BCU, SCORE host first BizFest; Pitchfest winners announced

Tony Otte, New Smyrna Beach CRA/Economic Development Director (left), was among several business leaders who offered counsel and advice at BizFest.
Bethune-Cookman University and Chapter 87 of the Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE) recently partnered to present the inaugural BizFest, which provided information and advice to entrepreneurs.

“We are grateful to BCU and its student volunteers, the event sponsors, attendees and everyone who contributed to the success of this first-time event,” said Tom Hellman, president of SCORE 87.

The keynote speaker was Heather Post, president and CEO of the Heather Post Companies; she explained the importance of acknowledgment and the difference it can make in one’s life. Wendy Sellers, a managing partner with BlackRain Partners, discussed cross-generational marketing.

Michael Zaharios III, program director for the Florida High Tech Corridor Council, was the event’s emcee.

Panel discussions addressed social media marketing and how to become an entrepreneur. Speakers included:

- Michael Zaharios III
- Nancy Tedeschi, inventor of the SnapIt Screw
- Ky Ekinci, co-founder of Office Divvy
- Connie Bernal, site manager for the UCF Volusia County Business Incubator
- Sue Couslin, chief executive officer for EZ Marketing
- Cindy Dalecki, owner of Marketing 2 Go

James Blasco, digital sales manager for the Daytona Beach News-Journal
Donna Loader, a social marketing professional with Constant Contact
Roundtable discussions addressed health care plans, free SCORE services, and financing your business.

Thirty entrepreneurs submitted entries in the accompanying Pitchfest competition. First- and second-place awards were announced during BizFest:

**Student Business** category: First place was awarded to Miguel Ledet of Royal Music Productions, which provides affordable music production services to local musicians. Second place went to Stella Parris of Legacy, which interviews and preserves veterans’ legacies.

**Emerging Business** category: First place went to Byron Catroppa of Tidal Rides, a golf-cart taxi service that takes tourists and residents around Flagler Beach. Kathryn Neel of My School Tech Hub received second place; her business provides technology education for students in kindergarten through 12th grade.

**Existing Business** category: First place was awarded to Rob Cassata of Cogent Solar, which creates roof gutter systems with integrated solar energy strips to provide electric power and hot water to homes. Second place went to Curtis Ceballos of DIGITZ, a payment gateway that allows consumers to use their fingerprint to conduct business transactions.

Event planning committee members were John Anderson and Debbie Lashinsky of SCORE Chapter 87, and Casandra Stroy and Roslyn O’Neal of Bethune-Cookman University.


The Volusia/Flagler SCORE Chapter is celebrating its 51st year of serving clients. Last year, volunteers provided more than 1,400 counseling services to some 775 entrepreneurs, many of whom have gone on to start businesses or improve existing businesses. The chapter also collaborates with the UCF Volusia County Business Incubator to conduct free workshops, which attracted more than 2,100 attendees last year. The chapter has received the platinum rating from the National SCORE Organization as one of the top chapters nationwide.
**Dialysis service company expands**

**DaVita Labs breaks ground for new facility**

DaVita Labs, already a major employer in Volusia County, broke ground on a new $30 million, 160,000-square-foot facility at DeLand’s Northwest Business Park near DeLand Municipal Airport. The expansion could add 100 new jobs to the company’s 350-person workforce.

DeLand Mayor Bob Apgar acknowledged the company’s investment and workforce expansion and credited the participation of other partners supporting the expansion. Among them are Volusia County Economic Development, Team Volusia Economic Development Corp., Enterprise Florida, Duke Energy, CareerSource and the Department of Economic Opportunity.

“We believe that today’s groundbreaking reflects our commitment to our vision, our patients, and the DeLand community,” said Jason Cline, vice president and general manager of DaVita Labs. “We look forward to the grand opening of our new home in 2018.”

DaVita Labs is a division of DaVita Inc. (NYSE: DVA), a leading independent medical group and leading provider of kidney-care services. DaVita Labs is a diagnostic laboratory that services dialysis centers across the country. The company performs more than 52 million lab tests each year and employs more than 500 teammates in its DeLand and Fort Lauderdale facilities.

Turning dirt at the groundbreaking were (from left) Jason Cline, VP and General Manager, DaVita Labs; Chris Cloudman, City Commissioner; Michael Pleus, City Manager; Charles Paiva, City Commissioner; Robert Apgar, Mayor; Leigh Matusick, Vice-Mayor; Jessica Davis, City Commissioner; Dr. Lorne Holland, Chief Laboratory Officer.
Daytona Beach International Airport (DAB) is the region’s preferred airport because of its convenient, stress-free and friendly experience. On the surface, it’s hard to match the customer service experience DAB offers its patrons, but there is much more than meets the eye.

