By Ken Datzman

Joseph “Joe” Hardy III has long navigated the world of business as a visionary entrepreneur, and he’s still in the game as he nears the centenarian mark in life. He has never shied away from hard work. And certainly, one part of succeeding as an entrepreneur is hard work. In fact, some experts say the willingness to work hard is the most important trait to have.

Mr. Hardy is the founder of 84 Lumber Co. and more recently, in 2017, founded Hardy World LLC, a privately held commercial real estate development firm with a growing presence and investments in Brevard County. The company has long-term aspirations for this market, which has been gaining visibility across the nation for job growth and other related dynamics that power the economy and create demand for various types of facility space.

His to-the-point advice to young people wanting to start businesses: “You have to have a zest for work.” He stresses the importance of having the right work ethic, and lots of enthusiasm.

The World War II veteran and industrial engineering graduate of the University of Pittsburgh sold home-grown vegetables door-to-door as a student.

In 1956, he founded 84 Lumber, in Eighty Four, Pa., about 25 miles southwest of Pittsburgh, and went on to grow that venture into a giant in the building-materials supply industry. He even worked in the lumber yards himself.

“My mother used to say to me every day, ‘Son, I love you, and you are going to amount to something.’ That was her motto. It was encouragement.”

In addition to 84 Lumber and Hardy World, Mr. Hardy founded Nemacolin Woodlands Resort in Farmington, Pa. Situated on nearly 2,000 acres, it’s one of North America’s premier resort destinations, and hosted PGA Tour events for a number of years at Mystic Rock golf course.

Today, he is CEO of Hardy World, based in greater Pittsburgh and doing business in multiple states, and works alongside his daughter, Taylor Hardy.

Young at heart, he has never lost his love for business and for life.

“People tell me all the time, ‘Joe, you know you could retire.’ What the heck is that? Retire? I have no interest in retiring. I’m almost 100 years old. I’m trying to stay as active as I can, and this business (Hardy World) helps me do that.”

Mr. Hardy, born in 1923, will be 99 years old in January and 100 in 2023. He said his parents lived into their 80s. The U.S. has the highest number of centenarians in the world, with 97,000 living in this country, according to the World Atlas. Japan is second.

He’s showing no signs of slowing down and travels to various sites where Hardy World does business and is looking to invest in property to develop.

Mr. Hardy was recently in Melbourne with Taylor Hardy, vice president of operations for Hardy Word. They flew into the Melbourne Orlando International Airport for this particular trip to The Edge. They had a very busy schedule.

Their company developed The Edge at Eau Gallie Pointe on West Eau Gallie Boulevard in Melbourne. The Edge is a roughly 33,000-square-foot flexible space project.

Hardy World has since expanded at that site with The Edge 2.0, more than 22,000 square feet of commercial flex space. The Edge development has been well received by a range of tenants. Their company leases the space. The

West Eau Gallie Boulevard corridor is fast becoming a magnet for businesses, particularly for entrepreneurial ventures.

“My father still does site selection with me,” said Taylor Hardy. “Today, for instance, we will be in three

Please see Hardy World LLC, page 23
Melbourne Regional Medical Center opens leading-edge expansion; suites equipped with latest technology

By Cathy Pague
cathy.pague@steward.org
Marketing Manager
Steward Health Care

(June 2, 2021) — Melbourne Regional Medical Center has opened a 35,000-square–foot expansion of its surgical facilities equipped with advanced technology, centered around patient safety and training areas for surgeons eager to learn the most advanced surgical techniques.

As part of the Steward Health Care family, Melbourne Regional broke ground on the massive project in March 2020. “We’ve added industry–leading technology throughout, along with a number of amenities that make Melbourne Regional Medical Center the area’s premier choice for surgical care,” said Melbourne Regional Medical Center President Ron Gicca.

The added operating rooms — four now, with others set to come online later — are significantly more spacious than the existing rooms, ranging from 25 percent to 50 percent larger. The operating rooms are only the second of their kind in the United States to feature Skytron’s EASE modular wall system featuring easy to clean surfaces with flawless quality. The rooms are also equipped with powerful ultraviolet lights that come on when the rooms are unoccupied. The UV lights bathe the room in a purple glow, enhancing the sterilization process.

Two of the operating rooms are equipped with a two–way communication system that allows physicians in training to observe and interact during authorized cases from a classroom. The cameras allow for active classroom participation including remote zoom capability while the audio equipment enables physicians in the classroom to ask the surgeons questions during a procedure.

Included in the expanded facilities is an advanced central sterilization department in which surgical instruments are passed through three different washing and sterilization machines before being placed in a significantly larger sterile storage room. In addition, there are newly designed post–operative areas equipped with remote monitoring for recovering patients as an extra layer of care. “We’re looking forward to serving more Brevard County patients and welcoming more physicians to enjoy the most advanced surgical equipment. It’s an exciting time for Melbourne Regional Medical Center,” said Gicca.

A variety of local contractors worked on the project, including primary contractor RUSH Construction Inc. from Titusville.

● About Steward Health Care — Rockledge and Melbourne. The mission of Rockledge Regional Medical Center and Melbourne Regional Medical Center is to provide the highest quality health care with compassion and respect. Both hospitals are full acute–care hospitals and include a network of affiliates providing rehabilitation and laboratory services, wound care, and assisted living.

For more information on Rockledge Regional Medical Center, visit www.Rockledgeregional.org. For more information on Melbourne Regional Medical Center, visit www.Melbourneregional.org.

Indie Film Festival can be viewed free online; event to include 27 short films

PALM BAY (June 6, 2021) — The “15 Minutes of Fame” indie film festival, sponsored by Brevard filmmakers Ray and Migdalia Etheridge, can be viewed online free of charge, from June 19–27.

The program will include 27 short films, produced by aspiring filmmakers from all over the U.S., including several from Florida. Genres include comedy, drama, animation, and documentaries.

Awards will be presented to filmmakers for “best” films in several categories, such as Best Drama and Best Comedy.” Winners will receive their awards by mail. For a complete list of films and information on how to watch, go to EtheridgeProductions.com.
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JUNE 21, 2021
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Society’s weird fascination with weight is a type of discrimination and prejudice

By J. Richelle Joe
UCF Forum columnist
University of Central Florida

ORLANDO (May 19, 2021) — Humans have a weird fascination with body size. We associate body size with health status, emotional well-being, and self-esteem. We even ascribe worth to individuals based on how large or small their bodies are at any given moment in time.

Author and educator Roxane Gay wrote poignantly about this in “Hunger: A Memoir of (My) Body” and helped me recognize how this fascination with body size results in a type of discrimination and prejudice that is still generally accepted. The treatment she has experienced due to the size of her body is appalling. At the gym, on airplanes, as she has wandered in her own world down the street, others have taken note of her body, judged it, and felt emboldened to either comment about it or treat it as insignificant.

This weird fascination with body size warps into a sense of entitlement where others’ bodies are open for commentary.

I remember a friend commenting on my body size several years ago. She had accurately assessed that I had lost weight and acknowledged the change in my body with a smile and nod of approval. I might have appreciated her comment had I not been in an emotionally fragile state. I was grieving the loss of a loved one, and I was hurt by the comment. I declined to participate in weigh-ins and weight-loss challenges.

I do weigh myself, however, I have made the decision not to hyper-focus on my weight and body size. Instead, I choose to pay attention when my body speaks to me. I check in with my body before and after a workout, and throughout the workout, I monitor my breathing, energy level, and physical output. Rather than its weight or size, I focus on my body’s abilities. Is it able to endure an intense workout without threatening to collapse? Can it breathe rhythmically to avoid an asthma attack? Can it lift, run, jump, or move as much, if not more, than it did the last time? Can it still do that two-minute plank? These are the questions I ask of my body because questions of weight just don’t matter to me as much.

Since making this shift in my approach to my body I have become more kind to myself. I have liberated myself from the pressure of attaining an elusive, arbitrary weight. I chart my progress differently, and by doing so, I celebrate my body much more often. I also respond more promptly to its need for rest and replenishment.

I have since found the weight that I had lost all those years ago when my friend noticed the change in my body. Along with the weight, I have also found an abiding love for self and deep commitment to holistic wellness.

I am no health and fitness expert, but for me, that is the win!

J. Richelle Joe is an assistant professor of counselor education in the UCF College of Community Innovation and Education. She can be reached at jacqueline.joe@UCF.edu.

Society’s weird fascination with weight is a type of discrimination and prejudice

ing smaller bodies, distracted from the emotional experiences that I was having.

Recently, I have been in spaces where conversations have focused on weigh-ins, body measurements, and waist trainers. I typically stand by awkwardly during these conversations, silently hoping for a change of topic. I have no desire to talk about how much I weigh; or to measure my waist, arms, and thighs; or to cinch my mid-section in so tightly that I cannot breathe.

I support other people when they make progress toward their weight or size goals, but I refrain from making those goals for myself. My goals are not focused on size and weight because I don’t want my body to be small. I want it to be strong. I want it to feel good. I want it to be able to do things and go places.

I want my body to be strong. I want it to feel good. I want it to be able to do

From the Public Record of Brevard County Sheriff Wayne Ivey

From: Bill Erfurth <bill@moderncityentertainment.com>
Sent: Saturday, June 16, 2018 10:01 AM
To: Bill Erfurth
Subject: Police Videos

Hey, how’s things? Some recent developments have come together about possibly turning the Heroes Behind The Badge documentaries into a TV series. Without getting into too many details, there is interest in setting up the series with a montage of real and dramatic police body camera, dash cam, helicopter, etc captured video. I’m reaching out to you to see if you happen to have any, or are aware of some highly dramatic, heroic, exemplary types of these videos? The more current the videos the better, but amazing footage is always still amazing.

Hope all’s well. Any help would be great!

Thanks, Bill
IS THE EIGHTEENTH CIRCUIT AN ONGOING CRIMINAL ENTERPRISE?

