



# CLAY FLORIDA

Economic Development Corporation

POSSIBILITY FLOWS | JUST SOUTH OF JACKSONVILLE



# 2021

ANNUAL REPORT

# LEADERSHIP

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Working together to have a direct impact on high-wage job creation and business growth in Clay County, Florida.



GEORGE EGAN  
Chairman  
CEO/President  
Reinhold Corporation



VAN ROYAL  
Vice-Chairman  
Owner - Exit-Magnolia Realty  
& GCS Council



TED MCGOWAN  
Treasurer & Secretary  
Exec. Director  
Reynolds Park



JERRY AGRESTI  
Director, Past Chairman  
President  
Developers Realty Group



JOHN BOWLES  
Director  
Division Manager  
Stellar



ROB BRADLEY  
Director  
Partner-Bradley, Garrison &  
Komando PA.



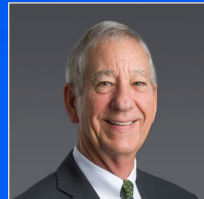
RUSSELL BUCK  
Director  
VP of Retail Services  
121 Financial Credit Union



BRIAN KNIGHT  
Director  
CEO/Founder  
Pragmatic Works



JOELLE MARQUIS  
Director  
Partner-Arsenal Capital  
Owner-Legacy in Action



FRANK MILLER  
Director  
Partner  
Gunster Law Firm



JOE MOBLEY  
Director  
Principal  
The Florentino Group



JOE PICKENS  
Director  
President  
St. Johns River State College



KEVIN RINKS  
Director  
Hospital Administrator  
Ascension St. Vincent's Clay



LISA VALENTINE  
Director  
CEO  
Orange Park Medical Center



## STEADFAST. CONSISTENT. FOCUSED.

Clay County leaders, we wish to sincerely thank you for your steadfast commitment throughout this past year. Building and scaling an organization to meet demand, while not overextending capacities and resources along the way, is a special skill made up of equal parts strategic planning and finesse. Our businesses have weathered many obstacles over the last few years. Those challenges are far from over as supply chains and manpower continue to be difficult. However, the tremendously positive response to supporting our community's growth continues to be a testament to the capabilities of our local public and private leadership.

The population of Clay County continues to grow rapidly. Leaders knew this transition was approaching and began long-term planning efforts to prepare for this shift many years ago. The rapid exodus of residents from all over the United States into Florida (2nd highest growth rate in the nation) as remote workers grew during the pandemic, sped up this adjustment tremendously. It concurrently choked many resources and escalated market segments.

Our business leaders and public officials continue to persevere despite these additional challenges. This perseverance is a testament to what makes Clay County an incredible community for businesses to succeed and thrive. Clay County is filled with hard working, resilient, and steadfast professionals who refuse to give up and stay engaged regardless of the difficulty. These leaders have an obligation to their employees and our residents in which they take pride. Clay County is a community where character counts and is valued above all else. The response of our leaders demonstrates this further.

In 2021, the Clay County population grew to just over 226,000 residents. Over 4,835 businesses were located in Clay County with an average daily workforce population of 43,992. Our county's average wage grew to \$44,155. As Florida's housing market flooded with new home buyers, Clay County's average home sale price rose 28.3% to \$325,000.

The construction of the First Coast Expressway (FCE) remains a major catalyst for the growth of the community. Phase III construction preparations for the new bridge over the St. Johns River have begun. The northern portion of Phase II is on schedule to complete in 2025 and the southern portion of Phase II is on schedule to complete in 2026. Clay EDC has enjoyed a significant increase in calls from potential developers in the past year.

The growth of the Clay County Economic Development Corporation since it began in 2014 is a further testament to local community leadership. Economic Development is a long-term strategy for community building that requires tremendous engagement, perseverance, and dedication. The effort continually builds as confidence and engagement continue to grow.

The results of this past year are indicative of many years of grueling hard work and faith in the economic development effort and eventual results. With \$554M in capital investment directly resulting from Clay EDC efforts along with the creation of 357 new high wage jobs, the community is starting to understand the return on investment of these efforts. Each Investor Partner, Board Member, and Volunteer of the Clay EDC should take tremendous pride in the part that they played in creating these results. We win together. These results would not have been possible without each of you and the strength of the partnership.

Our time of significant growth and development is well underway. The completion of the First Coast Expressway in 2030 will not be the finality of this growth, but a further catalyst. We cannot become complacent. Steadfast leadership and determination are critical now more than ever. Your partnership is incredibly valuable to these efforts, and you are making a measurable difference in your community with your support and involvement. As you read through this year's annual report, please take a moment to feel pride in the contribution you have made to your community.

# THANK YOU

When Clay County leaders set out to develop a focused economic development effort in 2014, they understood the significance and necessity better than most. They could foresee the incredible opportunity provided by the First Coast Expressway and the imminent growth. They realized the chance to make a measurable impact in creating a vibrant and resilient business community. They had vision, dedication, and drive.

