

# Connections

June 2016



ST. JOHNS  
COUNTY  
CHAMBER  
OF COMMERCE



Ponte Vedra Beach is a

## A Popular Place for Business

Mainstream Boutique  
Owner Carla Miles  
photos by Matus Foris Photography

Story on page 18

# Letter from the Director

Since arriving here four months ago, I have been busily immersing myself in the Ponte Vedra Beach Community. During my first four months as the director of the Ponte Vedra Beach Division of the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce, I have had the opportunity to experience a number of memorable events, including THE PLAYERS Championship, Roscolusa Songwriters Festival, Florida's Birding and Photo Fest, Tropical Storm Colin, and a number of great chamber events such as the Chamber Golf Classic, EDC Breakfast/ Legislative Update and our Membership Appreciation After Hours Event.

The Membership Appreciation event was definitely one of the many highlights. The annual event provides the opportunity to honor members who during the previous year went above and beyond to help strengthen and advocate for the business community. Among the award recipients we recognized was the Colonial Quarter's Carole Everitt with the Curious Traveler Award, given to a member that regularly traveled to both Ponte Vedra Beach and St. Augustine

events; and the Crushing It Award, given to Brian Anderson of Fluffy Cuts for best utilizing his chamber membership and for growing his business. SERVPRO of The Beaches/Ponte Vedra was also recognized as the Master of Social Media. Those were just a small sampling of the 11 awards that were presented to our valuable members. We probably could have handed out more.

During this event, and others, I have had the opportunity to meet many of you, and I have seen firsthand how you, our members, are giving referrals, offering best practice suggestions, and attending sponsored events and ribbon cuttings. These are all award-worthy activities and they go a long way in advancing the chamber's mission to grow business in St. Johns County.

Lin Jones  
Director  
Ponte Vedra Beach Division  
St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce



Photo courtesy of St. Johns County Chamber

Lin Jones

## Chamber of Commerce to present 'Chamber Forum Series'

As a benefit to our members and in collaboration with our local, regional and state public partners, the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce will present the Chamber Forum Series to inform, communicate and engage the business community. Upcoming events include:

### **The New Overtime/Salaried Wage law and the Impact of the Federal Highway Bill**

June 30, 9 to 10:30 a.m.  
Record Conference Center  
1 News Place  
St. Augustine

How will the new rule on overtime impact your business? Join us for additional updates on how the multi-year, \$305 billion highway bill will benefit Florida. Free to members and guests.

### **Amendment 2, Medical Marijuana also The Rising Cost of Worker's Compensation**

July 13, 9 to 10:30 a.m.  
Record Conference Center  
1 News Place  
St. Augustine

Amendment 2 is a constitutional amendment on the Florida ballot on November 8, 2016. Workers' compensation insurance will increase by 2 percent in 2016. Learn what it pays for, who pays for it and how to reduce your costs. Free to members and guests.

## Chamber Calendar – Ponte Vedra Beach Division

### **Chamber Before Hours**

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

### **Chamber at Noon**

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

### **Chamber After Hours**

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

For more information about chamber events, visit [www.sjcchamber.com](http://www.sjcchamber.com) and click on the Upcoming Events link.

### **Power Networking Luncheon (PNL)**

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

### **CHAMBER BUSINESS COUNCILS**

#### **Agricultural & Environmental Council**

Meeting on the fourth Thursday of every other

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

#### **Historic St. Augustine Council**

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

#### **Small Business Council**

Held on the fourth Tuesday of every month, this council works to support small businesses throughout St. Johns County. The council also strives to increase commerce while educating and serving as a resource to small business owners and their managers.

#### **South Beaches Council**

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

#### **Tourism & Hospitality Council**

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

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# Chamber to host ‘Politics in St. Johns’ events in Ponte Vedra, St. Augustine



Photo courtesy of St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce  
Chamber President and CEO Isabelle Rodriguez (center) joins former state senator and current Florida State University President John Thrasher (left) and Florida Chief Financial Officer Jeff Atwater (right) at a previous Politics in St. Johns event.

