

(Music plays)

(Multiple speakers)(indiscernible)

SPEAKER:

Thank you, thank you. OK.

SPEAKER:

â€ 8:30 AMâ€

SPEAKER:

It is an all-female crew and they did practice runs yesterday.

SPEAKER:

That's great!

SPEAKER:

(Laughs) I love it I call it the sound of freedom. Let's get on the road so we do not hold you up too much.

SPEAKER:

No problem.

SPEAKER:

Good morning everyone! If those who are up, if you can kindly take your seats.

Good morning everyone!

(Applause)

SPEAKER:

There we go, a round of applause for all of this networking.

(Applause)

SPEAKER:

Because this is the real reason we do this, right? So that we can come together and talk about all the great things that are happening in this community. I say we don't do this enough. But unfortunately we can only give you results quarter by quarter.

So here we are at the fourth quarterly update for 2023. And so before we get started I want to thank you all for coming! I have a few housekeeping items before we get started with the program.

First and foremost if you have your cell phone, if you can turn that off or put it on vibrate. I get really distractedâ€ I know some of you have great ring tones but my ADHD will come into effect and we will get nothing done. So if you put your cell phones or vibrate that would be

appreciated.

The bathrooms are to the side through the double doors and there are bathrooms through the glass doors as well be you can make your way through the terminal if necessary. Today's event is being streamed alive and is being live captioned.

To view live captioning, please go to FloridaBusiness.org in the Media Center and look for Closed Captioning

Link to view live captioning: <http://www.floridabusiness.org/media-center/closed-captioning.shtml>

--live.

There will be a ton of questions I'm sure. There are cards at your table, please fill them out and the staff from the economic development division will come and take those from you. At this time let's rise for the Pledge of Allegiance.

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

Play ball (Laughs).

I think I need the national anthem too. I'd like to take a moment to recognize some of our VIP guests in the room. I will do this in alphabetical order, well actually I will start with the Senator Tom Rife, the Florida State Senate.

(Applause)

SPEAKER:

Lynette Phillips, District aid for Representative Tom Leake.

Jake Johansson, Volusia County councilmember.

Matt Reinhardt, Volusia County councilmember.

Danny Robins, Volusia County councilmember.

Will Roberts, Volusia County tax collector.

(Applause)

(Laughter)

SPEAKER:

Don't worry Will, it happens to me all the time! (Laughs) Where is that new air service? Boo.

Debbie Dabo, Edgewater councilmember.

(Applause)

SPEAKER:

Vernon Burton, Lake Helen Mirren.

Lisa Stafford, Orange City councilmember.

Alex Tamsyn, Orange City vice mayor.

And Don Burnett, Orange City Port mayor.

Are there any elected officials in the room that I missed? I did Tom, yes. He was the first one. (Laughs)

I would like to thank our sponsor from Duke Energy! I have Elizabeth Godwin, the Senior Manager of Industry Recruitment of Florida economic with Duke Energy. So thank you Elizabeth! Would you like to come up and say some words?

ELIZABETH GODWIN:

Good morning! It is great to be with you all on this Friday.

I see said my name is Elizabeth and I have the pleasure of working for Duke Energy. I'm sure you are somewhat familiar with our company, we power the lives of our more than 1.9 million customers here in Florida including 88,000 just in Volusia County on the west side.

Our customers want affordable clean energy. We have made the ambitious goal to re-net carbon zero emissions by 2050. By the end of this year we will have 15 MW of solar online across the state. One of those plans is right here in DeBary.

In addition to solar we are looking at a variety of different technologies to help us reach that goal. One of them is hydrogen. You may have heard the last year we introduced an innovative hydrogen pilot again in DeBary.

So we are going to be powering an electrolyzer from the solar there and then that electrolyzer will be creating hydrogen and the hydrogen will be short and blended with natural gas in a turbine. It is very exciting! It may not sound like it to you (Laughs) But for us and our company and the industry, hydrogen is probably going to be a significant part of our energy future and I'm just very happy to have the innovation happening in our backyard and we are very proud of the City of DeBary.

