GREATER

GAINESVILLE

By Michael Candelaria
Greater Gainesville

More than a “sleepy little college town,” the Greater Gainesville area is battling its way up the ranks both across Florida and nationwide. And doing so with surprising economic muscle.

By Michael Candelaria
Greater Gainesville is Transitioning

Alachua County has a population of approximately 264,000, including nine cities — most notably, of course, Gainesville. And, located off Interstate 75 in North Central Florida, Gainesville sits a highway drive away from the nearest metro area, roughly 90 minutes from Jacksonville and two hours or so from Tampa and Orlando.

Is Gainesville a true city or more of a town, anyway? Fair question. Let’s call it a tweener, largely, steadily, transitioning from rural to urban. In sports talk, that’s a "player who has some but not all of the necessary characteristics for each of two or more positions," as defined by Merriam-Webster.

Boxing terminology brings the point a bit closer, with the loose definition of a fighter who can effectively move in and out of weight classes, and still have impact.

That’s Gainesville, top to bottom.

And, oh, does Gainesville pack a punch — from economic development and entrepreneurship to education and health care to lifestyle and the surrounding region as a whole.

“Gainesville punches way above its weight class” is a phrase shared by numerous local leaders.

Buoyed by collaboration and a maturing ecosystem, Gainesville is a world-recognized leader in biotechnology business incubation.

At last tally, Alachua County agriculture and related industries accounted for $1.49 billion in gross regional product, representing 11.8% of the GRP.

North Florida Regional Medical Center, formerly the area’s “community hospital,” is in the midst of a $90 million expansion project that includes adding three floors to its main facility. And it’s not even the largest hospital group.

Tourism’s annual impact on the county’s economy exceeds $1 billion, a testament to the area’s lifestyle.

The county’s millennial talent pool is nearly 50% greater than the national average, and its unemployment rate hovers at less than 4%.

To the east in the rural city of Hawthorne, Weyerhaeuser Co., one of the world’s largest private owners of timberlands, is developing a business park that contains 634 shovel-ready acres zoned for 3.5 million square feet of industrial space.

"The change in energy is palpable."

– Eric Godet, President/CEO
Greater Gainesville Chamber of Commerce
The city of Newberry, to the west, has big plans in the form of Agri-Tech Innovation Park.

On the northwest outskirts of the city, San Felasco Tech City is rising on an 82-acre site that’s across the street from a 7,200-acre natural preserve.

Those are just a few of the highlights.

Not coincidentally, as the Greater Gainesville Chamber of Commerce likes to tout, “Opportunity is abundant and well-rounded.”

“The change in energy is palpable,” says Eric Godet, president/CEO of the Greater Gainesville Chamber of Commerce. “It’s an exciting time.”

A few other common descriptions spanning assorted area sectors: “There’s something about this place.” ... “This is a best-kept secret.” ... “I would have never been able to do this outside of Gainesville.” ... “Gainesville is becoming a household name.” ... “It’s a place that’s maturing.” ... “Gainesville is more than a sleepy little college town.”

Indeed, little and college simply don’t go together around these parts. Instead, the words University and Florida surely do. In a very big way.

The University of Florida. UF, maybe you’ve heard.

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Workforce Draws From A Competitive Talent Pool

For starters, consider this statistic, as reported by the Greater Gainesville Chamber of Commerce: When it comes to millennials in the workforce, the region holds nearly 50% more talent compared to the national average. That represents more than 86,000 young people, many of whom are college educated and others who are willing.

"The result is a competitive talent pool — from the most skills to those most in need — ready to get to work and fill the immediate needs of our high-demand, high-growth businesses."

– Frank Avery, Executive Director CareerSource North Central Florida

Not coincidentally, with the regional unemployment hovering between 3% and 4%, much of the five-year strategic plan for CareerSource North Central Florida (encompassing Alachua and Bradford counties) is focused on vocational training — helping job seekers prepare, search, train for and identify career opportunities. The priorities, among others, include entrepreneurship training, earn-while-you-learn programs, soft-skills training and job matching.

Emblematic of such efforts, last March CareerSource North Central Florida was awarded $350,000 in state pilot grants to launch or expand three workforce programs. The grants, administered under a fund through the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, include the Maker Professional Apprenticeship (manufacturing), Stepping Stones (building trades/construction) and Building Bridges (training/reentry opportunities in cooperation with the Florida Department of Corrections). Each of the programs addresses a specific gap in the workforce, such as ensuring that lesser-educated residents have a place in the workforce too.