As the elections approach, the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce will host two “Politics in St. Johns” events to offer citizens the opportunity to meet candidates running for a wide array of public offices.

In Ponte Vedra, the chamber is joining forces with the Ponte Vedra Recorder and Hilton Garden Inn to host a “Candidate Meet & Greet” reception. To be held from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, July 27 at the Hilton Garden Inn, the event will enable attendees to speak one on one with candidates. The St. August-

tine event will be held from 5 to 7:30 p.m. Thursday, August 4 at the Solomon Calhoun Center at 1300 Duval St. The festive indoor event will feature candidate information booths as well as a straw poll. Food

trucks will also be on site.

Admission to both events is free, but advance registration is required. To register online, visit [www.sj-chamber.com](http://www.sj-chamber.com) and click on “upcoming events.”

## Politics in St. Johns

### Ponte Vedra

**Date:** Wednesday, July 27, 2016

**Time:** 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.

**Location:** Hilton Garden Inn

**45 PGA Tour Boulevard**

**Ponte Vedra Beach FL 32082**

**Cost:** Free (advance registration required); appetizers provided, cash bar

### St. Augustine

**Date:** Thursday, August 4, 2016

**Time:** 5 to 7:30 p.m.

**Location:** Solomon Calhoun Center

**1300 Duval Street**

**St. Augustine, FL 32084**

**Cost:** Free (advance registration required); food trucks available

## Ponte Vedra Beach Division Ambassador of the Quarter

Gloria Dongara works at AAA Life Insurance Agency, where she strives to ensure people have all their bases covered when the unforeseen occurs.

“We have all worked hard during our lifetime to establish a financial framework for our future,” Dongara said. “I try to make sure it’s all protected through a complimentary life review process at AAA.”



Gloria Dongara



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Suzanne W. Green has been practicing law since 1987 and is a former prosecutor with the Duval County State Attorney’s Office. Suzanne W. Green has been in private practice since 1990 and has managed her own firm since 1997. Suzanne also attained higher level degrees in business related fields prior to attending law school. Suzanne is also active in the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce and was recently elected as Chairman of our St. Augustine-St. Johns County Airport Authority.

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# Ponte Vedra: A popular place to do business

## By Chamber Staff

Whether you live in Ponte Vedra Beach or in Nocatee, you've likely noticed new restaurants like Trasca & Co. Eatery, Flavor Palette and Pieology providing consumers more choices to satisfy their culinary cravings. The growing menu of eateries is a trend indicative of growth throughout Ponte Vedra and Northeast St. Johns County. What's more, these new business options are not limited to just the retail and hospitality industries.

International Management Company (IMC) recently broke ground on a new 60,000 square-foot speculative office building in Nocatee. Chase or VyStar members can now visit their banks without leaving the beach. Companies like Vacation Pros are expanding their national headquarters in Ponte Vedra, while commercial spaces like Sawgrass Village are revitalizing their properties, bringing new life to area institutions like Aqua Grill.

It's not hard to understand why new businesses are popping up in Ponte Vedra. According to 2014 census data, the average median income for households in the growing community is nearly \$82,000 annually – more than 50 percent higher than the national average. With a highly desirable geographic location and a famously successful school district, St. Johns County is enjoying rapid growth, which is largely concentrated in the northern area including Nocatee and Ponte Vedra. In fact, 2015 U.S. Census data estimated 19.3 percent growth for St. Johns County compared to 7.8 percent statewide and 4.1 percent nationally over 2010.

Many of the newest business proprietors, however, don't cite numbers when asked what prompted them to open their businesses in Ponte Vedra.

"No other location was considered – Ponte Vedra is my hometown, it is where I have raised my children," said Jay Griffin, who in July will celebrate one year in business at A1A Pharmacy. "I wanted A1A Pharmacy to be modeled after the hometown pharmacy I knew as a child. It was a locally owned business that knew your name and took care of your family."

