



Photo by Keith Douglas - kd@keithdouglas.com

December 31, 2014

Following is a summary of recent and upcoming economic development news, stories and events.

Top Stories:

- Good News: Unemployment Down to 4.8 Percent in Broward County
- Florida Passes New York to Become the Nation's Third Most Populous State
- Florida's Leaders Working Together on Port Everglades Upgrades
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Top Stories

Unemployment Down to 4.8 Percent in Broward County

Florida's unemployment fell to its lowest level since the recession, with Broward County's rate at 4.8 percent. Broward County's rate was 5 percent in October. Florida's rate was 6 percent in October, falling to 5.8 percent in November. Economists said the November report was a strong finish to the year, with the state adding 38,600 jobs during the month. Over the year, 226,900 jobs were added in Florida. Florida has turned into a "really good labor market," said J. Antonio Villamil, economist for Washington Economics in South Florida. And South Florida is outpacing the rest of the state and nation in that job growth. "We're finishing the year on a strong note," he said. This article, by Marcia Pounds, ran in the Sun Sentinel on December 20. To read more, please [click here](#).

Florida Passes New York to Become the Nation's Third Most Populous State

By adding an average of 803 new residents each day between July 1, 2013 and July 1, 2014, Florida passed New York to become the nation's third most populous state, according to U.S. Census Bureau state population estimates released today. Florida's population grew by 293,000 over this period, reaching 19.9 million. The population of New York increased by 51,000 to 19.7 million. From Census.gov. To read more, please [click here](#).

Florida's Leaders Working Together on Port Everglades Upgrades (by Congresswoman Lois Frankel)

In this age of dysfunctional government, South Floridians can be proud of bipartisan efforts made by local, state and federal leaders to advance the expansion of Port Everglades. Port Everglades is the 12th leading container port in the U.S. and a South Florida economic powerhouse. The port is in an international race to deepen its harbor to accommodate the larger ships that will be traveling the seas as a result of the widening of the Panama Canal. Increased cargo will mean thousands of new middle-class jobs for South Florida families,

and \$500 million in economic impact to the region. Without port expansion, the larger ships will take their freight, and new jobs, elsewhere. This Opinion/Editorial piece, by Congresswoman Lois Frankel, ran in the Sun Sentinel on December 30. To read more, please [click here](#).

Alliance Participates in World's Largest Medical Trade Fair

Secretary of Commerce and Enterprise Florida, Inc. (EFI) president & CEO Gray Swoope recently announced that the EFI-led trip to MEDICA resulted in more than \$151 million in total projected export sales. Florida's two-story pavilion, the largest of any U.S. state at the event, showcased 25 small and mid-sized Florida life sciences companies and organizations. Secretary Swoope said, "I congratulate Florida's 25 companies on their success at MEDICA this year. Through international trade shows and missions, EFI is able to enhance opportunities for Florida companies and, in return, companies can help grow Florida's international footprint and add jobs. Because of the success Florida companies have at MEDICA year in and year out, the state is recognized around the world as a business super-state." To read more, please [click here](#).

Why Florida is the 5th-Best State for Entrepreneurs

Florida is one of the best states to start a business, according to a Small Business & Entrepreneurship Council report released this month. The state ranked fifth for its entrepreneur-friendly policies, after South Dakota, Nevada, Texas and Wyoming. The Washington D.C.-based nonpartisan research organization ranked states based on small business-related taxes, regulatory environment and government spending. "From a federal and state tax standpoint, [Florida is] a very attractive place to start businesses, or frankly, to relocate businesses," said Jim Cassel, chairman and co-founder of Miami investment banking firm Cassel Salpeter & Co. This article, by Celia Ampel, ran in the South Florida Business Journal on December 22. To read more, please [click here](#).

Companies Plan Pitches to Investors

Florida-based companies that want to pitch their businesses to potential investors have until December 30 to enter the 2015 Florida Venture Capital Conference. Six South Florida companies already are among those that have been selected to make presentations. The local businesses are BoxyCharm, an online beauty box subscription service based in Hialeah; Entic, an energy-savings system for building owners, in Pembroke Pines; Fresh Meal Plan, a producer of cooked meals for delivery, in Boca Raton; Power-Phase, developer of a system for fuel-efficient gas-fired generation, in Jupiter; Sky patrol, a GPS technology company that provides mobile solutions, from Miami; Snow Lizard Products, a consumer electronics company that makes water-proof cases for devices, in Miami; and Vascular Pathways, a medical device company that has developed a line of catheters, in Boca Raton. This article, by Marcia Pounds, ran in the Sun Sentinel on December 16. To read more, please [click here](#).