“We’re especially passionate at, and we believe effective at, pairing those who may face significant barriers to entering or reentering the workforce with the opportunity to gain business-driven skills in a paid, work-based environment supported [by us],” says Frank Avery, executive director of CareerSource North Central Florida.

Notably, some of the programs provide individuals from low-income families with the opportunity to be paid to learn how to work with area tech firms in high-demand positions, Avery adds.

“We pair these opportunities with classroom training support and, most critically, a rigorous entrepreneurship training program, which helps our participants shift their mindset from working ‘for’ the boss to learning how to be the boss,” Avery continues.

Santa Fe College is constructing a new business and tech center, and seeking to create education programs that match industry needs.

“The result is a competitive talent pool — from the most skills to those most in need — ready to get to work and fill the immediate needs of our high-demand, high-growth businesses,” says Avery.
“UF and Gainesville/Alachua County are creating an innovation ecosystem that nurtures the people and ideas that will drive the 21st-century economy forward in our community.”

— David Norton
UF Vice President for Research

“UF and Gainesville/Alachua County have been the University of Florida’s home for research and innovation.

UF scientists and scholars conduct over $800 million in research annually in fields as diverse as medicine, agriculture and engineering.

UF is a leader at transferring its research to the market, launching more than 200 high-tech companies.

An engineering student works in the wind tunnel at UF’s Powell Family Structures and Materials Laboratory.

research.ufl.edu
There are 16 colleges/universities along with 200-plus research, service and education centers, bureaus and institutes. All totaled, approximately 75,000 college students travel the roads in and around Gainesville to get to school. With its more than 35,000 undergraduate students representing only a starting point, the story at the University of Florida is wieldy and encompassing. Yet, it’s also simple: The plan is to become a top-five public university nationwide. In other words, preeminence, an initiative launched in 2013. Already, the effort has resulted in a spree of faculty hiring and planned construction. On its way to hire 500 new faculty, UF has risen to No. 8 among the nation’s top-10 public universities, as ranked in U.S. News & World Report’s Best Colleges list. Meanwhile, plans for capital improvement include new academic buildings and a new honors college.

"Great universities are societal engines that drive innovation, transforming the lives and livelihoods of the people they serve," comments UF President W. Kent Fuchs, Ph.D. "As a state, Florida is poised to emerge as a national and international leader for industry and sustainability that will herald a new era of growth and success. In becoming a top-five institution, the University of Florida can be a critical catalyst in recruiting the talent, combatting the challenges and disseminating the knowledge required of a state on the move.*

Additionally, new numbers regarding economic impact also reveal substantial growth. A few specifics: Total revenues or applicable expenditures made within the state for UF and affiliated organizations were $8.98 billion. That included $2.72 billion for university operations, $1.34 billion for technology licensing companies, $3.87 billion for health care and other direct-support organizations, $686 million for student spending, $306 million for campus visitor spending and $50.1 million for construction.

Across Alachua, total economic contributions in 2017-2018 were estimated at 104,773 jobs and $12 billion in industry output, representing 60% of total county employment and 56% of the county’s gross domestic product. Historically speaking, Santa Fe College was established in 1965 as a “community college” to broaden higher education access in Alachua and Bradford counties. Today, the college has grown into a four-year institution with more than 22,000 students and national distinction — winner of the 2015 Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence. Since 2012, the college has consistently ranked among the top 10 U.S. community colleges.

Most notably, in October 2018, the college announced plans for an expan-
sion in downtown Gainesville, adding a three-story building (80,000 square feet) to its existing Blount Center location by spring 2021. Construction is set to begin early next year.

The Blount Campus will be home to Santa Fe’s Center for Innovation and Economic Development and become the college’s anchor for business and IT education, as well as entrepreneurship. Those plans were strengthened in May when Santa Fe received a $4.8 million grant to help fund the center’s expansion.

“Santa Fe College has made many investments for our students and communities,” notes Santa Fe President Jackson Sasser, Ph.D. “None will have a more direct impact than the expansion of the downtown Gainesville campus.”

The expansion also enhances the Santa Fe focus on filling workforce voids, says Santa Fe’s Vice President of Economic Development Dug Jones. “We’re amazingly responsive to what our industry partners tell us they need in terms of workforce.”

