

Tampa Bay News Briefs

Highlights of Economic and Business Growth in the Tampa Bay Region

TAMPA BAY, Fla., May 20, 2010/PRNewswire/ -- News briefs concerning economic and business growth in the Tampa Bay region from the [Tampa Bay Partnership](#):

Tampa Ranks As Least-Expensive Large U.S. City for Business

Very competitive labor costs along with moderately-low office/industrial leasing and sales tax costs help make Tampa the least-costly place to do business among 22 U.S. cities/locations with populations exceeding 2 million, according to the [KPMG 2010 Competitive Alternatives](#) study. The study measured 26 cost factors including labor, taxes, real estate and utilities over a 10 year period. (Contact: Jennifer Taylor, 813-872-2809, jtaylor@tampabay.org)

Humana Adds Jobs to Tampa Bay-based National Operations and Service Center

[Humana Cares](#) plans to hire an additional 140 workers at its national operations and service center in [St. Petersburg](#) by July 2010. The center provides personalized health coaching via phone, care management, and health education and support to nearly 50,000 Humana members nationwide. The company will be hiring health care managers, community health educators, field area managers, and health coaches. Humana Cares opened its national operations and service center in February 2009. Today it employs 350 associates and after completing its next round of hiring, it is projected to employ 500 associates at its St. Petersburg location. Humana Cares' parent company, [Humana Inc.](#) operates additional locations throughout the bay area, and Humana's regional workforce is 2,000. (Contact: Mitch Lubitz, (813) 287-6180, mlubitz@humana.com)

Sunovia Energy Technologies To Triple Tampa Bay Facility, Add 68 Employees

[Sunovia Energy Technologies Inc.](#) (OTC BB: SUNV), which designs, develops and markets highly efficient renewable energy and energy conservation products in the solar and LED lighting industries, plans to triple the size of its facility to 18,000 square feet and add 68 employees over three years after relocating to Sarasota County this year. [Economic Development Corporation of Sarasota County](#), assisted the company with local performance-based incentives aimed at bringing good jobs to Sarasota County. The company, which has 20 employees, is expanding to meet growing demand for its products, which has prompted an increase in sales force, engineering and manufacturing teams, and operations personnel. (Contact: Kristen Watson, (941) 751-6800, kristen.watson@sunoviaenergy.com)

IMG Academies To Add 65 Employees In Manatee County

[IMG Academies](#) announced plans to add 65 employees over the next three years with the help of local incentives from [Manatee County](#). IMG Academies – the world's largest and most advanced multi-sport training facility for athletic, academic and personal development – will need the additional employees to staff new programs, including the IMG Madden Football Academy, IMG Lacrosse Academy and additional upcoming programs. IMG also plans to construct a 50,000 square foot dormitory in 2012, with a total of \$25 million in capital investments on the campus in the next five years. (Contact: Dan Tierney, (941) 752-2514, dan.tierney@imgworld.com)

USF Health Awarded \$6 Million Stimulus Grant for Electronic Health Records

[USF Health](#) will help doctors in 20 Florida counties move towards electronic health records, thanks to a \$6 million grant in federal stimulus funds. The project, [PaperFree Florida](#), will help doctors transform how they care for patients – not only improving health care delivery, but also helping the Tampa Bay region's economy as well. USF is one of the first regional initiatives in the nation to invest recovery dollars in a whole new professional work force combining health and information technology. USF Health will use the grant to hire and train 100 "e-ambassadors" to visit doctors' offices in a 20-county area and help them use and adopt electronic health records, acting as a

resource to make doctors' transition to modern records simpler. (Contact: Anne Baier, 813-974-3300, abaier@health.usf.edu)

Technology Conservation Group (TCG) Receives Incentive Funding

The Citrus County Board of County Commissioners approved funding recently through the [Citrus County Economic Development Council](#)'s Job Growth Incentive Program to [Technology Conservation Group \(TCG\)](#) for creating 16 new jobs. TCG is a privately owned electrical and electronic equipment (EEE) processing, distribution and recovery business that provides an environmentally-sound way to dispose of or recycle end-of-life electronic equipment and parts. From its start as a small business in Citrus County, TCG has grown into a worldwide corporation with 9 processing facilities throughout North America and South America, and Europe, while maintaining their headquarters in Lecanto, Florida. (Contact: Hamilton Rice, 877-926-8824, info@tcgreycling.com)

Port of Tampa Container Terminal Expansion

The [Tampa Port Authority](#) (TPA) recently completed the latest phase of the ongoing expansion of its container terminal, increasing the paved storage area from 25 to 40 acres. The terminal now includes 2,100 feet of berth length, three rail-mounted container gantry cranes and a 100-ton mobile harbor crane, all on a 43-foot deep-water channel. The next phase of expansion is already underway and includes a further extension of the container gantry crane rails and lengthening the berth to 2,800 feet, to be completed this summer. Together with terminal operator Ports America, TPA has plans to quadruple the size of the terminal to over 160 acres over the next several years. (Contact: Andrew Fobes, 813.905.5132 afobes@Tampaport.com)

Pinellas County Leads in Incumbent Worker Training Grants

For the sixth year, Pinellas County, Fla., led the state in Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) grant awards with over 30 Pinellas County companies training more than 2,100 employees this year. With assistance from [Pinellas County Economic Development](#), the IWT program provides the financial means for businesses to address training needs, keeping those businesses operating successfully in Tampa Bay. (Contact: Mike Meidel, (727) 464-7332, mmeidel@pinellascounty.org)

LEGOLAND® Florida Prepares to Break Ground

As [LEGOLAND® Florida](#) prepares to break ground, leaders from throughout [Polk County](#) recently returned from visiting [Merlin Entertainments Group](#) in England to learn more about LEGOLAND's® operations. Merlin, the world's second-largest owner of tourist attractions, currently operates four LEGOLAND® parks – three in Europe and one in California. LEGOLAND® Florida, which will be the biggest LEGOLAND® Park ever opened, is planned to open in late 2011, and will provide as many as 1,000 new jobs and an estimated \$459 million a year in economic impact for the region. Located on the site of the former Cypress Gardens park, Merlin officials plan to invest approximately \$150 million in developing the Winter Haven site. (Contact: Julie Estrada, 760-846-0886, usmedia@merlinentertainments.biz)

\$250,000 Economic Gardening Loan to Grow Pasco Company

[Web Direct Brands, Inc.](#), an online retail corporation located in Odessa, Fla., which owns and runs a growing number of online e-tailers, recently received a \$250,000 Economic Gardening Loan with assistance from the [Pasco Economic Development Council, Inc.](#) The Economic Gardening program focuses on providing existing businesses with the support they need to grow and thrive. The firm plans to use the funds to increase manufacturing capacity with new equipment purchases, expand the marketing and IT departments, and hire skilled manufacturing personnel, technical writers, graphic designers, programmers, and IT support. (Contact: Anthony Gaeto, (813)920-7259, Anthony@webdirectbrands.com)

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