



# ANNUAL REPORT

## 2023



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 3 Letter from the President**
- 4 Investor Meetings**
- 6 Development Activity**
- 8 Talent Recruitment & Retention**
- 12 Multifamily Development**
- 13 Future Focused**
- 15 LEDC Team**



# A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



While this year has presented us with continued development challenges nationwide that have slowed the decision cycle for many new projects considering our community, it has also provided us with valuable opportunities to focus on short and long-term planning, reevaluate strategies and fortify our community's foundation for future development when economic conditions shift.

As has happened numerous times in economic downcycles over the years, our established industries continued to support the local economy through significant investment in expansions. These ongoing investments underscore the importance of our community's work to maintain a pro-business regulatory environment, address our industries talent recruitment and retention needs, and advocate for advancement of our quality-of-life offerings.

Through the pages of this report, you'll see that health care, high tech and manufacturing led the way this year. Speculative development continues to move forward at a rapid pace which also positions us well for the coming years. We continue to dedicate resources to talent initiatives to support the needs of our members and to find effective ways to communicate the Lakeland value proposition to our strategic partners and prospects. All of this work cannot be done successfully without the support of our investors so thank you for your continued participation in elevating our community.

Steve Scruggs  
LEDC President

# INVESTOR MEETINGS

## Panels



Industry panels are a helpful way to hear diverse opinions on topics vitally important to our membership. In April 2023, we focused on the state of the economy with a keynote from economist Kevin Brickey, and industry panelists Brandon Clark with The Ruthvens, Brian Rewis from Community and Economic Development with the City of Lakeland, Corey Miller with Miller Construction, Rich Hames with Rita Staffing and Sterling Grubbs with MIDFLORIDA Credit Union.

In August, we went Back to School to focus on the state of education in Lakeland with a keynote from Polk County Public Schools Superintendent Frederick Heid, Lakeland Lead's Melody Rider, Alec Macaulay from IDEA Public Schools and Sheila Paul from Bezos Academy.

## Site Visits

In 2023, we visited two member sites. In May, Publix welcomed our members into their newly expanded corporate office. This \$60M project added 190,000 SF to their office to increase capacity for up to 700 new hires. Our attendees heard from Mike Smith, Senior Vice President of Industrial Operations and John Provenzano, Vice President of Public Affairs who outlined continued exponential growth of the company across the southeast, now totaling 1,354 stores.

In September our investors were the first members of the public to tour the new Lakeland Regional Health Kathleen Campus. This 76,000+ square foot facility will house Family Medicine, Primary Care, and several medical specialties with state-of-the-art exam and procedure rooms. The Kathleen Campus will also hold the Graduate Medical Education Family Medicine Residency Program, bringing continuing education and innovation to the next generation of Lakeland's physicians.



# Members & Industry Updates

This year we welcomed numerous new members to the LEDC whose representatives were introduced during our monthly meetings. From the City of Lakeland we welcomed new **Police Chief Sammy Taylor Jr.** and newly appointed Assistant City Manager **Rob Hernandez**. In the construction industry we welcomed Springer Construction's **Cole Springer**, Harper Little Construction Management's **Sean Harper**, and North American Rebar's **Luis Quintana**. **Dan Loudermilk** of HCA Supply Chain also gave us an industry update on his healthcare distribution facility which opened in 2020 and we met **Jason Buchino** of Nemours Children's Health at Lakeland Regional Health.

Our food manufacturing cluster continues to expand and we received updates from Tampa Maid Food's **Shawn Meany**, Pepperidge Farm's **Steve Larkin**, and Mission Food's **Richard Schuh**. We also received an update from JBT's **Gary Feldmann** who gave an overview of their facility since their expansion opened several years ago.



Technology and innovation continue to see steady growth within Polk County, as evidenced by the introduction of **International Flavors and Fragrance's** research laboratory on the campus of **Florida Polytechnic University**.