PGA Tour professional and entrepreneur Graeme McDowell also cited a personal connection as to why he chose to open his restaurant, Nona Blue – opening this summer – in Ponte Vedra.

"My family and I love spending time in Ponte Vedra when I compete at THE PLAYERS," McDowell said. "I'm thrilled to expand Nona Blue to



Photo courtesy of SJC Chamber

In July, A1A Pharmacy owner Jay Griffin will celebrate the first anniversary of his successful new Ponte Vedra business.

such a beautiful city with so much golf heritage. We considered many options for our second location, but I can't think of a better place to bring our restaurant."

Kurt and Carla Miles grew up on the eastern shores of Virginia and Maryland, but referred to the "hometown feel" they experienced after moving here that helped them decide to open the Mainstream Boutique at 880 A1A N.

"Business is going well, meeting new people each day," Carla Miles said, "and I feel truly blessed to have the opportunity to connect with such fabulous people in the community."

Clearly, however, entrepreneurs are not deciding to open their busi-

nesses in northeast St. Johns based purely on sentiment.

"We feel that Nocatee is the most attractive submarket in North Florida for expanding national business," Lou Nutter, senior vice president at CBRE, said in a news release referring to the IMC office building currently under construction there.

IMC Vice President Raja Saoud agreed. In an article published in the St. Augustine Record, Saoud noted, "Whenever you have one of the largest, quickest growing communities in the United States, you're in the right place."

While Saoud hopes office space will be in high demand, Gary Hallett, owner of Gateway Business

Advisors, believes entrepreneurs are actively seeking opportunities in the area.

"Currently, there is a high demand for quality businesses priced between \$500,000 and \$5,000,000," Hallett said. "Business owners who are taking the time to properly prepare for their exit are being rewarded at the closing table."

Sectors in high demand, he added, are manufacturing, consumer/retail goods and business services.

To become a member or learn more about the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce, contact the Ponte Vedra Beach Division at (904) 285-2004 or visit [www.sjcchamber.com](http://www.sjcchamber.com).

# Collaboration critical to elevating small businesses, Ross tells St. Johns Chamber

By Jennifer Logue

National Entrepreneur Center President Jerry Ross shared his thoughts on fostering entrepreneurship at the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce’s annual breakfast, held March 4 at the Renaissance World Golf Village Resort.

Addressing the several hundred local business and community leaders in attendance, Ross noted that 99 percent of all U.S. businesses have fewer than 100 employees.

“We’re a small business country,” he said. “So anything we can do to move small businesses to the next level is critical to strengthening communities.”

The key to reaching that next level, Ross said, is collaboration. Ross pointed to the St. Johns County Chamber’s recent initiatives – including merging with the Ponte Vedra Beach chamber, moving to new offices, increasing communication and government advocacy efforts, and implementing a three-year strategic plan – as examples of how businesses can embrace the unity of purpose that transforms “cooperation” into “collaboration.”

He also encouraged chamber members to collaborate with one another, sharing their successes and their setbacks so that others may benefit from the lessons they’ve learned.

“There are people in this room who have already gone through what you’re going through right now,” Ross said. “Business is not a solo sport. It’s a team sport, and you can’t play it alone.”



Isabelle Rodriguez, Victorm Raymos, Jerry Ross and Michael Scine

Photos by Susan Griffin



Ilene Thrasher and John Schaum



Lin Jones and Bob Porter

# Ponte Vedra Wellness Center opens new Nocatee location

Chamber officials and members were in attendance March 9 when Ponte Vedra Wellness Center opened a new second location in Nocatee.

"We are thrilled to be able to open a wellness center in Nocatee and look forward to serving this community so focused on active lifestyles and healthy living," Dr. Erika Hamer said. "We have had the support of the Ponte Vedra Beach community for over 11 years and we really felt this was the right time to expand services into this growing, active, family-friendly community."

