



Economic Development

Quarterly

An official publication of the Volusia County Economic Development Division

Third Quarter 2020

For Volusia County's economic development City All-Stars:
IT'S A WHOLE NEW BALLGAME!



New rules, new challenges, new solutions

It's a whole new ballgame



It was just January when we were sitting around a crowded conference table (without face masks) developing business strategies and making plans for growth. Then, we were thrown the COVID-19 curveball. To say that things have changed is an understatement; in fact what changed is *everything, for everyone, everywhere!* Let's face it, the business of business is a whole new ballgame.

This edition of *Volusia County Economic Development Quarterly* focuses on countywide economic development team members and examines how they can assist businesses in a COVID-19 environment and beyond. Long before the pandemic, we were working together and building upon one another's efforts, which really made it easier to work together during a crisis. Some players have been busy supporting Volusia County companies with assistance information while others are providing complimentary health

and safety products and materials to help our local businesses. The good news is that many of our businesses are operating with creative modifications in this new business climate.

If you need information or assistance, we encourage you to visit the business resource website we created with our teammates to support our local business community. [VolusiaBusinessResources.com/](https://www.volusiabusinessresources.com/) serves as a one-stop information hub, with resources from the local, regional, state and federal levels and the private sector.

All the players on the economic development team in Volusia County are ready to assist our local business community with today's immediate needs through the challenges of tomorrow's recovery.

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The Home Field Advantage

Business Retention and Expansion for Community Growth



*The Volusia County Economic Development Team Lineup
From left to right: Virgil Kimball, Heather Edwards, Rick Karl, Helga van Eckert, Katrina Friel, Brad Harris, Joanne Magley*

Economic Development is a team sport and, like baseball, getting to home plate involves participation from every player. While the Volusia County Division of Economic Development (DoED) collaborates with federal, state and local partners to recruit new businesses to the area; the primary focus of the division is Business Retention and Expansion (BR&E).

Critical to a community's stability and long-term growth, the retention and expansion of existing businesses capitalizes on an understanding and up-skilling of the existing workforce, utilization and improvement of the existing infrastructure and an in-depth knowledge of the local resources and gaps. In other words, BR&E uses the "Home Field Advantage." The DoED coordinates

the BR&E efforts between businesses, city practitioners and county economic development stakeholders that contribute to nurturing the success of the businesses and the community.

The importance of BR&E to the community has never been as crucial as today with the COVID-19 pandemic. From Main Street to Wall Street, the impact has been devastating.

Through the DoED, Volusia County was one of the first counties in the region to respond to our local business needs. First by working with the local financial sector to educate the business community on Florida Emergency Bridge Loan applications as well as PPP and Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) grant/loan applications. And then maturing with a countywide

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The Home Field Advantage

Business Retention and Expansion for Community Growth

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task force with the city practitioners, key community stakeholders and businesses that teamed up to develop the VolusiaBusinessResources.com website. This website provides a comprehensive lineup and links to all the federal, state and local resources available to our businesses.

As the pandemic reached new impact levels within the community, business challenges also increased. The County Council authorized the DoED to design and execute a \$10 million ReLaunch Volusia Small Business Reopening Grant program and later a

\$3 million Home-Based Business loan program. To date, grant awards to local businesses exceed \$7 million! That's more than 2,800 businesses that have benefited from this team effort. Funds are still available and applications are being accepted at VolusiaBusinessResources.com/

Finally, when our businesses expressed difficulty in accessing Personal Protection Equipment (PPE), the county partnered with the Volusia Chamber Alliance to distribute 7,500 PPE kits to local businesses. The kits included hand sanitizer, masks,

gloves, cleaning solution and thermometers. The intent of the kit distribution was to ensure the safety of the workforce, workplace and residents.

We know there will inherently be new rules, new challenges, and new solutions for Volusia's businesses as the economy reaches highs and lows. The charge of a strong BR&E program is to anticipate, educate and respond to our businesses' needs. Volusia County has a solid team in place. If you build it, we can help.

