

# BUSINESS BRIEFS

## Girard Environmental Services opens Fort Myers office

► Girard Environmental Services, a full-service commercial landscaping company based in Seminole County, recently opened a new branch in Fort Myers. The branch will be managed by Wade Smith and is located on 1975 Ortiz Ave. The opening is part of an expansion plan that includes a total of 11 branch offices throughout Florida. The company is also scheduled to open locations in Tampa, Boynton Beach and Jacksonville before April 2009.

“In difficult economic times, most of our major competitors have downsized and cut costs to maintain their profit margin,” said Rick Girard, chief executive officer of the company. “Unfortunately, this means they are cutting both customer service and customer satisfaction. As a privately owned firm, we take the opposite approach. We have been able to boost our market share by increasing customer service and satisfaction.”

Despite the downturn in the economy, GES’s business continues to grow. Since January 2008, the company has signed more than 150 new properties to its portfolio and its revenue has increased by almost 25 percent. As a result of this growth, GES currently provides weekly landscaping maintenance to more than 425 commercial properties.

With more convenient locations across the state, GES has been able to cut expenses associated with vehicles, equipment, maintenance and fuel. As such, the company is able to spend more of its time on the service it provides — not on the road. ■

## Stevens Construction collecting toys

► Stevens Construction Inc. is collecting toy donations for the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots Program. Located at 6208 Whiskey Creek Drive, Stevens Construction is among the many businesses in Southwest Florida that will serve as drop-off sites for those interested in donating to the program. The company is collecting



new, unwrapped toys for children ranging from infant to 13 years old. Donations are due by December 12. Toys for Tots distributes toys to more than 2,500 needy children in Lee County. This year, the program expects a 28 percent increase in participation over 2007. For more information on Toys for Tots, visit [www.toysfortots.org](http://www.toysfortots.org) ■



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