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## Local car dealer Galloway Jr. helped the region's hungry

David Dorsey Fort Myers News-Press  
USA TODAY NETWORK - FLORIDA

Sam Galloway Jr. had gathered the appropriate players. They assembled around the second-floor conference room table at his car dealership, Galloway Ford Lincoln, off Boy Scout Road in Fort Myers.

About 20 people had convened early in 1998, not to talk about Ford F-150 pickup trucks, Galloway's beloved 1906 Ford Model N or the myriad of other vehicles on the lot for sale. He had gathered Florida Depart-

ment of Transportation officials and attorneys, his own attorneys and other interested parties and officials over the widening of Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard in Fort Myers.

Widening the road meant demolishing some businesses and buildings alongside it, including the soup kitchen he helped establish to feed the hungry in 1984, known today as the non-profit organization Community Cooperative, for which he's been the chairman

See GALLOWAY, Page 8A



Sam Galloway Jr. NEWS-PRESS FILE

## With many Florida restaurants open at 100% capacity, visitors are finding themselves shell-shocked and unready



Patrons dine at Ford's Garage in downtown Fort Myers on Feb. 25. AMANDA INSCORE/THE NEWS-PRESS

# Restaurant shock

Annabelle Tometich Fort Myers News-Press  
USA TODAY NETWORK - FLORIDA

After Kris Atteberry's plane landed at Southwest Florida International Airport last week, his first stop wasn't Nino's for a slice or Pott's for a burger. It was CenturyLink Sports Complex for a COVID-19 test followed by a drive to his hotel room to await the results.

On his way, Atteberry, a radio broadcaster for the Minnesota Twins, passed the Twin Peaks restaurant in San Carlos Park. He saw the packed patio, the diners spilling out the front doors.

He realized he wasn't in Kansas — or Minneapolis — anymore.

"Not a parking spot in the lot," Atteberry said, laughing. "I was honestly a little shell-shocked and like, 'Oh jeez, this is going to be a long week.'"

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People enjoy art in Naples. JON AUSTRIA/NAPLES DAILY NEWS

## RSW land in play for Skyplex development project

### Initiative trying to move job growth north

Bill Smith  
Fort Myers News-Press  
USA TODAY NETWORK - FLORIDA

An initiative to develop Skyplex on 1,159 acres around Southwest Florida International Airport was cleared for takeoff by county commissioners Tuesday.

The commercial development foreseen by county and Lee Port Authority officials is part of an effort, beyond shops and stores, to bring in commercial enterprises that will be hiring people who live locally or relocate in Southwest Florida.

Skyplex already has a shopping center and a handful of businesses, but the land surrounding Southwest Florida International Airport will be marketed to companies worldwide by stressing the advantages of locating in Southwest Florida.

Marketing pitches to potential tenants have included touting Skyplex as being in a growing market within 200 miles of nearly half the state's population.

Lee County Economic Development Director John Talmadge told county commissioners that a well-developed commercial zone centered on the airport will put jobs closer to home for many residents.

"Our workforce principally lives in the central area of Fort Myers and out in Lehigh Acres; our retirement communities reside more to our south," Talmadge told commissioners meeting as the Lee Port Authority board.

"It's an initiative to move some of our job growth north. Most of the job growth (now) is south Lee and Collier," Talmadge said. "Now we see a

See SKYPLEX, Page 9A



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### USA TODAY

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An artist's rendering pictures the potential for the Lee Port Authority's Skyplex when fully developed. LEE PORT AUTHORITY RENDERING

## Skyplex

Continued from Page 1A

tremendous effort to move that north in the larger airport and also north of the river so that Cape Coral and North Fort Myers have access to the jobs."

Land near the airport has become popular for development of projects that are creating jobs.

"We have 83 distinct projects that are either in development, permitting or under construction," he said. "That represents 1.7 million square feet and 6,500 jobs."

Of the 1,150 acres that will be marketed, 870 are targeted for office complexes, science and technology companies, corporate headquarters and other uses.

