



Economic Development

# Quarterly

An official publication of the Volusia County Economic Development Division

December 2021



## ***The Workforce Issue***

*In this edition:*

- ***Employee Recruitment, Retention & Expansion***
- ***Partnerships to Develop Your Team***
- ***The ROI of Human Capital Investment***

# Shifting Focus to Employee Recruitment, Retention & Expansion

Helga van Eckert, Director  
Volusia County Economic Development



Did you know that Volusia County's workforce (in pure numbers) is the largest it has ever been? Yet our most recent Volusia County business survey continues to overwhelmingly list workforce as a top issue. We are not alone in this struggle. The labor shortage, or "Great Resignation," is a national concern. An alarming 4.4 million U.S. workers quit their jobs back in September alone!

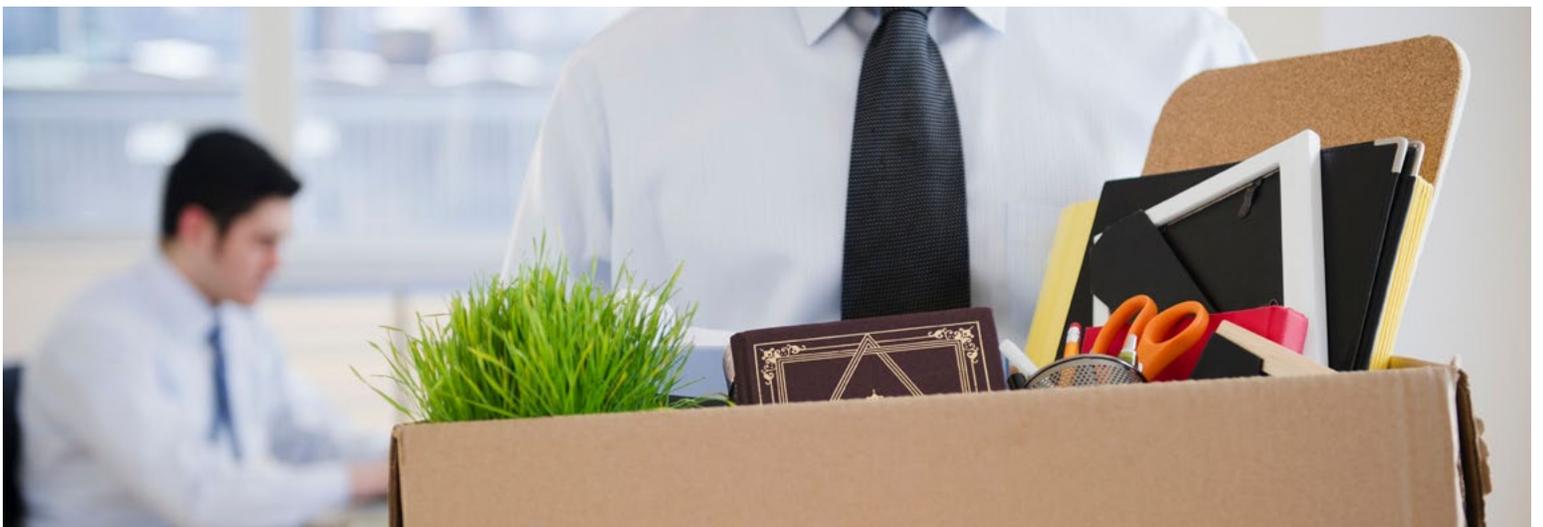
Explanations are diverse:

- **Convenience-driven remote work:** Employees can work for a company in Beijing from their New Smyrna Beach living room.
- **Technical advancement opportunities:** Medical procedures and appointments are being performed remotely over the Internet or through robot assistance.
- **COVID concerns:** Many individuals are retiring earlier than planned.
- **Financial concerns:** Employees are looking for higher paying positions.
- **Greener pasture syndrome:** While the Census shows us that 60,560 employees commute into Volusia County, a much larger number, [108,338, migrate out for employment.](#)

The bottom line is that staffing today is more competitive and challenging than it has ever been. In this issue of the *Quarterly*, we discuss symptoms of the labor shortage and some of the creative ways that successful Volusia County businesses are responding. Whether it falls under employee recruitment, retention or expansion, our businesses share their strategies and successes. I hope you find this issue informative.

Strengthening our economy by focusing on community.

Helga



# Can't Find The Ideal Employee? Read Below!

*Creative Ways To Find New Employees*



What do they call it when you keep doing things the same way over and over again but expect different results? Comically, the word “insanity” comes to mind. Professionally, the words “ineffective and costly” are more accurate. Overall, businesses have been using the same hiring techniques for years. And they worked - until recently. Today there’s no mistaking the fact that the hiring times are *a changin’* and workforce recruiters need to adapt.

What does that mean? It means that just placing want ads in front of job seekers will no longer deliver the desired result. It’s now about knowing the competition, understanding the targeted audience and setting an organization apart in creative ways. Today’s thriving businesses already realize that people, not structure and process, are the key to ongoing success. There should be no greater priority for business success than attracting the right people to the team. Why? Because.....

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***“You don’t build a business – you build people – and then the people build the business.”***

*– Zig Ziglar*

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*“You don’t build a business – you build people – and then the people build the business.” - Zig Ziglar*

While we all like the comfort of “tried and true,” current struggles force us to move out of our comfort zones and rethink what is possible. Today’s labor force shortage is such a struggle. Fortunately, some businesses are already responding to the tightened labor market in creative ways. A few of the innovative ideas we’re seeing nationally include:

**Skilled Through Alternative Routes Hiring:** Some companies are re-evaluating their narrow educational and degree-based hiring requirements and considering skill-based or customized training-based staffing approaches. By doing so they expand the available talent pool, creating a more equitable opportunity spectrum and encouraging team members to grow with the company through long-term upward mobility. This previously invisible and capable workforce, now Skilled Through Alternative Routes (STARs), can be a valuable resource for many businesses. [In fact, STARs made up approximately 70 million workers in the U.S. economy as of 2021.](#)

**“In Your Face” Advertising and Outreach:** The potential for adding creativity in recruitment campaigns is boundless. Top companies are already using non-traditional recruiting media and methods as a means to stand out. Not only are the campaigns technologically driven through YouTube, podcasts, MeetUps, websites and/or Twitter, but traditional media has come back as a way of being non-traditional. For example, with a bonus-energized Recruitment Referral Business Card program, an existing employee can offer someone who is familiar, and might be a good co-worker, a referral card. If the referral recipient is hired, the employee later receives a financial bonus. Other creative examples include employee mini-commercials broadcast at theaters or old-fashioned billboards at busy intersections.

**Second Chances:** Smart CEOs are expanding their talent pool by hiring employees with nonviolent criminal records. As an example, Chase Bank recently reported that 10% of their hires had a criminal record. A study supported by the Society for Human Resources Management revealed that employers and the American public are open to hiring people with criminal histories:

- 78% are comfortable shopping where customer service employees have a nonviolent criminal record.
- 76% are comfortable doing business with a company that offers second chance employment.
- 74% are comfortable being employed where some coworkers have nonviolent criminal records.

These examples represent just a few ways companies are responding to labor market conditions nationally. But there are similar examples in our own community. Take time to read the stories that follow to learn how some local businesses employ passion and creativity to recruit and build their teams.

## Second Chance Careers at Midtown Laundry

While the concept of second-chance hiring has recently become a national movement, Mykal Tairu, owner of Midtown Laundry in Holly Hill, is a pioneer in this area. As a proud, socially responsible entrepreneur, Tairu provides quality residential and commercial laundry services with the help of formerly incarcerated individuals and others from underserved communities, offering dignity AND a livable wage.

