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June 2017



ST. JOHNS
COUNTY
CHAMBER
OF COMMERCE

Ponte Vedra
Recorder



Message from the Director

The season has arrived for summer backyard barbecues, beach days and fun in the sun. This time of year, we start to see lots of new faces around our favorite restaurants and retail spots, reinforcing the simple fact that our county continues to be ranked at the top when considering vacation and leisure activities.

A big part of why we continue to be at the top is the quality of life and strong businesses around our county. The St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce understands that in order to have a strong economic environment, you must also have a strong sense of community. As the new director for the Ponte Vedra Beach Division, I am constantly reminded of just how blessed we are to have leaders, business owners, educators and citizens who realize that we all share in the responsibility of creating economic success within our community.

One of the ways we celebrate those individuals in Ponte Vedra Beach is during our Annual Membership Appreciation Awards. This after hours event held at Sawgrass Country Club continues to be the way we take a moment to thank our members for their commitment to the Chamber.

I want to acknowledge our recipients:

The Crushing It Award is given to the member who utilizes their membership and who has worked to grow their business: Matt Price, Regions Bank.

The Going the Distance Award is given to the member who has attended numerous events in both the St. Augustine and Ponte Vedra areas: Victoria Long, United Way of St. Johns County.

Key Contributor Award is given to the member who has stepped up at the last minute on countless occasions to assist and promote chamber events and initiatives: Felicia Cox, Iberia Bank.

Rookie of the Year Award is given to the member who shows great initiative in networking and promoting their business: Carla Miles, Mainstream Boutique.

2017 Dedicated Service Award is given to the member that never says no and can be consistently depended on for sponsorship of chamber events: Tom McDonough, Flavor Palette.

The Spotlight Award is given to the member that has had the most fun, and well attended before hours or after hours event: Cutter & Cutter Fine Art.

Our Board Member of the Year went to Sarah Alexander with Berkshire Hathaway Home Services. Sarah is the first to lend a hand and help in a variety of situations, whether it's out and about or during board meetings.

The Jeff Jenkins Community Service Award is given to a member who goes above and beyond in their service to our community: Advanced Disposal.

The Pat Morgan Outstanding Member Award is given to the member who goes above and beyond in their commitment to expanding and im-

proving our division: Rob Schlingmann, The Plantation at Ponte Vedra Beach.

Congratulations and thank you to all of our winners for your continued commitment to the chamber and our mission.

Another way we are continuing to grow business in St. Johns County is by working to enhance the visitor experience here in Ponte Vedra Beach. Isabelle Rodriguez, CEO of the SJC Chamber and I have been working alongside The Nichols Tourism Group/National Laboratory of Tourism, an eCommerce team retained to undertake a strategic planning assignment that would help us create a three-year plan for the Visitor Information Center in Ponte Vedra Beach.

This initiative directed by Dr. Daniel Fesenmaier of the National Laboratory of Tourism housed at the University of Florida was conducted to assist us in identifying new tourism product development opportunities. The results of their findings have been finalized and will be presented at the next Tourism Development Council Board meeting. It is our hope that we will receive the support needed to move forward to cultivate a stronger tourism base here in Ponte Vedra Beach.

In addition, mark your calendar for the 15th annual Ponte Vedra Auto Show presented by Fields Auto Group at Nocatee Town Center, on Sunday, Sept. 10 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. You don't want to miss it!



Toni Boudreaux
Director PVB Division, St. Johns
County Chamber of Commerce

Since becoming the Ponte Vedra Beach Division director, I have had the opportunity to work alongside our dedicated board members, who all share the same vision and commitment necessary to grow our business community. We are working collaboratively to build solid partnerships with our members throughout the county. As an advocate for business, we strive to create a healthy economy while simultaneously preserving the quality of life we all enjoy.

Recurring St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce Events

Chamber Before Hours: Held the second Wednesday of the month, this networking event introduces a new host business at each gathering.

Chamber at Noon: Held on the third Wednesday of the month, the event begins at 11:30 a.m. with registration. Members then have the opportunity to network before enjoying lunch. Each Chamber at Noon event includes an educational component, such as health care reform. The event also provides time for the sponsoring company to be recognized before a captive audience. It is a cost-effective way to get your company known among members and guests.

