

# Connections

## The St. Johns County Chamber Ponte Vedra Beach Division Board



October 2017



ST. JOHNS  
COUNTY  
CHAMBER  
OF COMMERCE

Ponte Vedra  
Recorder

**The St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce Ponte Vedra Beach Division Board of Directors 2017-18.**

(L-R) Rob Schlingmann, Gloria Dongara, Jennifer Belisario, Lori Adams, Sarah Alexander, Susan Griffin, Ed Mercel, Wiam Battah (not pictured) Janet Collins, Rachel Landis, Nancy Hallett

# MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR



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

Fall is in the air as we come to the end of another fiscal year. To say the least, the summer has been filled with lots of excitement. The 15th Annual Ponte Vedra Auto Show was a huge success for the Chamber. Cars were lined up starting at 6:30 a.m. to register, with the show officially beginning at 9 a.m. Vendors were unloading before daybreak, and food trucks were cooking up fare to attendees starting the minute they arrived. The Jaguars won in London, and all in all it was a beautiful day celebrating some of the area's most prestigious cars right here in our backyard.

It's important for me to take a moment to thank all the people that made this event a truly fantastic experience. Year after year, the return of participants continues to grow, the judges ensure that the integrity and prestige of the show continues, and the spectators come out in droves (This year, we welcomed close to 2,800 in attendance.) Our volunteers are the backbone of this event,

and we cannot thank you enough for your dedication to the Auto Show and the SJC Chamber of Commerce.

Another group of individuals that must be recognized is our ambassadors and the PVB Division Board of Directors. We are so fortunate to have such committed individuals serving in this capacity. I would like to formally thank our board members who have completed their term in office: Dave Danzeisen (Clean Getaway Car Wash) as immediate past chair and Steven Beyer (VyStar). We will miss you and thank you for your years of support to the PVB Division.

Beginning Oct. 1, we welcome two new board members to the division board: Lori Adams (Cabi) who previously served as one of our ambassadors, and Nancy Hallett (Gateway Business Advisors). These two dynamic women will be joining new Board Chair Susan Griffin (Ponte Vedra Recorder), Vice Chair Rob Schlingmann

(The Plantation) and Secretary Sarah Alexander (Berkshire Hathaway). Stepping down from his post as chair, Ed Mercel (Coldwell Banker Vanguard) now will serve as immediate past chair. Jennifer Belisario (TPC Sawgrass), Rachel Landis (THE PLAYERS), Janet Collins (Sawgrass Country Club), Wiam Battah (Ruth's Chris) and Gloria Dongara (AAA-The Auto Club Group) complete the slate of board members for the upcoming year.

Having been with the Chamber as your director of the PVB Division since mid-March, I've seen how our dedicated board members, volunteers and staff work closely through crisis and celebration. We are an organization that is thriving because of our members, and we look ahead into the next fiscal year to ensure that credibility, visibility, advocacy and prosperity continue to be the driving force in everything we do. I encourage you to get involved and look forward to seeing you out and about!

## CHAMBER PRESIDENT THANKS OUTGOING PVB DIVISION IMMEDIATE PAST CHAIR



Photo by Susan Griffin

St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce President and CEO Isabelle Rodriguez expresses her gratitude to PVB Division Immediate Past Chair Dave Danzeisen for his term in office and service to the community.

## MATT PRICE RECEIVES 'CRUSHING IT!' AWARD



Photo courtesy of St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce

St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce Ponte Vedra Beach Division Director Toni Boudreaux presents Ambassador Matt Price with the "Crushing It!" award, which is given to the chamber member that has made the most of his/her membership.

# Meet the Ponte Vedra Beach Division 2017-2018 Board of Directors

The St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce welcomes the 2017-2018 board of directors for the Ponte Vedra Beach Division. The incoming board represents a broad cross-section of industries and individuals, each of whom brings years of professional experiences and business acumen to their board duties.

**CHAIR**  
**Susan Griffin**  
**Ponte Vedra Recorder**

Susan Griffin is the publisher of the Ponte Vedra Recorder, the community newspaper of Ponte Vedra and the Beaches since 1969. Griffin also serves as the publisher of the bi-monthly First Coast Register magazine. The Register covers First Coast social events, as well as fashion, dining and home décor trends throughout the year.

Griffin started her career in the publishing field over 20 years ago when she joined the Recorder as an advertising account executive. She later served as the paper's sales manager before being named publisher. Prior to joining the Recorder, Griffin owned travel agencies in Florida and Georgia.

Griffin is very active in the community and participates in many events to benefit charity. She has been active in the Chamber's PVB Division since 1997, serving for many years as the chair of the ambassador committee. She has been awarded the Ambassador of the Year, Pat Morgan Outstanding Service and Chamber Member of the Year awards.

In addition to the Chamber, Griffin currently serves as the vice president of the board of directors for the Community Papers of Florida. She is also a member of the board of directors for the Overlook V office condominiums and a member of the Rotary Club of Ponte Vedra Beach Sunset.



