

Press Conference Statement

Damon Shelor; Community Council of Lehigh Acres, Feb. 9, 2009

Recent articles in local and national media publications along with the announcement of President Obama's visit to Ft. Myers and possible tour of our community has focused substantial negative attention on Lehigh Acres.

Lehigh Acres is a community that has existed for over 40 years and is not a suburb that just popped up during the recent building boom. Lehigh Acres has a history, a history that is similar to many communities in Florida that were started in the early 60's and 70's. One thing that distinguishes Lehigh Acres from other communities is its size, there are more than 130,000 buildable lots in Lehigh covering 96 square miles. The history of Lehigh has been one of slow growth, affordable living and a quiet "country" atmosphere.

The building boom of recent years, speculative lending practices and exuberant spending have led this nation to the economic crisis today and Lehigh Acres with its affordable living conditions reaped the benefits short term but now finds itself "ground zero" in the foreclosure debacle. Yes, Lehigh Acres has its problems.

BUT,

Lehigh Acres is populated with people that don't give up! We may not agree at times but we don't shrink away from challenges or controversy. Recent media attention concerning our economic status and sensational headlines like "Future Slum of Lee County" has triggered a homegrown response.

Lehigh Acres has become the poster child for the damage done to our nation during this recent economic cycle. We, citizens of Lehigh Acres, stand united today, prepared to be the "Poster Child" for how President Obama's economic stimulus plan can save America's Hometowns.

Thank you.