

Connections

Third Quarter
2016



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Chamber publication
Published by the

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Recorder
Not just a newspaper, but a way of life.



Meet the 2016 - 2017

Ponte Vedra Beach Division Board

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

As we come upon the end of our fiscal year, it is time to recognize our outgoing Ponte Vedra Beach Division Board members as well as our incoming board members who will officially take on their responsibilities on Oct. 1. We have been blessed to have such terrific leadership over the last several years and we are excited for what the future holds.

I would like to formally recognize those elected board members who are completing their terms in office:

- Christine Adams, Rogers Towers
- Felicia Cox, Iberia Bank
- Erika Hamer, Ponte Vedra Wellness Center
- Frances King, King & Associates Insurance Agency

- Michele Smith, RE/MAX Coastal Real Estate

The commitment that they showed over their terms has meant a great deal to me personally, but also and more importantly to the organization. Our chamber is made better by their involvement and they will be missed. My congratulations also to Dr. Hamer, who was elected to a seat on the St. Johns County Chamber Board of Directors and will begin a three-year term on Oct. 1.

Beginning Oct. 1 we welcome the following people to the Division Board:

- Jennifer Belisario, TPC Sawgrass
- Toni Boudreaux, Cultural Center at Ponte Vedra Beach
- Gloria Dongara, AAA The Auto Club

Group

- Sarah Hewett, Berkshire Hathaway Home Services

- Rachel Landis, PGA Tour

Additionally, I would like to congratulate Ed Mercel (Coldwell Banker Vanguard Realty) for his election as chair; Ponte Vedra Recorder Publisher Susan Griffin on her election as vice chair, and Rob Schlingmann (The Plantation at Ponte Vedra Beach) on his election as secretary.

We thank each of you for giving of your time, talent and resources for the betterment of the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce and the business community. We are an organization that is great because of our members and we value your commitment and leadership!



Isabelle Rodriguez
President/CEO

Chamber thanks outgoing SJC board members, welcomes new

The St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce would like to thank those members who have volunteered their time and talents to lead the organization. On Oct. 1, incoming St. Johns County Chamber board members will take their positions and outgoing members will be released from their board position responsibilities.

Below are the outgoing members and those who have committed to helping the chamber achieve its goals in 2016-17.

Outgoing SJC Board Members:

- Mark Litzinger, City of St. Augustine
- Lou Noir-Jones, Wells Fargo
- Jason Barrett, Flagler Hospital
- Dave Danzeisen, Clean Getaway Car Wash
- Jeff King, Bozard Ford
- Cliff Logsdon, Beaches & Shores Newspapers
- Lu Moore, The Garden Produce
- Kris Phillips, Newstalk 102.1 FM and 1240 WFOY
- Richard Pinto, Sunburst Crystal
- Randy Swift, VyStar Credit Union

Incoming SJC Board Members:

- Arleen Dennison, First Coast Technical College
- Kit Keating, Fountain of Youth Archaeological Park
- Dirk Schroeder, Century 21 St. Augustine Properties
- Erika Hamer, Ponte Vedra Wellness Center
- Scott Schiller, Reunion Bank of Florida
- Scott Graddy, Augustine Computer Services
- Kathy Fleming, St. Augustine Lighthouse & Maritime Museum
- John Stavely, Where Visitors Guide

Outgoing PVB Division Board



Photos by Susan Griffin

Thanking the outgoing board: Ponte Vedra Beach Division Chair Lin Jones (left), Dr. Erika Hamer, Christine Adams, Dave Danzeisen, Felicia Cox, Michele Smith and President Isabelle Rodriguez. Not pictured: Frances King.



Lin Jones and Isabelle Rodriguez thank outgoing PVB Division Chair Dave Danzeisen for his service.

PONTE VEDRA BEACH DIVISION AMBASSADOR CHAIR

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

A veteran of the mortgage business for 30 years, Taylor has managed underwriting, processing and shipping, affording her a unique perspective and the ability and expertise to handle even the most complicated loans.

