

Highlights of Economic and Business Growth in the Tampa Bay Region (News Briefs)

TAMPA BAY, Fla., July 18, 2006/PRNewswire/ -- News briefs concerning the economic and business growth in the Tampa Bay Region from the Tampa Bay Partnership:

Tasty Relocation

Taste Advantage, a flavors company from Lake Charles, LA, is expanding into a 19,000 square-foot manufacturing facility in Polk County with a \$7 million capital investment and 30 new jobs. Taste Advantage joins a strong flavors and essence manufacturing cluster in the Tampa Bay region with ties to a number of international companies in France, Germany, Denmark, Switzerland, Ireland and U.K. including Treatt USA, Jean Niel USA and Monin, Inc. The flavors and essence industry has grown to become a worldwide billion-dollar business. In Polk County alone, the flavor plants provide that county with 200 jobs and plant sales range from \$4 million to \$152 million according to annual reports. (Contact: Tom Patton, Central Florida Development Council, 863-534-4370, tompatton@cfdc.org.)

Communities of Tampa Bay Named Among “Best Metros for Business Expansion”

The communities of Tampa Bay have been designated a “5-Star Business Metro for Business Expansion” by *Expansion Management* and are profiled in the upcoming July/August issue of the magazine. The ranking compared 362 Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSA) to determine the communities with a combination of the best overall secondary school districts, the greatest concentration of workers with post-secondary advanced and technical degrees, high quality health care at a reasonable cost, a place where employees can enjoy exceptional quality of life at a reasonable salary, the best logistics infrastructure, and the best business climates as established by the state legislature in terms of taxes and spending. The ranking is a compilation of six major research studies the publication conducted during the past 12 months and the top 20 percent are designated at “Five-Star Business Metros.” To learn more about living and working in the Tampa Bay region, visit www.TampaBay.org. (Contact: Jennifer Taylor, Tampa Bay Partnership, 813-872-2809, jtaylor@tampabay.org.)

Tampa Bay to Host Big International Conference on Tiny Matters

The 11th Annual International Commercialization of Micro and Nano Systems Conference (COMS 2006) will be held August 27-31, 2006 in St. Petersburg, FL. COMS is the leading annual conference on micro-nanotechnology commercialization education. It brings together leaders in the field from across the world, representing organizations and companies from almost every sector of the community. These include leading industrialists, researchers, equipment vendors, customers, VC and angel investors, educators, media, professional organizations, and government. Tampa Bay has unique centers of excellence supporting the growth of MEMS and NANO technologies including the largest MEMS facility in the Southeast; a major research university – University of South Florida; one of the country’s top cancer center research facilities – Moffitt Cancer Center and Research Institute; and a cluster of technology manufacturing companies with applications in medical device manufacturing, electronic components and national defense. (Contact: Dr. Carol Steele, USF Collect of Marine Science / Center for Ocean Technology, 727-553-3975, csteele@seas.marine.usf.edu.)

Tampa Bay Hospitals Cited Among “America’s Best”

U.S. News and World Report named Sarasota Memorial Hospital, Tampa General Hospital and H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Center & Research Institute to its list of “America’s Best Hospitals.” Moffitt, which appears on the list for the eighth year in a row, moved up to the No. 11 spot on the list of “America’s Best Hospitals for cancer.” Tampa General was listed No. 45 among hospitals cited for their orthopedics offerings. Sarasota Memorial ranked No. 25 for heart and heart surgery, No. 31 for orthopedics, No. 42 for digestive disorders, No. 44 for respiratory disorders, No. 50 for cancer and No. 50 for gynecology. The hospital guide appears in U.S. News and World Report’s July 17 edition and online at www.usnews.com/besthospitals.

Tampa Company Launches Tree Trimming Software

Each year, utility companies across the country spend billions of dollars trying to combat tree growth around power lines. Enporion, a leading provider of sourcing and procurement services for energy and other industries, has launched its Electronic Vegetation Management Solution (eVMS), software designed to plan, execute and report on every aspect of transmission and distribution vegetation management around power lines. Enporion also announced that Asplundh Tree Expert Co. has signed a license and distribution agreement to bring eVMS to its customers in North America, the U.K., Australia and New Zealand. The eVMS software provides detailed tree species information in different geographic areas, and using different climate algorithms and other environmental influences can predict when and where trees near power lines would need to be trimmed. When the system detects that a tree does need trimming, it automatically issues a work order, allowing tree-trimming companies to concentrate on areas that need trimming rather than simply going region to region and just cutting all trees near power lines. (Contact: Michael Grohman, Enporion, 813-864-8128, mgrohman@enporion.com.)

STAR TEC Accelerator Adds Two New Tenants

The STAR Technology Enterprise Center (STAR TEC), a manufacturing and technology business accelerator located at the Young-Rainey Science, Technology and Research (STAR) Center in Largo, has admitted two new tenants. Alaka’i Consulting & Engineering, Inc., founded in Hawaii, provides next-generation sensor and technology services for the defense and security markets. Homeland Intelligence Technologies, Inc. designs, develops and manufactures antiterrorism equipment. STAR TEC supports the growth of early stage manufacturing and technology-based companies, enabling them to migrate their product/service to market more rapidly and effectively. Eight companies call STAR TEC home. Visit www.startecflorida.com to learn more about how STAR TEC accelerates small business success in Pinellas. (Contact: Paul Sacco, Young-Rainey STAR Center, 727 541 8942, psacco@co.pinellas.fl.us.)

Ringling School of Art and Design to Host International Design Summit

The world renowned Ringling School of Art and Design will host its inaugural Sarasota International Design Summit on October 9-11, 2006. The Summit will focus on the role design and design thinking occupies in global business strategy today. An international group of thought leaders and practitioners will convene to network and share knowledge about the transformational effects of design in their businesses and communities. Speakers from Target Corporation, Procter & Gamble, UK Design Council and Metropolis Magazine will address topics including how innovative design thinking and processes are shaping the future of education, healthcare, urban development, corporate operations and strategy, and responses to the needs of an aging population. For more information, visit <http://www.sarasotadesignsummit.com>.

St. Petersburg Seeks Vendors for WiFi Network

The City of St. Petersburg wants you to imagine surfing the Internet on your laptop computer or answering e-mails while lounging at a sidewalk café downtown. That day may not be far off if the city succeeds in setting up a wireless fidelity, or Wi-Fi, network that would serve residents, tourists, businesses and educational institutions throughout the city. Mayor Rick Baker is seeking proposals from companies to create a citywide wireless network that would enable people to access the Internet using laptops or some handheld devices. In addition to public access, the Wi-Fi St. Pete initiative would also help the city in delivery of governmental services, stimulate private investment, and promote job creation, business growth and economic development. The city is seeking vendors that can build and maintain the wireless network. Responses are due by August 16, 2006. Interested vendors are invited to review the details of the RFP and frequently asked questions by visiting www.WiFiStPete.com.

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