Business as (un)usual for cities' economic development practitioners



As the saying goes, when it rains it pours. But in Volusia County, there is a large umbrella covering the entire county that offers protection and assistance to our local businesses, in all kinds of weather! It's the economic development umbrella, with different organizations offering different assistance.

Volusia County Economic Development is the lead agency for expansion and retention; Team Volusia Economic Development Corporation is the lead for recruiting new businesses; and the CEO Business Alliance supports expansion, retention and recruitment efforts of the county and Team Volusia.

While this is a powerful trio of collaborating organizations, the roster of professionals who work in the economic development arena in Volusia County extends well beyond these organizations. In fact, all sixteen cities in Volusia County practice economic development. Fourteen of those have practitioners dedicated to economic development to one degree or another. Team members work side-by-side with Volusia

County Economic Development to support local businesses. Throughout the pandemic, these professionals have been anything but idle.

The immediate response to COVID-19 redirected priorities at city halls throughout the county. Cities scrambled to continue essential services and attend to the myriad effects of the shutdown. City economic development practitioners worked in lockstep with Volusia County Economic Development to inform businesses on the nuances of the \$2.2 trillion federal coronavirus relief bill and to distribute the county's \$13 million *Relaunch Volusia Small Business* and Home-Based Business Re-opening Grant Programs. These ongoing efforts are

resulting in millions of dollars in grants and loans to keep residents working and businesses operating.

But in addition to assisting existing businesses with the COVID-19 challenges, new economic development inquiries continue, illustrating Volusia County's durable appeal among investors, site selectors and project managers.

When it comes to economic development, Volusia County's roster is filled with dedicated professionals committed existing businesses and new ones, even while dealing with a pandemic.

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Business as (un)usual for cities' economic development practitioners

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Designated hitters!

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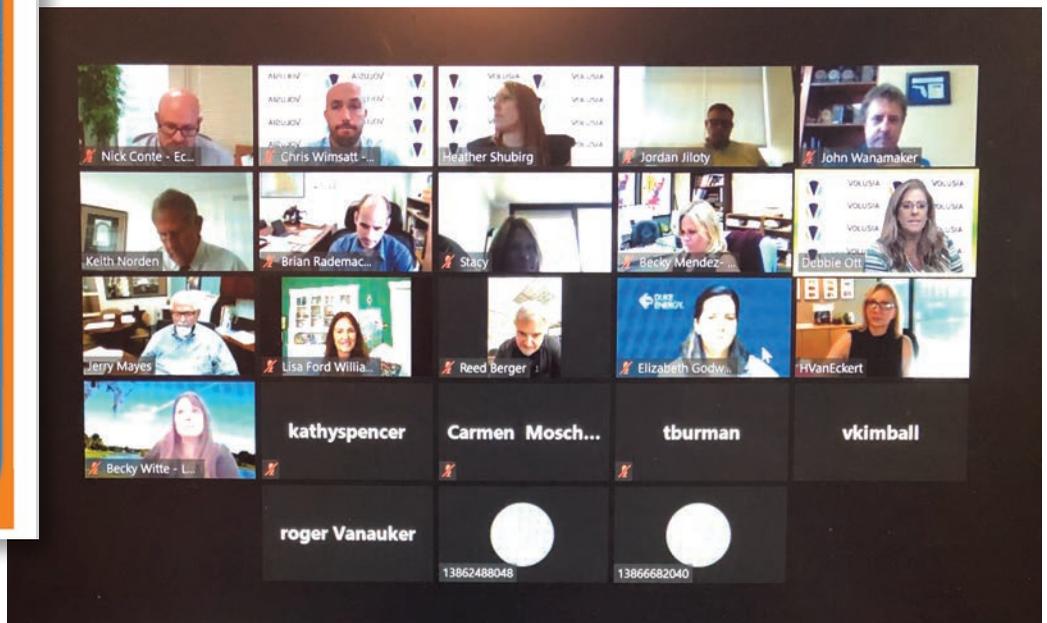
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Collaboration is key at Team Volusia Economic Development Corporation



Economic Development Practitioners Board virtual meeting

The pandemic put a halt to aggressive travel schedules. It nixed face-to-face meetings, canceled conventions and conferences, and even closed many office buildings. But the pandemic did not stop the daily ebb and flow of new business recruitment activity for the staff of Team Volusia Economic Development Corporation.