Chamber After Hours: Chamber After Hours events are held every fourth Wednesday of the month, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Each month has a different host location, making for a lively and enjoyable event. Most After Hours are free, or a nominal fee is charged

to members and guests. Chamber After Hours is the perfect way to showcase your business location and amenities!

For more information about chamber events, visit www.stjohnscountychamber.com and click on the Upcoming Events link.

Power Networking Luncheon (PNL): Held on the second Tuesday of every month, this business-to-business networking luncheon program allows participants to introduce their business to all attendees. Remember to bring a small gift or door prize to promote your business. The event is open exclusively to chamber members, and seating is limited to the first 50 respondents each month.

Chamber Business Councils
Agricultural & Environmental Council: Meeting on the fourth Thursday of every other month, this council aims to promote, educate and provide a forum to

advance agricultural and environmental issues and show how these industries contribute to our quality of life. Council programs focus on our agricultural heritage and the economic contribution that this industry brings to the county. Environmental programs focus on promoting and addressing issues associated with our natural and environmental resources, sustainable development, permitting, conservation and eco-tourism.

Historic St. Augustine Council: Held on the second Friday of every month, council meetings are designed to bring members the most current information on tourism trends. The sessions also spotlight local and state initiatives that have economic impact on business in the historic district and work to make the nation's oldest city a better place for residents and visitors.

Small Business Council: Held on the fourth Tuesday of every month, this council works to sup-

port small businesses throughout St. Johns County. The council also strives to increase commerce while educating and serving as a resource to small business owners and their managers.

South Beaches Council: With meetings on the third Thursday of every month, the South Beach Council is designed for chamber members with a professional or general interest in the South Beaches area. The council is characterized by its dedication to the community and advocacy for local business issues.

Tourism & Hospitality Council: Meeting on the first Wednesday of every month, this council aims to further enhance the abilities of St. Johns County tourism businesses to provide first-class service to their visitors. The council aims to achieve this by being a resource for industry-specific training and educational opportunities.

Chamber gears up for 15th Annual Ponte Vedra Auto Show

The St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce is gearing up for its 15th annual Ponte Vedra Auto Show.

To be held from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 10 at Nocatee Town Center, the auto show will feature up to 150 classic and new collectors' cars, which will compete for trophies in more than 30 categories. This year's event will also commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Camaro and the Shelby as well as the 70th anniversary of the Ferrari.

"The Ponte Vedra Auto Show is one of our most anticipated events of the year, with over 3,000 attendees annually," said Toni Boudreaux, director of the chamber's Ponte Vedra Beach Division. "We are excited this year to bring back food trucks, music and a vintage motorcycle display."

Presenting sponsor of the Ponte Vedra Auto Show will be Fields Auto Group.

"We welcome any opportunity to support the local 'car culture' and to mingle with other automobile enthusiasts," said Bran-

don Starks, general manager of Porsche of Jacksonville.

Starks noted that Fields Auto Group will have Lexus, Mercedes-Benz, Land Rover, Jaguar and Porsche vehicles on display at the 2017 Auto Show. Product specialists will also be on hand to discuss the cars and answer questions.

"We are thrilled to have Fields Auto Group return for its second year as the presenting sponsor for the Auto Show," said Isabelle Rodriguez, president and CEO of the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce. "The chamber is looking forward to providing for the 15th year this free event to residents and those who are visiting St. Johns County and Ponte Vedra Beach."

For more information or to register an automobile in the auto show, visit www.pvauto-show.com or call (904) 285-2004.



St. Johns County Chamber photos



Upcoming Chamber of Commerce events

Ponte Vedra Beach Division Joint Luncheon w/Jax Chamber Beaches Division

Thursday, July 13
11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.
Sawgrass Golf Club
10034 Golf Club Drive, Ponte Vedra Beach
Speaker: Mike Linnington, CEO, Wounded Warrior Project
Cost: \$25 for chamber members, \$30 non-members

Chamber at Noon

Wednesday, Aug. 16
11:30 a.m. to 1p.m.
Speaker: Richard Goldman, president and CEO, Ponte Vedra & The Beaches Visitors and Convention Bureau
Tourism in St. Johns County remains remarkably healthy, accounting for nearly one-third of all employment. Our speaker will preview things to come – new hotels, restaurants, galleries and more – while also discussing what's being done about controversial issues such as traffic and parking.
Cost: \$25 for members, \$30 non-members

PVB Division welcomes new ambassadors

The Ponte Vedra Beach Division of the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce welcomes its newest chamber ambassadors.