She is able to help clients throughout the Southeastern United States and specializes in jumbo loans and portfolio products. She has expertise in all facets of lending and often gives advice to real estate professionals in difficult situa-

tions.

Taylor has been a top producer for Synovus Mortgage for more than 18 years and was recognized by the Jacksonville Business Journal as a “Five Star Mortgage Professional.”

Her dedication to service, coupled with her expert knowledge, creates an exceptional experience for borrowers and serves as a reliable source for builders and realtors.

In addition to serving as chair of the Ponte Vedra Beach Division’s ambassador board, Taylor serves on the membership committee for the Jacksonville Beach Chamber.

She also volunteers her time with the Gamma Phi Beta sorority chapter at Jacksonville University. She is a graduate of the University of Georgia.

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

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



Ricki Taylor

Chamber welcomes new Ponte Vedra Beach Division ambassadors

As the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce begins its 2016-2017 year, the Ponte Vedra Beach Division extends its appreciation to those members who have agreed to serve as chamber “ambassadors,” representing and championing the Ponte Vedra Beach Division at chamber events and out in the community.

PONTE VEDRA BEACH DIVISION AMBASSADOR BOARD

CHAIR
Ricki Taylor
Synovus Mortgage Corp.

VICE CHAIR
Ilene Thrasher
Arbor Terrace

PROGRAM CHAIR
Brian Anderson
Fluffy Cuts

COMMUNICATIONS CHAIR
Matt Price
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MEMBERSHIP CHAIR
Lori Adams
Cabi Independent Fashion Stylist

PONTE VEDRA BEACH DIVISION AMBASSADORS
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First Guaranty Mortgage Corp.

ROBERT BAER
Robert A. Baer Co.

BILL LODISE
BB&T

AMY MILLER
Carr, Riggs & Ingram, LLC

KARI ZERRAHN
Allstate

St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce to hold annual awards celebration ‘Business Boogie’ theme of Oct. 19 event

By Jennifer Logue

A new format, a new venue and a new theme are just a few of the highlights of the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce’s upcoming annual awards celebration.

To be held Oct. 19 at the Ponte Vedra Concert Hall, this year’s event will feature a more celebratory atmosphere,

organizers said. Featuring a 1970s theme of “Business Boogie,” with 70s attire encouraged, the event will include a brief awards presentation followed by dancing to the popular band “Boogie Freaks” presented by SERVPRO of St. Augustine and SERVPRO of Ponte Vedra Beach. Guests will also be able to move among a

variety of food and drink stations and bid on silent auction items while networking.

SJC Chamber CEO Isabelle Rodriguez noted that this year’s celebration is open to not only chamber members but all companies that are interested in joining the chamber to help grow their business.

“This is an annual signature event that businesses do not want to miss,” she said. “This year it has a different twist with more entertainment as well as networking opportunities. Attendees will enjoy great food and drinks and dancing to the fun hits of the ’70s!”

Celebrating accomplishments

“Business Boogie” will also celebrate the chamber’s accomplishments of the previous year, with awards presented to leaders who have made significant contributions to the chamber’s mission. Awards to be presented include the President’s Award, the Fred Schroeder Member of the Year Award, the St. Augustine and

Ponte Vedra Ambassador of the Year awards and the Chamber of Commerce Member of the Year Award.

Sponsors of the event include Northrop Grumman Corporation, Auld & White Constructors, Ripley’s Believe it or Not! Museum, Ponte Vedra Recorder and the Ponte Vedra Concert Hall.

Susan Griffin, publisher of the Ponte Vedra Recorder, is heading up the silent auction effort.

“Silent auction donors will position their goods and services before a large gathering of local business and community leaders,” said Griffin, who said the chamber celebration is a highly anticipated annual gathering. “So get on your boogie shoes and come party with the chamber!”

An early bird ticket rate of \$95 per person is available to chamber members. Tickets for non-members are \$125 per person. To register, visit www.sjcchamber.com. For information on available sponsorships, contact Events Manager Debra Bulak at debra.bulak@sjcchamber.com. To donate an auction item, contact Griffin at susan@opcfla.com.



