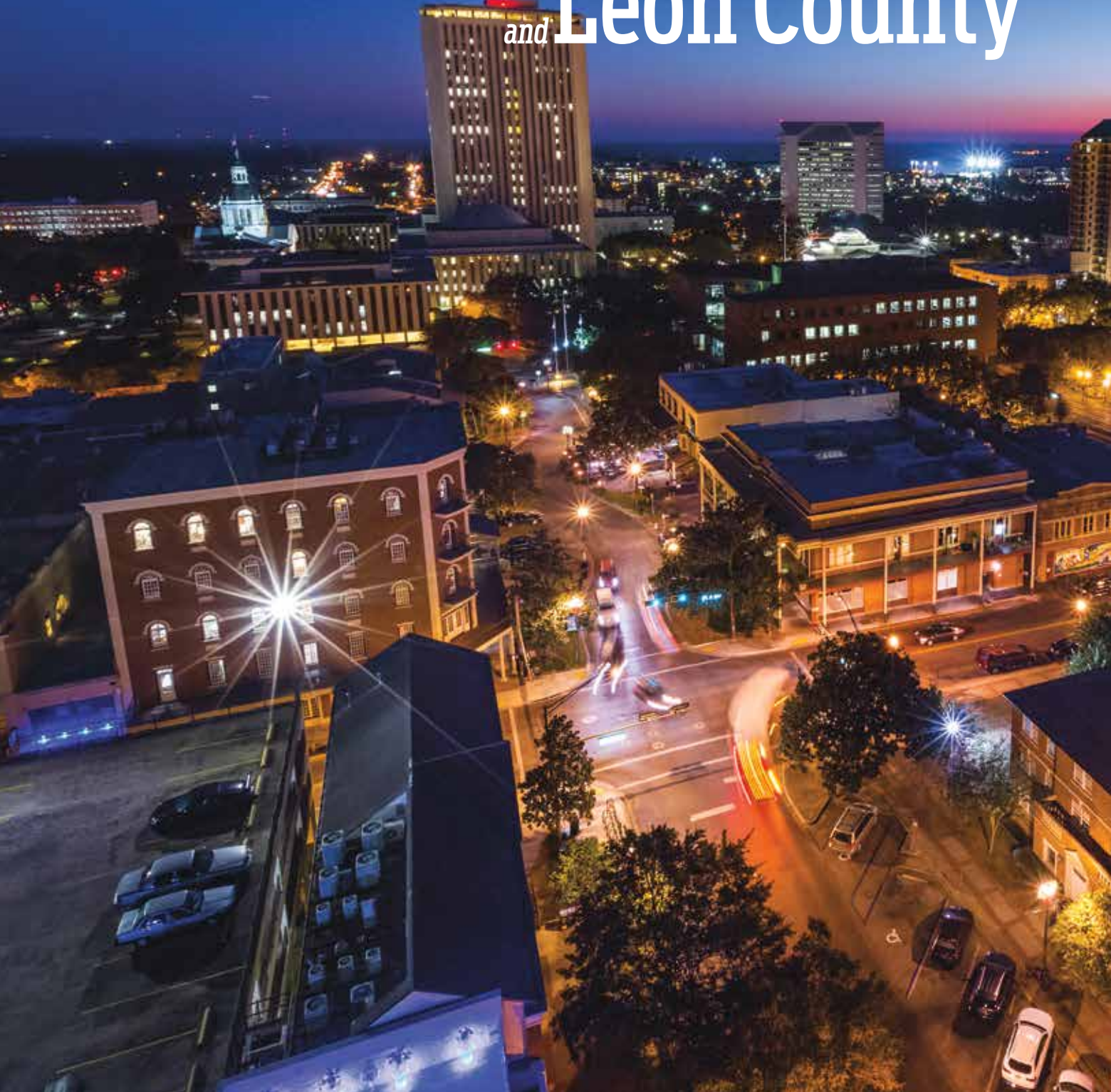


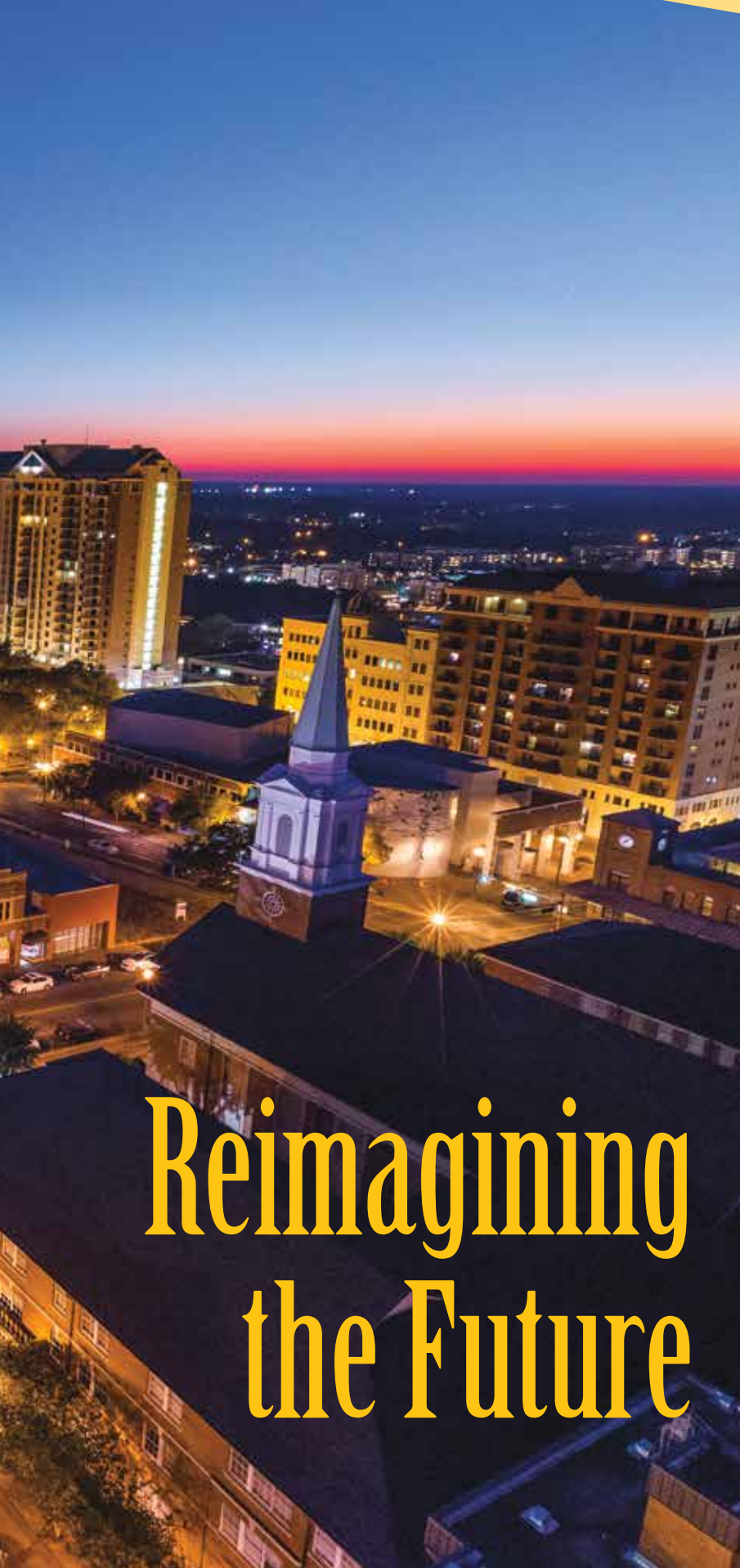
TALLAHASSEE

and Leon County

Reimagining
the Future

TALLAHASSEE *and* Leon County





Reimagining the Future

Anchored by
**homegrown
businesses** with
international reach ...

Fueled with the
innovation of two
research universities
and a burgeoning tech
community ...

Enlightened by
**community-led
initiatives** for
holistic growth and
work-life balance ...

A vibrant, Southern
city with a progressive
vibe, **Tallahassee**
**is poised for a
renaissance 25 years
in the making.**

By Heidi Tyline King

PHOTO COURTESY COLIN HACKLEY

Capital Cascades
Crossing Bridge
and Trail ▶



City of **Forward Thinkers**

In 1989, residents of Florida’s capital city approved a penny sales tax to fund roads and address public safety needs. Mindful — and wary — of the explosive population growth of Central and South Florida, Tallahassee’s community leaders, through an initiative called “Blueprint 2000,” vowed to make strategic investments in infrastructure that would sustainably support their growing city.

“There were obvious needs on the list, like completing Capital Circle and dealing with stormwater issues,” says Tallahassee City Commissioner Nancy Miller, “but we also looked at things like water quality, business parks, natural areas and preserving our green canopy.” Cascades Park, which opened in 2014, was a signature landmark funded by the early sales tax.

That same year, 65% of voters again approved a 20-year extension of the sales tax. “Actually seeing the projects funded created a bond with the community,” says Miller. “They had something to show for the money spent.”

This time around, the Blueprint 2020 plan is more comprehensive. Eighteen citizens appointed by city and county commissions, with input from thousands of Tallahasseeans, identified several projects to continue infrastructure improvements but also contribute to the economic

vitality and quality of life in the city.

“Our goal was not so much to have a signature project as it was to make sure we are preparing the greater county and community for the change that is going to take effect over the next 20 years,” says Steve Evans, a retired IBM executive who chaired the Blueprint 2020 committee. “We looked at everything from water quality to roads to quality of

life issues like bike systems and sidewalks. We also looked at infrastructure from all sides of Tallahassee and how we can enhance our city’s sense of place. And throughout the process, our entire committee recognized the seriousness of our work — we were planning for the long-term growth and sustainability of Tallahassee-Leon County.

(continued on page 6)

“All the key ingredients that we need have been here. But they have never been so well aligned as I see them right now.”

— **Ben Pingree**, Planning, Land Management and Community Enhancement Department

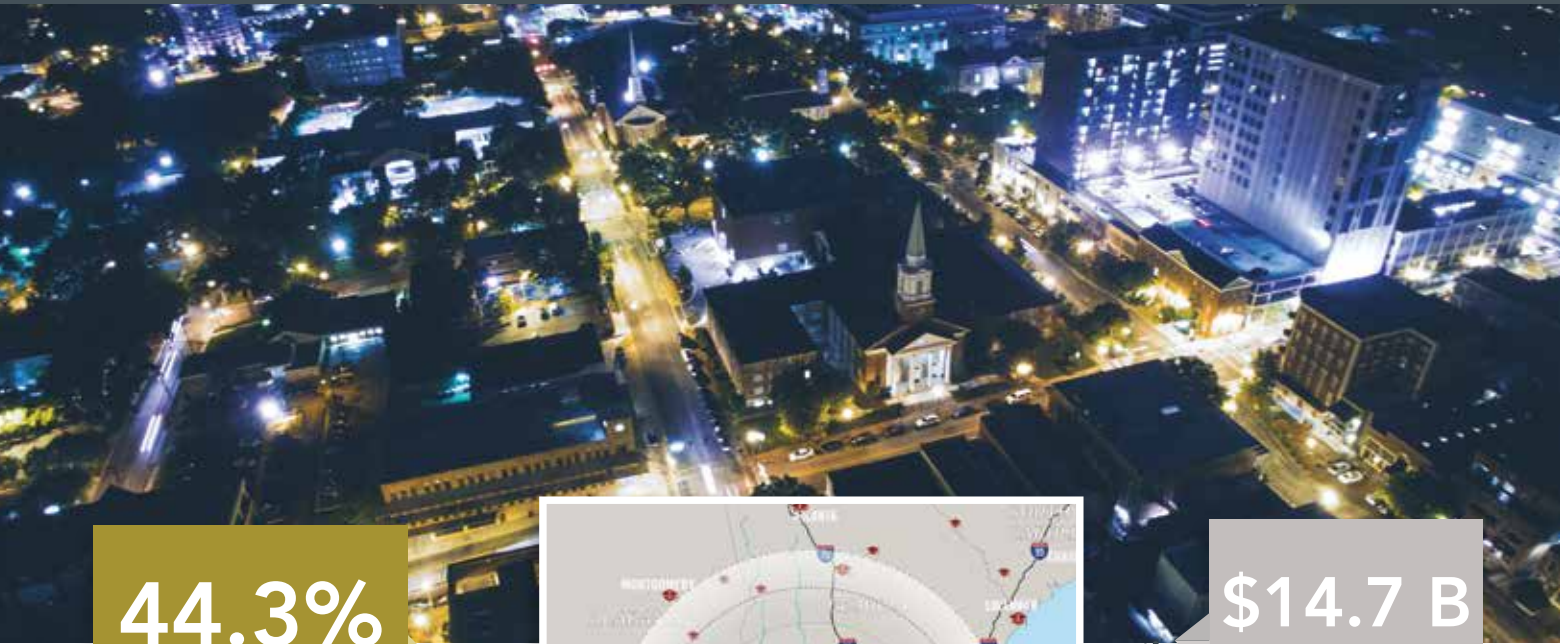


PHOTO COURTESY FIGG (TOP)

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44.3%

% POPULATION WITH
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OR HIGHER

Census, 5-Year ACS



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GDP

Bureau of Economic Analysis

\$3.9 B

TAXABLE SALES
(ANNUAL, 2015)

FL Dept. of Revenue

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OF TOURISM
(FY 2016)

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* Entrepreneur Magazine / ** WalletHub



▲ Leon County's median age is 11.3 years younger than the statewide median.

