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September 2024



ST. JOHNS





Leadership St. Johns Class of 2024

The Class of 2024 of Leadership St. Johns recently held their graduation ceremony and celebration to mark the end of their experience immersing themselves in the county's business, political and nonprofit communities.

Photo provided by the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce Foundation





MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT/CEO



Isabelle Renault President/CEO, St. Johns CountyChamber of Commerce

The power of connection in business and community

In today's world, the need for connection remains as crucial as ever - especially in business. The most successful businesses are built on not only innovative products or services but also strong relationships and meaningful connections. At the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce, we take pride in being a hub for vital connections between business owners, clients, government leaders, employees, the local community and beyond. For 120 years, the chamber has brought together professionals from various industries, creating a space where relationships can flourish and businesses can find mutual support.

Through Leadership St. Johns, local

professionals connect with each other and with St. Johns County leaders to gain a greater understanding of their community. This year's class brought their connections full circle by creating a fundraiser to support the SJC Chamber Foundation, which is home to the LSJ program. These leaders will apply their new knowledge and experience to their roles to strengthen the business environment and community in St. Johns County. You're invited to apply for LSJ Class of 2025 when applications open in November!

The chamber is committed to helping make St. Johns County a place where employees can live where they work. Our Attainable Housing Coalition advocates for more housing options for the workers that make our businesses thrive. We are sharing this message widely, including in recent presentations to leaders at Florida Blue in Jacksonville and at the statewide Florida Housing Coalition Conference in Orlando.

We also see important connections far outside our community. The chamber was recently part of a delegation from St. Augustine to Aviles, Spain, for the cities to celebrate 100 years of kinship, and we were thrilled to also welcome a delegation from Aviles in St. Augustine. The connection of these cities has opened the door for international business relationships and collaboration.

The chamber encourages businesses and the community to embrace the power of connection and engagement — to adapt to change, find innovative solutions and contribute to a vibrant, interconnected economy. These connections are what make St. Johns County thrive.

Isabelle Renault, President/CEO, St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce

Chamber to mark 120th anniversary at annual end-of-year celebration



The St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce invites members and the community to mark its 120th anniversary at Celebrate!, an annual event to highlight achievements of the year and show appreciation to Chamber members.

This year's event will take on an early 1900s theme to mark the Chamber's establishment as the St. Augustine Board of Trade in 1904. Attendees can mingle with period reenactors, pause for an early-1900s-themed souvenir photo, explore a timeline of the Chamber and the county's business history, snap a commemorative selfie, catch up with old friends and new, and enjoy live music, a plated dinner and cocktails in a luxurious setting.

The Chamber will also recognize the best of St. Johns County's business community, including Chamber Member of the Year, Ambassador of the Year and Economic Development Council Member of the Year.

Registration for the event is available on the Chamber's website at sjcchamber.com/events.

SJC Chamber Celebrate! 2024

Date: Thursday, Nov. 14 Time: 5:30-8 p.m. Location: Hyatt Place St. Augustine/ Vilano Beach, 117 Vilano Road, St. Augustine Tickets: \$99 per person, includes dinner and drinks, entertainment, keepsake photo and more RSVP and more information: bit.ly/ celebrate_120



Leadership St. Johns class of 2024 marks culmination of successful experience

The class of 2024 of Leadership St. Johns recently held a graduation ceremony and celebration to mark the end of their experience immersing themselves in the county's business, political and nonprofit communities.

Leadership St. Johns is the cornerstone program of the St. Johns County Chamber Foundation. The program accelerates the leadership skills of business and community professionals by building relationships and enhancing their knowledge of St. Johns County.

This year's class of 23 members is the first under the SJC Chamber Foundation, now in its second year.

At the celebration, the class heard from St. Johns County Tax Collector-elect Jennifer Ravan, a member of LSJ class of 2021, with insight to what makes a good servant leader. Chamber board Chair Berta Odom and foundation board Chair Cecil Gibson also addressed the group. Each LSJ class creates a fundraiser to support a cause or nonprofit organization that makes a difference in St. Johns County. This year's class created a golf tournament to benefit the SJC Chamber Foundation and raised more than \$28,000 to support scholarships for future LSJ



members.