Team Volusia's efforts to recruit new businesses to the area mean more well-paying jobs for residents and a more dynamic economy.

"Like everyone else, we quickly adjusted to conducting business safely and efficiently through the pandemic, but we have remained attentive to our pipeline of prospects," said Keith Norden, CEcD, president and CEO of Team Volusia.

"At any given time we have dozens of companies at various stages in our pipeline. Of these, only a few become final-stage prospects – those whose executives have visited, conducted extensive research on the area and

have committed to relocating or expanding in Volusia County."

But Norden says it never happens through Team Volusia efforts alone. His organization always works in cooperation with its partners – sometimes one or two, sometimes a half dozen or more.

Most often Team Volusia works with the Volusia County Division of Economic Development and the CEO Business Alliance. Other frequent partners include CareerSource of Flagler/Volusia, the Daytona Regional Chamber and other chambers of commerce, colleges and universities, economic development practitioners,

real estate professionals, the legislative delegation and more.

"Team Volusia may be the lead for the recruitment efforts, but all of the other partners play an important role, providing information and expertise from their organizations," Norden said.

"Working in collaboration allows Team Volusia and its partners to compete at the highest levels nationally and internationally."

To learn more about Team Volusia, visit www.teamvolusiaedc.com or email knorden@tvedc.com.

Pandemic changes transform SCORE



Virtual meetings become mainstream solutions for SCORE webinars

The organization formerly known as the Service Corps of Retired Executives, SCORE was already undergoing substantial changes when COVID-19 became a fact of business life. That increased the pace of change to warp speed.

"Like many businesses and organizations, our in-person activities were promptly halted," said Jason Morgan, president of SCORE Chapter 87, based in Volusia and Flagler counties. "Meeting with clients was no longer possible. And some of our mentors are among the demographic group whose age puts them at higher risk of contracting COVID-19. So, 'safety first' became our motto while we pivoted to the new normal."

In rapid succession, Morgan and SCORE officials transitioned from in-person counseling sessions to virtual sessions and seminars via video conferencing. Since the world was quickly adapting to this form of connection, there was wide ranging acceptance of it among SCORE clients. Seminars that used to attract 20 to 40 participants in person mushroomed to two or three times that level of participation. Additionally,

SCORE was able to tap a deeper pool of talented mentors from a much wider geographical area without the challenges of travel expense and importantly, travel time.

Technology has enabled SCORE to offer a more diverse roster of mentors. Also, it is offering seminars on subjects of intense and immediate interest. Seminars are presented by experts on traditional business disciplines such as bookkeeping and accounting, marketing, and human resources management. Seminars on timely subjects are added regularly, including employee safety and health, Payroll Protection Plan grants vs. loans, Small Business Administration resources, social media and more.

"Clearly, we have changed how we think about things," said Morgan. "Even the manner in which we recruit mentors has changed. Onboarding

new mentors now includes technical knowledge that supports remote sessions and seminars. And adding working professionals to our team of mentors adds a strong dynamic to our organization as a business resource."

The fact that Morgan is a 36-year-old working business professional underscores the fact that SCORE is very much in step with the needs of today's entrepreneurs. In fact, his involvement with SCORE began when he was a SCORE client – as the owner of a software company.

SCORE has four offices in Volusia and Flagler counties and has moved its main office to the Volusia County Business Incubator Powered by UCF at Daytona Beach International Airport. For more information, visit www.VolusiaFlagler.SCORE.org or email info@score87.org.

