Stimulating Job Growth for Okaloosa County

2016 Accomplishments

✓ **Expanding Community Dialogue**

- Hosted "Made in Okaloosa" Roundtable breakfast highlighting Okaloosa County manufacturers Fort Walton Machining, BOTE Boards, G.S. Gelato, Bay State Cable Ties.
- Hosted "Building a Healthy Okaloosa" Roundtable breakfast featuring a panel comprised of the CEOs of Fort Walton Beach Medical Center, Twin Cities Hospital, North Okaloosa Medical Center, Bridgeway Center, White Wilson Medical Center and Sacred Heart Hospital Emerald Coast.
- Hosted "The Sacred Trust: Military Support Organizations and our Great American Defense Community" Roundtable breakfast showcasing military support organizations and honoring the community's designation as a Great American Defense Community by the Association of Defense Communities.
- Hosted Jim Blair, Principal of Navigator Consulting, for a special presentation to EDC Trustees entitled "Inside the Mind of a Site Selection Consultant."

✓ **Enhancing Competitiveness**

- Partnered with the City of Fort Walton Beach to complete a "Competitive Positioning Study" of the Fort Walton Beach Commerce & Technology Park. Developed by site selectors with knowledge of competing product around the country, the study provides a road map for the Park's future improvement.
- Convened Fort Walton Beach Commerce & Technology Park property owners, tenants, real estate brokers and utility partners into a newly formed "Stakeholders Committee."
- Partnered with Gulf Power on the development of video showcase of the 135 acre Okaloosa Industrial Air Park in Crestview, recently certified under Gulf Power's Florida First Sites program.
- Developed promotional flyer and drone video footage highlighting 11,000 acre Shoal River Ranch in Crestview.
- Hosted Enterprise Florida business development team for a tour of Okaloosa County site opportunities.
- Partnered with Pioneer Technologies to develop video-based company capabilities briefings for EDC / TeCMEN Investors including GSC Systems, Micro Systems and American Elite Molding.

✓ **Supporting Workforce and Talent Development**

- Partnered with CareerSource Okaloosa Walton and the Okaloosa County School District to deliver an innovative program – "Educate the Educators". Originally designed to educate high school / middle school teachers and principals on specific skills needs present in the local area by touring local industry, the program was expanded to include select students in 2016.
- Partnered with CareerSource Okaloosa Walton and the University of West Florida to provide No-Cost Incumbent Worker Training to businesses participating in the EDC's Technology Coast Manufacturing & Engineering Network (TeCMEN)
  - 2016 Courses offered included Six Sigma Green Belt, Project Management Professional (PMP), SolidWorks 3D CAD, Lean Green Belt, CAPA, GD&T, Technical Writing and Process Mapping.

✓ **Strengthening the Military Mission**

- Spearheaded the successful nomination of the Eglin-Hurlburt Community as a *Great American Defense Community* by the Association of Defense Communities.
- Utilized EDC's Defense Support Initiatives (DSI) Committee for direct interface with unit commanders at Eglin AFB, Hurlburt Field, Duke Field, US Navy EOD School, and the US Army 7th Special Forces and Ranger Camp.
- Participated in the Northwest Florida Defense Coalition's Washington DC Fly-In in March.
- Awarded a FY 2017 Florida Defense Support Task Force Grant to support pre-mission baseline environmental assessments for non-hazardous military training missions in the Blackwater River State Forest.
- Awarded a State of Florida Defense Reinvestment Grant (DRG) to aid in the sustainment and enhancement of the local military presence while also providing for continued economic diversification.
- Continued facilitation of the Tri-County Partnership Initiative (TCPI); designed to assist Eglin and Hurlburt with efforts to lower operating costs / generate revenue through innovative community partnerships.
  - Two MOUs signed in 2016; Choctawhatchee Bay Estuary Program and Solar Ready Vets
- Utilized opportunities afforded at the local, state and national levels to spotlight the successes of the TCPI and the Eglin-Hurlburt Community Partnership Program.

MEMORANDUM

Date: February 22, 2016
To: Michael Beedie, City Manager, City of Fort Walton Beach
From: Nathan Sparks, Executive Director, EDC of Okaloosa County
Subject: Q4 2015 / Q1 2016 EDC Update

The Economic Development Council of Okaloosa County greatly appreciates our long-standing partnership with the City of Fort Walton Beach and we are pleased to provide the following update for consideration by the Fort Walton Beach City Council. I look forward to answering any questions when I appear before Council at the City's planned economic development workshop on Tuesday, March 1, 2016.