Similarly, in K-12 education, the presence of UF and Santa Fe College offers advantages to students in area public school. Each year, approximately 25 students graduate with both a high school diploma and an associate’s degree through Santa Fe’s dual-enrollment program, and Alachua County Public Schools has strong articulation agreements with the college, enabling students to make seamless transitions into their postsecondary careers. Also, many students in the school district have earned national recognition for their work in computing and other STEM-related fields.
Those words by David R. Nelson, M.D., senior vice president of health affairs at UF and president of UF Health, pretty much sum up his university’s impact both near and far.

UF Health is ranked No. 11 by U.S. News & World Report for pediatric cardiology.

The region offers a virtual who’s-who of medical standouts, which also includes Florida Surgeon General Scott A. Rivkees, M.D. He is a professor and chair of the Department of Pediatrics at the University of Florida College of Medicine and physician-in-chief of UF Health Shands Children’s Hospital, part of UF Health.

Aside from being the university’s academic health center, UF Health provides the broad spectrum of patient-care services through its family of hospitals and clinical programs.

Notably, much of the prowess also can be attributed to UF’s College of Medicine, ranked No. 43 in the nation and No. 19 among public medical schools for medical research, according to U.S. News & World Report.

Not far away, North Florida Regional Medical Center, an HCA member hospital, is undergoing a $90 million expansion, highlighted by the addition of three floors and 78 private patient rooms to its South Tower, which also is expected to result in 269 new jobs.

Says Eric Lawson, CEO of the medical center, “This new expansion just goes to show that growth and advancement is the North Florida way.”

Such investment, in fact, is occurring across Gainesville. Another example: Since 2009, there has been approximately $1 billion of investment in health care on a half-mile stretch along one thoroughfare, Archer Road, which also has helped to spur medical tourism.

“The investment is huge. People fly over great places [other cities] to get to Gainesville. And they fly their pets, too,” comments Bryan Harrington, director of development and construction for Trimark Properties, which specializes in commercial real estate projects.

We are one of only a handful of academic health centers in the country that feature the full complement of medical colleges, research facilities and hospitals we have. Through this unique combination, which includes the No. 1 research hospital in the state, we serve millions of patients each year — from every county in the state and every state in the nation, and from dozens of countries around the world. The landmark research we conduct changes lives and leads to innovative treatments that advance care and allow patients to achieve the best possible outcomes and return to a great quality of life.”
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“It’s not the country anymore. There’s culture; there’s food; there’s entertainment. There’s a lot more than just having a major university in a small town. It’s a town that has grown up around a major university,” he says.

As it turns out, Long has much to do with the change. He is director of UF Incubation Services, which is helping to drive economic development, particularly regarding biotech innovation and entrepreneurship.

Long oversees two of the state’s leading business incubators, UF Sid Martin Biotechnology Institute and Innovation Hub. In 2018, UF Innovate was established as an umbrella organization uniting not just the two incubators but also the UF Office of Technology Licensing.

Sid Martin Biotech, located in the city of Alachua, has launched more than 100 biotech, biomedicine and bioagriculture startups since its founding in 1995. The facility provides the founders of early-stage bioscience companies with qualified laboratory space, equipment, mentoring and investment.

In 2013 and 2017, Sid Martin Biotech won the International Business Innovation Association’s Randall M. Whaley Global Incubator of the Year award.

For proof of current success, look no further than Axogen Inc., an Alachua enterprise focused on peripheral nerve regeneration/repair.

Innovation Hub, opened in downtown Gainesville eight years ago, doubled in size last year to 100,000 square feet. More than a building, according to Long, the Hub provides a complete growth ecosystem in, around and beyond Innovation Square, a livable, walkable urban development located directly across from UF.

That setting will be bolstered by Santa Fe College’s expanding Center for Innovation and Economic Development, a community-based product commercialization entity that now assists more than 30 local inventors, innovators and entrepreneurs.

Two decades ago, Ryan Frankel went from student at Santa Fe working at a pizzeria to launching community/lifestyle magazines. Now, he has Frankel Media Group, established in 2005 — which he calls a “big-city agency in a small town.”

“I would have never been able to do this outside of Gainesville,” Frankel says.
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water.ifas.ufl.edu
Transportation Is Connecting The Dots Across Industries

The topic of transportation intersects with the very existence of Alachua County, particularly Gainesville. Interstate 75 and state roads 301 and 441 crisscross the region, while local thoroughfares such as Archer and Williston roads both funnel local traffic and shoulder major activity centers. Additionally, Gainesville is the halfway point between Atlanta and Miami, with popular multimodal hubs just off in the distance, Jaxport and Port of Tampa roughly 100 and 130 miles away, respectively. As a result, Gainesville acts as a magnet for local and regional travel. In turn, like virtually all metro areas, the picture isn’t always pretty.

