Speedway ready for the green flag following $400 million DAYTONA Rising renovation

Economic Development Quarterly goes digital!

Welcome to the first all-digital edition of Volusia County Economic Development Quarterly, a publication of the Volusia County Division of Economic Development. After 14 years as a printed publication, EDQ is now offered exclusively as a digital publication, so you can read it on your electronic devices at your convenience. As always, we welcome your comments, suggestions and story ideas. Email Joanne Magley, jmagley@volusia.org.
Speedway ready for the green flag following $400 million DAYTONA Rising renovation

What a difference a few years, $400 million, and millions of hours of labor can make. With Speedweeks about to begin, excitement is building over the grand debut of the new Daytona International Speedway. Completion of the DAYTONA Rising project — the re-imagining of an American icon that is Daytona International Speedway — has resulted in the world’s first motorsports stadium.

The project broke ground on July 5, 2013 and was completed in time for the Rolex 24 At Daytona last month. Since then, punch list items have been addressed and the motorsports stadium is ready to welcome loyal NASCAR fans for the 2016 edition of the Daytona 500 on February 21. The spectacular new complex is a 21st century salute to the dream and determination of William “Big Bill” France, whose vision for the original Speedway came to fruition when he built the original Daytona International Speedway in 1959. Since then, NASCAR has become a wildly popular and exciting spectator sport with fans around the world.

The new motorsports stadium makes a stunning visual statement even from the outside along International Speedway Boulevard. Nearly a mile of superstructure features sleek paneling and colorful sponsor graphics surrounding five fan “injectors” and the “neighborhoods” fans discover once inside the complex. There are more than 1,200 video screens in the complex, so fans need not miss a moment of the on-track excitement when they wander from their seats. Inside the stadium, fans will find a seemingly endless expanse of colorful seating, 101,500 permanent, wider, more comfortable seats. More than 60 luxury suites with trackside views and a completely revamped experience await corporate guests and sponsors.

The massive project generated approximately 6,300 jobs, $300 million in labor income and $85 million in tax revenue.

“The thing about this project is: We’re on schedule. We’re on budget,” said Joie Chitwood III, Daytona International Speedway president. “I’m not sure whether other projects of this size and magnitude could say that.”

Throughout the DAYTONA Rising project, the team at Daytona International Speedway has put a premium on communicating its plans and progress with the community, drivers, teams and owners, the news media and of course, the fans. Colorful events marked each stage of construction beginning with a unique bulldozer race among drivers to break ground. Later, when 40 escalators were being installed, the green flag dropped on an escalator race, which may be the only one of its kind in the history of escalators. A lighting ceremony was held as the gigantic Daytona International Speedway sign was illuminated for the first time. The sign features letters that are more than 13 feet tall and span 355 feet in length. Throughout the construction, which was halted periodically for scheduled racing events, residents and visitors who bought a ticket for the Speedway’s daily tours got a sneak peek of the project at various stages of construction.

While the complex is the first state-of-the-art motorsports stadium, it’s a perfect venue for non-racing events. Already, it is scheduled to host Country 500 this Memorial Day weekend, a three-day festival featuring some of the biggest names in country music. And, the Ferrari World Final will be in early December. Other events are being considered, but for today, the focus is welcoming the world to Speedweeks and the Daytona 500.
JetBlue commences nonstop flights, Daytona Beach to JFK in NYC

There was magic in the air as Volusia County welcomed the inaugural JetBlue flight from John F. Kennedy International Airport (JFK) in New York City to Daytona Beach International Airport last month. After years of working to get JetBlue to add Daytona Beach International Airport (DAB) to its route map, the big day arrived. The inaugural flight arrived ahead of schedule, bathed in a water-cannon salute on the taxiway, and to a warm welcome by 500 people in the terminal building who helped celebrate the commencement of JetBlue service to and from DAB.

Scott Laurence, Senior Vice President for Airline Planning for JetBlue, reacted in his comments to the crowd. “We have opened in 93 other cities. None of them have been like this. We are overwhelmed. And if this continues, we are going to need more ribbon and more scissors and more events like this. This is absolutely outstanding.”