Tairu earned his bachelor's degree in religion from Bethune-Cookman University and his master's degree in religion from Yale University. He began his career as a community organizer driven to bring about systemic change for individuals with a criminal history. He

knew that gainful employment was key to reducing the chance of recidivism and that business community buy-in was necessary. He led several **Ban the Box** campaigns – a reference to the box that a job applicant must check if ever convicted of a felony. Tairu recognized the first impression stigma created by this requirement and advocated that employers and local government officials delay the “box question” until after a face-to-face interview. By doing so first impressions would exclude the stigma and potential prejudice stemming from a criminal history.

Dissatisfied with the sluggish adoption of “ban the box” and in the likeness of a true leader, Tairu founded Midtown Laundry. The business is his personal response to the fight against employment discrimination, actively hiring and training convicted felons.

“Midtown Laundry was founded out of a desire to change our community by providing jobs that would help individuals realize God is best in every area of their lives,” said Tairu. “I was frustrated asking people to hire people that I care about. So I decided do it myself, which led me to becoming a business owner. We provide pickup and delivery laundry services to commercial and residential customers. We believe that providing job opportunities and professional services promotes social entrepreneurship and stimulates our local economy.”



*Midtown Laundry's workforce joined by interns earlier this year.*

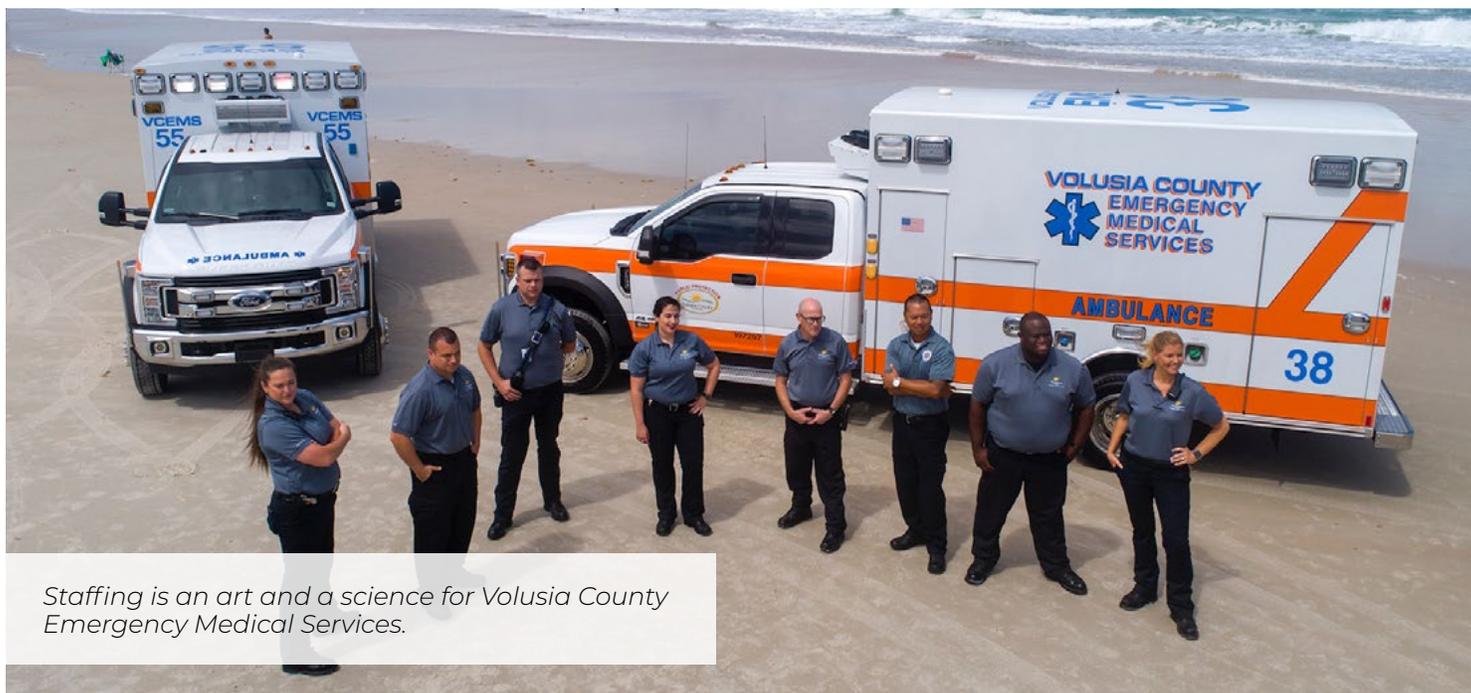
Midtown Laundry serves as an example of passion-driven leadership. Tairu has been quite pleased with his hires. He has complete trust in them and appreciates the fact that they value the “second chance” that working for Midtown Laundry affords them.

By the way, in 2015 the City of Daytona Beach adopted a memorandum approving the *Ban the Box Management Policy and Procedure*. The policy precludes an applicant from disclosing information regarding criminal convictions until the city expresses a desire to hire the individual. This policy does not apply to positions within the police and fire departments, confidential positions, and positions requiring mandated screening.

For more information about Midtown Laundry, visit <https://www.midtownlaundryfl.com/>

## “Welcome” And “Thank You”: Messages Backed By Reward

Volusia County’s Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Division is an essential-services division that operates 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. The career is more of a passion than a job and requires extraordinary commitment. When vacancies began to increase earlier this year, managers creatively developed plans to recruit new and retain existing paramedics and emergency medical technicians.



The competition to fill these positions is fierce nationally and locally. Physical and emotional stress of the position and new career opportunities lead to high turnover rates as other organizations recruit trained staff during a “normal” year. Add to this the challenges experienced over the last 20 months of the pandemic, when EMS averaged more than 4,000 ambulance transports per month.

In a show of employee appreciation and support, the Volusia County Council recently approved a plan to provide tiered hiring bonuses of \$4,500 to new paramedic recruits. Distributed in installments to certified paramedics, the incentives require a three-year commitment to the county. An additional retention bonus of \$5,000 is provided to current full-time paramedics who sign a three-year commitment to the county. Finally, a retention bonus of \$2,000 is approved for current full-time EMTs who sign a three-year commitment to the county as well.

“We don’t have an issue with EMTs now,” said Volusia County Public Protection Director Joe Pozzo. “But given the widespread shortage of EMT candidates in other parts of the country, we want to remain ahead of the curve.”

Additionally, the county is sponsoring new hires through EMT school, while other EMTs are attending paramedic school independently.

“The combination of education and incentives has helped close the paramedic staffing gap, but retaining and growing the staff is a continuing effort,” said Pozzo. “We’re a growing county and we need to staff and structure accordingly.”

Visit <https://www.volusia.org/services/public-protection/emergency-medical-services/> for more information about Volusia County Emergency Medical Services.



*Volusia County Emergency Medical Services has offered incentives to attract qualified candidates for open positions.*



*Proper staffing at Volusia County Emergency Medical Services is required to cover the county's 1200 square miles.*

## **An Eye For Talent – Recruiting Through Interaction**

While the “30,000-foot view” is always helpful, particularly among large employers, the ground-level perspective of entrepreneurs is vital to their operations. Such is the case for Joe Valente, who created Boston Coffeehouse in DeLand in 1996 and has grown his enterprise through careful analysis of his markets and successful staffing. Today there are three Boston Coffeehouse shops in Volusia County and a franchised operation in Altamonte Springs.

Valente credits the company growth to his team of managers and dedicated staff. However, assembling this team of superstars took time and energy. Many hires did not work out, job recruiter services often fell short, and staffing gaps resulted from the pandemic.