**SECRETARY**  
**Sarah Alexander**  
**Berkshire Hathaway**  
**Home Services**  
**Florida Network**  
**Realty**

Sarah Alexander is a real estate agent at Berkshire Hathaway Home Services Florida Network Realty. She entered into residential real estate sales with Prudential Network Realty in 2012 and ultimately followed the footsteps of her mother, a successful local real estate professional. She previously practiced physical therapy for 16 years in Jacksonville at Baptist Medical Center and Brooks Home Care Advantage.

Alexander has been a member of the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce since 2013. She served as an ambassador of the PVB Division in 2014 and the communications/ribbon cutting coordinator in 2015. She has since served on the board of directors for the PVB Division.

A fourth generation Jacksonville native and Episcopal High School graduate, Alexander grew up in Ortega and moved to Ponte Vedra Beach in 1979. She has a strong interest in the promotion and economic growth of Ponte Vedra Beach and St. Johns County and is proud to serve on the PVB Division board.



**IMMEDIATE**  
**PAST**  
**PRESIDENT**  
**Ed Marcel**  
**Coldwell Banker**  
**Vanguard Realty**

Ed Marcel is a successful realtor with a penchant for network building in both sales and property management. He has more than 19 years of experience in the real estate industry, working for a number of leading real estate firms and property management divisions.

Prior to entering real estate, Marcel was an internationally recognized producer and director whose credits include producing and/or directing drama, variety and children's programming as well as seven Olympic games.

Marcel is a past president of the local chapter of the National Association of Residential Property Management.

In addition to serving on the board of directors for the Ponte Vedra Beach Division of the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce, he serves on the board of directors for Beth El Synagogue.



**VICE CHAIR**  
**Rob Schlingmann**  
**The Plantation at**  
**Ponte Vedra Beach**

Rob Schlingmann is the general manager and chief operating officer of The Plantation at Ponte Vedra Beach, where he reports directly to the president and has full responsibility for the club, which in high season has a staff of more than 140 employees in 16 departments. In addition to managing all club operations, he oversees all functions of the Plantation's homeowners' association.

Schlingmann has more than 30 years of experience in the private club industry. Before moving to Ponte Vedra, he worked at The Apawamis Club in Rye, New York, where he was the general manager and chief operating officer for almost 11 years. He previously was employed as the general manager of the Rehoboth Beach Country Club in Delaware for almost five years. He started his career as a clubhouse manager at Kiawah Island Club in South Carolina.



**Lori Adams**  
**Harbor View**  
**Advisors/cabi/**  
**TPC Sawgrass**

Lori Adams is the operations manager for Harbor View Advisors, a boutique investment banking firm in Ponte Vedra Beach. She is also a cabi part-time fashion stylist, as well as a part-time employee of TPC Sawgrass as a sales associate in the golf shop.

Adams has 35 years of experience in the financial services industry, with specializations in client service, operations and compliance. She has worked as a cabi fashion stylist since 2010 and at TPC Sawgrass since 2000.

Adams is a former ambassador for the SJC Chamber PVB Division and received the Grace Hayes Ambassador of the Year award for 2014-2015. She is also a member of the Ponte Vedra Women's Alliance, for which she has served on the board in previous years.



**Nancy Hallett**  
**Gateway Business**  
**Advisors**

Nancy Hallett manages customer relations, business valuation and marketing to buyers, and in general keeps everyone at Gateway on task.

Previously, she has been a small business owner, founded a small private investment group and worked closely with the principals of a large family-owned private business. She has worked on M&A transactions with a Fortune 100 company, helping to lead that company through integration efforts in finance and operations. Hallett's education background is in accounting, and her business career has been in accounting, administration and operations.



**MORE PVB BOARD OF DIRECTORS ON PAGE 16**

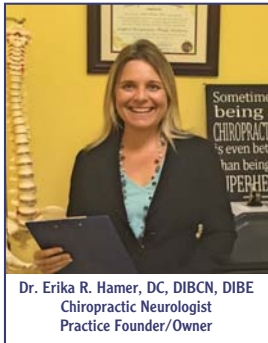


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## MORE PVBD CHAMBER BOARD OF DIRECTORS



**Janet Collins**  
Sawgrass Country Club

Janet Collins has worked as the director of member services at Sawgrass Country Club since 1998.

She is in charge of strategic and tactical marketing and membership development, budget management and vision, promotional presentations and web development. Collins has been a PVB Division Board member for two years. She was also president of the Northeast Florida Professional Club Marketing Association (PCMA) from 2009-2015.



**Jennifer Belisario**  
TPC Sawgrass

Jennifer Belisario is the director of sales and marketing at TPC Sawgrass, where she has worked for seven years.

Previously, she was employed at the Four Points by Sheraton as the director of sales and marketing. She also worked as the marketing director at the Jacksonville Golf & Country Club, where she was responsible for increasing the non-resident membership base by 100 percent in only one year.



**Rachel Landis**  
THE PLAYERS Championship, PGA Tour

Rachel Landis is a senior sales manager at the PGA Tour, where she has been recognized as Employee of the Quarter.

Previously, Landis worked at Folio Weekly as an event manager and senior account representative. She also has worked at On The Mark Promotions as an account executive and on President Clinton's advanced staff. Landis began her career at the Association of Surfing Professionals as a sponsorship coordinator.

Outside of her professional career, Landis has served as a social committee chair at the Museum of Science and History and as part of the restaurant committee at Caring Chefs, benefitting the Children's Home Society.