“Transportation is a challenge,” concedes Alachua County Manager Michele Lieberman, adding that roadways and traffic are a high priority across the county, and typically improvement funding is the main hurdle to overcome.

Bryan Harrington, director of development and construction at Trimark Properties, agrees. Harrington points to incoming traffic flow from neighboring Levy and Putnam counties, along with vehicles driven by tens of thousands of college students.

Setting Transportation Records

In 2018, Gainesville Regional Airport handled more than 476,000 commercial passengers, setting its all-time record for arrivals and departures.
Yet, there is good news. A collaboration among the Florida Department of Transportation, the city of Gainesville and the University of Florida has delivered a testbed to deploy and evaluate advanced technologies such as connected and autonomous vehicles, smart devices, and sensors — all designed to enhance mobility and safety.

Meanwhile, within Gainesville city limits, the RTS public bus system moderates traffic on local roads while providing an alternative for students and other residents. From October 2018 through April 2019, RTS recorded more than 6 million passenger rides.

Also, multiyear physical expansion is underway at Gainesville Regional Airport, located five miles from downtown. The airport operates 16 daily departures (American Airlines and Delta), with nonstop service to Atlanta, Charlotte, Dallas/Fort Worth and Miami.

In 2018, the airport handled more than 476,000 commercial passengers, setting its all-time record for arrivals and departures. There are more than 350 part- and full-time employees and tenants at the airport, generating an annual economic impact on the region of more than $374 million.
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“I think that we’ve reached more of a mature investment point, where people are looking to invest in the solubility of a university community,” says Gerry Dedenbach, vice president of CHW Professional Consultants, an Alachua County firm that specializes in planning, design, surveying, engineering and construction. “So, they are bringing doctors’ offices here; they’re bringing higher-end restaurants; they’re bringing housing choices. It’s not just one group that is trying to chase a singular item. It’s a more mature look at investments in the Gainesville community.”

For good measure, Dedenbach adds: “Gainesville is graduating from a college town to a university city.”

Land developer Mitch Glaeser surely would agree. Glaeser, CEO of the Emory Group Companies in Alachua, is building 82-acre San Felasco Tech City — an innovative live-work ecosystem — from the ground up in Alachua, on the outskirts of Gainesville. Across the street is 7,200-acre San Felasco Hammock Preserve State Park.

Glaeser is a past president of the Greater Gainesville Chamber of Commerce, and the project is in partnership with another area mover/shaker, Rich Blaser, CEO and co-founder of Infinite Energy in Gainesville.

There are big plans, such as 300,000 square feet of tech space in five buildings, including an urban warehouse design with 23-foot ceilings; a pedestrian-only promenade at the center of the tech space; five bifacial solar trees that collect sun rays from the top side and catch the bounce from the bottom side; 252 housing units, with each bedroom coming with a bicycle; a café/coffee shop; a preschool; a brewery; and a climbing tower.

“This is a model that can work.”

An emphasis on community redevelopment is evident through a recent 10-year, $70 million agreement between Alachua County and the city of Gainesville to merge four existing redevelopment districts into one. The hope is to spark redevelopment in underserved districts, such as the city’s eastside, by attracting private investment through community partnerships, competitive economic development incentives and improved public infrastructure.

“We do talk to each other. And we’re trying to move forward together,” comments Alachua County Manager Michele Lieberman about working with Gainesville city officials.

The talk about commercial real estate — from general office leasing and new Class A space to the demand from national brand names for retail space — is all about growth, asserts Nick Banks, a principal and managing director with Avison Young.

In the past two years, three new Class A buildings have opened, with the space leased quickly. “It just speaks to the strength of the market,” Banks says. “There was demand for higher quality office space and a recognition by developers that there was unfulfilled need. And it’s now met with [new] Class A office space.”

Similarly, national retailers such as Sam’s Club, Bass Pro Shops, P.F. Chang’s China Bistro and The Cheesecake Factory recently have entered the marketplace. “It’s a validation that, OK, this is a legit market,” Banks says. “People are spending money; people have a reason to be here. … They’re betting on our future.”