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Education, Workforce Development and Educational Excellence Builds Business (E²B²) News



Broward Schools Innovator Dr. Jeanine Gendron Named 2014 Top Technologist, Transformer and Trailblazer

Congratulations to Broward County Public Schools innovator Dr. Jeanine Gendron on being recognized as one of the Center for Digital Education's (CDE) 2014 Top 30 Technologists, Transformers and Trailblazers. The CDE is a national research and advisory institute specializing in K-12 and higher education technology trends, policies and funding. CDE provides education and industry leaders with support in effectively incorporating new technologies in the 21st century. To read more, please [click here](#).

Ribbon Cutting Ceremony Marks Grand Opening of the Confucius Institute of Broward County Public Schools

On Wednesday, December 17, 2014, Cypress Bay High School celebrated the grand opening of the Confucius Institute of Broward County Public Schools (BCPS). The Confucius Institute, which is located at Cypress Bay High School, is a joint venture between BCPS, the College Board and the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China. BCPS is one of only five Confucius Institutes in K-12 schools in the United States. To read more, please [click here](#).

Florida Department of Education Releases 2014 High School Grades and Graduation Rates

2014 high school grades and graduation rates were recently released by the Florida Department of Education. In the data released, more than 75% of Broward County Public Schools (BCPS) traditional high schools earned an A or B grade and achieved a graduation rate of 88%. To read more, please [click here](#).

Nova Southeastern University to Study BP Oil Spill

A fund established by the British oil company BP after the catastrophic 2010 spill in the Gulf of Mexico has awarded Nova Southeastern University \$8.5 million for research projects. A team led by the university's highly regarded Oceanographic Center will study the biology of the northern Gulf of Mexico, where most of the oil rigs are located. Focusing on the water column from the surface to a depth of more than a mile, the studies will attempt to catalog what species live there and how they interact, from fish to bacteria. This story, by David Fleshler, appeared in the Sun Sentinel. To read more, please [click here](#).

FAU Receives Largest Gift in University's History

FAU is pleased to announce that the university recently received a gift of \$16 million from the Schmidt Family Foundation, the largest

single gift in Florida Atlantic's history. The Schmidt Family Foundation's generosity will help create a national model of academic excellence in athletics to attract the nation's top coaches and student athletes to FAU. To read more, please [click here](#).

Broward College Celebrates Fall 2014 Commencement

Broward College recently conferred nearly 4,000 degrees and certificates at its 82nd commencement ceremony at the BB&T Center. These students joined more than 120,000 undergraduates who have graduated from Broward College since it was established in 1959. During the commencement ceremony, more than 2,489 associate's degrees, 197 bachelor's degrees and 1,432 technical certificates were conferred to students who represent more than 100 countries. The oldest graduate was 69 and the youngest was 17. There were 128 graduates over the age of 50. To read more, please [click here](#).

Broward College Celebrates GradSHOEation™ as Part of its Commencement Ceremony

Broward College celebrated its 82nd commencement ceremony in style, encouraging students to show off their fanciest footwear at GradSHOEation™ on Thursday, Dec. 18. The pre-ceremony celebration, which was initiated in May 2013, was created after Broward College administrators noticed shoes were becoming a big part of commencement and an even bigger topic of conversation after graduates marched across the stage. To read more, please [click here](#).

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Business Briefs and Alliance Member News



Alliance Member Companies in **Bold**

BankUnited, the largest bank based in South Florida, is the third best of the 100 largest banks in the U.S., Forbes Magazine decided. Forbes moved BankUnited to third on its list of "Best Banks in America 2015." The Miami Lakes-based bank has steadily moved up in three years: It was eighth last year and 10th in 2013. BankUnited has 101 branches in 15 Florida counties, including 39 in Broward and Palm Beach counties. The bank also has six bank centers in New York. This article, by Donna Geherke-White, ran in the Sun Sentinel on December 30. To read more, please [click here](#).

Broward County is the first County in the country to be awarded a 4-STAR rating for national excellence in economic, environmental and community sustainability by the STAR Community Rating System. STAR, or Sustainability Tools for Assessing and Rating communities, is a national certification program to recognize sustainable communities. The rating system includes seven goal areas and 44 sustainability objectives, with a total of 526 measurable indicators. To read more, please [click here](#).

