



Business with Sweden, GCAD discussed at January meet

TeCMEN attendees enjoyed a double treat as we welcomed both Andrea Moore, Regional Manager, International Trade Development, Enterprise Florida and Jane Birdwell, President of BPM, an experienced multimedia company based in Pensacola, at our January meeting.

Andrea began the morning with a presentation on business opportunities with Sweden, part of the EDC's International Trade program. She first compared Sweden with the State of Florida demographically. Even though Sweden is nearly three times the size of Florida in terms of land area, the Sunshine State's population is nearly twice that of Sweden (18 million [FL] vs. 9.1 million [Sweden]), while the labor force in Florida is 9.2 million vs. 4.8 million in Sweden. The linkage between our area and Sweden began through the professional tennis tournament held annually in Fort Walton Beach. Through this event, a series of networking events and business seminars has been created. Additionally, the City

has begun the process of establishing a formal Sister City relationship.

Andrea then transitioned to why Florida is an attractive trade partner. As the fourth largest US state, we have a great track record in attracting Foreign Direct Investment; are the recognized business gateway between Latin American and Caribbean countries and the rest of the world; and benefits by a favorable US regulatory environment. In Northwest Florida, we have key sectors of the State's economy, namely aviation/aerospace/defense, green/renewable energy, and life sciences. Sweden, by contrast, is not in the top 50 exporting countries, but does import over \$279 million annually.

Additionally, Northwest Florida is attractive to Sweden because of additional buying power due to the currency exchange rate (Sweden's currency is the Krona [they don't use the Euro] which is trading at about 8 Krona per US dollar), plus their cultural orientation that

favors cognitive-styled value system-based decision making.

All these activities serve as prelude to the Swedish-American Expo Day, currently scheduled for March 3, 2009, at the Emerald Coast Convention Center. This event will familiarize delegates with Northwest Florida's existing industry clusters; educate those delegates with specialized facilities and entrepreneurial resources that support business growth in the region; give delegates the opportunity to have meaningful meetings with decision makers in like fields; and inform them the process through which the delegates can find a Florida partner, engage in a site search, and/or establish a business presence in Florida.

For more information on doing business with Sweden, contact Andrea. Additional information on the Swedish-American Expo Day is available from Kay Rasmussen at the EDC office (flyer on p 3).

Jane was up next and unveiled the Gulf Coast Aerospace and Defense Coalition

(GCAD), area and industry leaders working together to foster strong relationships with domestic and international aerospace and defense companies and to showcase the aerospace assets of the Gulf Coast. Several highly-regarded studies have validated the aerospace and defense sector as a target of interest in the Northwest Florida economy. Within that main category, numerous subset areas were also identified for consideration including unmanned systems; very light jets; composite materials; air cargo and distribution; maintenance, repair and overhaul; avionics, engineering, testing, research and development; industrial design; flight training; air transportation; and consulting services.

There are a host of different companies already engaged in the aerospace and defense sector, many of them with operations in Okaloosa County and members of TeCMEN. Also of great importance is the wide range of military and research assets available, with such nota-

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IT workforce training, UWF IT Academy the focus in February

Information technology positions are high-demand occupations that support virtually all industries. The University of West Florida is ready to assist.

Join us for the February TeCMEN with our speaker Nicole Gislason, Director of the University's IT Academy. The

Academy is responding to that growing need for quality professionals in the information technology sector by developing this important workforce program, including several classes and certification opportunities.

In addition to providing an overview of the Academy and

its capabilities, Nicole will be seeking feedback from industry leaders relating to their respective IT training needs. This feedback will be crucial as the Academy continues to refine its program offerings. She is also reaching out to the IT talent pool in our area, recruiting a pool of IT instructors to serve in a part time, adjunct capacity.

This is an exciting initiative that can provide the targeted training your IT staff needs to keep at the top of their game. Mark your calendars now to attend—Tuesday, February 17, UWF-NWFSC Emerald Coast Campus in Fort Walton Beach. You'll be glad you did! **(NOTE DATE CHANGE TO THIRD TUESDAY THIS MONTH)**



Economic Development
Council of Okaloosa County

Reminders:

- The presentations from the January meeting are available at www.tecmen.org.
- The next TeCMEN meeting is Tuesday, February 17, 7:30 a.m., at the UWF-NWFSC Emerald Coast Campus in FWB. Start time is 7:30 a.m. **(NOTE DATE CHANGE)**
- The March TeCMEN meeting will be held Tuesday, March 10, and will feature a visit to the General Dynamics facility, 115 Hart Street, Niceville. RSVP in advance will be required. Start time will remain 7:30 a.m. **(NOTE LOCATION CHANGE)**

Technology Coast Manufacturing & Engineering Network (TeCMEN) is comprised of EDC-member companies promoting growth and advancement within Okaloosa's technology-based business community through the association, collaboration, and contract-teaming of its manufacturing, engineering, technology and defense industry clusters. Using a collaborative concept, these companies join together to compete for and complete both defense-contracting and other substantial business opportunities that are too expansive for a single business to undertake.