Victoria Long
United Way of St. Johns County



Sean Scullion
First Coast Magazine



Scott Rains
Fidelity Bank



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Kamal I. Bohsali, MD

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Morning on the Farm: EDC quarterly breakfast

The St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce Economic Development Council (EDC) held its quarterly breakfast Feb. 24 at Blue Sky Farms in Elkton.

Florida Commissioner of Agriculture Adam Putnam served as the event's featured

guest. He discussed his priorities while in office, including fostering the growth and diversification of Florida agriculture and expanding access to Florida's fresh produce and seafood.

In addition to his keynote

speech, event attendees enjoyed networking opportunities, an array of breakfast items, including primavera quiche, potatoes and fruit salad, as well as the many sights and sounds at Blue Sky Farms.



Farmer Jeb Smith brought his Florida cracker cattle to the event for attendees to see.



Photos by Susan Griffin

Victor Raymos, Adam Putnam, Isabelle Rodriguez and Jeb Smith at the EDC quarterly breakfast at Blue Sky Farms.



Bill McClure & Elizabeth Granite

Chamber of Commerce PVB Division 'After Hours' celebrates opening of State Farm Insurance office

The St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce Ponte Vedra Beach Division held a ribbon cutting ceremony Feb. 22 for State Farm

Insurance, which recently opened an office in Nocatee Town Center at 466 Town Plaza Ave.

In addition to the ribbon cut-

ting, the chamber hosted an "After Hours" social gathering at the State Farm office, which provided members with the opportunity to

network and enjoy an evening of complimentary hors d'oeuvres and refreshments.



State Farm Insurance staff and St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce Ponte Vedra Beach Division representatives at the ribbon cutting ceremony



Photos by Susan Griffin

State Farm Insurance employees Robert Gibbs, Danielle Miller, Brittney Bess, Candice Reed and Jonathan Gibbs

Morris offers sobering fiscal message at Ponte Vedra economic development breakfast

By Jennifer Logue

County Commissioner Jay Morris offered a sobering fiscal message to local business and community leaders March 1, when he predicted that St. Johns County will run out of reserves by 2021 and possibly as early as 2019.

At an economic development breakfast organized by the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce's Economic Development Council held at Ruth's Chris Steakhouse in Ponte Vedra Beach, Morris told more than two dozen business leaders that the

county will soon face difficult financial times if its leaders don't take action in the form of new revenue sources, such as an increase in the sales tax.

"The county is not financially viable going forward," said Morris, noting that while St. Johns County is the 35th fastest growing county in the nation, it was the second lowest in the state of Florida in terms of taxation.

"You get a very good deal here for what you have in St. Johns County for what you pay for it," Morris continued.

"That is going to come to a screeching halt. There really isn't any more you can cut out of the budget."

The commissioner then offered attendees a recap of the county's funding history, noting that today's budget is \$60 million less than it was in 2007, when the recession hit. In addition, the costs incurred in the clean-up of Hurricane Matthew have depleted the county's reserves, he noted.

Morris was critical of his fellow county commissioners, who voted in 2015 against putting a measure on the

ballot that would have increased the sales tax half a cent. Had the commissioners let the voters make that decision as they did with the increase for the schools, he contended, the county would not be facing the financial problems that will reach a critical point in the next few years.

"A decision is going to have to be made," said Morris, who noted he will not be running for re-election at the conclusion of his current term of office. "You can't continue to kick the can down the road."