The **Broward College** Speaker Series returns, presented by **Hoffman's Chocolates** at the **Broward Center for the Performing Arts**, January 21, 2015 - May 20, 2015. Individual tickets are now on sale. For tickets and more information, visit www.BrowardCollegeSpeakerSeries.com or call Ticketmaster at 800.745.3000. Full series subscriptions are also still available; subscribe to the full series and save 15%. To read more, please [click here](#).

CBRE arranged the sale and financing of Quorum Business Center, a best-in-class 408,000-square-foot distribution and office portfolio located just south of Boca Raton in the Deerfield Beach submarket of Fort Lauderdale. Quorum Business Center, which is strategically located at the intersection of SW 10th Street and Military Trail and just west of Interstate 95, was acquired for \$51 million, by Ivy Realty of Greenwich, Connecticut, from KTR Capital Partners of New York, New York. Quorum was 87% occupied at the time of acquisition. To read more, please [click here](#).

Florida Atlantic University's Office of Government Relations is excited to introduce Owl Advocates, a community of FAU supporters who are committed to advocating for the University and its priorities at all levels of government. FAU alumni, students, faculty, staff and friends are welcome to get involved. Owl Advocates' website, owladvocates.fau.edu, provides resources to let decision makers in Tallahassee and Washington know how worthy FAU is of their support. It's a grassroots tool that allows each of us to reach out to legislators on behalf of Owl Nation as critically important funding decisions are made. To read more, please [click here](#).

NextEra Energy, Inc. (parent company of **Florida Power & Light**) and Hawaiian Electric Industries, Inc. (HEI) recently announced a definitive agreement under which the companies have agreed to combine. The transaction, which is valued at approximately \$4.3 billion, includes the assumption of \$1.7 billion in HEI debt and excludes HEI's banking subsidiary. In connection with the agreement, HEI separately announced a plan to spin off ASB Hawaii, the parent company of American Savings Bank (ASB), to HEI shareholders and establish it as an independent publicly traded company. To read more, please [click here](#).

Volaris, the ultra low-cost airline, now offers nonstop service between **Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport** (FLL), and Mexico City. The new service will launch the carrier's second route into Florida, operating flights from Mexico City and Guadalajara. According to the US Census Bureau, more than 2.3 million residents of Greater Fort Lauderdale/Miami are of Hispanic or Latin American descent. Offering additional international flight service to Latin America generates greater opportunities for tourism and economic growth. For more information, [click here](#).

From December 2014 to August 2015 **Henderson Behavioral Health** will participate in the Center for Integrated Health Solutions (CIHS) Innovation Communities (IC) initiative. Henderson's IC, entitled "Developing High Functioning Primary Care Teams" was selected by Henderson to complement its behavioral health and primary care integration initiative known as "The HILL (Helping Individuals Live Longer) Project." To read more, please [click here](#).

The **Jim Moran Institute for Global Entrepreneurship** South Florida Outreach Division recently concluded its fourth Small Business Executive Program (SBEP). Classes ran from July to November 2014 with graduating participants representing 20 for-profit and nonprofit organizations in Broward, Miami-Dade and Palm Beach counties. To read more, please [click here](#).

MGM General Contracting, Inc. was on hand for the ribbon cutting at the grand openings of Starbucks and Shula Burger, two new restaurants at the Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport (FLL), both located in Terminal 1. Former Broward County Mayor Barbara Sharief, Coach Don Shula of Shula Burger, and Kent George, Broward County Director of Aviation attended the ribbon cutting, along with representatives of both restaurant chains. To read more, please [click here](#).

MGM General Contracting, Inc. (MGM) marked a key milestone as it recently completed construction of a fourth Starbucks at the Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport (FLL) within the past six months. The new Starbucks comes on the heels of the grand opening of Shula Burger. Both restaurants are located in Terminal 2. To read more, please [click here](#).

Nova Southeastern University president George L. Hanbury II recently sat down with **Tripp Scott's** Ed Pozzuoli to discuss the legacy of success of Nova Southeastern University, and what the future holds for the institution. To view the interview, [click here](#).

Pompano Beach's efforts to boost its tourism profile are paying off. The Broward County city this week was named No. 5 among the top 10 U.S. travel destinations on the rise, according to the Trip Advisor's 2014 Travelers' Choice awards. Tourists are drawn to Pompano's miles of sandy beach, its popular fishing pier and golf, entertainment and sports attractions. The city is home to 36 hotels, 306 restaurants and 54 attractions, according to TripAdvisor information. This article, by Arlene Satchell, ran in the Sun Sentinel on December 6. To read more, please [click here](#).

