Chamber Onnections



Ponte Vedra Beach Division

After Hours at THE PLAYERS 2024

Photos provided by the St. Johns Chamber of Commerce Ponte Vedra Beach Division













March 2024











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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT/CEO



For more than a century, the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce has been invested in making St. Johns County a place where businesses can grow and prosper. In the last few years, we recognized a need for another channel to be better supporters of the business community.

The St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce Foundation was established with this goal in mind. A 501(c)(3) nonprofit foundation provides an additional set of tools to support not only businesses but also the entire community through leadership opportunities, workforce education and economic development programs.

With the COVID pandemic in 2020, many local businesses, especially those in tourism and hospi-

tality, experienced severe economic challenges. The St. Johns County Chamber, a 501(c)(6) nonprofit, was ready and eager to find ways to ease the burden on the business community, but many economic relief opportunities were open only to 501(c)(3) nonprofits. By establishing this new foundation, the St. Johns County Chamber has opened a new path to supporting businesses when they need help most.

The foundation will also encompass Leadership St. Johns, the premier professional leadership development program in our county, and will establish a permanent scholarship fund to make this program more accessible, especially to small businesses and their employees. The foundation will also partner with local educational institutions to develop a highly skilled workforce and create an employment pipeline of local workers for St. Johns County businesses.

In addition to celebrating the new foundation, the St. Johns County Chamber this year is celebrating 120 years of advocating for the local business community. Since its establishment in 1904 as the St. Augustine Board of Trade, the chamber has positioned the business community at the forefront of political, social and economic discussions locally and at the state level.

There is so much to celebrate already this year, and so much more to look forward to. The chamber is constantly hard at work for St. Johns County businesses and will continue to advocate for a vibrant and prosperous future for our community.

Isabelle Renault
President and CEO, St. Johns County Chamber of
Commerce

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

APRIL

- **Ribbon Cutting:** St. Augustine Youth Services Playground, St. Augustine, April 3
- Women with Vision Council Meeting: Palencia Club, St. Augustine, April 4
- Ribbon Cutting: Stretch Lab, St. Augustine Beach, April 4
- Chamber Before Hours: Coastal Compass Executive Suites, Ponte Vedra, April 10
- Joint Chamber at Noon: Casa Marina, Jacksonville Beach, April 11
- Historic St. Augustine Area Council Meeting and Locally Made Roundtable: Our Lady of La Leche, St. Augustine, April 12
- Ribbon Cutting: 4Ever Young, St. Johns, April 12
- Chamber After Hours: Lisa Barton Team Ponte Vedra -Keller Williams Realty Atlantic Partners, Ponte Vedra Beach, April 17
- Tourism & Hospitality Council Meeting: Our Lady of La Leche, St. Augustine, April 18
- St. Johns County Chamber Foundation Poker Tournament: bestbet, St. Augustine, April 25
- Ribbon Cutting: Extract Juicery, St. Augustine, April 26

MAY

- Chamber 101: New Member Orientation, Zoom, May 10
- St. Johns County Chamber Golf Classic: Marsh Landing Country Club, Ponte Vedra Beach, May 20
- **Ribbon Cutting/20th Anniversary Celebration:** Advanced Business Solutions

New events and programs are added to the calendar regularly! View these and RSVP at bit.ly/sjc-chamber-events

Chamber announces staff changes



Elizabeth Middlebrooks

Elizabeth Middlebrooks joined the staff of the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce earlier this year as the director of marketing and communications. This position will be responsible for strategies for

member communications, public relations, brand management, sales and advertising.

Middlebrooks brings a wealth of nonprofit marketing, communications and programming experience, as well as nearly a decade of journalism experience. She has been self-employed the last two years, providing marketing and communication services to a number of clients, including nonprofit organizations, real estate professionals and a digital health startup. The St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce also engaged her to develop the branding and collateral for the Attainable Housing Coalition in fall 2023. Prior to that, Middlebrooks worked as the marketing manager for First Coast No More Homeless Pets and as the senior manager of marketing

and communication at Girl Scouts of Gateway Council.

An East Tennessee native, she received her bachelor's degree in English and history from Vanderbilt University in 2008.



Evelyn Rytelewski

The chamber also welcomed Evelyn Rytelewski in February as an administrative assistant. She is the first point of contact in the chamber's St. Augustine office. She brings several years of direct customer

Rytelewski years of direct custome service experience and will additionally provide membership and event support.

Scott Maynard has been promoted to senior vice president of



economic development for the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce. He works to help retain businesses in St. Johns County and to make the county an attractive

place for new businesses.

Chamber celebrates 120th anniversary

This year, the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce is celebrating a big birthday as it marks its 120th year.

