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**MARKET ROUNDUP | D2**

Growing consumer confidence helps nudge stock prices higher.

**HOME PRICES | D2**

Strong rebound in California real estate helps lift key index.

**CONSUMERS | D2**

Confidence, spending perking up in new reports.

# Business

2,410.69 +6.33 Nasdaq	1,173.27 +0.05 S&P 500	10,907.42 +11.56 Dow Jones	1,901.78 +9.87 American Stock	683.94 +1.69 Russell 2000	12,205.71 +2.65 Dow Stk (Wilshire)	\$82.37 +50.20 Oil
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WEDNESDAY, MARCH 31, 2010



## Verizon to get iPhone

Apple reported ending exclusivity with AT&T

BY CHRIS UMPIERRE  
cumpierre@news-press.com

Longtime Verizon Wireless user Caitlin McCall has shied away from purchasing Apple's iPhone because of the iconic gadget's exclusivity deal with AT&T.

But now that Apple is reportedly ending its AT&T exclusivity agreement and working on an iPhone for Verizon, the nation's largest wireless carrier, McCall is changing her tune.

"I'd buy a Verizon iPhone because I've always thought Verizon gets better service than AT&T," the Estero resident said.

Apple will begin working on a Verizon iPhone later this year, according to the Wall Street Journal. It's unclear when the model will be available, but analysts say the potential deal could double

the number of iPhone users in the U.S. and alter a smart phone landscape dominated by one carrier.

AT&T, which activated 3.1 million new iPhones in the fourth quarter of 2009, has 43 percent of all U.S. smart phone customers compared with 23 percent for Verizon, according to comScore Inc.

"The new competition from Verizon may cause AT&T to push even harder to increase their network's capability and reliability,

so they may retain unhappy customers," said Bryan Gonzalez of the Entertainment Technology Center in Los Angeles.

"In the end, the increase in available phones across carriers will only help consumers see lower rates and higher quality products in the marketplace."

The iPhone could help Verizon's wireless unit gain as many as 3.5 million new contract customers in the first six months

See IPHONE D2

### BUSINESS DIGEST

**Financial firm moves to new installations**

Private Asset Management Group LLC has moved to a new location in Fort Myers. The offices of financial adviser John A. Nicolosi and Certified Financial Planner Carl F. Nicolosi are located at 14311 Metropolis Ave., Suite 205. Securities and advisory services are offered through the Commonwealth Financial Network. Call 768-7007 or visit pamg-llc.com for more information.

**CRS president named to chamber board**

Carol P. Conway, president of CRS Technology Consultants in Cape Coral, has been appointed to the board of the Greater Fort Myers Chamber of Commerce.

**Pain management firm hires new COO**

Linda de Vasquez has joined Advanced Pain Management & Spine Specialists as corporate operating officer. She has worked as a health care executive in Lee County for 19 years. The interventional pain management medical practices are located in south Fort Myers and Cape Coral.

**Mastermind groups offer life coach**

Lee County Mastermind Group and Rich Life MasterMind Alliance recently have formed to help members realize their full potential in their business and personal lives. The free groups will be led by Jasse "Jazz" Matasse, a life coach, speaker and hypnotist. The Rich Life MasterMind Alliance began March 25. The MasterMind Group will meet from noon to 1:30 p.m. April 1. Both groups are held in the meeting room of the Church of Spiritual Light, 1939 Park Meadows Dr., Unit 1, Fort Myers. To register, e-mail jasse.success@gmail.com or call 503-0619.



Shoppers browse electronics merchandise Monday at the remodeled Goodwill Industries of Southwest Florida store at 4162 Palm Beach Blvd. in east Fort Myers.

## Goodwill to help depressed area

BY LAURA RUANE  
lruane@news-press.com

At about 10,000 square feet, the newly renovated Goodwill resale shop is nearly twice the size of its former east Fort Myers digs.

But that's only part of Goodwill Industries of Southwest Florida's plans for the economically depressed Palm Beach Boulevard corridor. Still to come in the \$1 million expansion and renovation are offices and classrooms for Goodwill's latest Job-Link center as well as for other service agencies.

"Our goal forever has been helping people with disabilities or with other disadvantages gain employment," said Kirsten Britt O'Donnell, local Goodwill spokeswoman. "What's changed is Goodwill no longer focuses only on helping people find a job; it's also about helping families deal with their responsibilities." O'Donnell said. These could include referrals to child day care, food assistance and other needs.

Goodwill is working with the United Way House in east Fort Myers to make space for social service agencies for which United Way has no room.

