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
- Alliance Participates in World’s Largest Medical Trade Fair
- Why Florida is the 5th-Best State for Entrepreneurs
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Education, Workforce Development and Educational Excellence Builds Business (E²B²) News

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Upcoming Enterprise Florida and Member/Partner Events

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,
FAU is pleased to announce that the university recently received a gift of $16 million from the Schmidt Family Foundation, the largest gift in the university's history.

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

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 Venture Capital Conference: 6 South Florida 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 BoxtyCharm, an online beauty box subscription service based in Hialeah; Entic, an energy-savings system for building owners, in Pembroke Pines; Punch Meal Plan, a provider 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.

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 nonprofit 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.

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.

Venture Capital Conference: 6 South Florida 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 BoxtyCharm, an online beauty box subscription service based in Hialeah; Entic, an energy-savings system for building owners, in Pembroke Pines; Punch Meal Plan, a provider 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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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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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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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.gflalliance.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).


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

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