



Message from the Executive Director

Substantial Progress Despite Recession

October marks the beginning of a new fiscal year for the Business Development Board of Martin County. It is a good time to reflect on activities of the past year and look to the future. Soon, you will receive our annual report that will present a more detailed view of our activities, but we present a broad view of them in this issue of our bi-monthly newsletter.

When we look back at this year, and on our community, we definitely see indications of a global recession. Yet, despite the downturn, Martin County is full of companies who have continued to succeed. Four of our companies – Waterblasting Technologies, Inc.; SystemsOne, LLC; CSA International, Inc.; and Seatorque Control Systems – were recognized with Governor's Business Diversification Awards for their innovation and expansion this past year. The BDB recognized these four and 12 more companies for their positive contributions to the Martin County economy. We applaud these companies and others like them for their ability to transform and innovate in order to grow.

I would be remiss if I did not use this opportunity to express, on behalf of the BDBMC Board of Directors and staff, my sincere appreciation to two government bodies that have demonstrated ongoing support of expanding economic opportunities in this county: the City of Stuart and the Martin County Board of Commissioners.

The City of Stuart has contracted with the BDBMC to provide the City with economic development services. The City made it possible for the BDBMC to partner with Indian River State College and to provide local matching funds to maintain an office of the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) in Martin County. The SBDC is a resource of the U.S. Small Business Administration, and a member of the statewide network of centers. By having a dedicated presence in Martin County, entrepreneurs and small business owners have increased and more convenient access to the variety of services available through the Small Business Administration - at a time when such access is desperately needed.

During the last year and a half, the Martin County Board of County Commissioners have taken remarkable steps to enhance Martin County's economic development program, by voting to support the Business Development Board's contract. The County further allocated the resources to allow the BDBMC to better serve and retain existing businesses within our community; to enhance access and resources for small businesses and entrepreneurs; to develop an active program to attract targeted businesses and work with the key contacts managing investments in the U.S. and from foreign countries; and to develop an increased communications and marketing program to sell Martin County on regional, national, and international levels as an ideal location on Florida's Research Coast.

Due to the resources and commitment of these two groups, we are much better equipped to accomplish our mission of supporting existing companies in their expansion needs, and attracting new companies within our target sector to the community. Increasingly, businesses are starting to regard Martin County as "business-friendly." This change in perception shows our commitment to the future of our community. Martin County Means Business!

Ron Bunch, CECD
Executive Director

The Business Development Board of Martin County is the county's official economic development organization, and Enterprise Florida, Inc. partner. More information about the organization can be found by visiting www.bdbmc.org.

Economic Development News

Expansions

Vought Aircraft Industries

The BDBMC worked with Vought Aircraft Industries, Inc. to facilitate a major expansion of the company's Stuart facility.



The expansion will include a \$12.9 million taxable investment

by Vought and the creation of 100 direct jobs in the next three years. As part of its work with Vought, the BDBMC facilitated the application for two state incentives: The Qualified Target Industry Tax Refund Program (QTI) and a Quick Response Training Grant (QRT). The QTI allows Vought a tax refund of \$3,000 for every job created and the QRT reimburses them for qualified training-related expenses for new hires. The QRT grant is valued at \$100,000 and is administered by Workforce Florida, Inc.

According to IMPLAN, the economic impact measurement system used by the BDBMC to produce the most detailed and accurate picture of how an economic development project would flow through and benefit the local economy with one time construction activity totaling \$5.2 million and 57 jobs, and recurring expansion activity totaling \$31.2 million in sales and 188 total jobs (direct and indirect). After the expansion is complete, Vought's combined existing and expansion operations will have an ongoing, recurring economic impact of \$93.7 million in annual output (sales), total employment impact of 562, (sustaining 262 jobs within the community in addition to the direct employment of 300 by Vought), and generate annual labor income of \$26.2 million.

River Forest Yachting Center

Built in 2005, River Forest Yachting Center is located on a nine-acre complex connected to the St. Lucie Canal. The facility currently has a 45,000 square foot, climate controlled storage building, a 6,000 square foot indoor storage building, in-water storage on a freshwater basin, and out-of-water storage lots. The company is replacing a smaller, older building that houses a fabrication and machine shop with a 5,000 square foot building that is more modern. Additionally, River Forest plans to improve part of the existing service area, including a large covered service area for larger boats. This expansion will ultimately allow River Forest to add new, skilled positions to their existing workforce.