BBN NOTE: John M. Stewart — a partner at Rossway Swan — is a past president of the 107,000 member The Florida Bar.

BBN 3925 PAGE 5
To Be Continued ...

Thank you Everyone, I just wanted to reach out to let you know that I will be sitting in on the BAM class this coming Saturday, March 10th. Nick is busy back in London working to properly vet the kids and all is moving forward toward an end of May filming date. Hope to see some of you on Saturday and discuss any other ideas and thoughts. I know we talked about Robbie being a key figure in the BAM program and there was one other Deputy that was mentioned as being instrumental, if anyone can recall that conversation?

Thanks, again,

Bill Erfurth
Feb 07, 2019
Secretary of State
0275169006CC

From: Ronald.Tomblin@bcso.us
Sent: Tuesday, March 6, 2018 1:39 PM
To: bill@moderncityentertainment.com; tod.goodyear@bcso.us; wayne.ivey@bcso.us; lindsey.deaton@bcso.us; michael.demorat@bcso.us; darrell.hibbs@bcso.us
Cc: nick.godwin@britesparkfilms.com
Subject: RE: BAM TV Show Meeting Today

Bill,

We were discussing Sergeant Michael Ingram.

Thanks
Ron

From: Dana Delaney Loyd
Sent: Tuesday, March 6, 2018 1:40 AM
To: tomblin, ronald <ronald.tomblin@bcso.us>; hoyt, wayne <wayne.hoyt@bcso.us>; deaton, lindsey <lindsey.deaton@bcso.us>; demorat, michael <michael.demorat@bcso.us>; hibbs, darrell <darrell.hibbs@bcso.us>
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Bill Erfurth [mailto:bill@moderncityentertainment.com]

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To: tomblin, ronald <ronald.tomblin@bcso.us>; hoyt, wayne <wayne.hoyt@bcso.us>; deaton, lindsey <lindsey.deaton@bcso.us>; demorat, michael <michael.demorat@bcso.us>; hibbs, darrell <darrell.hibbs@bcso.us>
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Thanks, again,
OAKLAND (June 8, 2021) — These days more and more apparently intelligent people seem to up speak. That’s the irritating “Valley Girl” intonation where every sentence sounds like a question. Don’t these people trust their own thoughts and words?

Perhaps up speakers’ brains are fried after being fed a steady diet of DEI, ESG, and BIPOC. For the uninitiated, these initials stand for “Diversity, Equity and Inclusion,” a corporate stock/investment rating based on Environmental awareness, Social justice and (right–minded) Governance. The latest data show that only 35 percent of 4th graders are proficient in reading and 41 percent are proficient in math. Instead of learning the necessary skills to race to the top of the ladder of success, they have the tools to win the victim triathlon. The prize: dependency on government resources.

COVID–19 added a new ingredient to the melting pot. Brown–skinned Americans fare more poorly with COVID than whites. Some reasons are sociological, such as crowded living conditions, working in service jobs that cannot be done from home, and inconsistent access to health care. Some reasons may be physiological. Studies have shown racial differences in the body’s ACE–2 receptors. These receptors help control inflammation, especially in cells lining the blood vessels. These are the sites where the “spike” protein of the SARS–Co–V–2 virus (that causes COVID–19) enter and infect healthy cells throughout the body. Notably, there may be more ACE–2 receptors in patients with hypertension, diabetes and coronary artery disease — conditions plaguing black Americans. Moreover, people with brown skin have lower levels of Vitamin D, a factor in the risk of contracting a SARS–Co–V–2 infection and the severity of COVID–19.

Knowing the higher risk, the DEI folks should have launched an education campaign informing BIPOCs about non–prescription supplements like quercetin, zinc, and vitamin D, as well as prophylaxis or early treatment with inexpensive medications (hydroxychloroquine, ivermectin, and fluvoxamine, among others) that can significantly reduce symptoms and prevent hospitalizations and deaths.

Instead, the public health gurus waited for vaccines. The guise of “vaccine equity” drew attention away from legitimate concerns about the shots. Despite the increased susceptibility to COVID–19, Black Americans remain skeptical of the shot. Folks still remembered the instances where the underserved were “helped” by the government. The 1932 Tuskegee syphilis study denied a group of Black men treatment for 40 years. Without informed consent, an experimental measles vaccine was administered to babies starting in 1987. After too many African and Haitian children’s deaths to ignore, the program was halted.

Able to read, BIPOCs learned about the serious side effects that include sometimes fatal blood clots, facial paralysis, possible menstrual problems, heart inflammation, among others. They wondered why the less effective Johnson & Johnson vaccine was sent to underserved neighborhoods. They wondered why the government had to offer $116 million in prizes, trucks, and customized firearms to encourage people to get the shot. They wondered why the government was going door to door to find BIPOCs to whom to give shots.

In order to swoop in to the rescue, the government–pharmaceutical complex could not allow the 34 million Americans who have had documented COVID–19 or a SARS–Co–V–2 infection depend on their natural immunity. Like a virus escaping from a lab or jumping from a pangolin to infect humans, the government control expanded from BIPOCs to privileged white folks.

What are we to do about the tension between addressing real health disparities and recognizing that racial disparities are used as a cover for manipulating society? Together we rip off the mask of benevolence. As ethical physicians, we pledge to treat all individuals with dignity and respect. We will explain the risks and benefits of their options and let patients decide. As active citizens, we demand prophylaxis, treatments of our choice, and the freedom to choose to receive or decline the shot. We take advantage of the law. A number of courts have been on the patient’s side.

Save yourself. Be bold. Speak up.

About the Author

Dr. Singleton is a board–certified anesthesiologist. She is past president of the Association of American Physicians and Surgeons. She graduated from Stanford and earned her M.D. degree at University of California–San Francisco Medical School. Dr. Singleton completed two years of surgery residency at UCSF, then her anesthesia residency at Harvard’s Beth Israel Hospital. While still working in the operating room, she attended UC Berkeley Law School, focusing on constitutional law and administrative law. She interned at the National Health Law Project and practiced insurance and health law. She teaches classes in the recognition of elder abuse and constitutional law for lawyers.

Dr. Singleton lives in Oakland, Calif. Her website is marilynsingletonmdjd.com.

By Marilyn M. Singleton, M.D., J.D.

 marilynsingletonmd1@gmail.com
By Judy Kent (jkent@nationalcenter.org) and David W. Almasi (dalmasi@nationalcenter.org) National Center for Public Policy Research

WASHINGTON (June 3, 2021) — Despite cultivating the reputation of a social justice warrior, basketball star LeBron James and his Los Angeles Lakers teammates have hit the court with the logo of online retailer marketing Confederate flags, Robert E. Lee lunch bags. Members of the Project 21 Black leadership network criticized James, the Lakers and the NBA for political inconsistency and their relationship with a retailer that sells products honoring the Confederacy.

“I wish LeBron wasn’t a hypocrite, but I guess it’s part of being on the woke left,” said Project 21 member Richard Holt. “But let’s be even more honest here. The NBA, LeBron and all the other social justice warriors are ultimately in it for the money. I don’t think they really care about you and me if there’s a dollar to be made. So they can keep promoting state’s rights through Wish sales all they want — maybe when the South rises again they can make money on the Robert E. Lee baseball hats.”

“We Wish LeBron Was Consistent,” a page on Project 21’s website, features images of only a few of the many Confederate and Southern pride items that can be obtained through Wish, an e-commerce platform designed to make it easier for third–party sellers to reach customers. This includes a wide array of Confederate-themed items including Confederate flag pillows, blankets, kids’ military uniforms, portraits of Confederate generals and even anti–COVID face masks featuring the rebel flag. James and the Lakers wear the Wish logo on their uniforms — uniforms that the NBA promotes through the league’s own online store as “a call to action, a command for greatness.”

“Wish can sell these things if it wants to, but why have LeBron and the Lakers lent their reputation to help them sell it?” the webpage asks. “Why has the NBA allowed this to happen after claiming to be all–in on social justice?”

The team’s partnership with Wish, and its pride in these uniforms, is particularly perplexing given its loud activism supporting “woke” causes.

“Prior to the start of the 2017–2018 NBA season, the Los Angeles Lakers signed a three–season deal with Wish. Lakers Chief Operating Officer Tim Harris called Wish ‘a company that shares our commitment to giving back to the community.’ Of course, when that community is the Lakers, and it is getting $12–14 million every season for the label rights, I guess it overlooked some of the products sold by Wish that should be decried by the team’s star player,” said Project 21 member Martin Baker. “Amidst all of the controversy over the Confederate flag, will James now call out his employers — who just extended his contract through 2025 — over the products that their sponsor sells? Or is he happy just cashing his own checks? Hypocrisy, thy name is the average professional athlete.”

Project 21 suggests people ask James, Lakers management and NBA officials why they did not properly check Wish sellers’ inventories — and continue monitoring them — before entering into this controversial relationship. A Twitter tool has been put on Project 21’s webpage to facilitate outreach and discussion.

“Let’s face it, LeBron is a publicity hog. We all can figure LeBron hasn’t done any due diligence into the practices of Wish and probably never will,” said Project 21 member Donna Jackson. “LeBron likes to position himself as a social justice warrior, but his primary wishes are really to stay in the news cycle and to generate profits — for him and his sponsors. Since his activism has almost single–handedly tanked NBA ratings over the past two years, I’m sure this wish won’t become a reality.”

Project 21, a leading voice of Black conservatives for over 25 years, is sponsored by the National Center for Public Policy Research. Its members have been quoted, interviewed or published over 40,000 times since the program was created in 1992. Contributions to the National Center are tax–deductible and greatly appreciated, and may be earmarked exclusively for the use of Project 21.

Founded in 1982, the National Center for Public Policy Research is a non–partisan, free–market, independent conservative think–tank. Ninety–four percent of its support comes from some 60,000 individuals, less than 4 percent from foundations and less than 2 percent from corporations.