It’s a surprise to some that DAB is a service of Volusia County Government. The facility is classified as an enterprise fund, meaning it generates its own revenue and does not rely on ad valorem tax. In fact, DAB pays Volusia County Government for any services rendered, including law enforcement, fire services and legal counsel.

DAB revenues consist of various fees, but revenues from the airlines (direct and indirect) represent only 67 percent of DAB’s $15.2 million operating budget. Among those contributing to indirect airline revenues are rental car companies, the parking management company, food and news-gift concessions.

Revenues from businesses operating outside the terminal building and leasing airport lands fund the remaining 33 percent of the budget.

DAB’s footprint covers 2,900 acres, 360 acres of which are still available for lease.

Commercial hangars located on airport property (NASCAR, Brown & Brown Insurance, and others) also pay land lease fees, as do the three FBOs (fixed base operators) on airport land: ATP Aviation, SheltAir Aviation and Yelvington Jet Aviation. Also leasing airport property are Courtyard by Marriott, Residence Inn, Homewood Suites, Houligan’s Sports Grille, Outback Steakhouse and Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University.

Of course, the airport itself is abuzz with aviation-related activity. In fact, it is Florida’s third busiest airport based on the number of takeoffs and landings. Commercial carriers account for about 690,000 passengers annually, and the trend continues to climb. In addition to the activity generated by Delta Air Lines, American Airlines and JetBlue Airways, a great deal of activity is logged by flight instructors and student pilots at Phoenix East Aviation and Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University.

Speaking of Embry-Riddle, DAB has a strong partnership with the university. DAB is a teaching airport, providing real-life experience in a variety of aviation management and operations for ERAU students. The airport also works with ERAU to support the Embry-Riddle Research Park, which will have access to the airport under an agreement that will provide taxiway access to the field itself, a key benefit for tenants of the park.

Of course, airport officials are busy every day managing operations on and off the field and pursuing air service development, which is much more than working to attract new carriers.

“Air service development includes the ongoing pursuit of new carriers,” said Jay Cassens, who oversees the effort. “Equally important is supporting our existing airlines every way we can. We encourage them to add daily flights and new destinations and use larger aircraft as demand grows.”

“The most important thing is to continue supporting our airport by booking flights,” said Rick Karl, Airport Director. “Daytona Beach International Airport is our hometown airport and we should support it as such. When passengers from Volusia, Flagler, Lake and Seminole counties use our airport, they enjoy the convenience of an extraordinarily user-friendly airport, and they strengthen the case for more flights to more destinations.”
Replacing a 50-year old facility, the Brannon Civic Center has opened to great reviews as a new venue for a wide variety of events.

Located at 105 South Riverside Drive in New Smyrna Beach, the location provides a great setting and the contemporary design of the complex has become an instant landmark. The complex can seat more than 600 people. It includes a 7,500 square foot outdoor terrace overlooking the sparkling Indian River.

The outdoor green space on the south side of the building is perfect of receptions or for viewing outdoor concerts and performances.

The single-story Brannon Civic Center covers 13,900 square feet and includes a 6,500 grand ballroom that is adjustable in size. Additionally, it can be expanded with additional multi-use space of 1,850 square feet.

There is a large lobby for reception and pre-event functions. A catering kitchen makes food service a breeze. It is a great location for meetings and conferences as it has a state-of-the-art AV system including 4 projectors and screens. There are on-site administrative offices with a professional staff to assist renters with their needs.

The new Brannon Civic Center is energy efficient and has been designed in accordance with current Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) requirements.

The total estimated cost for this project was $5.7 million, funded by the 2013 Capital Improvement Note.

The building was dedicated and the ceremonial ribbon cut on August 23, 2016 while the City of New Smyrna Beach hosted over 300 people in the new facility with refreshments from the venue’s select catering companies: Brian’s Bar-B-Q, Riverside Catering and River City Catering.

Civic Center Manager Heather Paternoster said “This is the perfect location for any event, you can’t beat the view and the amenities and versatility of the facility are impressive. We are currently accepting bookings and already have had quite a few events including seminars, meetings, a concert and a women’s health expo. We are getting inquires every day and already booking into 2017.”
CO2Meter, a maker of gas detection products, has been honored among firms cited on the Florida Economic Gardening Institute’s 2016 Florida Companies to Watch list. This is the third year in a row that a Volusia County business has been among the list of 50 firms, selected from a field of more than 500.