After 100 public meetings over two-and-a-half years, the Blueprint 2020 committee finalized recommendations to include:

- **Improve and expand local roads.**
- **Reduce traffic congestion.**
- **Build new sidewalks to local schools, commercial areas and recreational amenities.**
- **Implement "sense of place" projects throughout Leon County.**
- **Reduce neighborhood flooding.**
- **Expand green spaces, parks and natural areas.**
- **Create and promote jobs in the community.**

Projects will be coordinated by PLACE, the joint city/county Planning, Land Management and Community Enhancement department headed by Ben Pingree.

Specifically, 12% of the funding — roughly \$90 million — is earmarked for economic vitality. "Vitality is different from development," explains Evans. "When you embrace a community's existing businesses, talents and assets, and then identify ways to help these grow and thrive, you are focused on vitality. But if you do it right, economic development is a natural outcome."

"Tallahassee and Leon County have a great foundation for economic growth that has yielded some significant recent successes."

— **Al Latimer**, OEV

Latimer in the Lead



▲ Al Latimer

Al Latimer, a 25-year career veteran in state-level economic development and former NFL player, was named director of the Office of Economic Vitality (OEV) in October 2016. Latimer is charged with over-

seeing implementation of the area's long-term strategic plan.

"We have great assets, unified leadership, excellent talent development and private sector partnerships, a focus on research commercialization and entrepreneurship, and a strong business climate," Latimer says. "I relish the opportunity to promote and position Tallahassee and Leon County for sustained job creation, economic growth and enhanced quality of life."

**\$1.2
Billion
in Projects
on the
Drawing
Board**

- **\$50 million** Connecting and completing sidewalks throughout Tallahassee-Leon County
- **\$22 million** Midtown improvements
- **\$15 million** Bicycle system linking communities in Leon County and beyond
- **\$12 million** Redevelopment of North Florida Fairgrounds
- **\$9.4 million** Market District improvements
- **\$7 million** Improvements on South Monroe Street (SoMo)



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Getting Around

When it comes to getting around, Tallahasseeans like to brag about what they don't have: mainly heavy traffic and long commutes. Capital Circle loops around the city while I-10 connects the western and eastern sides. StarMetro, the city's award-winning bus service, is efficient, and K-12 students ride for free. Improved and protected bike lanes throughout the city and county have increased the number of biking commuters.



Regionally, Tallahassee-Leon County is anticipating the return of Amtrak in the next four years, thanks to a bill passed by Congress last year to study the potential of resuming service to stations east of New Orleans, including Tallahassee.

Likewise, major changes have occurred in the past two years in air transportation services. One of the highlights has been terminal and runway improvements that mark a new era in aviation with Tallahassee International Airport — the emphasis on “international.”

Having the international designation “started the conversation to design and build an international arrival facility at the airport,” says Chris Curry, aviation director. It also allows the airport to pursue the establishment of a foreign trade zone, where companies that locate here have the ability to fly in parts and raw materials without paying import taxes until their products are manufactured and sold.

“As we observe growth in the Latin American market, future trade potential with Cuba and expansion of the Panama Canal, Tallahassee is well-positioned to take advantage of those opportunities,” says Curry.



▲ 5.5 miles of protected bike lanes connect downtown, Cascades Park, FSU, FAMU and Stadium Trail.

“With more than 800 acres of land for development and easy access to I-10, the international designation and foreign trade zone provide additional tools to attract major business to the area.”

Currently, 9.5 million pounds of air freight are transported from Tallahassee each year, more than any other airport in the region.

(continued on page 10)

Tallahassee-Leon County is located like a hub in the center of a wheel, with New Orleans, Atlanta, Jacksonville and Orlando as the spokes. It is only a couple of hours from deep sea ports via I-10 and CSX rail, making it fast and convenient to move products and people in and out of the area. And because Tallahassee is situated in the northwest part of the state, the city is also a gateway to the rest of Florida.



Tallahassee International Airport

- 32% of air passenger travel in Northwest Florida
- 692,724 passengers in 2015

StarMetro

- 3.4 million trips annually
- 14 grid system-based routes
- 30% of the system's fleet is comprised of electric or alternative fuel vehicles.

Getting to Work

- At just 20 minutes, average commute time in Tallahassee is 22% lower than the state average.

TALLAHASSEE and Leon County

An increase in flights is another goal and one crucial to economic growth. For years, business and government leaders have been cognizant that efficient, inexpensive and diverse air traffic is imperative in attracting new business and keeping existing businesses linked regionally and globally.

Current efforts are focused on complementing existing air traffic with air carrier incentives designed to assist airlines in adding new non-stop destinations and increasing frequency. In the works is a plan to bring JetBlue to the area,

opening a direct route from Tallahassee to Fort Lauderdale.

"Reliable and affordable transportation is essential to the attraction and growth of business," says Curry. "The 'GetBlue' campaign was a creative approach to get business partners and residents involved in the air service development process."

Finally, as part of the 20-year plan, the city is considering making the airport a transportation hub, linking air, local and inter-city bus services and a potential rail connection.

9.5 million pounds of air freight are transported from Tallahassee each year, more than any other airport in the region. ▶



Curry on Deck



▲ **Chris Curry**

Visionary leadership and smart management of extensive renovations led to the Florida Department of Transportation naming Tallahassee International's Chris Curry the 2016 Aviation Professional of the Year.

The award is given to an aviation professional who has made major contributions in the areas of technological research or advancement, airport management, construction/maintenance and design, air safety, aviation legislation and Florida's aviation business.

"My staff and I have worked hard to guide the airport through a period of resurgence and growth," Curry says. "We are proud of the accomplishments we have made, and we will continue to work to improve the quality of air travel for our community and the state of Florida."

PHOTO COURTESY COLIN HACKLEY (LEFT)

A large advertisement for the TCC2FSU Golden Guarantee Program. The background is a photograph of a large, historic brick building with a prominent arched entrance on the left and a clock tower on the right. In the foreground, there is a paved walkway, some greenery, and a small pond. A person is walking on the path. Overlaid on the image is a large logo for "TCC2FSU Golden Guarantee Program". The logo consists of the letters "TCC" in blue, a large yellow "2", and "FSU" in maroon, with a yellow arrow pointing from the "2" to the "FSU". Below the logo, the text "BEGIN YOUR JOURNEY TO AN FSU DEGREE AT TALLAHASSEE COMMUNITY COLLEGE" is written in large, white, bold, sans-serif capital letters. At the bottom of the advertisement, the website "WWW.TCC.FL.EDU/TCC2FSU" is displayed in a similar white, bold, sans-serif font.



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RECRUITING, HIRING AND TRAINING IN THE CAPITAL CITY

On any given day in Florida's capital city, businesses across all industries are searching for talented people to join their teams. At the same time, career seekers are searching for opportunities to use their skills and experience. CareerSource Capital Region connects these businesses and people in Gadsden, Leon, and Wakulla counties.

"We understand the needs of local businesses and hiring managers who are short on time and money to hire the talent they need," said CareerSource Capital Region Senior Director Kara Palmer Smith. "We help them find and keep the right people in the right jobs, whether they are recruiting for one position or one hundred."

Kara Palmer Smith and her team assist businesses like **Capital City Bank**, which employs about 20 veterans among its more than 850 employees. Capital City Bank has focused on hiring veterans at all position levels for many years. They were recognized for this commitment last year by CareerSource Capital Region as a Preferred Veteran Employer.



"Veterans have a number of qualities we admire and appreciate, including their discipline and an ability to adapt to change," said Pamela Gay, Senior Vice President of Human Resources Risk Management for Capital City Bank. "It's something we really value, particularly in the banking industry, which is so quickly changing and evolving."

As many veterans reach retirement, the bank has turned to CareerSource Capital Region to help identify other veterans whose skills and career goals make them an ideal fit.

The solutions available through CareerSource Capital Region are a tremendous resource for businesses of all sizes. From customized employee training to hiring fairs and specialized recruitment events, CareerSource Capital Region meets business needs one solution at a time.



CareerSource Capital Region also assists businesses outside Florida. For example, **Systems & Methods Inc. (SMI)** has a location in Tallahassee but is headquartered in Georgia. The company administers management and disbursement solutions for state service agencies.

"It can be a daunting task hiring for a large project without having feet on the ground in the local area," said Liza Lulay, VP of Human Resources for SMI. "CareerSource Capital Region has allowed us to free up time and energy and save dollars by acting as an extension of our HR department."

Syntech Fuel Systems, a Tallahassee-based fuel management and security company, turned to CareerSource Capital Region to help find talent for hard-to-fill positions such as engineering, manufacturing, and assembly.

"The partnership we have with CareerSource Capital Region is so valuable," said Colene Rogers, Talent Acquisition Manager at Syntech Fuel Systems. "We know that they are always willing to jump in and help!"

CareerSource Capital Region is not alone in its mission to connect employers with qualified, skilled talent and Floridians with employment and career development opportunities to achieve economic prosperity. It shares this vision with 23 other workforce development boards within the CareerSource Florida network.

The CareerSource Florida network provides businesses with an integrated suite of services called FloridaFlex. FloridaFlex offers businesses in Florida, or relocating to Florida, recruiting, hiring, and training resources to help businesses like Capital City Bank, SMI, and Syntech Fuel Systems compete and grow.

HELPING BUSINESSES LIKE YOURS EVERY DAY

During the 2015-2016 fiscal year, CareerSource Capital Region helped **1,229 businesses** find **17,483 solutions** for recruiting, hiring and training needs and provided assistance to more than **21,797 career seekers**.



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Open for Business



▲ Ed Mansouri

As a graduate student at Florida State University in 1999, Ed Mansouri developed software to assist him in teaching his classes. When it worked better than expected, he surmised that his software might benefit other organizations.

Ed Mansouri was right. He turned that software, Ucompass.com, into one of the nation's most respected learning management systems, serving more than 3 million students and supporting large-scale organizations like Florida Virtual School and the American Public University System.

Even as Ucompass.com expanded throughout the nation, Mansouri never once considered moving his wildly successful company from Tallahassee.

"Why would I?" he asks. "There are a lot of things about Tallahassee that are appealing. It's a good place to raise a family and run a business.

I have access to world-class research. I am in awe of the area's physical beauty, which feeds me creatively. And there are so many amazing people here that it's impossible not to be energized by all the cutting-edge things taking place."

Inspired by his surroundings and the innovators who call Tallahassee home, Mansouri launched a startup in 2014, this time combining his passions for education and meteorology. WeatherSTEM designs comprehensive weather stations powered by live data and then installed in schools, golf courses

and other weather-dependent facilities around the country.

"Again, being in a city with strong research and educational resources has been extremely helpful in starting this new business," says Mansouri.

Mansouri's story is the story of business and economic vitality created and nurtured in Tallahassee-Leon County. It's a story of collaboration, an incredibly trained work force and access to world-class research through cooperative and eager academic partners — all complemented by an exceptional quality of life.

As Gray Swoope, president and CEO of VisionFirst Advisors, observed as he guided the city through the recently released economic development strategic plan, "Consider the resources needed to build a dynamic community from scratch: a research university, competitive jobs to retain talent and a high quality of life. Guess what? They're all here in Tallahassee."

Tallahassee Leon County Fast Facts

- **Population** 287,671
- **Labor Force** 148,346
- **Employment** 140,973



▲ Danfoss Turbocor came to town in 2007 to take advantage of FSU's world-class research institute.

Poised for Progress

The foundation for a strong economic future was laid in 1989 with the approval of the penny sales tax, but also with exciting projects like the 1989 creation of the Florida State University College of Motion Picture Arts and the 1994 opening of FSU's National High Magnetic Field Laboratory, the only one of its kind in the U.S.

The FSU Film School quickly grew into one of the world's best film schools, leveraging private-public partnerships and bolstering Tallahassee's standing as a creative economy. Students have won more than 700 awards, prizes and featured screenings at national and international festivals including the Cannes Film Festival.

The National High Magnetic Field Laboratory has done the same in the scientific community. More than 1,400 scientists and engineers from around the world conduct research at the Mag Lab, which has resulted in 54 patents and other products.

And now, a real gamechanger is in the works for the region's business landscape. Late in 2015, the family of the late Jim Moran and the Jim Moran Foundation pledged \$100 million to Florida State University — the largest gift in the school's history — to create a school of entrepreneurship. This complements the existing Jim Moran

Institute for Global Entrepreneurship at FSU, which cultivates, trains and inspires entrepreneurial leaders through world-class executive education, applied training, public recognition and leading-edge research. It's only a matter of time before Tallahassee reaps the benefits of cutting-edge entrepreneurial programs.

Sense of Place

In 2004, the wheels of revitalization rolled forward when NAI TALCOR's president and founder, Ed Murray, purchased the former Rhodes Furniture building in Midtown, transforming a tired street of strip malls into a desirable destination for dining, leisure and business.

"With those projects, the focus changed to millennial-oriented industries," says Tony Carvajal, executive vice president of the Florida Chamber Foundation. "The rest has been built around it — the Gaines Street investments and Cascades Park, but there are also new developments that have grown organically like the Midtown project. Together, these signify a shift, with people making investments to stay here. Most importantly, they have contributed to Tallahassee's sense of place — this is their place."

Shaping Tallahassee's identity, its sense of place, and then getting buy-

Leon County's Major Employers

PRIVATE SECTOR

Company	Employees
Publix Super Markets	3,439
Tallahassee Memorial HealthCare	3,190
Walmart Stores	2,117
Capital Regional Medical Center	1,151
ACS, a Xerox Company	700
Capital City Bank Group	532
St. Marks Powder, a General Dynamics Company	452
Capital Health Plan	425
Apalachee Center	400
Westminster Oaks	379
University Center Club	300
Big Bend Hospice	300
CenturyLink	278
The Florida Bar	250
General Dynamics Lands System	250
Tallahassee Primary Care Associates	244
Danfoss Turbocor	200
Dale Earnhardt Jr. Chevrolet	200
Capital Healthcare Center	200

PUBLIC SECTOR

Organization	Employees
State of Florida	22,612
Florida State University	12,512
Leon County Schools	4,550
City of Tallahassee	2,736
Leon County	1,919
Florida A&M University	1,759
Tallahassee Community College	1,631

Source: Tallahassee-Leon County Office of Economic Vitality

The Edison at Cascades Park is an example of how Tallahassee reimaged an abandoned structure as a thriving restaurant and entertainment venue. ▶



in from the community is actually the mission of the Knight Creative Communities Institute and its executive director, Betsy Couch. Ideally, implementing community-imagined ideas is supposed to attract and retain members of the creative class, which economist Richard Florida points to as a primary economic driver in thriving cities. The goal is to make those communities economically stable.

