BBN Brevard Business News

Vol. 36 No. 3 January 15, 2018 $1.00 A Weekly Space Coast Business Magazine with Publishing Roots in America since 1839

New Holiday Inn Express opens in West Melbourne; 100–room hotel off I–95

By Ken Datzman

The hotel market in Brevard County continues to see new entries by some of the biggest brands in the industry, at a time when demand for rooms is growing in the region.

Both the business and leisure–travel segments have been trending upward in this market.

Many area hotels posted a strong year in 2017, and are looking for much of the same in 2018.

The newest hotel to open is the 100–room Holiday Inn Express & Suites in West Melbourne, one of the brands of the InterContinental Hotels Group.

The four–story $12.7 million construction project has helped fuel Brevard's expanding economy and surging job market.

"The hotel industry in general impacts the economy in a big way," said Holly Bernard, the general manager of the new Holiday Inn Express & Suites, one of the most recognized lodging brands in the hospitality industry, with more than 2,400 locations worldwide and growing.

"The construction of new hotels like ours provides all types of economic benefits to the community and supports job growth. We're excited to unveil our new hotel."

"There is nothing more exciting in this industry than opening a new hotel," added Jessica Blews, the sales manager at the business–friendly Holiday Inn Express & Suites in West Melbourne.

"It's awesome to be part of this team. Holiday Inn Express has rebranded and we are excited to show off the new design to guests and to the community. We believe we provide a product that delivers the consistency and added value that this market demands."

New research conducted by Oxford Economics Inc. underscores the economic benefits of the hotel industry across America. The hotel segment supports 8 million jobs and contributes nearly $600 billion annually to the nation's gross domestic product.

And now with tax reform a reality, a new economic impact study found that tax cuts could generate an additional $131 billion in economic activity for hotels and related industries over the next 10 years.

"We're very upbeat for the coming year as it relates to our occupancy outlook for the Holiday Inn Express & Suites in West Melbourne," said Bernard. "Jessica is doing a great job. She's using her longstanding contacts to help drive business to our new hotel."

The meetings and events industry can be optimistic about

Please see Holiday Inn Express & Suites, page 23



BBN photo — Adrienne B. Roth

The new $12.7 million Holiday Inn Express & Suites in West Melbourne features a business center and a large 24–hour fitness center, as well as meeting space. Holly Bernard, left, is the general manager of the property. Jessica Blews is the sales manager. They are both hotel industry veterans in Brevard County. The Holiday Inn Express is part of the InterContinental Hotels Group. The owner is MPH Hotels Inc. in St. Petersburg. Holiday Inn Express & Suites has rebranded with its new 'Formula Blue,' a cutting–edge design prototype that was created to appeal to the 'smart traveler.'

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Corridor researchers elected as 2017 Fellows of the National Academy of Inventors, includes UCF's Professor Aravinda Kar

TAMPA — Four academic inventors representing the three member institutions of The Florida High–Tech Corridor Council — the University of Central Florida, the University of Florida and the University of South Florida — have been elected as 2017 Fellows of the National Academy of Inventors (NAI).

The 2017 NAI Fellows from The Corridor institutions are:

- Anthony Brennan, Margaret A. Ross Endowed Professor, Department of Biomedical Engineering, University of Florida.
- Aravinda Kar, professor, College of Optics & Photonics, University of Central Florida.
- Donald Keck, professor, Institute for Advanced Discovery & Innovation, University of South Florida.
- Dennis Killinger, Distinguished University Professor Emeritus, Department of Physics, University of South Florida.

"The four 2017 NAI Fellows in The Corridor region represent a rich diversity of research and innovation in the area," said Ed Schons, president of the Florida High–Tech Corridor Council. "Their work in biomedical engineering, physics, optics and photonics has positively impacted society by taking risks necessary for advancement. These individuals are an example of what many in The Corridor do — experiment, collaborate and impact lives for the better."

These four innovators are among the 155 academic inventors selected for induction as NAI Fellows this year and join a group that now comprises 912 NAI Fellows, representing over 250 research universities and governmental and nonprofit research institutes. The 2017 Fellows are named inventors on nearly 6,000 issued U.S. patents, bringing the collective patents held by all NAI Fellows to more than 32,000 issued U.S. patents.

Election to NAI Fellow status is the highest professional accolade bestowed to academic inventors who have demonstrated a prolific spirit of innovation in creating or facilitating outstanding inventions that have made a tangible impact on quality of life, economic development and welfare of society. As detailed in the 2017 NAI Activities Report, published in Sept. 2017, NAI Fellows have generated more than 9,400 licensed technologies and companies, and created more than 1.3 million jobs, with over $137 billion in revenue generated based on their discoveries.

Those elected to the rank of NAI Fellow are named inventors on U.S. patents and were nominated by their peers for outstanding contributions in areas such as patents and licensing, innovative discovery and technology, significant impact on society, and support and enhancement of innovation.

On Apr. 5, 2018, the 2017 NAI Fellows will be inducted as part of the Seventh Annual NAI Conference of the National Academy of Inventors at the Mayflower Hotel, Autograph Collection in Washington, D.C. Andrew H. Hirshfeld, U.S. commissioner for patents, will provide the keynote address for the induction ceremony. In honor of their outstanding accomplishments, Fellows will be presented with a special trophy, medal and rosette pin.

"The inventors elected to the 2017 class of NAI Fellows from Florida's major research institutions exemplify the incredible innovation fueling the state," said NAI President Paul Sanberg. "These accomplished individuals represent the pinnacle of achievement at the intersection of academia and invention — their discoveries have changed the way we view the world. They epitomize the triumph of a university culture that celebrates patents, licensing and commercialization, and we look forward to engaging their talents to further support academic innovation."

Included among all NAI Fellows are more than 100 presidents and senior leaders of research universities and nonprofit research institutes; 439 members of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine; 36 inductees of the National Inventors Hall of Fame; 52 recipients of the U.S. National Medal of Technology and Innovation, and U.S. National Medal of Science; 29 Nobel Laureates; 261 AAAS Fellows; 168 IEEE Fellows; and 142 Fellows of the American Academy of Arts & Sciences, among other awards and distinctions.

Visit www.AcademyofInventors.org/search–fellows.asp for a complete list of NAI Fellows, including links to biographical information.

The Florida High–Tech Corridor Council is an economic development initiative of the University of Central Florida, the University of South Florida and the University of Florida.

The Corridor is co–chaired by the presidents of UCF, USF and UF. The Corridor includes the presidents of two state colleges, the president of the Florida Institute of Technology and representatives of high–tech industry.

Spectrum ramps up Internet starting speed with no change in pricing

ORLANDO — Spectrum has increased the starting download speed of Spectrum Internet in Orlando from 60 to 100 Mbps — a 66–percent increase — with no change in price. The faster 100 Mbps speeds are available now to new Spectrum Internet customers, and the company has automatically increased speeds for current Spectrum Internet residential customers and Spectrum Business Internet clients in Orlando.

"More than 99 percent of our customers now have access to Spectrum Internet with starting speeds of 100 Mbps," said Mike Robertson, regional vice president. "We're delivering Internet customers even more speed for streaming, surfing and social media, all with no change in the price of their Spectrum package."

Spectrum introduced its new packaging and pricing to consumers in Orlando in November 2016, "offering the fastest starting Internet speeds with no data caps, modem fees or contracts."

A small percentage of Spectrum Internet customers will need a new modem to receive the faster speeds; affected customers will be contacted directly with details on exchanging their modem.

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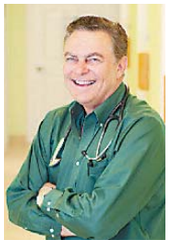
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Keep your 2018 resolutions short, simple and specific to be successful

By Jim Clark
UCF Forum columnist
University of Central Florida

'Tis the season for making New Year's resolutions, a custom that goes back 4,000 years to the ancient Babylonian empire. The Babylonians also gave us New Year's celebrations, although they celebrated in March when they planted their crops.

They had two consistent resolutions: Pay off their debts and return things they borrowed. Obviously, my neighbor is not a Babylonian. And if this timetable had stuck, we'd be playing college football bowl games in March.

The Babylonians were followed by the Romans who created a new calendar and moved the New Year to Jan. 1. January was named for the Roman god Janus, who had two faces. The idea was that one face looked toward the past and one toward the future. Or, you can just see it as being two–faced.

So, millions of us have come up with a list of things we want to accomplish this year. Back in 2000, somebody sold small journals for recording resolutions for the millennium. Figuring an official–looking journal would somehow help me keep the resolutions, and making plans for a thousand years seemed to demand something special, I purchased one and dutifully filled it out.

While recently cleaning out some drawers, I found the journal and looked at what I had planned to do for the next thousand years. To my surprise, I found that I had accomplished most of the 15 things on the list, although some had taken more than a decade to complete, and some of the accomplishments didn't quite turn out as planned — I lost weight, then unlost it; got married, then got unmarried. But I probably would have done them without making a list.

A survey found that one in six Americans make a resolution not to make any resolutions, but nearly half of Americans do make resolutions, whether it is a well–thought–out list, or just a mental note to do one or two things. But nine out of 10 resolution makers are doomed to failure, some of us fail within hours of the start of the year — my low point was failing within 12 minutes of the start of the new year, but I probably should not have been standing so close to a large bowl of M&M's.