**Wiam "William" Battah**  
Ruth's Chris Steak House

Wiam Battah is the general manager of Ruth's Chris Steak House, where he has worked for 12 years. Under his management, Ruth's Chris won the 2015 Leadership Award and has won many service awards.

Battah graduated from Eastern Kentucky University with a bachelor's degree in police administration and then went on to serve five-and-a-half years in the U.S. Army. After that, he ran three restaurants before deciding to go back to school. He graduated from

the California Culinary Academy with a Bachelor of Applied Science in restaurant/ culinary management.



**Gloria Dongara**  
AAA- The Auto Club Group

Gloria Dongara is the AAA life & annuities specialist at the Ponte Vedra Beach branch, where she helps clients with their life insurance needs.

Dongara has more than 23 years of experience in corporate America, with a background in insurance sales, anti-money laundering, client services and cash management. Prior to AAA, she worked as a financial services professional at MassMutual Financial Group and as a sales manager at Family Heritage.

A resident of Ponte Vedra for over 25 years, Dongara has served as a St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce ambassador, in addition to her current role as a member of the board of directors for the PVB Division.

# Business recovery tips post-Hurricane Irma



**By Isabelle Rodriguez**  
President and CEO,  
St. Johns County Chamber  
of Commerce

In the wake of Hurricane Irma, St. Johns County's business community seems to have suffered less damage

and is rebounding faster than it did a year ago after Matthew.

However, many of you still suffered damage. There are businesses that have not been able to reopen, and certainly many of you are experiencing economic hardship as many of your businesses have suffered decreases in revenue.

In this article, I'll walk you through some of the most helpful "tools" you can use as we continue to bounce back. But before we get to that, remember to fill out the disaster assessment survey at the Florida Virtual Business Emergency Operations Center (FLVBEOC) at <http://flvbeoc.org/index.php> if your businesses suffered any damage related to the hurricane, even if it is seemingly insignificant relative to previous disasters. This information is used to determine the

needs and level of assistance needed for impacted businesses throughout our area.

**Employers experiencing loss of revenue, physical damage**  
*Emergency Bridge Loan*

The Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) recently launched the Florida Small Business Emergency Bridge Loan program to help businesses get back on their feet.

The bridge loan program supports those impacted by Hurricane Irma by providing short-term, interest-free loans up to \$50,000 to small businesses that experienced physical or economic damage during the storm. Applications for this program must be completed by Oct. 31, 2017.

Apply online at [www.floridadisasterloan.org](http://www.floridadisasterloan.org). For more information about the bridge loan, call the Florida Small Business Development Center Network at (850) 898-3489 or email [Disaster@FloridaSBDC.org](mailto:Disaster@FloridaSBDC.org). You can also contact our local representative Marge Cirillo at (800) 450-4624 or [m.cirillo@unf.edu](mailto:m.cirillo@unf.edu).

**Disaster Unemployment**

The Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA) program provides assistance

to businesses and residents whose employment or self-employment was lost or interrupted as a result of Hurricane Irma. Apply today at <https://goo.gl/sLLFyK>.

**Long-Term Disaster Assistance Loan**

For a longer-term loan, consider applying for a SBA (Small Business Administration) Loan. The U.S. Small Business Administration has declared St. Johns, Duval, Flagler and Putnam county businesses and private nonprofit organizations eligible for both Physical

and Economic Injury Disaster Loans up to \$2 million to repair or replace disaster-damaged or destroyed real estate, machinery, equipment, inventory and other business assets. Interest rates are as low as 3.305 percent for businesses and 2.5 percent for nonprofit organizations with terms up to 30 years. The deadline to apply for physical property damage is Nov. 9, 2017, and the deadline to apply for economic injury is June 11, 2018. Apply online at <https://disasterloan.sba.gov/ela>.

IRMA continues on Page 18

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# PONTE VEDRA BEACH DIVISION AMBASSADOR CHAIR



**Ricki Taylor**

Ricki Taylor is an assistant vice president and mortgage loan originator with Synovus Mortgage, located in the Synovus Bank headquarters at Gate Parkway.

A veteran of the mortgage business for 30 years, Taylor has managed underwriting, processing and shipping, affording her a unique perspective and the ability and expertise to handle even the most complicated loans. She is able to help clients throughout the Southeastern United States and specializes in jumbo loans and portfolio products. She has expertise in all facets of lending and often gives advice to real estate professionals in difficult situations.

Taylor has been a top producer for Synovus Mortgage for more than 19 years and was recognized by the Jacksonville Business Journal as a "Five Star Mortgage Professional." Her dedication to service, coupled with her expert knowledge, creates an exceptional experience for borrowers and serves as a reliable source for builders and realtors.

In addition to serving as chair of the Ponte Vedra Beach Division's ambassador board, Taylor serves on the membership committee for the Jacksonville Beach Chamber. She also volunteers her time with the Gamma Phi Beta sorority chapter at Jacksonville University. She is a graduate of the University of Georgia.

The American Banker magazine rated Synovus Bank one of "America's Most Reputable Banks," based on customer scores. Forbes ranks Synovus Bank as one of the "Top 50 Most Trusted Institutions."