Liberator Medical Supply

Liberator Medical Supply announced plans to hire 200 new, permanent, full-time employees over a 24 month period beginning in March 2009. The BDBMC worked with Liberator Medical Supply to secure approval of a Quick Response Training Grant (QRT) from Workforce Florida to train these new employees.

Since March, Liberator growth has exceeded expectations. The company has already hired 65 new employees, with 25 additional hires expected in October. Liberator anticipates reaching 200 new hires well ahead of March 2011 and could exceed those projections if growth continues at its current pace. Because of this rapid growth and increased demand for their product, the company just announced an expansion into a new facility at Witham Field, giving them much needed additional space for these employees. Liberator is leasing Building 30 at the airport from Martin County.

"The Business Development Board took this project under its wing, and has shepherded it from the day we started. Working with the county has been a refreshing experience, too. We are very happy to reinvest in our Martin County facility, and intend to stay here for a very long time."

*John Smith, General Manager,
River Forest Yachting*



TCT Co-Presidents Stuart Shay (left) and Louis Surette (far right) accept \$60,000 grant from Martin County Board of County Commissioners.

TurboCombustor Technology, Inc.

The BDBMC celebrated continued expansion with TurboCombustor Technology, Inc. this month. The company acquired and began construction on a parcel adjacent to their existing property that will provide adequate parking and new building space for the company's increased employment. TCT is investing \$1.35 million in land and improvements. They currently employ 375 in Martin County, including the addition of 24 employees in the past year. The company has posted 10-15% growth even during a global recession.

The Martin County Board of County Commissioners unanimously voted to award a \$60,000 grant to TurboCombustor Technology from the County's Economic Development fund, which was established with the purpose of creating new jobs in the County. The BDBMC collaborated with Martin County officials to establish the economic development fund, as part of the local Economic Stimulus Package, and to structure the first grant from this resource. Martin County Board of County Commissioners Chairman Susan Valliere said "I am certain these funds will benefit Martin County, many times over, as TCT continues to grow their presence in our community."

New Companies

SystemsOne, LLC

SystemsOne, LLC announced in August the relocation of its world headquarters from Alaska to Stuart, FL. Founder and CEO Tom Arthur established the company in 2005 and is the proprietary provider of an innovative means of displaying complex multiple computer resources and their related images to one control station and one large screen video monitor. SystemsOne's patent pending product, Systems Integrator (SI), was created specifically for the electrophysiology segment of the medical industry. The company now employs five in its Stuart location with an average wage of \$90,000 annually.

Grants and other special programs

Florida MEP Lights the Way for Sol, Inc.

Sol, Inc. (Solar Outdoor Lighting), the world's leading designer and manufacturer of solar LED outdoor lighting solutions, has worked on some pretty big jobs since their inception in 1990. The company has manufactured over 38,000 systems for dozens of businesses, universities, and governments around the world, including Walt Disney World, the Statue of Liberty, the Pentagon and Miami International Airport. Recently, the company began working with Florida MEP, a partner of BDBMC, to increase their productivity without sacrificing quality.

Sol also participated in the Florida MEP's Mobile Outreach Skills Training (M.O.S.T.) program, which is funded through the Workforce Development Board of the Treasure Coast, and promoted by the Business Development Board of Martin County to area businesses.

Sol is a prime example of the type of high-tech green companies we want to grow in Martin County. The assistance they received from our economic development partners at the Florida MEP and the successful results affirms the high caliber of resources available to help companies in our community – it is a great example of team effort.