Victor Raymos addresses attendees at the Ponte Vedra EDC breakfast



Declan Reiley, County Commissioner Jay Morris and SJC Chamber of Commerce CEO Isabelle Rodriguez



Chuck Schoonmaker and Anna Washington of the Hilton Garden Inn



Jennifer Belisario and Bill Hughes
Photos by Susan Griffin

SJC Chamber of Commerce PVB Division celebrates opening of Pivot CPAs Nocatee office with ribbon cutting ceremony

The St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce Ponte Vedra Beach Division held a ribbon cutting ceremony Feb. 28 for Pivot CPAs to celebrate the opening of its Nocatee location.

Formerly known as The Griggs-

Group, the public accounting and business consulting firm's new office is located at 466 Town Plaza Ave. Suite 340 in Ponte Vedra. Pivot CPAs is headquartered in Ponte Vedra Beach and has an additional office in Gainesville.



Photo by Susan Griffin

Members of the Pivot CPAs staff join with representatives of the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce's Ponte Vedra Beach Division to mark the opening of the firm's new Nocatee location with a ribbon cutting.

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PV2-LV39671

FirstAtlantic Bank hosts chamber 'Before Hours'

FirstAtlantic Bank welcomed local business and community leaders March 8, when the bank hosted a "Before Hours" networking get together for the Ponte Vedra Beach Division of the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce.

In addition to networking, the event showcased the complete makeover of the bank's financial center and featured a drawing for gift baskets as well as breakfast catered by KC's Kitchen.



Photos by Susan Griffin

FirstAtlantic Bank staff members join Ed Marcel (right), chairman of the board of directors for the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce PVB Division, at the "Before Hours" social gathering March 8.

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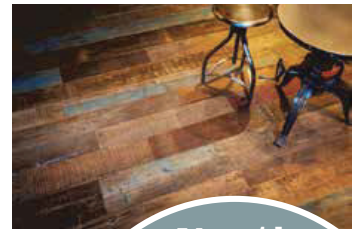
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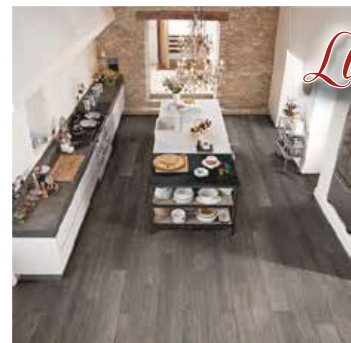
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PV2-LV39677

Jumbo Shrimp owner discusses power of branding at SJC Chamber annual breakfast

By Jennifer Logue

Ken Babby knows the importance of branding and marketing.

When Babby purchased the Akron Aeros in 2012, he soon changed the minor league baseball team's name to the RubberDucks and implemented a family-friendly marketing plan that boosted attendance nearly 30 percent. So perhaps it shouldn't have been a surprise when Babby – who

purchased the Jacksonville Suns in 2015 – decided to change the team's name a year later to the Jacksonville Jumbo Shrimp – a change that initially drew a strong negative reaction from fans.

Babby, however, has established a record for taking branding risks, and he shared some of what he's learned with attendees at the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce's annual membership meeting. Held March 9 at the Renais-

sance World Golf Village Resort in St. Augustine, the event offered chamber members a chance to learn more about Babby's creative approach to building successful brands.

In addition to changing the Suns' name, Babby has invested more than \$1.8 million in upgrades to The Baseball Grounds of Jacksonville. And as he did in Akron, he said he has focused on making a trip to see the Jumbo Shrimp an af-

fordable family-friendly outing.

The former chief revenue officer and general manager of digital for The Washington Post, Babby, 36, is the youngest multi-team professional sports owner. In January 2016, he was named one of Sports Business Journal's 2016 "Forty Under 40" recognizing excellence and innovation in sports business careers.



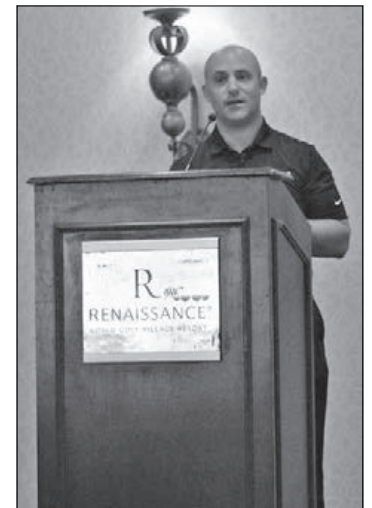
Photos by Susan Griffin
Sarah Alexander and Ed Mercel



Cathy Johnston



Dr. Erika Hamer and Dustin Vaughn



Jacksonville Jumbo Shrimp Owner Ken Babby

Le Macaron holds grand opening

Le Macaron French pastry shop held its grand opening celebration March 11 with a family-friendly event featuring face painting, balloons, a mime and more.