Investing in the clean energy transition we for decades have invested in the Economic Development. We are committed to working with our partners to bring capital investment. I have the pleasure of working here in Volusia County with fantastic partners, team Volusia, Volusia County, many cities but then of course Florida Commerce who are steering the ship for us. I am particularly proud of Laura DiBella.

She has incredible energy! I don't know how she does it. And she has been such an authentic advocate for economic development for the state of Florida and really led during a period of a lot of transition. So I'm excited to be here today to hear from her and I appreciate the opportunity to sponsor this morning's breakfast. So thank you!

(Applause)

SPEAKER:
Thank you Elizabeth.

With that, probably around 8:30 AM there is a rumour that we may have a mini air show that will take place! So what I want to do is get through the quarter results as quickly as I can and then hopefully we are able to take a brief pause so we can see the all-female crew of the Thunderbirds perform!

(Applause)

CYRUS CALLUM:
And you know, this is another one of the times of year where we are fortunate to have the relationships and the partners we have in the community. This honour we spoken so I want you to enjoy the experience as well. We will take a brief pause before we hear from our esteemed speaker. And hopefully we will not keep you too late with that!

I will jump right into the presentation. We will talk about labour force and employment. Our unemployment rate is hovering around 3.3 to 3.4%. Our labour force that are employed has gone down just a little bit but we are still well above those record numbers we set since we got out of the bulk of the pandemic. So my experts on the team tell me that this is exactly where we need to be. So the numbers are still looking good as it pertains to unemployment.

Looking at employment by major industry, if we look at our over year gain or loss, we had a net gain of over 6000 with the biggest share being in healthcare and social services, followed by leisure and hospitality. So the only two industries that experienced losses are going to be construction and transportation, warehousing.

We had about 228 million permits in the nuclear construction arena so it is really strong, it was the top of the year in terms of the value of the permits. The 28 permits were filed for during the fourth quarter.

With that, looking at construction, \$37 million in the education sector comes from the new cc and grounds Centre for aerospace tech at Embry Riddle. So if you drive down Clyde Morrissey will start to see the building starting to take shape there! They are doing a great job moving on with construction there.

And in a previous conversation we had in the air, James Ford spoke on behalf of Karis who is building three storage facilities. If you noticed during the intersection of I4 and 95 just off of Williamson, those buildings are starting to come out of the ground too. Those buildings represent the latest permit of \$35 million. So there is a lot of things going on in the community in terms of construction! Looking at new construction for residential we had 740 new permits just under \$1 million of permits there.

Then looking at the trends, of course the great recession, we saw a significant decline and we Rose right before we got into the pandemic. Numbers are starting to stabilize in regards to total permit value and also permit count is starting to come down a bit.

Getting into the GDP, we have been pretty strong over the past five years. We've seen a steady incline since 2017. Growth contracted a bit due to the pandemic. However Volusia County, we were significantly stronger than some of the growth rates if you compare the state of Florida to the United States.

So looking over the past five years we have had about 13% worth of growth. Florida had 20%, but we are ahead of the US trend rate of 11% as it pertains to the GDP in terms of millions of dollars.

So looking at the industry, a stand out in where we are seeing the largest number of jobs is with professional business services and also arts leisure and hospitality. Finance insurance and leasing lead the way but in 2022, Volusia County had a record 10.2 million visitors to our area and that is a major contributor to our growth! Some both industries are in our employment arena as well.

We are looking at our export trends on the side, it surged in 2022 with a growth rate of 29% and these were the highest growth rates we had since 2019. The 29% growth. You can see the chart on the top right our export sectors for the business and the community shows us what we are producing, transportation and equipment of course, that would be from our boarding manufacturing industry. But we have also had pretty good gains in textile mill products. So the development in manufacturing of parachutes and different things on the west part of the county are contributing to some of those numbers.

So with that, I have breezed through my update. So we can talk to someone who knows about commerce and international productivity.