Founded in 2004, Ponte Vedra Wellness Center is a traditional chiropractic neurology clinic for adults, children and pregnant women. The original location is at 100 Corridor Rd., Ste. 220, in Ponte Vedra Beach. For more information, call (904) 273-2691 or visit [www.pontevedrawellnesscenter.com](http://www.pontevedrawellnesscenter.com).



Dr. Erika Hamer cuts the ribbon on the Nocatee location of Ponte Vedra Wellness Center.



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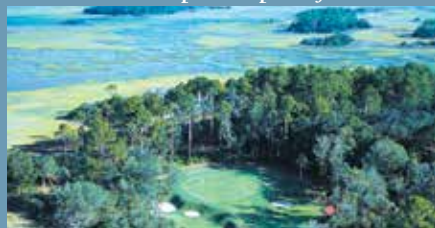


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Janet Collins, Isabelle Rodriguez and Dr. Erika Hamer



Nicole Constain, Joe Cohen and Bill Constain



Photos by Susan Griffin  
Felicia Cox, Michele Smith and Kari Zerrahn

# Ponte Vedra Eye Associates hosts Chamber After Hours

The Ponte Vedra Beach Division invited chamber members and guests to an evening of networking at a Chamber After Hours event on Feb. 24. From 5:30 to 7 p.m., attendees gathered at Ponte Vedra Eye Associates, 150 Professional Dr. in Ponte Vedra Beach, for complimentary hors d'oeuvres and refreshments while getting to know one another and learning more about the business.



Photo by Ed Johnson

Back row: Melisa Weeks, Dr. Gil Houston, Dr. Alissa Alterman, Marcy Dragotta, Dr. Karen Wolf and Victor Jones. Front row: Adrienne Rust, Jennifer Keener and Jennifer O'Neal.

# Donna Mancini Interiors and Flooring opens in Ponte Vedra

Donna Mancini Interiors and Flooring hosted a ribbon cutting March 10 at its new showroom located at 141 Hilden Rd., Ste. 202 in Ponte Vedra. The showroom offers buyers the opportunity to see the latest in current flooring trends and contemporary furniture, fabrics, lighting, artwork and rugs.



Photo by Susan Griffin

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# Ponte Vedra Beach Division open house

Local members of the business community had an opportunity to meet the new director of the Ponte Vedra Beach Division of the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce recently, when the chamber hosted an open house at the Ponte Vedra office on Solana Road.

New Director Lin Jones greeted more than 40 business leaders at the event and shared with them some of her plans for continuing the chamber's efforts to strengthen and support the Ponte Vedra Beach business community.

"I'm working to create a balance between maintaining what's familiar about the division and introducing some new things," Jones said.

Prior to joining the chamber, Jones worked at several convention and visitors bureaus and served in leadership roles at a number of tourism organizations in Indiana, including as director of Tour Indiana. She learned about the opportunity to lead the Ponte Vedra Beaches Division after relocating to Florida.

"I was familiar with the Jacksonville and St. Augustine area," Jones said, "so when I learned about the opportunity I just thought it was the perfect location."



PVBD Board Members Steven Beyers, Ed Mercel and Felicia Cox



Ponte Vedra Beach Division Director Lin Jones and St. Johns County Chamber CEO Isabelle Rodriguez



Rachel Landis, Bob Porter and Karina Coryell



Stephenie Davis, Gloria Dongara and Jeremy Davis



Steven Beyer and Dustin Beyer

# A1A Pharmacy hosts After Hours



Jay Griffin (right) welcomed guests to A1A Pharmacy, hosting the chamber's March 24 After Hours reception.

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# The Plantation at Ponte Vedra Beach hosts Chamber at Noon luncheon



Photos by Susan Griffin

Delores Wise of Susan G. Komen North Florida discusses the value of cause marketing with members of the Ponte Vedra Beach Division of the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber at Noon luncheon was hosted and sponsored by The Plantation at Ponte Vedra Beach.