*Boston Coffeehouse has become a fixture in downtown DeLand.*

An expert in passive recruiting, he has a constant eye out for candidates who will transition smoothly to the company culture. Whether they are customers who come in to the shop, family members of his regulars or individuals he meets during the course of the day, if they reflect the right qualities Valente's likely to make an offer. With a staff of 50 and growing, this is an ongoing discipline.

Valente reports that his managers and staff are as loyal as they are capable. "We provide training on a regular basis and we even offer training to the staff of our charter franchisee. This not only helps keep each team member engaged and pleased with their jobs, it helps us maintain lofty standards of quality and service, two things for which Boston Coffeehouse is known."

For more information about Boston Coffeehouse, visit <https://www.bostoncoffeehouse.com/>



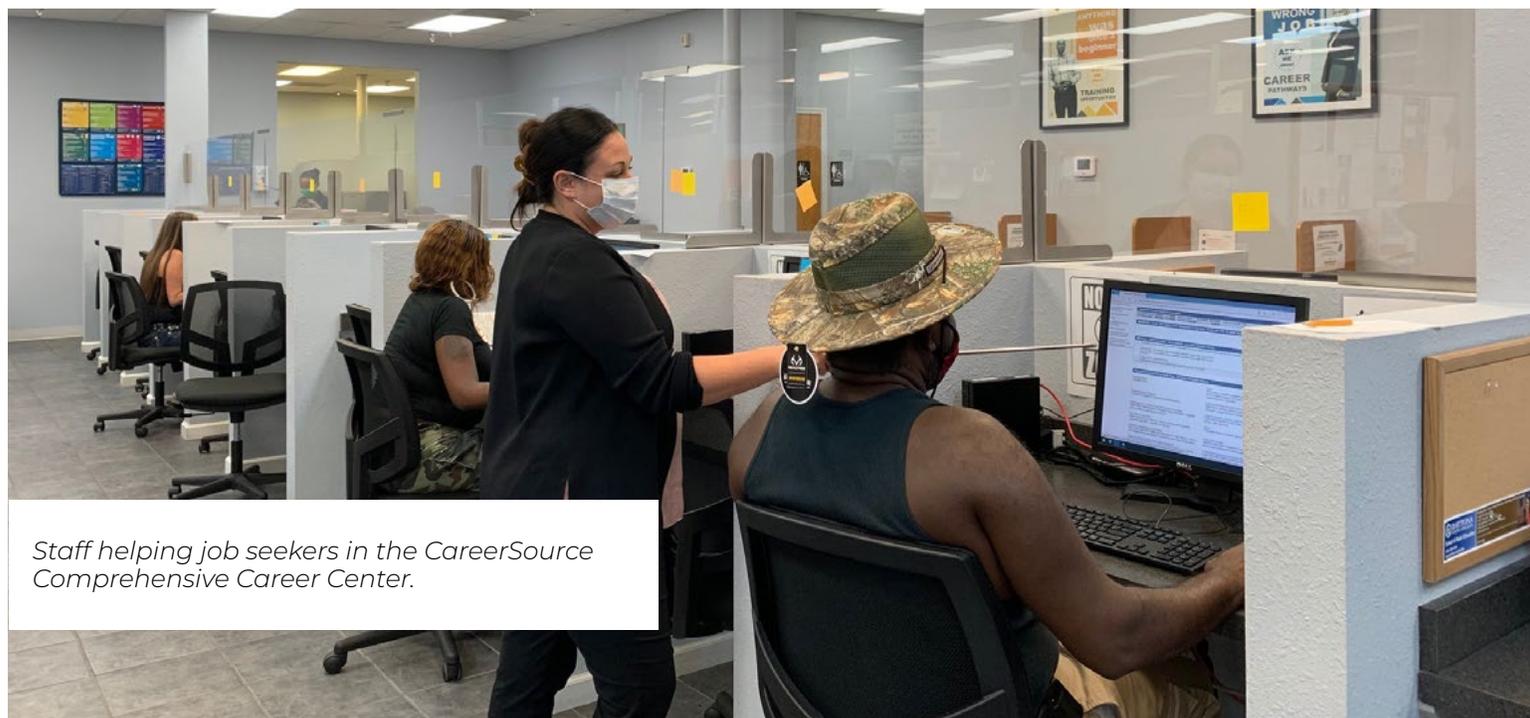
*Boston Coffeehouse managers and staff are as loyal as they are capable.*



*Servers enjoy their jobs at Boston Coffeehouse.*

# If You Can't Find Them, Grow Your Own.

*Future Workforce Preparation*



*Staff helping job seekers in the CareerSource Comprehensive Career Center.*

Today's workplace is growing and changing in ways few imagined even two decades ago. Generational expectations, technology and most recently a pandemic have left employers with workforce-related demands that only the largest companies can potentially meet. For others, it's a need that only a community can come together to satisfy. Even nationally recognized researchers acknowledge that future workforce preparation will require a new and broader approach to learning.

Barry Chudakov, founder and principal at Sertain Research and StreamFuzion Corp., said: "The key to education in the next 10 years will be the understanding that we now live in a world without walls - and so the walls of the school (physical and conceptual) need to shatter and never go up again. In the (hopefully near) future, we will not segregate schooling from work and real-world thinking and development."

He continued: "They will seamlessly weave into a braid of learning, realization, exposure, hands-on experience and integration into students' own lives. And, again, the experience of being a student now confined to grade school, secondary school and university, will expand to include workers, those looking for work, and those who want or need to retrain - as well as what we now think of as conventional education."

Thankfully, due to the visionary leadership of many in our community, the future reality for learning and workforce preparation Chudakov envisions is already in motion. Local partnerships among schools, colleges, businesses and our regional workforce development organization,

CareerSource Flagler Volusia have already provided a sound foundation for future learning and skill development.

## CareerSource And Partners

CareerSource Flagler Volusia (CSFV) organizes, funds and coordinates a variety of programs to help prepare and connect individuals and local employers. CSFV staff engages and partners with business and both public and private organizations to not only gauge employer demand but also to help structure and fund effective workforce development programs. That includes incumbent workers and unemployed or underemployed adults and students who are, or will soon be entering, the working world.



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***“We are always eager to speak with company executives willing to help teach classes or provide job-shadowing opportunities.”***

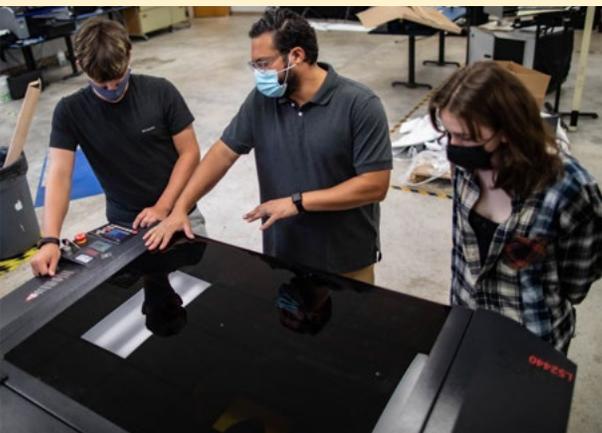
*— Robin King, President & CEO,  
CareerSource Flagler Volusia*

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One of the unique programs CSFV has funded or helped foster includes the Youth Employment Talent Initiative (YETI), which taps into a previously overlooked cluster of youth and prepares them for the world of work. CareerSource sponsors several companies over the summer and holidays to provide on-site work experience for youth interested in a particular field. The program also provides employability (soft skill) classroom training.

“We are always eager to speak with company executives willing to help teach classes or provide job-shadowing opportunities,” said President and CEO Robin King. She explained the need for business involvement in teaching the foundational skills they will need in their future workforces.