CareerSourceFV Drives Assistance, Re-Employment



CareerSource has played a key role in supporting Florida's Department of Economic Opportunity grant initiatives as well as other vital programs, training and employment and re-employment.

When area businesses scramble to fill openings, CareerSource Flagler/Volusia is busy developing the workforce. But when area businesses got slammed with the pandemic, CareerSource Flagler/Volusia stepped up and assumed a vital role in ensuring that applications for assistance offered through Florida's Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) got into the hands of the thousands of people who abruptly found themselves unemployed.

"There isn't a database on the planet that could have predicted the degree to which the DEO's CONNECT system was hit in March and April," said Robin King, president and CEO of CareerSource Flagler/Volusia.

"We were in a good position to facilitate the flow of information – Florida does not have unemployment offices – so we helped in some critical areas."

When the DEO website and helplines became overwhelmed and unable to convey online applications to those who needed to file for unemployment assistance, the three offices of CareerSource Flagler/Volusia (Daytona Beach, Orange City and Palm Coast) became the go-to places for people to pick up paper applications. By early August, 51,340 unemployment assistance claims were filed by Volusia County residents alone. CareerSource Flagler/Volusia established a phone bank with experts who helped applicants navigate the cumbersome system and explained some of the questions on the application that were a little difficult to understand. This was especially helpful for first-time

applicants, according to King, who is also president of the Florida Workforce Development Association.

"Now, we are anticipating claimant information from DEO so we can reach out to our clients with information on employment and training services that are available. This became critically important as assistance expired with no subsequent relief package from Congress on the horizon.

Additionally, claimants will be subject to reporting their efforts to find work, a requirement that was temporarily suspended until Sept. 5.

King is working closely with Daytona State College to anticipate the needs of area businesses and displaced workers. Information from area companies and data compiled from a business damage assessment survey help define those needs. One striking statistic is the projection that 20% of those who lost employment were permanently laid off; this will increase as more who were issued temporary furloughs may become permanently

laid off as businesses are ramping back up at lower capacity levels than those predating the pandemic. CareerSource Flagler/Volusia and Daytona State College are watching for information on which categories of employment will represent the best opportunities for area workers. The Florida Department of Education is implementing a rapid credentialing program that will help workers seeking certification in various trades qualify for employment more quickly.

"It has been a busy time and circumstances are very fluid, causing us to pivot in response to the needs of businesses and workers," King said. "One thing of which we are quite proud is that we never stopped serving the community during the pandemic. We were on duty throughout the crisis and we continue to serve."

For more information, visit www.careersourcefv.com or call 386-323-7001.

Chamber Alliance teams with Volusia County to provide businesses with critical supplies



A volunteer at one of the distribution sites provides drive-up delivery of a PPE kit to a local business owner. At right is a sample of the products included in the PPE kits.



The Volusia County Chamber Alliance has always put a premium on collaboration, collegiality, unity of purpose, and mutual support. The alliance, whose members include the leaders of chambers within the county, meets monthly to discuss topics of mutual interest and partner to connect, inspire and grow the business community. The alliance plans at least one major event annually for members of all chambers. From time to time, it will take on a project that's a benefit to the economic health of the community.

In July, the organization had a chance to put all those values into action as it partnered with Volusia County to meet a critical need among Volusia County businesses struggling to deal with COVID-19.

Working together, the Chamber Alliance and Volusia County's Economic Development team determined that businesses – small and medium sized businesses in particular – were having

a difficult time gaining access to personal protective equipment (PPE) and supplies, especially disinfectant wipes. In response, the Volusia County Council allocated \$1 million of the CARES Act funding to a PPE distribution program.

