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MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT CLARKE FREED

FIRST IAN, THEN NICOLE...REALLY?

Now what can we learn as a business community?

As Nicole headed into towards Florida in early November, many organizations including schools, businesses, and governments decided to close their doors on November 9, fearing the worst. However, the City of Mulberry remained open for business... not afraid of the hurricane, turned tropical storm, headed our way. What can we learn from Mulberry's stance in the face of the storm?

We have had many reasons to fear over the past 3 years as the business closings from COVID devastated our economy. Ideological divisions gripped our nation as not seen since the 1960's, and political unrest continues on both sides of the aisle. Then comes Ian and Nicole as mother nature flexes her muscles and wants to get into the action. However, we can choose how to respond in the face of such recent events. During COVID when many businesses felt they were forced to close, ingenious entrepreneurs chose to pivot and provide their goods and services in new and different ways. As political and racial unrest has gripped our nation, some will run and hide while others choose to love those we may not always agree with and have chosen not to participate in the cancel culture around us. As Nicole headed our way, at least one city chose not to participate. This is a time, more than ever, for the business community to come together, to seek common ground and gather around common interests. It's a time for government, non-profits, and businesses to work together to solve problems that hinder some from moving forward. Some of those hindered are the underserved businesses, the entrepreneurs that need a leg up and an opportunity to shine. They also need a winner's attitude that may have been subdued over the past couple of years. **It's time to help each other be winners.**

My challenge is twofold. First an attitude and second an action.

For the attitude - those who know me, know that I embrace an attitude of abundance, NOT scarcity. An abundance attitude is a belief that there is more than enough business to go around for everyone to win, especially those who provide an outstanding product backed by great service at a competitive price. Many of us heard the County Manager speak a few weeks ago as he briefed the chamber on the explosive growth in Polk County. This creates opportunity for all. Understanding this is just a small piece of the abundance attitude I am talking about.

For the action - grow your network! Take time to get to know your neighboring businesses, your other Chamber member businesses, your competitor businesses. Ask them to share a coffee (at Stone Cabin for example) or lunch and get to know each other's business. Use it as an opportunity to grow your own network, meet great people, provide referrals, and do business with people you come to know, like and trust.

THIS IS WHAT YOUR CHAMBER IS ALL ABOUT, CONNECTING PEOPLE AND GROWING BUSINESSES. HAVE FUN!

Member SPOTLIGHT

MILLER'S ALE HOUSE Where it feels like home. Laid back and family friendly sports bar. Offering delicious, nutritious and customizable menu items all day. Also offering everyday food and drink specials.



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MILLER'S ALE HOUSE gives back and builds relationships in surrounding neighborhoods. We are running fundraisers for the Mulberry High school football team and music department/band. The first Monday and Wednesday of December we will be holding fundraising Spirit Night for the high school. We look forward to serving you and your families real soon!!



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Florida job creators are telling us:

73% have trouble recruiting qualified candidates, with over 1/2 of new hires requiring additional skills training

58.4% anticipate need for reskilling/upskilling current employees

What Florida job creators are telling us:

73% have trouble recruiting qualified candidates, with over 1/2 of new hires requiring additional skills training

58.4% anticipate need for reskilling/upskilling current employees

Most Recent Metrics (Florida)

Florida surpasses pre-pandemic employment levels (+357,000)

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Greater Mulberry Chamber



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Ambassador

SPOTLIGHT

TIM BIRRI



Meet **Tim Birri** one of our Chamber Ambassadors.

- **Tim** is with Edward Jones Investments since May 2020, previously with Publix Super Markets for 35 years. Edward Jones, which turned 100 years in January 2022, is an associate-owned private partnership with more than 50,000 associates with 1.8 trillion in assets under management. Our goal is to help meet the financial needs of individual investors with personalized client service and carefully chosen quality investments.
- The agency became part of the Chamber in June 2021
- What I like most about the Mulberry chamber is that it is a very active chamber within the community. There are not only a lot of fun chamber activities, there is a great support for the community and businesses. Being part of the chamber has helped educate me on local and county events.
- The short time I've been there it seems like there is a family atmosphere. Everyone is helping each other to achieve success while also looking to what is best for the community.