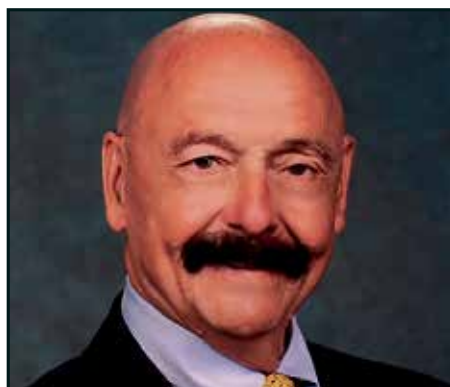
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Meet the Ponte Vedra Beach Division 2016-2017 Board of Directors

The St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce welcomes the 2016-2017 board of directors for the Ponte Vedra Beach Division. The incoming board represents a broad cross-section of industries and individuals, each of whom brings years of professional experience and business acumen to their board duties.



CHAIR
Ed Mercel
Coldwell Banker Vanguard Realty

Ed Mercel is a successful Realtor with a penchant for network building in both sales and property management. He has more than 18 years of experience in the real estate industry, having worked for a number of leading real estate firms and property management divisions.

Prior to entering real estate, Mercel was an internationally recognized producer

and director whose credits include producing and/or directing drama, variety and children's programming as well as seven Olympic games.

Mercel is a past president of the local chapter of the National Association of Residential Property Management. In addition to serving as chair of the board of directors of the Ponte Vedra Beach Division of the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce, he serves on the board of directors for Beth El Synagogue.

SEE **DIRECTORS**, PAGE 21

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DIRECTORS

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VICE CHAIR
Susan Griffin
Ponte Vedra Recorder

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

Griffin is beginning her 20th year with the Recorder, which she joined as an advertising account executive. She later served as the paper's sales manager before being named publisher. Prior to joining the Recorder, Griffin owned travel agencies in Florida and Georgia. In addition to being very active in the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce, she serves on the board of directors of the Overlook V office condominiums and is an officer of the Community Papers of Florida.

Active in the community, Griffin volunteers her time to support numerous events benefiting local charities.



SECRETARY
Rob Schlingmann
The Plantation at Ponte Vedra Beach

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

With more than 30 years of experience in the private club industry, Schlingmann

has managed some of the most exclusive clubs in South Carolina, Delaware and New York. Before moving to the Ponte Vedra Beach area, he was the general manager of The Apawamis Club in Rye, New York.

Schlingmann holds a degree in hospitality from the University of Houston. In addition to being involved with the Chamber of Commerce, he serves on the board of directors of the Florida Club Managers Association.



Jennifer Belisario
TPC Sawgrass

Jennifer Belisario has worked for TPC Sawgrass, home of THE PLAYERS, for more than six years, the past four years as director of sales and marketing.

She brings 10 years of successful sales, marketing and leadership experience and is responsible for managing the membership and annual pass sales, and implementing new marketing strategies and promotional initiatives to further solidify TPC Sawgrass's commitment to its members and the surrounding community.

A Jacksonville native, Belisario is a graduate of the University of North Florida, where she earned a bachelor's degree in marketing.

She previously served as the director of membership sales and communications at Jacksonville Golf and Country Club for nine years and as director of sales and marketing at Holiday Inn Express & Suites and the Four Points by Sheraton.



Steven Beyer
VyStar Credit Union

As vice president of the Jacksonville Beach branch of VyStar Credit Union, Steven Beyer is responsible for extending credit union services to more people while making a positive impact in the community. A Jacksonville native, Beyer has served as an ambassador for the Ponte Vedra Division of St Johns County Cham-

ber for the past three years while also serving as the Ambassador chair. He also serves on the advisory board for Ponte Vedra High School.

Beyer has volunteered for many charitable initiatives, including the March of Dimes, United Way, Light the Night and various other charities. He is also focused on financial literacy and helping people of all ages reach their financial goals through education and planning.