One of the greatest needs expressed by our employers is the availability and diversity of housing so we continued to track the development of multifamily throughout the year. To address concerns within retail development, we spent time during our October meeting tackling the question "*What would it take for Lakeland to have <insert your favorite national brand>*". This eye-opening presentation underscored why higher-density, **live-work-play communities** strengthen a community's value proposition for 3rd spaces.

# 2023 DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY

## PUBLIX DOWNTOWN TECHNOLOGY CAMPUS

Publix shared plans to expand their information technology footprint with sizable investment in their newly named Downtown Lakeland Technology Campus. The project will bring hundreds of new high-skill, high-wage jobs to the downtown core while retaining 1,200+ high-skill employees in Lakeland. In addition to renovating their existing 120,000 SF office at 321 S. Kentucky Ave, Publix has purchased the 142,000 SF former FEDEX building at 333 E. Lemon St and the Citrus Mutual parcel at 413 E. Orange St. They will invest \$50+ Million to complete this project in the coming years.



## KEYMARK

Keymark's investment in Lakeland began over 25 years ago with their 100,000 SF, \$15 Million facility on Knights Station Rd creating 100 jobs. Since then, they have created 240+ jobs and invested millions of dollars in expansion. Their newest project was the first to receive a \$400,000 City of Lakeland manufacturing incentive. The \$24+ Million, 77,000 SF, build-to-suit facility by The Ruthvens will house a vertical paint line and add 25 new jobs while paving the way for an additional investment of \$12 Million into an extrusion press at their existing facility.

## IDEA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

IDEA Public Schools is a high-performing, high-achieving K-12 free, public charter school network. At its core, IDEA aims to serve historically underserved populations within close proximity to the school location and provide them with access to high-quality educational choices and options. IDEA purchased 80,000 SF at 1775 Interstate Dr with plans to renovate the site for grades K-6. A later buildout will extend classes through grade 12. Their target open date is August 2024.



## HEALTH CLUSTER EXPANSION



### LAKELAND REGIONAL HEALTH

The recently completed 76,000 SF, \$65 Million facility at I-4 and Kathleen Rd will improve access to high-quality medical care in an area of our community that has been previously underserved. Additionally, the long-term impact of ambulatory care will help address the primary care shortage in Polk County. The location will house GME Family Medicine Residents, as well as primary care, specialty care, and urgent care.



### VETERANS AFFAIRS CLINIC

This 93,000 SF facility on Lakeland Highlands Rd consolidates and expands existing Polk County clinics into one single high-quality site. The clinic will treat 23,000 veterans in primary care, mental health, audiology, optometry, prosthetics, and imaging. The \$112 Million investment will create an estimated 96 new jobs.



### ORLANDO HEALTH

Site work has begun to make way for a \$110+ Million investment on a 580,000 SF, 7-story, 300-bed facility on Lakeland Highlands Rd. The hospital will include an emergency department, 30 intensive care rooms, 16 birthing rooms, and future space for a level II NICU. The facility will also house imaging, labs, pharmacy, and other support space. The PUD allows for outparcels that will be available for restaurants and retail uses.