Another 280 acres will be targeted for aviation-related users, with about 75 acres close enough to have access to the RSW runway.

Port Authority Communications Director Vicki Moreland said there has already been interest from potential tenants that would provide maintenance and other services to airline fleets.

Port Authority Executive Director Ben Siegel said one approach to the development of the property will probably include dividing the property into districts. Each district would have an identity that would be transferred to tenants.

"We will hire a nationally recognized firm to help not only find a market but also define what those districts are and what should be the first district to develop," Siegel said. "We are not experts in this real estate development, but the firm we bring in will be."

Commissioner Ray Sandelli, who has worked in commercial real estate for decades, strongly backed the idea of hiring a known firm to lure tenants to Skyplex.

"Part of this process right now is to get diversification to our economic base," Sandelli said.

But Sandelli also warned against bringing in a company from far away to lead the efforts to attract companies to Southwest Florida.

"The point is if you have a national firm and they don't have a presence here, I'd be very concerned about it," Sandelli said.

Siegel agreed that national credentials for the firm marketing Skyplex are important but only one factor in hiring a company for the potential lucrative work.

"I agree their expertise has to be national, but it needs to have that local understanding of what the project is," Siegel said.

Commissioners gave informal approval to the port authority to begin looking for an expert in commercial real estate to market the property on a commission basis. The meeting was a workshop session, in which no votes are taken.

## US bio weapons detection system audit finds major gaps

Ben Fox  
ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — A U.S. program created after the 2001 anthrax attacks to help detect biological weapons provided protection in less than half the states and couldn't detect many of the known threats, according to a report released Thursday.

The program known as BioWatch, which described itself in a mission statement as a nationwide early-warning system, was capable of detecting only six of 14 biological agents known to be potential threats. It also left detection equipment exposed and unguarded, the Office of Inspector General for the Department of Homeland Security found.

"Without implementing changes to address BioWatch's challenges, the United States' ability to prepare for, detect, and respond to a potential bioterrorism attack is impeded, which could result in significant loss of human life," the inspector general concluded.

BioWatch, which is run by a component of Homeland Security, was created in 2003 in response to the deadly mailing of anthrax-laced envelopes to news media and government offices two years earlier. It has faced criticism for years.

Intended to supplement existing surveillance programs, BioWatch consists of air sampling equipment and lab facilities around the nation. It was meant to reduce the time it takes to recognize an attack by monitoring for known biological agents. It costs about \$80 million per year to run, according to previous government reports.

The inspector general noted, however, that it has detection capability in just 22 of the 50 states.

Contrary to billing, "BioWatch does not operate a nationwide early warning system," the report said.

Previous reviews have faulted the program's computer network security and said it lacked reliable data about its capabilities for detecting an attack, among other problems. The Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction Office, which runs BioWatch, in 2019 ranked lowest across 420 government agen-



The U.S. created BioWatch in 2003 in response to the mailing of anthrax-laced envelopes to news media and government offices two years earlier. MANUEL BALCE CENETA/AP FILE

cies, for employee satisfaction and commitment, according to a report by the General Accountability Office.

Former Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge and former Connecticut Sen. Joe Lieberman, co-chairs of the Bipartisan Commission on Biodefense, have called for the replacement of BioWatch, which they say relies on winds blowing in the optimal direction and can take up to 36 hours to provide evidence of a biological agent.

The new report, based on an audit of the program conducted last year, found that BioWatch no longer carries out routine full-scale exercises, which in previous years had uncovered a range of problems with preparedness for a possible attack.

The Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction Office generally concurred with the findings in the report and said it is working to address problems raised in the audit. But its director also defended the overall value of the program. BioWatch is integral to the office's mission "and serves as the department's best tool to effectively prepare for, detect and respond to bioterrorism threats," David Richardson, an assistant secretary at DHS who runs the office, wrote in a letter accompanying the report.

To address its coverage of the U.S., the office said it plans to work with the Los Alamos National Laboratory, which conducted the 2003 assessment upon which the office based the deployment of its monitoring equipment.

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