Taylor's father was a career Air Force officer. Her oldest son is a graduate of the United States Air Force Academy, and her youngest son is in medical school at the University of Florida.

## Chamber welcomes new Ponte Vedra Beach Division ambassadors

As the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce begins its 2017-2018 year, the Ponte Vedra Beach Division extends its appreciation to those members who have agreed to serve as chamber "ambassadors," representing and championing the Ponte Vedra Beach Division at chamber events and out in the community.

### Ponte Vedra Beach Division Ambassador Board

**CHAIR**

**Ricki Taylor**  
Synovus Mortgage

**MEMBERSHIP CHAIR**

**Matt Price**  
Regions Bank

**VICE CHAIR**

**Amy Miller**  
Carr, Riggs & Ingram, LLC

**COMMUNITY OUTREACH CHAIR**

**Brian Anderson**  
Fluffy Cuts

### Ponte Vedra Beach Division Ambassadors

**ROBERT A. BAER**  
Robert A. Baer Co.

**VICTORIA LONG**  
United Way of St. Johns County

**JOSH HULL**  
VyStar Credit Union

**SEAN SCULLION**  
First Coast Media Group

**MOLLIE MALLOY**  
K9s for Warriors

**ELLEN TAYLOR**  
ServPro

**JENNIFER HOOPER O'NEAL**  
MosquitoNix

## Irma

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### Employers whose employees are not back to work

#### Dislocated Worker Program

Dislocated Worker Grants are awarded to local workforce offices for temporary employment to workers affected by major dislocations, including Hurricane Irma.

Disaster relief employment can be in the form of temporary jobs to address structural and humanitarian needs of residents of an area that has suffered a federally declared emergency or major disaster. Connect with your workforce office here: <http://www.careersourcenortheastflorida.com>.

#### Register for Disaster Assistance

Residents who sustained losses can apply for assistance by registering online at [www.DisasterAssistance.gov](http://www.DisasterAssistance.gov).

Residents who suffered damages from the storm should register now; the application will be processed automatically. Please share this information with your employees who may have suffered losses from Hurricane Irma.



Photo by Ed Johnson

Many, if not most of you, were prepared for Irma and thanks to your preparation, we have now been able to adjust our focus from helping businesses recover from physical damage to helping them recover from the economic injury caused by a disaster.

#### Transitional Shelter Assistance (TSA)

FEMA may provide TSA to eligible disaster survivors who are unable to return to their homes and have a continuing need for shelter after the congregating shelters have closed.

This initiative is intended to provide short-term lodging for eligible disaster survivors whose communities are either uninhabitable or inaccessible due to disaster-related damages. Find out more here: <https://www.fema.gov/transitional-shelter-assistance>.

#### Individuals and Households Program

FEMA's Individuals and Households Program (IHP) provides financial and direct services to eligible individuals and households affected by a disaster who have uninsured or underinsured necessary expenses and serious needs.

Eligible expenses include rental assistance, lodge expense reimbursement, home repair assistance, personal property assistance, transportation, etc. IHP is not a substitute for insurance and cannot compensate for all losses caused by a disaster. Rather, it is intended to meet the survivor's basic needs and supplement disaster recovery efforts.

Read more about the Individuals and Households Program at <https://goo.gl/1q51z7>.

Finally, I want to thank Florida Power & Light (FPL) and JEA, who have worked diligently across our state to return power to their customers. The pre-hurricane preparations and hard work by thousands to restore our electricity after Irma have gone a long way toward helping us get back to business!

# 1936 Chrysler C-9 Airflow Coupe wins top honors at Ponte Vedra Auto Show

A 1936 Chrysler C-9 Airflow Coupe received the Wells Fargo Advisors Best in Show Classic award at the 2017 Ponte Vedra Auto Show Sept. 24, claiming one of the event's most coveted prizes.

Owned by Mark Becker, the acclaimed automobile was one of more than 150 classics and collectables on display at the 15th annual event hosted by the St. Johns County (SJC) Chamber of Commerce at the Nocatee Town Center.

In addition to Becker and his coupe, Rob Sewell received the "Porsche for the Spirit of It!" award for his 1997 Porsche Carrera S, and Mitt Layton won the award commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Shelby Super Snake with his 1968 Shelby GT500KR. In total, participants vied for 31 awards at the Auto Show, which was presented by Fields Auto Group. The event, which ultimately hosted about 2,800 visitors, was originally scheduled for Sept. 10 and postponed due to Hurricane Irma.

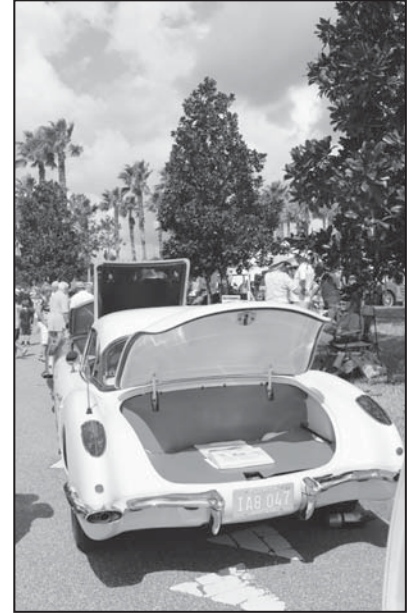
"Despite having to reschedule, we are very proud to have been able to host this event for the community and everyone who visits to see these incredible automobiles," said Isabelle Rodriguez, president and CEO of the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce. "Thanks to our partnership with Fields Auto Group and our other great sponsors, this Auto Show has been our best yet."