That's exactly the outcome with the Gaines Street revitalization project, which reimaged a tired, warehouse-lined corridor through extensive collaboration between the city of Tallahassee, Leon County, community advocates and various agencies. The \$27.7 million for road construction, property acquisition and development incentives, complemented by \$11 million from the Community Redevelopment Agency, has seen a return of \$195.8 million in private investment and a \$150-million post-development tax-

able value. One of the largest projects to redefine Tallahassee's identity, Gaines Street raised the bar for infrastructure improvements.

"Implementing projects that enhance a sense of place increases economic vitality in the region," says Couch.

Reimagining Tallahassee

Doing the hard work of creating a strategic plan with stakeholders from all segments of the community helped leaders understand that creating jobs and retaining the area's unique natural beauty go hand in hand.

The overwhelming success of Cascades Park embodies this type of holistic planning. Named the 2015 Public Works Project of the Year by the American Public Works Association, the 24-acre urban park repurposed an abandoned, contaminated industrial site. Visitors see a beautiful recreation and entertainment venue.

The Edison Restaurant, an upscale

eatery, is located in the renovated power plant on the property. There are walking trails, a playground and an amphitheater that hosts national artists. But underneath its attractive offerings, the park serves as an extensive flood control and management system — a necessity in case of flash floods.

"For a long time Tallahassee has had resources and amenities that have been the envy of other communities, and we have worked hard the last few years to finally pull the rope in the same direction," says Mayor Andrew Gillum. "We are now in a place to realize the fruits of this collaborative labor and are seeing our economic vitality and quality of life rise to unprecedented levels."

Subsequently, there are strict environmental and planning codes to protect natural resources like green spaces, canopied roads and water quality. City and county government entities are instrumental in leading the drive for sustainability with projects like financing through Property Assessed Clean Energy programs and the solar panel farm underway at Tallahassee International Airport.

With intentional building in mind, city leaders have focused on infill building and controlling urban sprawl as a way to preserve green spaces, a plan that has been so effective that Tallahassee was named the top city in the nation for promoting compact growth between 2000 and 2010, far exceeding the next city on the list, Washington, D.C.

(continued on page 18)



"Tallahassee is where innovation meets opportunity ... businesses have limitless potential for growth, while residents enjoy a high quality of life."

— **Ricardo Fernandez**, Tallahassee City Manager

A full-page photograph of a man with a serious expression, a mustache, and goatee. He is shirtless and has extensive tattoos on his arms and chest. He is holding a small, ornate white teacup with a floral pattern and a green rim, along with its matching saucer. The background is a solid dark blue.

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Says Vincent S. Long, Leon County administrator, "With our unique combination of unparalleled natural beauty and unmatched human capital, we believe we are well poised to be the place of choice for creativity and innovation."

There is also consensus that doing business in Tallahassee should be easy. Quick permitting and short commute times are obvious benefits, but the city and county went a step farther with opportunities for economic incentives and repealing the business license tax.

"Our community is open for business and ready for growth," says Ed Murray, who spearheaded the Midtown Revival. "The only barriers to our potential for economic growth in Tallahassee are the limits we place on ourselves. Repealing the business license tax enhances our business-strong story."

The savings support business growth, employee investments and even community giving, notes Sue Dick, president of the Greater Tallahassee Chamber of Commerce. "In business, every dollar counts. We believe that letting our businesses keep as much of their hard-earned money as possible is good for economic growth."



One of the area's oldest banks, Capital City Bank Group has a history of investing in local business, and many others are also catalysts in financing the area's future.

Training and Retaining Talent

Of all the proverbial carrots that Tallahassee and Leon County can dangle in front of prospective businesses, nothing is as enticing as the diverse, well-trained talent pool. "Not all communities are built the same," says Chris Hart, Florida secretary of commerce and president and CEO of Enterprise Florida. "Tallahassee has really strong talent assets because of its youthful population and premier universities."

Businesses have access to talent with skill sets that allow them to step in and immediately make a difference. If recent graduates choose to stay and build a career here, they often find they can do so faster in Tallahassee.

"In a big city, there are a thousand people doing the same thing. You can stay here, find your niche and make a difference — and make

it faster. Plus, there are only two degrees of separation between you and getting something done," says Audra Pittman, executive director for the Council on Culture & Arts, who is constantly looking for ways to link artists, business and technology into economically feasible partnerships.

The Tipping Point

Tallahassee has reached its tipping point. The talent is here. Entrepreneurism is taking flight. New infrastructure has spawned the type of cultural and family venues that keep families and young professionals here. Temperate weather and natural beauty provide a beautiful backdrop for daily life. Even Tallahassee's location, where the mega-regions of Florida, the Gulf Coast and the Piedmont-Atlantic area intersect creates unique opportunities for future business.

Medical providers are expanding programs and physical space to accommodate the need for exceptional healthcare.

"Tallahassee is unlikely other community in Florida: highly educated and much younger than other Florida cities. Our industries are intellectually based; there aren't too many smokestacks," says Mark O'Bryant, president and CEO of Tallahassee Memorial HealthCare. "And we have world-class health care."

There is a trend of people going where they want to live and then creating the jobs they want. With the key components in place, it's not an either-or decision between quality of jobs and quality of life. Tallahassee offers both.

(continued on page 20)

Businesses in Tallahassee enjoy benefits from city initiatives and services, including ...

- Low cost municipal services
- Lower taxes and no city business tax
- Lowest small business electric utility rates in Florida
- 7-day money-back guaranteed permitting process



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adjective pre·em·i·nent \-nənt\: having paramount rank, dignity, or importance: outstanding, supreme

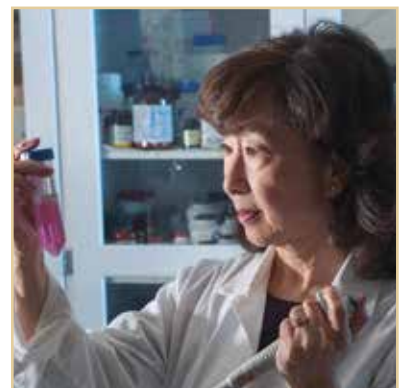


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New construction on Gaines Street near the FSU campus features restaurants and shops at street level with modern apartment living above.



One of the area's oldest banks, Capital City Bank Group has a history of investing in local business, and many others are also catalysts in financing the area's future.

"We do business from Pensacola to Key West and in all the major urban areas, and we do plenty of business in Tallahassee," says Todd Kocourek, president and CEO of Florida First Capital Finance Corporation, a Tallahassee-based bank that ranked at the top of the list for Small Business Administration loan production in Florida in 2016.

Additionally, the Florida Angel Nexus opened its second chapter in Tallahassee based on the city's industry cluster and affiliation with talent.

The Opportunities Ahead

So what are the next steps? For one, doing a better job of touting all that Tallahassee has to offer.

A few years ago, the mayor of Charleston came down to advise community leaders on growing innovation. "He said, 'When we look at your community, we see beautiful people on bikes, the live oak canopies and trees, but there is nothing telling the outside world — or the people who live here — about the innovation, vitality and talent located in Tallahassee,'" recounts Steve Evans, retired IBM executive and chair of the Blueprint 2020 committee. "We've worked hard to remedy this with partnerships and organizations built across different segments of our community. Creating the Office of Economic Vitality was a huge move in the right direction."

Even so, while most of Tallahassee enjoys the results of positive growth that comes from infrastructure investment, there remains opportunity to help a significant portion of the community rise up. The United Way

of the Big Bend launched an Income Council, and area businesses joined together to explore how best to offer a hand up to those wanting to become independent.

"Collaborating with other organizations like CareerSource Capital Region can help ensure positive outcomes that break the cycle of poverty and save taxpayer money," says Tim Center, CEO of the Capital Area Community Action Agency, which offers a research-based program, Getting Ahead/Staying Ahead complete with mentors and case managers.

Initiatives like the Income Council and protecting Tallahassee's natural assets are part of keeping an integrative focus on the entire community, not just its various parts.

"Sixty-five percent of the people who responded to a community survey see our challenge as balancing economic development with quality of life — a very amorphous term, I know," says Wendy Grey of Wendy Grey Land Use Planning, who was intimately involved with the Gaines Street corridor project. "There is a strong sense that our trees and green spaces are important; we don't want to be a strip mall community. This is important work — but it can be done, and done well."



"In Leon County, our attitudes and amenities have made us a place of choice where talented people want to live. Our ability to retain and attract human capital will not only continue to enhance the quality of life in our community, it will play a key role in our continued economic competitiveness."

— **Vincent S. Long**, Leon County Administrator

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the Office of Economic
Vitality's Strategic
Plan?**

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A Changing Cityscape

While the seat of state government is concentrated in downtown Tallahassee, a renewed focus on urban infill and bringing businesses back has reenergized the area.

On the drawing board are eight new hotels, including Hampton Inn & Suites, Tru Hotel by Hilton, Drury Inn & Suites and Holiday Inn Apalachee Parkway. Additionally, the DoubleTree by Hilton in downtown just finished an \$8-million makeover, including a new topper that modernizes Tallahassee's skyline. These will expand Tallahassee's offerings of accommodations and meeting space and reflect investor confidence in the area's growing tourism industry.

All Saints Distilling Co. is renovating a 1940 Coca-Cola bottling plant in the historic All Saints district to establish the city's first distillery of gin and vodka.

Bannerman Crossings is a multi-phase, mixed-use complex serving Tallahassee's affluent northeastern communities. It includes local restaurants, boutique shops,



▲ Over the past few years, construction cranes have become a common sight throughout downtown Tallahassee.



▲ DoubleTree Hotel

New Leaf Market, a Tallahassee favorite for locally sourced and organic foods, and an outdoor pavilion for live entertainment. Some of these are in operation; more are confirmed to come. Future phases will target additional commercial space and residential areas.

Residential Building Steady

Meanwhile, the overall level of residential building permits for new construction in Leon County has remained steady over the last three years. There were 535 permits issued for new single-family homes in 2015, the highest level since 2008, but still below the historical annual average of 1,249 new single-family construction permits issued per year since 1970.

Multifamily new construction permits included the Eclipse on Madison, Stadium Center Block C and CollegeTown Phase 2.

Personality Plus: Tallahassee's Downtown Districts

College Town Piggybacking on the impressive Gaines Street redevelopment, College Town is super-close to the FSU stadium and features shopping and entertainment as well as urban housing for college students and young professionals.

All Saints Tucked between Railroad Square and Gaines

Street, the hip area is known for its cool eateries and unique pubs.

Cascades Park History, art, geography and the great outdoors converge at Cascades Park. The newest of Tallahassee's hangouts, the 24-acre park has 2.3 miles of biking and walking trails, an outdoor amphitheater, landscaped

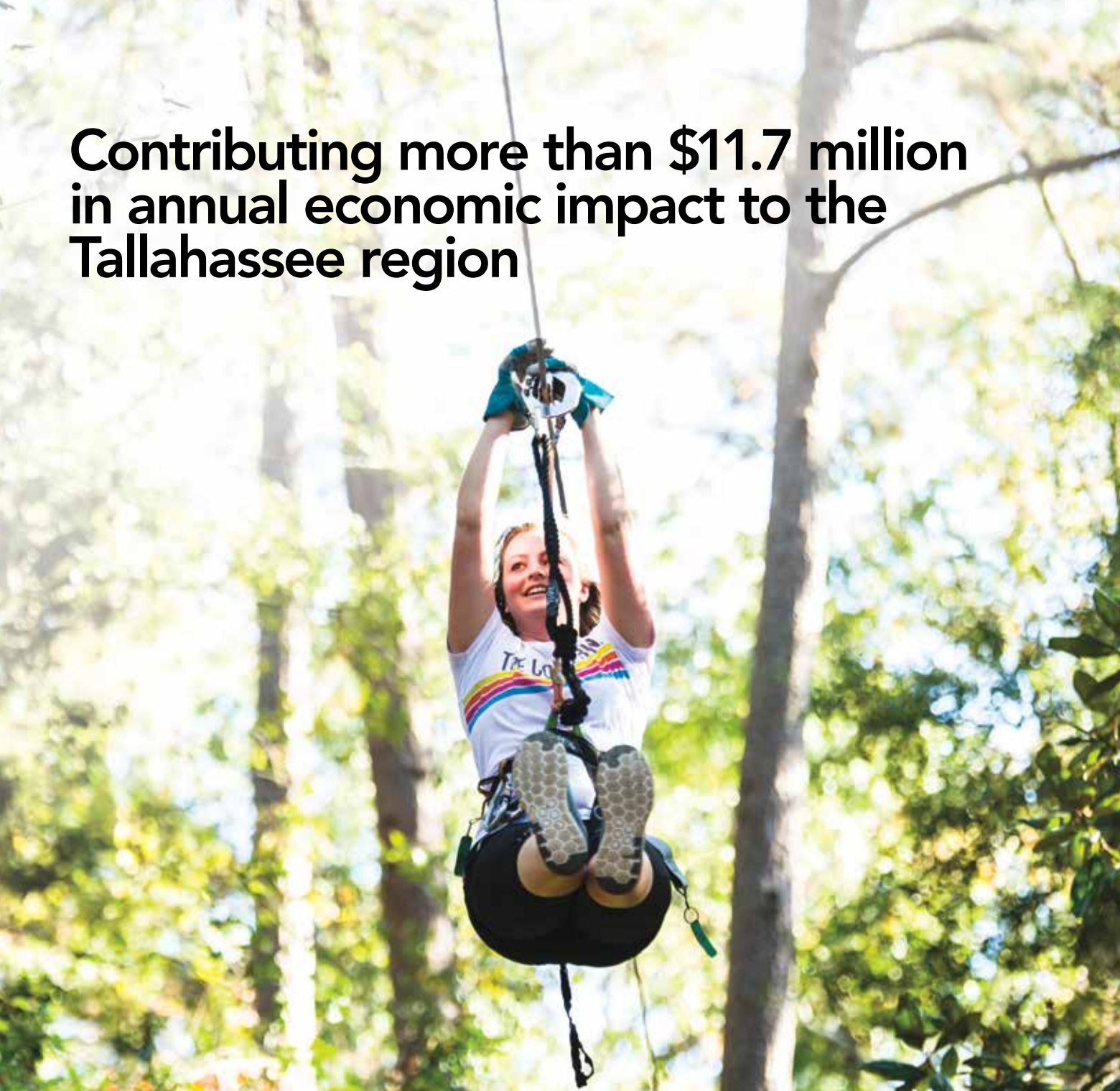
green space and ponds, and an outdoor museum.