Follow Project 21 on Twitter at @Project21News for general appearances. To be alerted to upcoming media appearances by Project 21 members, follow our media appearances Twitter account at @NCPPRMedia.
The case for coming back: How leaders can convince reluctant employees it’s time to return to the workplace

By Rick Grimaldi

HOBOKEN, N.J. (June 1, 2021) — For a while it looked like remote work was here to stay. But with COVID cases falling and the vaccine available, some employers have realized having people in the office is better for business. Some employees are happy to come back, but others are not as willing. What’s an employer to do? Of course, you could force people to come back, but you don’t want to lose good employees — and frankly it’s better for everyone if people don’t come back begrudgingly.

That’s why the best approach is to convince the reluctant returners.

We all know the old school command and control style of leadership doesn’t work any longer, and that includes the issue of determining where people work. Instead of dragging employees back against their will, it’s better to entice them with a collaborative, happy, innovative work environment they can’t resist.

In other words, if you build the right case for coming back you can pull them in your direction — no pushing required. Read on for some strategies to incentivize your employees to come back to the office.

1. **Be clear about your reasons for bringing people back to the office.** If having people on-site increases productivity, share that. If profits took a nose dive once people moved to remote work, be transparent and give them the facts. When you level with them about your reasoning instead of giving a command with no explanations, people are more likely to respect those rules and comply.

2. **If you have changed your mind, address that.** Some companies are just now seeing the value of having people in the office. Be honest about this. Tell employees: “We didn’t realize at first that face-to-face interaction was so pivotal to our success. The past year has shown that it really is.” They will appreciate your candor.

Employees don’t want to work in offices with bad cultures. But unfortunately, many workplaces were unhealthy prior to the pandemic, and workers may now fear returning to their former toxic, drama-filled, high stress work environment. It’s not too late to cultivate a culture where people want to be. Focus on building collegiate, close-knit, trusting, inclusive, and uplifting teams that inspire a sense of belonging in people. When people feel they have a “tribe” they will want to come to work. After all, camaraderie is the antidote to burnout—something many remote workers are currently suffering from.

Employees need an atmosphere of psychological safety to do their best work. Make sure your workers feel free to speak with candor, are allowed to make mistakes without blame or retaliation, and can deliver bad news without fear of your reaction. Finally, make it clear that the workplace is a bully-free zone. The best workplaces today do not allow anyone — including leaders — to dominate, demean, or belittle their workers.

3. **Add policies that make sense for today’s workplace.** Jettison those that don’t. The pandemic changed a lot about how we work. One of the new ways to digitally transform overnight, companies shifted to remote work, and flexed to stay afloat. And in some cases, those changes and new habits have made the workday run more smoothly. Figure out which of the new practices that you adopted during the pandemic are worth maintaining — and which old practices you can let go for good. For example, you might decide to keep flexible work arrangements during work from home and opt instead to meet only twice a week (and it is working well for the company), you might decide to make that change permanent.

4. **Talk with people one-on-one to understand their hesitancy to come back to the office.** A candid discussion with individual employees can help you dig deeper to find out why they may not want to return. Is it a childcare or eldercare issue? Is it about safety? Is it something else entirely? Their reasons may not even be what you think they are. But once you understand their reservation, you may be able to help them manage their concerns or solve the problem.

One-on-one interviews can help you get a sense of where people are coming from. You can learn who is burned out, who might be planning to leave, and who has new ideas around the future of work in the post-COVID era. It’s a great way to take peoples’ temperature and work together to find solutions to make the transition back easier on everyone.

5. **Make a case for mentoring opportunities.** Remote work can get a lot of time with leaders who could give them valuable career insights. Further, younger remote workers are less likely to pick up strong communication and professional skills, establish career goals, and build a network that they can rely on for years to come. But mentoring opportunities are abundant in an office setting. Young workers will benefit from the incredible wisdom and experience of senior employees, and more seasoned workers can rely on millennials and Gen-Zers to help them develop digital skills, learn to use social media for marketing campaigns, and adjust to an increasingly diverse and inclusive work environment.

6. **Play up the return of trust.** Just ask your remote workers: It can be very difficult to build trust-based work relationships when people only communicate over Zoom, meetings and email. Without daily face-to-face interactions, people never get to know their colleagues and build strong relationships. But spending time with colleagues at work allows for the informal exchanges that help people get to know one another and eventually build trust.

7. **Highlight the power of in-person collaboration.** Collaboration is necessary for innovation. But chances are your employees aren’t getting a lot of chances to collaborate remotely. The best brainstorming and innovation happen in person — and anyone who wants to hustle and harness that creative energy will be eager to show up in person to do so.

8. **Offer more flexibility around when and where people work.** (Just make sure it works for both leadership and staff.) During the past year, many employees have gotten used to being able to pick up their kids from school or take an aging parent to medical appointments. Naturally, they don’t want to give this up. The solution may be to offer a hybrid model that allows people to be in the office part time and remote part time. Or consider allowing them to be flexible with the timing of their work.

Often, you can set up a system that works for both leaders and employees. Leaders can get the facetime they need to manage and ensure workers are productive, and employees get more of the work-life integration that they crave. Finally, by staggering schedules and shifts, or allowing a hybrid model, you can meet your goals while keeping people as safe as possible.

9. **Make workplace safety a top priority.** Even though vaccinations have driven down COVID cases nationwide, employees are still concerned about safety at work. To ensure that you are complying with established safety practices, check out guidelines posted by OSHA and the CDC. A laser focus on safety not only helps companies prevent disability and discrimination claims and avoid OSHA fines, it sets the stage to recruit and retain top talent.

For more on this subject, check out my recent interview with Wharton on Sirius XM Radio at rickgrimaldi.com. Not only will these strategies entice people to come back to the office more quickly, they will also help your organization attract top talent. When you make your business a place people want to work, you are more likely to maintain the competitive edge that leads to innovation, creativity, and success.

10. **About the Author**

Rick Grimaldi is a workplace trends expert and the author of “FLEX: A Leader’s Guide to Staying Nimble and Mastering Transformative Change in the American Workplace.” His unique perspective comes from his diverse career in high-ranking public service positions, as a human resources and labor relations professional for an international high-tech company, and presently in private practice as a partner with Fisher Phillips LLP, one of America’s pre-eminent management side labor and employment law firms. Day to day, he works with companies to help them adapt to the ever-changing business environment and improve workplace practices, and become better employers. Grimaldi is an internationally recognized writer and keynote speaker, and has been selected through a peer review process as one of “The Best Lawyers in America” in three of the last four years.
Eric C. Reed new president of Orange County Bar Association

By Jennifer Brown
jennyb@ocbanet.org
Orange County Bar Association

ORLANDO (June 2, 2021) — Eric C. Reed, a partner with Shutts & Bowen LLP, has taken the helm as president of the Orange County Bar Association (OCBA) in Orlando.

Reed has been a member of the OCBA executive council since 2000, and has served as president of the OCBA Young Lawyers Section and as a trustee of the Legal Aid Society of the Orange County Bar Association Inc.

Reed, who practices in the areas of commercial litigation, construction litigation, and commercial landlord/tenant litigation, received his law degree from the Barry University School of Law. Reed also serves on the board of Ronald McDonald House Charities of Central Florida.

Reed said, “I am proud to serve as the president of the OCBA. When I first joined the OCBA while in law school, I knew this was an organization that I wanted to be involved in. The OCBA membership is tops in the country.”

The OCBA’s 2021–2022 Executive Council officers also include Karen Persis, Law Office of Karen Persis, PA, president–elect; and Amber Davis, Wolter Van Dyke Davis, PLLC, treasurer; and Arti Ajit Hirani, Meenakshi A. Hirani, PA, secretary.

The remaining individuals on the bar’s Executive Council are:
- Michael D. Barber, The Law Office of Michael D. Barber, PA
- Rizwanees “Rizi” Cerrud, II, The PCB Firm, PA
- Kesha Owens, Orange County Public Schools
- Lisa Gong Guerrero, State Attorney’s Office
- Catherine “Kate” Hollis, Garganese, Weiss, D’Agresta & Salzman, PA
- LaShawnda K. Jackson, RumbergerKirk
- Kristopher Kest, Kest Family Law, PA
- Bruce Mount, The Leach Firm
- Rafael O. Rodriguez, GEICO
- C. Andrew Roy, Winterwoodle, Haines, Ward & Woodman, PA
- Brandon Sapp, Morgan & Morgan
- Jennifer Smith Thomas, RumbergerKirk
- Jessica A. Travis, Law Office of Jessica Travis PA
- M. Ryan Williams, State Attorney’s Office
- Deborah L. Moskowitz, Quintairos, Prieto, Wood & Boyer, PA, was instated as president of the Legal Aid Society of the Orange County Bar Association Inc.
- Andrew Cameron was instated as president of the OCBA Foundation.
- Michael D. Barber, The Law Office of Michael D. Barber, PA, was instated as president of the OCBA Young Lawyers Section.
- April Phillips, was instated as president of the OCBA Paralegal Section.
- Reed and the remainder of these individuals were honored and celebrated at the OCBA’s Gala and Installation Ceremony held at Rosen Shingle Creek on May 22, 2021.

The Orange County Bar Association, established in 1933, is a voluntary association comprised of roughly 3,200 judges, attorneys, and other legal professionals whose mission is to serve the profession and the public with outstanding member and community programs. The association established and supports the work of the OCBA Foundation and the Legal Aid Society of the Orange County Bar Association, Inc. For more information visit www.orangecountybar.org.
Raymond James charitable grant helps area nonprofit Promise, Inc. launch mailing–fulfillment enterprise

By Tammy Farmer
tammy@promiseinbrevard.com
Marketing & Communications Manager
Promise, Inc.