Karen Everett, Ricki Taylor, Lori Adams and Cindy Bishop sell Auto Show apparel at the 15th annual event.

To find out more about the Ponte Vedra Auto Show, visit [www.pvautoshow.com](http://www.pvautoshow.com) or call the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce Ponte Vedra Beach (PVB) Division at (904) 285 2004. To find out more about the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce, visit [www.sjccchamber.com](http://www.sjccchamber.com). The Ponte Vedra Auto Show is funded in part by the St. Johns County Tourist Development Council.

*For more on the Auto Show, including additional photos, visit [Pontevedrarecorder.com](http://Pontevedrarecorder.com).*



ABOVE: Visitors look at classic cars on display at the 2017 Ponte Vedra Auto Show.



LEFT: Mark Becker sits inside his 1936 Chrysler C-9 Airflow Coupe, which was named the event's Wells Fargo Advisors Best in Show Classic.

Photos by Susan Griffin



Photo by Jon Blauvelt

St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce PVB Division Director Toni Boudreaux, Wounded Warrior Project CEO Mike Linnington and Jacksonville Chamber of Commerce Beaches Division Manager Kathy Sutton

## Wounded Warrior Project CEO gives Chamber of Commerce members positive forecast for organization

Originally published July 20

By Jon Blauvelt

Exactly one year after driving from Arlington, Virginia, to Jacksonville to take over Wounded Warrior Project (WWP) as its next CEO, Mike Linnington told a group of local business professionals July 13 that he's optimistic about the future of the nonprofit organization.

"We're on the right track," said Linnington, referring to the organization's recovery from news reports claiming it took part in lavish spending outside of its mission. "We have a long way to go in overcoming that stigma.

Luckily, we have a really great organization with dedicated passion and commitment to our wounded service members in trying to make a difference."

Linnington's comments about the organization were addressed to members of the Jacksonville Chamber of Commerce Beaches Division and the Ponte Vedra Beach Division of the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce at a joint luncheon held at Sawgrass Country Club. WWP offers a variety of programs and services for wounded veterans of military actions following Sept. 11, 2001.

WWP continues on Page 20



Photo by Jon Blauvelt

Jenny McKeithen, Randall "Smitty" Smith and Beth Bolton

## WWP

Continued from 19

The retired three-star general with 35 years of military service said at the July luncheon that WWP was about 60 or 70 percent back to where it was prior to the news reports surfacing. As a result of the speculation that ensued about the organization, Linnington said WWP has made it a priority to

be more transparent, noting that the organization's financials are now included on its website.

"Hopefully that transparency and focus on the good work we do will start to bring back the rest of the support that's starting to come back down," he said.

When asked about the organization's vision for the next five years, Linnington said WWP will likely invest additional resources in physical

health and wellness services. He said the organization's veterans who were young in the early 2000s are not so young anymore, and they're struggling with immobility, isolation and overindulgence of medications, resulting in poor physical health.

He noted that 86 percent of the wounded veterans they provide services to are overweight or obese. Linnington said that so much emphasis as of late has been placed on mental health, implying that physical health has taken somewhat of a back seat.

The WWP CEO also provided attendees of the luncheon with a general overview of the organization's reach. He said the nonprofit, which has physical presences in 25 United States cities, serves over 104,000 wounded service members and more than 20,000 family members of those service members. More than 2,400 of the organization's warriors are located in the Greater Jacksonville area, he noted.

Linnington boiled down the organization's work to three words: connecting, serving and empowering. He said the organization connects its warriors with each other. Then it serves them through a variety of free programs and services focused on physical and mental health and wellness and economic empowerment that are provided by WWP, other nonprofits or government agencies. Linnington said these programs then ultimately empower the warriors to once again become fully functioning members of their communities.

"The WWP logo shows one service member being carried off the battlefield by another service member," he explained. "At the end of the day, we want all of our transitioning veterans to go from being that veteran carried off the battle field from visible or invisible wounds and ultimately be a warrior that's leading peer groups and being active in their communities."

Linnington added that WWP provides 100 percent of the resources required for 700 of the nation's most previously wounded individuals to help them remain in their homes. He said the nonprofit pours a few million dollars a month into these in-home services, which include physical therapy, speech therapy and respite care, among others.

Linnington also encouraged business professionals at the luncheon to keep his warriors in mind as job opportunities surface at their respective companies.

"As you see opportunities for wounded service members to make a difference in your businesses or communities, please connect with us," he said. "Just as they led in the Army, Navy, Air Force, marines and Coast Guard, they can equally lead in communities."

For more information about WWP, visit <https://www.woundedwarriorproject.org/>.

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Photo by Susan Griffin  
**Toni Boudreaux (from left), Stephanie Bedsaul, Lynn Kettell-Slifer, Emily Slifer and Ed Mercel participate in the Health Partners LLC ribbon cutting.**

## Health Partners LLC joins SJC Chamber of Commerce

Health Partners LLC, a recently opened functional medicine practice in Ponte Vedra Beach, celebrated joining the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce with a ribbon cutting ceremony June 26.