But I am not alone; the list of most popular failed resolutions bears a striking similarity to many that I have embraced over the years: lose weight, get fit, spend more time with family, get out of debt, save money, and try something new.

What I have learned after decades of making resolutions is to keep it short, simple and specific. My failures are almost always related to making lengthy lists or vague lists. Promising to eat healthier fits the definition of vague and easy to violate. I could always find a way to fit a pizza or a German chocolate cake into my healthy living (it does contain coconut which is supposed to be healthy). When I made lengthy lists, I usually forgot exactly what was on the list within a couple of days and found it really easy to forget the tough resolutions.

When I have been successful, it came as a result of picking a few — no more than three — things that were priorities, and making sure I could do them.

Resolving to buy a new Ferrari in 2018 may be a great goal, but it is so far out of reach as to be absurd. I break them down into small manageable units. The vague "lose weight" holds little meaning, and the pledge to lose a vast amount of weight is impractical. But setting a goal of losing two pounds a month is doable and easy to follow.

And if you have failed at a resolution year after year, maybe it's time to move on to new resolutions or restructure the resolution. Perhaps running in a marathon just isn't in the cards.

So how do your resolutions compare to the top resolutions?

- Stay fit and healthy
- Lose weight
- Enjoy life to the fullest
- Spend less, save more
- Spend more time with family and friends
- Get organized
- Learn something new
- Travel more

Good luck with your resolutions and a have great year.

Jim Clark is a lecturer in UCF's Department of History. He can be reached at James.Clark@UCF.edu.

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Brevard Business News is published every Monday by Brevard Business News Inc. Bulk Rate postage is paid at Melbourne, FL and Cocoa, FL. This publication serves business executives in Brevard County. It reports on news, trends and ideas of interest to industry, trade, agribusiness, finance, health care, high technology, education and commerce.

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Subscription Rates for home or office mail delivery are $26.00 for one year (52 issues). Send all address changes to: Circulation Department, Brevard Business News, 4300 Fortune Place, Suite D, West Melbourne, FL, 32904, or email BrevardBusinessNews@earthlink.net.

CPD prepares for the future as retirees make way for new generation of leaders

2017 was a year marked by leadership changes both on the national and local levels. The Cocoa Police Department saw more than 50 years of experience retire, making way for the next generation of leaders, including the promotion of three lieutenants and three sergeants.

The agency also welcomed nine new police officers and continues to recruit the "best and brightest" law–enforcement professionals to protect and serve more than 18,000 residents in the City of Cocoa.

During the calendar year (as of Dec. 17), the men and women of the department responded to 48,274 calls for service. In addition, dispatchers answered more than 25,000 911 calls. The collective efforts of the agency also yielded a mid–year drop in reported crime of nearly 8 percent. This includes a 4.4 percent reduction in reports of violent crime and an 8.8 percent reduction in the number of total property crimes reported. These percentages are for the first six months of 2017, compared to the same time period in 2016. The data for the second half of 2017 won't be available until the first quarter of 2018, but the trend continued to show a drop in reported crimes.

Last year was also marked by noticeable challenges. In April, Motor Officer Rickford Leith suffered serious injuries following a hit–and–run crash as he participated in the police escort of the Moving Wall Vietnam Memorial. The driver was arrested after a three–day search and Officer Leitch is expected to return to full duty in early 2018.

In July, a group of teens' video recording of a man drowning sparked national outrage and a call for new laws in Florida to require citizens to act when a person is in distress. In September, the impacts of Hurricane Irma caused an estimated $150 million in damages countywide, including an estimated $6.1 million in damage within the City of Cocoa.

The department continued to place a high priority on connecting with the community through outreach and community education. The Community Resource Unit reached thousands of people through partnerships with local schools, community events, community watch and crime–prevention programs. The chief and city leaders also continued a partnership with the city's faith leaders in an effort to find solutions to crime and other issues. Also in 2017, the Code Enforcement Division became a part of the police department. This added four civilian personnel to the department roster.

The Cocoa Police Department currently has 67 full–time sworn officers, one part–time booking officer, seven reserve officers, one auxiliary officer and 30 civilians.

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'Hi. I need to report suspected abuse.'
Dana Delaney Loyd
aka Theresa Smith
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'Loyalty is everything to me!!!'
Brevard County Sheriff Robert Wayne Ivey
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to Dana Delaney Loyd
at 5:19 p.m., April 29, 2015

To Be Continued ...

4/26/2016 Jihosoft Android Manager

Date:
Content: I'm here if ya need to yell

To: 3212716029
Date: 2014-12-05 15:55:36
Content: Update: rockledge police department knew nothing of cookie incident. Group heading to Scully:s office. Fox35 too.

To: 3212716029
Date: 2014-12-05 18:10:00
Content: Thank you if you are behind getting this girl back in school...

From: +13212716029
Date: 2014-12-05 18:26:58
Content: What did Scully end up doing with it

To: 3212716029
Date: 2014-12-05 18:40:54
Content: He wasn't there

To: 3212716029
Date: 2014-12-05 18:49:15
Content: Principal met with the mom, student returns Monday... The dean said RPD was investigation unit... RPD had no idea wtf was going on. So Dean lied... When scully wasn't in, principal met at chili's and cleared victim.

From: +13212716029
Date: 2014-12-05 18:49:30
Content: Probably a good thing cause I told him to handcuff you and take a picture:)

To: 3212716029
Date: 2014-12-05 18:53:42
Content: I'm a writer... Not in the face, Denise Coyle was there instead of me. You know as well as I do that was wrong. And I'm out for the dean and the nurse... And here I was thinking you fixed it... Handcuffs... Better be fuzzy

From: +13212716029
Date: 2014-12-05 19:04:43
Content: Every pair I have are fuzzy!! Something's don't need fixing because they righteously fix themselves!! You can quote me on that cause I just now made it up. Have a great weekend!!

To: +13212716029
Date: 2014-12-05 19:06:44
Content: You too, and I m using that quote.

From: +13212716029
Date: 2014-12-05 19:08:09
Content:

To: 3212716029
Date: 2014-12-13 15:35:52
Content: Rumor is Hesse shot man in back. Stood over him and shot three more times. Fyi

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Resolving to have a happier, healthier year? Reshape your body attitudes, says a Florida State University professor

By Dave Heller
University Communications
Florida State University

TALLAHASSEE — Put together a list of New Year's resolutions yet?

Every year, many of us pledge to work harder at being healthy, losing weight or eating more veggies. A Nielsen survey showed about one–third of Americans resolved to shed a few pounds and reshape their bodies.

Here's a better resolution: Lose the critical thoughts about your body.

That's the advice of Florida State University Professor Pamela Keel. Her research team has tested a new program encouraging body acceptance and seen dramatic results.

"Consider what is really going to make you happier and healthier in 2018: losing 10 pounds or losing harmful attitudes about your body?" Keel asked.

Keel has spent a career studying body–image issues, particularly how they relate to eating disorders, and the results are not pretty. Body dissatisfaction in American culture is a pervasive problem, especially among young women.

Over the past 35 years, the ideal body type — particularly prevalent in media images — has become virtually unattainable for most people. Keel added that the majority of Americans are overweight today, and that creates a mismatch between reality and the body types seen in media.

"There's a big gap between what we're shown as being ideal and what to aspire to and where we actually are as a population," Keel said. "That leaves people feeling bad about themselves, and, unfortunately, feeling bad about your body does not actually motivate a person to pursue healthy behavior."

BODY–ACCEPTANCE STRATEGIES

Keel has documented strategies to help people feel better about themselves. The ideas come from an intervention program called "The Body Project" developed by Eric Stice, Senior Research Scientist at the Oregon Research Institute, and Professor Carolyn Becker at Trinity University in Texas. It was designed to reduce the risk of eating disorders and poor body image. Keel and then–doctoral student Tiffany Brown adapted the program for men.

One exercise called mirror–exposure may initially feel uncomfortable, but it directs a person to stand in front of a full–length mirror in little or no clothing and identify specific body traits that are good. The praise might focus on the body's function.

"You would say, 'I really appreciate the way my legs take me wherever I need to go,'" Keel said. "'Every day without fail, they get me out of bed, to the car, up the stairs and into the office. I don't have to worry about walking.' It can be that kind of functional appreciation of what your body does for you."

Or a person might appreciate the appearance of a body feature like the skin, or the shape of the shoulders or neck.

"You can even go for higher risk body parts," Keel said. "Rather than looking at yourself and saying, 'I hate my gut,' you could say, 'I really like the shape of my legs.' If there is something about you that you like, the idea is to spend time focusing on it."

The strategies have worked in studies led by Keel and other researchers. This approach, focusing on positive things rather than singling out negative ones, helps transform people's feelings about their bodies.

The intervention employs the basic psychological principles of cognitive dissonance theory: Do the opposite of a negative attitude. When actions oppose the internal mindset, Keel said, the easiest way to resolve that psychological clash is to change the attitude.

"If you make yourself consistently behave outwardly in a way that reinforces appreciation and acceptance of your body, then those actions will eventually get you to a point where you actually do feel that way about your body," Keel said.

Another exercise encourages people struggling with body acceptance to think about specific activities they avoid, such as not going swimming in the summer or not wearing shorts when it's hot, and then choosing to go out and do them.