Toni Boudreaux
Cultural Center at Ponte Vedra Beach

As director of development for the Cultural Center at Ponte Vedra Beach, Toni Boudreaux is responsible for managing all fundraising activities for the nonprofit organization.



Working with the executive director, she oversees and coordinates all aspects of the center's contributed income, including memberships, annual fund, sponsorships, corporate partnerships, non-program

SEE **DIRECTORS**, PAGE 22

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DIRECTORS

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events and donor retention.

Boudreaux holds a degree in Communications and an MPA from the University of North Florida.

In addition to serving on the Ponte Vedra Beach Division chamber board, she is a member of the Rotary Club of Ponte Vedra Beach, which presented her with its Rotarian of the Year Award for 2015-2016.

She is also a member of the UNF Speakers Bureau and the advisory board for the Communications Department.



Janet Collins
Sawgrass Country Club

Janet Collins is the director of member services at Sawgrass Country Club, where she has been a key member of the staff for more than 18 years.

A certified marketing professional, Col-

lins leads the development of the club's marketing plans, overseeing membership development, budget management, social media, promotional presentations and the production and distribution of marketing materials.

She plays a critical role in managing public relations and advertising initiatives while providing the highest level of customer service.

In addition to serving on the Ponte Vedra Beach Division board, Collins served as president of the Northeast Florida Professional Club Marketing Association for six years.



Dave Danzeisen
Clean Getaway Car Wash and Detail

The immediate past chair of the Ponte Vedra Beach Division board, Dave Danzeisen has more than 40 years of experience in the transportation and car wash industries.

A Pennsylvania native, Danzeisen

served as president of the American Bus Association, American Transit Operators, the National Association of Bus Owners and the NYS School Bus Operators Association.

In 1970, he founded Vanguard I Tours, a school transportation company serving Westchester County, New York.

He also founded the White Plains Bus Lines mass transit company in 1973 and the Bedford Bus Company in 1975.

Danzeisen is the owner and CEO of Clean Getaway Car Wash, Classic Car Wash and Duckys Car Wash. In 2006, he developed Showboat Car Wash in St. Augustine.



Gloria Dongara
AAA

Gloria Dongara is the life and annuities specialist for AAA Life. In this role, she helps clients ensure they are prepared for the unforeseen. A New Jersey native, Dongara moved to Ponte Vedra in

1992 as part of a relocation with Merrill Lynch, where she worked for 15 years and managed teams in the client service, cash management, draft processing and training areas. She later served as an advertising sales representative for the Ponte Vedra Recorder before joining Bank of America, where she advanced to the position of senior vice president of the global KYC Services team.

Dongara is active in both the St. Johns County and Jacksonville chambers of commerce as well as the Seven Bridges chapter of BNI.



Sarah Hewett
Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices
Florida Network Realty

Sarah Hewett is a professional sales associate with Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty. Based in Ponte Vedra Beach, she offers

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Annual Event

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DIRECTORS

CONTINUED FROM 22

her clients full-service representation when they are looking to buy or sell their home.

A fourth generation Jacksonville native, Hewett completed a master’s degree in physical therapy in Atlanta before returning home and continuing her career in physical therapy for 16 years. In 2008, she received her real estate license and followed in the footsteps of her mother, a successful local real estate professional. As a full-time real estate sales associate, Hewett enjoys helping others achieve their dreams.

Rachel Landis
PGA Tour

As sales manager for THE PLAYERS and Web.com Tour Championship, Rachel Landis works with the executive director on budgets, inventory, sponsorships and more.



In addition to generating sales of event packages and corporate sponsorships, she is responsible for sales reporting, concept marketing and promotions.

Prior to joining the PGA Tour, Landis was a special events manager and senior sales account representative for Folio Weekly.

She also previously served as an advance representative for former President Bill Clinton, coordinating logistics to ensure successful events.

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George Ansloan and Raeshon Mansoor



Frances King and Marie Watson

TPC Sawgrass upgrades key to club's future, general manager says

By Jennifer Logue

When it comes to planning for the future of TPC Sawgrass and its signature event, THE PLAYERS Championship, General Manager Bill Hughes says it all comes down to three little words.

