



Photo by Ken Henson – ken@whitehotmedia.com

The Alliance E-Newsletter
April 29, 2011

Top Stories

Private Jet Charter Opens North American Regional Headquarters in Fort Lauderdale

Private Jet Charter, one of the world's largest independent private jet charter brokers and consultants, has unveiled an aggressive expansion plan in North America by establishing its regional office in Fort Lauderdale to serve as its charter hub for the United States and Canada. Private Jet Charter founder and Chief Executive Hugh Courtenay said that the Fort Lauderdale office will be the company's fifth in its network, complementing locations in London, Nice, Dubai and Moscow. Courtenay, who has overseen the company's growth from inception in 1991, said: "After expanding our marketing activities in the US market, we are now in the perfect position to set up new offices staffed by a team of specialist aviation consultants, led by our experienced Operations Director Shaun Elliott. This is a very exciting project for Private Jet Charter, as the American market has grown significantly in the past year achieving an exponential growth."

"Our site selection process initially focused on Las Vegas or Chicago, but the presence of the Fort Lauderdale Executive Airport – one of the nation's busiest – and the assistance provided by the Greater Fort Lauderdale Alliance CEO Council and City of Fort Lauderdale Economic Development officials motivated us that Fort Lauderdale was indeed the right choice to use as a platform for the entire North American market," Courtenay added.

Private Jet Charter has selected office space at 401 East Las Olas Boulevard in downtown Fort Lauderdale. Stiles Realty assisted in the office search, Coldwell Banker provided residential relocation assistance and the Behar Law Group provided corporate and immigration legal counsel.

CEO Council Chairman Ray Ferrero, Jr. said, "We are delighted to welcome Private Jet Charter's US/Canada regional headquarters and charter hub to Greater Fort Lauderdale. It joins over 150 other corporate and international regional headquarters that call Greater Fort Lauderdale home. In addition, they are part of The Charter Club – the world's most prestigious yacht-charter members club backed by the International Yacht Register, and we see exciting synergies between Private Jet Charter and our world famous Fort Lauderdale yachting industry."

Fort Lauderdale Mayor Jack Seiler added, "We are happy that leading companies in their fields like Private Jet Charter are choosing Fort Lauderdale as a platform to target the growing business potential occurring in the North American market. We believe that Private Jet Charter will provide value to their customers with transparent and reliable service which we are happy to see from Fort Lauderdale to the entire market."

Florida Governor Rick Scott said, "We welcome Private Jet Charter's choice to serve the entire North America region from Florida. This demonstrates the strategic location of Florida on the international map and speaks volumes for the significance of our efforts to reduce the burden of taxes and regulation on businesses."

Commenting on the projected employment headcount and capital investment, Courtenay said: "Our current staff of two will be expanded to six employees over the next 18 months. This is sufficient in the first two years since our other international offices are supporting the North America office around the clock and most of the administration work will be provided by our international offices through effective systems we have in place."

He added: "As we are a technology-led industry, we project a \$2M turnover in the first year and double that in the second year of business, with our overall initial investment reaching \$200,000, including consultancy fees from our management teams in other regions."

Courtenay concluded: "Our Florida office will guarantee a qualitative service at a closer proximity to our North American customers who represent a big chunk of our clientele. We are committed to servicing them with the highest degree of efficiency and professionalism, which have been the hallmarks of our relationship with our customers in general. We proudly claim that we offer an experience rather than a service."

Private Jet Charter is an ISO 9002-certified company with 20 years of leadership in the aviation field. It is a respected provider of VIP aircraft, executive jets, helicopter charter, corporate airliners and dedicated medical evacuation aircraft. The company accesses its global fleet through a Computerized Aircraft Tracking System which is updated automatically on a daily basis.

Comcast Planning to Hire 300 for Miramar Call Center

Comcast has announced that it will open a Spanish-language Center of Excellence in Miramar this spring. Once fully operational later this year, the new center will employ more than 300 customer account executives exclusively dedicated to handling sales calls from Spanish-speaking consumers across the country.