"Most people experience a sense of freedom when they realize that nothing bad will happen if they wear a swimsuit or shorts in public — everyone is completely fine with it. This reinforces body acceptance through experience."

GETTING RESULTS

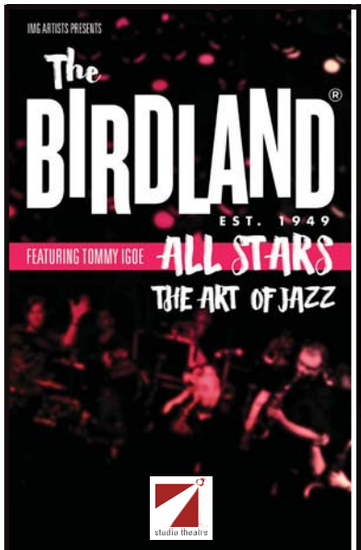
Keel said research has repeatedly found that the strategies work, and the benefits often go beyond improved body image.

"It turns out that discarding those unattainable body ideals also improves your mood, self–esteem, reduces disordered eating behaviors and may reduce the risk of self–injurious behavior," Keel said. "All sorts of things get better as a result of feeling better about your body."

The results for healthy body image and healthy eating patterns have been replicated among diverse groups of participants, including a national sorority system and men at risk for eating disorders.

Keel calls it a powerful intervention that does not take a lot of time. An online beta version of the program for women is available for free at www.ebodyproject.org, courtesy of the Oregon Research Institute. The hope is to make the program even more widely available in the future to help individuals regardless of gender.

"When people feel good about their bodies, they are more likely to take better care of themselves rather than treating their bodies like an enemy, or even worse, an object," Keel said. "That's a powerful reason to rethink the kind of New Year's resolutions we make for 2018."



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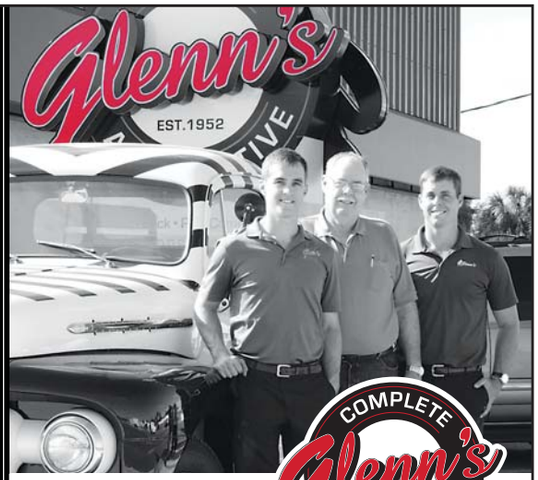
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Florida Tech students 'hack' their way to success and recognition; team wins a top spot at the recent University of Miami 'hackathon'

By Adam Lowenstein
FIT News Bureau
Florida Institute of Technology

For those whose notion of hacking is centered on pilfered emails or violated bank accounts, hit control–alt–delete and reboot your thinking.

At Florida Institute of Technology and a growing number of universities, hacking is more akin to what the Urban Dictionary described as "a clever or elegant technical accomplishment." Students are refining their skills to "hack" problems and find practical solutions.

Muntaser Syed, a graduate student in computer engineering at Florida Tech who leads an informal team of students in hackathons around the region and the country, said these events are positive and affirming and almost the polar opposite of the high–profile incidents of computer malfeasance that often make news.

"If you go to a hackathon, even if you don't win, you come away with a lot: techniques, connections, a ton of cool ideas," he said. "It is a very good way to highlight your skills."

For Syed and his team, including undergraduates Christopher Wille, Christopher Woodle and Peter Tarsoly, who is president of the Florida Tech chapter of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, the experiences they are gaining are a powerful compliment to their classroom learning.

Often running just 24 or 36 hours — sleep is a secondary concern, at best — hackathons usually involve making or developing something, Syed said, whether a robot or device, an app, a website or program, even a solution to a major problem.

At a hackathon hosted by the University of Miami in early December, Syed and his colleagues built an extraordinary gadget. It consisted of a headband with electrodes on it that would sense the wearer's mood via brain waves — angry, mellow, etc. — and, using Bluetooth connectivity with smart appliances, adjust a room's lighting and music accordingly.

Built in 24 hours, the system won the Florida Tech team a top spot at the hackathon.

"Hackathons are about creativity, the spontaneous bringing together of skill sets and experiences," said Ken Gibbs, who retired after a 30–year career as an engineer at Harris Corp. and Northrop Grumman and now serves as an adjunct instructor at Florida Tech. He has been an informal advisor for Syed's team and had both Woodle and Wille in his classes.

"This is a new way of doing engineering," he said. "Engineering is changing."

Hacking events also represent an increasingly effective and direct way to make professional inroads, Gibbs and Syed said. Companies like GE, IBM, Shure, Dell and Bloomberg can benefit in multiple ways, as described by Major League Hacking, a student hacking league that engages more than 65,000 students around the world annually: recruiting, brand marketing and developer relations.

One company, Gibbs recalled, was prepared to offer a student hacker "a job on spot."

Syed speaks of similar experiences. "This is a very good way to get noticed by large companies," he said.

For more information on hackathons and his student team, prospective participants may contact Muntaser Syed at msyed2011@my.fit.edu. Find out more about Major League Hacking at https://mlh.io/.

EDC and Eastern Florida State College announce dates for CPT course

The Economic Development Commission of Florida's Space Coast and Eastern Florida State College have announced the dates for the next Manufacturing Skills Standards Council Certified Production Technician course in Brevard County.

The CPT course is a 10–week synchronous online program which focuses on the core technical skills of an entry–level production worker, and is applicable in all sectors of manufacturing. Course topics include safety, quality practices and measurement, manufacturing processes and production, and maintenance awareness. The MSSC CPT certification is also worth up to 15 credits toward an engineering technology or aerospace technology associate's degree at EFSC.

The next 10–week course starts Jan. 22, and will run online Monday and Wednesdays from 6–10 p.m. Scholarships are available for Brevard County residents.

"With an 80 percent job–placement rate after completion, the CPT course continues to be a vital and successful resource for our 500 local manufacturing companies," said Lynda Weatherman, president and CEO of the EDC. "Students who earn this credential are a step ahead within this growing sector where over 3,000 jobs are expected by 2022."

"The Certified Production Technician Credential is an excellent tool for anybody wanting to get into manufacturing," said Mike Ennis, chairman of the EDC's Industry Council and Regional Manufacturers Association of Florida's Space Coast. "In 10 weeks, students gain a lot of knowledge, and that knowledge is credibility."

Hear the successful stories from Space Coast manufacturing professionals who have completed the CPT course, and apply for the next class at www.ManufacturingInBrevard.org.

Oil–painting classes at The Art Gallery of Viera

Tricia Eisen is offering ongoing classes in oil painting at The Art Gallery of Viera. The address is 2261 Town Center Ave., Suite 111. The fee is $20 per class. The classes are 5:30–8 p.m. on Mondays. For more information on the classes, contact Eisen at 508–4281, or Treisen@aol.com. Her website is www.ArtByTriciaEisen.com.



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'For Your Eyes Only' fundraising event was a big success for Children's Advocacy Center of Brevard

The Friends of the Children's Advocacy Center of Brevard recently hosted its second annual James Bond–themed event to raise funds for the Children's Advocacy Center of Brevard.

The "elegantly" grand event, "For Your Eyes Only," which was a big success, was held at the Merritt Island estate of Lila and Keith Buescher and cohosted by Ambika and Dr. Ravi Palaniyandi.

The Bond contestants collectively raised more than $120,000 in donations and in–kind support. The contestants "were men committed to the protection and defense of Brevard's abused and neglected children," and raised funds to support the programs and services of the Children's Advocacy Center of Brevard.

The Friends of the Children's Advocacy Center "searched and found leaders" in the community committed to serving children in need and competed to be named Brevard's "Top Bond," which went to "Agent" Ron James of Titusville, who retired from Florida Power & Light Co.

James dressed as the "suave and sophisticated" Bond he portrayed, tuxedo and all, drove more than 1,500 miles as he personally approached over 150 individuals to share his assignment and raise awareness of the needs of abused and neglected children served by the Children's Advocacy Center of Brevard.

James also shared his personal motivation for accepting the assignment: to share that the cycle of abuse can be broken as he and his wife Sharon had ensured for the two abused children they had adopted 27 years ago. James raised just under $50,000 for the Children's Advocacy Center of Brevard.

All of the Bond contestants were "incredible" as they worked to raise money for the Children's Advocacy Center of Brevard. The contestants included: Tony Hurt, of Miller & Hurt Wealth Advisors; Micah Loyd, CEO Loyd Contracting Inc. and a Port Canaveral Commissioner; Brian Spencer, of Shelter Mortgage Co.; Lt. Stephen Fernez, of the Brevard County Sheriff Office; and Djon Pepaj, CEO Pepaj Steakhouse & Restaurants.

Roughly 200 people attended the event. Victory Casino Cruises, AMBAL Inc. and Beach Organics were the major sponsors. Other top sponsors included Lila and Keith Buescher and Ambika and Dr. Ravi Palaniyandi, "Space Coast Daily," Delores Spearman, Community Credit Union, Miller & Hurt Wealth Advisors, Whitaker Cooper Financial Services, Ron and Sharon James, and Robert Rose.