Grow the game.

“(At TPC Sawgrass) we are all in charge of growing the game,” Hughes told attendees at the July 14 joint luncheon meeting of the St. Johns County and Jacksonville chambers of commerce. “Because if we don’t grow the game, we have no game.”

Achieving that goal, he said, requires an understanding that, unlike other golf clubs, TPC Sawgrass is all about showcasing THE PLAYERS Championship and serving an increasingly global audience that flocks to Ponte Vedra Beach each year for golf’s “fifth major.” He pointed to the opening of the \$32.5 million clubhouse in

2007 as a seminal moment in the elevation of TPC Sawgrass and even The PGA Tour as a whole.

“The clubhouse changed the whole complexion of what the tour is,” Hughes said. “To see what has happened since then ... it didn’t happen by luck. It’s the result of a strategic business plan, and (Executive Director) Matt Rapp and his team have executed that plan on every pillar.”

Now, Hughes and his staff are preparing for the next phase in TPC Sawgrass’s evolution as the golf course undergoes a \$50 million renovation. Hughes outlined for chamber members a number of the major upgrades happening, including re-grassing all the greens with new varieties of grass, enlarging eight greens and lengthening two holes. Other improvements underway include ripping up the driving range and making it bigger and building a new golf course maintenance facility.



Photos by Susan Griffin

Dave Danzeisen, Lin Jones, Bill Hughes and Amanda Patch



Sandra Goode and Gloria Dongara



Renee Parenteau



Melinda Demsey, Kelley Moore and Tina Robbins



Sam Ruiz and Dr. Dan Vosgerichian display a copy of Connections, the official chamber section published by the Ponte Vedra Recorder.

The Plantation hosts Chamber After Hours

Members of the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce had an opportunity to see the recent upgrades to the Beach Club at The Plantation at Ponte Vedra Beach, when the club hosted the July 20 Chamber After Hours networking event.



Bill and Kim McClure



Ilene Trasher, Steven Beyer and Julie Hull

Photos by Susan Griffin



Toni Boudreaux, Gay Dunn and Lori Adams



Isabelle Rodriguez, Dave Danzeisen, Rob Schlingmann and Lin Jones



Dr. Rob Karol and Dr. David Yoder



Frances King and Dr. Erika Hamer



Pete and Brenda Ruffing

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Candidates meet constituents at 'Politics in St. Johns'

A capacity crowd filled the Hilton Garden Inn in Ponte Vedra Beach July 27, as dozens of candidates turned out to meet with constituents and supporters at "Politics in St. Johns."

Co-sponsored by the Ponte Vedra Recorder and the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce, the event attracted candidates from races up and down the ballot including the races for county commis-

sion, St. Johns County sheriff and the 4th congressional district race.

The following week, the chamber hosted a second Politics in St. Johns event at the Solomon Calhoun Center in St.

Augustine that attracted an estimated 500 people.

Nearly 350 votes were cast in the event's straw poll, which included national as well as local races.

PONTE VEDRA



Former Jacksonville Sheriff and 4th Congressional District Candidate John Rutherford



Carol Mauer, Chuck Schoonmaker and Anna Washington of the Hilton Garden Inn.



County Commission Candidate (District 5) Henry Dean, Chuck Johnson and County Commission Candidate (District 3) Jerry Cameron



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



Elizabeth Granite, County Commissioner - and 4th Congressional candidate - Bill McClure and Kim McClure



Democratic congressional candidate Dave Bruderly talks with local Democrats.



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Elizabeth Granite, Savannah Sizer, Kim McClure, Bill McClure, Blake McClure and Samantha Gilbert



John Reardon and Mary Middleton O'Brien



Jane and Hunter Conrad



Nearly 350 votes were cast in the Politics in St. Johns straw poll.



David Bruderly



Sheriff David Shoar

Recorder, Chamber of Commerce host 'Coffee with the Editor'

More than 60 business and community leaders visited the Ponte Vedra Recorder offices to attend "Coffee with the Editor."