The president of Plantation firm **Setnor Byer Insurance & Risk** will launch a public safety app this week through her company sci-Shot. The sci-Shot app allows users to anonymously submit photos and videos of suspicious activity to local Crime Stoppers, founder Anita Byer said. "It's a step below calling 911 and a step above doing nothing," she said. "We're encouraging spectators to download sci-Shot, register as an anonymous user, and confidentially share pictures and video of non-emergency conditions that appear unsafe or threatening and cause concern." This article, by Celia Ampel, ran in the South Florida Business Journal on December 9. To read more, please [click here](#).

Stiles is proud to announce that its owned and managed office buildings, the historic Plaza at Las Olas and The **AutoNation** Building in downtown Fort Lauderdale, were honored with The Outstanding Building of the Year (TOBY) awards from the Fort Lauderdale/Palm Beach Building Owners and Managers Association (BOMA). Overall, Stiles received six distinguished TOBY awards for quality office and retail projects as well as its management personnel. The TOBY Awards were held at the Harbor Beach Marriott Resort and Spa in Fort Lauderdale on Nov. 7. To read more, please [click here](#).

Fort Lauderdale-based **Stiles** and Prudential Real Estate Investors recently announced the acquisition of 200 East Las Olas (also known as "New River Center"), a 20-story trophy Class A office tower located directly on Las Olas Boulevard in the heart of Fort Lauderdale's bustling central business district. Developed by Stiles in 1990, this institutional quality asset is currently 86% leased and encompasses 281,713 rentable square feet of some of the most desirable office and ground-floor retail space in the vibrant South Florida region. To read more, please [click here](#).

Miller Construction Company recently announced the launch of its Special Projects Group, a team dedicated to projects that are smaller and of shorter duration than new construction work. South Florida's increasing demand for service work, capital expenditure projects and tenant improvements valued at under \$2 million prompted the firm to formalize the Special Projects Group, according to Traci Miller, vice president of business development. "Clients and industry colleagues call me on a regular basis asking Miller to handle their smaller projects," she said. "We're committed to serving our clients for all things construction-related, and with demand stronger than ever, dedicating an expert team streamlines all phases of these projects." To read more, please [click here](#).

Jordan Zimmerman, founder of **Zimmerman Advertising**, has been named a winner of the 2015 Horatio Alger Award, a prominent national honor that recognizes success despite adversity. Zimmerman is one of 12 Americans to receive the award this year, the Horatio Alger Association announced Thursday. "It's an unbelievable honor. I was surprised and moved," said Zimmerman, chairman of Zimmerman Advertising, a firm with \$1.3 billion in billings in 2013 and more than 1,000 employees worldwide. To read more, please [click here](#).

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Featured Property of the Month





Cornerstone One
1200 S. Pine Island Road, Plantation
Listed by CBRE
Additional details at GreaterFortLauderdaleProperties.com
[Click Here](#)

Upcoming Events



Alliance Events

Alliance Partner Council Meeting (Members Only)

Thursday, January 8, 8:30 - 10:00 a.m.

Location: Florida Small Business Development Center, Fort Lauderdale

For more information, please contact Helen Kulp at 954-627-0131 or at hkulp@gflalliance.org

Alliance Leadership Council (Members Only)

Tuesday, January 20, 8:30 – 10:00 a.m.

Location: TBA

For more information, please contact Tania Vinaixa at 954-627-0133 or at tvinaixa@gflalliance.org

Alliance Corporate Council Meeting (Members Only)

Wednesday, January 21, 8:30 - 10:00 a.m.

Location: TBA

For more information, please contact Helen Kulp at 954-627-0131 or at hkulp@gflalliance.org

Alliance Governor Council (Members Only)

Wednesday, January 28, 8:30 – 10:00 a.m.

Location: TBA

For more information, please contact Tania Vinaixa at 954-627-0133 or at tvinaixa@gflalliance.org

Alliance 2015 Mid-Year Meeting

Thursday, May 14, 11:15 a.m.

Location: Hyatt Regency Pier Sixty-Six, Fort Lauderdale

For sponsorship information and additional details please contact Gail Bulfin at gbulfin@gflalliance.org or Tania Vinaixa at 954-627-0133 or at tvinaixa@gflalliance.org

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Enterprise Florida Events

Arab Health 2015

January 26 – 29, 2015

Location: Dubai, United Arab Emirates

For more information, [click here](#).

