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Pursuit Boats' expansion to triple Fort Pierce campus

Fort Pierce/August 29, 2019 – Pursuit Boats, one of St. Lucie County's largest manufacturers, broke ground today for the first phase of an expansion that will ultimately increase their local employment to 600 and bring their campus footprint to 100 acres of land with 773,000 square feet of manufacturing and support space.



Groundbreaking ceremonies were held at the company's 213,000-square-foot facility on Saint Lucie Boulevard in Fort Pierce. The three-phase expansion will add an additional 569,430 square feet of manufacturing space with three manufacturing and support operations complexes. The expansion's first phase will add a 182,115-square-foot facility.

"Pursuit Boats has been manufacturing our award-winning, luxury fishing boats in Fort Pierce since 1983. After 37 years here, we are a multi-generational employer. We, and our 400 current employees, are thrilled to be able to stay and expand here at home, something we've wanted to do for a long time," said Pursuit Boats President Bruce Thompson.



The Pursuit series of fishing boats was introduced in 1977 in Holland, Michigan. Demand for the popular boats led to the construction of a 75,000-square-foot manufacturing facility in Fort Pierce in 1983. Pursuit expanded several times over the years and, in 2018, the company was acquired by Malibu

Boats. “Malibu’s investment and market demand led to an imperative need for expansion of our manufacturing operations,” said Thompson.

“Manufacturing has been and will continue to be at the core of our business development efforts,” said St. Lucie County Administrator Howard Tipton. “Anytime you have a great company like Pursuit looking to expand, we know we have to earn the opportunity for them to expand here. I’m proud of the way our economic development team came together to provide Pursuit exactly what they were looking for, exactly when they needed it.”

“This was truly a team effort with everyone – multiple county departments, Pursuit’s leadership team and the Economic Development Council of St. Lucie County (EDC) – focused on the goal of retaining and expanding the county’s business base,” said Pete Tesch, EDC president. “Targeted industries such as marine manufacturing provide high-value careers for St. Lucie’s residents and are an essential part of our local economy.”

The expansion application was fast-tracked through the county. “Keeping Pursuit Boats here in St. Lucie County is very important to everyone. I am so proud of county staff’s response. The application received an unheard-of six-week approval,” said St. Lucie County Commission Chair Linda Bartz. “This was particularly impressive because our environmental resources staff had to work very hard to ensure the preservation of threatened and endangered species habitat.”

Pursuit’s site plan encompasses a 111.42-acre site and a 42-acre scrub jay habitat area, of which 32 acres will be donated to the county as a preserve area for threatened and endangered species. Pursuit has also extended support for county acquisition of an additional 10 acres south of the development through the Environmentally Sensitive Lands Program.

“The Pursuit Boat manufacturing expansion serves as a model for sustainable development practices and exemplifies the ecological and economic benefits possible when private industry and local government work hand in hand with a solution-based mindset,” said Amy Griffin, director of the county’s Environmental Resources Department. “This coordination will result in the creation of a 42-acre preserve which will perpetually protect critical habitat and add a travel corridor for the federally threatened Florida scrub jay within northern St. Lucie County.”

“Projects like this one demonstrate how early collaboration can lead to solutions that work for our entire community,” said Leslie Olson, director of the county’s Planning and Development Services

Department. “Not only did working with St. Lucie County staff from the very beginning help Pursuit avoid many of the typical delays of a complex economic development project, it also allowed us to create a sanctuary protecting the county’s unique environmental resources.”

“Our environmental preservation partnership with St. Lucie County will help match our legacy on the water with our environmental stewardship on the land,” said Thompson.

For more information about Pursuit Boats, visit <http://www.pursuitboats.com>.

About Pursuit Boats

For more than half a century, Pursuit Boats has been building high-quality, luxury offshore fishing boats using distinct engineering and production processes championed by the Pursuit family of employees. Pursuit is the recent recipient of a prestigious 2018 NMMA Innovation Award and has earned the NMMA CSI award since its inception. Acquired by Malibu Boats in 2018, Pursuit offers Offshore Center Console, Sport and Dual Console models from 23 to 40 feet in length. Pursuit Boats are manufactured in a state-of-the-art 250,000-square-foot facility in Fort Pierce, Florida. For more information, please visit <http://www.pursuitboats.com>.

About the Economic Development Council of St. Lucie County

The EDC is a private, not-for-profit organization dedicated to promoting economic vitality in St. Lucie County through the attraction, retention and expansion of businesses in the community. The EDC works in partnership with local governments and the private sector to advance its goals of creating more and better-paying jobs for residents, broadening the tax base and improving St. Lucie County’s economic quality of life. Contact the EDC at 772.336.6250 or <http://www.youredc.com>.

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