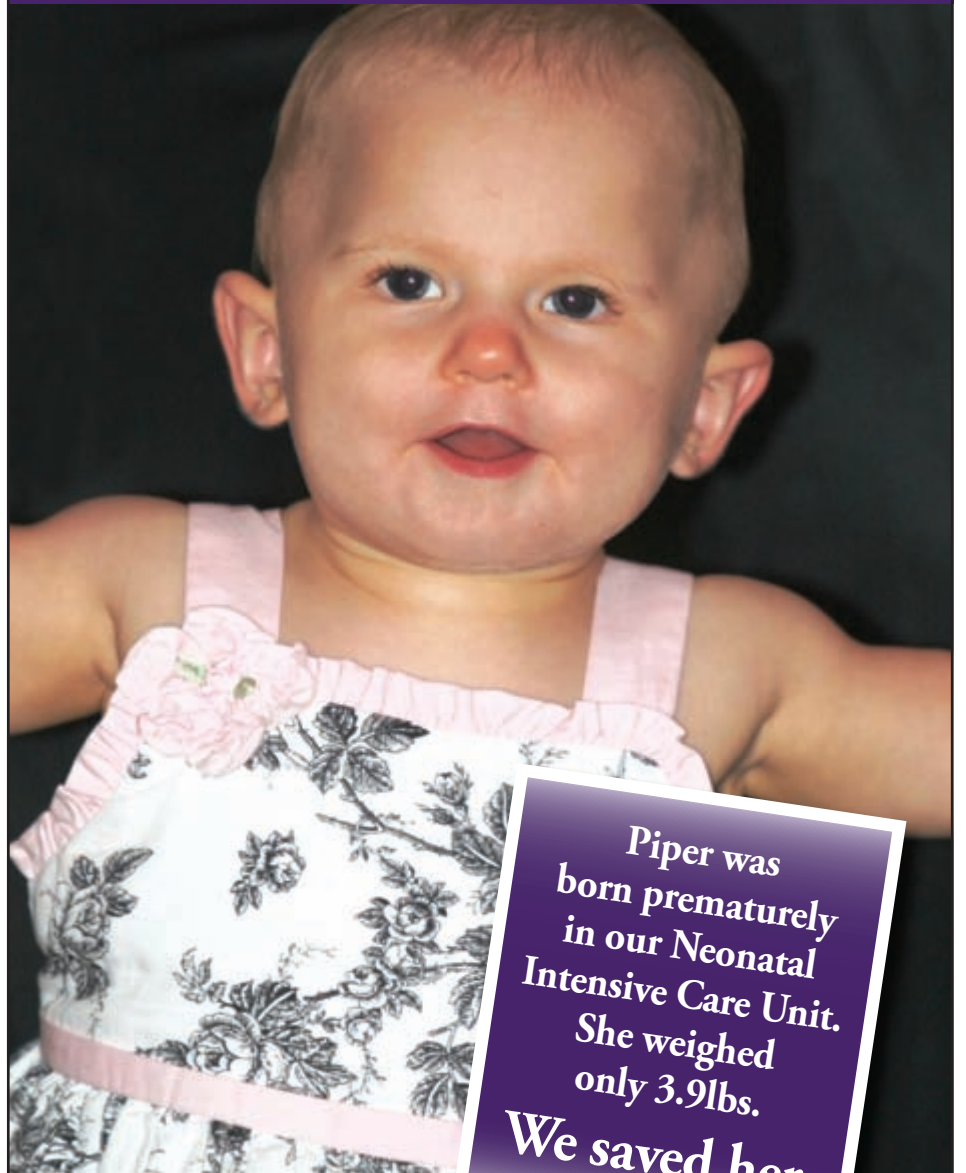
For example, when Madden described the research park project to 33 members of Leadership Lee County's 2008 class this spring, who were in Denver attending the Community Leadership Association's annual conference.

"It will be a phenomenal success right from the start," he said. "Southwest Florida has always had an innovative spirit. Thomas Edison came here to think, not to get away."

But Madden's company went further than just conjuring up old, local scientists. They hired Lee County companies to see the development through, rather than simply bringing in Madden's established teams from Colorado. Owen-Ames-Kimball/Steve Shimp is handling construction, for example, and Parker-Mudgett Smith will serve as architects.

"It'd be very easy for me to bring my Colorado crew, but they're not vested in this," Brown said. ■

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