

BUSINESS

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Thomas Monigan, Northwest Florida Daily News

Swedes Arrive Tuesday

Welcome to March, faithful readers. We've got some good items for you today.

Hello, Sweden

Tuesday, the Swedish-American Business Expo makes its debut at the Emerald Coast Conference Center on Okaloosa Island. Trade Show Exhibits are from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., with an evening social from 6 p.m. until midnight.

Kay Rasmussen from the Economic Development Council of Okaloosa County credits tennis pro Erik Stenberg for helping to get the event started. On the program, Stenberg is listed as the president of the Swedish-American Connection. Local sporting types know him as the man who runs a major tennis tournament every year at the Fort Walton Beach Tennis Center.

Other speakers on Tuesday's program include Andrea Moore from Enterprise Florida, EDC Chairman Paul Hsu and Gunilla Girardo, president of the Swedish-American Chamber of Commerce.

"We want to provide business connections between the continents," Rasmussen said recently. "We're talking about any business relationship, really. In these hard economic times, you don't look just next door - it's gone global.

"This is our first go at it to see if we can stimulate some business relationships," -she added. "If it's successful it could be a stepping stone for a bigger, more profitable economic engine like eDays."

Turns out that eDays is an international business connections conference for entrepreneurs, which will be held in Savannah, Ga., this year. Next year, it's scheduled for Sweden. But in 2011, could it come here? That would mean at least 500 businesses visiting, according to Rasmussen.

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