WEST MELBOURNE (June 8, 2021) — Promise Inc., a nonprofit organization based in West Melbourne, has always been employment. Despite the challenges of the COVID–19 pandemic, more than half of Promise’s population has secured long–term employment, whether out in the community at more than 30 area businesses or within its own social enterprises, which include the Promise Treasures Thrift Shoppe at the corner of 192 and Wickham Road; Aves’ Place Ice Cream at West Melbourne Community Park; Sweet Sue’s Salon at the Promise Main Campus; as well as its home–made All–Natural Doggie Treat and Soy–Based Clean Candle enterprises, which are currently offered in more than 40 businesses throughout Brevard County.

One of Promise’s goals is for every resident who wants to have a job to have the chance to be matched with an employment opportunity that meets their needs and interests. “Some of Promise’s residents, however, are very eager to be employed, but are more comfortable and have better success in an individualized, in–house setting with additional job–coaching and simplified work tasks,” said Kristin Schwartz, a Promise employment specialist. This sparked the concept for Promise’s new mailing–fulfillment enterprise.

Once the enterprise is up and running, Promise will soon be able to solicit businesses and agencies from throughout the community who wish to send mass mailings to its clients. The agency will provide the content and addresses for the mailings, then the Promise employees will fold the content, place it in envelopes and affix the appropriate labels and postage.

In the short term, Promise estimates providing employment for six–to–eight part–time employees. Once Promise hires its job coaches and provides the necessary training for its residents who are interested in being employed in the mailing–fulfillment enterprise, Promise will begin marketing it to the community.

Included with each mailing is a message thanking the client for supporting individuals with disabilities by providing unique employment opportunities.

Within the past few months, Promise has been fortunate to partner with several local agencies, including The Platinum Group at Keller Williams as well as the Carpenter Kessel Homeselling Team, to complete 10 test mailings.

The program proved to be efficient and successful for both parties, providing vocational training opportunities for residents, as well as an opportunity for these businesses to relay to clients their support of the special needs’ community.

“We chose Promise and its residents to help support our direct–mail initiative because we felt as though it was an opportunity to truly invest in our community,” said P.J. McLoughlin, a Realtor and team lead for The Platinum Group at Keller Williams. “We deeply value the impact Promise has in the community and its various partnerships with businesses across Brevard County.”

He added, “And from a personal standpoint, I have had several clients who have relocated to this area specifically so that their family members could live at Promise, so we are very familiar with the unique experience Promise provides and were anxious to partner in new ways. During the pandemic, the Promise team got very creative in providing opportunities for us to reach out to our customers in a timely way through this initiative. We look forward to our next project together.”

Out of nearly 300 applicants, Promise was one of 16 charities from across the nation to be selected as a 2021 recipient of the Raymond James Charitable Grant Initiative, funded by its board of trustees.

“This funding will provide seed money by allowing us to purchase equipment and fund job–coaching hours for our newest social enterprise, which will be a perfect employment opportunity for a subset of our residents,” said Jeff Kiel, president and CEO of Promise Inc. “We are so grateful to Raymond James Charitable for supporting our disabilities community here at Promise.”

Kiel continued, “While some of our resident employees may need a little extra time to complete their tasks than someone without a disability, the overall impact of this enterprise will speak volumes.”

Funding from this Raymond James Charitable grant will help pay for a folding machine, job–coaching and offset unbillable hours during the program’s launch.

In the short term, Promise estimates providing employment for six–to–eight part–time employees. Once Promise hires its job coaches and provides the necessary training for its residents who are interested in being employed in the mailing–fulfillment enterprise, Promise will begin marketing it to the community.

• About Promise Inc.
  Established in 2009, Promise is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization with a mission to provide affordable, independent housing for individuals with cognitive and physical disabilities utilizing public and private partnerships to develop a model community. For more information about Promise and its mission of providing opportunities for individuals with special needs, please visit www.promiseinbrevard.com.

• About Raymond James Charitable
  Raymond James Charitable is a 501(c)(3) public charity established in 2000 to provide clients a means to engage in philanthropy in a strategic, efficient manner. Raymond James Charitable has supported charities with more than $700 million in grants through the generosity of its donors. Additional information is available at www.raymondjamescharitable.org.

Meet VolkLaw Lawyer

Steven Gieseler

• 22 U.S. Supreme Court Cases
• 16 Years Property Rights Litigation & Constitutional Law Experience
• Florida 19th Circuit Judicial Nominating Commission
• Published Author & TV/Radio Opinion Commentator

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Celebrating 27 Years
Interior Fusion launches a full-service office furniture dealership in Melbourne while supporting local veterans

By Liz Morgan
liz@lizmorganpr.com
Liz Morgan PR

(June 8, 2021) — Florida’s premier veteran-owned office furniture dealership, Interior Fusion, recently celebrated the soft opening of its third location in Florida. Located at 3945 W. Eau Gallie Blvd. at The Edge at Eau Gallie Pointe in Melbourne, the new showroom provides full-service design and installation solutions for commercial, healthcare, education and government office environments.

The Melbourne location joins existing Interior Fusion showrooms in the Jacksonville and Tampa Bay areas. Founded in 2008 by Rich Fendley, a service-disabled military veteran, Interior Fusion’s first location was opened in Tampa.

After forming a partnership with fellow veteran Steve Jacobs, a second location in Jacksonville opened in 2019 to serve the North Florida area.

The new Melbourne location is the company’s flagship store with a 4,500-square-foot showroom.

“While it’s certainly a challenge opening a new location in a COVID–19 environment, we are confident that there is a continuing strong need for our products and services in central Florida,” said Fendley.

To celebrate the opening, Interior Fusion Melbourne will be donating a portion of the profits from the first two months sales to National Veterans Homeless Support Inc., or NVHS. Founded in 2008, NVHS’s mission is to eliminate homelessness among veterans in Central Florida. Since 2008, they have reduced the homeless population by 88 percent.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, there are 4,400 veterans in Brevard that are in poverty. NVHS’s goal is to get all of the homeless housed while at the same time keep the at-risk in their homes.

“What makes NVHS truly unique is the fact that they tackle homelessness directly where it exists — on the streets of the community,” said Fendley. “They proactively go out to find those in need through street-level outreach where they live, provide basic needs to ensure their survival and build rapport, and connect them to any organization that offers a service beneficial to them, rapidly moving them from homeless to housed.”

The new Interior Fusion location features an expanded showroom space allowing guests to view firsthand a variety of furnishings for the business office as well as the home office. The expanded showroom is named the “jewel showroom of Florida” and will serve as the model for all future Interior Fusion showrooms.

Jacobs expressed enthusiasm about the launch of the new location, stating, “Throughout the years, we’ve had the pleasure of working with businesses and individuals on their office decor needs up and down the east coast. This showroom will enable us to better serve customers in Melbourne, Orlando and the surrounding areas.”

For more information, visit Interiorfusion.us or call (321) 343-7227.

Gov. DeSantis signs Sen. Wright’s bill improving career opportunities for servicemembers in the Sunshine State

By Elisha Converse
converse.elisha@flsenate.gov
The Florida Senate

PORT ORANGE (June 4, 2021) — Gov. Ron DeSantis signed Sen. Tom Wright’s (R-New Smyrna Beach) Senate Bill SB 586: Veterans Employment and Training (passed as HB 435).

The bill designates Veterans Florida as the principal organization to implement the Department of Defense’s Skillbridge Program, connecting employers with our talented military members transitioning to civilian life and new career opportunities.

“HB 435 furthers our state’s commitment to providing our Servicemembers meaningful work opportunities following their service,” said Wright. “When an individual completes their service to our country, there can be several challenges during that process. With the help of Veterans Florida we will be able to ease part of that process and produce better outcomes for both the individual and employer.”

Skillbridge will connect transitioning Servicemembers to employers and their new career. During the transition period, their salary and benefits are retained while obtaining any needed associated industry certifications, apprenticeships or internships.

Veterans Florida is a nonprofit organization that was created by the Legislature to help military veterans transition to civilian life.

SB 586 amends F.S. 295.22, authorizing the Skillbridge program to be implemented and managed by Veterans Florida.

“It is our duty to ensure that those who serve our country are given proper resources to flourish in the career they choose to pursue,” said Wright. “The final passage of this measure is yet another representation of Florida being our nation’s most veteran-friendly state.”

HB 435’s Veterans Employment and Training will go into effect on July 1, 2021.
8–koi plans to purchase own facility, create pet–friendly workplace, add pet–insurance benefit; Inga Young’s Artie is top Coton de Tulear in U.S.

By Ken Datzman

MERRITT ISLAND (June 10, 2021) — Businesswoman Inga Young, president and CEO of 8–koi, has been shopping the market to invest in a commercial facility for her growing firm, which specializes in providing a range of services to government agencies nationwide.

Her company just announced it was one of six competitively selected Woman–Owned Small Businesses to win the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers’ “Horizontal Construction, Renovation, Repair, and Incidental Design Indefinite–Delivery Indefinite Quality” contract for a three–year period of performance with work taking place in Alabama, Florida, Mississippi and Georgia.

The general construction contract requires 8–koi to provide supervisory, technical and administrative staff to include field superintendents, quality control managers, architects, engineers, interior designers, desks and project managers, among others. 8–koi maintains a general contractor’s license in Florida and has provided design–build services to government clients since 2016.

Task orders for engineering design and construction projects may include new construction or rehabilitation of facilities and structures such as project management offices or shop buildings, storage facilities, picnic shelters, courtesy docks, and boat storage, to include power, paving, and roofing in the Corps of Engineers’ Mobile District.

“This is our first contract with the Corps of Engineers and our team is looking forward to supporting this agency with improvements to public–use areas in the Southeast region,” said Young.

8–koi Construction Division Vice President Otto Herrea added, “It’s always exciting to start work with a new customer to learn their preferences, adopt their standards, and develop the relationship over time to meet their needs.”

Currently, the company she founded in 2008 has offices in Melbourne and at the Financial Center at Merritt Island. With a corporate–owned office building in mind, one of her goals is to create a pet–friendly workplace with a dedicated on–site area for employee pets.

