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.