Landing JetBlue did not happen overnight and it did not happen without a countywide community effort. In fact community support was a major factor affecting JetBlue’s decision to serve DAB. It all began in 2000 when airport and community officials made their first pitch to JetBlue at the airline’s headquarters in Connecticut. Since then, there have been dozens of meetings and hundreds of phone calls to support the case for serving DAB. In 2012, the president of JetBlue visited DAB, after which efforts to win JetBlue’s confidence intensified, and in 2015 the decision was made to begin nonstop service between JFK in New York City and DAB.

At welcoming ceremonies at Daytona Beach International Airport, Volusia County Manager Jim Dinneen summed up the sustained and countywide effort to land JetBlue, adding to the to the outstanding service already provided American Airlines and Delta Air Lines.

“This truly has been a community effort, and your presence here shows the community’s enthusiasm for this new nonstop service to New York. It also shows what we can accomplish when we work together,” said Dinneen, who recognized Lesa France Kennedy, CEO of International Speedway Corporation, for her leadership in the effort recruit JetBlue to DAB. He thanked the Volusia County Council members for their steadfast support of efforts to lure JetBlue, including approval of incentives. Dinneen also presided over the dedication of the Dennis R. McGee Community Room at the airport, as a tribute to the former airport director and a key figure in the JetBlue recruiting initiative from the very beginning. McGee died in 2015.

Rick Karl, Director of aviation and economic resources for Volusia County Government noted the impressive incentive package that was created in support of the recruiting effort, which is common in today’s competitive environment among airport cities. He noted that the package was varied, focused and creative. Landing fees were waived. Ground handling fees were waived. Terminal rent was waived for the first year. Daytona Beach International Airport partnered with the Daytona Beach Area Convention & Visitors Bureau, the West Volusia Tourism Advertising Authority and the South-east Volusia Advertising Authority to fund a marketing campaign in the New York City market, encouraging people to fly JetBlue to DAB. Also, Daytona Beach International Airport funded a targeted Central Florida marketing campaign encouraging local people to support the new, nonstop DAB to JFK service on JetBlue.

The Daytona Regional Chamber coordinated an innovative “travel bank” that affirmed the purchase tickets. “More than 25 businesses pledged a quarter of a million dollars in ticket purchases over the first two years of JetBlue’s service to DAB,” according to Nancy Keefer, President /CEO of the Daytona Regional Chamber of Commerce.

JetBlue is using the Airbus A320 aircraft for its DAB/JFK route. It seats 150 and features free wifi service, a continuous stream of video entertainment, expanded legroom and more. The aircraft got good reviews from passengers on the inaugural flight to DAB.

While efforts are focused on making the route a success for JetBlue, there have been observations among those involved in the JetBlue initiative that the airline could consider increased service to and from JFK and the addition of a Boston flight from DAB in the future if demand is strong enough.
JetBlue was bowled over! More than 500 people on January 7 crowded the second floor of our airport terminal to greet the inaugural JetBlue flight as it arrived from New York City. Daily, nonstop service between Daytona Beach and Kennedy International Airport is a reality.

The outpouring of community support for JetBlue service carried the day. JetBlue’s Scott Laurence, Senior Vice President for Airline Planning, said of the 93 cities his airline has opened, none topped the rousing welcome the air carrier received in Daytona Beach. “We’re overwhelmed,” he said, during a festive ribbon cutting event.

Landing JetBlue service at our airport is among the many significant economic development positives that are taking place in Volusia County. There are countless reasons to be positive as we focus on the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. But while the JetBlue service is cause for celebration, it’s important to keep in mind that economic development takes hard work, a willingness to support the necessary financial incentives, and a cohesive effort that includes governments and the private sector working in harmony toward the same end game.

It should be noted that landing JetBlue literally took years of sales calls and plenty of patience. In the end, the incentives supported by the Volusia County Council (airport), a pledge of real money in the form of a travel bank by local businesses, and marketing dollars by our tourism authorities to make this deal work. The one JetBlue flight a day will generate at least $1 million a year for the airport. If we want JetBlue to be successful and expand, we must pack the planes with passengers.

The JetBlue success story is noteworthy because it illustrates what we can do as a community if we all work together. Economic development is a “team sport” and I believe our team has the right players and the right game plan for continued prosperity going forward. Team Volusia, the CEO Business Alliance, the county and the cities, our colleges and universities, our incubator and workforce organization are in the game.