Governor's Walk When improvements are made, Governor's Walk will connect midtown from the Governor's Mansion to the Florida Capitol — in essence, creating a walkable stretch that the governor could conceivably take each morning to work. Historic

mansions, iconic businesses and the city's chicest condos and boutique hotels are located in this area.

Capitol Hill Celebrating Tallahassee's Capital Complex, the Capitol Hill District is a combination of past and present, with some of the best architecture in town.

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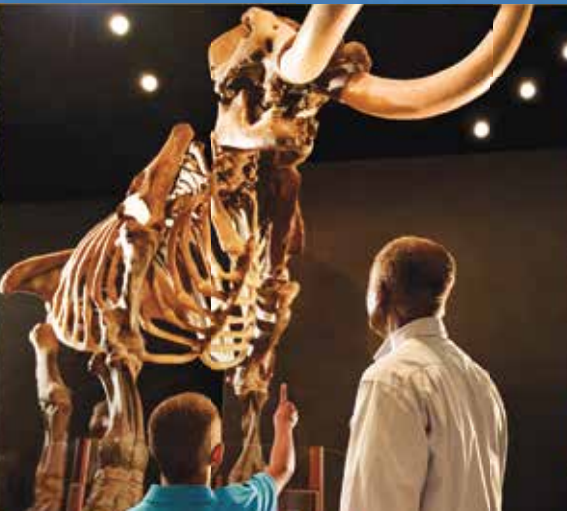




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► **THRIVING CRAFT BEER AND CULINARY SCENE**

The lively Midtown, Gaines Street and Market districts along with four renowned craft breweries amp up a contemporary vibe. Some of the most acclaimed Southern chefs win praise from experts and foodies as Tallahassee-Leon County builds a reputation for innovative, regional cuisine inspired by fresh local produce.



Incubator for **New Business**

Exciting things are happening at CoLab@thePod and Domi Station, Tallahassee's startup incubator program. In the last year, 53 early-stage startup teams have participated in core incubator programs to accelerate their business acumen and experience — success that has not gone unnoticed on the national stage.

In 2014, Tallahassee ranked ninth on the website FiveThirtyEight's list of metro areas with the fastest-growing rate of new startups. In 2015, the city was named a Top 50 City for Entrepreneurs by Entrepreneur magazine, one of only three Florida cities to make the list.

The idea of co-locating and collaborating is not a new idea, but there has been a definite surge in Tallahassee in the last few years," says Lucas Lindsey, executive director of Domi. He feels a chemistry of city, county and other organizations coming together to invest in Tallahassee's en-

trepreneurs, which creates a nurturing environment for startups.

At CoLab@thePod, co-working spaces are conducive to the way the creative community works, with independent private and co-working spaces as well as a conference room for training sessions and meetings.

Domi provides comprehensive space and services for business and tech startups. Their clients are diverse, but Lindsey has noticed that the young millennial entrepreneurs approach business the same way they do life. "People in my generation are hungry to have an impact,"



▲ CoLab@thePod



"A real benefit of being in Tallahassee is its size. Here, the ripple effect travels faster and goes farther."

— **Lucas Lindsey**, Domi Station

Lindsey says. "We want to make a difference right away, and having Tallahassee's size, support and resources makes that easier to do."

One of the newest incubator ventures is KitchenShare @ Heritage Hub, a kitchen rental facility and food business incubator in FrenchTown.

"In 2014, we addressed the food desert in the FrenchTown neighborhood by starting a farmers market," says Betsy Couch, executive director of Knight Creative Communities Institute. "From that effort came the opportunity for a permanent structure

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TALLAHASSEE and Leon County

for the market, which will also house Kitchen-Share @ Heritage Hub for emerging chefs and caterers."

As part of Tallahassee Community College's push to create an entrepreneurial campus from the inside out, Spark! was launched last fall to nurture and grow entrepreneurship. If you're a student, training can be used for college credit. As a community member who works full time, you can get the same training during the evenings and on weekends.

Spark! is housed on the TCC campus, but many of the program's

events are held in the new downtown Tallahassee Innovation Center, which opened last summer. Kimberly Moore, vice president for workforce development at TCC, says, "We envision it as a place where government, nonprofits and the private sector can come together and hold engaged leadership discussions and convene on a variety of topics."

Additionally, Spark! hosts several startup ventures: a retail incubator, Startup Weekend Tallahassee for new businesses, and the Florida Veterans Entrepreneurship Program.

Startups Nurtured at Domi

- **Cuttlesoft** Designers of scalable web and mobile applications.
- **DivvyUp** A buy-one, give-one online sock shop.
- **FullScaleNANO** Software for the analysis of nanomaterial.
- **GrassLands Brewery** Local brewery and taproom that handcrafts beer.
- **HWind Scientific** The world's leading provider of tropical cyclone wind field data; recently acquired by RMS, the world leader in risk management solutions and reinsurance products.
- **NewSci** Provider of Insight-as-a-Service to the education, health care and nonprofit markets.
- **QuarryBio** Covalent labeling technology for therapeutic proteins.
- **Vale Food Co.** Healthy, chef-prepared, daily delivery meal plans.

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Homegrown Businesses with International Reach

Tallahassee's business advantages spur success that extends far beyond the South.

A Leading Lifestyle Brand



▲ Coton Colors

With the motto to “never miss an opportunity to celebrate every day,” Coton Colors has taken advantage of many opportunities since its founding in 1995.

Influenced by a childhood immersed in the colorful culture of Old Miami and engrained with the Southern charm of her home in Tallahassee, lifestyle brand and designer Laura Johnson began hand-painting pottery and clothing for friends. Soon she was flooded with so many orders that she realized she had a business on her hands.

Since then, the company has grown into an international brand sold by more than 3,000 retailers, from multi-location and large department stores to boutiques. The company has been listed on Inc. 5000's list of fastest-growing companies in the U.S. for the past several years.

The flagship store remains in Tallahassee, and much of the business is run by family members. “From its inception, Coton Colors has relied on family ties to make it a successful endeavor,” says Johnson.

Here's a look at local companies doing business on the national — and international — stage.

- **FIGG Bridge Group** Viewing bridges as art, the company has designed bridges throughout the U.S. and in six nations that have won numerous architectural and engineering awards.
- **Municode** Started in 1951, the company serves 4,100 cities and counties in all 50 states with legal codes of ordinances.
- **Moore Communications Group** What started as a local public relations firm has grown into a national presence with offices in Tallahassee, West Palm Beach, Denver and New Orleans. The company has received numerous industry and corporate culture awards.
- **Danfoss Turbocor** The market leader for oil-free centrifugal compressors, the company has transformed the HVAC market with innovative, efficient compressors for buildings and factories.
- **Sachs Media Group** This strategic communications firm with offices in Tallahassee, Orlando, Boca Raton and Washington, D.C., partners with large-sized corporate, non-profit and government organizations to promote brands, issues and services.
- **Golden Lighting** Founded in 1982, Golden Lighting sells decorative lighting products to showrooms and electrical supply houses throughout the United States.

Safe-Keeping America's Interests at Home and Overseas



◀ Datamaxx

The company that Kay Stephenson founded in 1991 in a 600-square-foot building with her kids pitching in after school has grown into the nation's premier provider of advanced communications, data access, information sharing, enterprise intelligence and access control solutions to law enforcement, criminal justice, public safety and security industries.

Today, Datamaxx's client list includes the FBI and every embassy around the world. "Our systems are mission-critical and a necessity in the world of homeland protection," says Stephenson. "Those on the front line, such as the cops on the streets who save lives and protect people, need to share information easily and instantaneously, and that's our job."

Most recently, Datamaxx developed the first-of-its-kind security technology for private sector industries, GREENLIGHT and the REDTAIL Security and Screening Program, which are designated critical infrastructure and key resources.

■ **Mainline Information Systems**

Working across the country and across industries, Mainline has helped companies find solutions for their IT needs for 25 years. Founder Rick Kearney is a well-known local philanthropist; his most recent gift funded the new Kearney Center, a 24-hour comprehensive emergency service center for the homeless.

- **Syntech Systems** Founded in 1970, Syntech is a dynamic defense and commercial engineering design and manufacturing firm that specializes in automated fuel management systems and munitions support equipment. Syntech designed and produced a Manual Operated Lift Truck that is used by the U.S. Air Force and numerous allied air forces to load bombs and missiles on fighter aircraft.

- **Zimmerman Agency** A full service media strategy company, Zimmerman is responsible for some of the country's most creative advertising and marketing campaigns.

- **Parks and Crump Attorneys at Law** Hailed as "this generation's Johnnie Cochran," Benjamin Crump made national news representing the parents of Trayvon Martin. Today, Crump is one of the nation's leading civil rights attorneys and served as president of the National Bar Association in 2015.

- **Marquis Software** The company pioneered data tracking for offenders from jail to prison and has 130,000 users at 400 correctional facilities and 600 offices in eight states.

Research and IT Town

In March 2016, Tallahassee became one of 50 communities from around the U.S. to be awarded a TechHire designation from the White House.

The designation recognizes communities that are taking innovative steps in training the local workforce in various technologies. This training, which helps local talent gain the skills needed for a 21st century economy, is also beneficial to existing tech companies in Tallahassee who hire them.

Research is another specialty in Tallahassee, and with two premier research universities, there is always something new being tested or discovered.

Of most interest recently is the development of the world's strongest magnet built at the Innovation Park site of the FSU-based National High Magnetic Field Laboratory. The discovery is a major advancement in the study of molecular structures in proteins and materials. It will move FSU toward a top 25 university ranking and bring researchers from all over the world to use this new 36T magnet.

FSU has also been working on breakthroughs for the Zika virus. Hengli Tang, professor of biological science at Florida State, discovered that the virus directly targets brain development cells and stunts their growth. "This enables us to focus on studying the right cell type, screening drugs on the right cell

type and studying the biology of the right cell type," says Tang. He also found existing drug compounds that can both stop Zika from replicating in the body and from damaging the crucial fetal brain cells that lead to birth defects in newborns.

The FAMU Division of Research was listed by the National Science Foundation as the nation's No. 1 historically black college or university (HBCU) for total research and development expenditures in 2015. Work includes groundbreaking research by Anthony Ananga, associate professor of food technology at the College of Agriculture and Food Sciences, on flavonoids, which are key antioxidants. Under Ananga's guidance, FAMU student Jasmine Hall made history as the first young scientist to clone and characterize the key enzyme in flavonols, a gene in muscadine grapes.



▲ The National High Magnetic Field Laboratory is the only one of its kind in the U.S. and one of only nine in the world.

IT Firms in Tallahassee-Leon County

- **Aderant North America**
Provider of comprehensive business management software for law and other professional services firms.
- **Citilabs** Products and services that provide the backbone of operational and predictive transportation systems.
- **Coaxis** Fully managed hosting, IaaS, hybrid cloud, back-up and encrypted/complaint communications.
- **Datamaxx Group** Provider of advanced communications, data access, information sharing, enterprise intelligence and access control solutions to the law enforcement, criminal justice, public safety and security industries.
- **Diverse Computing**
Creates technology solutions for criminal justice professionals.
- **EnPointe Technologies**
A specialist in Microsoft-centric IT environments for 20 years.
- **General Dynamics Land Systems** Global leader in the design, development, production, support and enhancement of tracked and wheeled military vehicles.
- **Hayes Software Systems**
Software solutions for schools.
- **Infinity Software Development** IT consulting services and software development.
- **Mainline Information Systems** A 25-year veteran in the IT solutions industry.
- **Marquis Software** Data tracking for correctional facilities.
- **MasTec** Engineering and construction for electrical transmission, oil and natural gas pipelines, renewable energy and wireless networks.
- **Open Text Corporation**
A local presence for a leader in enterprise management.
- **Paul Consulting Group**
Custom programming solutions provider.
- **TalSearch Group** Full-service recruiting firm that matches IT clients and professional job candidates.
- **UberOps** An elite data integration and cloud computer company specializing in medical facilities, including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

TalTech: Allied for Tech Growth



▲ Wendi Cannon

Bent on shaping Tallahassee into the tech capital of Florida, the TalTech Alliance is building collaboration between government, education and business. Its 250 members represent more than 75 area technology-based companies, organizations and institutions. According to TalTech Chairwoman Wendi Cannon, the goal is to create opportunities through education, consulting and networking that grow new ideas into businesses while also promoting the Greater Tallahassee area.

