



STIMULATING JOB GROWTH FOR OKALOOSA COUNTY

2019 Accomplishments

Expanding Community Dialogue

- ✓ Hosted two Roundtable breakfasts – “**Brain Chasing: Talent Attraction as a Community Strategy**” and “**Economic Gardening: Cultivating Sustainable Entrepreneur Support Initiatives**”.
- ✓ Held the 3rd Annual TeCMEN Industry Day featuring panel discussions and presentations from **Enterprise Florida, Boeing, Vertex Aerospace, GKN Aerospace, ST Engineering, Eglin Air Force Base, Bit-Wizards** and the **UWF Center for Cybersecurity**.

Enhancing Competitiveness

- ✓ Completed a consultant-led **Incubator Feasibility Study** assessing the potential for a successful entrepreneurial incubator or accelerator in Okaloosa County.
- ✓ Assisted the City of Fort Walton Beach with **master planning** process for the **Fort Walton Beach Commerce & Technology Park**.
- ✓ Secured grant funding to aid in the planning of a new research park – **FuturesPark** – located in proximity to Eglin AFB and devised to house defense contractors and DoD research entities in a collaborative environment.

Supporting Workforce and Talent Development

- ✓ Partnered with the Hsu Educational Foundation, the Okaloosa County School District and Rocky Bayou Christian School to host 25 **area high school students and principals** for interface with technical employers at the TeCMEN Industry Day.
- ✓ Partnered with University of West Florida to provide nine (9) **no-cost training / industry certification courses** to companies participating in the EDC’s TeCMEN committee.
- ✓ Partnered with the Okaloosa County School District and CareerSource Okaloosa Walton to host “**Educate the Educators +1**” – an opportunity for teachers, principals and students to gain firsthand knowledge of local employers.
- ✓ Utilized geo-targeting technology to promote local career opportunities found within the **Talent Attraction Portal** on the EDC’s website to Emerald Coast visitors who may be inclined to relocate to the area.

Strengthening the Military Mission

- ✓ Undertook targeted **Federal legislative outreach** in support of enhancement of the Gulf Range and extending the current moratorium on offshore oil drilling activities in the eastern Gulf of Mexico.
- ✓ Supported Eglin’s **NexGen** initiative – a strategic plan to transform an aging military complex to be a world-class center for advanced military technology.
- ✓ Utilized the EDC’s **Tri-County Community Partnership Initiative (TCPI)** to tackle key community challenges faced by installations and service members. Efforts include transportation / mission readiness, childcare availability and post-military career transitions.
- ✓ Completed a consultant-led **Military Mission Impact Study** illustrating the potential local economic impact of hypothetical military mission growth or loss. Information was utilized in Okaloosa County’s successful \$64 million Triumph Gulf Coast application for the State Road 85 Crestview Bypass.

Promoting Location Opportunities

- ✓ Conducted an aggressive **trade show and event marketing program** designed to promote Okaloosa County to global decision makers in high wage sectors including aviation, aerospace, defense, advanced manufacturing and technology.
- ✓ Partnered with Gulf Power, PowerSouth and Enterprise Florida to host Opportunity Showcase Luncheons spotlighting the **Shoal River Ranch Gigasite** to site selectors in Chicago, New York and Cleveland.

Facilitating New Jobs and Investment

- ✓ Assisted Virginia-based **MAG Aerospace** with establishing the Technology Integration Support Center (TISC) in a 25,000 square foot building in the Fort Walton Beach Commerce & Technology Park leading to the creation of more than 70 new jobs.
- ✓ Partnered with BIA of Okaloosa & Walton Counties to recruit the **Home Builders Institute** to stand up a construction trades training program at Northwest Florida State College focused on separating military, Veterans and military dependents.
- ✓ Assisted **DS2** with efforts to secure a Weapons Planning Software contract, necessitating the company’s expansion into a second Niceville location. More than 30 new technology jobs are anticipated as a result.
- ✓ Supported **Vertex Aerospace AIS** in their efforts to expedite County permitting for a new 15,000 square foot ballistics foam facility in Crestview. Total company investment is \$3.5 million and 30 new aerospace jobs are expected.
- ✓ Successfully recruited German automotive chip tuning market leader **RaceChip** to relocate their US headquarters from southern California to Fort Walton Beach resulting in the creation of 12 new jobs.