Based on a survey of local businesses, the Chamber Alliance advised on the most needed PPE materials. County departments swung into action to

find and procure materials, buying from local sources whenever possible, providing facilities for and assisting with package assembly, and promoting the chamber distribution dates. Meanwhile, Chamber Alliance members rounded up an army of volunteers to sort and package the materials for distribution to local businesses. Kits were offered to all Volusia County businesses, whether or not the businesses were chamber

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Chamber Alliance teams with Volusia County to provide businesses with critical supplies

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members. Drive-through distribution points throughout the county made distribution efficient, and within about a half day, all 3,500 kits were in the hands of businesses that otherwise may not have been able to cobble together a meaningful amount of material.

"Our research had confirmed what we already knew, that there was a need for PPE," said Debbie Cotton, chairman of the alliance and president and CEO of the Ormond Beach Chamber of Commerce.

"What we did not realize was the degree of urgency our businesses were experiencing. The need for PPE was overwhelming. For some, the only thing standing between closing up shop or continuing operations was

the lack of access to PPE, particularly among small and medium sized businesses. Without PPE, many companies could not even consider operating during the pandemic."

Cotton saluted Volusia County for facilitating the program, citing the partnership with Volusia County's Economic Development, Purchasing and Public Protection departments.

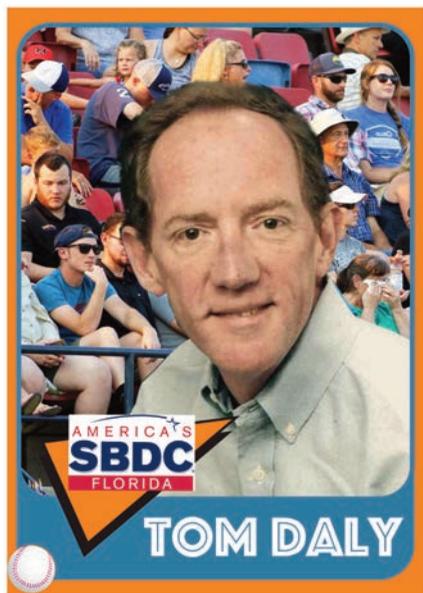
"CARES Act relief is only effective if it gets to those in need, something of which county officials were acutely aware," said Cotton.

As for the Chamber Alliance, Cotton said she was not at all surprised that members took up the challenges of receiving, sorting, packaging, promoting and distributing materials in record time.

"One thing about the alliance is that we all have such a respectful working relationship with each other that when there is a challenge, we come together, find a solution and make it happen, supporting each other along the way. It's no surprise to have chambers throughout Florida that emulate our model.'

The need of the PPE was evident, as the kits were distributed within a couple of hours. Round two of the PPE kit distribution took place in late August. Locations and other details regarding requirements to receive kits can be found at www.VolusiaBusinessResources.com.

SBDC: Pandemic triggers big help for small business



Social distancing and masks allow for some in-person meetings at the Small Business Development Center at Daytona State College. From left are Greg Martin, President/CEO SOS Signs & Lighting Services; Janice Huffstickler, President VannData Services; Amanda Yarborough, Founder/CEO MamaBareSugaring Studios and; Sean Skirrow, Owner/Vice President Dream Home Inspections. Joining the meeting virtually (on projection screen) is Todd Stebleton, Owner, Universal Pest Control.

Business is brisk these days at the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) at Daytona State College. Given the pandemic's effect on business in general, that assessment may be a bit of a surprise, but SBDC is in the business coaching business – and if ever there were a time when a little coaching could make a big difference, it is now.

"We routinely help businesses from concept and startup through the critical first year or two of operation and up to the point where they have survived as small to medium size enterprises," said Tom Daly, director of the SBDC.

SBDC is funded equally by the United States Small Business Administration and Florida State College System. This enables the organization to serve as an essential resource at no cost to its clients. It has helped countless businesses survive and thrive by offering advice on subjects such as building a business plan, forecasting, procuring funding, identifying threats and opportunities, marketing, website development, social media, research and more.