"We've been extremely focused on bringing an enhanced entertainment experience to the growing Hispanic community, but just as important is delivering top-notch service," said Filemon Lopez, Senior Vice President of Comcast's Florida East Coast Region. "By creating a dedicated Spanish-language Center of Excellence, we can leverage our investments in sophisticated tools and advanced technology, and deliver specific employee training on our unique Hispanic product offerings to deliver a consistently high quality experience to Spanish-speaking consumers."

Comcast's move to open the Spanish-language Center of Excellence and create 300 new jobs was applauded by leaders in the state of Florida and the Hispanic community.

"As Governor, I am working to make Florida the No. 1 place for job creation so that successful companies like Comcast will grow and expand in our state," said Florida Governor Rick Scott. "The diversity of our people and our commitment to giving Florida's business environment a competitive edge over other states will increase economic opportunities for all Floridians. I applaud Comcast for their investment in Florida's Spanish-language communities by creating this new call center in Miramar."

The Spanish-language Center of Excellence will officially start to handle customer calls in May and Comcast is currently accepting applications for the more than 300 new customer account executive jobs at www.comcast.com/careers. To fill

these roles, the company is looking for individuals who are bilingual in Spanish and English, and who have at least one to two years of sales experience and a commitment to deliver superior customer service.

Florida Leads Nation in Potential to Grow Jobs

Florida leads the nation in its potential to grow jobs, according to a new Wells Fargo report that predicts a major rebound in the Sunshine State's battered hiring climate. In ranking states by regional competitiveness—intrinsic factors that lead employers to create jobs in that state versus others nearby—Florida scored first in the Wells Fargo study released Wednesday morning. Florida gets a boost in the rankings by tourism and hospitality industries, a natural for a state that heavily attracts tourists. But Wells Fargo also gives Florida credit for a growing "life-sciences" industry, citing both a hefty retired population needing medical care and the research dollars that come with facilities like the Scripps Research facility in Palm Beach County. "The influx of new medical research facilities will help reinvigorate [research and development] growth in Florida, helping further diversify the state's economy," the report said. Florida was ranked as regionally competitive in 22 industries, one more than second place finisher Georgia in the Wells Fargo ranking. The high-growth sectors include white-collar fields such as finance, insurance and professional services. "Florida is attracting a diverse group of individuals," said Michael Brown, a Wells Fargo economist and study author. "They are in a position to expand employment amid a wider selection of industries." [Source: [Miami Herald](#)]

Town of Davie and City of Oakland Park Approve Streamlined Permitting Process

Town of Davie and City of Oakland Park Commissioners have approved an expedited development/permitting process for businesses that meet certain qualifications, joining the City of Tamarac as Alliance "Platinum Cities." To qualify for streamlined permitting, businesses must be a part of Broward's targeted industry clusters and hire new employees with salaries at least 15 percent higher than the average per capita income in Broward or industry average. They must also show that the property is properly zoned, platted and ready for the type of business being proposed. The cities' plans to streamline the permitting process includes increased communication, pre-development meetings and designating a city staff member as a "concierge" to assist the company through the permitting process. An online permitting system will also allow applicants to review the status of their permits throughout the process.

The Alliance has been encouraging communities to adopt a streamlined development/permitting process ordinance or resolution as a way to let businesses know the community is ready to help them navigate the permitting process and quickly start or expand their business and hire employees. Communities that adopt the ordinance are being highlighted on the Alliance's website and in other ways. The Alliance is ranking those communities as Platinum Cities because they have taken extra steps to help ensure that businesses have a first-rate experience when going through the development review and permitting process.

Economic Gardening Forum a Big Success

More than 40 second stage companies in Broward County learned how to fast track their companies' growth at the Greater Fort Lauderdale Alliance's Economic Gardening Breakfast Forum held on April 8th at the Signature Grand in Davie.

The forum, which addressed "achieving success beyond the second stage," provided insight on dealing with growth challenges and defining a path for success from keynote speaker Thomas J. Miller, Chief Executive Officer of Miller Construction Company, and experts from the State of Florida's GrowFL Economic Gardening program, the Black Business Investment Fund (BBIF) and members of Broward's financial community. It also featured Broward companies that have completed the Economic Gardening Program as well as provided valuable information on obtaining loans from local financial institutions.