An example: burgeoning Celebration Pointe, a 160-acre development of 1 million-plus square feet of mixed-use space near the Archer Road exit off Interstate 75. Bass Pro Shops arrived there in November 2016, and the area’s first luxury seating mega cinema opened there in April 2018. Luxury apartments and urban townhomes also are in the works.

There’s a first for detached single-family housing, too. For the first time in roughly a decade, two communities are being built within the Gainesville city limits, Grand Oaks and Finley Woods.

One more note: In January, Banks’ former company, Gainesville-based Front Street Commercial Real Estate Group, was acquired by global, Toronto-based Avison Young — another indicator of a maturing local market.

Photos L to R: Grady House in High Springs, San Felasco Tech City
The Gainesville Regional Airport terminal expansion will offer more gates, more amenities, and bright, modern spaces for travelers to enjoy.
Sports/Recreation/Culture
Improve Quality of Life

How’s this for quality of life? Last year, more than 2 million people traveled to Alachua County and stayed overnight to enjoy sights, sounds, sports, nature and general entertainment, among other leisure pursuits.

“If you’re bored in Gainesville, you’re not trying,” says Brian Jose, director of UF Performing Arts. He adds, “We compete with cities 10 times, 20 times our MSA [Metropolitan Statistical Area].” Not coincidentally, Jose’s UF Arts is well regarded across the country.

Asserts Jessica Hurov, tourist development manager for Visit Gainesville, Alachua County: “We have the assets here.”

And there are numbers to prove it. Across the county, tourism’s annual impact exceeds $1 billion, and the hospitality sector accounts for 7.5% of Alachua County employment, while supporting more than 9,475 jobs and providing $318 million in wages per year, according to Hurov.

The Tourist Development Tax, or bed tax, paid by tourists in Alachua County has increased by 45% since 2013 and in 2018 reached a record-setting $5.3 million. The county leverages the bed tax to market and promote the destination.

What to do? Visitors and residents alike can enjoy more than 100 miles of trails, paddle the Santa Fe River, splash in the springs, bike the Hawthorne Trail and experience the city of Hawthorne’s new Little Orange Creek Nature Park, take in a world-class show at one of the many theaters, visit museums, go antiquing, and indulge in the area’s rich musical heritage on dozens of stages. (Check out Bo Diddley Community Plaza in the heart of Historic Downtown Gainesville.)

Meanwhile, the restaurant scene is “upping its game,” as the popular saying goes, and pints of beer from local breweries are spilling over with noteworthy regularity.

A few other sites of interest are the Florida Museum of Natural History and the Samuel P. Harn Museum of Art on the UF campus; the 10-acre Santa Fe College Teaching Zoo; the Cade Museum for Creativity and Invention (honoring inventors from all fields); and Depot Park, once a languishing rail yard now transformed into a public greenspace that is dubbed Gainesville’s Central Park.

More than 160 nonprofit and philanthropic organizations work behind the scenes to help bring those assets and others to life.

And, not to neglect sports, there are the Gators (in blue and orange at UF), who field among the nation’s top collegiate athletics programs in multiple arenas.

Much of this has been on display throughout 2019 during Gainesville 150!—a celebration of the city’s birth that encompasses concerts, performing arts, history projects, public art exhibits, dance and community discussions, among other components. The celebration concludes in April 2020.

Oh, and one more note: Local officials say approximately 1,200 new hotel rooms are expected to come online within the next year.
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Greater Gainesville Is Growing Up

Trending toward transition and innovation in Gainesville

Agriculture. In a county and city that are in transition, incrementally trending toward urban, the Alachua County Cattlemen’s Association — an influencer of public policy for more than 60 years — remains strong, while agriculture, natural resources and related industries make up an economic powerhouse.

In Alachua, the most recent tally (2016) reveals $1.49 billion in gross regional product from agriculture and related industries, representing 11.8% of the county’s total GRP, according to data from the University of Florida’s Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences.

Energy. Expect energy to be a very big deal in Gainesville. “We want to make Gainesville a center for energy,” says Rich Blaser, one of two CEOs (the other CEO is Darin Cook) for Infinite Energy, which provides retail natural gas in Florida, Georgia, Ohio and New Jersey, as well as retail electricity in Texas.

Infinite Energy is the largest energy company in Gainesville, even larger than Gainesville Regional Utilities in terms of revenue and customer count. Currently, the company is quadrupling its space to 33,000 square feet and designating two of its smaller buildings as an incubator for energy startups.