Melissa Landoll and Ilene Thrasher



Rob Schlingman and Dr. Erika Hamer

# Flavor Palette holds ribbon cutting

Chef Tommy McDonough officially cut the ribbon opening his new Ponte Vedra Beach sandwich shop, Flavor Palette, April 12. Members of the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce welcomed McDonough and his family to their new restaurant, located in the Ponte Vedra Pointe Shopping Center at 880 A1A N,

Suite 9. Guests enjoyed a variety of samplings of Flavor Palette's menu offerings, including its homemade gelatos. "I just want to make people happy and I do that by giving them true flavor to enjoy," McDonough told guests.



The Flavor Palette team: Yvonne Belardo, Tom and Jamie McDonough, Abigail Lieberman, Emma Cramer, Savannah Madaffari, Natalie Altmire and Jarod Magdon



Savannah Madaffari offers guests samples of the falafel burger.



Chef Tommy McDonough cuts the ribbon on his new restaurant, Flavor Palette.



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# John Craig Clothiers hosts grand opening

Sawgrass Village officially welcomed yet another new business April 21, when John Craig Clothiers held a grand opening celebration and ribbon cutting. Representatives from the Ponte Vedra

Beach Division of the chamber joined with owner Craig DeLongy to cut the ribbon on the new John Craig Clothiers store in Sawgrass Village.



Photo by Ed Johnson

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# Joint chamber luncheon updates attendees on THE PLAYERS 2016

By Jasmine Marshall

The St. John's County Chamber of Commerce's Ponte Vedra Beach division held a joint luncheon with the JAX Chamber's Beaches Division April 14 to discuss updates for the 2016 THE PLAYERS Championship.

Guest speaker at the luncheon was THE PLAYERS Championship Executive Director Matt Rapp, who detailed a number of improvements undertaken to improve the fan experience. The chamber luncheon also recognized Rock Solid Business Law Owner and Founding Attorney John Miller for being named 2016's overall Small Business Leader of the Year by JAX Chamber. Miller thanked the chamber once again for the award and introduced two new associates, Yasmin Adamy and Teri Mai. Miller has been a part of the Beaches business community since he opened his own firm and relocated it to the area 25 years ago.



THE PLAYERS Executive Director Matt Rapp with Lin Jones and Isabelle Rodriguez

Photo by Lucia Miller; all other photos by Jasmine Marshall



Nan Kreamer and Sharon Sacks



Lisa Leath and Lawrence Dioso



David Henderson and Bob Tackett



Rae Mansoor and Thea Jeffers of T Works Interior

# St. Johns elected officials update Chamber on legislative session

Restoring the Summer Haven River and aiding residents struggling with mental health issues were among the legislative accomplishments highlighted by St. Johns County elected officials at the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce quarterly Economic Development Council breakfast.

Held April 22 at the Renaissance Resort at World Golf Village, the event featured a legislative update from state Sen. Travis Hutson, state representatives Cyndi Stevenson and Paul Renner, and Board of County Commissioners Chairman Jeb Smith.




Cyndi Stevenson, Paul Renner, Travis Hutson, Isabelle Rodriguez and Jeb Smith




Greg Hunting and County Commissioner Bill McClure

Photos by Susan Griffin



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# Christy's Dream Ice Cream Bar ribbon cutting

Members of the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce's Ponte Vedra Beach Division were on hand May 4 to help cut the ribbon for the new Christy's Dream ice cream shop.

Located in Sawgrass Village adjacent to the Hilton Garden Inn, the shop is the "dream" of Christy and Jason Leinheiser. Sporting a funky décor heavy on '80s pop culture, Christy's Dream features more than two dozen specially made flavors, including such options as "Shut Your Face," which features Oreo cheesecake. In addition, the shop features about eight to 10 "adult" flavors, including "Bond. James Bond" – a chocolate martini – and "I Cried at Work Today," which features a chocolate Heath bar and chocolate liqueur.



