

## *Issue Forum*

### Job Growth: Who's working on it?

**This forum examined current and past job growth initiatives, explored the role of the public and private partners involved and identified priorities for Jacksonville's future job growth strategy.**

#### Key Findings:

- Jacksonville's job growth partners, both public and private, effectively capitalize on Jacksonville's assets and pro-business environment to bring in new businesses. While Florida is ranked 5<sup>th</sup> in the nation as a destination for new, relocating, and expanding businesses, Jacksonville is currently ranked number one for new businesses and relocation.
- However, 80 percent of all new jobs in Jacksonville are produced by existing businesses. These businesses do not receive the same attention, support, and services by the local public and private partners as new or relocating businesses. In addition, existing businesses often do not know of the available services or how to access existing service providers.
- While resource speakers defined a "good" job as one paying an annual salary of at least \$35,000 with benefits, Jacksonville's Median Family Income is below that at \$33,303. Jacksonville's workforce lacks a sufficient number of educated and skilled workers needed to attract and sustain higher paying jobs. Employers reported that many applicants lacked even basic comprehension and communication skills for entry-level positions.
- In addition to workforce education and training needs, resource speakers identified gaps between educational institutions (secondary and post-secondary) with the workforce needs of our community. Few partnerships exist between local businesses and the Duval County public school system to address current and future workforce shortages for "in-need" industries, such as healthcare and trades.

#### Action Plan:

Based on findings from resource speakers and additional research, the committee will develop ideas to address the identified gaps and opportunities for improvement in Jacksonville's job growth efforts. These suggestions will be presented to the public and private partners working on job growth in Jacksonville, including Cornerstone, Jacksonville Chamber of Commerce, the Jacksonville Economic Development Commission, The City of Jacksonville's Mayor's office, The City Council of Jacksonville, the Duval County School Board, and other local leaders.

#### Resource Speakers:

Nancy Boyle, Small Business Resource Network  
Henry Brown, Miller Electric Company  
Lad Daniels, First Coast Manufacturing Association  
Bruce Ferguson, WorkSource  
Carrie Goudy, Cendant Mortgage  
Mike Israel, ATS Professional Services  
Juliet Kaufman, Jacksonville Chamber of Commerce  
Jerry Mallot, Cornerstone

Candace Moody, WorkSource  
Karl Pelletier, BearingPoint  
Mayor John Peyton, The City of Jacksonville  
Declan Reiley, Jacksonville Chamber of Commerce  
Al Rossiter, Enterprise North Florida Center  
Kirk Wendland, Jacksonville Economic Development  
Commission  
Helen Werking, Lutheran Social Services

*Number of participants: 60*