## OVERALL ACTIVITY

### BEST BUY

#### DISTRIBUTION

274,000 SF; \$9M CapEx

### SOUTHERN GLAZERS WINE & SPIRITS

#### DISTRIBUTION

217,000 SF; \$5M CapEx

### WESTLAKE PIPE & FITTINGS

#### DISTRIBUTION

193,000 SF; \$20M CapEx

### KEYMARK

#### MANUFACTURING

77,000 SF; 125 Jobs; \$36M CapEx

### MIAMI WAREHOUSE LOGISTICS INC

#### LOGISTICS

77,000 SF; \$7.5M CapEx

### TAYLOR CORPORATION

#### MANUFACTURING

70,000 SF; \$4M CapEx

### DRISCOLL'S

#### DISTRIBUTION

46,500 SF; \$2.5M CapEx

### FARM CUT, LLC

#### COLD STORAGE

42,423 SF; \$4M CapEx

### W SOULE & CO INC

#### FABRICATION CONTRACTOR

38,276 SF; \$5M CapEx

### CENTURY CABINETS

#### LIGHT ASSEMBLY

32,000 SF; \$5M CapEx

### XPO, INC

#### LOGISTICS

31,000 SF; 75 Jobs; \$15M CapEx

### STATEWIDE ELECTRICAL CONTRACTORS INC

#### CONTRACTOR

20,687 SF; \$4M CapEx

### KINSHIP PACE

#### OFFICE

19,830 SF; \$2.5M CapEx

### ABC MANUFACTURING

#### MANUFACTURING

16,721 SF; \$1.5M CapEx

### TOTAL:

1.15 MILLION SQUARE FEET

\$121 MILLION CAPEX



# TALENT RECRUITMENT & RETENTION

## Summer Leadership Program

The LEDC's **Summer Leadership Program** (SLP) continues to be a valuable leadership training and retention tool for Lakeland's employers. SLP is designed to professionally develop and further integrate Lakeland's young professionals into the community through a 5-week session of local tours, insightful speakers, workshops, trainings, and networking. In 2023, we hosted two sessions in which participants were able to meet and learn from local and national leaders exploring a variety of skills-based topics to assist them as they **develop into emerging leaders within their companies**. Whether a life-long Lakelander or new-to-Lakeland, the program opens the eyes of participants to all that Lakeland has to offer for their **quality of life** from **arts, culture** and **entertainment, volunteer opportunities**, diverse **industry** sectors and more.

Our 2023 participant survey found

- **65%** of participants now plan on remaining in Lakeland permanently
- **95%** agree to have gained beneficial career experience

In 2023, the Summer Leadership Program

- Utilized **46** local companies
- Welcomed **29** local leadership speakers
- Graduated **88** young professionals, totaling **865** graduates to-date



## QUICK STATS

**88** participants

Average age: **25**

**18** non-Floridians

**16** interns, **72** new hires

**51** female, **37** male

**30** companies

**22** participants who self- identified as people of color



**14** industry & community tours

**16** community panelists

**17** leadership trainers

## TESTIMONIALS

*"SLP benefited me a lot in finding my place and gaining my confidence in my own workspace. I have a much deeper appreciation for the city that raised me."* -Austin, 25

*"This program has inspired me to grow my network by plugging into all of the amazing resources, clubs, and volunteer opportunities Lakeland has for the community at large. I have gained new friendships, connections, and networks that will be valued for the rest of my life."* -Lindsay, 23

*"The individuals I met through SLP genuinely want to contribute to their community and make lasting connections with like-minded people; this was a truly wonderful experience."*  
-Tara, 25



In 2023, SLP was led by Communications and Program Intern **Sarah Falcetti** and SLP Intern **James Simpson**.

# TALENT RECRUITMENT & RETENTION

## GRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION

The ratio of physicians to residents in the Polk County market has historically been low, creating a lack of access to quality care for our insured and uninsured population alike. Lakeland Regional Health is the second busiest Emergency Department in the nation and was the largest hospital of its kind without a Graduate Medical Education Program. For over 10 years Lakeland Regional Health has been working on the development of a Graduate Medical Education Program to create greater access to care as well as build a pipeline of physicians who have 3 years of service to learn about and fall in love with the Lakeland community.

During the national resident match in March, Lakeland Regional Health filled all 70 seats of their inaugural Graduate Medical Education (GME) class. The first-ever class of residents began in June and encompass seven subspecialties: Emergency Medicine, Family Medicine, General Surgery, Internal Medicine, Psychiatry, Surgical Critical Care, and Transitional Year; with plans to recruit resident doctors within additional subspecialties over the next few.

The GME program not only revolutionizes the caliber of care and degree of research Lakeland Regional Health can offer patients, but it also fortifies a talent pipeline for highly trained doctors for the LRH system and other medical facilities in Central Florida who are familiar with and connected to the Lakeland community.