Meanwhile, Goodwill Job-Link centers provide training in the so-called "soft skills," including



The newly remodeled Goodwill Industries store on Palm Beach Boulevard in east Fort Myers boasts approximately 10,000 square feet of retail space — about double that of the former operation. Construction is under way in the east side of the complex for the offices of Goodwill's Job-Link program and other services aimed at strengthening families in the economically depressed area.

resume writing, online searches for open positions, and interview coaching. Other Job-Link centers opened regionally within the past year in Clewiston and Fort Charlotte. Bonita Springs' United Way House and Goodwill headquarters in North Fort Myers also are Job-Link sites.

Job-Link's regional rollout began June 2009. It has served more than 600 people from then through December.

Stephen R. Bowen Construction is contractor for the Job-Link office complex adjacent to its thrift shop at 4162 Palm Beach Blvd. That's expected to be ready sometime in May.

Goodwill sees employment assistance as pivotal to the region's recovery and

to "strengthening the family," O'Donnell said. Jobless data specific to east Fort Myers wasn't available. However, Lee County sustained a 13.9 percent unemployment in February. That's down from 14.2 percent in January but still represented almost 39,000 people looking for work, according to data from Florida's Agency for Workforce Innovation.

Business owners along Palm Beach Boulevard as yet see few signs the recession is lifting. "I used to see a lot of construction people," said Samir Syed, owner of the Foam & Fizz convenience store. "Now, many of them are out of jobs."

See GOODWILL D2

**UPDATED STORES**

Goodwill Industries of Southwest Florida operates 24 thrift stores throughout the region. Six have gotten renovations within the past 18 months. They are at:

- East Fort Myers: 4162 Palm Beach Blvd., Fort Myers, 239-694-4915
- South Fort Myers: 16523 Island Park Road, 239-482-6102
- Bonita Springs: Bonita Springs Plaza, 8951 Bonita Beach Road, Suite 570, 239-390-1061
- Naples: 1687 Pine Ridge Road, 239-592-1586
- Clewiston: 969 W. Sugarland Highway, 863-983-2774
- Fort Charlotte: 2325 Tamiami Trail, 941-625-3449.

**LEARN MORE**

Get details on Job-Link by calling Goodwill Industries of Southwest Florida Inc. at 239-995-2106.

## PBS&J tops list to refit airport

Page Field builder to get nod in May

BY LAURA RUANE  
lruane@news-press.com

PBS&J, a national firm with a Fort Myers office, won a key recommendation Tuesday for redeveloping the southwest quadrant of Page Field General Aviation Airport.

After hearing company presentations, the Airports Special Management Committee ranked PBS&J No. 1 for the job of project manager, followed by Hole Montes, Johnson Engineering, Kinley-Horn and Hanson Professional Services.

The redevelopment of the nearly 23-acre parcel is expected to occur in several phases, and currently has no estimated budget or timetable.

"As we see . . . demand for aircraft parking increase, I feel very confident we will secure grant funding and do the projects as demand warrants," said Mark Fisher, deputy executive director-development, for Lee County Port Authority.

Job one will be design and permitting work for realigning South Road, which runs east from U.S. 41. County airports chief Bob Ball said this will ease concerns about car and truck traffic from Page Park community residents and users of the Jerry Brooks

See AIRPORT D2

**More changes for Page**

A portion of South Road will be realigned in a redevelopment planned for the southwest quadrant of Page Field General Aviation Airport in Fort Myers.



THE NEWS-PRESS

The sunny weather, white sandy beaches and upscale lifestyle are just a few reasons to live here.



Homes starting in the high 300's

## Senate approves pension bill

BY BILL COTTERELL  
The News-Press  
Capital Bureau

TALLAHASSEE — Government employees would begin paying into the Florida Retirement System, under a bill approved Wednesday by the Florida Senate.

"The worst thing we can do to state employees, who haven't had a pay raise in five years, is to tell them we're giving them a salary reduction," said Sen. Al Lawson, D-Tallahassee. "We're dipping

pension fund lost about \$16 billion on investments with the market slump the past two years, "but that's not the employees' fault."

The bill, SB 2022, by Sen. JD Alexander, R-Lake Wales, would require employees to pay one-quarter of 1 percent of their salaries into the FRS. Alexander said the pension plan has been entirely employer-paid since 1974 for most employees.

But he said the state, county, city and regional agencies that make up the FRS can't afford to pay the

"Certainly, this is something that none of us likes to do," said Alexander, who chairs the Senate budget committee. "Based on the 2009 public-funds survey, most public-sector plans (in other states) require employee contributions. Those are generally in the 2.5 to 10 percent of gross salary range."

He also said "virtually every private plan I'm aware of in Florida requires employee contribution." Alexander said the contribution rate under his bill would