Photo by Susan Griffin

Christy and Jason Leinheiser (center) join with representatives from the Ponte Vedra Beach Division of the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce to cut the ribbon on their new shop, Christy's Dream Ice Cream Bar.



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# Membership Appreciation Awards

A dozen local business leaders were recognized for their commitment to fostering a thriving business community in May, when the Ponte Vedra Beach Division of the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce presented its annual "Membership Appreciation Awards."

Held May 25 at the Sawgrass Golf Club, the cocktail reception and awards ceremony honored Ponte Vedra Beach Division members in a variety of categories. Ponte Vedra Recorder Publisher Susan Griffin received the Pat Morgan Outstanding Member Award and Clare Berry of Berry & Co. was recognized with the Jeff Jenkins Community Service Award. Rob Schlingman of The Plantation at Ponte Vedra was recognized as Board Member of the Year, while Former Executive Director Sandy Kavanaugh was honored for many years of service to the chamber's Ponte Vedra Beach Division. Additional awards presented included:

**Crushing It!:** given to the member that has made the most of his/her chamber membership – Brian Anderson, Fluffy Cuts

**Curious Traveler:** recognizing the member who attended numerous events throughout the county – Carole Everitt, Colonial Quarter

**Pinch Hitter:** honoring the member who steps up at the last minute – Carol Maurer, Hilton Garden Inn

**Rookie of the Year:** given to a new member who has shown great initiative in attending chamber events – Dr. Sharyl Truty, Balanced Physician Care

**Master of Social Media:** recognizing the member who is most supportive of chamber social media initiatives – Michael Mitchell, ServPro

**Dedicated Service:** given to the member who never says no and sponsors chamber events – Michelle Nemeth, FirstAtlantic Bank

**5 Star Hospitality:** given to the member or venue that has gone above and beyond when hosting a Chamber event – Sawgrass Country Club (Barry McDonald)

**The Showman:** given to the member who hosted a creative special event – Ilene Thrasher, Arbor Terrace.



Photo courtesy of St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce

Back row: Sandy Kavanaugh, Rob Schlingmann, Susan Griffin, Felicia Cox, Michele Smith and Dave Danzeisen. Front row: Janet Collins, Dr. Erika Hamer, Lin Jones, Isabelle Rodriguez and Frances King.



Clare Berry, Susan Griffin and Sandy Kavanaugh



Carol Maurer and Anette Saalmann



Bill and Nicole Constain



Ilene Thrasher and Lori Adams



Dr. Erika Hamer and Jeff White



Malcolm and Andrea Anthony



Mel and Felicia Cox



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Source: Real Value of Joining a Local Chamber of Commerce  
Shapiro Group, 2012.

# After Hours at THE PLAYERS

More than 700 business and community leaders celebrated the start of THE PLAYERS Championship May 5, when the chamber hosted its annual joint “After Hours at THE PLAYERS” reception. The sold-out event featured complimentary refreshments provided by a number of local businesses, including Mulligan’s Pub, Peterbrooke Chocolatier, Flavor Palette, Anthony’s Catering, Amelia Toffee, Biscotti’s, BlackFinn Ameripub, Bold City Brewery, Il Desco, PDQ, Sticky Fingers, The Flame Broiler, Uncle Maddio’s Pizza Joint and Pollo Tropical.



Beverly Adelman and Yasmin Adamy

Photos by Susan Griffin



Alicia Sisco



Dottie Cernik , Mary Compton and Cindy Bishop



Jerry Cameron and Malcolm Anthony

# Scott highlights strong state economy at PLAYERS' Governor's Reception

Florida's economy continues to gain steam thanks to policies that limit taxes and regulation and promote job creation and growth, Gov. Rick Scott told local business and community leaders at an economic development reception held May 12 at THE PLAYERS' Stadium Village.