Matt's Casbah catered the affair and guests listened to James Bond movie title songs played by DJ Janna Ivey. The guests played casino games for fun and entertainment. They were provided by Casino Party Planners.

Brevard County Sheriff Wayne Ivey conducted the Live Auction with "great enthusiasm and fun." Guests had the opportunity to bid on many grand prizes including an elaborate Monte Carlo trip for an ultimate James Bond experience.

"For Your Eyes Only was the second annual James Bond–themed event and hopefully will soon be recognized as the Friends' of the CACB's signature event each year as we highlight the many other action–packed Bond movies, and search for Brevard's next Top Bond," said Friends President, Tyler Sirois. "This event is vitally important to our fundraising efforts on behalf of the Children's Advocacy Center."

The Friends of the Children's Advocacy Center of Brevard is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization comprised of volunteers whose purpose is to increase awareness of the issues of child abuse and neglect in the community, and to raise funding to support the mission of the Children's Advocacy Center of Brevard.

The Children's Advocacy Center of Brevard was established in 1996 and is now a program of the Space Coast Health Foundation. The CACB is a multi–agency collaboration of the Child Protection Team, the Florida Department of Children and Families, Brevard County Sheriff's Office and municipal law–enforcement agencies, and The Office of the State Attorney. These core partners of the CACB work together to intervene in the most severe cases of child abuse, including all child sexual abuse, physical abuse and neglect in Brevard County. "The Children's Advocacy Center of Brevard is so fortunate to have individuals in our community who are passionate and support our center, and the children of Brevard," said Jeanie Raciti, director of the CACB.

For additional information about the Children's Advocacy Center of Brevard, visit www.CACBrevard.org.

Cocoa City Council launches Sustainability Committee to ensure the city remains resilient now and in future

The Cocoa City Council unanimously approved the establishment of a Sustainability Advisory Committee at its Dec. 12 meeting. The committee will advise the city on ways in which the city can incorporate and promote sustainable and resilient activities and practices that not only meet the needs of the present, "but also do not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

The holistic concept of sustainability includes consideration of the environment, the economy, and community well–being and social equity.

Dozens of residents from the community and representatives from organizations in support of the Sustainability Committee were represented at the meeting. The organizations included: the Indian River Lagoon Coalition, the Florida Solar Energy Center, League of Women Voters, the University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences Extension in Brevard County, and Keep Brevard Beautiful.

"With Cocoa being such a forward–thinking community, I have no doubt this is going to be a great success," said Keep Brevard Beautiful Executive Director Tony Sasso. "Keep Brevard Beautiful is ready and willing to partner with your committee."

Cocoa resident Lorraine Koss derived the idea for this committee from her interest in the Indian River Lagoon. "Cocoa has the opportunity to contribute to the lagoon's long–term health and this is where planning comes in." In May, Koss gave a presentation to the Cocoa City Council on the success of the City of Satellite Beach's Sustainability Plan and requested that the Cocoa City Council consider establishing a committee to help form and implement such a plan for Cocoa.

The City Manager's office met with Koss and a group of "dedicated" residents to formulate a proposed scope of work for the committee and the city drafted a resolution for the creation of the committee.

The committee will consist of five to 11 members who are residents or owners of property in Cocoa and whose main objective will be to establish a written Sustainability and Resiliency Plan. The plan will consider and recommend a set of actions, initiatives, strategies, policies, or programs related to items such as: sustainable enhancements that serve low–income neighborhoods; public use of right–of–way areas along Indian River Drive to promote lagoon–friendly landscaping and rain gardens; opportunities to develop trails in the Cocoa Conservation area; improving recycling access; and expansion of the city's Rain Barrel program.

Currently the Cities of Palm Bay and Satellite Beach have adopted similar Sustainability Plans, although many local governments engage in sustainable activities through committees and regulatory practices.

Once the plan is formalized and presented to Cocoa City Council for consideration, the committee will continue to advise and assist the city regarding implementing, monitoring and assessing the performance of each action, initiative, strategy, policy, and program set forth in the plan.

Currently, the City of Cocoa strives to promote and achieve sustainability through existing plans and regular operational procedures including sustainable and smart growth measures included in the city's 2010–2020 Comprehensive Plan and in the city's 2016–2021 Strategic Plan, which encourages the promotion of sustainability through redevelopment of the City's core and sound fiscal practices.

"We are excited for the talented residents of our community to work together and improve our City for future generations," said Cocoa Mayor Henry Parrish III. "When residents step up and engage with their community, the results can be tremendous."

Local Kiwanis Club awarded grant from foundation

The Kiwanis Eau Gallie/Suntree Club was recently awarded a $5,000 grant for their "Kids Closet" program from the Margaret Binz Foundation. Kiwanis International is a global organization of volunteers dedicated to improving the world "one child and one community at a time." The Eau Gallie/Suntree Club sponsors Title One schools with educational tools to improve reading skills, supplies for underprivileged children, and in other ways. In addition to local schools, the organization has reached out to the Boys & Girls Club, The Haven, Arnold Palmer Hospital, The Women's Center and other entities.



Michael Ayers to lead Melbourne Regional Chamber as new president and CEO; brings wide experience to the membership–based business organization

By Ken Datzman

Michael Ayers, who has in–depth experience in government at the state and federal levels and once served as chief of staff for the Florida Agency for Workforce Innovation, beat out a roster of candidates from around the nation to be named the new president and chief executive officer of the Melbourne Regional Chamber of East Central Florida.

Ayers brings one of the most diverse backgrounds the position has seen in many years, with experience in everything from budgeting to economic development, human resources, and legislative affairs to working with a state agency that helped people with developmental disabilities.

The Melbourne Regional Chamber is a business organization, representing and advocating for companies of all sizes and sectors. It advocates for pro–business policies that create jobs to help grow the economy.

A West Melbourne resident since 2015, Ayers most recently was the director of government relations at the Sanford Burnham Presby Medical Discovery Institute at Lake Nona in Orlando.

Ayers, who commuted to his job with the Sanford Burnham Presby Medical Discovery Institute, was responsible for generating funding for the independent nonprofit biomedical research institute.

His position required him to travel a lot to Tallahassee and to Washington, D.C.

The Institute's research focuses on cancer, immunity, neurodegeneration, metabolic disorders, and rare children's diseases. It employs about 1,000 scientists and staff in La Jolla, Calif., and Orlando.

Ayers worked for the Sanford Burnham Presby Medical Discovery Institute the last three years. But much of his career was spent in Tallahassee working for government agencies.

He said he first came to Brevard County in 2004, just three years out of the University of Illinois, where he had earned his bachelor's degree in business administration.

"I worked on the Bush–Cheney re–election campaign of 2004. I was originally working on a campaign in Illinois, but was sent to Brevard to help out. I had never been here before. I fell in love this community, and it's where I met my wife, Sarah," said Ayers, who worked for both Gov. Rick Scott and Gov. Charlie Crist at the Agency for Workforce Innovation.

Ayers' career includes having served as chief of staff for the Florida Agency for Persons with Disabilities, chief of staff for the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, legislative director and chief of staff for the Florida Agency for Workforce Innovation, and as regional field director for the Republican Party of Florida.

When Gov. Scott came into office he reorganized some agencies, including Workforce Innovation, into the Department of Economic Opportunity. Ayers was chief of staff for the DEO.



BBN photo — Adrienne B. Roth

West Melbourne resident Michael Ayers, right, is the new president and CEO of the Melbourne Regional Chamber, which has more than 1,000 members. Brent Peoples is the new board chairman of the organization. He runs Peoples Financial Planning of Raymond James & Associates. Ayers most recently was director of government relations for the Sanford Burnham Presby Medical Discovery Institute at Lake Nona in Orlando. Ayers topped a roster of candidates from around the nation. Ayers is a graduate of the University of Illinois with a bachelor's degree in business administration.

Brent Peoples, the new board chairman for the Melbourne Regional Chamber, said there was a lot of interest from applicants for the president and CEO position, which was advertised nationally through various Chamber groups.

"We received applications from around the United States," said Peoples, who has been a Melbourne Regional Chamber board member for the past five years and runs Peoples Financial Planning of Raymond James & Associates in Melbourne.

"What attracted the board to Michael is his diverse professional background. We really feel like he has the personality and the broad experience to sit down and have a conversation with all types of people, from Bill Brown (the president, CEO and chairman of Melbourne–based Harris Corp.) to a sole proprietor who faces a unique set of challenges running his or her small business. Michael's experience includes having interacted with a lot of business groups and economic development organizations, and much more."

Peoples said Ayers is going "to lead the Melbourne Regional Chamber into the future. We feel the Chamber can make big strides in the years ahead under his leadership and direction."

The president and CEO position had been open since the resignation of Christian Malesic in June. Justin Anderson served as interim president while the search was ongoing.

For five years, Ayers, an Illinois native, was the chief of staff for the Florida Agency for Persons with Disabilities. The agency annually serves more than 50,000 Floridians with severe autism, cerebral palsy, spina bifida, intellectual disabilities, and Down syndrome, for example.