Located at 100 Executive Way across from PVPV-Rawlings Elementary School, the new practice provides area residents with a "relationship-focused" option that staff members say bridges the gap between traditional, prescription-based primary care

and alternative treatment. "We go upstream from where symptoms are, and we do more than just treat symptoms," said founder Lynn Kettell-Slifer, a family nurse practitioner with experience in preventative care, healthcare for the uninsured, medical missions and hospital oncology. "We are really passionate about the health of our patients. This is about working together with the patients to optimize their health in a true partnership."

## the *New Signature* of memory care



*There's no getting around it: dementia is hard on everyone involved.*

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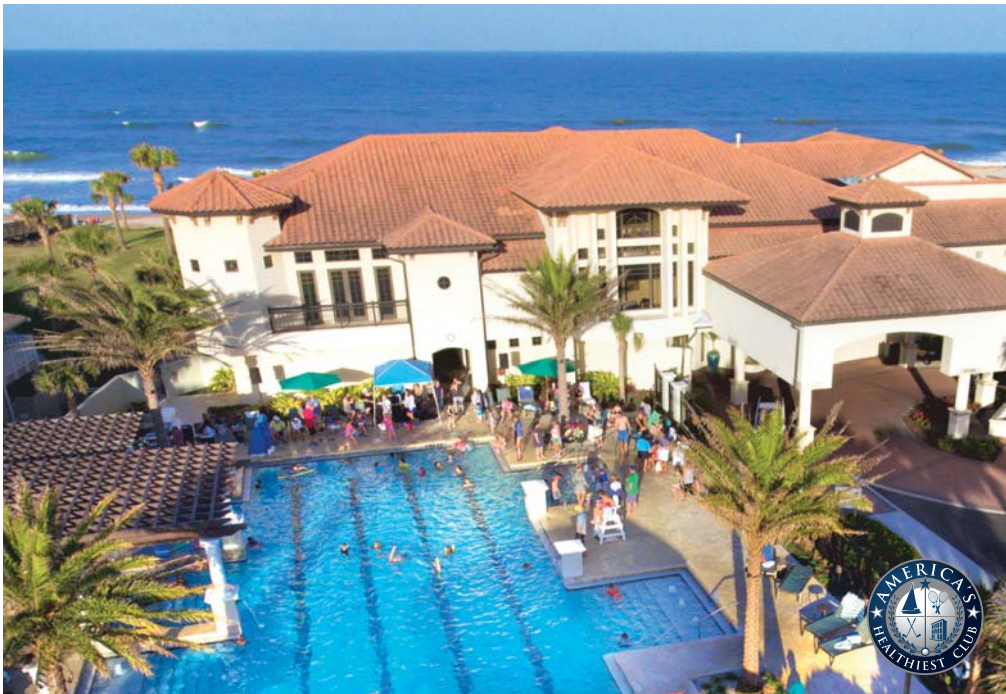
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# Local officials share accomplishments from recent legislative session at chamber breakfast

Originally published Aug. 3

By Jon Blauvelt

Providing bonuses for St. Johns County teachers, increasing state-wide funding for mental health and substance abuse and revising and improving Enterprise Florida and Visit Florida were among the accomplishments of the 2017 legislative session shared by local officials at the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce's Economic Development Council breakfast July 28.

Rep. Cyndi Stevenson, Sen. Travis Hutson, Rep. Paul Renner and St. Johns County Commission Chair James Johns provided these updates to business leaders from around the county at the Chamber event at the Renaissance in World Golf Village.

Hutson shared highlights from HB 7069, an education bill that he played a large role in writing. Most notably, the state senator shared that the bill will extend the Best and Brightest Scholarship Program, resulting in several bonuses for "effective" and "highly effective" St. Johns County teachers. 850 teachers will qualify for \$800 bonuses this year, next year and the year after, he said. 1,300 teachers, he continued, will qualify for \$1,200 bonuses each of the next three years. An additional 200 teachers, he stated, will qualify to receive \$6,000 bonuses each of the next three years.

Hutson explained that other results of the bill include conducting a study to replace the Florida Standards Assessment (FSA) with another federally funded test that is more suitable for teachers; allowing schools more flexibility to shift the schedule of their testing; expanding funding for the Gardiner Scholarship, which supports kids with rare diseases and disabilities; and requiring 20 minutes of recess each day for kindergarten through fifth grade students. One controversial aspect of the bill, Hutson noted, is the fact that it allows high-performing charter schools to establish more than one charter school in any year if it operates in the area of a persistently low-performing school and serves kids from that school.

The state senator also reported that the 2017 legislative session resulted in increasing the Bright Futures Scholarship for a child from 50 percent to 100 percent tuition reimbursement.

"If your child qualifies for Bright Futures, the state of Florida is going to pay the way," Hutson said, adding that this will take effect next year. "We want you in and out in four years with well-paying jobs so you can come back and contribute."

Rep. Stevenson provided a high-level overview of the state budget, sharing that it only increased by less than a quarter of a percent, or less than \$10 per person.