BioContact Québec 2015

February 25 – 26, 2015

Location: Quebec City, Canada

For more information, [click here](#).

Dubai International Boat Show

March 3 – 7, 2015

Location: Dubai, United Arab Emirates

For more information, [click here](#).

Enterprise Florida (EFI) conducts or participates in an extensive schedule of export marketing missions and exhibitions worldwide. These trade events are open to all businesses registered in Florida. For more information and to see more event listings, please [click here](#).

Member/Partner Events

South Florida Symphony Orchestra: Starry Night All in White

Sunday, January 4, 5:00 p.m.

Location: Hyatt Regency Pier Sixty-Six, Fort Lauderdale

For more information, please [click here](#).

South Florida Symphony Orchestra: SymphonyPOPS - WannaBeatles

Tuesday, January 6, 8:00 p.m.

Location: First Baptist Church of Fort Lauderdale

For more information, please [click here](#).

Port Everglades Cruise Terminal 4 Grand Re-Opening Celebration

Thursday, January 8, 9:00 a.m.

Location: Port Everglades, Fort Lauderdale

For more information, please [click here](#).

Deadline for Lifestyle Media Group Leaders in Law Nominations

Thursday, January 15

For more information, please [click here](#).

South Florida Technology Alliance State of the Industry

Thursday, January 15, 5:00 p.m.

Location: FAU Tech Runway, Boca Raton

For more information, please [click here](#).

Broward Leaders Water and Climate Academy Day 3

Friday, January 16, 8:00 a.m.

Location: Broward County Government Center, Fort Lauderdale

For more information, please [click here](#).

Broward College Speaker Series presented by Hoffman's Chocolates: Anthony Robles

Wednesday, January 21, 7:30 p.m.

Location: Broward Center for the Performing Arts, Fort Lauderdale

For more information, please [click here](#).

Safe Streets Summit

Thursday, January 22, 8:30 a.m.

Location: IGFA Fishing Hall of Fame & Museum, Dania Beach

For more information, please [click here](#).

2015 IEDC Economic Development Leadership Summit

January 25-27

Location: Palm Beach Gardens Marriott

For more information, please [click here](#).

2015 South Florida Business Journal CFO Awards Cocktail Reception and Program

Wednesday, January 28, 5:30 p.m.

Location: IGFA Fishing Hall of Fame & Museum, Dania Beach

For more information, please [click here](#).

Emerge Broward's 9th Annual Leadership Summit

January 23-24

For more information, please [click here](#).

Florida Venture Capital Conference

January 29-30

Location: Diplomat Resort & Spa, Hollywood

For more information, please [click here](#).

Center for Hemispheric Policy: NAFTA

Friday, January 30, 8:00 a.m.

Location: Conrad Miami

For more information, please [click here](#).

Broward Leaders Water and Climate Academy Day 4

Friday, January 30, 8:30 a.m.

Location: Broward County Government Center, Fort Lauderdale

For more information, please [click here](#).

South Florida Business Journal Critical Conversations: Real Estate

Thursday, February 5, 9:00 a.m.

Location: Interiors by Stephen G, Pompano Beach

For more information, please [click here](#).

Leadership Broward Foundation's Expedition Leadership

Friday, February 6

Location: Hyatt Regency Pier Sixty-Six

For more information, please [click here](#).

Broward College Speaker Series presented by Hoffman's Chocolates: Mark Halpern

Wednesday, February 18, 7:30 p.m.

Location: Broward Center for the Performing Arts, Fort Lauderdale

For more information, please [click here](#).

Blue Wild Ocean Adventure and Marine Art Expo

February 21-22

Location: Greater Fort Lauderdale/Broward County Convention Center, Fort Lauderdale

For more information, please [click here](#).

Smart Growth Partnership Forum - Financing Development

Thursday, February 26

Location: IGFA Fishing Hall of Fame & Museum, Dania Beach

For more information, please [click here](#).

2015 South Florida Business Journal Best Places to Work Awards

Thursday, February 26, 11:30 a.m.

Location: The Signature Grand, Davie

For more information, please [click here](#).

Calendar items are subject to change without notice. Please visit www.gfalliance.org for the most current calendar of events and meetings and for more information regarding the Alliance.

Connect and follow the Alliance on Social Media: [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#) and [LinkedIn](#)

Also join our [LinkedIn group](#) (for members only).

Looking for commercial properties and demographic information? Visit www.greaterfortlauderdaleproperties.com.

Why have so many companies relocated to Greater Fort Lauderdale? [Click here](#) to find out (90 second video).

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