Please see Melbourne Regional Chamber, page 19

Grand prize for Crosswinds' 20th 'Great Brevard Duck Race' is two–year free lease on new Honda Fit, courtesy of community–minded Space Coast Honda

By Ken Datzman

COCOA — Two decades ago, Crosswinds Youth Services Inc. introduced the "Great Brevard Duck Race" to the community, and it soon became one of the region's most popular fundraisers, with people "adopting" yellow rubber ducks that are entered in a race to win prizes.

For years, Crosswinds Youth Services' fundraising efforts in the community have been closely identified with the Great Brevard Duck Race, a unique event that draws hundreds of spectators annually. The race raises money for the organization's programs and services.

An estimated 10,000 yellow rubber ducks "decked out with ultra–cool sunglasses" will be racing their way along a course in the Indian River on Sunday, April 15, at Sand Point Park in Titusville.

This free, family friendly program will get underway at 12:30 p.m. with music, activities for children, and appearances by "Quacky," the "official" race mascot.

The Ducks will race to the finish line to win various prizes for their "adopters" in the 20th annual event. This year's grand prize for the Great Brevard Duck Race will be a two–year lease, free of charge, for a 2018 Honda Fit, courtesy of Space Coast Honda on West Highway 520 in Cocoa. The dealership is owned and operated by area businessman Scott DeMasso.

The sporty Honda Fit has fresh, new styling for 2018. And Honda "Sensing" adds safety and driver–assistive technologies to the company's benchmark subcompact. A new vibrant color — Orange Fury — joins an expanded color pallet that includes White Orchid Pearl, Modern Steel Metallic, Crystal Black Pearl, Milano Red, and Aegean Blue Metallic.

"We are beyond thrilled by the tremendous generosity given by Mr. DeMasso to our organization," said Jan Lokay, the president and CEO of Crosswinds. "This is going to make the 20th annual Great Brevard Duck Race even more interesting for duck adopters."

Space Coast Honda has been supporting the nonprofit Crosswinds Youth Services in various way since 2004, as well as a host of other organizations in the community.

"We have been in business a long time in Brevard County and the community has been good to our dealership," said DeMasso. "This is one way we give back to the community, and we've been doing it for years."

He added, "Crosswinds is a great organization that's having a positive impact on the lives of young people and families in the county through their programs and services. We're happy to team up with them in the Great Brevard Duck Race and provide the grand prize for the event."

For more than 40 years, Crosswinds has been a safety net for Brevard youth in crisis and their families. Often, these young people "have nowhere else to turn" when in need of help.

As an organization, Crosswinds began with a group of concerned community leaders who came together to discuss how Brevard could respond to the increasing number of runaway and homeless youth in the county.

The initial group of community leaders responding to this mission included judges, a county commissioner, and Dr. Robert Lehton, a clinical psychologist who had experience counseling runaway youth. He established the first youth shelter in the state of Louisiana.

Dr. Lehton is the past chairman of Crosswinds' Board of Directors, and a longstanding volunteer for whom Crosswinds' shelter facility is now named. Out of the efforts of this group of volunteers, the organization now known as Crosswinds opened an emergency youth shelter in 1974. Today, it's known as the Robert E. Lehton Children's Shelter.

In addition to being a founding force behind Crosswinds, Dr. Lehton helped start Servant Air Ministries Inc., a nonprofit Christian ministry on Merritt Island that provides air transportation to help people in need and to advance the gospel.

"I've known Dr. Lehton for a long time. He has done so much for the community. His work as a humanitarian speaks for itself, I believe," said DeMasso, whose dealership is a 13–time Honda President's Award recipient, the only such dealership in Brevard to earn that many President's honors.

DeMasso said Space Coast Honda had a strong year in 2017 and he's anticipating the momentum to carry into 2018, with the redesigned Honda Accord and other new models leading the way for his dealership.

"Honda did an awesome job with the redesign of the new Accord," said DeMasso. "No other car has come close to winning the number of awards that the Accord has through the years. It has a loyal buyer base. The 2018 Accord is the most sophisticated model ever for Honda."

The new 2.0–liter VETC turbo offers the highest



BBN photo — Adrienne B. Roth

Space Coast Honda in Cocoa has been a longtime supporter of the nonprofit Crosswinds Youth Services. The dealership is providing the grand prize for the 20th annual 'Great Brevard Duck Race,' a free two–year lease on a 2018 Honda Fit. Online early 'duck adoptions for the race will begin Feb. 5. From left: 'Quacky,' the Great Brevard Duck Race mascot; Misty Campbell, Crosswinds' development director; Scott DeMasso, owner, Space Coast Honda; and Jan Lokay, president and CEO, Crosswinds.

Please see Crosswinds Youth Services, page 21

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Space Coast Birding and Wildlife Festival set; event singled out by the Southeast Tourism Society

The Southeast Tourism Society has named the Space Coast Birding and Wildlife Festival one of the "STS Top 20 Events" in the Southeast for January 2018 for the fifth year in a row.

This year's Space Coast Birding and Wildlife Festival is set for Jan. 24–29. The STS Top 20 Festival and Event Awards have highlighted programs around the Southeast since 1985.

The Space Coast Birding and Wildlife Festival features world–class photographers, unique field trips, engaging workshops and presentations by various field experts. "It is one of the largest and most award–winning birding and wildlife festivals in the United States."

People who plan to attend the 2018 event can sign up for one of many field trips "to get up close and personal" with the local birds and wildlife populations. They will also enjoy one of the newly featured "Spotlight Presentations" and workshops "led by some of the top experts in the "birding world."

The keynote speakers will be Pete Dunne and Kevin Karlson, who will make a presentation on their newly released book on raptors.

"We are privileged to have world–class photographers here, and the optics and camera companies at the Exhibit Center will provide an outstanding array of equipment to enhance the attendees' birdwatching abilities," said Danica Romeyn, the outreach and development coordinator for the Space Coast Birding and Wildlife Festival.

"The Southeast is home to unique and memorable events throughout the year," said Bill Hardman, president and CEO of the Southeast Tourism Society. "In spotlighting the Top 20 festivals and events each month, STS is not only giving these events the recognition they deserve but we're also creating a quick reference guide to some of the best festivals in the Southeast. These events are important to the economic vitality of our communities and this is a way for us to acknowledge the time and resources organizers have tirelessly spent to create memories for their attendees."

Events considered for the STS Top 20 recognition must be at least three years old and have attendance of at least 1,000 people. STS, founded in 1983 and headquartered in Atlanta, is a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting tourism to and within 12 states — Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia and West Virginia.

For more information on the 2018 Space Coast Birding and Wildlife Festival, contact Romeyn at (989) 295–9446 or Danica.Romeyn@BrevardNatureAlliance.org.

Library to host computer classes in January

The Palm Bay Public Library will be conducting computer classes starting in January. The fee is $5 per class. Registration is required. To register for the classes, call Julie at 952–4519. The library's address is 1520 Port Malabar Blvd., NE.

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Author, photographer Laura Williams to headline fundraiser at Mar–A–Lago benefitting Young Adventurers

PALM BEACH –Author and wildlife photographer Laura Crawford Williams' lions, tigers, giraffes and monkeys will romp at Mar–A–Lago in the "wildest party of the season," the 2018 Safari Night Ball benefiting Young Adventurers Inc. (www.SafariNightBall.com)

The Jan. 26 event, hosted by honorary chairpersons Jim and Elizabeth Trump–Grau, is the primary fundraiser for Young Adventurers, a nonprofit mentoring organization serving young adults since 1992.

At the event, Williams will be signing her newly released book that takes "readers on a wild ride" through South America in "Wildlife in Wild Lands: Photography for Conservation in Southern South America."

"It truly takes an immense collaboration of conservation enthusiasts to produce an event so meaningful," said Adrienne Mazzone, president of the TransMedia Group and a conservation advocate. "The next steps for Laura's upcoming adventure are in the works as she may partner with Young Adventurers for her wild excursions."

Guests at the safari–chic Mar–A–Lago benefit can take a walk on the wild side with Williams' "breathtaking photography" captured by her "precocious" camera (lcwphoto.com) throughout her eight–year journey in South America's robust landscapes.

"Wildlife in Wild Lands: Photography for Conservation in Southern South America," which embodies a collection of "dramatic landscapes and fierce animals," is available now.

The internationally recognized and award–winning photographer captures and shares her journey in 244 "vivid" pages accessible in both English and Spanish. The book has been 10 years in the making, she said. The tabletop book's exclusive images resonate with a strong theme of conservation, allowing readers to connect to a world in dire need of exposure thousands of miles away.

"Wildlife in Wild Lands: Photography for Conservation in Southern South America is encouragement to those who have always wondered how they might best serve the wider world," said Williams. "Wildlife conservation is, at its core, one of the purest forms of giving back."

During her time in South America, she was able to work with like–minded individuals that helped contribute to the project and capture her unique journey.

Williams and her partner, German Ambrosetti, created Frontera Wildlife Adventures (fronteraadventure.com), a nonprofit company focusing on conservation projects and education.

Williams' work has been published and recognized by magazines such as "National Geographic," "National Wildlife," "The Nature Conservancy," and "Nature's Best."

The Safari Night Ball is the primary fundraiser for Young Adventurers, which has served young adults since 1992. Tickets can be purchased online at the website or call 561–317–KIDS for more information and sponsorships.