The application for LSJ 2025 will open in October, and the program runs January-September. Learn more at sjcchamber.com/leadership-st-johns.

arn more at sjechamber.com/leadership-st-johns.



School superintendent explains need for budget increase at Chamber EDC breakfast

The St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce held its quarterly Economic Development Council breakfast on Friday, Sept. 20. Tim Forson, superintendent of St. Johns County School District, shared updates about the school system and what's needed to ensure St. Johns County retains its consistent "A" score and top statewide ranking.

The school district has proposed two referenda for the November general election ballot: one that will continue the current half-cent sales tax for another 10 years, through 2035, and another that would raise property taxes by one mill for four years. The sales tax continuation funds capital improvements for school facilities, and the millage increase would fund school operating costs like teacher salaries and educational programs.

Forson spoke about the need for voter approval of both of these referenda, saying that strengthening schools is a function of a community's quality of life.

He highlighted the increased demand on the county's educational system as the population grows, and the disparity in average teacher salary between St. Johns and neighboring counties. The millage increase would allow the school district to invest in hiring and retaining highquality teachers and staff and make St. Johns a more competitive employer, he said.

The school district has used the half-cent sales tax over the past 10 years to fund construction of new schools and make critical renovations to others, Forson said. Extending this tax another 10 years will allow the school district to continue making facility improvements



Photo courtesy of St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce Scott Maynard, senior vice president of economic development for the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce; Berta Odom, board president for St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce; Tim Forson, superintendent of the St. Johns County School District; Isabelle Renault, president and CEO of the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce; Dirk Schroeder, chair of the chamber's Economic Development Council Executive Committee.

in the face of rising construction costs, he explained. The next Economic Development Council Breakfast will be Friday, Dec. 13, at Renaissance World Golf Vil-





lage Resort. The featured speaker will be David Altig, executive vice president and chief economic adviser for the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta. Interested attendees can register for the event on the chamber's website at sjcchamber.com/events.

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Photo courtesy of St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce

Annual Chamber board retreat focuses on strategic plan

The St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce held its annual retreat and strategy planning session for the board of directors and staff last month at St. Johns Golf & Country Club. Consultant Nancy Dering Mock facilitated the strategic planning work. The group held many important conversations, shared ideas and worked on the three-year strategic plan to continue the Chamber's work as an advocate for the St. Johns County business community.



Photos courtesy of St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce

Chamber joins St. Augustine delegation visit to Aviles, Spain

St. Augustine and Aviles, Spain, are celebrating 100 years as sister cities. In August, a delegation of St. Augustine city officials, along with St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce representatives, visited Aviles to get to know the city and the possibility of establishing business relationships with companies in Aviles.

Isabelle Renault, president and CEO of the Chamber, and Scott Maynard, senior vice president of economic development, learned more about the business community in Aviles and connected with the Aviles Chamber of Commerce to strengthen the business partnership between Aviles and St. Augustine.



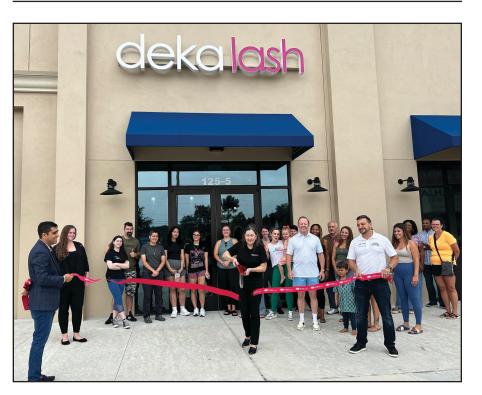
A delegation from Aviles also visited St. Augustine earlier in September as part of the anniversary celebration.