Second stage companies in Broward County may be able to receive a free suite of economic gardening support services including: technical assistance; access to information and decision-making tools typically only available to larger companies; up to a \$250,000 business loan; access to CEO Forums and events; and a statewide referral network. To qualify, companies must meet certain criteria, along with other qualifications such as having 10-50 employees and revenues of \$1 million to \$25 million a year.

Fourteen Broward companies have already completed the GrowFL Technical Assistance program and five have received BBIF loans in the amount of \$250,000 each. Sponsors and partners of the event included Enterprise Development Corporation, Florida Economic Gardening Institute, City of Hollywood, City of Margate Community Redevelopment Agency,

Miller Construction Company, City of Plantation, PNC Bank and the Town of Davie.

Alliance Mid-Year Meeting Set for May 5, 2011

Please register now to attend this year's Alliance Mid-Year Meeting to be held Thursday, May 5, from 11:15 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the Hyatt Regency Pier Sixty-Six Resort & Spa, 2301 Southeast 17th Street in Fort Lauderdale. The Alliance's Mid-Year Meeting is one of the premier business events of the year and will feature Gray Swoope, newly announced President and CEO of Enterprise Florida, as keynote speaker. For more information regarding the event, or to register to attend, please [click here](#). To learn about sponsorship opportunities, please contact Gail Bulfin, Alliance Vice President of Membership Development at 954-627-0127. Presenting sponsors of the Mid-Year Meeting include FP&L and Patriot National Insurance Group. Platinum sponsors include AutoNation, Broward County and the Hyatt Regency Pier Sixty-Six Resort & Spa. Gunster Yoakley is a Silver Sponsor.

Greater Fort Lauderdale and Port Everglades Featured in National Site Consultant Magazines

The Alliance is pleased to share articles from the March/April edition of [Site Selection](#) magazine highlighting our CEO Council's headquarters marketing and recruitment initiative, and the March/April [Business Facilities](#) magazine featuring information about Port Everglades in its preparation for the expansion of the Panama Canal. The Alliance assisted with editorial content for both publications. To view the articles, please click on the name of each magazine in this story.

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

Broward College Named by Aspen Institute as One of Top 120 Colleges in Top 10 Percent Nationally on Student Success Indicators

Broward College has been ranked in the top 10 percent of community colleges nationally, according to an announcement by the Washington, D.C.- based Aspen Institute. The college is thereby eligible to win funds from the institute's new \$1 million Prize for Community College Excellence, to be awarded at the end of this year. The prize represents a partnership among the Aspen Institute, the Joyce and Lumina Foundations, and the charitable foundations of Bank of America and JP Morgan Chase.

"We are very pleased and honored to be named one of the 120 best community colleges in the U.S. It is gratifying to receive national recognition for the hard work done every day, term after term, by our dedicated faculty, professional staff, and administrators" said Broward College President J. David Armstrong, Jr.

The next round of the competition for this prize will narrow the field of contestants to eight to 10 finalists, said Josh Wyner, executive director of the Aspen Institute College Excellence Program. A site visit will be made in September to each college in the group of finalists. A panel of judges will award points based on how much students learn, how many complete their programs on time, and how well students do in the job market after graduating. "We're interested in what they've done and how we can replicate the practices that led to student success," Wyner said. One grand prize winner will be awarded up to \$700,000 and three runners-up will each win \$100,000.

Speaking for the jury that will select winners and finalists, former Governor of Michigan John Engler, president of the Business Roundtable and former president of the National Association of Manufacturers, emphasized the tremendous importance of community colleges in preparing the high-tech workforce American companies need.

Broward County Public Schools Named Finalist for Broad Prize

Broward County Public Schools has been named by The Eli and Edythe Broad Foundation as a finalist for the 2011 Broad Prize for Urban Education, guaranteeing the district a minimum of \$150,000 in college scholarships for its students.

The Broad (rhymes with "road") Prize for Urban Education is an annual \$1 million award—the largest education prize in the country—that honors large school districts that demonstrate the greatest overall performance and improvement in student achievement while reducing achievement gaps among poor and minority students.

The other finalists this year are Miami-Dade Public Schools, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools in North Carolina and the Ysleta

Independent School District in El Paso, Texas.