TeCMEN member companies represent every major manufacturing and engineering discipline required to support requirements of both the military missions and the civilian community including:

- *Aerospace & Aviation*
- *Information Technology*
- *Micro-Electronics*
- *Biometric Technology*
- *Precision Machining & Metal Fabrication*

Assisting in the EDC's commitment are Okaloosa's learning institutions Northwest Florida State College, the University of West Florida, and the University of Florida Research & Engineering Education Facility.



For more information on TeCMEN,
contact Jeff Fanto at jeff@florida-edc.org

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ble facilities as Eglin Air Force Base, with its associated Air Force Research Lab; Hurlburt Field; Naval Air Stations Whiting Field and Pensacola, as well as the Navy's Corry Station; the University of Florida Research and Engineering Education Facility (REEF); the Andrews Institute; and the Institute for Human and Machine Cognition. The area is also

benefitted by the various education institutions resident here, including Northwest Florida State College and the University of West Florida, along with several other higher education providers.

GCAD is a dedicated forum to market these unique capabilities to a national and international audience. GCAD will

provide the venue to help foster additional partnerships for existing companies in our area, as well as assist in the recruitment of new, industry-specific companies to the region, while supporting entrepreneurship and recruiting the talent these growing companies need to be successful. Jane's company, BPM, has taken the lead in this effort, creating a modern website

along with electronic and print advertising, and direct presentations to interested individuals and groups. A complete communications strategy is in the works that will continuously update the aerospace industry assets resident in the area and the numerous agencies in the region that support this vital economic engine. That updated information will be disseminated to the media, industry representatives, and other interested groups to continue to foster interest in our area.

Interested in participating? Contact GCAD at info@gulfcoastaerospaceanddefense.com and keep visiting their website, www.gulfcoastaerospaceanddefense.com.

Coming events at the EDC

- "Vision of Progress" TV show for February features Judge Patt Maney and Mr. Tom Rice. Judge Maney is spearheading a new VA Veterans Center project in Fort Walton Beach and Mr. Rice talks about the upcoming Emerald Coast Honor Flight project to honor our local WWII veterans. Tune into Cox Channel 6 Wednesdays at 6:00 p.m., Thursdays at 7:00 p.m. and Fridays at 10:30 a.m.
- The next Roundtable Breakfast will be Wednesday, February 25, featuring Speaker Allan Bense. Location is the Empire Room of the Ramada on Okaloosa Island; start time is 7:30 a.m. Call the EDC office to make your reservation, 850-651-7374, by February 19.



Välkommen! & Welcome!



- What?** SWEDISH-AMERICAN EXPO DAY
When? MARCH 3, 2009, 10 A.M. – 3 P.M.
Where? EMERALD COAST CONFERENCE CENTER, FT. WALTON BEACH, FLORIDA

The **SWEDISH-AMERICAN EXPO DAY**, a business conference designed to facilitate Swedish-American business connections, will take place in Fort Walton Beach, Florida. Surrounded by the sugar-white beaches and emerald waters of Northwest Florida, the **SWEDISH-AMERICAN EXPO DAY** gives you the opportunity to enjoy the following features:

◇ *Business Overview*

Learn about trade and investment opportunities for Swedes interested in establishing business with US companies. Just like Sweden, Florida is keenly interested in reducing its dependency on fossil fuels and is actively engaged in renewable energy and power generation research. Speakers from the Swedish-American Chamber of Commerce and Enterprise Florida will present an overview of the business climate.

Industry sectors that maybe of interest to Värmland companies include:

- Bioinformatics
- Computer application development & software
- Defense electronics
- Medical devices
- Network security applications
- Orthopedics and sports medicine
- Water treatment equipment
- Wireless broadband

◇ *Business Matchmaking*

To optimize your stay in Florida during the **SWEDISH-AMERICAN EXPO DAY**, we recommend that you submit a request for matchmaking. This service is designed to help you find potential partners, distributors, agents, and/or consultants that meet the specific needs of your company. There is no fee for this activity – we just want to make sure you have a chance to learn that there is more to the sunshine state than fun and sun – although there is plenty of that! Simply fill out a matchmaking form, describing your company profile and what types of contacts you are seeking and e-mail it to us by no later than January 15, 2009. This form helps us set up relevant meetings for you. The meeting schedule will be shared with you via e-mail about one week prior to the **SWEDISH-AMERICAN EXPO DAY** to give you time to prepare questions.

◇ *Networking.*

We invite small, medium, and large companies to connect and develop new business relations with Floridian counterparts. Whether you are trying to import a US-made product, serve as a distributor or agent for a Florida product or service or simply want to gauge what it would take to expand in Florida, this event is your chance to connect.

◇ *Registration & Questions?*

Limited Seating! Early bird registration \$25 through January 15, 2009; registration thereafter is \$29. Registration fee includes lunch. To register or get more information about the **SWEDISH-AMERICAN EXPO DAY**, please contact us at kayr@florida-edc.org or +1 850 651 7374.



www.florida-edc.org



www.fwbtc.com



www.eflorida.com



www.sacc-usa.org