Established in 1904 as the St. Augustine Board of Trade, the chamber has a long history of promoting, supporting and advocating for the business community in St. Johns County.

In fact, President Theodore Roosevelt visited St. Augustine in 1905 thanks to event of efforts by the St. Augustine Board of Trade from the to promote the city.

Whatever the name has been, the chamber has always been working to promote the best business environment possible in the community. Some of the chamber's current efforts include:

- Managing a grant for businesses to become Certified Autism Centers, indicating a commitment to providing an inclusive, welcoming environment for neurodiverse visitors.
 - Spearheading the Attainable Housing

Coalition to better advocate for housing that meets the needs and budget of the county's most essential workers.

• Establishing the St.

Johns County Chamber
Foundation to provide
leadership training, workforce development and
disaster relief programs for
local businesses.

The chamber encourages members to plan to attend the annual Celebrate! event on Nov. 14, where more history from the past 120 years will be showcased. More information will be available soon.

Chamber members are encouraged to participate in the display by sharing any history with the chamber, including milestones experienced as chamber members or what's been accomplished with the chamber's support. Members can share documents, photos, a story or news clippings with the chamber by emailing communications@sjcchamber.com or dropping by the offices in St. Augustine or Ponte Vedra Beach.

Chamber Golf Classic returns for 2024

The St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce will hold the annual Golf Classic on Monday, May 20, at Marsh Landing Country Club in Ponte Vedra Beach.

The golf tournament will support the chamber's mission to deliver continuous service to members and to the community. Golfers can network with fellow business professionals and industry leaders while enjoying a day of friendly competition on the links.

Marsh Landing's golf course is a

nature lover's paradise, with great views all along the course. Chamber members can sign up as a foursome or individually, and sponsorships are available.

2024 St. Johns County Chamber **Golf Classic**

When: Monday, May 20. Check-in begins at 7 a.m.

Where: Marsh Landing Country Club, Ponte Vedra Beach

Cost: Foursome, \$1,200; individual, \$300 Register: bit.ly/sjcchamber_golf_2024



The St. Johns County Chamber Golf Classic returns for 2024 at Marsh Landing Country Club.

Argyle Ribbon Cutting



Photo by Susan Griffin

Argyle Ponte Vedra Beach held a ribbon cutting in February.

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Byron Chandler Interiors ribbon cutting

Byron Chandler Interiors held its grand opening and ribbon cutting on Jan. 20. It was an afternoon of networking, food and celebrating.

> Photo by the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce



Before Hours at Encompass Health



Photo by the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce

A Chamber Before Hours event was held Jan. 10 at Encompass Health — St. Augustine. Tom Laughlin and his team hosted the morning of networking, food and coffee.

Ferreira Wealth Group ribbon cutting



Photo by the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce

Ferreira Wealth Group held its ribbon cutting in January in Nocatee.



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Bank Ribbon Cutting



Photos by First Coast Headshots

Fifth Third Bank held a ribbon cutting at its new branch in Northwest St. Johns County in February.

County Update

St. Johns County Administrator Joy Andrews presented an update at the February 23 Economic Development Council breakfast highlighting the county's growth and how officials are managing and planning for development, infrastructure changes and maintaining the high quality of life for all St. Johns County residents. An update was also provided from Baptist Medical Center about their expansion into St. Johns County.



Photo by the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce

Chamber Before Hours

The Feb. 8 Chamber Before Hours was held at St. Augustine, Ponte Vedra and The Beaches Visitors & Convention Bureau in St. Augustine.

> Photo by the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce





St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce establishes foundation to serve the community

The nonprofit foundation will be anchored by Leadership St. Johns and offer workforce development and educational opportunities

The St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce is proud to announce the creation of the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce Foundation, a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization with the mission to serve the entire community through leadership opportunities, workforce education and economic development programs.

The Chamber established the SJCCC Foundation to expand its programming and culture of philanthropy beyond the business community. The foundation's primary focus areas will include:

- Leadership St Johns: The premier professional leadership development program in St. Johns County, Leadership St. Johns has fostered the growth of hundreds of business and government employees for more than 20 years. The foundation seeks to create a permanent scholarship fund to support Leadership St. Johns.
- **Disaster relief:** The foundation will create an emergency relief fund for businesses to support recovery from natural disasters or economic downturns.
- Workforce development: Through partnerships with local educational institutions, the foundation will support the development of a highly skilled workforce and the creation of an employment pipeline of local workers for



The 2024 class of Leadership St. Johns kicked off earlier this year. The St. Johns County Chamber Foundation will establish a permanent scholarship fund for Leadership St. Johns to

make the program accessible to more businesses.

St. Johns County businesses.