Chamber After Hours

Doug Bell and the team at DJ's Clam Shack in St. Augustine hosted Chamber After Hours on Aug. 14. It was a great evening of networking and catching up, despite the rainy weather. DJ's Clam Shack is located on Hypolita Street in downtown St. Augustine.



Photo courtesy of St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce



Two businesses cut ribbons

Deka Lash and YogaSix St. Johns held ribbon cuttings July 10. Both businesses are located in Northwest St. Johns County. Deka Lash provides customizable lash and brow services, and YogaSix offers a variety of yoga classes for everyone from beginners to experts.

Photo courtesy of St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce



Donna Mancini hosts Chamber after hours event

Donna Mancini Interiors & Flooring hosted a Chamber after hours event at its location in Ponte Vedra as fellow Chamber members took part in the social event on Aug. 21.

Photo by Susan Griffin



Chamber After Hours at Freedom Boat Club

Freedom Boat Club Jacksonville, Jacksonville Beach & St. Augustine histed the June 27 Chamber After Hours event.

Photo courtesy of St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce





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Chamber After Hours at Old Coast Pickleball

On July 18, Old Coast Pickleball hosted a very fun Chamber After Hours, where members could network while playing pickleball at the indoor, air-conditioned facility during the evening thunderstorms. Owners Tim and Ashley Owens are also breaking ground on a new, 12-court facility in St. Augustine, near the intersection of Dobbs Road and Kings Estate Road.

Photo courtesy of St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce



Hair Cuttery ribbon cutting

Hair Cuttery held its grand opening and ribbon cutting on July 19. The salon is located in the Treaty Oaks shopping center on S.R. 207 in St. Augustine, with a great team of colorists and stylists to serve the community.

Photo courtesy of St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce







GJ Gardner Homes ribbon cutting

GJ Gardner Homes held its ribbon cutting and grand opening on July 26.

Photo courtesy of St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce



Dutch Bros Coffee ribbon cutting

Dutch Bros Coffee held its ribbon cutting and grand opening on Aug. 9. The business is located on U.S. 1 near the Palencia-International Golf Parkway intersection. The team serves up a variety of coffees, teas, shakes and more starting at 5 a.m. every day.

Photo courtesy of St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce







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Chamber After Hours at Wells Fargo

Wells Fargo hosted the June 26 Chamber After Hours event.



Ascension St. Vincent's 210 hosts Chamber before hours

Ascension St. Vincent's Hospital on County Road 210 hosted a St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce before hours event on Aug. 7. The event was another part of the hospital's busy summer which included celebrating their two-year anniversary ceremony.

Photos by Susan Griffin





Chamber After Hours at Real Property Management

Real Property Management Home Together hosted a fun Chamber After Hours event Sept. 11 with great networking, food and drinks. The business offers an affordable solution to managing real estate in St. Johns County with a focus on quality residential property management.

Photo courtesy of St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce



Chamber Before Hours at Hydro Med Spa

Hydro Med Spa hosted the July 10 Chamber Before Hours event. Founder, CEO and Clinical Director Travis Jeffords spoke to the special approach Hydro Med Spa takes to help clients look and feel their best with custom IV infusions, hormone replacement, ozone therapy, aesthetics, body sculpting and more.

Photo courtesy of St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce



Golf Cart World ribbon cutting

Golf Cart World, located at 100 Sterling Plaza Drive in Ponte Vedra, held a ribbon cutting July 29 to celebrate their opening with members of the community.

Photo courtesy of St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce



Chamber Before Hours at Hillary's Chicago Pizza

Hillary's Chicago Pizza in St. Augustine hosted a very tasty Chamber Before Hours event on Sept. 12. Members got their workday started with great networking and authentic Chicago-style pizza. Owners Hillary and Bruce Lake bring the love of pizza and history of being Chicagoans to St. Augustine. The restaurant is located on U.S. 1 near State Road 312 in St. Augustine. It also offers online ordering and catering.