Joshua Pringle, CO2Meter’s vice president of business development, commented on the honor, saying: “It’s gratifying to have the vetting process deem us worthy of notice. It validates our processes and how we run our business.”

Florida Economic Gardening Institute was established by the Florida Legislature to help companies employing six to 150 people and generating annual revenues between $750,000 and $100 million.

“These standout companies are all led by entrepreneurs and have demonstrated their capacity and intent to grow,” stated Tom O’Neal, the institute’s executive director. “They also have critical intellectual property or a niche position that gives them a competitive edge in their markets.”

CO2Meter CEO Irene Hicks, a former international mining company executive, and her husband, Ray Hicks, an entrepreneur and technology expert, started developing gas detection devices in their Ormond Beach garage before forming the company 11 years ago. They moved to Florida in 2011 and set up operations in Ormond Beach. The company now employs 12 people and wrapped up its last fiscal year with a 30 percent jump in revenues. The company’s products, which are sold domestically and internationally have residential and commercial applications.
Local farmers can work together through the Farm Bureau to gain valuable knowledge about their industry. The Farm Bureau also helps farmers communicate with today’s health conscious consumers through various meetings with industry experts.

In local government issues, in Tallahassee and in Washington, D.C., the Farm Bureau tackles legislation that affects local farmers. It helps outline local agricultural issues to elected government officials. Accordingly, the organization keeps members informed of important legislative decisions as they come up.

Besides working for the local agriculture producers, the Farm Bureau focuses on supporting the next generation of farmers. It offers mini-grants to agriculture educators in the school system and scholarships to college-bound students. Representatives of the Farm Bureau volunteer their time to read to elementary school students in the annual statewide Agricultural Literacy Day program.

On Wednesdays, the Farm Bureau organizes and directs the Wednesday Farmers Market at the Volusia County Fairgrounds. The largest and possibly oldest market in Volusia County is filled with vendors selling locally grown produce. Locals and tourists alike enjoy shopping the fresh selection at better-than-grocery-store prices.

The Farm Bureau works in cooperation with the Florida Farm Bureau, which is the statewide voice of Florida agriculture. It also works in harmony with the University of Florida/Volusia County Extension, which partners with communities to provide quality, relevant education and research-based expertise to foster healthy people, environments and economies.

While most people know Volusia County is the home of agricultural enterprises, most of us are unaware of how big the agricultural footprint is in our community.

For example, nearly one of five jobs in Volusia County is related to agriculture. That’s 40,856 agriculture-related jobs, driving a 12.7 percent contribution to Volusia County’s Gross Regional Product. Viewed another way, that contribution totals $1.74 billion.
Economic Development is often referred to as a team sport. Volusia County has leveraged three organizations, with support from various community and statewide organizations, to be key drivers of the economic development activities within the county. These organizations strive to create a successful economic development ecosystem that incorporates public and private investment to ensure continued success in recruiting, retaining and developing businesses of all sizes.
While Hurricane Matthew took a heavy toll on Volusia County, most agree it could have been much, much worse. Mercifully, the eye of the hurricane remained 30 to 35 miles offshore, which may have prevented a virtual flattening of Volusia County’s heavily populated east coast.

Another factor in our favor was extensive disaster planning and training, which has been ongoing since the hurricanes of 2004. Nowhere is this more evident than in Volusia County’s Emergency Operations Center (EOC), a state-of-the-art command center that was activated before the storm arrived and remained in service for days afterward.

The Emergency Operations Center is on Tiger Bay Road in Daytona Beach. It’s a 43,000-square-foot complex that houses the county’s emergency operations and Sheriff’s Communications Center, which includes the countywide emergency dispatch function. It was built in 2013 and is designed to withstand 180 mph winds and an EF3 tornado, according to Jim Judge, Volusia County’s emergency management director.

Key disaster response officials convene in the EOC to make the strategic decisions necessary to protect the public during emergencies, which include hurricanes. They include the Volusia County chair, County manager, and the emergency management director, utility officials, representatives of the county’s 16 municipalities, and dozens of other designated individuals. They convene in this facility to make the strategic decisions necessary to protect the public during emergencies, which include hurricanes.

This facilitates a centralized response as well as recovery decisions, plans and operational activities to maximize the efficiency, quality and quantity of resources.

Keeping the public informed during a disaster is a major responsibility of Volusia County Emergency Management. A Citizens Information Center and a Media Center provide accurate and timely information to the public during emergency operations. Through an agreement with Volusia County, radio stations WNDB 1150AM/WHOG 95.7FM radio and television station WDSC TV-15 are Volusia County’s official emergency management information stations. WNDB has a broadcast outlet at the EOC, and WDSC enhances the county’s ability to provide critical public safety information with a direct, live television connection. Access to the Emergency Alert System allows emergency messages and warnings to be sent to area radio and television stations for immediate rebroadcast to the public.