Owners Stephanie Ebers and Reggie Thompson welcomed representatives from the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce's Ponte Vedra Beach Division, who participated in the shop's ribbon-cutting ceremony. Located in The Shoppes at Ponte Vedra at 330 A1A North, Le Macaron offers naturally gluten-free macarons in a variety of flavors, along with chocolates, pastries and an assortment of French gelatos. The shop also features a breakfast menu of croissants, waffles, crepes, coffee, espresso and more.

Le Macaron French Pastries is open from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Thursday, 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Friday and Saturday, and from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Sunday.



Rice: THE PLAYERS CHAMPIONSHIP a boon to local economy

By Jennifer Logue

THE PLAYERS Championship is more than just a world-class golf tournament, Executive Director Jared Rice told local business leaders at an April 13 chamber luncheon. It's an economic engine that pumps millions of dollars into the local economy while showcasing Northeast Florida to a global audience.

"This is extremely important for our community," Rice said at a joint meeting of the St. Johns County/Ponte Vedra Beach and JAX Beaches chambers of commerce held at Sawgrass Beach Club. "Five years ago, 60 percent of our ticket purchases originated from within the five-county area. Today, 55 percent originate from outside of the five-

county area. So, we are bringing quite a bit of out-of-town business to this community."

Rice shared some of the key pillars of THE PLAYERS' business plan, which include ensuring that the PGA Tour's "fifth major" offers the best field of competitors of any major tournament.

"Statistically, (THE PLAYERS) is

the best field of golf, period," Rice said. "It is the best of the best playing each other at TPC Sawgrass."

He also noted that over the past seven years, the tournament has generated nearly \$50 million for local charities.

"That is life changing giving and it is staying here in Northeast Florida," he said.



Photos by Jennifer Logue

THE PLAYERS Championship Executive Director Jared Rice addresses members of the Jax and St. Johns County chambers of commerce.



Tournament Chairman Kevin English discusses the critical role volunteers play in THE PLAYERS Championship.



Toni Boudreaux and Jennifer Belisario



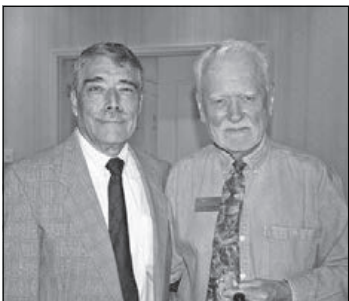
Chris Goerge and John Miller

Business leaders meet new Ponte Vedra Beach chamber director



Photos courtesy of SJC Chamber

Ponte Vedra Beach Division Director Toni Boudreaux and Board Chair Ed Mercel



Victor Raymos and Art Wildblood

Local business and community leaders had an opportunity to meet the new director of the Ponte Vedra Beach Division of the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce March 27, when the Hilton Garden

Inn hosted an after-hours reception.

New Director Toni Boudreaux met with guests and shared with them some of her plans to strengthen the PVB Division, drawing on her background in fundraising and

event management. Guests also had an opportunity to network with other business leaders while enjoying complimentary hors d'oeuvres and refreshments.



Dr. Rob Karol, Isabelle Rodriguez, Toni Boudreaux, Ed Mercel, Carol Maurer, Ted Hayes, Kathleen Floryan, Anna Washington, Chuck Schoonmaker and Anette Saalman.

Arbor Terrace hosts 'Chamber After Hours'

Arbor Terrace Ponte Vedra hosted a "Chamber After Hours" event April 19 for the Ponte Vedra Beach Division of the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce. Chamber members and guests enjoyed complimentary hors d'oeuvres and refreshments while networking with other business and community leaders.