“One of the buildings we are looking at has a sizable office that goes out to a courtyard with pavers and a grassy area. That would be very attractive because it would be the perfect place where employees could bring their pets,” said Young.

“I am a pet lover. With our own building, employees will be able to bring their pets to work on different days. We will have a schedule so that the pets can get acclimated to the environment, and not have all the employees bring their pets at the same time,” she added.

A pet–friendly workplace is defined as one that allows pets in the workplace regularly or occasionally, or offers a pet–friendly employee benefit, such as pet insurance.

A recent study conducted by Nationwide Insurance, in partnership with the Human Animal Bond Research Institute, reveals that 90 percent of employees in pet–friendly workplaces feel “highly connected” to their company’s mission; fully engaged with their work; and willing to recommend their employer to others. In contrast, less than 65 percent of employees in non–pet friendly workplaces made the same claim.

Additionally, more than three times as many employees at pet–friendly workplaces report a “positive” working relationship with their boss and co–workers, significantly more than those in non–pet friendly environments.

In that same study, 72 percent of employees who work for a pet–friendly company would decline a job offer with another company at similar pay versus 44 percent who work in non–pet friendly workplaces.

And 91 percent of employees who work for a pet–friendly business feel the company “supports their mental well-being” versus 63 percent who work in a non–pet friendly environment.

Expect workplaces to become more pet–friendly after the pandemic. Employers plan to enact more pet–friendly office policies. Currently, about 7 percent of employers allow pets at work, according to a survey conducted by the Society for Human Resource Management.

New surveys show that more and more Americans believe pets should be allowed in the workplace.

Seventy–five million Americans believe having pets in the workplace makes people happier, and 70 million people believe having pets at work reduces stress, says a survey by the American Pet Products Association.

Young said 8–koi will also be adding pet insurance as a company benefit.

“It will be part of our employee compensation plan. Every year we survey our employees to get feedback about benefits, and pet insurance ranks high. So we will be adding pet insurance to our benefits package. It’s one of the things our benefits broker offered us and I think it’s a great idea. But we wanted to make sure that it was a benefit that the employees wanted.”

Voluntary pet–insurance plans are one of the fastest–growing employee benefits, according to the Society for Human Resource Management. In fact, it’s ranked third in a new survey by SHRM listing the popularity of employee benefits.

The U.S. pet–insurance market is supported by various growth drivers, such as an increasing love for dogs and cats, and growing interest of millennials for pets.
General contractors upbeat about Brevard’s growth; Welsh Construction working range of commercial projects, including developing 28-acre site on Merritt Island

By Ken Datzman

When you see businesses expanding, new commercial buildings being constructed, new neighborhoods being developed, and existing facilities undergoing renovation, it signifies a growing community.

“All that is happening in 72-mile-long Brevard County, and it is driving the economy and creating jobs. Business is strong,” said local general contractor and longtime entrepreneur Ken Welsh, president and founder of Welsh Construction Inc., a commercial builder and developer.

“We’ve brought on two new project managers and an assistant project manager. We have also hired a few more superintendents, and have added an accountant to the team. Last year was a good year for our firm and we’re on track to have another year of gains.”

He added. “The Brevard County construction market is humming along right now. Interest rates are low and that is good for builders, especially on the residential side.”

The development of commercial real estate and the ongoing operations of existing commercial real estate facilities in the United States — office, industrial, warehouse, and retail — supported 8 million American jobs, contributed $1 trillion to the gross domestic product in 2020, and generated $338.1 billion in personal earnings, according to the 2021 “Economic Impacts of Commercial Real Estate” study released by National Association of Industrial and Office Properties, or NAIOP.

In Florida, one of the top three states for construction, commercial real estate development is a powerful economic engine, creating jobs and generating significant fiscal contributions to local economies.

In 2020, it generated $27.7 billion for the state’s economy, $10.2 billion in wages and salaries, and created and supported 220,212 jobs, according to the NAIOP report.

Welsh Construction is a family-run business. Welsh founded his company in 2003 and has decades of experience in the construction industry.

Previously, he was the co-owner of G&G Contractors for 15 years, before the firm merged with BRPH Construction Services Inc. in Melbourne. When the companies merged, Welsh served as director of operations for five years. Welsh, who studied construction engineering technology at the University of Central Florida, later went on to form his own general contracting business.

The company has grown its portfolio of projects not only in Brevard but also in surrounding counties and around the state.

It has constructed all types of facilities, including medical buildings and veterinary offices, restaurants, storage complexes, educational facilities, senior-living structures, and churches.

The firm has worked projects for a range of clients over the years, including L3Harris, Brevard County Schools, Hardy World LLC at The Edge on West Eau Gallie Boulevard in Melbourne, and for the U.S. Navy.

“When we first started in the late 1990s, we worked out of a large job-site trailer at Cavalry Chapel in West Melbourne,” said Jennifer Parkerson, who today is vice president of operations for Welsh Construction and the daughter of Ken Welsh.

“It was a family affair. I brought my first child into that office. My brother was there. My mother was there. There were three offices in a roughly 60-foot-long trailer.”

They all worked to make the business thrive, and it has grown with a roster of repeat clients.

Parkerson was Welsh Construction’s first employee and through the years has performed many duties for the firm, including information technology management, marketing, bookkeeping, human resources, and project management on three condominium developments.

“I’ve worn a lot of different hats over the years,” said Parkerson, who earned her bachelor’s degree in business management and information systems from the University of Central Florida.

For a while, she worked in South Florida as the information technology manager for a home-theater company. Parkerson also worked for an insurance company in information technology.

“But my husband and I came back to Brevard because this is our home and where we want to be,” she said. “Welsh Construction has been growing. So it’s been exciting to see all of the construction activity that’s going on in the county. We’ve come a long way since the first Cavalry Chapel project.”

Welsh Construction has managed the design coordination, development, and construction of that 300,000-square-foot church situated on the 31-acre campus in West Melbourne, as well as Cavalry Chapel’s 67,000-square-foot facility on the 16-acre Viera campus.

Cavalry Chapel in West Melbourne houses a 3,000-seat auditorium, which is considered the largest in Brevard County. The Maxwell C. King Center in Melbourne can seat up to 2,016 people in its main auditorium.

“We are currently doing a couple of projects for Cavalry Chapel,” said Welsh. “One is in Sebastian. It is an addition to their existing facility there. And we’re also adding a children’s ministry building to the Viera campus of Cavalry Chapel.”
Palm Bay City Council votes to accept $1.9 million purchase contract for Pelican Harbor Marina property

PALM BAY (June 1, 2021) — At the May 20 Regular Council Meeting, Palm Bay City Council voted to accept the recommendation of the Bayfront Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) to execute a purchase contract with Space Coast Marinas LLC for the sale of three parcels, known as Pelican Harbor Marina, owned by the CRA and the City of Palm Bay.

Space Coast Marinas submitted an offer of $1.9 million to purchase the Marina for the development of a dry dock boat storage and service facility, boat launch and wash service, boat club, ship store, tiki bar with an outdoor entertainment venue, restaurant, and retail amenities to include a valet service. Space Coast Marinas intends to renovate the existing boat club, ship store, tiki bar with an outdoor entertainment venue, restaurant, and retail facilities.

Space Coast Marinas anticipates the overall capital investment for this development project to be at least $10–12 million and create roughly 302 new jobs.

The developer has also purchased two privately owned parcels, a vacant 0.37-acre site located at 4200 Dixie Highway NE, and has under contract the Bait & Tackle property located at the southwest corner of Dixie Highway and Pospisil Avenue NE.

Under current plans, the buyer will retain Paddling Paradise, which is currently in a month-to-month lease with the City of Palm Bay to operate out of the existing, 1,600-square-foot facility at 4220 Dixie Highway NE. Paddling Paradise has offered kayak and stand-up paddleboard rentals and tours at this site for nearly two years, generating ecotourism to Turkey Creek and the Indian River along Palm Bay’s bayfront.

“Under current plans, the buyer will retain Paddling Paradise, which is currently in a month-to-month lease with the City of Palm Bay to operate out of the existing, 1,600-square-foot facility at 4220 Dixie Highway NE. Paddling Paradise has offered kayak and stand-up paddleboard rentals and tours at this site for nearly two years, generating ecotourism to Turkey Creek and the Indian River along Palm Bay’s bayfront.

“This is an exciting development project for the City of Palm Bay,” said Joan Junkala-Brown, Palm Bay’s deputy city manager. “The proposed development will add value to what currently exists and further create an environment for residents and visitors to gather, eat, shop, and listen to live music whether arriving by boat or vehicle.”

She added, “This project will encourage further redevelopment of the area and hopefully serve as a catalyst to implement the city’s vision for a Bayfront Village, a quaint waterfront downtown district for the community to enjoy.”
Sprouts Farmers Market opens Orlando Produce Distribution Center to support Florida expansion

By Kalia Pang
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Senior Public Relations Specialist
Sprouts Farmers Market

PHOENIX (June 4, 2021) — Sprouts Farmers Market has opened a new produce distribution center in Orlando, marking its first distribution center in Florida and its seventh across the country. Since opening its first store in the state in 2017, Sprouts has been rapidly expanding across Florida. The center will serve all the grocer’s current 23 stores in the state and the additional 10 locations planned to open in Florida this year.

The 135,000-square-foot facility was built for Sprouts and includes 34 degrees Fahrenheit and 55 degrees Fahrenheit storage, and fruit-ripening rooms that are ideal for the wide variety of fresh produce Sprouts offers.

Sprouts recently announced it will drive efficiencies across its network of fresh distribution centers by locating them within 250 miles of the stores they serve, allowing for fresher, local assortment.

“With organics representing more than a third of our produce business in Florida, we know shoppers across the state are interested in fresh, affordable organics and local varieties,” said Chief Fresh Merchandising Officer Scott Neal.

“We've put together a team of local produce buyers to bring to market the freshest, local product available. Additionally, the new center’s state-of-the-art ripening rooms provide the ideal climate for produce storage and will immediately provide shoppers with perfectly ripe avocados and bananas.”

