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**JULY 2017**

**THIS MONTH: CF Celebrates Timber Grads**

Six men received their certificate of completion for graduating through the College of Central Florida’s inaugural Timber Harvesting Equipment Program.

The graduates – Guy Bowers, Garrett Bowker, Thomas Conrad, Hunter Matus, Charles McCullar and Joshua Randolph – were awarded certificates June 30 at a small ceremony in Chiefland. The group was a part of history, which Rayanne Giddis – provost of CF’s Levy Center – acknowledged. The program launched this year and is a first of its kind in the state, serving as a model for future programs, she said.

Program participants went through eight weeks of classroom and in the field instruction on a variety of topics, including basic forest management, harvesting operations, safety and equipment operation. Numerous companies and others were recognized for supplying machinery and equipment, fuel, training and assistance.

Program instructor Bryan Olmert of the Loncala timber company said all six graduates are great guys who gave a lot of themselves to go through the class, and they have bright futures.

**NEWS AND NOTES**

- **Jobless rate holds steady:** The tri-county area of Citrus, Levy and Marion counties saw its unemployment rate hold at 4.9 for May, while locally the labor force saw a small decrease. There were 16,137 employed in Levy County at the end of the months, while the labor force sat at 16,860 (down six); the unemployment rate stayed at 4.3 percent from the previous month.
- **Map is live:** The NCBD Council has made a valuable addition to [naturecoast.org](http://naturecoast.org) with a new [interactive transportation map](#). The map highlights the key transportation systems on a national, regional and county level to give proximities to major cities, and detail key interstates and highways, airports and seaports, and railroads.
- **Change of plans:** Pegasus Farms in Bronson continues working on the construction of its aquaponics system, integrating blue tilapia and with floating beds of seeds to produce herbs and vegetables. It’s been a four-year journey nearing the finish line; while the farm was initially going to construct greenhouses to produce crops, it is switching things up by utilizing LED lighting in buildings. The growing technique has been used successfully in Europe and elsewhere.
- **Hiring Events:** CareerSource Citrus Levy Marion is hosting several hiring events across the region this month; click on this [calendar of events](#) to see what’s happening near you.
- **Economic scorecard:** More than 400 jobs have been created in Levy County over the last year; that’s up from 43 the previous year. Click [here](#) to see the latest scorecard and compare to other counties.



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**OUR VALUABLE PARTNERS**

- [CareerSource Citrus Levy Marion](#)
- [Enterprise Florida](#)
- [Levy County](#)
- [North Florida Economic Development Partnership](#)

**ADD IT TO YOUR CALENDARS**

<p><b>JULY 5 &amp; 18</b></p> <p>Levy Board of County Commissioners regular meeting</p> <p>9 am</p> <p>County Courthouse, Bronson</p>	<p>NCBDC board/RESTORE Act Advisory Committee meeting</p> <p><b>THERE IS NO JULY MEETING SCHEDULED</b></p>	<p><b>JULY 13</b></p> <p><a href="#">MRMA Summer Speaker Series/meeting</a></p> <p>1:30 am – 1 pm</p> <p>College of Central Florida Ewers Century Center Room 107, Ocala</p>	<p><b>July 20</b></p> <p>North Florida Economic Development Partnership board meeting</p> <p>9:30 am – noon, Baker County Extension Office, 1025 W. Macclenny Ave, Macclenny, FL</p>
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