Ed and Cyndi Goldberg



Declan Reiley and Karen Everett



John Schaum and Ann Terrell

Photos by Susan Griffin

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Jacksonville, St. Johns chambers of commerce host 'After Hours at THE PLAYERS'

Members of the Jacksonville and St. Johns County chambers of commerce got a head start on the festivities surrounding THE PLAYERS Championship when the two

chambers hosted an "After Hours" event at TPC Sawgrass.

Held May 4 at THE PLAYERS Stadium Village, the event attracted an estimated 500 business and com-

munity leaders from across the First Coast. Attendees enjoyed refreshments provided by a number of local restaurants – including Blackfin Ameripub, Gusto, III Forks,

Mulligan's Pub, Papa Murphy's Take-N-Bake, Seasons 52, Taziki's Mediterranean Café and Peterbrooke Chocolatier – while networking with other business representatives.



Randall and Karina Coryell



Jennifer Belisario, Susan Griffin, Victoria Crawford, Christine Ondek, Gloria Dongara and Carol Maurer



Jackie Smith, Clare Berry and David Smith



Marcia Karol, Dr. Robert Karol and Sandy Mackanos



Chris Guzewich, Scott Showalter and Kimberly O'Steen



Jeff Wyatt and Jennifer Belisario



Ina Gerville, Jared Rice, Paul Woods, Daniel Davis, Ashley Szczukowski, Greg Smith, Darnell Smith and Vince McCormack

Photos by Susan Griffin



Malcom Anthony and Victoria Crawford

EDC panel: Businesses should prepare now for hurricane season

By Jennifer Logue

With Hurricane Matthew a not-so-distant memory, local government and public safety officials say that now is the time for local businesses to learn from last year's major storm and prepare for this year's hurricane season.

Learning the lessons of Hurricane Matthew was the focus of the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce's quarterly Economic Development Council breakfast. Held May 25 at the World Golf Village Renaissance Resort, the event featured a panel discussion during

which participants urged business leaders to take steps now to prepare for potential future storms. Panelists included St. Johns County Administrator Michael Wanchick, St. Augustine Beach Police Chief Robert Hardwick, St. Augustine Fire Chief Carlos Aviles and Marge

Cirillo of the Florida Small Business Development Center.

"I challenge you to prepare yourself and your business," Hardwick told attendees. "Prepare your business for an evacuation. Because there will be another storm. It'll happen again."



County Administrator Michael Wanchick and St. Augustine Fire Chief Carlos Aviles



Panelists Michael Wanchick, Chief Robert Hardwick, Chief Carlos Aviles and Marge Cirillo

Photos by Jennifer Logue

Chamber of Commerce presents Member Appreciation Awards

The Ponte Vedra Beach Division of the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce recognized its most active and engaged members May 24 at its annual Member Appreciation Awards.

Held at Sawgrass Country Club, the celebration recognized members who actively participate in chamber

events and initiatives. The 2017 Jeff Jenkins Community Service Award was presented to Advanced Disposal, while the Pat Morgan Outstanding Member Award went to Rob Schlingmann, general manager at The Plantation at Ponte Vedra Beach. The Board Member of the Year Award went to Sarah Alexander of Berkshire

Hathaway HomeServices.

Additional award categories and their recipients included: Crushing It: Matt Price, Regions Bank; Going the Distance: Victoria Long, United Way; Key Contributor: Felicia Cox, Iberia Bank; Rookie of the Year: Carla Miles, Mainstream Boutique; Dedicated Service: Chef Tommy

McDonough, Flavor Palette; Spotlight Award: Cutter & Cutter Fine Art.

Sponsors of the Member Appreciations Awards event included Sawgrass Country Club, Pivot CPAs, the Ponte Vedra Recorder, VyStar Credit Union, Clean Getaway Car Wash and Le Macaron, which provided refreshments.



Award recipients Felicia Cox, Len and Sonya Cutter, Sarah Alexander, Steve Carn (accepting on behalf of Advanced Disposal), Melissa Nelson (accepting on behalf of Victoria Long), Jamie McDonough (accepting on behalf of Chef Tommy McDonough) and Carla Miles.



Lori Adams and Ricki Taylor

Photos by Susan Griffin

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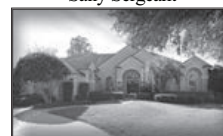
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