But for the past six months, the only routine is that there is no routine. SBDC has fielded countless requests

for information on the Paycheck Protection Program, expanded use of Emergency Injury Disaster Loans, Volusia County grant programs through the CARES Act.

"Our daily docket has increased to include requests from many existing clients requesting information on these and other topics dealing with survival. We have also fielded many requests from entrepreneurs who may be facing the permanent loss of middle management jobs and have decided to establish a new enterprise," said Daly.

Either way, basing decisions on what used to be normal may be a fatal flaw, according to Daly.

"We help all clients – whether they are existing clients or new clients – and we encourage them to make decisions filtered by the prism of

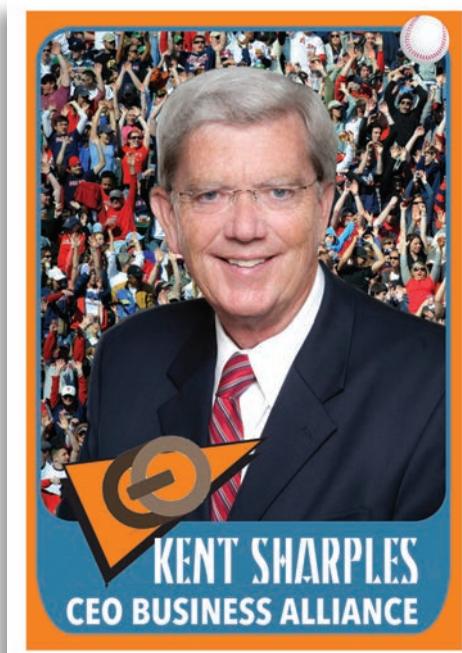
the future, which may never again resemble the past.

Survival of existing or new enterprises must include thoughtful examination of expenses, development of new revenue streams, staffing considerations and evaluation of their clients/customers to identify those who are too costly to serve. With the pandemic still part of the landscape, these things take on a new urgency."

SBDC continues to serve clients in much the same way as in pre-pandemic days, although 95% of its contacts are via Cisco Webex and Google Meet, real-time video conferencing tools.

For (free) information on issues of concern to small businesses in Volusia County, visit www.daytonastate.edu/sbdc/.

CEO Business Alliance brings unique perspective to economic development



CEO BUSINESS ALLIANCE

Reshoring Business to Volusia County, Florida

The CEO Business Alliance plays a unique role in the economic development circles. It's a 501(c)(6) not-for-profit organization whose mission is to stimulate the creation of new jobs and attract capital investment to Volusia County. It's funded entirely by leading business executives in the private sector, with membership composed of CEOs and chairpersons of those companies.

The Alliance works closely with the Volusia County Division of Economic Development and Team Volusia to recruit new business to the area, support local business retention and growth, and support initiatives that enhance economic development efforts.

"When a business is considering relocating to Volusia County, it's beneficial for the company's CEO to talk and meet with CEOs from our area," said Kent Sharples, CEO of the Alliance. "The CEOs have many qualities in common, and getting another CEO's perspective of the

business climate can be critical when making major decisions."