The winner of The Broad Prize, to be announced on Tuesday, September 20, in Washington, D.C., will receive \$550,000 in college scholarships for high school seniors who will graduate in 2012. The three finalist districts will each receive \$150,000 in college scholarships, for a total distribution of \$1 million in Broad Prize scholarships.

Among the reasons that Broward County was chosen as a 2011 Broad Prize finalist:

- In 2010, Broward outperformed other Florida districts serving students with similar family incomes in math at all school levels (elementary, middle and high school) and in reading at the middle and high school levels, according to The Broad Prize methodology.
- In 2010, achievement gaps between Hispanic and white students in Broward were among the smallest in the state in reading at all school levels and in math at the elementary and high school levels, according to The Broad Prize methodology.
- Between 2007 and 2010, Broward narrowed achievement gaps between Hispanic and white students in math at all school levels and in reading at the elementary and middle school levels. In addition, Broward narrowed achievement gaps between black students and white students in math at the middle and high school levels and in reading at the elementary school level.
- In 2010, the percentage of Broward's black students performing at the highest achievement levels (levels 4 and 5) on the state assessments ranked in the top decile of district performance statewide in math and in the second decile of district performance statewide in reading when compared with other black students statewide.

All four 2011 Broad Prize finalists have previously been finalists. Broward returns as a three-time finalist, previously in 2008 and 2009.

South Plantation High School's Allan Phipps Selected for Albert Einstein Distinguished Educator Fellow Program

The Triangle Coalition for Science and Technology Education announced the selection of Allan Phipps, an environmental science teacher at South Plantation High School, to participate in the Albert Einstein Distinguished Educator Fellowship program 2011/12. The program offers elementary and secondary science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) teachers with a demonstrated excellence in teaching an opportunity to serve in the national education and public policy arenas. One of 28 outstanding educators serving this year, Phipps was selected from a nationwide pool of applicants.

Business Briefs and Alliance Member News (Alliance members in bold)

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Florida has opened a Blue Center at 1970 Sawgrass Mills Circle in Sunrise, to help customers with health insurance and care decisions.

Broward County Office of Economic and Small Business Development Director Norman Taylor and Economic Development Manager Deborah Wilkinson have been selected to serve on the Florida Chamber Foundation's Six Pillars Caucus System. They will join other leaders from across the state to help craft the first-ever, state-wide strategic plan for Florida's economic future. The Six Pillars Caucus System is a qualitative research program aimed at developing a plan for Florida's future economy that includes high-wage jobs, global competitiveness and vibrant communities by the year 2030. The program was launched last year and current members have already begun to construct the foundation for the plan. To read more, please [click here](#).

Colliers International South Florida is pleased to announce a 22,336 square-foot completed lease at the Saw Ban Building located at 1401 NW 136th Avenue in Sunrise. Robert Listokin, SIOR, Senior Vice President, and Peyton J. Moore, MBA, Commercial Associate, the exclusive listings agents, completed the transaction at the 106,413 square-foot class A office building. The tenant, Alliance Entertainment, LLC, will use the space for its corporate offices and call center. The company is a distributor of CDs, DVDs, videogames and related products to merchants, including Target, Best Buy, Barnes and Noble, and Borders Group, as well as Internet retailers such as Amazon.com. Alliance Entertainment was attracted to the property based on the economic deal offered, its location in Southwest Broward and the building's ability to provide a required high parking ratio.

Registration is now open for the ESCAPE Entrepreneurship High School Camp Entrepreneurship Summer Camp and Personal Enrichment program (E.S.C.A.P.E.) at the H. Wayne Huizenga School of Business and Entrepreneurship at [Nova Southeastern University](#). The program is designed to give high school students with a passion for business an understanding and appreciation for the process of starting a business and maintaining ethical business practices. The camp is open to highly motivated high school students currently in grades 9, 10, 11 and 12. Each day is packed with lectures from NSU professors and South Florida business leaders, lively discussions and interactive exercises. For session information, please [click here](#) or contact Cheryl Babcock at babcockc@nsu.nova.edu. Applications are due by May 9th.