Organizational Update

- The organization welcomed five new investors (Bay State Cable Ties, Bridgeway Center, Avatar Equities, the Jay Odum Group, and CHOICE High School and Technical Center) during the referenced timeframe.
- The EDC's FY 2015 Officer Installation was held on October 8. The EDC's new officer slate is as follows:
    - Chairman – Greg Britton, Fort Walton Machining
    - Vice Chair – Kelly Murphy-Redd, Ruckel Properties
    - Treasurer – Kim Wintner, Alliance Management
    - Secretary – Linda Sumblin, CareerSource Okaloosa Walton
    - Member at Large – Glenn Scharf, Saltmarsh Cleaveland & Gund

Marketing Initiatives

- Exhibited at the National Defense Industrial Association's Air Armament Symposium held at the Emerald Coast Convention Center November 3 – 4.
- Participated in the National Business Aviation Association's Annual Convention and Trade Show in Las Vegas November 17 – 19.
- Served as signature sponsor and exhibitor at the Pacific Northwest Aerospace Association's annual meeting in Seattle February 9 – 11.
- Developed the EDC's 2015 Annual Report.

Strategic Initiatives

- Hosted site selection consultants undertaking a comprehensive "Competitive Positioning Study" of the Fort Walton Beach Commerce & Technology Park December 9 – 10.
- Undertook select legislative advocacy geared toward:
  - Much needed funding for Enterprise Florida to promote Florida to businesses
  - Making the state sales tax exemption on manufacturing equipment permanent
  - Eliminating sales tax on commercial leases
  - Support of Governor Scott's proposed "Florida Enterprise Fund", structured as a $250 million legislative appropriation request that will replace the state's woefully underfunded Quick Action Closing Fund (funded at $12 million statewide)
- Completed and submitted a comprehensive package on February 12 nominating the community for the Association of Defense Communities inaugural "Great American Defense Community" Award.
- Coordinated Okaloosa County's participation in the upcoming Northwest Florida Defense Coalition's Washington D.C. Fly-In scheduled for March 15 – 16.
- Partnered with Florida's Great Northwest and economic development organizations from the seven other "disproportionately affected" counties of northwest Florida to develop a comprehensive presentation for Triumph Gulf Coast, Inc.

Project Activity

The EDC continues to experience strong project activity, with 23 active projects currently in the pipeline. Of these, 6 are expansions of existing Okaloosa County operations. The EDC is also pleased that 14 of these opportunities were "locally generated" as opposed to projects that come by way of Enterprise Florida and other state and regional partners. The attached graphs provide insight into the specific sectors and numbers of jobs represented within the EDC's current project pipeline.

MEMORANDUM

Date: August 17, 2016
To: Michael Beedie, Fort Walton Beach City Manager
From: Nathan Sparks, Executive Director, EDC of Okaloosa County
Subject: Q2 2016 EDC Update

The Economic Development Council of Okaloosa County greatly appreciates our long-standing partnership with the City of Fort Walton Beach and we are pleased to provide the following update for consideration by the Fort Walton Beach City Council. I look forward to answering any questions when I appear before Council on Tuesday, August 23, 2016.

Organizational Update

- The organization welcomed five new investors (Four Points by Sheraton, Gulf Coast Immediate Care, JEI / GCT, Superior Environmental Services, WinTec Arrowmaker) during the referenced timeframe.

Marketing Initiatives

- Hosted the EDC's second Roundtable Breakfast of 2016 on May 24. The event, entitled "Building a Healthy Okaloosa", featured a panel comprised of the CEOs of Fort Walton Beach Medical Center, North Okaloosa Medical Center, Twin Cities Hospital, Bridgeway Center, Sacred Heart Emerald Coast and White Wilson.
- Participated in Enterprise Florida's Team Florida marketing event targeting site selection consultants in Ponte Vedra Beach, FL May 12-13.
- Joined forces with Enterprise Florida, Florida's Great Northwest and other northwest Florida economic development organizations to target prospective aviation / aerospace companies at the Farnborough International Air Show July 11 – 15.
- Undertook promotional activities at the iCAST Fishing Equipment trade show in Orlando July 13 – 15.
- Hosted Jim Blair, Principal, Navigator Consulting (site selection consulting firm specializing in location searches for European based companies) August 15 – 16.

Strategic Initiatives

- Partnered with Florida's Great Northwest and economic development organizations from the seven other "disproportionately affected" counties of northwest Florida to begin the development of a transformational regional economic development strategy in preparation for funding that may come through Triumph Gulf Coast.