In late June, the LEDC hosted a community welcome reception to introduce Lakeland's newest doctors to local leaders and LEDC members at Catapult. The reception featured welcome speeches from community champions including the LEDC, Chamber, LDDA, City of Lakeland and Catapult. As the residents begin their years of advanced training in Lakeland and continue to expand the breadth of care provided by our local healthcare partners, we hope the strong relationship our community builds with these medical graduates will begin to fill the need for healthcare providers within Polk County.



# NEW TO Lakeland

YOUR ULTIMATE GUIDE TO LAKELAND, FL

LIVE

EXPERIENCE

WORK

RESOURCES

In late 2022 we launched NewToLakeland.com in response to the expressed needs of our members in communicating the Lakeland value proposition to prospective employees. This is in partnership with 6AM City who produces the daily LALTODAY newsletter and marketing platforms. Over the course of the last year, the journalists have continually added content based on the most frequently asked questions our employers receive. We also launched a quarterly newsletter sent to over 37,000 people to drive them to the website content.

## QUICK STATS

**70K+** website pageviews

**4** newsletters with a **45%** open rate distributed to **37K+** people

### Most Read Stories:

**#1** - New Businesses & Developments in LKLD

**#2** - Top Employers & Industries

**#3** - Find Your Ideal Neighborhood

# MULTIFAMILY DEVELOPMENT

Diversifying Lakeland's housing options, improving the availability of housing, and offering housing that is affordable all affect our ability to recruit and retain talent. Lakeland did not build any significant new multifamily projects (over 50 units) in the city limits from 2013-2020 and we have experienced significant population growth in the past 3 years. Due to these facts, we are experiencing a significant shortage of multifamily units in Lakeland. Although the projects below won't solve this issue, they will go a long way to improving it.



## PROSPECT LAKE WIRE

Located at the intersection of Sikes Blvd and George Jenkins Blvd, this development includes 300 multifamily residential units, lifestyle amenities and 15,000 square feet of retail space. This mixed-use development is a 22-acre joint venture between Carter from Atlanta and Hunt Companies from El Paso. The second phase will include 330 multifamily residential units and 15,000 square feet of retail space.

## VALENCIA AT THE PARK

Nestled in Lakeland's historic Garden District across the street from Barnett Family Park, CODA Development's new project is a mixture of 32 one and two bedroom units. The project was designed by LEDC investor The Lunz Group and is being built by LEDC investor Miller Construction Management.



## LAKELAND SQUARE MALL

The Flacks Group purchased the former Sears building and plans to demolish it making way for a mix of three- and four-story apartment buildings; a ground level clubhouse and numerous lifestyle amenities. The development matrix breaks down into 199 one-bedroom units, 106 two-bedroom units and 15 three-bedroom units totaling 320 luxury apartment units.



## WELCOME CANARY

Murex is building a 160 unit development near Southern Glazer Wine and Spirits, Rooms To Go and Lakeland Central Park consisting of four three-story buildings, a pool and clubhouse. The project was designed by LEDC Investor The Lunz Group and built by Strickland Construction.

