

Expanding Community Dialogue

- ✓ Hosted the 8th Annual **TeCMEN Industry Day** featuring an expo hall, panels, speed matchmaking with Federal buyers and a keynote presentation by **Jeff Hoffman**, inventor of the airport ticketing kiosk and **Founding Partner of Priceline.com / Booking.com**.
- ✓ Hosted a One Okaloosa Business Roundtable Luncheon featuring a fireside chat with **Brigadier General Mark Massaro**, Commander, 96th Test Wing, Eglin Air Force Base and **Colonel Patrick Dierig**, Commander, 1st Special Operations Wing, Hurlburt Field, in April.
- ✓ Hosted a One Okaloosa Roundtable Luncheon featuring **Florida Secretary of Commerce Alex Kelly** in September.

Supporting Entrepreneurs and Existing Industries

- ✓ Debuted fourth edition of Startup Okaloosa **Veteran Entrepreneur Video Series** designed to share best practices and key lessons from successful local veteran entrepreneurs. Veterans featured during 2025 included **Capt. Gary Jarvis** (Boat Owner Assist & Training), **Wayne Bernheisel** (Dillard Gulf Coast) and **Tom Rice** (Magnolia Grill).
- ✓ Collaborated with LEADERSHIPTEN to present two free professional development webinars – “**Leadership in the Mirror: Challenging the Leader’s Mindset**” in May and “**Thinking Habits That Elevate Your Leadership**” in December.

Supporting Workforce and Talent Development

- ✓ Partnered with CareerSource Okaloosa Walton and Rocky Bayou Christian School to host 19 students and teachers for an **Educate the Educator Plus One** event in Niceville in February. The event included tours with the **City of Niceville**, the **Niceville Valparaiso Chamber of Commerce**, **HCA Florida Twin Cities Medical Center**, **Vertex Solutions**, **Planned Systems International** and **DS2**.
- ✓ Partnered with CareerSource Okaloosa Walton and Okaloosa County School District to host 22 students and teachers for an **Educate the Educator Plus One** event in Fort Walton Beach in November. Following an overview by the **City of Fort Walton Beach**, company visits included **Magna Manufacturing**, **Kratos Defense** and **Boeing Global Services**.
- ✓ Partnered with the HSU Educational Foundation, Okaloosa County School District and Rocky Bayou Christian School to host 39 area students, teachers and administrators for interface with companies attending the 2025 TeCMEN Industry Day.

Strengthening the Military Mission

- ✓ One Okaloosa’s **Defense Support Initiatives (DSI)** developed a comprehensive **legislative position paper** speaking to key Federal funding and policy priorities and conducted issues briefings with Pentagon officials and key members of Congress in April.
- ✓ With the reemergence of oil drilling / exploration threats in the Eastern Gulf of America, joined forces with Oceana and a myriad of local, state and Federal partners to advocate for the **long-term protection of the Gulf** in support of the military mission.
- ✓ Utilized One Okaloosa EDC’s **Tri-County Community Partnership Initiative (TCPI)** as a collaborative forum for incubating community / military partnership projects in three focal areas including **Infrastructure**, **Quality of Life** and **Education & Training**.

Enhancing Competitiveness

- ✓ Successfully pursued “**Rural Area of Opportunity**” designation for northeastern Okaloosa County. Authorized by Governor DeSantis in July, the new RAO designation allows for local governments within the defined area to apply for rural infrastructure funds, allows for accelerated state permit reviews and provides new or expanding companies with access to rural job tax credits.

Facilitating New Jobs & Investment

- ✓ Partnered with **FloridaCommerce**, **Triumph Gulf Coast**, **Space Florida** and the **Okaloosa County Board of County Commissioners** to successfully recruit Michigan-based aircraft engine manufacturer **Williams International**. The company will construct a 1M square foot facility in multiple phases on 106 acres at the Shoal River Industrial Park. With **336 jobs** and a planned capital investment of **\$1,040,819,000**, the project represents the single largest investment in the history of northwest Florida.
- ✓ Assisted **TalkingParents / Bit-Wizards** with their expansion to Fort Walton Beach’s Freedom Tech Center. The company’s new 50,869 headquarters represents a \$16,000,000 total capital investment and will support more than **100 new jobs**.
- ✓ Assisted Cincinnati-based **Sims-Lohman** - the nation’s largest supplier of kitchen cabinets, granite and quartz countertops - with identifying a 65,000 SF vacant building in the Okaloosa Industrial Air Park to serve as their Gulf Coast headquarters, including warehousing and manufacturing functions. Representing a total investment of \$8,500,000, the facility will support **90 new jobs**.