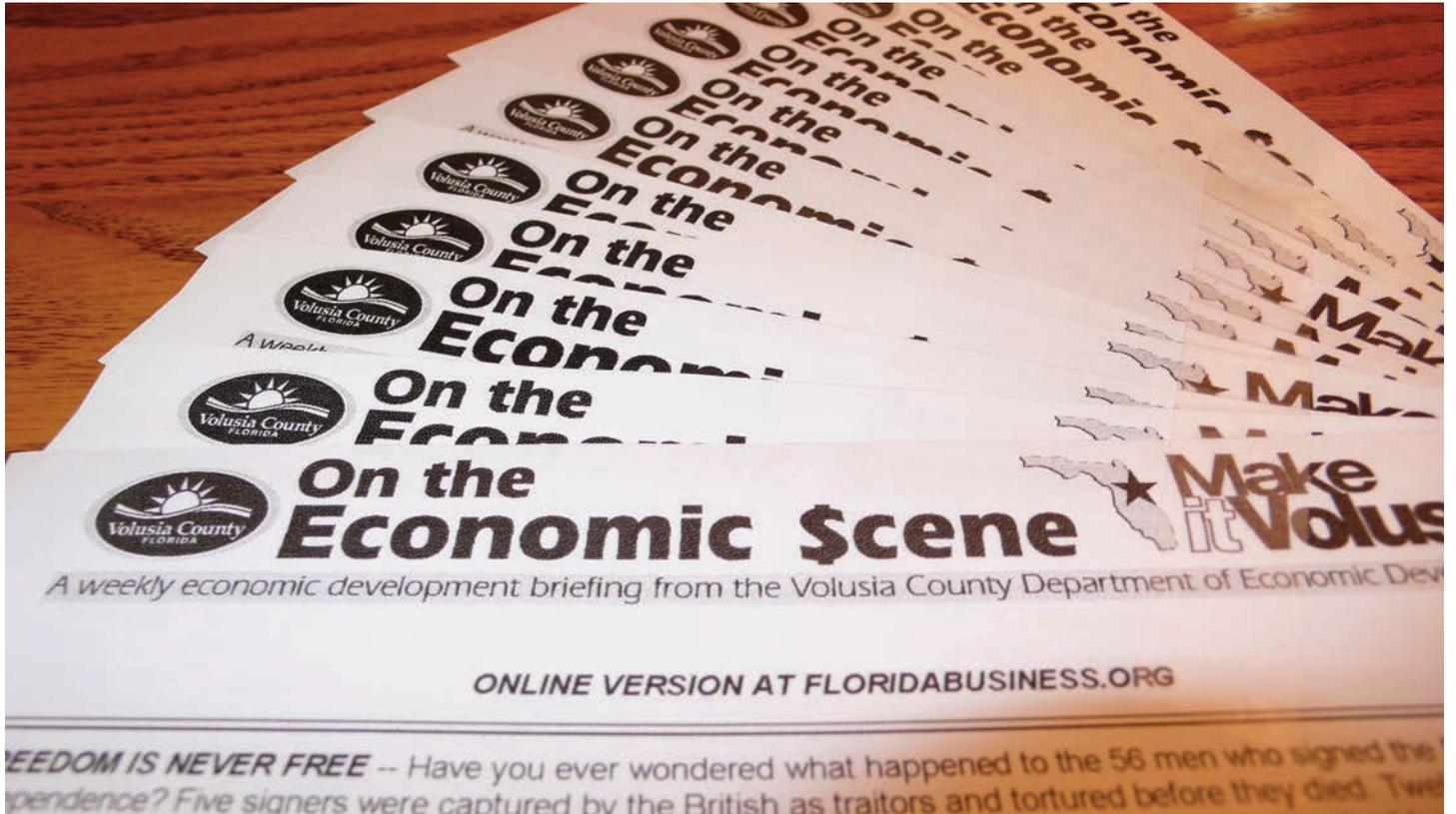
Before the pandemic, in-person meetings were critical for relationship building. With travel and in-person meetings on hold, CEO Business Alliance leaders are investing more time in research of targeted industries. That information is pointing to what could be a good opportunity for Volusia County in the years ahead and can help local leaders seize a promising opportunity – or avoid a costly mistake. The perspective of private sector leaders is an advantage in making such determinations.

During the pandemic, there are still business prospects whose interest in Volusia County remains robust and the CEO Business Alliance continues to highlight our community as a potential site for relocation or expansion.

"We are fortunate to live in a community where many of our business leaders feel so strongly about our area as an outstanding location for business and industry and who are eager to support our mission."

For more information, email KSharples@CEOBusinessAlliance.com, call 386-256-4900 or visit www.CEOBusinessAlliance.com

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