CareerSource also supports aspiring adult workers with on-the-job training. It pays up to half the wage for a set amount of time depending on the skill set of the new job.



*Teacher Matt Milazzo and students Matthew Chase and Ella Andrews work on the Boss Laser/Cutter Engraver as part of the Communications Academy at Deltona High School.*

CareerSource’s GED program in partnership with the Daytona Beach Housing Authority’s Learn-to-Earn-and-Development Center (LEAD) and Eckerd Connects provide academic support to help disengaged students earn a General Educational Diploma (GED) and obtain industry-recognized certifications. Eckerd Connects is a leader in workforce development, child welfare, juvenile justice and more. This collaboration prepares the individual for a successful career.

CSFV also works with local school districts to prepare students for a wide variety of careers. They broker information from businesses to Volusia County Schools through the CareerSourceFV’s BOD Career

Pathways Committee. This helps, in some instances, to open opportunities for work-based learning and provides timely input helping educators align curriculum with current employer needs. Beneficiaries of the business-CSFV-schools link have been the 21 Career Academies and over 60 Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs offered by Volusia County Schools at its 10 high school campuses.

For more information about CareerSource FV programs, visit <https://www.careersourcefv.com/job-seekers/>

## Volusia County Schools - Career Education Programs

Exposing students to real-world career demands and environments is one way secondary educators are helping align workplace demands with emerging workforce skills. Volusia County Schools continues to expand its Career and Technical Education (CTE) curricula, including regular updates to its award winning academy program.

At present, Volusia County Schools offers 21 academies in nine high schools.

The concept, which was launched locally in 1994, helps students learn about high-skill, high-wage jobs that exist right here in Volusia County. It provides valuable exposure of students to specific industries, fortifying the local workforce in the process, which is particularly impactful as technology continues to play an ever-increasing role in company operations.

CTE offers students the opportunity to experience hands-on instruction. According to Bree Castelli, Volusia County Schools' Career & Technology Coordinator, "Academies include concentrated studies relative to a number of professions, giving

students direct exposure to their area of interest."

The academy program combines career education, academics and real-world experiences by collaborating with participating companies. Importantly, it includes industry certifications, which administrators seek for each academy (See table on next page for a breakdown of academies offered at each school).

"By earning certifications, we ensure curriculum is in step with the industry with which the academy is aligned," Castelli said. "This makes the student experience infinitely more valuable, particularly when seeking a job."

Academy graduates learn that there are great jobs available - jobs that call for the very skills they have mastered - right here in Volusia County.

Learn more about Volusia County Schools Academies at <https://www.vcsedu.org/cte/career-academies>



*Students in the Information Technology & Robotics Academy at Spruce Creek work on staging their custom-built robot for the robotics competition.*

## HIGH SCHOOL

## ACADEMY

### ATLANTIC HIGH SCHOOL

- Law & Government Academy
- Aquaculture, Environment and Marine Science Academy
- Technology Engineering, Science and Aeronautics Academy

### DELAND HIGH SCHOOL

- Communications Academy
- Engineering Academy

### DELTONA HIGH SCHOOL

- Food & Agricultural Science Academy
- Digital Media Enterprise Academy
- Health Services Academy

### MAINLAND HIGH SCHOOL

- Scientific Inquiry and Medicine Academy

### NEW SMYRNA BEACH HIGH SCHOOL

- Early Childhood Education Academy
- Criminal Justice Academy
- Engineering Academy
- Medical Academy

### PINE RIDGE HIGH SCHOOL

- Health Care Academy
- Advanced Manufacturing Academy

### SEABREEZE HIGH SCHOOL

- Allied Health Academy

### SPRUCE CREEK HIGH SCHOOL

- Finance Academy
- Information Technology & Robotics Academy

### UNIVERSITY HIGH SCHOOL

- Finance Academy
- Gaming & Simulation Academy
- Biomedical Sciences Academy

## stemCONNECT: Inspiring Our Next-Generation Workforce

Another community resource that helps grow the local workforce is stemCONNECT, a program of Florida's High Tech Corridor that helps match student interests with potential careers in STEM-related fields. The program is all virtual and is presented to K-12 students in schools across a 23-county region in the state. stemCONNECT provides an innovative classroom learning experience that inspires and encourages students to explore science, technology, engineering or mathematics more deeply and elevates student interest in tech careers. These web-based sessions bring students virtually into many different environments such as research

or medical labs, manufacturing or robotics centers or office spaces. Using video conferencing tools, teachers are matched with subject-matter experts who deliver engaging multi-media presentations about STEM applications.

The sessions, which include live interaction and engaging conversation with a STEM speaker, have been well received by students and educators alike. Even during the pandemic-impacted 2020-2021 school year, stemCONNECT hosted 145 sessions with the assistance of 300 STEM professionals, reaching over 15,700 students and teachers. In addition, they have added new mentorship videos to make it even more convenient for teachers to incorporate STEM application lessons into their classrooms.



*stemConnect hosted Kindergarten and 5th Grade students and the Coral Restoration Foundation on ocean ecosystems and coral reef restoration initiatives.*

“Some of the programs are pre-planned, but the majority of them are tailored to the specific areas of interest cited by the teacher,” said Amanda Allen, manager of the Florida High Tech Corridor stemCONNECT Program.

The program allows teachers from any central Florida school to request a session or sessions for their students by contacting the stemCONNECT staff at <https://www.flstemconnect.com/>

# Corporate Culture

*Your Competitive Advantage*



RETAIN

Nationally, a staggering one in four employees quit their jobs in 2021 and more are expected to do so by the end of the year. The “Great Resignation,” as it has come to be called, has become a critical concern in most business circles. Not surprisingly, survey after survey, including one recently conducted by the Volusia Business Resource partners, found that employers are struggling to replace skilled staff who have left, leaving critical shortages.

Why are they leaving? The three top reported causes include:

- Inadequate salary or benefits
- Dissatisfaction with company culture – work/life balance
- Lack of growth opportunity



While “inadequate salary” continues to hold a top spot, a survey by Manpower shows that workers want more than just higher pay. They want a better work-life balance and improved corporate culture. Top-performing employees won’t stay at a company with a poor workplace culture – especially with seemingly endless job options available elsewhere. Through job apps and other targeted recruiting programs, there’s little need for professionals to even seek out opportunity; the opportunities now seem to find them.

So, when you ask what company culture has to do with employee retention, the answer is simple: EVERYTHING. Corporate culture is the secret that builds loyalty between the employer and the employee and relationships among employees. It fundamentally defines the nature of your organization.

The question is how can you develop a strong organizational culture? Leadership is the key. Think bigger about your company culture and its implications on employee work satisfaction, consider re-centering your organization around human-first practices, rethink your role in your employee’s health and well-being, and/or rebuild your company culture to expand employee opportunity and inclusivity.

We spoke with three Volusia County companies to learn from some of their best practices.

## Davita Labs

“One for all and all for one” is the motto cited by Ambar Rivera, DaVita Labs’ people services director. “I like to think of our lab as a truly special place with roles ranging from medical technologists and credit balance specialists to internet technology analysts and so many more. Our lab talent is truly unique. And we are a culturally diverse campus with teammates from various backgrounds.”

Everything at the global health care company begins and ends with corporate culture. Employee care and opportunity are front and center. It begins as early as sharing the company’s core values with interested applicants and continues with daily practice that says “We value our team.”

DaVita’s employee program goes beyond offering the full complement of compensation including competitive wages, a 401K matching program, and medical, dental and vision coverage. It even goes beyond providing “pay-for-performance” incentives and personal development growth support. The DaVita Labs philosophy focuses on the day-to-day working environment and corporate culture. No detail is too small. It’s evident from the moment you enter the picturesque 14-acre campus. The environment within the 150,000-square-foot facility is bright, contemporary and seems to pulsate positive energy throughout the building.