Laura DiBella is the President of Business Development for Florida Commerce. She previously served as the Secretary of commerce and president and CEO of apps or enterprise Florida. Prior to her state appointments from November 2019 through July 2022, she served as executive Director of the Florida pilots Association, to ensure the uninterrupted flow of commerce throughout all 14 operating deepwater seaports in Florida. From 2014 to 2019 Lara served as the Director for Florida counties economic Board as well as the port Director for Port for Edina, Ocean Highway and Port Authority of Nassau County.

While overseeing both roles she saw high raw recruitments and comprehensive manufacturing, corporate headquarters, healthcare and logistics, coupled with millions of dollars in grant funding.

So we got through that faster than we thought. So we will have some time today to ask Lara some questions before the Thunderbirds take off! Then we will? And kick it off. With no further ado, Laura?

LAURA DIBELLA:

I'm doing a mic check here, am I good with the microphone? OK good!

It's nice to see all good morning! I was looking through my calendar and this breakfast is my first speaking engagement I had speaking to communities when. At the time I was the Deputy Secretary for Florida so I'm excited to be back!

I'm closing a big loop in my career and our time together if you will. And so much has happened since then. I think it was around August to December 2022. So I will ask you all some questions in terms of what you want to ask me. Usually I have traditionally what I want to say I did and I tie in some of what you are looking to learn into my talk.

In the space of time before the ladies take off I want to talk about what is happening structurally in terms of business development for the state of Florida.

Changes that we are concerned about at the state level of things. If you recall the last time I was here there was an organization called Enterprise Florida. Enterprise Florida was birthed from originally the Florida Department of Commerce's in 1967 so they had changed the enterprise of Florida into a public partnership which eventually became Enterprise Florida where businesses and government leaders together moved together with economic development in mind. It was a model that Florida was the first to do, then 14 other states took that model and ran with it and it lasted for 20 years here in the state of Florida.

The last legislative session, not the one we are in, the last legislative session speaker runner made it a priority to convert the functioning of Enterprise Florida back into the Florida Department of Commerce model, thereby taking two agencies that existed Enterprise Florida and the Department of Economic Opportunity and brought them together under one umbrella which is now Florida Commerce.

So now the big agency has many divisions within it. So I'm talking about we have a division of economic development, a division of workforce, a division for this and this and this. So it is one large umbrella agency with many divisions in it.

Before we were all working together but the thought is now that we are working much more efficiently as one unit and there is much more collaboration between all of the agencies within it. It has only been around now for six months. So I would be lying to you if I said things were running really smooth because we are still building this out! You know? But we are fully on board.

We retired Enterprise Florida bylaw by December 1 we had to and we did that. So now we are fully commerce. Enterprise Florida is no longer our name.

What you all should know from the Economic Development side of things is there is a smaller division within the division of economic development that was created called Select Florida.

Select Florida is essentially a mini private/public entity that handles public international trade, it was traditionally done by Enterprise Florida. I don't want to confuse you but basically need to know that Florida Commerce and Select Florida are the same thing when it comes to Economic Development. We are all doing the same things just in different areas of activity within that.

Are there any questions on that before I move on? No? OK good. There could be some that come out. What do you guys want to hear today?

SPEAKER:

How Volusia County can attract high-paying jobs.

LAURA DIBELLA:

Easy, easy. Anything else?

SPEAKER:

(away from mic) (indiscernible)

LAURA DIBELLA:

I will address that actually right now. So we are still working through some of the language and what is allowed and not allowed.

The grand function Enterprise Florida used to be able to provide to both rural communities and also for trade grants is no longer on the table right now, because we have to adhere very close to the language in House Bill five in regards to what we can do and not do. So I'm not saying it will never be the case but we are still working out what that will look like. So that is something. Let me keep my words right here, that is something that is difficult. The plan looks really good on paper and the implementation is where the rubber meets the road.