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Center of Synergy



Over the past several years, Tallahassee's community leaders have worked hard to bridge the gaps between various sectors with collaborative projects and problem-solving.

Rather than work parallel, businesses are encouraged to work together to capitalize on resources, knowledge and expertise.

The Greater Tallahassee Chamber of Commerce has been at the forefront of this effort, growing business, advocating for business success and driving value to members as part of its new focus. In doing so, the chamber has facilitated many of the discussions between the professional services, health care, hospitality, and trade-transportation and logistics sectors, the fastest-growing industries in the Tallahassee area, to promote and maximize synergies.

"We are cultivating a community that is vibrant, impactful and an exciting place to be where every person — and every business — can thrive," says Sue Dick, president and CEO.

Tangible examples include expanding Tally Job Hop, which introduces top university students to local employers, and initiating the Talent Lives Here campaign to market Tallahassee as a career destination.

"This is an exciting time for our business community," says Reggie Bouthillier, chamber chairman and shareholder at Stearns Weaver Miller. "As the region's leading business organization, the chamber serves as a bridge between industry and discovering opportunities to drive growth and commerce through collaboration, collective resources and advocacy voice. Together, we will continue to improve Tallahassee's business environment."

▲ TCC's Wakulla Environmental Institute connects education, conservation and recreation with economically viable development.



Training Tomorrow's Entrepreneurs

A huge support for synergies between business and academia is FSU's Jim Moran Institute for Global Entrepreneurship, which

cultivates, trains and inspires entrepreneurial leaders through world-class executive education, applied training, public recognition and leading-edge research. A new school of entrepreneurship funded by the family of the late Jim Moran and the Jim Moran Institute will complement the already rich offerings for entrepreneurs. It's a game changer for the regional business landscape.

Demand-Driven Degrees

Tallahassee Community College's local partnerships are born of community need. "We don't dream up exciting degrees to lure students," says Jim Murdaugh, president. "We are demand driven."

A case in point is TCC's Wakulla Environmental Institute, which connects education, conservation and recreation with environmentally responsible and economically viable development. Concern about Apalachicola's dwindling oyster beds led to the creation of the oyster aquaculture program. Surface, air and aquatic drone training came about from the demand for trained technicians in unmanned technologies.

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Cutting Edge Health Care



▲ Tallahassee Memorial HealthCare

New, improved and expanded health care facilities are a key piece of the economic development pie, but consider their value on a personal level and they become much more than numbers. Focusing on the individual, with personalized care provided by attentive and knowledgeable clinicians and physicians, is the mission of Tallahassee-Leon County's health care providers.

Tallahassee Memorial HealthCare

Tallahassee Memorial HealthCare (TMH) is in the middle of the largest construction project in Leon County history. At a cost of \$260 million, the cutting-edge, 300,000-square-foot M.T. Mustian Center will provide surgical and intensive care services using the latest technologies.

"Years of planning a transformative facility that can be used 50 years from now gives us a platform for new services that support our designation as an emerging quaternary care center," says Mark O'Bryant, president and CEO. This distinction references levels of highly specialized medicine that are not widely accessible.

This advanced level of care, together with minimally invasive, innovative neurosurgery and heart surgery procedures, is revolutionizing medical care in Tallahassee and turning the city into a health care destination. "Historically, we've served a 60-mile radius, but we've become a health care destination, with patients traveling, in some cases, up to 200 miles to be treated," says O'Bryant. TMH's reach extends to New Orleans, mid-Georgia, Central Florida and north to South Carolina, creating an expansive referral footprint.

VA Outpatient Clinic

The new, 197,000-sq.-ft. Tallahassee VA Outpatient Clinic that opened in October employs about 300. VA officials say more than 16,000 patients are served in the North Florida/South Georgia district, the largest in the VA network, and this new facility reduces the need for many veterans to drive to Gainesville or other cities for care. Some 131,000 military veterans live in the Tallahassee area, adding to the diversity of the local workforce.

Capital Regional Medical Center

"People want to have their needs met in the city where they live, and that could not ring truer than in health care," says Mark Robinson, president and CEO of Capital Regional Medical Center (CRMC). "They don't want to drive to Jacksonville or Birmingham. And thankfully, because we are a progressive community hospital with everything needed to care for this town and then some, they don't have to. Our job is to continue providing quality care with new facilities and services, and recruiting and keeping talent here in Tallahassee."

Last year, CRMC opened Capital Regional Medical Care in the Bannerman Crossings Shopping Center to serve northern Tallahassee and Leon County. More than 50,000 people live within a five-mile radius of the site.

"It has been an exciting process. However, the greatest outcome is opening the doors and continuing to live true to our mission, which is keeping people well," Robinson says.

With that in mind, CRMC partners with local businesses to promote wellness initiatives to help employees live healthier lifestyles.



"We have to ensure that all areas of Greater Leon County are served by quality physicians and clinicians so that people can receive care close to home."

— Mark Robinson, CRMC



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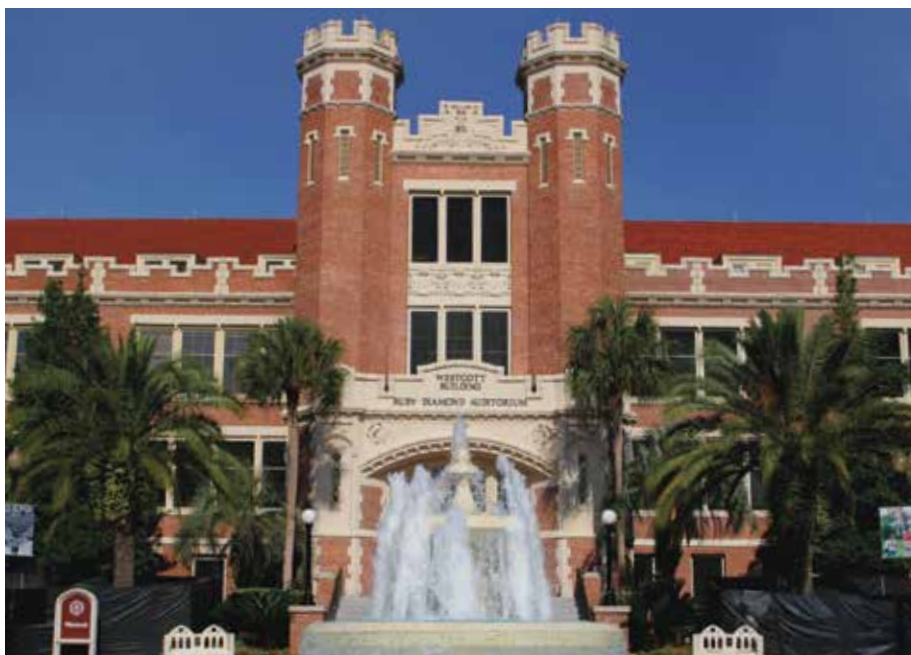


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World-Class Education

STEAM-based K-12 educational programs, two nationally recognized public universities and a top community college make Tallahassee a hub for innovative learning and education.

Tallahassee is ranked the 11th most educated city in the country, placing higher than Raleigh, N.C., and Colorado Springs, Colo., according to a 2016 study by WalletHub. Analysts compared 250 of the most populated metropolitan statistical areas across two key dimensions: educational attainment and quality of education and attainment gap.

Leon High School is the oldest public high school in the state and one of the oldest in the nation. ➤



87.2%

Leon County's High School Graduation Rate
(compared to 82.7% statewide)

While the area's premier postsecondary institutions carried a lot of weight, so did the ranking of Leon County's public schools.

"We have great schools, and they have been strong for decades. But even though we are at the top, we know we can do better," says Rocky Hanna, newly elected Leon County Schools superintendent.

One way is to "quit treating kids as one-size-fits-all" by assessing individual needs and then meeting them with collaboration between the school system and the community, whether it's pursuing a four-year degree or looking at opportunities outside of a college experience.

One such program is LeonWorks, which helps intelligent, capable students who prefer a solid, well-paying trade job over college get the training they need while still in high school. "Events like the Leon Works Expo are aimed at renewing career training in what we call 'skills that pay the bills,'" says Leon County Commissioner Mary Ann Lindley. "Less than two years ago, the school board focused on addressing the workforce gap of skilled workers in our community. Leon Works has been quite the answer."



◀ In addition to advancing knowledge in the molecular basis of human disease, the FSU College of Medicine places a great deal of emphasis on helping students develop their research skills and interests.

Strength, Skill and Character

Florida State University is an integral part of Tallahassee's culture and economy.

In 2014-15, FSU had a \$10 billion economic impact in Florida, with 42,000 students spending \$876 million and contributing \$44 million in sales tax to Leon County. The university has also created 94,160 jobs in Florida.

FSU President John Thrasher, a former state legislator and FSU alumnus, points with pride to the school's outstanding graduation and retention rates. "Our students are among the most academically talented this university has ever seen," he says. "Our retention rate is 93%, and our five-year graduation rate is 79%. That's nine percentage points above the graduation rate that *U.S. News & World Report* predicted for that cohort. Only three institutions in the top 100 exceeded their predicted rate by more than FSU."

As a top-tier research university, FSU is ranked among the top 38 public universities in the nation. Of particular interest to business are the tools and expertise that can be found on campus to help business thrive in today's challenging marketplace. Besides strong undergraduate and graduate programs, FSU focuses on cutting-edge research and its application to industry.

The university's nationally recognized programs include the Center for Intelligent Systems, Control and Robotics; the High-Performance Materials Institute; the National High Magnetic Field Laboratory; the Center for Advanced Power Systems; and the Center for Academic & Professional Development.

Most recently, FSU's College of Business was ranked in the Top 50 on the "America's Best Colleges" rankings by *U.S. News & World Report*. The online graduate programs ranked No. 4 among public and private universities on the 2016 list. The school also has an international reputation for its rigorous curriculum and strong classroom experience.

To support its student-focused initiatives, the university is in the midst of a \$1 billion "Raise the Torch" campaign to improve the student experience, serve as an economic engine for the state through research and job creation, and improve the quality of life through the creation and dissemination of knowledge and ideas. "It's not by accident we list 'improving the student experience' as one of our top priorities," says Tom Jennings, Ph.D., vice president for University Advancement and president of the FSU Foundation. "Florida State is and always will be student-centric. It's in our DNA."

Tallahassee Community College

The College of Choice

A nationally ranked community college, Tallahassee Community College (TCC) serves more than 12,000 students and thousands of additional students in non-credit courses each year. The 50-year-old institution also contributes significantly to the area, employing 1,400 full-time and part-time employees. In 2014-15, annual money generated to the local economy totaled \$385.7 million.

"TCC is student focused, demand driven, and future oriented," says Jim Murdaugh, president. "Our TCC2FSU and TCC2FAMU Golden Guarantee programs provide our graduates with a path to the university of their choice, and our workforce programs prepare students



for all 10 of the top high-wage, high-growth jobs in our region."

TCC offers more than 70 academic and in-demand workforce programs. Its Workforce Development division features a variety of training solutions that address employer needs with industry-specific programs in manufacturing, technology, construction trades, welding and green jobs, to name a few. The division's entrepreneurship hub is a comprehensive program to nurture and grow start up businesses.

◀ TCC's Golden Guarantee programs offer graduates admission to either Florida State University or FAMU.

Florida A&M University

Scholarships, student success and faculty support are top priorities at Florida A&M University. ▶



Excellence with Caring

In late November, FAMU graduate Ibram X. Kendi won the prize for nonfiction at the National Book Awards cere-

mony in New York for his book "Stamped from the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America." On the heels of that achievement, alumni

Bernard and Shirley Kinsey of Pacific Palisades, Calif., gave \$500,000 to FAMU's Marching "100" band. And FAMU interim President Larry Robinson announced a \$5 million initiative to help the university increase its graduation rate, enhance academic programs and recruit top talent.

"This initiative represents a collaborative partnership that increases the possibilities for student success by strengthening opportunities for talented students, and those who need financial support to complete their studies and receive their diplomas," Robinson says.

Founded in 1887, FAMU attracts students from across the nation and more than 70 countries. It is ranked by *Essence* and *Money* magazines as the No. 1 public historically black college or university (HBCU) in the nation and No. 5 overall on their joint list of "50 Best Colleges for African-Americans," behind Princeton, Harvard, Duke and Cornell.

Yearly, the school brings in \$653.6 million to the local economy and has a payroll of \$163.6 million.

FAMU offers 100 degree programs, including 56 undergraduate, 29 graduate, three professional and 12 doctoral degrees. Architecture, business, environmental science, journalism, pharmacy, nursing and agribusiness are among the school's premier fields of study.

FAMU is also known for its Center for Viticulture and Small Fruit Research, Center for Water and Air Quality and Small Business Development Center, which provides counseling for business owners and entrepreneurs.



Ian Macdonald
Commercial Litigation,
Probate Litigation, Real Estate

Keith Bell
Commercial Litigation,
Real Estate, Government Affairs

Trevor Thompson
Appeals, Federal Practice,
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Going Green

Canopy oaks, national forests, natural springs, wetlands, lakes, parks, hike and bike trails — Tallahasseeans love all things green. Naturally, this love extends to a care and concern for the environment that goes beyond preserving and maintaining green spaces.



▲ Icons of Tallahassee's abundance of trees are its 78 miles of canopy roads.

So how does this play into economic vitality? “Generally, people think that sustainability addresses environmental aspects only, but we consider three factors that contribute to quality of life: environment, economy and social equity,” says Maggie Theriot, director, Office of Resource Stewardship for Leon County.

“By making smart, holistic business decisions and investing in social equity — those things that create a vibrant, strong community — the environment almost always benefits.”