Photo courtesy of St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce



Learning Experience ribbon cutting

The Learning Experience held a ribbon cutting on Sept. 13 at its new location in St. Augustine. Students from infants to preschoolers learn, play and grow through the unique L.E.A.P. curriculum.

Photo courtesy of St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce





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Chamber After Hours at StretchLab

StretchLab in St. Augustine Beach hosted a great Chamber After Hours on July 24. Attendees had a fun night of networking and learning from the StretchLab experts about all of the benefits that come with increased flexibility and range of motion, no matter what activity you do.

Photo courtesy of St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce



Chamber Before Hours at Code Ninjas World Golf Village

Code Ninjas World Golf Village hosted Chamber Before Hours on Aug. 15 for fellow Chamber members. Owner Ryan Clark spoke about the importance of using technology to prepare children for the future. Clark, a member of the Chamber's Board of Directors, also owns Code Ninjas Ponte Vedra. At Code Ninjas, kids learn how to code in a fun, safe and social-learning environment where gaming is celebrated and STEM is cool.

Photo courtesy of St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce



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Chamber Before Hours at Mall 2121 and Buma Landscaping

Mall 2121 and Buma Landscaping hosted the Chamber Before Hours on July 11. Mall 2121, formerly the Ponce de Leon Mall, is now open, and owner Earl Glisson plans to fill the remaining spots with community-based businesses. The company uses a portion of rent it collects to help those in need locally, nationally and internationally. Buma Landscaping is locally owned by Seth Buma, who described how the company's approach to landscape design is to coach customers to envision the ideal landscape that will help them create the best memories in their home; then, the company executes that vision.

Photo courtesy of St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce



Longleaf Ribbon Cutting

Longleaf St. Johns Luxury Apartments held its ribbon cutting on June 26.

Photo courtesy of St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce



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Chamber at Noon at Marsh Landing Country Club

Marsh Landing Country Club was the setting for an informative joint Chamber at Noon with JAX Chamber. Experts from St. Johns County and the Florida Department of Transportation presented important information about our beaches and their impact on quality of life, businesses, tourism and more, with an ongoing focus on renourishment and resiliency planning.

Photo by Susan Griffin



Conquer Health Chiropractic ribbon cutting

Conquer Health Chiropractic held its ribbon cutting ceremony June 28.

Photo courtesy of St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce



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First Coast Headshots ribbon cutting

First Coast Headshots held its ribbon cutting on Aug. 7. Owner Gabriel Giannelli opened the new studio in downtown St. Augustine at the historic Treasury Building at 24 Cathedral Place.

Photo courtesy of St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce





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FastSigns Ribbon Cutting

FastSigns held its ribbon cutting and reopening under new management on June 27.

Photo courtesy of St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce





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Photos courtesy of St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce

Sawgrass Pet Resort celebrates expansion with dual ribbon cuttings

Sawgrass Pet Resort in Ponte Vedra Beach held a ribbon cutting and open house on Aug. 18 to celebrate their opening after adding an additional 2,000 sq. ft. boarding area and walking trail. The grand opening of Sunrise Vet at Sawgrass was celebrated with a ribbon cutting the same day. Sawgrass Pet Resort offers many amenities for dog owners, including boarding, daycare, grooming and training.







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Sugar Sugar Ribbon Cutting

Sugar Sugar — St. Johns held its ribbon cutting and grand opening on July 12. Sugar Sugar is located at 105 Nature Walk Parkway, Unit 107, off C.R. 210. It offers sugaring hair removal, spray tans, facials and brow services.

Photo courtesy of St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce



Social Society ribbon cutting

The Social Society held its ribbon cutting and grand opening on Sept. 16. The area's newest party supply store is now open in Nocatee, and owner Seri Kertzner has sourced everything you need to throw a fabulous party. In this fun and creative space, you'll find trendy gift ideas, pieces for everyday entertaining, a balloon bar with delivery options and more.

Photo by Anthony Richards



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