As we look ahead, the amazing DAYTONA Rising project is complete. We now have the first motorsports stadium in the world. This opens the door to a variety of racing and other events. Across the street, the Speedway/NASCAR family is about to launch the first phase of the ONE DAYTONA mixed use development. Lesa France Kennedy especially deserves credit for the role she played in convincing JetBlue to come and her willingness to invest in the community.

Tanger Outlet Mall is coming out the ground along Interstate 95 in north Daytona Beach. The Desert Inn on the beachside is being transformed into a four star Westin property. I mention these projects because they all have something in common. It took the willingness of the Volusia County Council, and others, to take the actions necessary to set the table for these projects.

As elected officials, it takes political courage to “put your money where your mouth is”. The Desert Inn project comes with a pledge by the county council to remove vehicles from the beach in front of the project in exchange for an equal number of public parking spaces. The county council went one step further and vowed to create a two-mile, vehicle-free stretch of beach in the core area of Daytona Beach if any developer steps forward with the completion of a similar four star hotel. This bold move by the county council is an economic development incentive to spur the rejuvenation of the beachside. It’s not, as some have suggested, a veiled move toward a car-free beach.

And speaking of the core beachside, the county council has given a conceptual thumbs up to a long-range endeavor to expand the beachside boardwalk for two miles. The county is working with the City of Daytona Beach and the private sector on the myriad difficult steps we must take to make this happen. If we can pull this off, and I believe we can, this will be a tourism game changer of epic proportions.

And speaking of tourism, the community hosted a record 9.2 million visitors in 2015. Hotel occupancy was up, as was the number of events at our Ocean Center. Tourist tax collections were at an all-time high. In another example of setting the table for our economic future, the county and Daytona International Speedway are now partners in the Daytona Beach ½ Marathon. Being a longtime runner who has participated in the biggest races in the country, I am confident our unique race will grow into one of the area’s most significant winter events.

Recreation, eco-based tourism is a strong point for our county. The county council now has created more than 125 artificial fishing/diving reefs, and continues work on our amazing trails system. We have fine-tuned our beach management and are hoping to expand our enormously popular Marine Science Center.

In closing, there are challenges we must tackle. We must find a cohesive solution to the difficult problem of homelessness. The county is solidly behind the very promising goal to turn the vacant Hearst Elementary school into a place where homeless families can turn their lives around. And, we are developing a comprehensive program to address the needs of homeless veterans. The homeless on the street is going to require a comprehensive, short- and long-term strategy with the same cohesive team approach that led to the JetBlue success.

In addition, this county faces the very real problem of a lack of road construction funding. You can’t see or feel the problem now, but I promise you it’s coming and it will have a serious negative on our future economic development initiatives if we don’t find a permanent, consistent source of funding.

I’m confident if we work together we can address these challenges.
Daytona Beach Half Marathon set for February 7

February marks the debut of the newly redesigned Daytona Beach Half Marathon, a 13.1-mile race that also includes a two-person relay and 5k that has been created by event partners Volusia County Government and Daytona International Speedway. Registrations are approaching 2,000 runners, making this an emerging event among the half marathons in the Southeast, with the potential to become one of America’s premier half marathons.

“This has been designed as a first class family event from top to bottom,” said Jim Dinneen, Volusia County Manager, an experienced marathoner and participant in numerous half marathons and other events. “With the first leg of the course being a lap of the track at Daytona International Speedway, and then a stretch directly on the beach at the midway point, this event is drawing participants from throughout Florida and well beyond. It has the potential to double and re-double in size within just a few years.”

Dinneen said the response from the community has been very positive. “We have had tremendous support from the community, which is encouraging. This includes the generous support of many corporate sponsors including our presenting sponsors — Florida Hospital and Brown & Brown — as well as our tourism advertising authorities in Daytona Beach, west Volusia County and southeast Volusia County.”

The event includes a dazzling medal for finishers, upscale runner shirts for men and women, exhibits on race day and a breakfast for participants following the race.