Held Aug. 10 in conjunction with the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce's Ponte Vedra Beach Division, the event gave attendees an opportunity to meet Managing Editor Jennifer Logue and learn about the role the Recorder plays in the community.

"The great turnout here today is both a testament to the strong St. Johns County business community and the Recorder's well-established reputation as the community's paper of record since 1969," Logue told attendees. "We are committed to being the paper readers turn to for local, original reporting they can trust."



The Ponte Vedra Recorder staff: Ed Johnson, Jennifer Logue, Kristin Flanagan, April Snyder, Susan Griffin and Jasmine Marshall. Not pictured: Carrie Resch.

Photos by Susan Griffin



Karina Coryell of KC's Kitchen provided breakfast refreshments.



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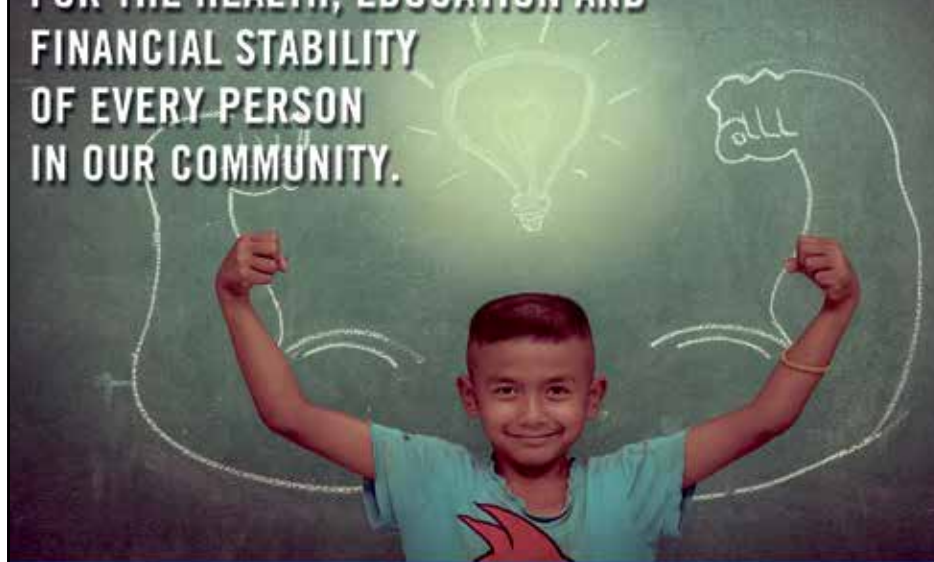
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Photos by Susan Griffin

Ed Johnson, Malcom Anthony and Recorder Managing Editor Jennifer Logue



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Sawgrass Beach Club hosts 'Chamber at Noon'

St. Augustine Ponte Vedra VCB President and CEO Richard Goldman gave chamber members an update on the region's tourism industry at an Aug. 17 luncheon held at the newly renovated Sawgrass Beach Club.

"We're essentially an economic development engine,"

Goldman said, "and we work wonderfully with the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce."

In 2015, Goldman said, 6.3 million visitors traveled to St. Johns County – an increase of 1 million visitors over the previous year – generating a \$1.7 billion financial impact on local businesses.



Randi Guthard, Donna Day and Sarah Hewett



Ed Mercel, Ricki Taylor and Richard Goldman

Photos by Susan Griffin

King & Associates holds ribbon cutting at new Sawgrass Village office

By Jennifer Logue

Representatives from the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce's Ponte Vedra Beach Division were on hand Aug. 23 to help local insurance agency King & Associates celebrate the grand opening of its new Sawgrass Village office.

Located at 3202-3 Sawgrass Village Circle in the Falls professional building, the new office marks the reestablishment of King & Associates as an independent insurance agency after a two-year partnership with another agency. Owner Frances King said the new office will enable King & Associates to continue do what the agency does best: provide one-on-one, personalized service to clients both old and new.

