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## International guests tour Punta Gorda five years after Charley

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**CHARLOTTE COUNTY:** A handful of foreign dignitaries got a chance to see the progress Punta Gorda made since Hurricane Charley on a rainy Wednesday afternoon.

Mexican consul Alonzo Martin, who is based in Miami and had never been to Punta Gorda, was impressed.

"Not every town has this way of being, this spirit," Martin said.

City leaders invited consuls from Mexico, Iceland and Germany. They took a trolley tour to some of the rebuilt areas of the city, including River Forest Village - a mobile home park destroyed by Charley five years ago.

It was the same place President Bush toured during his visit to the devastated city August 15, 2004.

"We want to show how much we've changed in five years, the resilience of the people and just how we are ready for new business, new residents and new visitors from their countries," said John Wright, executive director of the Punta Gorda Chamber of Commerce.

Afterward, they met for a reception at the new Lashley Crab House in Lashley Park.

By [Grant Boxleitner](#)



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