Theriot's department leads by example with tested, innovative projects that are transferrable to the private sector, such as utilizing alternative fuels and conducting fuel conservation

programs. The office is also rolling out the PACE (Property Assessed Clean Energy) program to fund residential energy improvements

Another interesting green development is the Sustainable Demonstration Center, which has been transformed into a net-zero facility with the addition of solar power and an ultra-energy-efficient geothermal heating and air systems.

“We saw this as a win-win project,” says Leon County Administrator Vincent S. Long. “In county government, when you can save money, protect natural resources and make a community space even more appealing, we should act. This facility is a great learning opportunity

for the youth who visit daily and for our peers throughout the region.”

A significant green project to be completed in late 2016 is the construction of a utility-scale, 20-megawatt solar farm built on 100 acres at the south end of Tallahassee International Airport. Installed by Origis Energy, the project gives citizens the option of opting in for solar energy at about the same price as natural gas.

Equally exciting are several projects that maximize Tallahassee-Leon County's natural beauty:

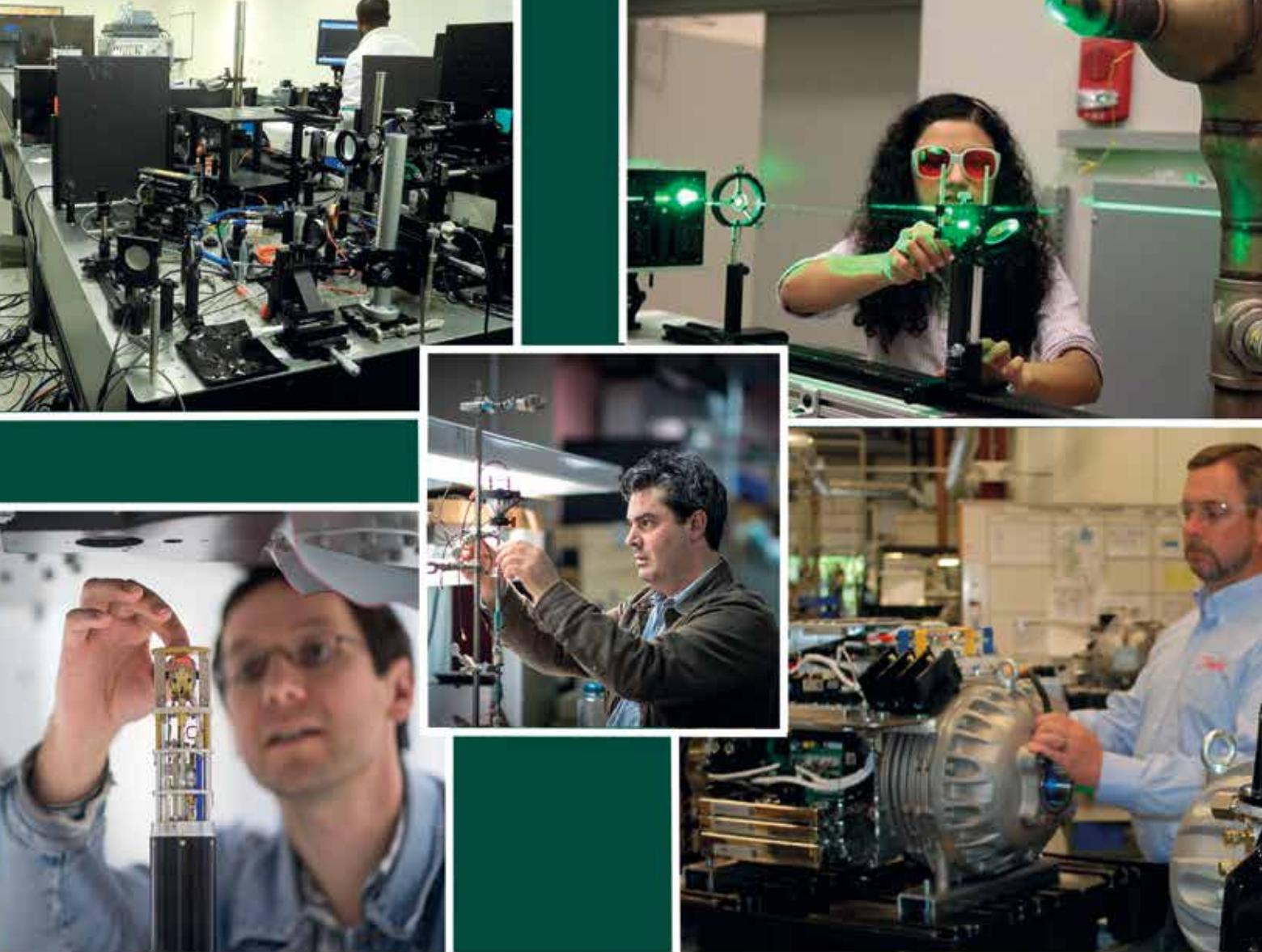
- Trailahassee.com, a compilation of hiking and biking trails suitable for both novices and amateurs.
- Expanded and protected bike lanes throughout the city that have earned Tallahassee a ranking in the top 50 best bike cities by *Bicycling* magazine.
- The October 2016 opening of the Capital Cascades Crossing Bridge and Trail, connecting Cascades Park with FAMU Way and the new Gaines Street development.



▲ Leon County's net-zero building is powered by a 60-kilowatt solar array that doubles as shaded parking.

Space to Roam

- **16,510 acres of Parks**
- **600 miles of Trails**
- **20 Lakes and 5 Rivers**



Innovation begins with bold ideas

Innovation Park of Tallahassee is the place where research and ideas come together to create life-changing discoveries. With two major universities offering matchless research expertise and a dynamic community seeking to collaborate and support new programs and ventures, start-ups and other pioneering businesses have access to an environment designed from the ground-up to foster



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TALLAHASSEE and Leon County

Andrew's
Capital
Grill & Bar,
Downtown
Tallahassee



Tallahassee is an easy — affordable — place to live.

And with an extremely high quality of life, fabulous parks and green spaces, quality jobs, close proximity to world-class beaches, it's also a fun place to live.

Shelly Duffey, who works for the Florida Department of Health, lives for the weekends when she can head outdoors with her fitness-minded friends. "There is always something going on, and I'll go do it just to keep myself moving," she says. "Tallahassee is a great place because of our trails, our hills — which are rare in Florida — and our weather. There are so many groups to join. I'm part of the Gulf Winds Triathletes and two Facebook groups, Can't Stop, Won't Stop and Revolutions Triathlon Training Group, where I can connect with other people who want to get out and train."



Lucas Lindsey, the 27-year-old executive director of Domi Station, often wraps up his day by meeting up with friends at a local restaurant or bar.

"Maybe it's because I'm obsessively involved in the community, but it's cool to not just go to a bar, but to go to a bar where I know the owner, like Gabe at GrassLands," says Lindsey. "I am energized by the people in this town and I love going out — it makes me feel connected. One thing is for sure: There is never a shortage of things to do in Tallahassee."

Scott Balog, chief of staff at Tallahassee Community College, can often be found at one of the area's local music venues or festivals.

"There's something going on every night of the week, and the variety is unbelievable," he says. "Our music scene is evolving, and there are many different venues of different sizes opening up throughout town, which all have their own feel." Among Balog's favorite musicians: strong local talent like the Sarah Mac Band, 6 Pack Deep and Royce Lovett with Motown Gospel. "I've also seen national groups here like the Avett Brothers, the Currys and Jason Isbell," he says. "And to stay connected to the music scene, I volunteer with a number of musical organizations including Word of South, a music and literature festival now in its third year."

(continued on page 48)

Mild Climate ■ **79.5°** Average High Temp
■ **55.8°** Average Low Temp



CEO JEFF ATWATER AT
THE 2016 DINNER



COMMISSIONER ADAM PUTNAM
AT THE 2016 DINNER

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MARCH 8, 2017

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TALLAHASSEE and Leon County

Nefetari Dennard, a 24-year-old self-professed craft queen, started a local Esty-ish craft show, the Fuzzy Pineapple Craft & Art Festival, for artists and DIYers like herself. The first year, 3,000 people attended and the “vendors were super excited about the sales they made,” she says. “We’re not Chicago or New York, but even here, people are interested in the arts and keeping them alive and well.”

Dennard is inspired by the artists in the community, “not only for my own art but because they’ve encouraged me to stick with this. It’s become bigger than me.”

Duffey, Lindsey, Balog and Dennard are different ages, at different stages in life and have different interests, but they share one commonality: a love for Tallahassee-Leon County’s low cost of living and extremely high quality of life.

Median Income Above Florida Average

- **\$68,943** Leon County
- **\$57,176** Florida



▲ Cascades Park Amphitheater



▲ Railroad Square Art Park

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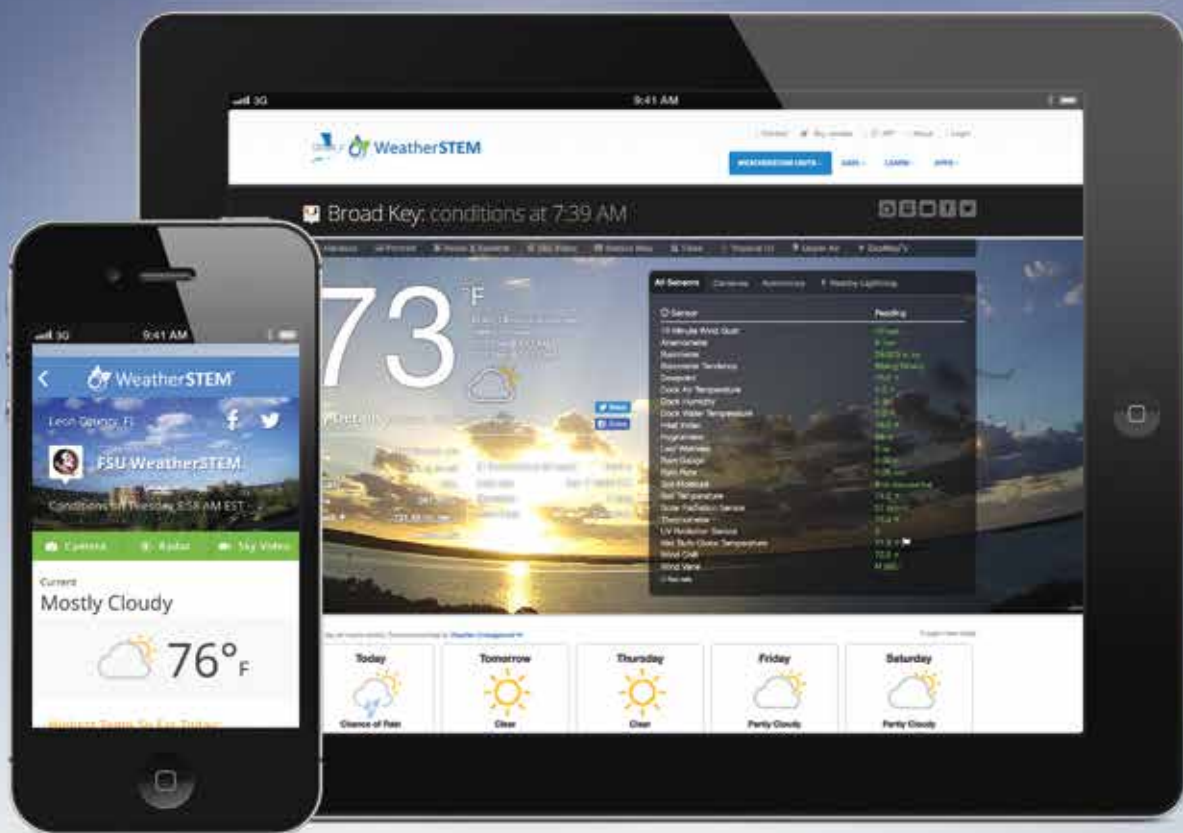
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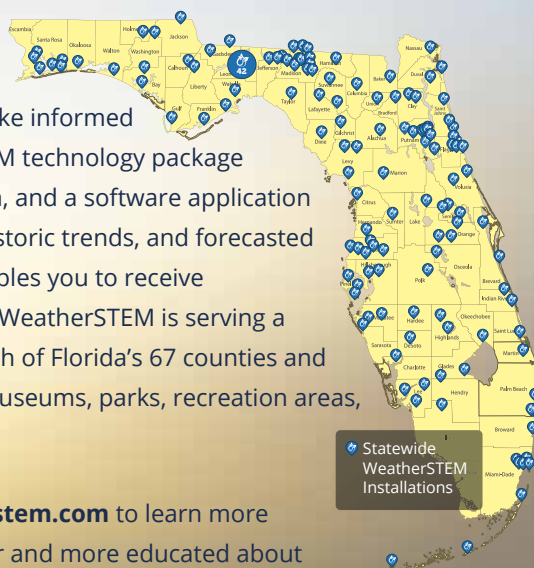


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Destinations and Diversions

Go kayaking in the morning, catch a festival in the afternoon, then spend your evening listening to the sounds of your favorite band.



▲ Kayaking in Wakulla Springs

Historically, Tallahassee has been known for its natural and cultural attractions like Wakulla Springs and Mission San Luis. Another local favorite is the Tallahassee Museum, a 52-acre outdoor museum located on Lake Bradford with history and natural exhibits.

But fueled by Florida's youngest and most educated populace, there is a growing vitality as evidenced in premier entertainment, nationally recognized sports tourism, award-winning restaurants, distinct districts with unique shopping and dining venues, and investments in new hotel projects.

New on the Scene

New venues and attractions are popping up across the Tallahassee-Leon County landscape.

Cascades Park, the crown jewel of Tallahassee's urban parks, was named No. 1 among "Great Places in Florida" by the Florida chapter of the American Planning Association, beating out distinguished finalists like downtowns in Boca Raton, Sarasota and West Palm

Beach and The River District in Fort Myers. The 24-acre park is a redeveloped downtown green space with multi-use trails, playgrounds, picturesque water features and monuments.