[Stiles](#) and [AutoNation](#) have jointly announced that the AutoNation Building is the second office property in downtown Fort Lauderdale to achieve Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED®) certification from the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC). The USGBC awarded the 204,000 square-foot multi-tenant office building a certification for Existing Buildings Operations Management (EBOM) under its stringent rating system. The AutoNation Building earned the prestigious designation from the national, not-for-profit USGBC for meeting LEED standards for energy use, lighting, water and material use, and for incorporating a variety of sustainable strategies. Stiles' 300 Las Olas Place office property was the first in the downtown area achieve LEED status.

HDI, the largest membership association for IT service and technical support professionals and the premier certification body for the industry, recently announced that [Technisource](#) is the winner of the 2011 HDI Team Excellence Award for External Support in recognition for its commitment to innovation and continual improvement in people, processes and technology. The award was presented at the 2011 HDI Conference and Expo held in Las Vegas, NV. Technisource, one of the largest technology services providers in North America, delivers a wide range of staffing, management services and technology solutions. It is a subsidiary of [SFN Group](#).

[Upcoming Economic Development Meetings, Missions & Events](#)

[Enterprise Florida Events:](#)

[Export Sales Mission to Chile & Peru](#)

May 14 - 21, 2011

Santiago, Chile & Lima, Peru

Event Type: International Trade and Investment

Industry Sector: Various

[Sanctuary Cove International Boat Show](#)

May 19 - 22, 2011

Brisbane, Australia

Event Type: International Trade and Investment

Industry Sector: Marine

[HOSPITALAR 2011](#)

Hospitalar is the most important health fair in Brazil and Latin America. The show features products ranging from the most sophisticated state-of-the-art medical technology to disposables. Almost 90,000 professional visitors and over 1,250 exhibitors are anticipated at this year's show.

May 24 - 27, 2011

Location: Sao Paulo, Brazil

Event Type: International Trade and Investment

Industry Sector: Life Sciences

[32nd Hemispheric Congress of Latin Chambers of Commerce & Industries](#)

June 1 - 4, 2011

Coral Gables, Florida

Event Type: International Trade and Investment

Industry Sector: Various

[Canada Business Development Mission](#)

June 7 - 10, 2011

Montreal/Toronto Canada

Event Type: International Trade and Investment
Industry Sector: Various

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 go to <http://eflorida.com/Events.aspx>.

Other Events:

Florida Medical Device Symposium

The Florida Medical Device Symposium is Florida's premier event for medical device manufacturing companies.
May 2 - 3, 2011

Location: Hilton St. Petersburg Carillon Park
For more information or to register, please [click here](#).

Hispanic Unity of Florida: Entrepreneur Summit and Awards Luncheon

May 10, 2011 8:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Location: Hyatt Bonaventure Resort & Spa, 250 Racquet Club Road, Weston
For more information, please [click here](#).

EDC's 10th Annual Life Sciences Conference

May 11, 2011 7:30 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Location: Florida Atlantic University, Live Oak Pavillion, 777 Glades Road, Boca Raton
For more information, please [click here](#).

Broward Business Leadership Network: Sixth Annual Career Fair and Expo

May 11, 2011 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Location: Nova Southeastern University, Carl DeSantis Building, 3310 College Avenue, Davie
For more information, please [click here](#).

FEDC's (Florida Economic Development Council) 2011 Annual Conference

June 23 - 24, 2011

Location: Hyatt Orlando Airport
For more information, please [click here](#).

Alliance Calendar of Events

Alliance Mid-Year Meeting

Thursday, May 5, 2011 11:15 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

Location: Hyatt Regency Pier Sixty-Six Resort & Spa, 2301 Southeast 17th Street, Fort Lauderdale
For more information regarding the event, or to register to attend, please [click here](#). To learn about sponsorship opportunities, please contact Gail Bulfin, Alliance Vice President of Membership Development at 954-627-0127.

Partner Council Meeting (by invitation only)

Thursday, May 12, 2011 8:30 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.

Location: City of North Lauderdale, Champions Hall Community Center, 6601 Boulevard of Champions, North Lauderdale
For more information, please contact Helen Kulp at 954-627-0131 or at hkulp@gfalliance.org.

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

Follow the Alliance on these websites: [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#)

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

THE ALLIANCE: *PARTNERSHIP FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH*

Broward County's Official Economic Development Partnership

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