It all adds up to teamwork and a shared commitment among public and private sector leadership to public safety and a timely recovery.
These meetings are crucial to our interests in developing partnerships with the Japanese,” said Norden. “Relationships are crucial to forging business relationships in this arena and these events are important forums for relationship building.”

The meetings followed a productive February meeting in Volusia County, at which Ken Okinawa, Consul General of Japan in Miami, met with officials of Daytona Beach International Airport and Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, Volusia County Manager Jim Dinneen and Daytona Beach Mayor Derrick Henry.

The business seminar in Japan was organized by the Japanese External Trade Organization, which had more than 90 Japanese companies in attendance. It included presentations by Team Volusia’s Keith Norden; Dr. John Watret, Chancellor of Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University Worldwide; officials of Enterprise Florida, Florida Power & Light, Space Florida, Florida’s Space Coast; and other leaders of government, education and commerce. General Okinawa offered closing remarks.

According to Enterprise Florida, Inc., Florida is home to some 200 Japanese companies that employ approximately 26,000 Floridians.
While we collect data from several government agencies in dozens of categories, the key metrics to determining the health of the local economy are Gross Domestic Product (GDP), employment, unemployment, labor force, industry growth trends, exports, education attainment and population characteristics.

GDP, a common metric used as a barometer of economic health, is the monetary value of all finished goods and services within the county for a given year. Labor force size, employment and unemployment monthly data portray the size and robustness of the local workforce. Industry employment trends indicate which business sectors are growing or shrinking. In addition to labor force data, export data trends also serve as an indicator of economic productivity. All goods and services produced and not consumed within the United States are considered an export. Tracking export data is crucial because as exports grow, the economy benefits due to the addition of higher paying jobs. Population characteristics are important to businesses because they provide the opportunity to understand local consumers, features of the workforce, age, educational attainment and generation composition. Understanding the demographic makeup of the community is critical in defining and segmenting markets.

Volusia County Economic Development provides data and information on these statistics. Recently updated data is accessible on our website at www.floridabusiness.org. Call Kim Anderson at 386-248-8048 if you have any questions.
Long a barometer of the local economy, both residential and commercial permits increased in number and value in the Q3 2016 compared to Q3 2015.

“Clearly, commercial activity has picked up after years of stagnation,” said Paul Viscomi, a principal of Viscomi Construction. “It’s a combination of pent-up demand for new construction associated with new projects as well as expansion and improvement associated with existing commercial enterprises.”

Quantifying his assessment, a year-over-year comparison of third quarter activity shows 22 commercial permits pulled in Q3 of this year versus 18 Q3 permits issued in 2015. While this represents a 22% increase in the number of permits, the difference in dollar value of the permits is a dramatic 348%. The value of Q3 2016 permits is $103,273,007, compared to about $23,073,789 for the same period in 2015.

Leading the way in commercial permit value for Q3 2016 is Daytona Beach with $69,284,280 in commercial permits. DeLand reports commercial permit value $12,534,556 and Deltona permit value totaled $9,052,299.

On the residential side, increases are less dramatic, but no less important, according to Sandy Bishop, Executive Director of the Volusia Building Industry Association. “I concur that pent-up demand contributes to the current demand, said Bishop. “Add population increases to the mix and the kind of housing new residents prefer and the result is an uptick in permits for new residential construction.”

Q3 2016 residential construction permits hit the 450 mark, compared to 321 for the same period last year, a 40% increase. Those 450 permits represent $142,370,755 in value compared to the $105,420,400 value of the 321 permits issued in Q3 2015, a 36% increase.

Economic observers often note that activity breeds activity. Whether it’s residential or commercial construction, roadwork, bridges or anything else, it all adds up to new product and the economic vitality that goes with it.
Volusia County Residential Permit Data by Quarter

Source: Cities and County Permit offices reporting new construction activity

Residential Building Permits Issued in Volusia County Third Quarter 2016

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Data listed in descending order by value for the most recent quarter.
Source: Cities and County permit offices reporting new construction activity.
Volusia County Commercial Permit Data by Quarter

Source: Cities and County Permit offices reporting new construction activity
*Q3 2013 includes a single $165M permit for Daytona Beach International Speedway
**Q1 2014 includes a single $152M permit for Daytona Beach International Speedway

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

Commercial Building Permits Issued in Volusia County Third Quarter 2016

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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 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.shtml