Famous PGA golfer Gary Player's son, Wayne Player, will live auction trips to The Masters, The Kentucky Derby and to South Africa.

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The Supply Zone for Teachers becomes Full Affiliate member of nonprofit Kids In Need Foundation

VIERA — The Kids In Need Foundation, a national nonprofit organization dedicated to providing free school supplies to economically disadvantaged children and under–funded teachers, announced it has elevated two of its Junior Affiliate "teacher–free" supply stores to Full Affiliate status, including the Supply Zone for Teachers, a program of the Brevard Schools Foundation.

Full Affiliates being added to the Kids In Need Foundation National Network of Resource Centers are located in Cocoa and Tulsa, Okla.

The addition of Supply Zone for Teachers and The Pencil Box in Tulsa brings the total number of affiliates in the Kids In Need Foundation National Network to 41 centers. Inclusion in the network is by evaluation only and is based on a center's stability and efficiency, among other criteria.

"Supply Zone for Teachers and The Pencil Box are two centers making an impact in their communities," said Dave Smith, executive director of the Kids In Need Foundation. "Their service models closely align with that originally designed by Kids In Need, and we are proud to be able to help them serve students most in need."

Affiliates of the Kids In Need National Network serve schools in their local areas where high percentages of students are enrolled in the federal free and reduced lunch program. Although typically located in warehouses or similar environments, the facilities are set up the same as a retail store where any teacher would go to buy supplies for their students or classrooms. The difference is that there is no charge for any of the school supplies or teaching aides taken from the shelves.

As an affiliate, the Supply Zone for Teachers is eligible to receive school supplies donated to the Kids In Need Foundation by manufacturers and retailers for redistribution to high–need students, teachers, and schools.

Since the organization's founding in 1995, Kids In Need has distributed more than $900 million worth of school supplies to the centers in the network. Combined with the product donated to the individual centers locally, the network provides school and classroom supplies to 5.4 million students and nearly 200,000 teachers annually.

Established in 2014, the Supply Zone has already served more than 67,000 students by distributing in excess of $1.6 million in school supplies.

For more information on this program, visit www.BrevardSchoolsFoundation.org.

Melbourne Chamber Music Society concert

On Friday, Jan. 19, at 7:30 p.m. at St. Mark's Church in Indialantic, the Melbourne Chamber Music Society will present Sirena Huang, violinist, and Robert Koenig, pianist, in a concert of the music of Stravinsky, Ravel, Tchaikovsky, Prokofiev, Shangqian Li, and Pablo Sarasate. Tickets are $35 for adults and $10 for students. Tickets are available at the door the evening of the concert or visit MelbourneChamberMusicSociety.org. The phone number is 213–5100.

B&N in West Melbourne launches its eighth 'My Favorite Teacher Contest' — entry deadline March 2

WEST MELBOURNE — Barnes & Noble has announced the start of the 2018 "Barnes & Noble My Favorite Teacher Contest," which for the past eight years has provided middle and high school students the opportunity to tell their communities how much they appreciate their teachers.

Students can nominate their teacher by writing essays, poems or thank–you letters that share how their teacher has influenced their life and why they appreciate and admire them. Participating schools collect the essays and submit them to Barnes & Noble West Melbourne for consideration.

Entries are judged on the compelling nature of the teacher's inspiring qualities, the sincerity of the student's appreciation and the quality of expression and writing.

Teachers from middle schools and high schools are eligible for nomination. Awards for winning teachers, schools and students include cash prizes, Nook devices and more. The contest is broken down into local and regional winners, from which the "Barnes & Noble National Teacher of the Year" will be chosen.

The local winning teachers will be recognized in spring 2018 at events held at Barnes & Noble stores including in West Melbourne, where they will each receive a special award acknowledging their achievement, as well as additional recognition and praise from their community. The students who wrote the winning essays or poems will each receive a certificate of recognition, and will also be honored at the ceremonies.

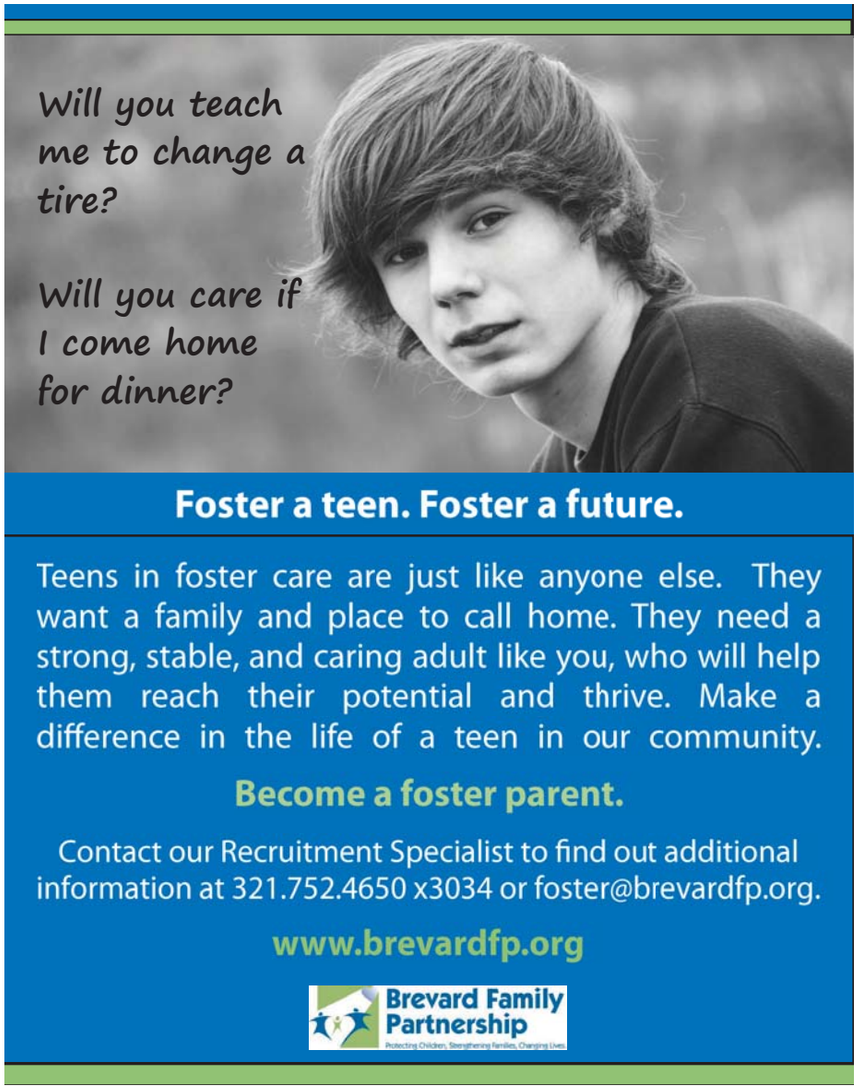
Each regional winner will receive a $500 Barnes & Noble gift card. From the pool of regional winners, Barnes & Noble will name one teacher the "Barnes & Noble National Teacher of the Year." The national winner will receive $5,000 and be recognized at a special community celebration at their local Barnes & Noble store. Their school will also receive $5,000.

The student who writes the national winning essay, poem or thank–you letter will win a $500 Barnes & Noble gift card and a Nook.

Barnes & Noble has long supported teachers through Educator Appreciation Weeks, special discounts, personalized service, in–store events, book fairs, store tours for classrooms, and, since 2010, through the My Favorite Teacher Contest.

The Barnes & Noble My Favorite Teacher Contest submission period ends on March 2. Students who want to participate must submit their essay or poem to Barnes & Noble in West Melbourne by that date. Only middle and high school students and active teachers employed in elementary, middle or high schools in the United States are eligible to win.

Customers should visit Barnes & Noble in West Melbourne or www.BN.com/MyFavoriteTeacher for complete details and the official My Favorite Teacher Contest rules. Additionally, photos and the winning essay from the 2017 My Favorite Teacher Contest can be found at www.BN.com/MyFavoriteTeacher.







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Jersey Mike's Subs opens in Viera, owner celebrates with a 'free–sub' fundraiser event

Jersey Mike's Subs, known for its fresh–sliced, fresh–grilled subs, has opened in Viera. Franchise owner Bryan Price and operating partner Tyler Freese will hold a grand opening and "free–sub" fundraiser from Wednesday, Jan. 17, to Sunday, Jan. 21, to support the Brevard County Sheriff's Office Charity.

The new restaurant, located at 2338 Citadel Way, is circulating 10,000 coupons throughout the community offering a free regular sub for a minimum $3 contribution to the Brevard County Sheriff's Office Charity. Customers must have a coupon to be eligible.

Price said he shares Jersey Mike's "commitment to quality products and exceptional customer service, and is dedicated to giving back to the local community." Since 2010, Jersey Mike's locations throughout the country have raised more than $25 million for "worthy local charities" and have distributed more than 1.5 million free sub sandwiches to help numerous causes. In 2017, the company's seventh annual Jersey Mike's "Month of Giving" in March raised more than $5.5 million for nearly 150 charities throughout the country.

To recognize those making a difference in local communities, Jersey Mike's is seeking nominations for five $5,000 "Sub Abover Grants." From now through Jan. 19, go to BeASubAbove.com to nominate an individual who is making a difference. As a reward, Jersey Mike's will send you a coupon good for $2 off any sub. Grants will be awarded in February.

