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David J. Pieklik – Executive Director -- [Email us](#)

FEBRUARY 2017

Career and Technical Education Month

February is Career and Technical Education Month, with the objective of preparing students for high wage and high demand careers. In Levy County, that means jobs in advanced manufacturing, healthcare, information technology and other fields.

Out upcoming Business Alliance meeting will focus on the month by listening to educators describe how student will be prepared, and what the workforce needs are to have them properly trained. Additionally, we will discuss what “soft skills” employers desire their employees to have, such as strong interpersonal communication, problem solving, proper etiquette, familiarity with certain computer skills and other attributes.

The next Alliance meeting is Feb. 22; please refer to the calendar below for location and time details, and click the link if you would like to reserve your spot.

Know a manufacturer that should be recognized for its work and impact to the community? Nominate them for business excellence.

NEWS AND NOTES

- **Proposed Bill to Cut Economic Funding:** The Florida House is proposing a bill that would eliminate Enterprise Florida and Visit Florida, the state’s top economic development and tourism agencies, respectively. The 172-page [committee bill](#) also proposes cutting tax exemptions to filmmakers, and preventing the use of collected bed taxes to fund sports stadium construction or renovations. Opponents of the bill say eliminating the agencies would severely limit the ability to attract targeted jobs to the state, or the millions of tourists who visit the Sunshine State yearly.
- **Regional Employment Sees Growth:** The jobless rate in the region decreased slightly last month, dipping to 5.9 percent. At the same time, employment saw an increase. Levy County retained the lowest unemployment rate at 5.1 percent, though the labor force shrank slightly by 93 to 16,660. However, since December 2015, the number of employed increased by 254 and the labor force has grown by 272.
- **Berridge Retires From FHTCC:** After more than 21 years at the helm and an endless number of success stories, Randy Berridge has retired as president of the Florida High Tech Corridor Council. Berridge will remain on as a volunteer, serving part-time until June 30 to allow for a transition to the next leadership. The economic development initiative formed from a collaboration between the University of Florida, University of Central Florida and the University of South Florida. Its Matching Grants Research Program has have contributed more than \$1-billion to innovation, research and development.



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OUR VALUABLE PARTNERS

- [CareerSource Citrus Levy Marion](#)
- [Department of Economic Opportunity](#)
- [Enterprise Florida](#)
- [Levy County](#)
- [North Florida Economic Development Partnership](#)
- [Virtual Entrepreneur Center](#)

ADD IT TO YOUR CALENDARS

Feb. 9	Feb. 9	Feb. 21	Feb. 22
MRMA meeting and tour: Marion Technical Institute 11:30 am – 1 pm 1614 E. Fort King Street, Ocala mrma.events@gmail.com to register	NCBDC board/RESTORE Act Advisory Committee meeting 3 pm, College of Central Florida, 114 Rodgers Blvd., Chiefland	RESTORE Act Advisory Committee/NCBDC board meeting 3 pm, County Courthouse, 355 S. Court Street, Bronson	Nature Coast Business Alliance 12:30 pm – 1:30 pm College of Central Florida 114 Rodgers Blvd., Chiefland RSVP