For information and registration, go online to: DaytonaBeachHalf.com.
TopBuild picks Daytona Beach for company headquarters

The nation’s biggest installer and distributor of insulation and other building materials has broken ground on a 65,700-square-foot headquarters off Williamson Boulevard in Daytona Beach. Community leaders joined company officials for groundbreaking ceremonies in December. Completion is expected later this year. The company currently operates from a 46,000-square-foot building it leases immediately north of Volusia Mall.

The company’s origin dates back to 1995, when its then-parent company, Masco, purchased Gale Insulation, a locally-based company.

“In the next 10 years, great things happened,” said Robert Buck, TopBuild’s President and Chief Operating Officer. “The economy was cooperating, so we experienced good organic growth, along with a major roll-up and acquisition strategy. We grew to a nearly $3 billion company over a 10-year period. Our parent company (Michigan-based Masco Corp.) decided to spin us off, to become our own public, independent company in July and we were very excited about that.”

TopBuild CEO Jerry Volas has been ranked No. 81 of a list of top CEOs for small-cap companies globally by ExecRank. based on 24 different performance measures.

As a company with a broad footprint across the United States, the decision of where to locate its headquarters could have been in a number of cities. Nationally, TopBuild has 8,000 associates in 43 states. It has 260 locations in the United States and is active in 99 of the nation’s largest metropolitan areas. TopBuild has two divisions — TruTeam, which manages installation, and Service Partners, which manages distribution.

The selection of Daytona Beach was not difficult, according to Jerry Volas, TopBuild’s Chief Executive Officer, although the company looked at several locations including some in Florida.

“When it came time for us to decide where we were going to put our new corporate center, we had a lot of history here; we had a lot of success here,” said Volas. “It’s a great community. We have more than 200 employees who work right here in this office and they like it here. So when you roll all that together, it was a pretty easy decision that we should make permanent roots here.”

Consolidated-Tomoka Land Co. sold the property for the new headquarters to the Fisher family, which also owns the company’s current building. Dick McNerney, a commercial Realtor®, negotiated the deal on the family’s behalf.

To ensure the selection of Volusia County as site of the company’s new headquarters, community leaders worked together to provide an incentive package of up to $385,000 to underscore the appeal of the area for the project. The incentives include county and state funds based on the company meeting its goal of adding at least 55 jobs here over five years.

The team engaged in convincing TopBuild to locate its headquarters here included the Daytona Regional Chamber of Commerce, the State of Florida, Volusia County Government, the City of Daytona Beach, and the CEO Business Alliance.”

TopBuild is a publicly traded company whose NYSE stock symbol is BLD. It joins three other publicly traded companies in Volusia County — Brown & Brown, Consolidated-Tomoka Land Co., and International Speedway Corporation.
Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University has begun site work for its Advanced Aerodynamic Lab, the first step in the creation of its Research Park. The university views the project as a milestone in its mission to deliver applied solutions to aviation and aerospace companies.

“This lab is designed to encompass research enterprises in aviation, space, engineering, unmanned systems, and environmental ventures,” said Rodney Cruise, ERAU Vice President for Administration & Planning. “The 50,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art Advanced Aerodynamics Laboratory will include many critical components that will support a broad spectrum of research and development applications throughout the research park.” Among them are:

• Composites center
• Multiscale materials laboratory
• Large article testing laboratory
• Structural health monitoring facility
• Smart materials laboratory
• Space technologies laboratory
• Thermal and energy laboratory
• Advanced dynamics and control center
• Robotics and autonomous systems facility
• Radar and communications laboratory
• Circuits, sensors and instrumentation laboratory
• Computational sciences laboratory

In addition, the Advanced Aerodynamics Laboratory will feature 10,000 square feet of flex lease space to meet tenants’ needs and a 5,000-square-foot specialized technology incubator to bring industry ideas from ideation to the marketplace. Later in the spring ERAU will recruit Resident Partners, such as accounting firms and intellectual property firms that will have a role in supporting the start-ups. With space in the building, will come a commitment to provide free services for a specific number of hours a week. ERAU also will recruit a panel of local entrepreneurs to become mentors for start-ups that are in the incubation process.

Overall, the 90-acre Research Park includes offices, labs and hangar space with direct taxiway access to Daytona Beach International Airport.

Embry-Riddle’s Research Park is conveniently situated near Orlando, Tampa and Jacksonville, and is well positioned to leverage the resources of Florida’s growing high-tech corridor.