Gainesville is becoming quite the startup city, and with that brings much innovation.

We want to take advantage of that and help energy innovation thrive here,” Blaser comments.

Manufacturing. Seeking to attract manufacturing jobs, and targeting Gainesville’s east side, the county, city and UF are collaborating on 37-acre Eco-Industrial Park. Essentially, the park is a step beyond recycling — supporting the region’s recycling and zero-waste goals by co-locating private sector reuse, recycling and manufacturing in dedicated resource-recovery spaces.

Construction began last spring, with plans that include a 20,000-square-foot research and incubation facility and a 15,000-square-foot bulk materials storage facility. In total, Greater Gainesville’s manufacturing sector has approximately 200 companies that employ roughly 4,000 people.

Regional Activity. Greater Gainesville continues to show development strength as a region, with places such as Alachua, Hawthorne and Newberry in the midst of big plans. Alachua has 82-acre San Felasco Tech City in the works. Hawthorne Industry Park, consisting of 1,068 acres, is ready for industry and commerce through a public-private partnership led by Weyerhaeuser and the City of Hawthorne.

“That gives the region an opportunity to grow from a job standpoint and the city of Hawthorne to grow its tax base,” says Rosemary Fagler, economic development manager for Weyerhaeuser.

Meanwhile, the city of Newberry is planning Agri-Tech Innovation Park, where knowledge would be shared among university, government and private research entities.

Project Wildcat. Alachua County is in discussion with the U.S. Army Reserve 81st Readiness Division on use of the county’s Fairgrounds Redevelopment Area to bring an Equipment Concentration Site and associated economic benefits to east Gainesville in 2022. An Equipment Concentration Site provides warehouse services, vehicle repair, storage and related training for non-combat vehicles. The effort has been dubbed Project Wildcat. The local economic benefit is estimated at $30 million for site improvements and construction.

Gainesville Inequities Study. In January 2018, Gainesville and the county, along with education, health and chamber of commerce leaders, released the results of an area study that continues to garner policy and funding attention today. The “Understanding Racial Inequity in Alachua County” study revealed significant equity/social services gaps for ethnic minorities, especially African-Americans, who compose nearly 20% of the population. Among the chief points of concern are affordable housing and hunger.

Corrective actions are ongoing, according to Alachua County Manager Michele Lieberman. “The collaboration is really a big key, because it’s addressing the issues that are happening in the community,” Lieberman says. “There’s a great sense of community in working together to resolve them.”

Photos L to R: Solar Trees at San Felasco Tech City, Eco-Industrial Park rendering, Infinite Energy campus
UF Health Shands Hospital is nationally ranked by U.S. News & World Report in seven specialties and high performing in seven adult procedures and conditions. This recognition reflects our unwavering dedication to providing high-quality patient care. Home to the state’s #1 research hospital, we conduct landmark translational research that moves medicine forward with innovative treatments and discoveries that advances care for millions of patients each year. We have the resources to solve the toughest challenges in health care.
People to Know

Greater Gainesville leaders span industries from education to health care, biotech to recreation.

Mark Avera
Managing Partner, Avera & Smith

Frank Avery
Executive Director, CareerSource North Central Florida

Stephanie Bailes
Executive Director, The Cade Museum for Creativity & Invention

Nick Banks
Principal, Managing Director, Avison Young

Rich Blaser
CEO and Co-founder, Infinite Energy Inc.

Adam Boukari
City Manager, City of Alachua

Deborah Bowie
Interim City Manager, City of Gainesville

Rick Carlson
CEO, SharpSpring

Lee Anne Chesterfield
Director, Harn Museum of Art

Karen Clarke
Superintendent, Alachua County Public Schools

Darin Cook
CEO and Co-founder, Infinite Energy Inc.

Ryan Frankel
President, Frankel Media

W. Kent Fuchs
President, University of Florida

Eric Godet
President/CEO, Greater Gainesville Chamber of Commerce

Mitch Glaeser
CEO, Emory Group Companies
President, Laser Investment Group
Owner, Glaeser Realty

Bryan Harrington
Director of Development and Construction, Trimark Properties

In Memoriam

Karl Havens, 61, who led the Florida Sea Grant and served as a professor at the University of Florida, passed away in April. A champion in the battle to solve Florida’s water problems, Havens committed decades to aquatic research, education and outreach.
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