

TODAY

'MC 101': Learn from ground up

So you think you know all about the Treasure Coast?

OK, smart guy. What's the MLATC?

If you don't have a clue, maybe you'd better sign up for "Martin County 101," a class exploring the area's history, environment, development, economic climate and issues.

Developed by the not-for-profit Sustainable Martin Alliance, two classes are scheduled:

► 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. April 7.

► 5:30 to 9 p.m. April 8 and 9.

Both will be at the Martin County Fairgrounds on Dixie Highway in Stuart.

OK, there are other programs for people who want to learn about Martin County — "Leadership Martin County" sponsored by the Stuart-Martin County Chamber of Commerce and "Martin County Cares" presented by county staffers.

"Our speakers lay out the facts, without making judgment calls, and let the participants figure things out for themselves," said Stacy Ranieri, executive director of Sustainable Martin Alliance.

Scheduled speakers in-



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clude John Wakeman of the Martin County Environmental Studies Center; Dan Martinelli of the Treasure Coast Wildlife Hospital; Gary Roderick, Martin County Office of Water Quality; Nicki van Vonno, Martin County Growth Management; Ted Astolfi, Business Development Board of Martin County; James Vojcsik, United Way of Martin County; and Carol Cloud Bailey, director of the Martin County Cooperative Extension Service.

About 200 people attended last year's session, Ranieri said, from newly arrived residents to folks whose families have lived here for generations.

And because many asked for more information about specific topics, the organization has come up with "Martin County 201."

"It will be more in-depth," Ranieri said. "Each topic that we hit on in 'Martin County 101' will get its own day-long seminar."

For instance, for the session on the environment,

participants will follow the flow of water from Lake Okeechobee to the Atlantic Ocean and see how it affects the ecosystems along the way.

"Martin County 101" is limited to 50 people per session, but it isn't limited to Martin County residents.

"There are a lot of people who live in St. Lucie County but work and have business interests in Martin County," Ranieri said.

If the sessions fill up or you can't make the assigned dates, don't worry: Organizers plan to offer it again in August.

The cost is \$25 per person, which includes food and beverages.

To register or for more information, call the Sustainable Martin Alliance at 223-6312 or e-mail sustainablemartin@aol.com.

By the way: The MLATC is the Marine Industry Association of the Treasure Coast.

"They're a bigger player in the area than most people know," Ranieri said.

Most people, not "Martin County 101" graduates.

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