“Developing new strategic partnerships and evolving existing relationships with leading companies is a top priority for Embry-Riddle, and our expanding research mission and global activities,” said Dr. John R. Watret, Embry-Riddle’s interim president. “The park provides the opportunity for an interdisciplinary and collaborative approach between industry and academia to generate applied solutions to real-world problems, new products and ultimately high-paying jobs.”

In addition to the new building, research park tenants, composed of established industry leaders and burgeoning enterprises, will have access to use the facilities provided within Embry-Riddle’s continually expanding areas of research, that include:

• Unmanned design, engineering and flight
• Center for Cybersecurity and System Assurance, which encompasses the NextGen Engineering Applied Research Lab
• Eagle Flight Research Center, where faculty, staff and students work with industry on experimental flight testing, design and testing of unmanned aerial systems (UAS), development and verification of high-fidelity flight data models used in engineering and training simulators, and prototype engineering solutions to advance environmentally compatible alternatives for aviation.
• Designated a Center of Excellence in Unmanned Aircraft Systems, Embry-Riddle will be the technical lead in UAS airport ground operations and UAS pilot and crew training and will co-lead in-command and communications research. This distinction was bestowed jointly by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and Alliance for System Safety of UAS through Research Excellence (ASSURE).
• Under the guidance of the recently named Research Park Advisory Board that is composed of local, state and national leaders from industry, government and higher education, the university will identify partnership opportunities with aviation and aerospace industry leaders.

About Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University

Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, the world’s largest, fully accredited university specializing in aviation and aerospace, is a nonprofit, independent institution that offers more than 75 baccalaureate, master’s and Ph.D. degree programs in its colleges of Arts & Sciences, Aviation, Business, Engineering and Security & Intelligence. Embry-Riddle has residential campuses in Daytona Beach and Prescott, Arizona, and a Worldwide Campus with more than 125 locations in the United States, Europe, Asia and the Middle East through on-line programs. The university is a major research center, seeking solutions to real-world problems in partnership with the aerospace industry, other universities and government agencies. For information go online to: embryo.riddle.edu, follow ERAU on: Twitter (@EmbryRiddle) and facebook.com/EmbryRiddleUniversity, and find videos at: YouTube.com/EmbryRiddleUniv.
Team Volusia names vice president

Chris Wimsatt has joined Team Volusia Economic Development Corporation as Vice President of Business Recruitment. He comes to the area from Ohio, where he was economic development director for the City of Fairborn. During his tenure there, he formed the nonprofit Fairborn Development Corporation. Prior experience includes having served as Workforce & Economic Development Director for the Dayton Area Chamber of Commerce. Wimsatt holds a bachelor of arts degree in management from Ohio State University and a master of science degree in community and economic development from Penn State University.

Chris Wimsatt
New DeLand hotels add to community’s warm welcome

Business is growing. Downtown is drawing crowds. Stetson University is thriving. Tourism is increasing. As such, there is an increased demand for more hotel rooms. In DeLand, that demand is being met.

The Hampton Inn & Suites DeLand just celebrated its first year in business, and plans for a new, downtown Courtyard by Marriott are progressing.

“We have seen a steady increase in tourism throughout west Volusia County,” said Renee Tallevast, executive director of the West Volusia Tourism Advertising Authority. Her organization promotes tourism in the region and currently has an inventory of 912 guest rooms. “Our accommodations are perfect for individual business or leisure travelers, but also we routinely welcome groups, sports teams and meetings to the area. Our properties offer great accommodations and small town hospitality. Our new properties fit right in with that profile.”

Nick Conte, Executive Director of the DeLand Area Chamber of Commerce agrees. “With such a great downtown area, having such great accommodations right in the heart of the City only increases convenience and adds to the City’s appeal.”

The Hampton Inn & Suites has proven to be a popular property among business and leisure travelers, according to Samir Naran, executive vice president of Premier Resorts & Management Company, which has 14 hotels in the Carolinas and Florida. “Hampton Inn & Suites came to the DeLand market with a great package,” he said. “It includes a convenient location near the intersection of U.S 17 and 92; well-designed guest rooms with work areas for business travelers, free internet access, high definition television; a fitness center; free hot breakfast or Hampton-on-the-Run breakfast bags.”