Scott welcomed guests to THE PLAYERS and stressed that Florida's economy continues to provide a strong incentive for businesses and residents to relocate to the Sunshine State.

"We are growing way faster than the rest of the country," said Scott, noting that he had recently returned from trips to California and Louisiana as part of his administration's efforts to encourage businesses there to come to Florida.

"They keep raising taxes and passing more regulations and we're doing the exact opposite," he said. "Florida is on a roll."



Gov. Rick Scott describes the progress Florida has made in creating jobs, reducing unemployment and attracting new businesses.



County Commissioner Rachael Bennett and Henry Deen speak with Governor Rick Scott.

Photos by Jennifer Logue



Jacksonville Mayor Lenny Curry and wife Molly



Henry Green and County Commissioner Jimmy Johns



Jim Mottor and Cathy Johnston

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# Mainstream Boutique ribbon cutting

Mainstream Boutique held a ribbon cutting June 1 at its new location at 880 A1A N., Ste. 4, next to the Beach Diner.

Representatives from the Ponte Vedra Beach Division of the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce joined owners Kurt and Carla Miles for the ribbon cutting at the boutique, which features a diverse assortment of women's clothing – everything from tops and jeans to little black dresses and ankle pants. The boutique also features an exclusive line known as Mac and Me.

Part of a franchise founded 25 years ago in Minnesota, the Ponte Vedra location is the second Mainstream Boutique to open in Florida, following the opening of a store in Tampa. The boutique was listed in the Franchise 500 list of fastest growing companies in 2015.



Kurt and Carla Miles



Mainstream Boutique owners Carla and Kurt Miles cut the ribbon on their new store, Mainstream Boutique.

Photos by Susan Griffin

# Chamber After Hours at The Browning Agency

The Browning Agency hosted an "After Hours" reception for the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce at the company's Sawgrass Village office. From left: Browning agency staff Shelby Weikel, Terri King, Diane Roche, Cecily Browning, Jim Browning, Taylor Barnard, Regina Morriss and Pavline Savino; Judge Scott DuPont; and Declan Reiley, vice president of economic development for the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce.



Photos by Ed Johnson and Susan Griffin



Jennifer Huguenard and Donna Day



Kim and Andy Scott



Photo by Susan Griffin

Joe Cohen and Nicole and Bill Constain cut the ribbon at the opening of the new Ponte Vedra Beach location of Freedom Wealth Services.

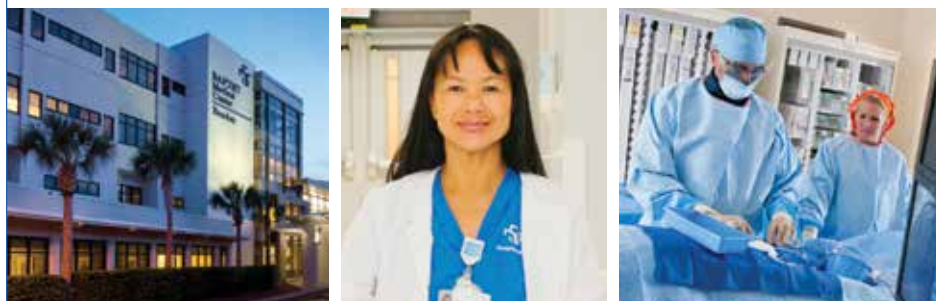
# Freedom Wealth Services holds ribbon cutting

Freedom Wealth Services celebrated the recent opening of its new Ponte Vedra Beach location with an April 28 ribbon cutting ceremony. According to CEO and Wealth Strategist Bill Constain, Freedom Wealth Services offers financial peace of mind to help people transition from variable, insecure financial positions to more predictable and secure positions through advising and consultation.

"This is our second office in the Jacksonville and

Ponte Vedra area," Constain said. "We serve clients throughout the country and are very excited about the opportunity to help families and businesses right in our back yard."