Sen. Travis Hutson (from left), St. Johns County Commission Chair James Johns, Rep. Cyndi Stevenson and Rep. Paul Renner participate on the EDC panel July 28.



ABOVE: Emily Stimler, John Eaton, Aaron Emmel and Kyle Murdock



ABOVE: Alex Acree, Mike Koppenhaver and Erik Kasper



RIGHT: Chamber President/CEO Isabelle Rodriguez

Photos by Jon Blauvelt



LEFT: Heather Sciertelli, Denise Hagan and Mary Ann Steinberg

She emphasized, however, that the state increased funding for schools by 4 percent and higher education by 7 percent. Although health care funding slightly decreased, she said the state maintained strong priorities, enhancing funding for mental health and substance abuse, especially for efforts to combat the Opioid epidemic.

"I think we need to start calling this what it is," she said. "People are dying from injecting heroine and the new drug we hear, fentanyl."

Among several other items of local, state and federal interest, Stevenson noted that St. Johns County will benefit from \$13.3 million in funding to repair damage to its beaches post-Hurricane Matthew, and overall, she said several state employees will receive pay raises for the first time in 10 years.

Rep. Renner discussed two programs

he said he played a part in improving: Enterprise Florida and Visit Florida.

Enterprise Florida, he explained, is a program in which taxpayer money is given to private sector companies to lure them into Florida or keep them within the state.

In the past, he said, this money has been given to companies with more than 1,000 employees, leaving many small businesses out to dry and creating a system of "winners and losers." In addition, he said tax payers generally expect their tax dollars to be used for something that can help them, and this wasn't always the case with Enterprise Florida.

With the revised bill, Renner explained that the monies now can't be used for any single company; they must be distributed to a multitude of companies to allow for competition. In addition, he said the tax monies must be devoted to either

infrastructure or workforce development.

Renner said that the legislature's recent efforts on Visit Florida, the state's official tourism marketing corporation, have resulted in more stringent accountability measures to ensure money for the program is being used for advertising.

St. Johns County Commission Chair James Johns concluded the presentations by discussing a recent trip he took to Washington, D.C., to meet with representatives from various federal agencies, including the Department of Transportation, Federal Emergency Management Agency and others. When he first received an invite for the meeting, he thought it was a prank.

"This administration says that they do not feel like they have communication lines with local governments, and they

BREAKFAST continues on Page 23

# TPC Sawgrass hosts 'After Hours' event for Chamber

TPC Sawgrass hosted an "After Hours" networking event for the Ponte Vedra Beach Division of the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce Wednesday, July 19.

After work, Chamber members and their guests were invited to the TPC Clubhouse to chat, mingle and take in the views of the famed and picturesque golf course. Attendees were also served complimentary hors d'oeuvres and refreshments.



Clare Berry, Mark Ryan, Michael Lenahen, Andy Scott and Greg Totten



ABOVE: Chris Goerge with Nancy and Gary Hallett



RIGHT: Kim O'Steen and Karina Coryell

Photos by Susan Griffin



Rocky Nightingale, Kelly Green, Beth D'Augerot, Bryan Fazio and Jennifer Hooper O'Neal

## Breakfast

Continued from 22

wanted to change that," Johns said. "We were all blown away."

During a question and answer session at the end of event, Johns also discussed his stance on the potential implementation of a bed tax to generate additional revenue for the county.

"One of the most important things to me is not just generating revenues to meet our needs but making sure we're all on the same page as to what the end result is expected to be," he said. "I want to make sure that place we're intending to spend it is where you want it spent when we collect it. And so, if this is the mechanism by which the majority of the people want an issue resolved, then I would gladly support that effort."

On a similar note regarding a potential increase to the county's sales tax, Johns said following the breakfast he needs the majority of the county to support it before he will, and he also wants more clarity to be established concerning how those monies would be spent.

"I don't want to spend people's money without knowing where it will be spent," he said.

The next EDC breakfast is Nov. 17.



Karsten Jacobson, Sarah Alexander, Toni Boudreaux and Steven Beyer

# Jacobson discusses economic perspectives at 'Chamber at Noon' luncheon

The current economic climate was the focus of the Ponte Vedra Beach Division's "Chamber at Noon" luncheon June 21.

Held at Sawgrass Golf Club, the luncheon featured Edward Jones financial advisor Karsten Jacobson, who discussed timely market topics and potential investment strategies.



Sarah Alexander helps Toni Boudreaux select the door prize winner during the luncheon.

Photos by Susan Griffin

# PET HALLOWEEN COSTUME CONTEST

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Photo by Susan Griffin

The My House Fitness team participates in a ribbon-cutting ceremony as part of its grand opening event.

# My House Fitness opens in Ponte Vedra Beach

By Jon Blauvelt

A new My House Fitness franchise is now open in Ponte Vedra Beach.

Located at 2 Fairfield Blvd. (Suite 4) in the same plaza as Starbucks, the gym held a grand opening and ribbon cutting ceremony Thursday, July 27. The business "soft" opened in the end of June.