The Courtyard by Marriott is being developed by Avista Hotels & Resorts which has six hotels in Central Florida. The new hotel will be in downtown DeLand at the corner of Woodland Boulevard and Wisconsin Avenue. Demolition of existing buildings on the property will occur soon, according to Ajit Nana, senior vice president of Avista Hotels & Resorts. “Once salvage operations at the existing building (Gould Building) are complete and the buildings are demolished, we will schedule ground-breaking, which could happen in March.” The 104-room hotel is expected to open in 2017.

The new hotel is viewed as a great addition to the allure of the award-winning downtown area, according to Wayne Carter, executive director of Mainstreet DeLand, which is dedicated to supporting and enhancing downtown the economic development while protecting and promoting DeLand’s historic heritage. “There is so much to see and do downtown, there are so many professional offices, and of course, being so close to Stetson University makes the location of this Courtyard by Marriott particularly convenient,” he said. “It’s a nice complement to the evolution of our wonderful downtown area.”
Row, row, row your boat
West Volusia sees growing interest in rowing

There’s something about the sight of a crew on the St. Johns River, rowing in perfect rhythm, skimming across the water. Rowing, often referred to as “crew” in the United States, is gaining in popularity as a competitive sport and as a form of outdoor recreation and exercise.

In west Volusia County, the sight of rowing teams and individual oarsmen is becoming more common as residents take up the sport and as competitors travel to the area to compete in regattas.

“Rowing is a sport steeped in tradition and often associated with Ivy League schools and their counterparts in Europe and elsewhere,” said April Stomberg, vice president of Hontoon Landing Resort & Marina in DeLand. “The sport dates back to ancient Egypt and is based on propelling a racing ‘shell’ using oars. It has been an Olympic sport since 1900. Today, the sport is welcoming more and more teams and individuals – probably due to the fact it is a healthy, non-contact sport that is enjoyed outdoors in beautiful surroundings.”

Situated on the banks of the historic St. Johns River, Hontoon Landing is positioned perfectly for the sport. In addition to boat slips and boat rentals, daily narrated river tours, and birdwatching galore, the resort has 18 guest rooms, several with full kitchens. Competitive teams stay at the resort to maximize time on the water. Similarly, individuals who enjoy rowing and kayaking appreciate the resort’s convenience.

“Every year we host a variety of rowing camps whose participants come from all over the country,” said Stomberg. “Our resort offers a floating dock to launch, giving rowers and kayakers easy access to the river and lakes. There are also private coaching programs for beginners, including safe practices, rowing instruction and video review of techniques.”

All American Rowing Camp is an organization that offers rowing camps including many at Hontoon Landing. Many of its camps fill up well in advance. Mark Wilson, one of the founding partners of All American Rowing Camp, is also the head rowing coach at Stetson University. He is bullish on the sport and its impact on west Volusia County.

“We began offering rowing camps 17 years ago, first in Tampa, then Melbourne, and now here in West Volusia County, where we have been for the last 13 years” he said. “It is an exceptional location. The water is great. The people are great. And we love taking our guests to local establishments where they can experience the community on a personal level.”

Wilson said legends of the sport recognize the area as an exceptional area for training and competition. For example, the head coach of the Canadian National Rowing Team, who has rowed all over the world, considers west Volusia County the best training place in North America.

Wilson cited the stunning growth of the sport locally, noting that a growing number of college and university teams make the pilgrimage to the area for training. Among them are the universities of Virginia, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Iowa, Oklahoma, Susquehanna, Tufts, Temple and others. In addition, high school teams are coming here, including the noted Sidwell Friends School in Washington D.C. as well as junior teams from Boston and Toronto.

From his perspective as the coach of Stetson’s rowing team, Wilson sees nothing but growth on campus. “The university recently received a $6 million donation to build an aquatic center and boat house, which is in the design stage and may break ground later this year. That will advance our program in so many ways and will have a ripple effect on the economy by attracting more students and more teams.”

In November, Stetson hosted the Fall Rowing Rendezvous Head Race, a chase style event that attracted 1,200 competitors from across the state. He added that similar events hosted by All American Rowing Camp also draw people from around the U.S. and the world. For example, the Canadian National Rowing Team makes four-two week training trips to the area each year. Dartmouth College recently brought 90 students and six coaches to the area for 10 days. “It is becoming apparent that the impact on tourism and the economy is on the rise,” he said.