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# Aqua Grill hosts Chamber at Noon

State Rep. Cyndi Stevenson updated local business and community leaders on legislative matters last week, when the Ponte Vedra Beach Division of the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce met for its monthly Chamber at Noon event.

Held on the deck of the new Aqua Grill restaurant in Sawgrass Village, the event gave attendees an opportunity to learn about recent legislative issues and accomplishments that impact St. Johns County residents.



Bob Porter, Felicia Cox, Lin Jones, Sandra Ingram and state Rep. Cyndi Stevenson



Christin Adams and Katie Ghiotto



Dave Danzeisen, Board Chair PVB Division



Sandra Lief and Robin Giddens-Sheppard

## Youthful Medical Spa Before Hours



Photo courtesy of St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce  
Dr. Sharyl Truty, Allie Pulos and Debra Smith attend the Chamber Before Hours event at Youthful Medical Spa.

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# Ponte Vedra Inn & Club hosts Chamber at Noon luncheon

The Seafoam Room was the setting for the Chamber at Noon luncheon held June 15 at the Ponte Vedra Inn & Club. Guest speaker at the event was Joe Flask, CEO of BrightLink Technology, who offered attendees tips on keeping their company's data safe.



Suzan Lupton and Melissa Munson



Dr. Erika Hamer and Nancy Hallett

Photos by Susan Griffin



The Seafoam Room offered picturesque views for the Chamber at Noon luncheon.



Joe Flask, Lin Jones and Dave Danzeisen

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# Chamber holds annual golf classic, ‘Seasonal Blend’

The St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce held its annual Golf Tournament and summer Seasonal Blend June 8, bringing together business and community leaders from across the county for a day of golf and networking.

Held at the Slammer & Squire in World Golf Village, the event featured a golf tournament with a variety of course games. The daylong event concluded with a cocktail reception featuring awards, raffles, door prizes and more.

- Winners of the various contests included:
- Putting contest: Sam Sissine of Brennan, Manna & Diamond
  - Best dressed golfers: Pat and Jay Kane, Pop-A-Lock
  - Longest Putt: Greg Otte, Beach 105.5
  - Closest to the Pin: Chad Prizzia, Web.com
  - Longest Drive: Julie Ownes, FLC Contracting; and Bill Lodise, BBT
- 
- 1st Gross: Rogers Towers
  - 2nd Gross: Ponte Vedra Wellness Center
  - 1st Net: FLC Contracting
  - 2nd Net: Malcolm, Anthony, P.A.



Photos by Susan Griffin

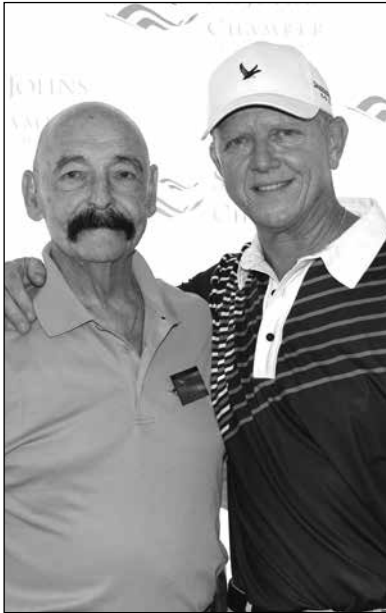
1st Place Net Team FLC Contracting; also pictured: Cathy Johnston and Isabelle Rodriguez.



Best dressed: Pat and Jay Kane of Pop-A-Lock



Don DePietto and Amelia McLean-Robertson



Ed Mercel and Brett Duncan



Joshua Le Drew and Ashton Henderson



2nd Place Net Malcolm Anthony team; also pictured: Cathy Johnston and Isabelle Rodriguez



Susan Griffin and Dr. Erika Hamer



Lori Adams and Malcom Anthony



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