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## **IMG Academies to add 65 employees in Manatee County**

BRADENTON, FL – Manatee County’s economy continues to score new jobs as IMG Academies plans to add 65 employees over the next three years with the help of local incentives approved today by the Manatee Board of County Commissioners, according to Eric Basinger, executive director of the Manatee Economic Development Council (EDC).

IMG Academies – the world’s largest and most advanced multi-sport training facility for athletic, academic and personal development – will need the additional employees to staff new programs, including the IMG Madden Football Academy, IMG Lacrosse Academy and additional upcoming programs. IMG also plans to construct a 50,000 sq. ft. dormitory in 2012, with a total of \$25 million in capital investments on the campus in the next five years, according to Chip McCarthy, director of finance, planning and development at IMG Academies.

“To continue serving as a world leader in athletic, academic and personal development, we needed to strategically expand and enhance our facilities and programs, while providing employees to staff new initiatives,” McCarthy said. “This grant not only helps our growth and assists our efforts to provide a significant economic impact, but confirms that Manatee County fully supports its valued businesses and wants to ensure a bright future for the county’s economy and workforce.”

Sports performance is a targeted industry in the EDC’s five-year strategy to bring more jobs to Manatee County residents and create more wealth in the community, Basinger said. The EDC helped facilitate IMG’s application for county incentives.

“IMG Academies is a world-renowned sports performance destination for professional and amateur athletes,” Basinger said. “In addition to the jobs IMG provides, the academy’s students fuel the local economy through rental accommodations, retail purchases and restaurant visits.”

IMG Academies has played a significant role in the area’s economy since opening as a tennis-only establishment with a handful of students more than 30 years ago. Since then, the Academy has expanded to seven sports, while attracting more than 12,000 youth, adult, collegiate and professional athletes from more than 80 countries annually. Additional events like this summer’s 2010 High School National Championships and yearly Eddie Herr International Junior Tennis Championships will bring thousands more to the area.

“Bringing good jobs to Manatee County residents is vital to our community’s sustainability,” said Ed Hunzeker, Manatee County administrator. “Performance-based incentives for adding good jobs help us attract and retain employers that our community wants and needs.”

The county incentives included up to \$65,000 over five years, and IMG only receives funds as jobs are provided. Jobs provided by the company must meet or exceed an annual average wage of \$38,619, which is 115 percent of the average wage in Manatee County.

**About the EDC**

The Economic Development Council, a division of the Manatee Chamber of Commerce, develops and implements programs to attract new high-impact businesses and to assist in the retention and growth of targeted existing businesses in Manatee County. Information: [www.ManateeEDC.com](http://www.ManateeEDC.com).

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