If you are interested in becoming a chamber ambassador please contact Lisa Hall at lhall@ritastaffing.com



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Space is limited, so please RSVP:

dknox@dreamvacations.com or 863-815-0995 (no text)

Presentation Date: February 25, 2023 1:30 – 2:30

Presentation Location: My Office & More, Lakeland



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NEW GREATER MULBERRY *Chamber Members*

The Greater Mulberry Chamber of Commerce would like to welcome the following new members. We encourage you to stop by or somehow connect with them and give them a warm Mulberry welcome.

The Mortgage Firm

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863-512-3999

Contact: Candice Clark

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Willow Oak School

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Contact: Michelle Townley

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Contact: Barbara Wiechmann

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Double M Audio

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404-791-4266

Contact: Melissa Moran

Melissa Moran is a voice over talent specializing in commercials, e-learning, corporate VO, and has narrated over 300 audiobooks. She's also a certified Life Coach who helps creative women design their best life and hosts the podcast "The VO Mindset"

Valley Bank

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Contact: Stephanie Colon

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RCMA (Redlands Christian Migrant Association)

4441 Academy Drive
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Contact: Dani Higgins

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meanwhile, AT CITY HALL



'Tis the season for the city is abuzz with holiday happenings. On December 2nd, the city will host its annual Christmas Tree Lighting program followed by a cookie stroll. What's better than Christmas cheer and cookies?

On December 10th, the City will host its annual Christmas Parade. This year's theme is "Sounds of the Season". Floats, cars, and walking units will be making a joyful noise through the NE quadrant of the city.



recipient. Angel Huckery (UPS employee and chamber member) recommended the Mulberry Public Library in recognition for their continued outreach to children in the surrounding community. All city staff would like to thank UPS for this generous Christmas gift! Most importantly, the books will be distributed at the library's Storytime with Santa on December 14th!



Immediately following the parade will be the city's Christmas Village at Spence Park. Guests will enjoy carriage rides, visit with Santa and Mrs. Claus, shop with local vendors, and enjoy s'mores by a bonfire.

The Mulberry Cultural Center will host its eighth annual "Merry and Bright" juried student art exhibition. The artwork of talented local students will be on display from December 8th through January 6th.

The Mulberry Public Library received some Christmas joy of their own by way of local UPS stores. Annually, UPS locations participate in "Toys for Tots Literacy Drive". Three local UPS stores (Imperial Lakes, Harden Blvd., and Lake Miriam) were so successful in their fundraising drive that they could choose an organization to be the



Story Time with Santa
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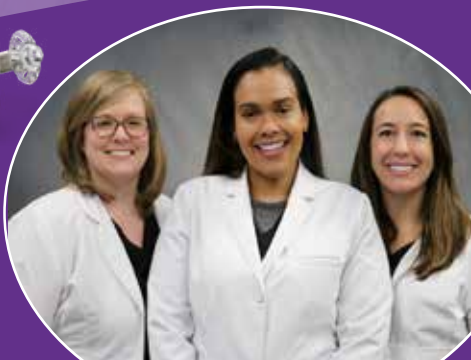
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Save the Dates

December 14 - Chamber Breakfast - 8am - 9am Mulberry Civic Center
THURSDAY Sponsored by ACT Doors open at 7:30

January 18 - Chamber Breakfast - 8am - 9am Mulberry Civic Center
Sponsored by TBA Doors open at 7:30

January 21 - Annual Dinner - 6pm - 10pm - Hilton Garden Inn

February 15 - Chamber Breakfast - 8am - 9am Mulberry Civic Center
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March 15 - Chamber Breakfast - 8am - 9am Mulberry Civic Center
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