“It’s a wonderful sport that is attracting many visitors who otherwise might not have discovered west Volusia County,” said Renee Tallevast, executive director of the West Volusia Tourism Advertising Authority. “People love to participate in the sport as competitors, for exercise, or just for sightseeing. And even those who do not participate are captivated at the sight of teams or individuals rowing. Often there is a bit of a gallery watching those on the water.”

“This is a sport that features intense competition, reverence for its own history and is so exciting to watch,” said Nick Conte, Executive Director of the DeLand Area Chamber of Commerce. “It’s great that the sport is growing right before our eyes.”

The growth of the sport in the area is spurred by the efforts of Tallevast’s tourism marketing organization and those of her counterparts in Volusia County. In Daytona Beach, the Halifax Rowing Association has been rowing on the Halifax River since 1996. Last summer, it hosted the 19th Annual Halifax Summer Regatta, marking the end of the sprint season. Nearly 500 rowers from throughout the Southeast competed.

Even national and international organizations’ efforts to promote the sport add to its growth locally. Among them is the governing body for the sport of rowing in the United States, US Rowing. In 2017, the FISA World Rowing Championships will be held in Sarasota and it is expected that several teams will do their pre-Championship training in DeLand on the St. Johns River and Lake Beresford.

DeLand continues to excite and provide great experiences to all of its visitors.
JetBlue Airways began daily flights to New York City from Daytona Beach International Airport. Daytona Beach will be the seventh, but smallest, market in Florida that JetBlue serves, but the daily service is estimated to bring an added 95,000 to 100,000 passengers in the first year and generate $1 million in revenue for the airport.

World Class Distribution constructed an $88-million distribution facility in Daytona Beach, and Boston Whaler completed a $10-million, 58,000-square-foot building at its manufacturing facility in Edgewater.

Frontier Communications opened a 32,000-square-foot technical support and security software center, which could increase the firm’s total employment in DeLand to 1,500.

TopBuild Corporation, Volusia County’s newest publicly-traded company, has begun construction of a 65,700-square-foot corporate headquarters and B. Braun Medical Inc. is considering a 54,000-square-foot expansion of its existing FDA-rated facility, both in Daytona Beach. Combined, these companies could generate more than $150 million in new capital investment and create more than 625 new jobs.

Tanger Outlet Mall completed the purchase of 39 acres adjacent to Interstate 95 and LPGA Boulevard in Daytona Beach for the construction of a $100-million retail outlet center, and Tailwind Development opened the Country Club Corners shopping center in DeLand as part of a larger 105-acre mixed use development.

Embry-Riddle announced a $28-million Advanced Aerodynamics Laboratory and Wind Tunnel at its Research Park West and the university began construction of a $75-million, 177,000-square-foot student center.

Halifax Health is considering a $100-million emergency and medical office complex in Deltona at the intersection of Interstate 4 and S.R. 472, and Central Florida Regional Hospital has announced plans to construct a freestanding emergency department near the same location.

Florida Hospital opened an $11-million outpatient clinic in Deltona, while Florida Hospital Fish Memorial in Orange City completed a $1.75-million renovation and a $3-million upgrade of its ER and catheterization labs.

The Hilton Daytona Beach Oceanfront Resort was acquired by the Starwood Capital Group for more than $92 million with reported plans to invest more than $25 million in renovations.

The Summit Hospitality Group is spending more than $20 million to redevelop the former Desert Inn in Daytona Beach into a four-star Westin property, and a five-story Courtyard by Marriott hotel is planned in downtown DeLand after demolition of two buildings on a site south of Stetson University.

The City of Deltona completed construction of a $27-million water reclamation facility on the eastern side of the city off S.R. 415.

Florida Department of Transportation contractors reached 85 percent completion on the $138-million Interstate 4 widening and 90 percent completion on the $118 million Interstate 95 widening. Improvements to the Interstate 4/Interstate 95 interchange, valued at more than $200 million, have commenced with completion planned in 2018.