Started in 1956, Jersey Mike's now has 1,500 restaurants open or under development nationwide.

The restaurant's hours are 10 a.m. to 9 p.m., seven days a week. You can contact the Viera location directly at 372–0372.

Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida announces its Excellence Award winners

Caprice Atwell, managing Broker for the Melbourne office of Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Realty, has announced the office's "Good to Know" Excellence Award winners for September, October and November.

September: Top Sales Associate by dollar and number volume, Dee Dee Davis; Top Listing Associate by dollar and number volume, Jeff Chancey; Overall Top Producer, Barbara Wall.

October: Top Sales Associate by dollar and number volume, Cynthia Tripp; Top Listing Associate by dollar volume, Kelly Rodano; Top Listing Associate by number volume, Josie Rekab.

November: Top Sales Associate by dollar volume, Shari Abbott; Top Sales Associate by number volume, Jeff Chancey; Top Listing Associate by dollar and number volume, Toie Crespi.

Rei Mesa, the president and CEO of Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Realty, along with Caprice, congratulated the top producers.

Melbourne Regional Chamber of East Central Florida

Continued from page 12

"Working with that agency was an eye–opening experience for me," said Ayers. "I learned as I went along about the people we served and the struggles they and their families go through, and how the services we provided helped them."

When he takes over in mid–January, Ayers will be leading an organization with more than 1,000 members and whose history dates back to 1925, the founding of the Melbourne Chamber of Commerce.

"The Melbourne Chamber has played an important role through the years," said Peoples. "The Economic Development Commission of Florida's Space Coast was spun out of the Melbourne Chamber. Lead Brevard was also spun out of the Melbourne Chamber. And Business Voice of the Space Coast, a local political action committee, was spun out of the Melbourne Chamber. This Chamber has had a huge impact on Brevard County for a long time."

The Melbourne Regional Chamber is accredited by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce as a 5–Star Chamber, placing it in the top 1 percent of all such organizations nationwide. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce provides four levels of accreditation, with the 5–Star rating the most prestigious.

Ayers said his priorities as president and CEO include working to not only grow Chamber membership, but also increase the value of the membership. "We want to provide the very best value we can to members. Membership is the lifeblood of the organization. We are going to look at everything and get feedback from the members as to what they perceive as value."

"The Chamber puts on more than 100 events for our members over the course of the year," added Peoples. "In addition to the events, we have a wide range of Chamber councils and committees. I think there are a lot of great things going on that the community is not aware of. We want to do a better job communicating to the business community about what we do and the resources we have as an organization."

The groups include the Space Coast Tech Council, the Chamber Visitor's Bureau, Engage Professionals, the Nonprofit Council, the Small Business Council, the Veterans Resource Council, the Women of Excellence Council, and the Viera–Suntree Business Council.

Right now, the Melbourne Chamber is gearing up for a trip to the state Capitol. The "Brevard County Joint Chamber Legislative Trip to Tallahassee" is set for Tuesday, Jan. 30.

"We are the lead Chamber and we are organizing the event," said Peoples. "We have invited the other Chambers in the county to go along with us on the 'Tallahassee fly–in.' We are going to fly out of the Orlando Melbourne International Airport direct to Tallahassee and then meet with our state legislators, on behalf of the business community."

This is a one–day lobbying trip for members of the Melbourne Regional Chamber, the Greater Palm Bay Chamber, the Cocoa Beach Regional Chamber, and the Titusville Area Chamber.

Ayers also said he would like to see his Chamber "become more engaged at the policy level, whether it's at the city level, county level, or state level. That is a big part of what the Chamber was founded on, being an advocate for pro–business policies."

"It's about developing better relationships with the local city councils, with the local mayors, with the legislative delegation, and with the congressional delegation, for example, so when the issues come up, they know our position. The Florida Chamber of Commerce is focused on policy at the state level. I think we need to do that at the local level," he added.

One hot issue locally and around the state is the rising cost of workers' compensation. Florida's business community is facing a $1.5 billion impact from workers' compensation rates that remain 14.5 percent higher "than they should be," according to the Florida Chamber of Commerce.

"Reducing the Cost of Doing Business" is on the Florida Chamber of Commerce's 2018 "Jobs and Competitiveness" agenda, along with "Preparing for the Future" and other initiatives.

"At the Melbourne Regional Chamber, we are going to stay on top of the issues that are impacting businesses and the community. We are going to be vocal in support of businesses. I think the Chamber has a great platform to build upon. I'm excited about the opportunity the board has given me to lead this organization," said Ayers.

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JAN. 29, 9 AM – 2 PM
Melbourne | (321) 727-0793

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JAN. 29, 9 AM – 2 PM
Melbourne | (321) 723-3631

ST. MARY CATHOLIC SCHOOL
JAN. 29, 9 AM – 2 PM
Rockledge | (321) 636-4208

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JAN. 31, 9 AM – 2 PM
Titusville | (321) 267-1643

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Indialantic | (321) 773-1630

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Publix customers and associates can support Special Olympics at the register where they shop

CLERMONT — Publix Super Markets and Procter & Gamble are helping customers save money all while supporting Special Olympics Florida.

Now through Jan. 20, Publix customers and associates will be able to make a donation to Special Olympics Florida at the register and in turn will receive a special Torch Icon that includes exclusive savings on Procter & Gamble brands, including Tide, Gain, Bounty, Charmin, Gillette, Venus, Pampers, Luvs, Olay, Ivory, Vicks DayQuil or NyQuil. Donations can be made for as little as $1, $3, $5 or $10, and all donors will receive $14 in coupon savings.

"For 45 years, we have shared the vision of Special Olympics and have been proud supporters, along with our partners at Procter & Gamble, and our loyal customers," said Maria Brous, Publix director of media and community relations. "Together, since 1993, we have raised more than $40 million for Special Olympics. We take great pride in and thank our customers and associates for making a positive impact throughout the communities we serve."

Special Olympics Florida offers life–changing opportunities for children and adults with intellectual disabilities to learn new skills, build confidence and achieve their fullest potential through sports training and competition. Special Olympics Florida serves more than 42,000 athletes who compete at local, state, national and worldwide levels.

In addition to training and competition for these athletes, Special Olympics Florida provides $2 million in free medical exams for thousands of Floridians with intellectual disabilities through its health programs, including much needed access to free prescription glasses and hearing aids. Its Unified Champion Schools further spread the message of inclusion, respect and advocacy in 167 schools and 14 universities throughout Florida.

"Our athletes are able to achieve greatness on and off the playing field," said Special Olympics Florida Chief Executive Officer Sherry Wheelock. "With support from Publix, Procter & Gamble and the thousands of Florida shoppers who donate at the register, we are able to reach more adults and children in Florida with opportunities, critical services and support they need to thrive."

Visit PromotionPG.com/Special–Olympics to learn more about Special Olympics Florida .

Herbert Emile affiliates with Coldwell Banker

Coldwell Banker Residential Real Estate recently announced that Herbert Emile, an experienced real–estate professional, has become a sales associate with the company's Melbourne office. "I look forward to providing the best customer service and helping area buyers and sellers achieve their needs with my knowledge of the area," he said. Formerly with EXP Realty, Emile specializes in residential property sales. "We are very happy to welcome Herbert to the Coldwell Banker network. His real–estate experience, knowledge of the area and commitment to excellent customer service leads to making customers for life," said Michael Pruitt, branch manager. Emile may be reached at 301–5808, or herbert.emile@floridamoves.com.

Crosswinds Youth Services

Continued from page 13

torque output in an Accord. The new Accord also features the Honda Sensing suite of advanced safety and driver–assisted technologies, including the new Traffic Signal Recognition system.

Recently named "America's Best Sedan" by "Car and Driver" magazine, Accord is on track for its fifth consecutive year as America's No. 1 midsized car. The 10th–generation Accord looks to build upon that legacy with its dynamic new styling, sports–sedan performance, and leading–edge technology.

Space Coast Honda is also showcasing the new 2018 Clarity Plug–in Hybrid, Honda's first vehicle series that offers customers an array of electrified powertrain choices in one comprehensively equipped five–passenger sedan.

As the volume leader, the Clarity Plug–in Hybrid joins the Clarity Fuel Cell and Clarity Electric in the Clarity series, sold in all 50 states, according to American Honda Motor Co. Inc.

The National Automobile Dealers Association just released its 2018 U.S. sales forecast, predicting the sale of 16.7 million new cars and light trucks. The forecast pretty much follows the strong 2016 and 2017 sales trends.

For 2018, the NADA says consumer "demand is still healthy" for new vehicles. "We're very optimistic for 2018, especially with the lineup of our new models," said DeMasso.

Space Coast Honda also presents the Brevard Public Schools' Teacher of the Year with a new Honda vehicle, continuing a tradition the dealership began in 2002.

"Educators are very close to Scott's heart," said Lokay. "His grandmother was a teacher."

The 2018 BPS Teacher of the Year will be chosen by a committee of education and civic leaders and will be announced at the "Applauding Brevard's Champions Award Gala" on Jan. 24 hosted by the Brevard Schools Foundation. Community Credit Union is the premier sponsor of the event, which will be held at the Maxwell C. King Center for the Performing Arts in Melbourne.