“The culture here is very special. It’s a culture where you can have fun,” said Collection Specialist Kay Brewster.



*There is no escaping the fact that fun is part of the experience of being on the DaVita Labs team in DeLand.*

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***“We are a culturally diverse campus with teammates from various backgrounds.”***

***— Amber Rivera, DaVita Labs  
People Services Director***

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Lab Week is an example of one of the many programs and events dedicated to celebrating and energizing the DaVita Labs team. While Lab Week is celebrated nationally, the company chooses to celebrate locally, based on a theme suggested by the staff. This year’s winning recommendation featured a Cirque du Soleil theme that included skits, videos, flash mobs, social gatherings, and plenty of props and costumes.

Between the rewarding work of leading-edge technology applied to regimens and treatments that improve the lives of

dialysis patients and the employee-centric company culture, DaVita Labs presents a compelling case for joining its team. In a word, it is inviting.

Lab Operations Vice President Keri Wagner sums it up. “We are more than just a group of professionals, we make an impact. Each year with more than 21 million test tubes processed, 63 million tests performed, and more than 21 million patients served, the DaVita Labs team makes a significant difference in the world of dialysis. That makes us proud to be part of such a noble mission.”

For more information about DaVita, visit <https://www.davita.com/about>

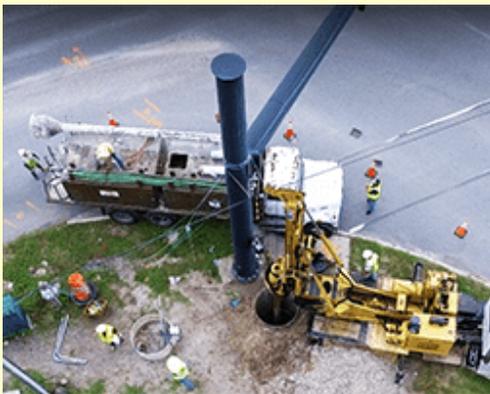
## Chinchor Electric

RETAIN

Chinchor Electric is a family owned company in Orange City with exacting workforce needs. The company employs 145 people and provides electrical contracting for commercial and industrial customers, including new construction, retrofits, maintenance and service. As a commercial/industrial electrical contractor, Chinchor handles jobs such as highway lighting, water treatment systems, wastewater lift stations, generators, intelligent traffic systems and more. It also provides installation and maintenance of traffic signals and sign structures for municipal governments and the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT). For example, the company recently completed electrical work on pedestrian crosswalks and roadway signage at Daytona Beach International Airport, an assignment with specification requirements from FDOT, the Federal Aviation Authority and others.



*A water treatment plant built by Chinchor Electric.*



*Installation of a drilled shaft that will support a traffic signal.*

“Electrical contracting requires a depth of knowledge that few candidates bring to the table,” said Kim Capman, the company’s office and human resources manager. “So, we have to sharpen our focus when filling vacant job openings or adding to our workforce. And when we find a candidate with the right background – or a willingness to undergo rigorous training – our corporate culture and benefits package underscores our commitment to our team.”

That package begins with tuition for traffic certification classes and full benefits including medical, dental, life insurance, 401k, paid holidays and vacation time. In addition, the company provides apprenticeship and training through the [Florida Electrical Apprenticeship & Training \(FEAT\)](#) program, an Orlando-based comprehensive apprenticeship program that allows a team member to grow within the organization. Chinchor Electric pays tuition for the four-year program. FEAT provides students with a comprehensive education designed to ensure success in high-tech electrical professions. Their apprentices can earn bonuses during the four-year program. The top performing apprentice qualifies for a \$1,000 bonus with tiered bonuses following. Over the four-year course of study, apprentices can earn up to \$10,000 in bonuses. Additional bonuses are available for journeymen.

Capman says the company has a dynamic approach to its human resources needs. The company team maintains membership in key trade associations and local organizations such as chambers of commerce. Its relationship with FEAT

officials also helps with the kind of networking that supports recruitment efforts. The company also keeps an eye out for potential candidates who may currently work for its suppliers, or even its customers.

“Electricians are responsible for the safe installation and maintenance of electrical wiring and equipment,” said company President Tim Chinchor. “Electricians are among the first trades to work on a new construction project and one of the last trades needed to complete the job timely. It is precision work requiring specific knowledge and skills. We are ever mindful of this as we maintain and expand our staff.”

For more information about Chinchor Electric, visit <https://chinchorelectric.com/>

## Halifax + Brown & Brown – Supporting Employees on a Whole New Level

RETAIN

Two of the area's largest employers offer their employees services and support that deal with a wide range of mental well-being issues with which teammates may be coping. The past year's struggles through the COVID-19 pandemic escalated this concern for many of us. There are even professionals who consider the Great Resignation as a side effect of COVID-19. Signs and signals of a problem may not always be apparent, but they represent personal or professional problems that are sure to escalate if ignored.

Halifax Health and Brown & Brown Inc. offer a wealth of services to support individuals who may be living with mental well-being issues from nuisance issues that affect one's attitude and performance to serious problems that could be early warning signs of problems that require concentrated therapies to resolve.

Mark Spivey, coordinator of the Center for Wellbeing at Halifax Health, has a long resume in identifying and resolving mental well-being issues among teammates. As a clinical chaplain and trauma psychotherapist, he oversees a broad range of programs and services that support his teammates at Halifax Health. He notes the importance of services dealing with mental well-being among those working in the health care professions.

"Mental well-being is a wonderful thing," Spivey said. "It indicates someone who is in balance to think, feel and act with resilient energy. But when someone's mental well-being is out of balance, performance and response at all levels are affected."

Spivey noted that signs and signals of troubling mental issues are always present. As these problems take hold, an individual may mask the problem. He or she may become withdrawn or even isolated. Mood swings, short temper and non-participation are outward signs of a problem. But many signs and signals are not outwardly apparent. A trusted friend, advisor or counselor will probe more deeply to help his or her teammate talk about issues and participate in conversations leading to resolving them.

This is not always easy. Archaic stigmas attached to any mental well-being issues, while fading, still stifle spontaneity among some people and professions.

"It's ironic that we can feel alone and isolated in such a well-connected society," said Spivey. "Some of this is steeped in tradition, essentially penalizing us for being human. For example, physicians traditionally maintain a do-not-touch attitude when it comes to mental well-being issues. Fortunately, this is changing. As new generations of physicians join the noble health care professions, they are more tuned in to work-life balance and mental well-being issues that can affect that balance."

The Center for Wellbeing offers a variety of programs designed to support teammates through communication, engagement, interaction and counseling.

Issues triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic are addressed at weekly COVID Conversations forums. Spivey reports that these can lead

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***"Your organization has only one asset that does not depreciate: your workforce. It's the asset most directly aligned with the success of your business. A happy and engaged workforce – particularly in the area of mental wellbeing – not only drives the success of your organization, it telegraphs that success."***

*— Robin King, president & CEO,  
CareerSource Flagler Volusia*

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to spirited conversations among attendees. Most sessions lead to one-on-one counseling sessions to help teammates deal more effectively with the challenges of living and working in the shadow of a global pandemic.

Other resources include access to programs closely aligned with the issues a teammate is experiencing. Referrals to specialized counselors, psychologists and psychiatrists are also available. It's all part of a commitment at Halifax Health to support its teammates with programs and services that help ensure good mental well-being leading to a happier life and a gratifying employment experience.