We are going through the implementation of language right now and it is going to take a little while to finesse this and massaged it in a way that it will resemble what we were able to do before. Not in all cases, in some cases. One thing, you bring up a great point that I did not make clear before, the changes are obviously external, internal to us. External outside of what you just brought up, all the incentives remain for the companies we had. Everything is still on the table. Just our trade grants and rural programs are what we are still working on in regards to how that goes. But in terms of incentives and grants and everything that it's programmatically in place, it is still in place today. Other states are weaponizing this against us saying that Florida shut down economic development entirely, they are having an absolute field day about this. But I can assure you that there are no changes to the companies, especially the ones we are going after right now. So thank you for bringing that up!

Go ahead.

SPEAKER:

(away from mic) (indiscernible) The amount of need generation (indiscernible) So I hope you guys will fill in those gaps. (indiscernible) No doubt about it.

LAURA DIBELLA:

It's a great amount we are talking about reality! This is what we need to go through some it's important. Thank you for bringing that up!

I have heard that and I can speak to that a little bit. Numbers The volume of projects I think has changed a little bit because some companies are just do not know who to go to first. They're going to power companies first often times. They don't know who to go to first anymore because their initial contact, they are unsure if that is still the same contact now.

So projects are coming to us, they always come to us in different ways but companies are going to go to who they feel most comfortable with because they don't know who the point of person is amongst the change. Because it was very hard to get out during the change who that person would be so they are going through the utility providers and it has been a circuitous conversation and how we are dealing with the incoming Also to be entirely fair to what is

going on, we are in an election year.

I've been in this world along enough! I have been through a few election cycles and in the election-year things slow down. Everyone kind of presses pause and waits to see what will happen. Because many companies we are talking to are making decisions based on IRA funding and all sorts of programs that should President Biden not be in place anymore could go away. Alternatively should Trump come in they absolutely want to be here. Politics come in when companies make big moves so that is why things have slowed down a little bit.

SPEAKER:

Can you speak to the competitive process for attracting companies and how that trickles down to the counties and then what the competitive process looks like for the counties?

LAURA DIBELLA:

So when a company comes to the state and we deal with that? Yeah. Companies come to us in different ways and in different stages. Some of them come to us with an absolute! With the research, they know absolutely where they want to go and they need help navigating the political landscape and processes and all that stuff. There are other companies that come to us and know nothing! They will ask us to tell them about Florida.

Oh! Are we stopping?

SPEAKER:

There they go!

LAURA DIBELLA:

Yay! (Laughs)

(Laughter)

(Multiple speakers)

CYRUS CALLUM:

Just for everyone's information, they will come back and do a few more manoeuvres, so that was not the show! They will come back and do a few more manoeuvres and it will probably be about 10 minutes worth of exercise they are planning on working on ahead of the race so we look forward to seeing their practice. We are still on pause just for a second.

LAURA DIBELLA:

Alright great I will eat.

CYRUS CALLUM:

We will give Laura a few minutes to eat her breakfast and we will see their tricks and why they are showing us their practice for the race.

(Multiple speakers)(indiscernible)

CYRUS CALLUM:

Alright everyone! If we can take our seats so we can get back into the question and answer

session with Ms. Laura DiBella.

Everyone! Everyone! If we can get back to our seats. So the Thunderbirds teased us a little bit because typically they do a few more runs over the runway but we are not going to probably get that before we are out of time. So I want to make sure we have enough time to get some questions and answers in to Laura.

So if we can all take our seats now and get back on schedule. And if they flyby they just happen to fly by (Laughs).

LAURA DIBELLA:

Alright. I will go back to I will answer Katrina's question as far as how it goes. Companies come to us in different ways. Sometimes they know exactly what they want and other times they do not know exactly what they want. So we will handle it depending on how the company wants to approach it and we will look at all aspects of what is important to them. You know, are they looking for infrastructure? What is the driver? The workforce? Is it being close to a certain industry sector? Is it being close to a seaport? What is it? Airports, you know? All of those things. There is a battery of options that need to be weighed in order to cite a facility somewhere, a facility or corporate headquarters, whatever it may be. So we take all of that out and aggregate it and then we send out the request to those communities that would be the best fit for this type of user that is coming along.