The distribution center will support and expand Sprouts’ local farm partnerships with growers like Jim Rash, Noble Citrus, Astin Berry Exchange, and others, allowing for exclusives like Sugar Baby watermelons, a crisp yet juicy version with a classic sweet taste, available this summer. Later this year, Florida stores will transition to an all-organic mushroom set.

Sprouts is partnering with Penske Logistics as its third-party logistics provider for the distribution center and dedicated transportation fleet which created 57 new full-time jobs in the market. The grocer’s ability to offer the freshest, highest-quality produce at a great value is supported through its network of distribution centers, direct grower relationships, and enhanced quality controls. In addition to the new Orlando facility, Sprouts currently operates distribution centers in Aurora, Colo.; Colton and Union City, Calif.; Glendale, Ariz.; Wilmer, Texas; and Atlanta, Ga.

To celebrate the opening, the Sprouts Healthy Communities Foundation donated $25,000 to Fleet Farming, an Orlando nonprofit urban agriculture program that brings edible landscaping to schools, community centers, and affordable housing units to increase local food accessibility. Their largest initiative can be seen in 13 micro farms or “farmlettes” they have helped create in previously unutilized front lawns in the Audubon Park community near Sprouts' store in Winter Park. Fleet Farming hosts biweekly “swarm rides” whereby staff and volunteers bike from one farmlette to another, tending to and harvesting the produce.

The Foundation’s donation will provide Fleet Farming resources to purchase a vehicle to transport agricultural supplies and support the buildout of a commissary kitchen which will allow staff to prepare food within a mile of their distribution hub. Remaining funds will be used to purchase gardening supplies like seedlings and soil for the 13 farmlettes. Since 2017, the Sprouts Healthy Communities Foundation has donated more than $270,000 to nonprofit organizations across Florida, supporting garden-based learning and healthy eating programs for kids, including the work of Orlando Health Foundation and the Arnold and Winnie Palmer Foundation.

About Sprouts Farmers Market Inc.

Sprouts is the place where goodness grows. True to its farm-stand heritage, Sprouts offers a unique grocery experience featuring an open layout with fresh produce at the heart of the store. Sprouts inspires wellness naturally with a carefully curated assortment of better-for-you products paired with purpose-driven people.

The healthy grocer continues to bring the latest in wholesome, innovative products made with lifestyle-friendly ingredients such as organic, plant-based and gluten-free.

Headquartered in Phoenix, and one of the fastest-growing retailers in the country, Sprouts employs 35,000 team members and operates more than 360 stores in 23 states nationwide. To learn more about Sprouts, and the good it brings communities, visit about.sprouts.com.

Kyle Hash to be honored as a United Fresh Produce Excellence award winner

(June 2, 2021) — 28 North Executive Chef Kyle Hash will be celebrated as one of nine of the country’s most innovative chefs and foodservice professionals by the United Fresh Produce Excellence in Foodservice Award Program, sponsored by FreshEdge.

He will be honored during the PMA Foodservice Conference & Expo taking place July 21–22 in Monterey, Calif. United Fresh’s Produce Excellence in Foodservice Award Program was created to showcase chefs and their companies for their creativity in the workplace, highlighting fresh produce in their menus and experimenting with new flavors to give customers an innovative dining experience.

The 2021 award recipients were selected from nominations submitted by produce companies and foodservice operations. To choose winners, United Fresh coordinated reviews of each nominee and judged them on their menus’ integration of fresh produce, use of food safety protocols, and proper produce storage and handling. Nominees were also judged on their involvement and leadership in produce-related community service and special events as well as recognition by their company and industry peers.

Hash won his award in the Fine Dining Restaurant category. “As someone who generally gravitates toward proteins, it is gratifying to be recognized for my creative use of fresh produce as well,” he said.

For more information about the Produce Excellence in Foodservice Awards Program, visit www.unitedfresh.org. To learn more about the award program’s sponsor, FreshEdge, visit www.freshedgefoods.com. Or, to celebrate the awarded chefs and foodservice professionals at the PMA Foodservice Conference & Expo, visit www.pma.com/events/foodservice.

Located in Melbourne, 28 North provides its customers with a responsibly sourced, made-from-scratch, chef-curated menu of elevated pub-style food with a full bar of innovative craft cocktails and a rotating selection of locally and nationally brewed beers. The company’s simple focus is “local latitude and local attitude.”

More information about 28 North can be found at https://28northgastropub.com.

Space Coast Machinist Apprentice Program Offering Certification

Manufacturing companies!
Place your machining employees in our Florida Department of Education “Certified Machinist — Journeyman Certificate” Program.

This 4 year program provides classroom and machine shop labs taught by working professionals in conjunction with 8,000 hours of on-the-job training by your company.

Very low cost for companies and tuition FREE for students — email us at brevmachineapprent@brevard.org or call 321-254-8278.
Florida Tech project receives funding in state budget; university to get $2 million for specialized equipment

By Adam Lowenstein
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Florida Tech News Bureau
Florida Institute of Technology

(June 3, 2021) — A Florida Tech project central to the Sunshine State’s identity and economic strength that will boost STEM and manufacturing education through cutting-edge technology received critical funding in the 2021–22 budget, thanks to the efforts of legislators and the final approval June 2 of Gov. Ron DeSantis.

The university will receive $2 million for its Biomedical Aerospace Manufacturing (BAM) specialized equipment project in the just-approved spending plan.

“This project focuses on an area of great importance to Florida — our ability to help our students and the business community compete and succeed in the high-tech economy,” said Florida Tech President Dwayne McCay. “We thank Gov. DeSantis and our legislators for empowering Florida Tech to move forward with this impactful endeavor.”

The BAM initiative will help secure cutting-edge equipment for Florida Tech’s new Health Sciences Research Center and its Center for Advanced Manufacturing and Innovative Design, creating availability across university programs for the biomedical, aerospace and manufacturing sectors.

Equipment such as bio tissue testing machines, specialized 3D printers, and imaging devices procured over the next three to five years will provide a platform for exposing students to equipment Florida’s targeted industries are using, and will be using, to develop new technologies and new jobs.

“Florida industry demands a workforce with a relevant education to support evolving economic conditions,” said state Rep. Randy Fine. “I was proud to sponsor this legislation and applaud Gov. DeSantis for supporting Florida Tech’s efforts to provide critically needed STEM skills in the state.”

Providing technology access and enhanced capability for Florida Tech students, as well as for broader career and skill engagement programs, BAM will increase STEM workforce availability, hands-on project work in areas such as prosthetics and tissue generation, and career awareness for the growing biomedical, aerospace and manufacturing targeted industries in Florida.

One of the legislators who sponsored the BAM project, state Sen. Tom Wright, said, “As an owner of manufacturing facilities and an advocate in the Senate for skill training, I know firsthand how essential it is for Florida Tech to have the latest advanced equipment available for its programs.”

• About Florida Institute of Technology
   Florida Tech was founded in 1958 at the dawn of the Space Race that would soon define the Atlantic coast of Florida and captivate the nation. Now the premier private technological university in the Southeast, Florida Tech is a Tier 1 Best National University in U.S. News & World Report and one of just nine schools in Florida lauded by the Fiske Guide to Colleges. Florida Tech offers bachelor’s, master’s and doctoral degrees in aeronautics and aviation, engineering, computing and cybersecurity, business, science and mathematics, psychology, education and communication. Learn more about our relentless pursuit of greatness at www.fit.edu.

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Wed., July 7, 2021
11:30a-1:30p

Space is limited. Register TODAY!

CEO Nexus
CEO Nexus.com/070721r
OR Email Ray Watson at ray.fegi@gmail.com

Brevard business owners and executives have banded together to help each other in a safe, confidential and non-competitive environment.

We are ready to help you, too!

At this informational luncheon, we will show you a new approach and give you the initial steps to drive your business to new levels of efficiency, productivity, and profitability. We will provide you with resources to precisely execute this approach utilizing our method for maximizing potential success.

A limited number of seats are available to Brevard-based CEOs, Presidents, and business owners of second-stage companies. Please RSVP quickly.
Sea Ray’s next-generation Sundancer 370 Outboard chosen as the 2021 ‘Top Product’ by Boating Industry

By Michelle Meier
Michelle.Meier@brunswick.com
Brunswick Corporation

KNOXVILLE, Tenn. (May 10, 2021) — As an innovative fusion of performance and beauty, the Sea Ray Sundancer 370 Outboard has been selected as a prestigious 2021 “Top Product” by Boating Industry magazine. The Sundancer 370 Outboard sets a new standard in luxury sport cruisers by delivering an exceptional on-water experience perfect for day trips or weekend getaways. The award marks the sixth consecutive year Sea Ray has been recognized as a Top Product by the staff of Boating Industry and judges from across the recreational boating community.

A modern take on an American classic, the Sundancer 370 Outboard is the first keel-up design to feature new design language for the brand. The key to the design language was to define a foundation for bold and pure design expression. The result was a fresh set of design principles that pay homage to Sea Ray’s past while indicating the future, resulting in a look that is undeniably Sea Ray. Four key design characteristics now inform Sea Ray models moving forward: sleek, confident, athletic and distinctive.

“Sea Ray introduced the Sundancer 370 Outboard in conjunction with the 45th anniversary of the Sundancer Series, and it’s the first model crafted to embody Sea Ray’s new design language,” said Dan Manore, Sea Ray category director. “The Sundancer 370 Outboard’s designation as a 2021 Boating Industry Top Product comes during an exciting moment exceptional, supporting boaters’ unique lifestyles with a customized balance of unparalleled comfort and performance and world-class technology throughout. Learn more about the Sea Ray Experience at SeaRay.com.

About Brunswick Corp.

JUNE 21, 2021

Visit BrevardBusinessNews.com for Advertising Information
Applications being accepted online for nominations of Woman of Year in Agriculture; deadline set Aug. 1

By Office of Communications
comms@freshfromflorida.com

TALLAHASSEE (June 8, 2021) — Agriculture Commissioner Nikki Fried and the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) have launched the online application for the 2021 Woman of the Year in Agriculture award.