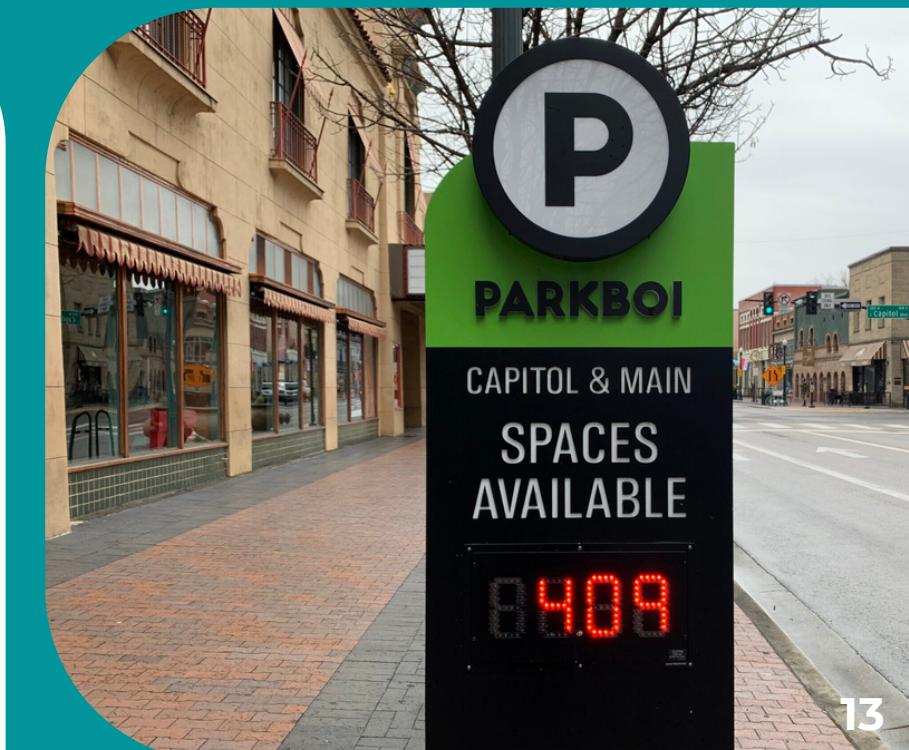
# FUTURE FOCUSED

In addition to recruiting new companies to Lakeland and helping local companies expand, the LEDC understands that with new growth comes the need for infrastructure improvements. Two future focused infrastructure projects the LEDC has been advocating for are Highway 33 & I-4 interchange improvements and electronic signage for parking in Downtown Lakeland.



The **Highway 33** corridor has been popular for industrial users due to its proximity to Interstate 4. This corridor accounts for over 6.7 million SF of industrial space and over 13 large industrial users. After the passage of the "Moving Florida Forward" initiative by the legislature, FDOT announced that the Highway 33 interchange project was being fast-tracked to begin in late 2024. The project's scope includes integrating the diverging diamond concept for the interchange, like what you may have experienced at the new Champion's Gate exit. The modifications would also include widening SR 33 in both directions and additional traffic lights and signage.

Predictability of public parking areas is key to a thriving downtown. The LEDC and our community partners have been advocating for electronic signage for downtown parking garages to let the potential users know where and how much parking is available to the public. The City is currently reviewing RFP bids and will be awarding a contract by the end of the year.



# FUTURE FOCUSED



We have been working closely with the City of Lakeland and Lakeland CRA to focus efforts to entitle sites for development and **create developer certainty** around infrastructure, parking, water and wastewater capacities, and incentives. Using Lakeland's digital twin, CatalystLakeland.com, we can showcase these available sites to developers across the country.

The lack of population density in the Lakeland market can cause Lakelander's coveted brands to overlook us because we do not meet their defined metrics in our larger commercial corridors. The LEDC believes that this is just another reason to advocate for smarter growth strategies around **"live-work-play"** development in existing commercial and office corridors across Lakeland.



The Lakeland CRA had been studying the East Main district, the area east the 98 cross-town bridge, for redevelopment potential. Private investors took an interest and through collaboration have visioned this district to become **LoMa** (or Local Makers Village). The CRA approved \$163,600 towards the engineering and design of the streetscape and lighting to provide a distinct character for the area.

# OUR BOARD



**Cory Petcoff**  
Baron Realty



**Todd Baylis**  
QGiv



**Mark Cabrera**  
Saddle Creek  
Logistics



**Danielle Drummond**  
Lakeland Regional Health



**Mike Smith**  
Publix



**Karen Turner**  
Lockheed Martin



**Will Harrell**  
Miller Troiano, P.A.



**Callie Neslund**  
GiveWell

# OUR TEAM



**Steve Scruggs**  
President



**Katie Worthington Decker**  
Senior VP



**Laura Taylor**  
VP Operations



**Abbas (AJ) Jaffer**  
VP Business Development



**Sarah Falcetti**  
Communications &  
Program Manager



863.687.3788



502 E. Main St.



[www.lakelandedc.com](http://www.lakelandedc.com)