The $44-million Veterans Memorial Bridge over the Halifax River is scheduled to commence in 2016 by remembering a quote from famed racer Mario Andretti that Joie Chitwood, Daytona International Speedway president, likes to use. “If everything seems under control, you’re just not going fast enough.”

In closing, let’s accelerate into 2016 by remembering a quote from famed racer Mario Andretti that Joie Chitwood, Daytona International Speedway president, likes to use. “If everything seems under control, you’re just not going fast enough.”
Residential permit activity up significantly in 2015; commercial lags, but many projects loom for 2016

While the nation and the world come to terms with the Chinese economic tremors, depressed oil prices, significant NYSE corrections, and ongoing tensions in the Middle East, there are many indicators the local economy is picking up steam. Chief among them is the number and value of the residential and construction permits issued by the county and city building permit offices.

The Volusia County Economic Development Division compiles the permit data every quarter as part of its monitoring of the local economy.

Residential permit activity countywide posted a healthy gain in 2015, while commercial construction leveled off following permitting for the Daytona Rising project at Daytona International Speedway.

During the fourth quarter of last year, building permit offices across the county issued 391 residential permits with a total value of $120 million. This trumped the residential permits issued in the fourth quarter of 2014 when 259 permits were issued with a total value $86 million. This is a 50 percent increase in the number of permits quarter-over-quarter, and an increase of nearly 40 percent in dollar value.

“It’s a good sign and may be a harbinger of what could lie ahead,” said Sandy Burke Bishop, Executive Director of the Volusia Building Industry Association. She said early indications are that the year is off to a good start.

In looking at the residential permit activity by jurisdiction, the 94 permits ($30.6 million) issued by DeLand in the fourth quarter was the most. The county issued 67 residential permits ($20.1 million); followed by the 50 residential permits issued by New Smyrna Beach ($16.8 million).

On the commercial side, the numbers were steady when viewed without the tremendous impact of a single $152-million permit issued in 2014 for the Daytona Rising project at Daytona International Speedway. A year-over-year comparison of commercial construction permitting in 2015 versus 2014 shows a slight decrease.

During 2015, there were 93 commercial construction permits issued countywide, four fewer than the total for 2014. The 2015 tally is a decline of 4 percent. In a year-over-year comparison that includes the Daytona Rising permit issued in 2014, the total value of commercial permit activity in 2015 was $153 million. This compares to the $324 million value of commercial construction permits issued in 2014. Without the Daytona Rising permit, the 2014 dollar amount comes in at $172 million.

Of the 32 commercial permits issued countywide in the fourth quarter of 2015, 21 were issued by Daytona Beach.

While the commercial construction permit values declined in 2015, several projects in the planning stages could fortify the numbers in 2016 and 2017, according to Ehrhardt.

“Hotel construction and some large retail projects are in various stages of planning,” he said. “Presuming each navigates through pre-construction processes, construction permits for each will be significant. And if global economic and political affairs stabilize, that could be a catalyst for other projects.”
Volusia County Residential Permit Data by Quarter

Source: Cities and County permit offices reporting new construction activity

Residential Building Permits Issued in Volusia County Fourth Quarter 2015

Source: Cities and County permit offices reporting new construction activity
### Volusia County Commercial Permit Data by Quarter

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value of Permits $ Million</th>
<th>Q1</th>
<th>Q2</th>
<th>Q3</th>
<th>Q4</th>
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<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Cities and County permit offices reporting new construction activity

*Q3 2013 includes single $105M permit for Daytona International Speedway
**Q4 2014 includes single $152M permit for Daytona International Speedway

**Note:** Dotted lines represent permit total excluding single permit for the Daytona International Speedway

### Commercial Building Permits Issued in Volusia County Fourth Quarter 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AREA</th>
<th>October</th>
<th>November</th>
<th>December</th>
<th>Total</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Value</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>340</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Cities and County permit offices reporting new construction activity

*Cities listed in descending order by Value for the most recent quarter

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On the Economic Scene

Volusia County Economic Development Division publishes a useful, quick-read, one page newsletter every Monday morning, On the Economic Scene. It arrives by fax and is a very popular little publication. If you are not getting this publication and wish to receive it, submit your fax number to 386-248-8048, or fax it to 386-248-8037.

If you prefer to read it online, it is posted at floridabusiness.org/news-and-data-resources/index.stml