"We're small enough that we can really concentrate on taking care of our clients and their needs," King said, noting that some staff members have been with the agency for more than 15 years. "They all have extensive backgrounds in insurance and good experience in working with our clients."



Staff members help cut the ribbon on the new Sawgrass Village offices of King & Associates.

Photos by Susan Griffin

Brian Anderson, Malcom Anthony and Lin Jones



The King & Associates team: Staci Kidwell (front), owner Frances King, Helen Viollet, Lisa Melendez and Laura Halvorsen



Chris and Ginger Peace

Photos by Susan Griffin



Frances King and Dave Danzeisen



Ed Mercel and Dave Danzeisen



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Best In show #4

1954 Cadillac El Dorado takes top honors at Ponte Vedra Auto Show

By Jennifer Logue

A 1954 Cadillac El Dorado took top honors at the 2016 Ponte Vedra Auto Show Sept. 11, claiming the coveted trophy from a field of hundreds of both new and vintage automobiles ranging from the 1920s to today.

The red convertible El Dorado owned by Ed Schenck received the Wells Fargo Best in Show Classic at the event, which featured the presentation of 30 trophies in a variety of categories. New this year was a

category for golf carts, which shared space alongside displays and booths from local businesses, the St. Johns County Sheriff's Office and more. The daylong event also featured a memorial tribute to mark the 15th anniversary of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

Sponsored by the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce, the annual Ponte Vedra Auto Show regularly attracts thousands of attendees. This was the first year the event was held at Nocatee Town Center.



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Photos by Susan Griffin:

The Best Exotic Trophy, sponsored by the Ponte Vedra Recorder, went to Ralph Nuñez, shown with St. Johns County Chamber CEO Isabelle Rodriguez and Brandon Starks of presenting sponsor Fields Auto Group.



Future Classic Best New Corvette sponsored by Ponte Veda Wellness Center: Fred Porter, with Isabelle Rodriguez and Brandon Starks



Porsche Future Classic sponsored by Florida Crown Region: Cynthia Brooks King with Isabelle Rodriguez and Brandon Starks



This year's Auto Show featured a category for golf carts.



Best Classic Off Road trophy, sponsored by Land Rover Jacksonville: Awarded to Patrick Miko, shown with Brandon Starks and Isabelle Rodriguez



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Pure Barre studio holds ribbon cutting



Photo by Susan Griffin

Members of the Ponte Vedra Beach Division of the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce were on hand to help Mike and Victoria Koster celebrate the grand opening of their Pure Barre studio. The latest business to open its doors in the newly revamped Sawgrass Village, Pure Barre uses a ballet barre in a 55-minute full-body workout.

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Shapiro Group, 2012.



Phong Nguyen, Greg Evans, Quintin Kendall, Declan Reiley, John Regan, Isabelle Rodriguez and Victor Raymos

Photos by Susan Griffin

Transportation improvements key to county’s growth, officials say

The connection of 9B to St. Johns Parkway, improvements to Race Track Road and efforts to deal with traffic and parking issues in St. Augustine were among the priorities highlighted by local, state and county transportation officials at a St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce breakfast.

As Florida’s population continues to increase, officials said, transportation improvements are critical to ensuring continued growth and prosperity both locally and statewide.

“By 2030, we’ll have 6 million more people calling Florida home,” CSX Vice President Quintin Kendall told attendees at the Aug. 26 breakfast presentation sponsored by the chamber’s Economic Development Council. Locally, he said, estimates predict that St. Johns County will have as many as 150,000 new residents by that time. “For this continued growth, we’ve got to ensure Florida remains successful,” Kendall said, “and we need to plan for Florida’s future and that includes transportation.”



Kimberly Holland and Rachel Landis



Chamber President and CEO Isabelle Rodriguez



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The Learning Experience holds ribbon cutting at new Nocatee center



Photo by Susan Griffin

The Learning Experience held a ribbon cutting ceremony for its new location in Nocatee Sept. 15. Members of the Ponte Vedra Beach Division of the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce were on hand to help welcome the new business, located at 70 Greenleaf Drive at the entrance to Nocatee's Greenleaf neighborhood. The Learning Experience offers infant, preschool and early education programs.