Space Coast Honda supports and partners with all kinds of community organizations. "We try to help as many local nonprofits as we can. We think it's the right thing to do. Crosswinds is an example. We want to help make the Great Brevard Duck Race a big success this year," said DeMasso.

Online early duck adoptions for the race will begin Monday, Feb. 5. A $5 donation will get you a duck in the race and a chance to win prizes. The full package of prizes for contestants to win will be announced this month. Crosswinds will also be selling the "Quack Pack," which is five ducks plus one free of charge. The website is www.GreatBrevardDuckRace.com.

Starting March 12, ducks can be "adopted" at various locations throughout Brevard County which will be listed on the website.

Crosswinds has set a goal of getting all 10,000 "available ducks" adopted for the 2018 race, said Misty Campbell, Crosswinds Youth Services' development director.

"Our goal is to have 10,000 ducks entered in the race this year. We have never been able to hit that number. We sold more than 8,000 one year. We want this year — the 20th annual — to be the biggest and best ever. The Great Brevard Duck Race is a must–see event in the county."

Crosswinds is seeking "Adoption Partners" for the Great Brevard Duck Race. An Adoption Partner must commit to getting a minimum of 300 ducks adopted. This program is for businesses that can reach out to their customers to get ducks adopted.

The Great Brevard Duck Race is also seeking "Quacker Backers," or sponsors for the event at all levels. Volunteers are needed, too, for both race day and when the thousands of ducks are tagged in the "Duck Room" at Crosswinds in Cocoa.

Tables will be set up and the ducks will be tagged for the race along an "assembly line" staffed by volunteers from the community. The tagging will begin at 9 a.m. on Saturday, March 24. It's a great way for students to receive volunteer hours for community service. "It takes a tremendous effort and a lot of volunteers to make the event a success," said Campbell.

If you interested in volunteering either on race day or tagging the ducks, or want to inquire about being an event sponsor, contact Campbell at 452–0800, extension 205.

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Holiday Inn Express & Suites in West Melbourne

Continued from page 1

growth prospects in 2018. Overall, the amount of money spent is expected to rise, according to the 2018 Meetings and Events Forecast from American Express.

Additionally, a report by the U.S. Travel Association says domestic leisure and business travel will continue to thrive in 2018.

Overall travel in the U.S. showed a 3.6 percent year–over–year growth. Domestic leisure travel led the way, rising 4.2 percent in 2017 over the previous year.

The Holiday Inn Express & Suites brand strives to be the "smart choice" for travelers who need a "convenient and practical hotel in which to rest, recharge, and get work done," said Blews, whose hotel recently hosted a grand–opening ceremony with the Melbourne Regional Chamber of Commerce and the Greater Palm Bay Chamber of Commerce.

Local dignitaries and business leaders attended the function and toured the facility.

MPH Hotels Inc. in St. Petersburg is the owner and builder of the new hotel. MPH develops limited–service hotels, typically properties with 75 to 100 rooms in secondary markets.

In addition to its guest rooms, the Holiday Inn Express & Suites in West Melbourne has on–site meeting space that can comfortably accommodate up to 45 people, depending on the configuration for the client.

The complex also has a business center and a large state–of–the–art fitness center. At the 24–hour fitness center, guests can work out on exercise machines that have small television screens attached to the front of them.

Outdoors in back of the hotel is a heated pool and a hot tub. "We are also going to have a firepit," said Bernard. And there will be gazebos with grills for guests who want to barbecue.

"We are looking to add some games like shuffleboard and horseshoes. Our plan is to make the back patio area of hotel like a mini–resort for the guests," Bernard said.

The pet–friendly Holiday Inn Express & Suites is located on Coastal Lane in West Melbourne, just off Interstate 95, in an expanding business corridor.

"We are situated in a growing business area of West Melbourne," said Bernard. "It's a great site for a Holiday Inn Express & Suites. We are very fortunate to have this convenient location just off I–95 and we are excited about being part of the West Melbourne community."

Bernard added, "What's great is the timing of the hotel opening. We are opening in season. Porter Airlines of Toronto recently announced it is ramping up flights into the Orlando Melbourne International Airport. We hope to gain some of that business."

Porter Airlines now offers nonstop service from Ottawa and Windsor to Orlando Melbourne International Airport. The weekly seasonal service runs through March 31.

The Holiday Inn Express & Suites in West Melbourne employs about 25 people.

"We have a really strong, service–minded team that staffs this hotel," said Bernard.

Bernard and Blews are both hotel industry veterans. They have worked in the Brevard hotel market for years.

"With the current healthy demand in the market, which is benefiting many hotels in the area, I think we are positioned to have a strong year," said Blews, who has worked in the local hotel business for 11 years. "We are close to the Orlando Melbourne Airport, Northrop Grumman, Harris Corp., Embraer, and other businesses."

She continued, "The Holiday Inn Express & Suites provides an attractive product for government employees and for corporate people coming to this area on business, as well as other travelers, including families whose children participate in the U.S. Specialty Sports Association competitions. The local market is growing. I feel confident we are going to win business and build a repeat customer base at our hotel. We are off to a good start."

The Space Coast tourism industry got a lift when the USSSA signed a 20–year lease deal with the county in 2015 to move its amateur sports operations from Kissimmee to Space Coast Stadium in Viera.

The USSSA told the Brevard County Commissioners it would help transform the Space Coast to the youth "sports capital of the world" through its events.

The USSSA bills itself as the "world's largest" multi–sport athletic association. Founded in 1968, USSSA has grown to more than 4 million participants competing in 14 nationally sanctioned sports including youth baseball and youth and adult softball, as well as soccer. And when these families travel to communities for events, they fill hotels.

"We think USSSA is going to present a great opportunity for our hotel," said Bernard. "We are positioned to cater to those families. And we already have some bookings."

Holiday Inn Express & Suites is part of the InterContinental Hotels Group. "It is the fastest–growing segment of IHG," said Bernard.

"We cater to the 'smart traveler.' The Holiday Inn Express & Suites brand has been a big success. They are popping up everywhere to meet new demand in the market for this type of traveler."

Launched in 1991, Holiday Inn Express is one of the largest– and fastest–growing brands in the hotel industry. The Holiday Inn Express "offers competitive rates for both business and leisure travelers, as well as extended–stay rates," said Bernard, who has been with Holiday Inn or IHG properties for 20 years.

"I started my career at a Holiday Inn in Pittsburgh. I did an externship when I was in college studying for my degree in hospitality management. I love working in this field. There is a lot of career opportunity. Through the years, I have seen the transformation of Holiday Inn. It's been exciting."

Bernard is a graduate of the Bradford School, which is part of the University of Pittsburgh.

More than 80 percent of the new locations for Holiday Inn Express & Suites are new construction, making the brand a "fresh and innovative experience for the guests," said Bernard. "Smart, efficient design is key to the Holiday Inn Express brand."

The property in West Melbourne features the brand's newest design, "Formula Blue," which was created to meet the evolving needs of the hotel's guests.

In 2015, IHG formalized Formula Blue, its latest Holiday Inn Express brand design prototype. The design puts "sleep quality, simplicity, and ease of maintenance at the center of its concept," said Blews.

Formula Blue "engages guests with first–class amenities and crisp décor through a fresh, modern, high–tech design."

Features of the hotel's design include an open, pod–style front–desk area that "delivers a familiar" and "expedited" check–in and check–out experience.

The "comfortable guestrooms provide features that allow guests to be productive during their stay and have a great night's sleep," said Blews.

For example, there are multiple points of power connectivity located throughout the room. There is functional storage space, too.

"The rooms are extremely convenient for travelers, with the power outlets, microwaves, refrigerators, big–screen TVs, and Wi–Fi, for instance. We have everything a traveler would need. The rooms are spacious. And our standard amenities include a complimentary breakfast for guests," said Blews.

The complimentary "Express Start" breakfast bar offers a full range of items, including pancakes from the brand's "one–touch" pancake machine; the signature cinnamon roll, Smart Roast coffee, and rotating selections of items such as scrambled eggs or omelets, bacon or turkey sausage, and biscuits.

"Our cinnamon rolls are one of the most popular items on the Holiday Inn Express buffet," said Bernard. Also offered are yogurt, whole wheat English muffins, fresh fruit, breakfast cereals, and oatmeal.

Free bottled water is another amenity, one that rates high among hotel users.

Hotel owners and operators have long offered complimentary amenities to enhance their guests' stays and differentiate themselves from competitors.

A new report from the Cornell University's Center for Hospitality Research places bottled water at the top of the amenity list for hotel occupants.

The researchers collaborated with a global multi–brand hotel company to analyze the return on investment on three popular complimentary amenities — bottled water, Internet access, and fitness center use — for six hotel brands, using thousands of pre– and post–stay guest surveys.

Their study found notable differences between brands for which amenity had the highest payoff, and differences in the impact of amenity use on first–time guests and repeat business.

While Internet access had a significant impact on attracting first–time guests, for example, complimentary bottled water offered the highest return–on–investment in terms of generating repeat visits.

"We're all about service and amenities. The Holiday Inn Express & Suites brand offers a special kind of hospitality that makes guests feel at home the moment they walk through the door. We're thrilled to have opened our doors at the West Melbourne property and are looking forward to serving customers," said Bernard.



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