**We thank each of you who have supported this effort by partnering with our organization along the way. You are why we are able to celebrate this success.**



THANK YOU FROM

LAURA J. PAVLUS  
Vice President



## PROJECTS



Two new solar projects will total \$200M in capital investment and create up to 15 new high wage jobs. The three solar projects in Clay County will cumulatively create \$1M in taxes.



The HCA Florida Orange Park Hospital finished another \$34M expansion and created 80 jobs. In partnership with Healthpeak Properties, an \$18M medical office building will create 40+ jobs.

## FLORIDA POWER & LIGHT

Florida Power & Light announced two new solar projects in 2021 following the successful creation of the Magnolia Springs Solar Energy Center. The two new projects will be located near the Magnolia Springs site, all in the southern portion of Clay County.

The Anhinga Solar Energy Center is scheduled to begin construction Q2 of 2022 and will create 200 to 255 construction jobs. The project cost will exceed \$100M. The 500 acre project site will generate 74.5 MW of power, which is enough to service 15,000 homes.

The Anhinga site is anticipated to include a NE Florida Regional Service Center headquarters. The service center is anticipated to house 12 to 15 managers and engineers overseeing approximately 10 sites.

The Terrill Creek Solar Energy Center will start construction in Q3 of 2022. The site is located to the west of the Magnolia Springs site. The 717 acres site will also produce 74.5 MW of power with an anticipated cost of \$100M. This site will also employ 200 to 250 construction

workers.

These three solar projects use land that is generating very little ad valorem tax in rural areas. Upon completion, the projects will contribute close to \$1M in annual ad valorem taxes to the community. They will contain a 100 foot landscape buffer to enhance the project aesthetics from the main road.

The solar energy centers have an anticipated production period up to 30 years. Upon removal from the site, there is minimal lasting impact to the site. The land will also be well prepared for industrial development.



## HCA FLORIDA OP HOSPITAL & HEALTHPEAK PROPERTIES INC

The medical corridor in Orange Park continues to grow rapidly. HCA Florida Orange Park Hospital (formerly Orange Park Medical Center) announced another \$34M multi-phase expansion. The project will be completed by Q4 of 2023 and create 80 new high wage jobs. The expansion includes the construction of two new inpatient units that will add 48 private patient rooms. The project also includes a state-of-the-art 20 bed ICU for a total of 48 beds. Upon completion, the

hospital will have 408 beds and be the 5th largest hospital in the Jacksonville region.

In partnership with Healthpeak Properties Inc., HCA Florida OP Hospital built a 60,000 SF class-A medical office building to the east of the hospital campus. It will include physician offices for general surgery, women's care, imaging services, neurology care, ear nose and throat (ENT), and primary care. This new building will create 40+ high wage jobs.

## NIAGARA BOTTLING

Niagara Bottling is a family owned and operated beverage manufacturer that began in Irvine, CA in 1963. High quality innovation is the key to their success. They use heavy automation in their manufacturing processes.

The project inquiry began in December of 2020 with an announcement in April of 2021. Q1 of 2022 marks first shippable pallet. The 820,000 SF manufacturing facility is located on 147 acres in Middleburg, directly off the First Coast Expressway and the new Atlantis Drive. The project included \$13M of utility infrastructure upgrades to the site which will benefit subsequent projects.



The initial project proposes 100+ high wage jobs and \$100M in capital investment. A planned expansion will increase these numbers further.

Clay County Board of County Commissioners in partnership with the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) have begun construction of Atlantis Drive through the development to be complete Q1 of 2022. Clay County BCC also awarded the project an Economic Development Grant and a Tangible Personal Property Capital Investment Grant. This project was a catalyst for the development of the Challenger Center.

## CHEMOURS COMPANY

The Chemours Company is a global chemistry company with leading market positions in titanium technologies, thermal & specialized solutions, advanced performance materials, and chemical solutions.

In July, Chemours broke ground on a new \$93M mining facility on land leased from Camp Blanding Joint Training Center. The project consists of two mobile mining units, two mobile screening units, a pre concentrator plant, a concentrate upgrade

plant, and ancillary services and equipment.

The plant will cover approximately 20 acres and includes facilities of 120,000 SF. The project will operate with 98% recycled water from the processes. The expansion project allows Chemours to have additional access to high-quality concentrated deposits of titanium and zircon mineral sands. The project will create 50 to 75 new high wage positions at the facility. Start-up is anticipated by Q4 of 2022.

## PROJECTS



Niagara Bottling is the first project to occupy Challenger Center in Middleburg. The 820,000 SF facility will create 100+ high wage jobs and over \$100M in capital investment.



The Chemours Company mining facility on Camp Blanding is a \$93M capital investment creating 50 to 75 new high wage jobs.