Then communities come back to us, they respond by either rejecting it saying they cannot handle the requirements there or they come back with a response and we package it all together and give it to the customer. We go over with the customer very thoroughly and we downselect communities from there. I will tell you right now, incentives have nothing to do with the initial part of the equation. None! If a company comes to us and says, "We want a facility here, tell us what you can give us as an incentive." That is a big red flag because of a company has nothing to give us, if they have not went into extreme detail of what they have, the jobs, the average wage, they are not serious. I was a local economic developer too so we all understand the sensitivities around this and who is playing games and who is not so we are able to dissect that really quickly. But if incentives are the first thing they want to talk about we automatically know how to do these people. I want to make very clear where incentives come into play. Incentives come into play when it is you versus another community. That's it. It's really when it is pushed over the edge and they are looking at two communities closely.

Economic Development is local. So how do you attract jobs? You get really aggressive on the local level. Because I will tell you right now the state will not pony up anymore right now. The state incentives are a bad word. I hope to God that the incentives stay where they are right now and do not go away along with other programs that are no longer in existence, so you as community need to fight harder to make up for where we are lacking.

SPEAKER:

(indiscernible) (away from mic)

LAURA DIBELLA:

They have done certain things but I They have spent money but I would say it does not come out to shelling out money, it is being able to support the onboarding of communities, supplying them with I Just to give you an example of my experience in Nauset County, we are still a

rural county and one of the fastest growing counties now, we had a big manufacturing facility. These communities needed a place to pretty much incubate while they are building their facility.

We are dealing with a new greenfield type of project that takes a year and 1/2 to put that thing up. An incentive could be supplying them with office space somewhere while they are setting up their operations. You know? Or supporting them at the local college. --half.

I'm saying these things, it is easier said than done but these are great ways of attracting and onboarding these companies to your communities. It does not always involve giving money or giving a rebate or any of those things, it could be something much more creative that is beneficial to everyone involved. But getting them in is the hook so that is what I am saying.

SPEAKER:
(indiscernible) (away from mic)

LAURA DIBELLA:
That is a this and this, so what is required in situations like that is making sure that they are actually doing an apples to apples comparison. You know, when you're dealing with a state that has income tax versus a state that does not you cannot look at those two things as the same because basically the incentive for Alabama, Georgia or any of the seats we may be dealing with is they are taking off the income tax. Well that's great but we never had that to begin with so that is not a fair comparison. So you have to make sure you articulating in a very positive and correct way that we are not the same as them as far as how we are taxing them into certain things altogether. -- States. It is really down to the line item on everything.

So it's a fun job, it really is fun but it gets really dirty. We get into the weeds as far as how we go after

SPEAKER:
(away from mic) There are payroll taxes, all sorts of taxes for the land.

LAURA DIBELLA:
We have all sorts of programs. They had time I would go through all of those programs and we really do compete contrary to what people believe. We do have the ability to compete with these large-scale projects. Our weapon in the state of Florida is space Florida, the charter that space Florida supports. Very few people now and it is a very complicated thing to explain but the charter that space Florida has has economic development tools that no other state has. That is why the aerospace and defence industry is growing here so much, you know, besides the fact that that ecosystem is here and now it has been commercialized so much and it is bleeding all over the place. It is the entire state, it's not just right here in your backyard, it will take over the entire state. The space charter allows Florida to basically take upfront capital cost away from companies and allow them to come here and build their facilities and put their money where it needs to be which is towards operations, toward hiring, towards equipment, you know? All of the really big ticket items that make a company want to be here. Or be anywhere for that matter.

So that is something we have that no other state has and we have sharpened our ability with that particular tool. Yeah?

SPEAKER:

(away from mic) (indiscernible)â€¦ We sharedâ€¦ What was the big thing (indiscernible)â€¦?

LAURA DIBELLA:

Gosh there are so many. We hadâ€¦ Well this is toughâ€¦ I have not reflected on this very much. You know what was my proudestâ€¦ It really has beenâ€¦ It was walking into a situation that was not exactly stable. When I came on to Enterprise Florida, you know, it was under constant attack every session. The morale was very low with the staff. Here I was, another person put in charge. Granted I had economic development background and I knew some of that but there was this look of, "What are you going to do for us? We are going to get shut down next year." So it was a very touchy situation. There were a lot of vacancies. I was doing around six jobs at that time and I remember I had heart palpitations. It was really hard for the first few months.