The Capital City Amphitheater at Cascades Park seats 3,500 concertgoers. In the past year, it has hosted Alabama Shakes, Sublime with Rome, Peter Dinklage, the Beach Boys, Count Basie Orchestra and other top acts. The site's century-old power plant is now an upscale restaurant, The Edison.

Centre of Tallahassee, a former indoor shopping mall, is being converted to a multi-use complex for shopping, dining, recreation, open-air events and large concerts. Restaurants and retail are planned.

The Centre Pavilion accommodates more than 10,000 concertgoers for shows like Steve Miller, Rascal Flatts and Alice Cooper. At Thanksgiving, the Centre opens its ice-skating rink for seasonal fun.

Railroad Square Art Park compris-



▲ Mission San Luis

es art galleries, studios, shops, cafes, a performance theater and a craft-beer brewery occupying reclaimed railroad warehouses. Its hip culture is spreading to other parts of the city, most visibly in street art that includes imaginative murals by international and local artists.

Brewing Up a Good Time

Tallahassee's Brew District along Gaines Street contains two craft breweries: Proof, now a regional distributor; and Grasslands. Nearby are the craft-centric Brass Tap tap room and Madison Social, a bustling local restaurant featuring craft beers and an imaginative food menu. The compact Brew District is headquarters for large events and competitions such as the Florida Tap Invitational.

(continued on page 52)



▲ Food Truck Thursday

The GARNET and GOLD STANDARD

Ben Bowersox, MBA '09
Veteran, U.S. Navy
Wealth Adviser, Capital City Trust Company



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Before retiring as a Navy officer in 2010, **Ben Bowersox** decided to seek out and pursue a **Master of Business Administration (MBA)** online from Florida State University's College of Business.

Bowersox said he chose FSU because of its flexibility. The program allows students to complete coursework at times that work best for them each week. "I found that FSU's program was fully online with no campus visit required. That made it very pro-military."

Now a wealth adviser for Capital City Trust Company in Tallahassee, Fla., Bowersox encourages fellow veterans to follow his lead. "Sure you can have a great career after the military without a graduate degree, but why not differentiate yourself and add value to your resume?"

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TALLAHASSEE and Leon County

Other breweries putting Tallahassee on the craft-beer map are Momo's, Deep, Lake Tribe, Tallahassee Brew Bus and Growler Country.

Coffee breweries and shops like Lucky Goat Coffee Co., Catalina Café Coffee Roaster and Bakery, and RedEye Coffee have local followings.

Distinct districts include Downtown, Gaines Street, Midtown and Market, each with its own local restaurants, one-of-a-kind shops and live-music venues. Found only within these Tallahassee districts are Lofty Pursuits ice-cream parlor and candy store, Fifth & Thomas Kitchen and Musichouse, Cole Couture women's boutique, Fire Betty's Arcade Bar, and Fermentation Lounge. Latest additions include Backwoods Crossing, Table 23 — A Southern Porch, Table and Bar, and Blu Halo, featuring steaks, seafood and a martini bar.



▲ Grasslands Brewing Company

As a new entertainment mecca, the city's growing number of venues for live shows now includes Florida State's Doak Campbell Stadium, which hosted its first concert in 30 years last Veterans Day Weekend. Doak joins the Donald L. Tucker Civic Center, Capital City Amphitheater, The Moon, Centre Pavilion and Ruby Diamond Auditorium as venues for top-tier entertainment.

Florida's Sports Capital

In 2009, Leon County realized a dream of developing a permanent site for **competitive cross-country running**. Today, national, regional and state championships are decided at Tallahassee's Apalachee Regional Park, one of the finest facilities of its kind.

The 140-acre park hosted 10 major cross-country championships in 2016, attracting more than 20,000 visitors and generating \$8.4 million in direct visitor spending. The park is equipped with fiberoptic technology to monitor running times and video equipment to broadcast races in progress — one of the reasons the Florida Sports Foundation named it 2016 Sports Venue of the Year in mid-size markets.

Trailahassee.com connects outdoor enthusiasts to a network of 600 scenic miles of **running, biking, paddling and equestrian** trails in town and in

the countryside. The award-winning website advises consumers with mapping technology, personalized features and details on outfitters and trail associations.

Premier swimming landed Tallahassee firmly on the global sports map when USA Swimming ranked it in the 35 best swimming cities for 2016. The British Diving Team chose FSU's Morcom Aquatics Center as its training facility ahead of the 2016 Olympic Games. USA Diving has hosted regional and national championships at Morcom.

You can't talk sports in Tallahassee without talking **competitive soccer**, which brings in an estimated 8,500 visitors in April for the Florida State Invitational Soccer Tournament. The two-day tourney for girls and boys ages 7-18 is the largest of its kind in the Southeast.

In all, youth and adult sports accounted for an estimated 73,000 visitors and \$31.6 million in visitor spending.

While Florida is one of the few places you can play **golf** year round, "People are always amazed at the live oaks and elevation changes on the courses," says

▲ Apalachee Regional Park

Trey Jones



Trey Jones, head coach, director of golf at FSU and two-time ACC Coach of the Year. "They are also surprised by how many clubs we have — eight in Leon County and five within an 8-mile radius. And they are all different. Golden Eagle is built on a lake system, while Southwood was designed around an old plantation."

Part of Jones' recruiting talk is weather. "The average in Atlanta during winter is 42 degrees. The average for Tallahassee is 51 — that's a huge difference when you're on the golf course." Another reason golf is so attractive here: the low cost. "Because we have so many courses, you can play a really nice course for an affordable price," Jones says.

In May 2017, Tallahassee will host its second NCAA Women's Regional Tournament, just one of the premier youth and collegiate golf events held in the area.





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Charlie Morris's business blows up around holidays in more ways than one. Charlie's Kool Kreationz, founded in 2008, sells balloon bouquets and balloons filled with goodies such as stuffed animals, t-shirts, candy, jewelry, and even live plants.

Charlie, who shows ingenuity and an outstanding work ethic, loves the opportunity his business has given him. "I like working with balloons, and it is something I can do in a wheelchair. I am able to use my creativity in making the gift balloons. I enjoy what I am doing."

If you are looking for a quality employee like Charlie, contact AbilitiesWORK. We help connect employers with thousands of talented candidates who have disabilities.

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An Emerging Creative Community



▲ Tallahassee Symphony Orchestra

A city that inspires. Local artists who create. Tallahassee's emerging arts community gets plugged in.

Big things are happening on the Tallahassee art scene, and Audra Pittman is determined to plug everyone in.

"There's so much going on, so much to do," says Pittman, executive director for the Council on Culture & Arts (COCA). "We are quickly becoming the festival capital of the Southeast. Take April, for example. It is jam-packed with events."

Complementing the city's many venues and activities is a cultural awakening that Pittman credits to the completion of Gaines Street and Cascades Park. "The area's identity is coming from the artists themselves. The creative energy is real, and so many artists feel empowered to create here," Pittman says.

COCA's job is to advocate for and support the arts in ways that create economic stability for the area's creative class. "We are a chamber for the arts — what the business chamber does for business, we do for the arts," she explains. "Our goal is to grow our emerging creative economy. People are already gathering in Tallahassee; we just need to keep supporting our artists and spreading the word that our community is a substantive cultural destination."

Outdoor art abounds in Tallahassee with more than 200 iconic, historic and quirky works of art, like this mural by Street Art Tallahassee. Outdoor sculptures, murals, windows, monuments and memorials can be viewed from the street, sidewalk or other public locations. ▶



Artrepreneurs Unite

Think "Etsy meets your favorite Pinterest board ..." that's how local "artrepreneur" Charity Myers describes her gift boutique, POP! Shop, which opened in Railroad Square last summer.

An artist and graphic designer with a national client base, Myers wanted to find a way to reconnect with the art community in Tallahassee.

"This area has always been known to have artists and alternative shopping, but with the expansion of



▲ POP! Shop

FAMU Way and Cascades Park and the Gaines Street revitalization, it felt like the perfect time to come re-join the community," she says. "It's a great mix of artists, some of whom have been here a long time, but there is also an influx of young artists and entrepreneurs. Even though we are all doing our own thing, there is a lot of collaboration and sense of community. Everyone supports and promotes each other. It's an inspiring place, and you want to be part of it."

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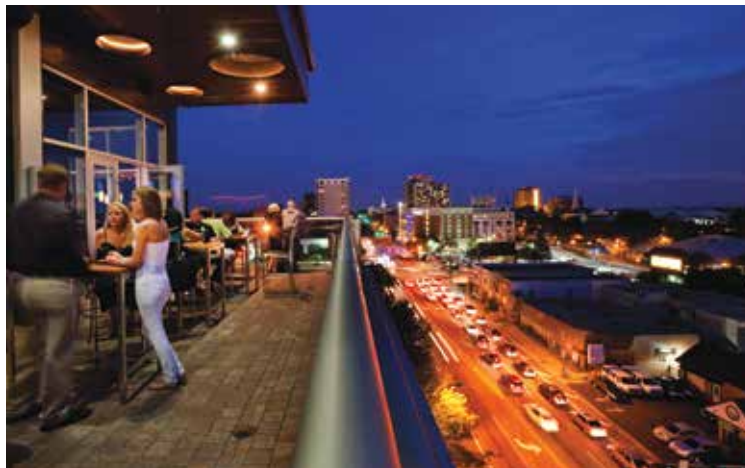
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▲ The View from Hotel Duval

Florida's capital region is a year-round destination where history, fine dining and outdoor activities attract visitors in record numbers.



“Tallahassee has an energy now that is much more sophisticated and vibrant than even five years ago. Every weekend events are taking place all over town.”

– Kerri Post,
Visit Tallahassee

First of all, history runs deep here. Some of North America's earliest colonial history occurred in Tallahassee. Mission San Luis, a 17th century mission recreated in the archaeological footprint of the original, brings to life the blended culture of Spanish friars and Apalachee Indians. In 1539, Hernando de Soto and his troops made their winter encampment here and are believed to have celebrated North America's first Christmas Mass.

Second, Tallahassee is a dining destination that ex-

perts love. *Florida Trend* magazine annually issues Golden Spoon awards to multiple Tallahassee restaurants. In 2016, Golden Spoons were awarded to Cypress, Food Glorious Food, Masa and Shula's 347. *South* magazine's 2016 "Greatest Southern Chefs" included the chefs at Tallahassee's Backwoods Crossing, Cypress and Fifth & Thomas Kitchen and Musichouse. Local produce and fresh seafood from the nearby coast are key ingredients.

Here you will find "one of the best soda fountains in

the country," per the *New York Times*. Lofty Pursuits is one of the country's few sweet shops where old-fashioned hard candies are made with equipment dating to the 1800s. While he loves all things vintage, owner Greg Cohen's candy-making videos attract millions of viewers on YouTube.

In the great outdoors, mountain-biking is popular in Tallahassee because of its challenging hills, rarely found in Florida. And nearby spring-fed rivers are among the few places in the nation where paddlers can view rare manatees in the wild.



▲ The Tallahassee Museum offers adventurous visitors the opportunity to zipline through a cypress swamp and conquer aerial games and obstacles 60 feet off the ground.

Tourism's Impact

- **2.3 million** Annual Visitors
- **\$533 million** Visitor Spending
- **\$841 million** Total Economic Impact
- **13,700** Tourism Jobs
- **\$5.2 million (7th record year)** Tourist Development Tax Collected

Gadsden County

The Perfect Place to Grow Business in the Capital Region

Gadsden County is home to global distributors and manufacturers that depend on the county's positive business climate and vast transportation network to serve their customers. The region's unsurpassed quality of life and mild climate allow residents and visitors to do something original most every day.

Located in the Tallahassee MSA, Gadsden County has seven business parks including parcels zoned for heavy and light industry, commercial and office uses and warehousing. Businesses of all types and sizes are finding a great selection of sites to choose from. Gadsden County is ideal for any business that serves tourists or travelers or any company that makes products or moves freight.

Gadsden County is also a leading participant in Florida's Strategic Sites Inventory program, having identified 20 large acreage industrial sites ranging in size from 200 to 1,500 acres. These sites have passed stringent suitability modeling and are proximate to Florida's Strategic Intermodal System assets such as Interstate 10, four-lane highways, CSX and AN railroads and the ports of St Joe, Panama City and Jacksonville. Gadsden County is actively positioning priority sites for development through the creation of a four-county Freight Logistics Zone connecting transportation assets from Gadsden to Gulf counties.

Successful Business Expansions

Companies seeking to expand their operations by moving out of leased space and into land/facility ownership are finding exceptional options in Gadsden County that include: four I-10 interchanges with available utilities; existing buildings, business parks and strategic sites; streamlined permitting and a local economic development grant program.

Innovative Education Partnerships

Gadsden Technical Institute (GTI) and Four Star Freightliner (FSF) are training diesel mechanics using the GTI campus for classroom instruction and the new FSF location for hands-on experience. Each student completing the course can enter the workforce with a complete set of tools provided by FSF. This new pipeline of in-demand skills will support multiple employers in the region as identified by CareerSource Capital Region.

Key Infrastructure Investments

A key component to the successful expansion of Four Star Freightliner is the Florida Rural Infrastructure Fund. Gadsden County was awarded \$387,585 in competitive funds to extend water, wastewater and electric utilities provided by Talquin Electric Cooperative to the chosen site along a newly constructed public road.