- Participated in various Enterprise Florida board, executive Committee and Stakeholder's Council meetings intended to address the Governor's requested $6M funding cuts.
- Secured grant funding from the Florida Defense Support Task Force that will be used to collaborate with the Florida Forest Service to ensure that non-hazardous military missions in the Blackwater River State Forest don't have adverse impacts.

Project Activity

The EDC is delighted that our partnership with the City of Fort Walton Beach culminated in the successful announcement of Props Brewery's new location in the Fort Walton Beach Commerce and Technology Park. As highlighted in the attached press release, the City's willingness to provide an Economic Development Ad Valorem Tax Exemption was a major factor in the successful location of this project, thus ensuring a $1.1M capital investment and the creation of 10 higher wage jobs in the local economy.

Looking to the future, the EDC continues to experience strong project activity, with 22 active projects currently in the pipeline. Of these, 7 are expansions of existing Okaloosa County operations. The EDC is also pleased that 15 of these opportunities were "locally generated" as opposed to projects that come by way of Enterprise Florida and other state and regional partners. The attached graphs provide insight into the specific sectors and numbers of jobs represented within the EDC's current project pipeline.

MEMORANDUM

Date: December 6, 2016
To: Michael Beedie, Fort Walton Beach City Manager
From: Nathan Sparks, Executive Director, EDC of Okaloosa County
Subject: Q3 2016 EDC Update

The Economic Development Council of Okaloosa County greatly appreciates our long-standing partnership with the City of Fort Walton Beach and we are pleased to provide the following update for consideration by the Fort Walton Beach City Council. I look forward to answering any questions when I appear before Council on Tuesday, December 13, 2016.

Organizational Update

- The organization welcomed three new investors (Children in Crisis, GEXPRO Services, Reliance Test & Technology) during the referenced timeframe.

Marketing Initiatives

- Hosted leading site selector from Navigator Consulting in the community August 15 – 16.
- Hosted the EDC's third Roundtable Breakfast of 2016 on September 21. The event, entitled "The Sacred Trust: Military Support Organizations and our Great American Defense Community" featured a presentation of the *Great American Defense Community* award by the Association of Defense Communities and a panel comprised of the Building Industry Association of Okaloosa-Walton, CareerSource Okaloosa Walton, Fisher House and Venture Hive.
- Joined forces with Enterprise Florida, Gulf Power and other northwest Florida economic development partners to target prospective aviation / aerospace companies at the National Business Aviation Association's Convention in Orlando November 1 – 3.
- Developed promotional flyer touting Okaloosa County's business attributes and accolades (attached).
- Hosted British Consul General Dave Prodger for a meeting with area defense contractors

Strategic Initiatives

- Partnered with the City of Fort Walton Beach to host a Fort Walton Beach Commerce & Technology Park Stakeholders Meeting on 12/1.
- Partnered with Florida's Great Northwest and economic development organizations from the seven other "disproportionately affected" counties of northwest Florida to continue

the development of a transformational regional economic development strategy in preparation for funding that may come through Triumph Gulf Coast.

- Participated in Florida Chamber's "Future of Florida" Forum in Orlando September 28 – 30.
- Participated in various Enterprise Florida board, Executive Committee and Stakeholder's Council meetings.
- Began implementation of the Program of Work for the EDC's Florida Defense Support Task Force grant awarded to ensure that non-hazardous military missions in the Blackwater River State Forest don't have adverse environmental impacts.
- Continued coordination and oversight of the Tri-County Community Partnership (TCPI); a collaborative forum for identifying opportunities for area military installations, communities and the private sector to enter into innovative and cost saving partnerships.
- Attended the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management's November 14 Public Meeting to voice opposition to petroleum drilling in the eastern Gulf of Mexico due to adverse impacts that would result from this action.

Project Activity

The EDC continues to experience strong project activity, with 21 active projects currently in the pipeline. Of these, 4 are expansions of existing Okaloosa County operations. The EDC is also pleased that 13 of these opportunities were "locally generated" as opposed to projects that come by way of Enterprise Florida and other state and regional partners. The attached graphs provide insight into the specific sectors and numbers of jobs represented within the EDC's current project pipeline.

The EDC is especially pleased that one of our projects – Project Hook II – is advancing toward a final decision to locate in the Fort Walton Beach Commerce and Technology Park, and we greatly appreciate the City's role in this process.