We built the team back. In the beginning of 2023 it was really amazing when I was made an honest woman, when I was made the secretary in February last year we were really going fast. We had a business development team and we really had some wins under our belts, glands, and we had a series of projects. We were chasing some big deals, one that was looking right here at Volusia County. It was a really amazing time!

And then stuff happenedâ€¦ So now the morale has changed again. I think that was my proudest moment, to be able to turn around that situation and have a really well oiled machine because there were a lot of people who believed that we were not going to be able to do that.

I appreciate them because most of them have stated, you know? The Business Development team has stayed. They are the most dedicated people I've ever worked with! They are so talented. I was only there to help them, to help them do God's work (Laughs). And I appreciate them immensely. That would be my proudest moment, seeing them live to their potential and work at their potential.

SPEAKER:

(away from mic) (indiscernible)â€¦ How is Volusia County going to attract businesses to our local community?

LAURA DIBELLA:

Well Florida is in an amazing situation. I'm not saying that because I get paid for it but because it is absolutely, positively the case. Our GDP jumped from last year to this year almost 20%! We went from 1.47 trillion 26.4 trillion. We are now the 13th largest economy by GDP in the nation so we are bigger than Mexico's economy, we are bigger than Indonesians. Our goal is to be 10 in 2030 which is to make us as big as Canada. We are not messing around! We are truly a force to be dealt with.

We are quickly moving away from the service-based economy to truly manufacturing and all of that. So now we are number 10 in manufacturing in the nation. We beat New York. And we are only going to continue down this path as we continue to really develop our aerospace and space industries here.

When I say that, many people say that we are putting all of our eggs in one basket. Now we really are not! Everything nowadays involves space activity, satellite activity, batteries, whatever it is, space covers every single industry we are talking about now. So we want to be at the forefront of all of that technology from the entire supply chain down because that is what is

moving the world these days!

So we are launching, how many? I think we did 73 launches last year and we will have double up that this year. What are they launching and putting into orbit? Satellites! So that just speaks volumes to where we are going.

And (indiscernible)

(Laughter)

LAURA DIBELLA:

So you take that space and then you have the aviation side, Air Force and defence is our number one industry in Florida. So pass agriculture last year, we will never look back. With all of the activity with airports and all of that stuff is growing exponentially. We have companies that want to be here in the MRO space because of our proximity to Latin America. The service centres need to be here in Florida because of the influence and connectivity to Latin America.

With the reshuffling of everything happening in the supply chain, the breakaway from China and repositioning there is a lot of moves towards Central America, Latin America and of course the United States. If we cannot get them here in Florida they go to our closest trading partners so I am talking about Mexico and Latin America. So we are benefiting in both ways, directly and indirectly through trade. So that is why I say it is an amazing time and it is not stopping. That is where it is going!

Having MRO in your backyard is amazing because the workforce is it so badly needed. We cannot train these people fast enough. So did I answer your question? OKR good.

SPEAKER:

Good morning thank you for being here. My name is Sean Baffert and I have been here since 1978. I have worked in South Florida, Jacksonville, I live in Orlando.

LAURA DIBELLA:

Well you sound like me. (Laughs) Go ahead.

SPEAKER:

watching you grow over the last 30 years has been exciting. What can Florida Commerce do for us where we have issues? What I hear often now is about transportation. Our roads are not congested but they are for someone who grew pure in the Port Orange area. But we do not have the money, it costs so much to expand a GBL over a creek.

What resources can we get from Florida Commerce to help develop that transportation sector? Like we have an issue right now that where this has been a long-term transportation (indiscernible) (away from mic) And all of this development has occurred.

In providing, the biggest thing here is we do not have registered development forums and (away from mic) (indiscernible) What resources can we get from Florida Commerce financially to help this happen?