Shawn Abbatessa of Brown & Brown Insurance has similar observations as he looks after the company's growing number of teammates. Abbatessa is chief of staff for Brown & Brown Absence Services Group, coming to the position with extensive experience in law enforcement leadership, sales, marketing and operations. He's also an Air Force veteran. Abbatessa personally deals with post-traumatic stress disorder and is a frequent presenter on the subject, giving him unique insights into the complexities of the condition.

While his area of the business specializes in Social Security disability, working closely with insurance disability carriers and more, it is the entire Brown & Brown organization's dedication to mental well-being that helps teammates every day.



*Shawn Abbatessa and Mark Spivey participated in an Employee Mental Wellness panel discussion.*

*Panel participants from left to right:*

*Host: Kevin Captain, Volusia County Community Information Director*

*Robin King, President & CEO, CareerSource FV*

*Shawn Abbatessa, Chief of Staff, Brown & Brown*

*Helga van Eckert, Volusia County Economic Development Director*

*Mark Spivey, Coordinator, Center for Wellbeing at Halifax Health*

*Courtney Edgcomb, President, United Way of Volusia and Flagler Counties*

“We have a strongly rooted culture that prioritizes the health and mental well-being of our teammates and their families,” he said. “You regularly hear our most senior leaders stress the importance of health, family, business—in that order. As part of our commitment, the company offers robust resources that provide support and assistance relative to a variety of challenges or issues teammates may be facing.”

Abbatessa concurs with Spivey on the importance of picking up signs and signals relative to mental well-being. “Even in the age of COVID-19, when so many of us have been working remotely and meeting via Zoom or Teams platforms, we can look for and pick up on signs and signals that may foreshadow a problem. Whether teammates are dealing with a lingering issue or are facing a crisis, Brown & Brown provides access to services that can help with coping skills, crisis relief and everything in between.”

Many of the services readily available to Brown & Brown teammates are bundled under the company’s Employee Assistance Program. These include no-cost, confidential support services such as access to mental health counselors, a 24/7 crisis hotline, coaching, wellness activities, a library of videos on demand and more. Additionally, the company’s Crisis Hotline offers *Advocate for Me*, a service that provides one-on-one consultation with mental well-being case navigators, therapists and psychiatrists, alongside other programs, like *Mindfulness Meditation*. Offerings also include a *Peer Partnership Program*, where teammates from across the organization can connect to build new partnerships, expand their network, and experience the company culture through different perspectives.

The company also offers a popular Small Bites series, consisting of bite-sized, 30-minute presentations covering a wide variety of personal and professional topics. Brown & Brown’s Cup of Joel group chats allow teammates to connect with Dr. Joel Axler, an on-staff board-certified psychiatrist, to discuss mental and physical well-being topics. The company’s intranet, The Spot (an homage to the company’s cultural symbol, the cheetah), provides a dedicated place for teammates to reference important news from across the organization, view upcoming events, access information and resources, and much more.

The bottom line is that, for the Brown & Brown team, the kind of support they are committed to providing goes beyond simply declaring an open door policy.

“Such a policy is a two-way street,” said Abbatessa. “It is incumbent upon the person inside the door to step out, to reach out to look for signs and signals of mental well-being issues, and be a part of the solution. Supporting those interactions through readily available access to mental health support resources is also critical.”

For more information about Halifax Health and Brown & Brown, visit:

<https://halifaxhealth.org/about-us/our-history/>  
<https://www.bbinsurance.com/about-us/>



*Brown & Brown Insurance's popular Cup of Joel program offers subject matter on a variety of interesting and insightful topics, including some related to mental wellbeing.*

# Partnerships to Develop Your Team

Launching Tech Careers Through Immersive Learning



EXPAND



*Volusia County Schools Superintendent Dr. Ronald "Scott" Fritz speaking at the inaugural FAME signing event. Also pictured are Congressman Michael Waltz, Jayne Fifer, president emeritus of the Volusia Manufacturers Association and students ready to sign on with their sponsor companies.*

**D**emand for advanced manufacturing workers is growing in Volusia County. That's great news since many of the career opportunities, like Advanced Manufacturing Technician (AMT), are financially rewarding and very stable. But many of these opportunities require complex skills that take a lengthy commitment to learn and master. For those willing to make the commitment, there are now multiple paths to get you there, like FAME and the FloridaMakes IMT apprenticeship program.

## F.A.M.E.

Thanks to the vision and hard work of a regional coalition, including Daytona State College (DSC), CareerSource Flagler Volusia, Volusia Manufacturers Association (VMA), local manufacturers, economic development organizations and more, a clear pathway to becoming an AMT has just been created. Local students and recent graduates can now pursue advanced manufacturing careers through Florida's first chapter of the Federation for Advanced Manufacturing Education (FAME).

FAME originated 10 years ago in Kentucky at the site of a major Toyota manufacturing complex. It was driven by the need for more workers with the advanced skillsets that Toyota and other manufacturers needed. The movement has gained a great deal of momentum among businesses of all sizes, from mom-and-pop job shops to major manufacturers such as General Electric, Tyson, Caterpillar, Xerox, Trane, 3M and others.

The collaborative effort to bring FAME to our community included several sponsoring manufacturers, a few business support organizations and the program's education provider, Daytona State College and its Advanced Technology College. Frank Mercer, director of DSC's Center for Business & Industry (CBI), introduced the concept to local leaders in 2018. Three years later, the Sunshine Chapter of the Federation for Advanced Manufacturing Education was launched in Volusia County. The initial sponsoring employers, each of which commits time and resources to a student, include Hudson Technologies, Everglades Boats, Germfree Laboratories, Boston Whaler, Dougherty Manufacturing, SCCY Industries, Pentair, ABB and B. Braun Medical.

***“The need for more highly skilled workers has been a common denominator across the national business landscape,”***

***— Artie Loeffler,  
president of the Florida FAME  
Sunshine Chapter***

“The need for more highly skilled workers has been a common denominator across the national business landscape,” said Artie Loeffler, president of the Florida FAME Sunshine Chapter and Chief Financial Officer of Dynamic Engineering Innovations Inc. “This is the right time and the right program for building technical skills in our manufacturing community.”

FAME’s curriculum is designed to develop skilled technicians at local manufacturing companies and to provide rewarding career opportunities for students enrolled in the program. Students will gain technical knowledge they can apply immediately as employees of their hiring sponsors. Students are paid at a level that offsets the cost of tuition, books and lab fees, making it possible to graduate debt free. They attend classes two days a week and work on the job at the sponsoring company three days a week. Program graduates will have gained knowledge in disciplines such as pneumatics, hydraulics, mechanics, electricity and more. They will graduate as multi-skilled technicians with certification as Advanced Manufacturing Technicians, a designation that is a powerful entry on any resume. After graduation, they are likely to land a job with their sponsoring employer.

“If ever there were a win-win situation for our manufacturers, this is it,” said Loeffler.



*Students learning welding techniques in the Daytona State College Welding Technology Certificate Program.*

Jayne Fifer, president and chair emeritus of VMA and an early and consistent advocate for the FAME concept, agrees.

“The level of support for the program among our manufacturers is a great barometer for predicting FAME’s future success,” said Fifer. “In addition to the rich experiences the program offers, students learn about the joys – and responsibilities – of holding a job. Punctuality. Proper attire. Communications. Responsibility. Professional skills. All this and more contribute to student preparation to join the workforce and properly represent his or her employer.”

The FAME program is not restricted to graduating high school students or students already enrolled in college. Yes, recent graduates are the program’s target audience, but workers who want to master technology on their current job or increase their ability to reach higher-level manufacturing positions are welcome to apply as well. Veterans and others who may have left the workforce and want to re-enter with skills in manufacturing technology are welcome to apply as well.