Upcoming Events

BDBMC Events

November 12: International Trade
Regulations

December 10: Export Target Market
Certifications and Access to Major
Market Regions for the Marine
Industries

For more information about these
events, visit our website at
www.bdbmc.org

Enterprise Florida Events

January 23-31: boot Dusseldorf Boat
Show 2010, Dusseldorf, Germany

January 27-30: ARAB Health Trade
Show 2010, Dubai, United Arab
Emirates

February 23-28: Singapore Air Show,
Singapore

March 3-6: EnerTech World Expo,
Mumbai, India

For more information, please visit
www.eflorida.com/

Other opportunities

November 20: Finding Financing for
Florida Exports presented by the
US Department of Commerce &
Florida International Bankers
Association

For more information, please visit
www.fiba-events.net/

Martin County Companies Receive Target Sector Trade Event Grants

Two Martin County companies worked with BDBMC to apply for Target Sector Trade Event Grants from Enterprise Florida, Inc. (EFI), the state's official economic development organization and BDBMC partner, in July. The two companies – Awareness Technology based in Palm City and Armstrong Nautical Products of Stuart – were approved for these grants that will cover up to 50 percent of the cost of exhibition space and basic decoration packages for international trade shows. Florida's small manufacturers, target sector companies, research and development companies, and technology service providers from throughout the state were considered for the program. The Target Sector Trade Event Grant program is an initiative by EFI to assist eligible small (500 or fewer employees) Florida companies showcase their products at certified trade exhibitions and selected Florida trade shows in key markets worldwide, with the goal of increasing their international exposure and export sales.

BDBMC and Venture Park Partner to Offer Free "Permit Ready" Business Park Land Incentive

BDBMC and Venture Park developer Paul Filipe announced in August a partnership that offers a free, 2.6 acre parcel of land located in Venture Park in Indiantown. This marks the first time that a local company has offered free land for qualified economic development projects in Martin County.

The 22-lot industrial subdivision has lots ranging in size from two to more than seven acres, and is "permit ready" – no separate site plan approval process will be required, and the owner applies directly for building permits. The property's PUD zoning allows most industrial uses. This offer by Venture Park will provide a qualified target company with the ability to quickly move forward with plans for an expanded or new facility in the heart of Indiantown.

BDBMC News

MartinCountyProspector.com Launches

MartinCountyProspector.com is an online program to help existing Martin County companies expand and attract new businesses. The website serves to centralize demographic and facility data in one location, streamlining the process for a company searching for the "right" location and the "right" building. MartinCountyProspector.com allows the user to view, create and print maps; find available commercial or business property; and develop custom demographic radius reports.

MartinCountyProspector.com speeds up and simplifies the process of business attraction and site selection for growing businesses. The tool identifies available buildings and land; market characteristics such as demographics, workforce, and spending; business synergies and opportunities; and unique geographic characteristics. All of this information is provided to website users in minutes using interactive Internet GIS mapping technology. In addition, Martin County's tool feeds into ZoomProspector, a national database of properties, which provides dynamic mapping capabilities including the ability to zoom in/out, move the map, identify information and view geographic "layers" of information such as flood zones, golf courses, zip codes, hospitals, railroads, and schools. The importance of providing quality property and site selection information is critical because over ninety percent of the initial site selection screening is now done using the Internet.



The website program is now available to the public on-line at MartinCountyProspector.com or as a link from the Business

Development Board of Martin County's website www.bdbmc.org. Within a week of launch, the BDBMC received 20 new registrants. To say we are pleased with the interest is an understatement. This level of participation is extraordinary!

Economic Gardening Grant (FRC)

Florida's Research Coast Economic Development Coalition (FRC) was awarded an Economic Gardening Grant of \$193,000 by Workforce Florida, Inc. The grant was submitted by Workforce Solutions, a Coalition partner. BDBMC's Executive Director Ron Bunch serves as Chairman for the FRC and was just re-elected for a second term as chair to oversee the Economic Gardening project.



Economic Gardening is another term for the development of local, high-growth small & medium businesses. The strategy focuses on the development of a regional economy by using methods and tools that promote growth of the economy from within. While Economic Gardening concentrates on growing local businesses it is also outward-looking; encouraging businesses to seek new markets, whether local, national or international.

Using grant funds, the Coalition will develop various programs that help companies with high-growth potential succeed. Grant activities include the research and development of market intelligence in targeted industry sectors, marketing of training programs, workshops, the identification of supply chains and exporting opportunities, creation of a regional business information website and training of 150 workers in targeted industries. The project's targeted industries are healthcare, biotechnology and energy including alternative energies, but many other businesses will benefit from the grant activities.

Primary Coalition partners in this project include the Business Development Board of Martin County, the Economic Development Council of St. Lucie County, the Indian River County Chamber of Commerce, Okeechobee Main Street, and Workforce Solutions. Other business and educational entities will be recruited as project partners. These entities include Indian River State College, Florida Atlantic University and the Chambers of Commerce in Indian River, Martin, Okeechobee, and St Lucie counties.