LAURA DIBELLA:

To answer the roadwork question first, you have a very qualified DNT expert here that is on top of everything that you need. But ultimately they are completing with the rest of the state as far as needs and all of the requirements that go there. You know? There is only so much of a budget. So if you are able to put together some private/public partnerships for any of these areas, private/public partnerships are the way to go so that is my answer for that.

But continually elevating the issue, being that squeaky wheel saying, "It needs to be done!". Over and over because you have to keep saying it, that is the best answer I can give to you in establishing private/public partnerships because they certainly love the buy-in from private.

It shows well there. Secondly we do have some programs in place in terms of how we can help communities as far as writing their sites. For jobs there are twoâ€¦ Rural infrastructure fund would only apply to a few areas of this county but that is definitely a program you can look at. The job growth of grant fund is more or less a flexible instrument that we can use towards proactive infrastructure investment.

So if you have a site that is publicly or privately owned that has an infrastructure need of some sort, and you have a good case as to why this would be good for us to invest, because again there is only so much money and you're competing across the state, that is a tool that we can possibly deploy. So that is what I would say. How am I looking?

SPEAKER:

We have time for one more question and it came from the back of the room there. There are talks that the upper levels of space wars are currently making a decision to see they are in California or Florida. We do not have insight at this point but Laura does.

LAURA DIBELLA:

Our military and defence division, again a new areaâ€¦ Well it is not new but it is new to Florida Commerce, is definitely on top of these things. On top of all of these activities. Not only do they stay on top of the needs of all of our 20+ bases around to ensure that they are getting what they need, and I mean anything that they need! But also going after spaceâ€¦ I'm sorry star com was a huge win for us.

I can't say what our odds are but there are only a few places for space really. So if we continue to drive the way we are in terms of being the leader for space, we are truly the gateway to space. We are the gateway to Latin America and the gateway to space. The new Silicon Valley all rolled into one. We have a really good chance I'd like to say!

I would hope that politics does not get into it but I do not know thatâ€¦ So I would like to say that our chances are really good and that always speaks volumes. It's not up to me, it is not up to me, yeah.

SPEAKER:

(away from mic) (indiscernible)â€¦ Waiting for AAA to go throughâ€¦ (indiscernible)?

LAURA DIBELLA:

In 2027. I mean I could talk to you a lot about that off-line. Florida is the absolute hub, and will be the hub for advanced air mobility. For those who are not familiar it is an electrical vertical takeoff and landing. For those not familiar with what I am talking about, they are talking about

flying taxis. You hear these things like the Jetsons, electric power vehicles that will transport us all over the place. It is a reality! We have talked to these companies.

We had a really big one here that we lost by a hair. We lost them because of readily available inventory I can say that. But I will get to that in a minute. Florida is the absolute Goldilocks market. It will be the first market that will see these vehicles actually take off here in the United States!

Right now Dubai will be first and Florida will be second so it's amazing! But yes it is all based on the FAA. The person we have to talk to at the FAA to talk about it is a first mover advantage. Whoever gets the FAA certification first will ultimately win the entire place.

SPEAKER:
(away from mic) (indiscernible)

LAURA DIBELLA:
We are. According to the feedback I received from the infrastructure partners that you obviously need in order to support the industry, it is happening here. Yeah, yeah and Florida is really behind it on the legislative side.

CYRUS CALLUM:
Please join me in giving Laura a round of applause!

(Applause)

CYRUS CALLUM:
Laura thank you so much for what you have done for our state and community. We appreciate and are fortunate that you have been a speaker for us twice so thank you so much!

I also want to thank our sponsor Duke Energy, thank you for sponsoring our wonderful breakfast.

(Applause)

CYRUS CALLUM:
And if anyone is interested in sponsoring a future Q Breakfast please see me or my esteemed colleagues in the back! Katrina could probably do better than I could. Please mark your calendars for the next Q, it will be May 17th of 2024. And once again thank you for joining us this morning!

Have a great weekend! Hopefully you will see some Thunderbirds flying around on your way out! And happy Daytona 500 as well. Thank you so much.