"The St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce Foundation is a natural extension of the chamber's work to promote a vibrant, diverse business environment in St. Johns County," said Isabelle Renault, chamber president and CEO. "The foundation opens new avenues for programs and philanthropic work to make a difference in the community at large as we work to strengthen our business community."

The foundation will be led by a board of directors comprised of business leaders in the county. The found-

Foundation Kickoff Event

Celebrate the new St. Johns County Chamber Foundation with a fundraiser Texas hold 'em tournament and reception, hosted by bestbet St. Augustine!

When: Thursday, April 25, 5:30-9 p.m.

Where: bestbet St. Augustine, 800 Marketplace Drive, St. Augustine

Cost: Spectators, \$50;

Poker players, \$100 **RSVP:** https://bit.ly/SJC-foundation-kickoff



ing members include Board Chair Cecil Gibson (Ameris Bank), Vice Chair Orville Dothage (Northrop Grumman), Treasurer Erika Alba (Woolsey/Morcom), Secretary Nancy Dering Mock (Nancy Dering Mock Consulting) and Chamber President and CEO Isabelle Renault.

"The community will benefit tremendously from the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce Foundation," Gibson said. "By offering education and leadership development, along with the relief fund, the foundation's work will create opportunities for both individuals and businesses to thrive in St. Johns County."

More information about the foundation is available at sjechamber.com/foundation.



20 CONNECTIONS

After Hours at Bestbet



Katie Root, director of marketing, speaks.

Jamie Shelton and the team at Bestbet Poker Room/Jax, Orange Park and St. Augustine Players Group hosted the Feb. 22 Chamber After Hours Event. It was a wonderful evening of networking, food and drinks.



Attendees gather at the After Hours event.



Photo by the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce



Alfreda T. Boney of PSC Consulting speaks during the most recent Chamber at Noon.

Making connections is topic

Alfreda T. Boney of PSC Consulting gave a presentation at the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce's March 20 Chamber at Noon at Marsh Landing County Club. She spoke on the importance of making meaningful connections and building relationships by seeking opportunities for collaboration rather than competition.





Pictured from left are Elizabeth Bernardino, Alfreda T. Boney, Dr. Erika Hamer and Felicia Cox.

CycleBar Ribbon Cutting



Photo by Anthony Richard

Effect Medspa grand opening



Photo by Susan Griffin

The Effect Lifestyle Practice held its grand opening and ribbon cutting Jan. 18.

Fyzical welcomes Chamber



Photo by the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce

The Feb. 7 Chamber Before Hours was held at Fyzical Therapy & Balance Centers, a wonderful morning of networking, food and coffee.

KFC Grand Re-opening

KFC in St. Augustine held its grand re-opening and ribbon cutting on Feb. 28.

Photo by the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce



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Love's Ribbon Cutting



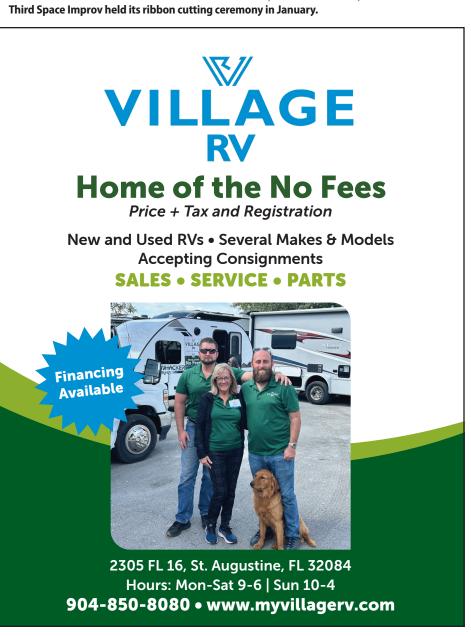
Photo by the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce

Love's Travel Stops on S.R. 206 at Interstate 95 held its ribbon cutting March 20, and the company shared donations to Peace of Heart Community and the St. Johns County Sheriff's Office.

Improv holds ribbon cutting



Photo by the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce



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After Hours at THE PLAYERS

The following are photos from the joint After Hours at THE PLAYERS Championship event, co-hosted by the St. Johns County Chamber and the Jacksonville Chamber of Commerce. The member event was held on THE PLAYERS grounds and took place March 7.

Photo by Susan Griffin



Matt Price, Susan Phillips and Isabelle Renault.

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PLAYERS Economic Impact

Smith was guest speaker during the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce luncheon at Marsh Landing Country Club on Feb. 14.

Photos by Anthony Richards



THE PLAYERS executive director Lee Smith speaks next to the tournament's 50th anniversary logo during the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce Ponte Vedra Beach Division luncheon on Feb. 14.