“From an economic development perspective, the FAME program is certain to have great impact on local manufacturers,” said Helga van Eckert, director of Volusia County’s Economic Development Division. “A more technology-savvy workforce strengthens the case for business



*A student signing on with Dougherty Manufacturing at the inaugural FAME signing day event.*

to continue operations in this community rather than moving elsewhere. It expands the workforce in dynamic ways and supports the expansion of manufacturers. The economic engine the FAME chapter will become will be substantial for retention of our manufacturers, expansion of their operations, and recruitment of companies eyeing the area for relocation or expansion.”

For more information about FAME, visit <https://fame-usa.com/2021/09/08/fame-launches-at-dsc/>

## FloridaMakes

Another source for advanced manufacturing training is FloridaMakes, through its Industrial Manufacturing Technician Apprenticeship program (IMT). FloridaMakes is the statewide, industry-led partnership that helps strengthen and advance Florida’s manufacturing economy. Its mission is to improve the productivity and technological performance of Florida’s manufacturing sector. The IMT program helps Florida’s manufacturers bridge skills gaps by creating a pipeline of skilled workers.

The IMT program supports employer needs by helping grow talent internally while motivating employees with a flexible program that builds a career in advanced manufacturing. Traditional apprentice programs, while highly regarded, often experience low participation because the required courses are offered only in the evening inside a physical classroom at a local college or vocational school. IMT offers a re-imagined apprenticeship model that meets the needs of the employer and its workforce.

This new program addresses entry-level skills gaps and provides foundational manufacturing knowledge regardless of the specific occupation, which will help give apprentices the tools they need to move on to more specific occupations. It also provides online, on-demand flexible access for students with lifestyle issues, work schedules and geographical barriers that often prohibit participation in traditional classroom offerings.

Apprenticeships have proven to build employee loyalty, reduce the cost of training, attract more applicants and improve productivity within an organization. By providing on-the-job training, related online instruction and guaranteed wage structures, employers who sponsor apprentices provide incentives to attract and retain more highly qualified employees and improve productivity. Plus, certifications earned through registered apprenticeship programs are recognized nationwide and typically articulate to college credits.

For more information about FloridaMake’s IMT program, visit: <https://www.floridamakes.com/featured-programs/imt-apprenticeship-program>

### **FloridaMakes IMT Program** **200 online curriculum hours**

- *Safety Awareness*
- *Quality Practices*
- *Manufacturing Processes*
- *Maintenance Awareness*

### **12-month or 2,000-hour on-the-job training**

- *Equipment Operation*
- *Process Improvement*
- *Business System*
- *Materials & Supplies*



*Students learning HVAC electrical, refrigerant flow, and component troubleshooting.*

# The ROI of Human Capital Investment



EXPAND



“People are our greatest asset.” Have you heard or perhaps said that before? It’s amazing how many leaders let that statement roll off their tongue and never take steps to fully develop their team. Before any business leader makes that claim, some self-examination needs to occur. Leaders should start by asking questions like:

- Does my company’s budget include resources for regular training, education and development at all levels?
- Are communication channels in place to ensure that team member capabilities and aspirations are clearly understood?
- Have organizational barriers to individual achievement and recognition been removed?

Leaders who can answer “yes” to these and other similar questions have placed proper value on their human assets and are probably already seeing a return on their investment.

In fact, research shows that companies that view employees as valuable assets, and not cost centers, outperform companies that don’t. They are more productive, more creative, attract talent more easily, and have higher employee retention levels than companies that don’t invest in their human capital.

“Employees are a company’s only non-depreciating asset, and if you want to keep your employees, you must invest in them.” So says Robin King, president and CEO of CareerSource Flagler Volusia.

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***“The only thing worse than training your employees and having them leave is not training them and having them stay.”***

***— Henry Ford***

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And you can attract the best talent when you encourage the existing workforce to grow. When companies offer effective workforce development programs, they can also attract employees from external sources. By offering workforce development programs, outlining career paths and diversifying responsibilities, companies give employees an incentive to stay for the long term. It's clearly a win-win for employer and employee alike.

There are many examples of creative workforce investment programs across the whole spectrum of industry types and sizes. One that is well established and nationally recognized is the "Live Better U" education program offered by the nation's largest employer, Walmart.

## Walmart - Tuition Free Education

Walmart announced it will pay 100% of college tuition and books for associates through its Live Better U (LBU) education program. This means approximately 1.5 million part-time and full-time Walmart and Sam's Club associates in the U.S. can earn college degrees or learn trade skills without the burden of education debt. As the largest U.S. private employer, Walmart is committing to invest nearly \$1 billion over the next five years in career-driven training and development.



"We are creating a path of opportunity for our associates to grow their careers at Walmart, so they can continue to build better lives for themselves and their families," said Lorraine Stomski, senior vice president of learning and leadership at Walmart. "Walmart is always looking for new ways to encourage more associates to pursue further education. This investment is another way we can support our associates to pursue their passion and purpose while removing the barriers that too often keep adult working learners from obtaining degrees."

"We're also excited to add in-demand college degree and certificate options in business administration, supply chain and cybersecurity. These additional offerings join a robust catalog of programs to set associates up for new career opportunities," Stomski said. "Our education offerings tie directly to our growth areas at Walmart, and what better way to fill the pipeline of future talent than with our own associates."

In addition, Walmart will add four academic partners, including Johnson & Wales University, the University of Arizona, the University of Denver and Pathstream. These complement the existing partners: Brandman University, Penn Foster, Purdue University Global, Southern New Hampshire University, Wilmington University and Voxy EnGen. These institutions were chosen for their history of success with adult and working learner programs as well as their focus on degree completion.

"Walmart is creating growth opportunities for their workforce and preparing them for the future of work."

Since launching LBU in 2018, more than 52,000 associates have participated in the program and 8,000 have already graduated. Nearly 28,000 associates have been active in an LBU program this summer.

When an associate enrolls in LBU and earns a certificate or degree, he or she takes important steps toward creating a long-term career within the Walmart ecosystem.

For more information about Walmart's LBU program, visit

[https://one.walmart.com/content/usone/en\\_us/company/news/popular-content/education-articles/unlock-the-future--introducing-live-better-u.html](https://one.walmart.com/content/usone/en_us/company/news/popular-content/education-articles/unlock-the-future--introducing-live-better-u.html)

## Security First - Rapid Upskill

Creating new careers is a priority at local company Security First Insurance, which recently opened its new corporate headquarters in Ormond Beach.

Security First has established a program where candidates, who have a bachelor's degree but no experience germane to the insurance professions, are immersed in a rapid-development series to arm them with skills necessary to become claims examiners. The Entry Level Claims Training program gives new hires a chance to undergo concentrated training that leads to a position in the company's claims unit. After an intense 120-day period, successful candidates will have been fully trained in claims processing and administration and prepared to handle homeowners' claims.

"We look for people with the right aptitude and attitude, and who have an affinity for this area," said Frank Molinaro, Vice President, Human Resources. "If they find a great job locally, they will be more likely to remain here in Volusia County. This is extremely important in light of 'storm chasing,' where some claims processing professionals are lured to employers that service areas hard-hit by storms. These temporary jobs are lucrative and attractive to some, but we believe that with competitive wages, a great working environment and an exceptional community in which to live, work, play and raise a family, Security First is the better choice."

Security First Insurance is committed to offering continuing education and is planning to expand such offerings. Already, the company's staff includes many people who have developed new skills and risen to higher positions, including policy underwriters who are now filing roles as director and vice president at the firm.