Since 1985, FDACS has recognized women who have made outstanding contributions to Florida agriculture, honoring them with the “Woman of the Year in Agriculture” award. The application submission deadline is Aug. 1, 2021.

“As Florida’s first woman elected Agriculture Commissioner, I’m proud that our department has for 36 years recognized the contributions of women leaders in agriculture,” said Fried.

“Women are breaking barriers in every industry, at every level, every day — that includes the growing share of female agriculture producers, dedicated to serving their communities through their outstanding leadership. I’m encouraging all achieving female farmers to apply for our 2021 Woman of the Year in Agriculture award to honor the accomplishments of women leading the way from the barn to the boardroom, and everywhere in between.”

The “Woman of the Year in Agriculture” award, sponsored by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services in conjunction with the Florida State Fair Authority, is presented to recipients during the Florida State Fair in Tampa.

Recipients of the award have come from all parts of the industry, including cattle, vegetables, timber, citrus, row crops, equine, horticulture, tropical fruits, sugar cane, dairy, agricultural journalism, and agricultural education and outreach.

In 2001, the award program was enhanced to help heighten awareness about the women who have helped make Florida agriculture into the important industry that it is today. Since then, a documentary video about each new recipient has been shown during the award ceremony, and a booklet outlining her contributions to agriculture has been distributed to those in attendance.

Deborah DeLeo of firm TreeFrog Data Solutions ranked as one of ‘Top 75 Women to Watch’

COCOA BEACH (June 9, 2021) — Deborah DeLeo, president of TreeFrog Data Solutions, was recently honored and ranked, through The Commonwealth Institute Florida and in collaboration with Kaufman Rossin, as one of the “Top 75 Women to Watch: Florida’s Entrepreneurial Leaders 2021.”

This year the 75 Top Women List represents a combined recognition of for-profit and not-for-profit led organizations, and 5 Top Women–Led Startups in the state of Florida.

As the research and survey team stated in the executive summary, “A challenging year for everyone, with GDP down 3.5 percent, according to the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2020 was particularly difficult for women. Women lost more jobs, and many who weren’t laid off had to step back from careers to help their children handle home schooling or care for elderly relatives. Even in the health–care industry, where women held 76 percent of jobs in 2019, they saw more job losses than men during the pandemic. Many are calling the 2020 recession a ‘shecession,’ and predict long–term effects including difficulties resuming employment, long–term economic security, and housing and food insecurity.”

Even though revenue was down for the women businesses surveyed overall in 2020, the top 75 list was still based on overall revenue growth and provided insight as to how the women business leaders fared and faced the challenges of the past year.

TreeFrog Data Solutions is a women–owned small business in its 23rd year of operation. The company provides medical–claims processing, medical records coding, auditing, training, quality assurance, and health–care administrative and staffing assistance. Visit www.treefrogdata.com for more information on TreeFrog Data Solutions.

Brevard Zoo voted one of North America’s Best

(June 4, 2021) — Readers of “USA Today 10Best,” a travel and lifestyle website, have voted Brevard Zoo one of the top 10 zoos in North America. The Brevard Zoo took sixth place overall and is the only Florida facility on the list. Brevard Zoo guests often cite unique animal experiences, such as kayaking next to giraffe and ziplining above monkeys and otters; lush, jungle–like landscaping; and the friendliness of staff and volunteers as the highlights of their visit. “We’re proud to offer authentic, innovative animal adventures you won’t find anywhere else,” said Keith Winsten, the Brevard Zoo’s executive director.

“We are grateful to 10Best’s readers for recognizing what makes us so special, and we hope this encourages more people to visit the Brevard Zoo and Florida’s Space Coast.”
whose favorite activities include “clowning, cavorting, and
are known for being great therapy dogs,” said Young.
Tulear is a port in Madagascar.” Their lifespan is 15 to
Madagascar,” adding, “They are revered in Madagascar.
breed is hypoallergenic and does not shed.
charming dogs. They are considered a rare breed. The
(KO–Tone Dih TOO–Lay–ARE), small, immensely
illness or injury.
training required to provide higher–quality services.
Pet insurance can help by offsetting some or most of the
costs of diagnosing, treating and managing your pet’s
illness or injury.
Young says she brings her pets to work every day.
They are not ordinary pets. She has five Coton de Tulears
(KO–Tone Dih TOO–Lay–ARE), small, immensely
charming dogs. They are considered a rare breed. The
breed is hypoallergenic and does not shed.
“They have been coming to the office since they were
puppies. They are well–trained,” she said.
Young said the Coton de Tulear is the “Royal Dog of
Madagascar,” adding, “They are revered in Madagascar.
Tulear is a port in Madagascar.” Their lifespan is 15 to
19 years, according to the American Kennel Club. “They
are known for being great therapy dogs,” said Young.
The Coton is a bright, happy–go–lucky companion dog
whose favorite activities include “clowning, cavorting, and
following their special human around the house.”
Amusing traits of these dogs include “unique vocaliza-
tions and a knack for walking on their hind legs. They are
naturally clownish and lighthearted.”
The names of Young’s Cotons include Astro, named
after the canine character in the cartoon The Jetsons;
Sally, named after the late astronaut Sally Ride; and Sir
Elton, named after “Rocket Man” Elton John, the British
singer. “My Cotons were born during the SpaceX Dragon
launch window, so that is why we went with space–related
names,” said Young.
“They were born from my female dog Trixie and my
male dog Artie, who will be competing at the Westminster
Kennel Club Dog Show. Artie is the No. 1 Coton in the
United States right now. We’re proud of that.”
Trixie has been in the limelight, too. In May 2019,
Young journeyed to China when she took Trixie to
Shanghai for the World Dog Show competition. Trixie won
the title World Champion.
“Trixie flew all the way to Shanghai — a 20–hour flight.
It was a long flight, to and from, but Trixie took it all in
stride. No problem.”
Young said she also started competing Sally. “She is
currently No. 2 in the ranking. Both of them — Artie and
Sally — have won the American Kennel Club Puppy of the
Year on different years. So Sally is definitely following in
her daddy’s footsteps.”
The 145th annual Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show,
presented by Purina, was held June 11–13 (The deadline
for this story was June 10). The location for this year’s
show was moved because of the pandemic.
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show was moved because of the pandemic.
It shifted from Madison Square Garden in New York
City to the Lyndhurst Estate, a property of the National
Trust for Historic Preservation, in Tarrytown, N.Y.

This year’s Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show is
outside but spectators will not be allowed because of the
pandemic,” said Young. The show was televised on Fox
Sports.
The Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show, first held in
1877, is America’s second–longest continuously held
sporting event, behind only the Kentucky Derby. It has
survived power outages, snowstorms, a national depres-
sion, two World Wars, and a tugboat strike that threat-
ened to shut down New York City, according to its “Facts
and Figures” history.
Artie has a professional handler, Laura King, who is
based in Milan, Ill. King herself has the No. 1 “All–Breed”
dog in America, Striker, a Samoyed. The Samoyed is a
“powerful, tireless dog with a thick all–white coat impervi-
sous to cold,” according to the American Kennel Club
description. Samoyeds, the “smiling sledge dogs,” were
bred for hard work in the world’s coldest locales. In the
Siberian town of Oymyakon, for instance, temperatures of
minus–60 degrees are common.
“Laura’s team is called Daybreak. She travels in a
commercial truck that has been customized for her dogs.
She is on the road a good part of the year,” said Young.
“The Top Dog schedule is grueling. Striker is her special
dog. A lot of times Artie goes wherever Striker goes on the
circuit. Laura has a large team of handlers and groomers
that travel with her.” Young said she is excited to be competing at the
145th Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show.
“We will be up against some good competition. They are
all great show dogs. I know most of the owners personally.
I will be happy for any one of them to win but, of course, we
want Artie, our dog to win. It’s going to be interesting. This
is the big event. We’re ready.”

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Index spotlights where home prices are rising the fastest, Dallas, Denver, Houston, Miami appear prone to downturn

By Paul Owers
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College of Business
Florida Atlantic University

BOCA RATON (June 04, 2021) — Home prices are escalating quickly in Dallas and a handful of other U.S. cities where consumers would be better off financially by renting and reinvesting the money they would otherwise have spent on homeownership.

That’s the takeaway from first-quarter figures in the Beracha, Hardin & Johnson “Buy vs. Rent Index,” a national housing barometer created by professors at Florida Atlantic University and Florida International University.

The index analyzes 23 U.S. metropolitan markets and determines whether consumers will create wealth faster by buying a home and building equity or renting a similar property and investing their savings in a portfolio of stocks and bonds.

Dallas is the U.S. metro where it made the most sense to rent in the first three months of 2021. Consumers also were wise to rent and avoid the overheated housing markets in the following areas: Denver, Houston, Kansas City, Miami and Seattle.

“The BH&J scores for these areas suggest they are the most exposed to price corrections in the event of a real estate downturn,” said Dr. Ken Johnson, co-author of the index and a real estate economist and associate dean in FAU’s College of Business. “Buyers are bidding up home prices to near peak levels. It is probably wiser to rent and reinvest in Dallas and these other markets at this point in time.”

The buy or rent decision wasn’t as clear-cut in the following metros, although renting still is the better option: Atlanta, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Portland and San Diego.

Consumers determined to buy a home and build equity should consider settling in Chicago, the U.S. market where it made the most sense to own during the first quarter.

New York and Cleveland also favored owning, according to the index.

“In those three metro areas, prices are rising more moderately, leaving room for future price appreciation,” Johnson said.

The index also revealed that buying was a wise decision in these metros: Boston, Cincinnati, Detroit, Honolulu, Milwaukee, Minneapolis, San Francisco and St. Louis.

The index examines the U.S. housing market by factoring in home prices, rents, mortgage rates, investment returns, property taxes, insurance and home maintenance costs.