Enterprise Florida and Workforce Florida Training Partnership

Martin County was one of six locations chosen to participate in the Global Trade Training Pilot Program, a joint venture of Enterprise Florida and Workforce Florida. Through this pilot, Quick Response Training Grant funds are matched by the state in order to offer export management and process training in the international trade sector. These grants assist Martin County in efforts to advise and prepare companies to grow their operations in foreign markets or improve global business success rates. Specifically, Martin County is using the funds to provide training encompassing export marketing, finance, compliance and logistics tailored to Florida's marine sector.

Young Professionals Challenge Grant Awarded

The BDBMC awarded a grant to the Young Professionals of Martin County (YPMC) and the Stuart/Martin County Chamber of Commerce to conduct the Next Leaders Survey 2009 in Martin County. The survey, to be performed by Next Generation Consulting, was only partially funded by the BDBMC, which issued a challenge to the community to exceed the match requirement to finance the remainder of the cost.

The Next Leaders Survey is designed to help Young Professionals Organizations (YPO), such as the Young Professionals of Martin County, measure their impact on their communities. YPOs play a critical role in communities' efforts to attract and retain talent for two reasons: they help stem the "brain drain" of educated youth leaving the community, and they help attract and cultivate future leaders in the area. In general, YPOs focus on showcasing and shaping a community's quality of life – one that is attractive to diverse, young talent. Understanding the impact of Young Professionals on Martin County helps us better cultivate an environment for their success.

Connecting this group with expanding or relocating businesses gives the business access to a talented and diverse workforce, which is paramount to their future expansion and growth. The community did step up to match the challenge. YPMC collected more than the \$1,000 needed and will use the additional funds to implement recommendations from the survey results. Look for information soon on how you can participate in the survey.

Crystal France Joins BDBMC Staff

Crystal France has joined the economic development team as Marketing and Public Relations Manager. Crystal's core responsibilities are to plan, develop and execute the BDBMC's advertising, communications, public relations, research, and marketing efforts in support of the Corporation's mission.

Professionally, Crystal has nearly 10 years of marketing and public relations experience. Prior to joining the BDBMC, she served as Director of Marketing/PR for Martinsville-Henry County Economic Development Corporation in Martinsville, Virginia. There, she implemented a PR campaign that highlighted successes of local businesses. The campaign served two purposes: elevating the company's exposure within the community (improving employment and recruitment efforts) and raising community awareness of local companies. The campaign was part of a comprehensive strategic plan she developed and implemented for the organization that aided recruitment in various target sectors and encouraged existing business growth. Crystal holds a B.A. in Communications from Mary Baldwin College in Staunton, Virginia. She is a member of Lambda Pi Eta and Alpha Sigma Lambda honor societies. Her senior thesis earned her distinction within her graduating class.

Randy Welker, CEcD, EDFP Joins BDBMC Staff

Randy Welker will join the staff of the BDBMC on November 1 as Business Development Manager. Randy's responsibilities are to develop, coordinate and implement business retention and attraction program activities that translate in direct investment and job creation. Randy will work closely with our member partners and leaders in our key target industries to ensure local businesses take advantage of available resources, to provide training to existing companies, and to help solve problems or challenges that may hinder existing business growth within the community.

Randy has nearly 20 years of experience in the Economic Development field. Prior to joining the BDBMC, he served as Executive Director of the Citrus County Economic Development Council. There, he was responsible for leadership, budget, operation and direction of the county's ED efforts. Randy has also served as Business Recruitment Director for the Greater Delray Chamber of Commerce, Director of Client Management for the Greater Cincinnati Chamber of Commerce, Interim Executive Director of the Port of Greater Cincinnati Development Authority, Economic Development Director of the Hamilton County Development Company, and Development Officer for the City of Cincinnati.

Randy holds a Bachelor of Science degree and Juris Doctor from Southern Illinois University. He has served as an Assistant Professor at his alma mater. Randy is an active contributor to his community and has served on the boards of the YMCA, Citrus County United Way, Ohio Tax Credit Authority, Port Authority for Brownfield Redevelopment, and Ohio Development Association, to name just a few.

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