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Traffic study, PV Greenway among items discussed at PVB Chamber meeting

Improving traffic and transportation safety and a proposal to build a traffic-separated greenway trail in Ponte Vedra were among the topics discussed at a luncheon meeting of the Ponte Vedra Beach Division of the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce.

Held Sept. 14 at the Sawgrass Beach Club, the luncheon featured presentations by Greg Leonard of the Citizens Traffic Task Force and Deb Chapin of the PV Greenway & Preserve initiative.

The Ponte Vedra/Palm Valley Traffic Study – which focuses on AIA from Mickler Road to the Duval County line, Palm Valley Road, Solana Road and Roscoe Boulevard – is scheduled to be completed by next summer.

“This entire process and the completion of the study will happen by June of next year, so the study piece of it is at least in our foreseeable future,” Leonard said. The study results and recommendations will be made public at that

time, in June or July 2017.

After the traffic study is completed, the next step will be figuring out how to mobilize funds. Possible sources of funding include the federal government, FDOT or the county, but asking the county for new funds at this point in time is a very uphill task, Leonard said.

The action plan set forth by the PV Greenway & Preserve initiative, meanwhile, has been largely accomplished, organizer Deb Chapin said. The grassroots group, which proposes to create a multi-use traffic-separated greenway trail system, has gained a lot of policy maker support and established a lot of partnerships, she said. Currently, the group is in the process of looking at obtaining a 501(c)(3) non-profit status, and is seeking funding to help with the group’s website – which Chapin said should be online in a couple of weeks – as well as maps and renderings. A business plan for maintenance also needs to be established, she said.



Photos by Susan Griffin

Dr. Erika Hamer, Lin Jones, Jennifer Bruno, Debra Chapin, Derek King, Brian Anderson and Dave Danzeisen



Debra Chapin

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Photos by Susan Griffin

Representatives from the Ponte Vedra Beach Division of the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce were on hand Sept. 14 to mark the grand opening of Nona Blue. Handling ribbon cutting duties was PGA Tour golfer Graeme McDowell, who owns Nona Blue with partners Joe Davi and Bill Bona.

Ponte Vedra welcomes Nona Blue

By Jennifer Logue

Hundreds of local residents turned out to celebrate the grand opening of Nona Blue Sept. 13-14, marking the latest restaurant to open in Ponte Vedra's burgeoning Sawgrass Village.

The restaurant's Sept. 14 grand opening was preceded by a VIP reception the night before. Guests walked the red carpet and posed for photos with PGA Tour golfer Graeme McDowell and his Nona Blue founding partners Joe Davi and Bill Bona. Inside, guests enjoyed cocktails and generous samplings of the restaurant's appetizers, including firecracker shrimp, fried calamari, "Mama's meatloaf" sliders, flatbreads and more.

The following day, McDowell and his partners held a formal ribbon cutting ceremony to inaugurate their second Nona Blue location.

"It's so amazing," McDowell said of joining the Ponte Vedra community. "I've played many PLAYERS Championships here."

In addition to representatives from the Ponte Vedra Beach Division of the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce, the Nona Blue team was joined by former New York Giants Coach Tom Coughlin, who accepted a \$15,000 donation for his Tom Coughlin Jay Fund representing all the gratuities the Nona Blue staff collected during their "Practice with a Purpose" soft opening.



Graeme McDowell, Ponte Vedra Recorder Publisher Susan Griffin, the St. Johns County Chamber's Declan Reiley, Bill Bona and Joe Davi



Danielle Hall



Anette and Andrew Saalman



Melissa Bushong and Rod Strader



Michael and Nicole Story



Geri Price and Debbie Davis



Mandy Morrow and Millie Harrison



Ponte Vedra Beach Division Director Lin Jones joins Nona Blue owners as they present former New York Giants Coach Tom Coughlin with a donation to the Tom Coughlin Jay Fund. Photos by Susan Griffin



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