According to Doug Siewart, the

franchise's co-owner and one of its personal trainers, the gym specializes in individualized personal training that focuses on the goals and schedules of its clients. He said clients work one-on-one or in small groups with trainers, explaining that the small group option affords people the opportunity to train

MY HOUSE continues on Page 26

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Photo courtesy of St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce

Felicia Cox, Toni Boudreaux and Dr. Erika Hamer

## Ponte Vedra Beach Division hosts 'Chamber at Noon' event

The Ponte Vedra Beach Division of the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce hosted speaker Richard Goldman at the Sawgrass Beach Club in Ponte Vedra Beach Wednesday, Aug 16.

The executive director of the St. Johns County Visitors & Convention Bureau, Goldman presented "How Tourism Affects You" at the "Chamber at Noon" event, which was sponsored by the Browning Agency.



Karen Zander and Carole Everitt



Cindy Bishop and Ken Smith



Isabelle Rodriguez, Richard Goldman and Toni Boudreaux.

Photos by Susan Griffin

## Berkshire Hathaway hosts Chamber networking event

Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty hosted a "Before Hours" networking event July 12 for the Ponte Vedra Beach Division of the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce.

Chamber members gathered at the real estate company's Ponte Vedra Beach office for conversation and a continental breakfast. The event was sponsored by Sarah Alexander, the incoming secretary of the Ponte Vedra Beach Division Board of Directors. Door prizes were given, and coffee and pastries were provided.



Toni Boudreaux, Ed Mercel, Sarah Alexander and Dr. Erika Hamer

Photo by Susan Griffin

# BHGRE Lifestyles Realty opens new office in Nocatee

By Samantha Logue

Better Homes and Gardens Real Estate (BHGRE) Lifestyles Realty has joined the ever-growing list of businesses to migrate into the Nocatee community. The company celebrated the opening of its new office with a ribbon-cutting ceremony July 10.

"Everybody knows the name 'Better Homes and Gardens,' and they usually know it from the magazines and the cookbooks, but we really want people to be thinking of us as a solution to help them out with more things in their life," said Daniel Lewis, a broker associate at Lifestyles Realty.

With other offices located in Jacksonville and Jacksonville Beach, Lifestyles Realty's Nocatee office is its third branch. According to Lewis, the company's name is derived from its mission to help families find not only the homes that they want, but more importantly, the lives

that they want.

"We don't want to find out from people just how many bedrooms and bathrooms they want," Lewis said. "We want to find out what it is they do in their life and match them up with a place that they're going to be able to achieve the lifestyle that they want to live."

Lewis said that Nocatee – with its many luxurious amenities – seemed an ideal location for such a business, and he is looking forward to showing the local residents everything Lifestyles Realty has to offer.

"We want to intertwine ourselves with the community and really feel like we're supporting that community," he said. "Right now, we're only the third real estate company in all of Nocatee ... We feel like we're a breath of fresh air from all of the things that people are more used to, and we're opening up a lot more resources in every facet to be the real estate company of the future."



Photo by Susan Griffin

The BHGRE Lifestyles Realty team participates in a ribbon cutting ceremony July 10 with Chamber of Commerce members.

## My House

Continued from 24

with their spouse, significant other, sibling or friend.

"We really try to hone in on what they're trying to accomplish, and we make it adaptable to their schedule," he said. "You tell us when you want to be here, and we'll be here."

The franchise owner explained that the gym is essentially redesigned for each training session. Most of the equipment, he said, lines the walls of the

gym, leaving the middle of the facility wide open. For each session, however, trainers move the necessary equipment for that particular client or group of clients from the wall to the middle of the facility to personify the mission of providing clients with customized training plans.

For more information about the new business, call (904) 834-4711.

"It's about the individual goals and schedules of the clients," Siewart reiterated. "We're making it available for clients to live fit for the rest of their lives."



Jim Kelly

## Pivot CPAS hosts Chamber 'After Hours' event

Pivot CPAs hosted an "After Hours" networking event for the Ponte Vedra Beach Division of the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce Wednesday, Aug. 23.

Attendees enjoyed food and drink from food trucks and Victory Beer and St. Augustine Distillery, as well as music from Jim Kelly.



George McCaughan, Clare Berry and Greg Totten



ABOVE: Kim O'Steen and Jill Fennessey

LEFT: Brian Anderson, Jennifer Belisario and Mark Berman

Photos by Susan Griffin

## MULLIGAN'S PUB HOSTS CHAMBER 'BEFORE HOURS' EVENT

The Ponte Vedra Beach Division of the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce gathered before work Aug. 8 for networking and refreshments at Mulligan's Pub in Ponte Vedra Beach.

Photo by Susan Griffin



Ryan Williams, Brian Leeds and Nahid Sabet

## The Pineapple Corporation hosts Chamber 'After Hours' event at model home

Luxury home builder The Pineapple Corporation hosted an "After Hours" networking event at one of its model homes at The Vista at Twenty Mile in Nocatee Wednesday, Sept. 27, for the Ponte Vedra Beach Division of the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce.

Attendees enjoyed conversation and building relationships while touring the model home. The Vista at Twenty Mile is characterized by its Spanish architecture and is located in Nocatee's Twenty Mile neighborhood just west of the Intracoastal Waterway.



Karen Chartier and Carol Maurer



ABOVE: Amanda Johnson and Malcolm Anthony

LEFT: Spencer Calvert and Kurt Morgan

Photos by Susan Griffin





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