# RESULTS

## OTHER PROJECT ACTIVITY

- Borland Groover-Orange Park
  - \$14.6M
  - Medical Center Redevelopment
  - 49 New Jobs
- Prelude-Green Cove Springs
  - 42-Unit Mixed Use Development
  - \$10M
  - Retail & Restaurant
- CC Town Center-Middleburg
  - Retail, Restaurant, Medical, Office, Hotel, Storage Facilities
- The Station-Fleming Island
  - 180 Units



Henley Road Overpass  
SR 23 Toll New Road Construction

## DIRECT SUPPORT ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

Below is a high-level overview of some of the activities Clay EDC staff completed during the 2021 fiscal year:

- 57 Project Inquiry Responses Submitted to JAXUSA (regional economic development team) and Enterprise Florida Inc./EFI (State of Florida economic development team)
- 20 Existing Business Retention and Expansion Program Site Surveys
- \$64,500 in Defense Reinvestment Grant Award Funding Received
- Completed Full Financial Audit
- Worked with Stakeholders to Develop 5-Year Financial and Strategic Economic Development Plan
- Digital GIS Analysis Application Creation Compiling Multiple Agency Data Sets for Comprehensive Site Evaluation and Planning
- Supported \$14M in Infrastructure Development for Strategic Project Sites
- Supported JAXUSA Elevate NE Florida
- Hosted Informative Quarterly Economic Development Presentations, Leadership Summit and First Coast Expressway Summit
- Career & Technical Education and St. Johns River State College Workforce Skills Alignment Efforts
- Tourism & EDC Collaborative Video Production Targeting Incoming Markets
- Competitive Incentive Policy Development Support
- Hosted Strategic Land Planning Meetings for Project Placement, Utility Infrastructure Alignment, and Land Owner Engagement



Connection over SR 16  
SR 23 Toll New Road Construction

## LOOKING FORWARD

As we look into 2022, we will continue to build upon the solid organizational foundation created by our leadership and community partners. The creation of certified shovel-ready sites remains a priority to accommodate business recruitment efforts. We will continue to work with our major landowners and regional developers on a site readiness program to create more commercial, industrial, and shovel-ready inventory for Clay County project placements.

We have been awarded Defense Reinvestment Grant (DRG) funding by the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity to complete Phase II and Phase III of the Strategic Sites Inventory program. Phase II of the program includes desktop engineering of identified large developable sites to eliminate potential barriers to site preparations. Phase III includes gaining land owner engagement for public-private partnerships.

We will continue to work in support of roadway and utility infrastructure improvements throughout the county. We will continue to work in support of our

secondary and post-secondary education partners to continue strengthening our local workforce with alignment and programming efforts. We will continue to support solutions to combat the workforce housing shortage. Finally, we will continue to support projects which enhance the overall quality of life for our residents and make Clay County the best place in the nation to live, work, and play.

We look forward to continued success in business recruitment and bringing significant high wage partners into the community. We will continue to champion quality long-term sustainable planning efforts for community development. We will continue to support our business community by mitigating growth obstacles and facilitating expansion projects.

Your support and partnership with Clay County Economic Development Corporation makes these priorities possible. Thank you!

# INVESTORS

## 2021 PARTNERS

Clay County Board of County Commissioners  
Florida Department of Economic Opportunity  
CareerSource NE Florida  
City of Green Cove Springs  
Clay County Utility Authority  
Clay County Development Authority  
Ascension St. Vincent's  
Baptist Clay Medical Campus  
HCA Florida Orange Park Hospital  
Reinhold Corporation  
Reynolds Park/Clay County Port  
Stellar  
Town of Orange Park  
VyStar Credit Union  
Challenger Center  
Clay Electric Cooperative  
DR Horton  
GreenPointe Communities  
St. Johns River State College  
Superior Construction  
TECO Peoples Gas  
Thrasher-Horne Center  
Vallencourt Construction  
Vestcor  
Wells Fargo  
121 Financial Credit Union  
Ameris Bank  
ARCO Design|Build  
bestbet Orange Park  
Capital City Bank  
Carlton Construction  
City of Keystone Heights  
Eagle Wings Enterprises  
Hi-Liner Fishing Gear & Tackle  
JEA  
Regions Bank  
Strong Leadership - Sen. Jennifer & Rob Bradley  
UF Health  
Universal Engineering Sciences  
Vac-Con, Inc.  
Wantman Goup Inc.  
AT&T  
Chemours Company  
Developers Realty Group  
Drees Homes  
England-Thims & Miller, Inc.  
EXIT Magnolia Point Realty  
The Fiorentino Group  
Fifth Third Bank  
First Florida Credit Union  
Florida Power and Light  
Hampton Inn & Suites  
Holiday Inn Express & Suites  
Ladson Construction  
Micamy Design Studio  
Murphy Land and Retail Services  
Northeast Florida Builders Association  
Orange Park Mall  
PNC Bank  
Pragmatic Works  
Susan Carter CPA, P.A.



**CLAY FLORIDA**  
Economic Development Corporation  
POSSIBILITY FLOWS | **JUST SOUTH OF JACKSONVILLE**

[CHOOSECLAY.COM](http://CHOOSECLAY.COM)

1845 Town Center Blvd., Suite 110-B  
Fleming Island, FL 32003

904.375.9394



**ACCREDITED  
ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT  
ORGANIZATION**  
*International Economic Development Council*