Local business owners met at Marsh Landing Country Club during the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce Ponte Vedra Beach Division luncheon on Feb. 14.

Texas Roadhouse holds ribbon cutting



Photo by the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce

Texas Roadhouse celebrated joining the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce with a ribbon cutting on March 25.

UF Health St. Johns rebranding



Erin Wallner speaking at the event.

Erin Wallner, administrator of marketing and communications for UF Health St. Johns, spoke at the Jan. 11 Joint Chamber at Noon event with the JAX Chamber Beaches Division. She talked about how UF Health St. Johns orchestrated a flawless launch of its rebranding, which included everything from press releases, marketing and advertising, public appearances and multiple social media campaigns across multiple platforms.



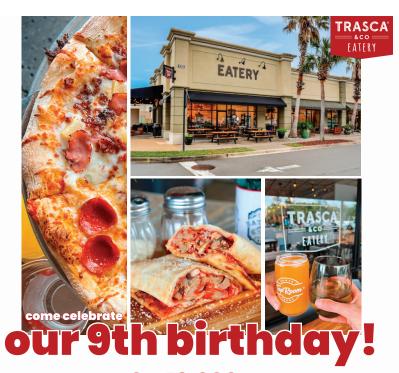
Photos by the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce

Discover & Recovery ribbon cutting



Photo by the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce

Discover & Recovery St. Johns County held its ribbon cutting ceremony March 16. It was a wonderful afternoon of networking, food and celebrating.



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Village RV Ribbon Cutting



Photo by Susan Griffi

Village RV located at 2305 FL-16 in St. Augustine, held its ribbon cutting March 22.



24 CONNECTIONS

Fleur de Lis Ribbon Cutting



Photo by the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce

Fleur de Lis Boutique Florida held its ribbon cutting in February.

After Hours at Basecamp Fitness



Photo by the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerc

Josh Bailey and the team at Basecamp Fitness hosted the Chamber After Hours event in January, an evening of networking, food and drinks.

After Hours at Longleaf



Photo by the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce

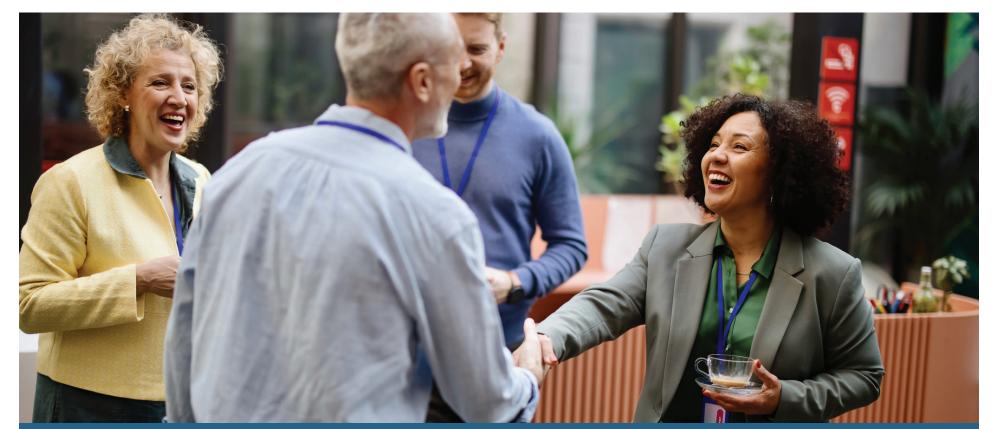
Genalin Ivantchenkov and the team at Longleaf at St. Johns hosted a Chamber After Hours event in January, a wonderful evening of networking, food and drinks.

After Hours at Brown Family YMCA



Photo by the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce

Feb. 21 was a beautiful evening for a Chamber After Hours Event. Cara Roach and the team at Brown Family YMCA hosted the wonderful evening of networking, food and drinks.



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Miracle Leaf Ribbon Cutting



Photo by the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce

Miracle Leaf Saint Augustine franchise owners cut the ribbon on their new store Jan. 13.

Women with Vision Council



Photo by the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce

Asia Gholston, vice president of marketing at the Jacksonville Jaguars, spoke at the Women with Vison Council luncheon on Feb. 1. She spoke on the tools needed to navigate the everevolving landscape of marketing through brand strategy, marketing operations, digital, social, influencer marketing, concert and event marketing.

UF Health breaks ground for facility



Photo by Anthony Richard

An official groundbreaking ceremony was held at the site of the proposed UF Health Durbin Park hospital in St. Johns.

St. Johns Premier Boat Rentals ribbon cutting



Photo by the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce

St. Johns Premier Boat Rentals held its ribbon cutting ceremony on March 20. The event was a wonderful morning of networking and celebrating.

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