For more information about Security First Insurance, visit <https://www.securityfirstflorida.com/>



*Rapid growth necessitated the creation of a new headquarters building for Security First Insurance located in Ormond Crossings.*



*Training helps team members to join Security First's growing claims department.*

## Halifax Health - Education Scholarships

Halifax Health has served the community for 93 years. It has grown with the community and today offers a diverse portfolio of health, wellness, medical and surgical services.

Maintaining an exceptionally well-qualified staff for so many services means Halifax Health must work to retain its team members and attract new talent. It does so through initiatives that have a common denominator: education.

"Our education benefits and scholarship programs address team member retention, advancement

and attraction,” said Kimberly Fulcher, senior vice president and chief human resources officer. “Growth and learning options include the Scholarship Program, Tuition Assistance Program and the Education-to-Employment Program. If an individual wants to work at Halifax Health and have a great career as a new or advancing team member, we’ll pay for his or her education to get them there.”

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***“Growth and learning options include the Scholarship Program, Tuition Assistance Program and the Education-to-Employment Program.”***

*— Kimberly Fulcher, senior vice president and chief human resources officer*

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Scholarships are available for existing Halifax Health team members, offering a benefit for those seeking additional knowledge in a particular discipline and for those advancing their education level. For essential areas of study such as nursing, 100% of the tuition is paid by Halifax Health. But even for other areas of study Halifax Health will pay up to \$1,500 per year.

Offering scholarships as a recruiting initiative is front-and-center thanks to a partnership between Halifax Health and Daytona State College (DSC), forged in 2019. Under this program, Halifax Health committed to fund scholarships in nursing and health-related fields – up to \$500,000 over a five-year period.

“This is a partnership that has tremendous benefits for students at Daytona State and future employees of Halifax Health,” said DSC President Dr. Tom LoBasso. “By working together to provide both educational and employment opportunities, we’re able to help fill critical health care positions



*The Halifax Health 100 Club has a robust and loyal membership of team members with thirty or more years of service to Halifax Health.*

with home-grown talent. Daytona State College has enjoyed a long and successful partnership with Halifax Health for many years, and we’re confident that this new scholarship will provide long-term benefits for everyone.”

Halifax Health President and CEO Jeff Feasel underscored Dr. Lobasso’s comments. “Halifax Health represents opportunity to so many in our area. Every year we provide scholarships for our team members to enhance their education. This program with Daytona State College – Education-to-

Employment – is a great way for us to build a sustainable pipeline of lifesaving caregivers and increase the economic vitality of our area.”

Numerous specialties are covered under Halifax Health’s education and scholarship programs. Among them are certified surgical technicians, licensed practical nurses (LPNs), medical assistants and certified nursing assistants. While recruiting is a year-round endeavor at Halifax Health, its retention levels underscore its reputation as a great place to work. In fact, it celebrates longevity through its “100 Club,” an exclusive club of Halifax Health’s 100 longest tenured team members, each of whom has provided more than 30 years of service, a stunning fact for at least the past 10 years. At its annual induction ceremony, the 100 Club welcomed 26 new inductees and recognized its longest tenured member, Sharon James, whose career at Halifax Health spans 47 years.

# WHAT OUR BUSINESS COMMUNITY TOLD US

As an integral part of our local economy, we thank you for participating in our survey. Your input is vital in order to ensure that future community business assistance programs align with your post-COVID needs.



Here are the results...

80%



Sought business assistance

68%

Found the resources needed



## TOP 3 PLACES BUSINESSES GO FOR HELP

Web Resource



Another Business



Business Association



## PRESENT NEEDS

Advance B2B and B2P (provider) connection



Improve resource awareness and access



Promote businesses and community more



Provide business loans and grants



Attract and train workforce



Increase tactical business education



Enhance startup assistance

## FUTURE NEEDS



FINANCE



LABOR FORCE

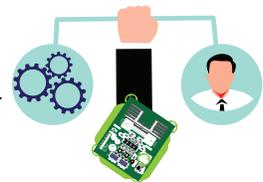


FACILITIES/LAND



STRATEGY

TECHNICAL



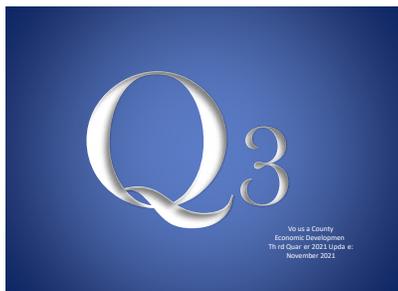
# Volusia County Economic Development Communications



## ECONOMIC SCENE WEEKLY E-NEWSLETTER

A weekly economic development briefing email that focuses on business news, economic trends, surveys, webinars and workshops, trade shows, grant programs, and labor and workforce updates.

Want to receive Economic Scene each week? Sign up at <https://secure.campaigner.com/CSB/Public/Form.aspx?fid=1541975>



## "Q BOOK" QUARTERLY REPORT

The "Q Book" report includes updates on current labor market conditions for Volusia County and municipalities, commercial and residential new construction building permit trends as well as timely data on GDP, exports, workforce, education, real estate trends, grant programs and other pertinent information that may impact the community.



## WEBSITES

In addition to print and digital publications, Volusia County Economic Development maintains two websites, [FloridaBusiness.org](https://www.floridabusiness.org) and [VolusiaBusinessResources.com](https://volusiabusinessresources.com) as part of a multi-channel method of communication outreach to the business community.



## SOCIAL MEDIA

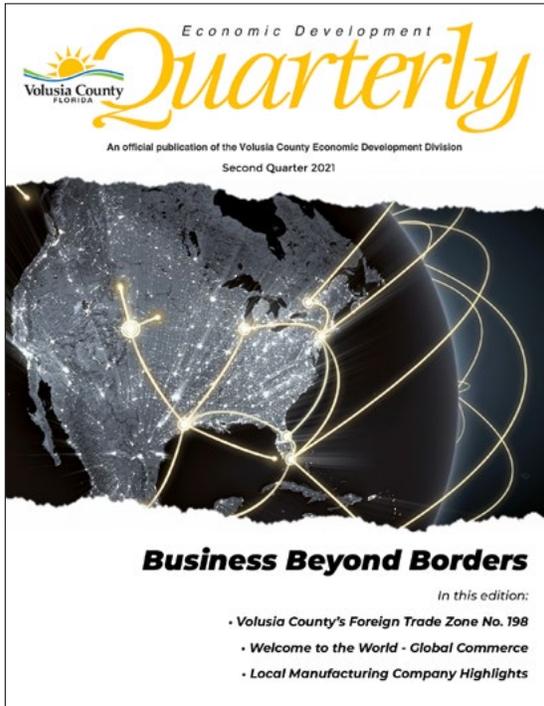
A social media presence has been established to expand communications reach and to increase awareness of resources available to the business community:

## FOLLOW US

 [Volusia Business Resources](https://www.facebook.com/VolusiaBusinessResources)

 [Volusia County Economic Development](https://www.linkedin.com/company/volusia-county-economic-development)

Want to receive The Economic Development Quarterly? Sign up at  
<https://secure.campaigner.com/CSB/Public/Form.aspx?fid=1541975>



*Volusia County Economic Development Quarterly* is a publication of Volusia County Government and is produced by the Volusia County Economic Development Division. It is dedicated to readers who have an interest in the area's business, economic development and real estate market. As an economic development tool, it is intended to provide information and statistics that have meaning to your business. To submit story ideas or offer comments, please contact Marketing Director Heather Edwards at 386-248-8030 or [hedwards@volusia.org](mailto:hedwards@volusia.org).

For more information about economic development in Volusia County, visit [www.floridabusiness.org](http://www.floridabusiness.org).



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