Many consumers want to buy now because they can afford more house for their money because of persistently low mortgage rates. But the nation’s housing market would take a hit if rates rise, according to the professors.

“All markets are exposed to the potential for high interest rates as we are at historic lows,” said FIU’s Dr. William Hardin, an index co-author.

Homeownership traditionally was considered the far better option than renting and reinvesting, but the historic housing crash from 2006–2011 changed that perception for many Americans. The BH&J Buy vs. Rent Index, first published in 2013, shows that even when home prices are rising, renting and reinvesting can be equally or more lucrative for disciplined savers.

“Most people used to believe that renting was throwing your money down the drain every month without getting anything for it,” said Dr. Eli Beracha, an index co-author and director of FIU’s Hollo School of Real Estate. “But research has shown that renting and investing the money that would otherwise be spent on ownership can build a nest egg superior to owning and building equity.”

All three professors stressed that consumers essentially have three choices: buying and building equity, renting and reinvesting money that would otherwise have been spent on ownership, and renting but spending on consumption rather than saving. The first two choices are viable wealth creation strategies, while the third should be avoided because it prevents wealth creation.

Property Appraiser Blickley to address women’s luncheon

Property Appraiser Blickley will be the guest speaker.

Brevard County Property Appraiser Dana Blickley will be the guest speaker.

Brevard Federated Republican Women has been involved in empowering women in the political field since 1950. It is a member of the Florida Federation of Republican Women and National Federation of Republican Women.

Advanced reservations are required and must be received by 12 p.m. on Friday, July 2. Reservations can be made by calling the 24-hour reservation line at (321) 727–1212 or by visiting www.brevardfederatedrepublicanwomen.org.
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CLASS of 2021
Continued from page 1

different states in about six hours. We’re hands–on owners and operators. We want to see every opportunity up close before we decide to go forward in the process. So my father is very active in the decision–making, doing market research, and traveling to cities to look at properties." 

“It’s fun coming to a beautiful place like Brevard County,” said Mr. Hardy. “It’s great to get out and see things. We love Brevard. We love Florida. You have a great governor. He makes it awfully easy to operate and do business here." 

Gov. Ron DeSantis recently signed a bill (HB 337) that limits local impact fees. The law, which took effect immediately, prevents local governments from increasing impact fees more than once every four years and limits the increases to 50 percent. Increases between 25 and 50 percent would have to be spread over four years. Smaller increases would be phased in over two years.

Taylor Hardy joined Hardy World a year ago. She is a 2019 bachelor’s degree honors graduate of the renowned Cornell University School of Hotel Administration, with a real estate minor, development concentration, and a distinction in research. The School of Hotel Administration is part of Cornell’s SC Johnson College of Business.

She said working under her father has been an enriching experience. "That is one of the reasons I have been instilled in me. You have to be curious about everything. How does this work? How do you apply that?"

Curiosity and vision is what set Mr. Hardy on the path to business success when he seized an opportunity in the 1950s and saw a national market for 84 Lumber.

Another one of his sayings is “selling doesn’t start until somebody says no,” she said.

“And, of course, one of his favorites is ‘nothing is impossible.’ There has been a book written about him with that title," said Taylor Hardy. Jeffrey L. Rodenberg authored the book “Nothing is Impossible: The Legend of Joe Hardy and 84 Lumber.”

The book chronicles the remarkable life of Mr. Hardy and how his company rose to the top of the building–supplies industry. The foreword is written by former Secretary of Homeland Security Tom Ridge.

Mr. Hardy is also a big proponent of simplification and embraces the acronym KISS, "keep it simple, stupid. "People overcomplicate matters and sometimes that is what kills a deal," said Taylor Hardy.

The acronym was reportedly coined by Kelly Johnson, lead engineer at the Lockheed Skunk Works, creators of the Lockheed U–2 and SR–71 Blackbird spy planes. He gave a team of design engineers a handful of tools, with the challenge that the jet aircraft they were designing must be repairable by an average mechanic in the field under combat conditions with only those tools.

Since starting up, Hardy World has grown with projects in Florida, Tennessee, Ohio, West Virginia, Kentucky, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Arizona.

“We have developed, and or manage roughly 400,000 square feet," said Taylor Hardy. “From a growth perspective, we are on pace to easily more than double that amount in the next five years.”

She added, “We are currently developing our first ‘spec’ building in Washington County, in Pennsylvania. It’s the first project for which we are acting as the general contractor and managing the entire project." We’re developing about 28,000 square feet right in the heart of Washington County.

About three years ago, Hardy World made its initial investment at East Galilee Pointe and then built The Edge, which has been a big success.

“One of the projects the area has had one of the fastest–growing economies in the nation," said Taylor Hardy. “We are extremely bullish on the Brevard County market and are continuing to invest here for the long term.”

Hardy World has future phases planned for The Edge. Currently, it is going through permitting for a 19,000–square–foot building. “And we have two additional lots, one is under contract to purchase and the other lot we are entertaining some build–to–suit offers," she said.

Roughly 4 miles from The Edge, Hardy World closed on a 5.2–acre parcel along Sarno Road and Apollo Boulevard. Hardy World purchased the property from Tricon Development of Brevard Inc. and will be building flexible space at the site. “We are underway on a build–to–suit project for a retail client based out of Florida, but are not at liberty to name the client.”

She added, “We’re starting to branch out and get closer to the airport and provide a flexible space product in that market. We think it’s significantly underserved as it pertains to flex space. There are a lot of aerospace companies in that corridor and we’re positioning ourselves to cater to vendors and businesses that serve those firms. Flex space is the way to go.”

Flexible space can be loosely defined as any building, typically single story, that has a combination of warehouse space, office and retail space. Flexible spaces can be easily rearranged to accommodate changing business objectives.

Flexible space is playing an increasing role in the evolution of real estate.

Chicago–based Jones Lang LaSalle, or JLL, a professional services firm that specializes in real estate and investment management, says in a new report that this type of space will continue to grow as businesses and investors alike respond to the increasing demand for flexibility.

In fact, JLL research predicts that 30 percent of all office space will include some type of flexible space by 2023, up from 5 percent today.

“We think the flex–space product that we offer has a competitive advantage because of its adaptability,” said Taylor Hardy.

She said the investments Hardy World has made at The Edge development are just “a small glimpse of what this market has to offer to a company like ours. Brevard will be growing years into the future, and we plan to be part of that growth. We are looking for property all over the county. We feel very strongly about the Brevard market as a whole. We have a few sites we are looking at in Cocoa and Rockledge, and as far south as Palm Bay.”

She said Hardy World did a lot of research on Brevard County and has followed its rise in the Milken Institute’s “Best Performing Cities Index.”

Early this year, the Palm Bay–Melbourne–Titusville Metropolitan Statistical Area rocketed up the rankings of Best Performing Cities, a prestigious index which tracks where America’s jobs are created and sustained. The Palm Bay–Melbourne–Titusville MSA vaulted to second place in the 2021 Tier 1 Large Cities ranking, behind Provo–Orem, Utah.

From 2018 to 2020, the Space Coast jumped 47 spots to make the top 10. This year’s report attributes the Space Coast’s continued ascent to strong wage and job growth, which are third and eighth in the nation, respectively, in the Milken Institute’s Best Performing Cities.

According to the Milken Institute, “The Space Coast improved on last year’s breakout performance, transforming one–year gains into long–term job and wage growth. This continued success is largely due to a diversified, high–tech industrial base, including a significant part of the national aerospace and defense industries.”

The Milken Institute’s Best–Performing Cities Index tracks the economic performance of roughly 400 MSAs in the U.S. using an outcome–based set of metrics which include job creation, wage gains, and high–tech gross domestic product growth to evaluate the performance of the cities. New measures of household affordability and household broadband access were included in the 2021 Index.

“We were very encouraged by the strength of the Brevard market over the last 18 to 20 months," said Taylor Hardy. “Despite the pandemic, the core industries here have continued to perform. That’s impressive.”

In college, Taylor Hardy served on Cornell Real Estate Club’s Executive Board. The Real Estate Club is a student organization for undergraduates who are pursing a minor in real estate. With more than 375 members, the Real Estate Club complements the real estate curriculum by providing educational, professional, and networking opportunities.

The club benefits new students who have had little exposure to the real–estate industry and expands the breadth of knowledge for those students who already have professional experience. It offers a range of activities for members, including career treks to Philadelphia and New York, a fellowship mentor program, industry exposure, and guest speakers.

“My role on the Executive Board focused a lot on multi–sector analysis and doing alumni connections to make sure the students in the Real Estate Club and the program were receiving mentorship. I was in charge of helping to organize treks. I was fortunate enough to travel to Tokyo and lead a real–estate trek there, and also to go to London with a group of students,” she said, adding that the group was able to view a sizable number of development projects throughout the city of Tokyo.

On these treks, the students have the opportunity to network and to meet with alumni, both internationally and nationally, who are leaders in real–estate development.

“We had the great fortune of networking with some of New York’s and Manhattan’s largest developers, because a lot of them are graduates of Cornell’s real estate programs. They are very kind with their time and sharing information and knowledge about the real–estate sector.”

Taylor Hardy did an asset–management internship in Manhattan for a subsidiary of the Blackstone Group, one of the world’s leading investment firms. She worked closely with business analysts, resident–relations personnel, and apartment–takeover managers.

“During my time at Cornell, I was involved not only in course work and extracurricular activities, but I was also deeply involved in professional development. I held a lot of teaching assistant roles. I worked over 30 hours every single week in addition to taking 20–plus credit hours.”

She served as a teaching assistant at Cornell for more than 10 different courses, including Asset Management, Investment in Real Estate Securities and Funds, Principles of Real Estate, and Marketing and Management. "While Mr. Hardy has no plans to retire, he’s confident that Hardy World will continue to thrive long into the future.”

“I believe my daughter Taylor will carry on with this company and it will do very well.”
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