Four Star Success

Four Star Freightliner, a leading heavy and medium duty truck dealer of Freightliner, FUSO and Western Star brand trucks for both highway and vocational use, has chosen a greenfield build-to-suit solution for their 25,000-square-foot sales and service operations in Gadsden County with I-10 visibility and easy customer access. The \$2.5 million capital investment retains 18 employees and allows for an additional 10 jobs at an average wage of \$50,000.



www.GadsdenFLDev.com
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Calendar of Events



So much to do ... so little time. With so many festivals year-round, it's apparent that Tallahassee has lots to celebrate.

▲ Word of South

SEASONAL

Spring on Stage

(March – May)

Tallahassee celebrates its glorious spring weather with outdoor festivals, al fresco dining and national acts performing in the Capital City Amphitheater at Cascades Park. Spring concerts in 2016 featured Jason Isbell, O.A.R. and Dawes.

Downtown Marketplace

(March – November)

On Saturdays, stroll through the downtown Chain of Parks and shop local produce, baked goods, eggs, meat, fresh-cut flowers, native plants, jewelry, arts and crafts.

Opening Nights Performing Arts

(Year-round)

The prestigious Opening Nights performing-arts series, in conjunction with Florida State University, brings acclaimed artists, musicians, comedians and authors to the Capital City. The 2016-17 roster includes Smokey Robinson, Lily Tomlin, Lang Lang, Chris Botti, Marc Maron and Anne-Sophie Mutter.

The Artist Series

(Year-round)

The Artist Series of Tallahassee hosts outstanding classical ensembles and soloists including eminent string quartets, master pianists and woodwind artists, such as Fandango, Simone Porter and Vassily Primakov in the Opperman Music Hall at FSU.

FEBRUARY

Tallahassee Marathon & Half Marathon

Starting in downtown, the course showcases local landmarks, parks, neighborhoods and business districts. A sanctioned USA Track & Field event and a qualifying event for the Boston Marathon.

MARCH

Florida Legislature

The Capital City buzzes with activity leading up to and during the annual legislative session. Visitors may view the House and Senate chambers from public galleries. The 22nd floor of the Capitol offers a panoramic view of the region.

Red Hills International Horse Trials

Olympic riders and horses compete in this international equestrian three-day event that includes dressage, cross country and stadium jumping competitions.

FSU's Flying High Circus



Springtime Tallahassee Festival & Grand Parade

Annual celebration of spring kicks off with a concert by a national recording artist on Friday night and continues on Saturday with one of the largest and most celebrated parades in the Southeast, Jubilee in the Park art show, the Children's Park and a 5K run.

APRIL

Flying High Circus

One of two collegiate circuses in the nation, the Flying High Circus is a unique tradition at FSU. The performances offer a variety of jaw-dropping routines, both in air and on the ground, that rival professional shows.

Word of South Festival

The festival celebrates renowned masters of literature and music with a variety of musical performances, literary discussions, poetry readings, interviews, book signings and a dedicated children's program. The festival also features big-name concerts in the Capital City Amphitheater.

▲ Springtime Tallahassee Festival & Grand Parade

LeMoyné Chain of Parks Art Festival

Annual two-day juried art festival held beneath the oak trees in the downtown Chain of Parks. Browse artwork for purchase from more than 150 artists from around the country and enjoy food and live music.

MAY

Southern Shakespeare Festival

The open-air festival and Renaissance fair includes live Shakespearean performances, face-painting, juggling, crown and wand-making, Elizabethan games and costume play for children.

Emancipation Celebration

To commemorate the first reading in Florida of the Emancipation Proclamation on May 20, 1865, the Knott House Museum reenacts the historic reading on the very steps where it occurred, brought to life by re-enactors in period clothing, group singing and a picnic.

(continued on page 60)



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JUNE

Tallahassee Latin Dance Festival

A weekend of culture, fun and fitness with dance workshops and performances.

Florida African Dance Festival

Three days of internationally renowned artists in dance and drum workshops and performances.

SEPTEMBER

Downtown Getdown & Seminole Block Party

On Friday evenings before home games, football fans fill downtown for pre-game festivities featuring concerts, food, adult beverages, arts, crafts and activities especially for families and children.



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Tallahassee Community College

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Sylvia Myers, Assistant Principal, Kate Sullivan Elementary School. Leon County Teacher of the Year. TCC and Flagler College-Tallahassee graduate.



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OCTOBER

Experience Asia Festival

Cultural offerings such as the famous Maturiza Japanese drummers, exhibits, demonstrations and cuisine representing the wonders of Japan, China, the Philippines, India, the Middle East, Indonesia, the Polynesian Islands and Hawaii.

Greek Food Festival

Enjoy all things Greek at this two-day festival: pastries, gyros, spanakopita, moussaka, ouzo and more, plus Greek music, dancing and tours of the beautiful Holy Mother of God Greek Orthodox Church.

NOVEMBER

North Florida Fair

The region's largest agricultural fair features 4H and FFA competitions and exhibits, livestock show, arts and crafts, entertainment, carnival rides, games and food.

Bradley's Fun Day

On the Saturday before Thanksgiving, Fun Day features live music, clogging, sugar cane grinding, syrup making, food, arts and crafts, a petting zoo and wagon and pony rides.

DECEMBER

Winter Festival & Jingle Bell Run

The 3K Jingle Bell Run/Walk, a parade, live entertainment, arts and crafts and lighting ceremony turn downtown into a winter wonderland.

Market Days

One of the Southeast's largest and most popular juried arts and crafts shows, featuring more than 300 vendors.

Winter Solstice Celebration

Celebrations at the 17th century Mission San Luis include a commemorative Mass, drum circle, dancing, storytellers, history presentations, arts, crafts and period food.

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Community with Heart



▲ Boys' Choir of Tallahassee

“We have one of the more generous, thoughtful communities, especially considering that we don’t have a lot of large corporations,” says Steve Uhlfelder, a Tallahassee lawyer who has advocated for many causes here and currently sits on the United Way board. “There is also a lot of camaraderie between organizations, which makes a huge difference when you are trying to get something done.”

Joy Watkins, president and CEO of the **Community Foundation of North Florida**, agrees. Her organization helps people and organizations accomplish long-term, permanent charitable goals. The foundation is rapidly approaching \$50 million in assets and in 2017 will celebrate its 20th anniversary. “In just 20 short years, in addition to regular annual support for local charities, people in this community have committed nearly \$50 million to support good causes for generations,” says Watkins. “We see philanthropy growing every day.”

Agency for Persons with Disabilities

Tallahassee-Leon County benefits from myriad state services located in the Capital City. One in particular is the Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD), specifically tasked with serving the needs of Floridians with developmental disabilities and their families.

“APD enjoys access to the seat of Florida government here in Tallahassee,” says Director Barbara Palmer. “We are positioned to have greater access to the governor and lawmakers, and because of their outstanding support, APD has been able to offer community services to an additional 6,000 people over the past four years. Tallahassee is a great place to live and raise a family, and APD is here to help all Florida families that include someone with a develop-

mental disability so they may live, learn and work in their community.”

Boys' Choir of Tallahassee

They have performed around the world and are one of the area’s best-loved outreach programs. The Boys’ Choir of Tallahassee targets males ages 8 to 18, typically from single-parent, low-income homes, to foster academic excellence, social responsibility and to help them realize their full potential. Almost all of the young men continue to college or the military after high school.

Big Bend Cares

One of the most exciting additions to Tallahassee-Leon County is the construction of a new full-service medical facility on the southside of town for Big Bend Cares, which provides education and support to people infected with or affected by HIV/AIDS. When complete, the facility will be a one-stop medical home for patients in the area.

Boys Town

Boys Town North Florida, one of Tallahassee’s favorite projects, has been serving children and families since 1983 by providing stable, secure and loving family settings for displaced and at-risk children.

(continued on page 64)

Opening Doors to Opportunity, Housing, Independence

What began as a charitable effort by a local church is now the Kearney Center, a state-of-the-art shelter providing comprehensive emergency services for Leon County’s homeless population. The West Pensacola Street site has the look and feel of a home, with room to house up to 390 guests. The center provides short-term housing along with guidance and counseling that ideally will lead to permanent or transitional housing.



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The Jim Moran Institute for Global Entrepreneurship cultivates, trains and inspires entrepreneurial leaders through world-class executive education, applied training, public recognition and leading-edge research. Since the Jim Moran Institute's inception more than 20 years ago, it has served the Tallahassee business community by facilitating new business and furthering the goals of established businesses. As the challenge of operating and growing a small business becomes increasingly complex, the Jim Moran Institute remains a source of expertise and executive education.

www.jimmoraninstitute.fsu.edu


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Able Trust

The Able Trust, also known as the Florida Endowment Foundation for Vocational Rehabilitation, provides people with disabilities the opportunity for successful employment. The Able Trust youth program includes career development and transition coaching for students with disabilities to help reduce the dropout rate and prepare young adults for life beyond high school.

United Way of the Big Bend

The United Way works to address the root causes of community issues like education and graduation rates, affordable and accessible healthcare,

mental health, financial stability and education, hunger, shelter, child abuse and domestic violence. "We support the human service needs in our community by working through our 38 agency partners in Leon County but also programs in an eight-county footprint," says Katrina Rolle, president and CEO. "Our internal programs fill gaps not addressed by our agency partners."

One of these programs is Reading Pals, which matches mentors one-to-one with students in kindergarten through second grade. In 2015, data showed that 73% of kids in the program increased their reading scores from fall to spring by at least one year's worth of growth.

FSU Dance Marathon



It's a bunch of college kids dancing for a good cause — and dance they do, to the amount of nearly \$8 million since it began 21 years ago. Dance Marathon at Florida State University is a year long effort that culminates with an annual 40-hour event where more than 1,800 students stay awake and on their feet to raise money for the local Children's Miracle Network Hospital, Shands Children's Hospital and the FSU College of Medicine.



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Big Bend Minority Chamber of Commerce



BBMC Board Members (from left to right): John Grayson, Harold Knowles, Antonio Jefferson, Scott Vedder, Gina Kinchlow (Interim President), Sean Pittman (Founder and Chair), Jim Murdaugh, Lila Jaber, Chuck Cliburn.



We might be viewed as the new “kids” on the block, but collectively we bring more than 200 years of experience to the organization, and we seriously accept our assignment to **boost north Florida’s economic ecosystem by helping minority and women business owners** thrive over the long term. So whether it’s hosting wealth-building workshops, meeting with key decision makers, or matching our members to big-business opportunities, our focus is spot-on... strategic...and it works.

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Capitalizing on State Government



▲ The Capitol Rotunda

There once was a time when Tallahassee was dependent on state government as its main economic base. "We were thought of as a 'company town,' with the 'company' being government," says Fred Baggett, managing partner of the Tallahassee office of Greenberg Traurig and a longtime community advocate. "Well, that's what it may have been, but that's not what Tallahassee is today."

Today, Tallahassee-Leon County-based businesses that work directly or indirectly with the government sector — and even those that don't — have the benefit of leveraging the definite advantages that come with being located in close proximity to Florida's "policy capital."

"We are close to the decision-makers and power brokers," says Frank Rudd, president and CEO of Florida Society

of Association Executives (FSAE), a fact not lost on the FSAE membership of 400 associations in Tallahassee alone.

No doubt, "the state is a great resource," says Cissy Proctor, executive director of Florida Department of Economic Opportunity. "We like to think of the state as part of the community, and we want Tallahassee to take advantage of all we have to offer."

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Local and Proud

Up-and-comers on the business scene wouldn't thrive without the strong, established mainstays in Tallahassee's business community. Their deep knowledge and expertise provide guidance to newer businesses, but also create a firm foundation on which to build innovations of their own.

Garnet & Gold

The go-to store for all things FSU, Garnet & Gold has three locations and a website with 25 million visits annually. It employs 5,000 college students.

Proctor Car Dealerships

The third generation owners have expanded the business beyond selling Hondas, Acuras, Subarus and used cars to a full-service advertising agency, Compass Marketing & Consulting. The company opened in 1910.

NAI TALCOR

Founded in 1990, this real estate brokerage firm specializes in North Florida commercial properties and is the largest locally owned commercial real estate firm in Tallahassee. President Ed Murray is a major player in Tallahassee-Leon County economic development initiatives.

Capital City Bank Group

Providing banking services since 1880, CCBG is consistently listed in regional business publications as a "best place to work."

Super-Lube

The independently owned and operated oil change company has 40 corporate stores and 10 franchise stores in Florida, Alabama, Illinois and Wisconsin.



▲ Three generations of the Gavalas family operate Nic's Toggery stores in Tallahassee.

Nic's Toggery

Established in 1950, Nic's has clothed generations of Tallahassee power brokers. For 13 years, it has been named a "Top 100 Men's Store" in the U.S. by *Esquire* magazine.

Ajax Building Corporation

Founded in 1958, the company got its start restoring historic buildings in Tallahassee and on the FSU campus. Today it is one of the fastest-growing construction companies in the nation.

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People to Know

Interested in developing community relationships or new ventures? Get to know the movers and shakers in the Tallahassee-Leon County business world.



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President
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Group

Fred Baggett
Tallahassee Managing
Shareholder
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Martha Barnett
Former President
American Bar Association;
Retired Senior Partner
Holland & Knight



Randy Blass
Executive Director
Jim Moran Institute for
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Southern Strategy Group

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Dominic Calabro
President & CEO
Florida TaxWatch



Tony Carvajal
Executive Vice President
Florida Chamber
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Tim Center
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Jorge Chamizo
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Marshall Criser III
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John E. Dailey
Chairman, Leon County Commission

Dustin Daniels
Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office
City of Tallahassee

Claudia Davant
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People to Know



Russell Daws
President/CEO
Tallahassee Museum

Tom Delacenserie
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Florida Lottery



Bryan Desloge
Leon County
Commissioner;
President, National
Association of Counties

Brett Doster
Founder and President
Front Line Strategies

Kristin Dozier
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Sue Dick
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Laurie Dozier
Founder and President
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