MIAMI TODAY

WEEK OF THURSDAY, AUGUST 11, 2016 — *A Singular Voice in an Evolving City* — WWW.MIAMITODAYNEWS.COM $4.00

TRANSPORTATION

MDX boasts of safer expressways, pg. 9

Beach Corridor project given Priority 1 status, pg. 11

FYI MIAMI

DOWNTOWN PRICES STEADY: Miami's Downtown Development Authority has released its mid-year 2016 report, and it contains some good news for renters and potential buyers. Conducted by Integra Realty Resources, the report covers the period from January to June 2016, and says that prices "will continue to hold for new, under construction, and delivered inventory." There are exceptions, of course: Brickell City Centre raised prices on average by 9% this quarter.

DORAL MOVING SLOWLY TOWARD ONE-WAY STREETS: City of Doral officials have yet to conduct a study approved by county commissioners in March regarding turning some of the city's two-way roads in one-way streets. The city has received a grant from the county's Metropolitan Planning Organization that stipulates that the city match 20% of the value of the study, said Doral City Manager **Edward A. Rojas**. The item is up for approval later this month, he said, after which the study meant to determine the feasibility of the traffic clearing measure will be conducted.

RENTS DROPPING: Rents in Miami were down by 0.4% in July, according to a report this week by Apartment List, an online company that publishes renter and house-related news stories. The median rent price for a two-bedroom apartment for August is $2,350 and rent for a one-bedroom is $1,860, 1.1% lower than they were in July 2015, according to the report. Rents in coastal cities continue to be the nation's most expensive**,** the report says, with New York City and San Francisco boasting the highest rents in the nation.

SPOTLIGHT ON SMALL BUSINESS: The City of Coral Gables, in conjunction with the Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce and the Business Improvement District of Coral Gables, has launched a campaign focused on encouraging retail shoppers to "shop local" at small businesses unique to the city. The first event tied in with last weekend's Florida 2016 Sales Tax Holiday, but Family Day on Aragon – a free block party – and the Summer Sidewalk Sale will be hosted on Aug. 13 and Aug. 20.

WHEELS DONATION: City commissioners approved donating a Ford E350 one-ton Econoline van to Attachable Inc., a 501(c)(3) non-profit. The 2004 vehicle, declared as surplus by the city's chief procurement officer, will be used to enrich the community, a staff report says. Attachable Inc. aims to improve the lives of youth facing challenges within the juvenile justice system, local economy and educational system, the report says.

THE ACHIEVER

Photo by Marlene Quaroni

Admiral Kurt Tidd

US Southern Command leader stresses close partnerships

The profile is on Page 4

New trolley routes draw big numbers

By John Charles Robbins

When Miami city commissioners return from the August break Sept. 8, they will again take up the idea of expanding the city's popular trolley service city-wide.

And they are bound to be buoyed by impressive ridership numbers on the city's newest routes for its free trolley service.

The city launched trolley service in Little Havana, Coconut Grove and Wynwood on March 1.

Collin Worth, a transportation analyst with the city's Capital Improvements and Transportation Program, provided Miami Today with ridership tallies that show steady growth on the new routes.

The new trolleys added more than 53,000 riders to the city's monthly overall ridership for March. In February, city trolleys carried 311,056 riders. When the numbers were tallied for March, the new routes coupled with other increases in ridership totaled 407,851.

Of the three new routes, the service through Little Havana is by far the most popular, followed by Coconut Grove and Wynwood, based on monthly ridership counts for March-June.

The Little Havana route saw 40,585 riders in March, 55,796 in April, 64,184 in May and 71,754 in June.

The Wynwood trolley attracted 3,593 riders in March, 5,126 in April, 5,847 in May and 5,888 riders in June.

The only slight drop in ridership was experienced on the Coconut Grove route between May and June; however a new connection with neighboring Coral Gables may grow those numbers going forward.

In March the Grove trolley service handled 9,692 riders, 14,857 in April, 15,847 in May, and 14,430 in June, according to city officials.

It was May 2015 when commissioners directed the launch of three new routes within six months. It took more than nine months for the changes to be implemented.

Consulate General of Italy in Miami kept busy

By Camila Cepero

■Vacationing Italians love Miami, pg. 23

An unprecedented 500 Italians a month are registering as foreign residents within the Consulate General of Italy in Miami's jurisdictions throughout the Southeast US and Caribbean, said the consulate, with most settling in to call Florida home.

Aside from Florida, the jurisdiction of the Consulate General of Italy in Miami includes Georgia, South Carolina, Alabama, Mississippi, Puerto Rico, US Virgin Islands, Bahamas, Jamaica, St. Maarten, St. Eustatius, Saba, American Virgin Islands, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands and Turks & Caicos.

From 2013 to 2016, registrations in the jurisdictions increased by nearly 24%. Specifically, there was an increase of 9% over 2013-2014 and 2014-2015, and an increase of 5% was registered in the period from 2015 until July 2016.

"About 500 people a month are registering," said Italian Consul General Gloria Marina Bellelli. "This increase is due to new people coming directly from Italy but also from families with dual nationality coming from Central and South America – especially from those countries characterized by a high degree of social, political and economic instability, such as Venezuela, Brazil and Argentina," she said.

The consulate only keeps track of Italian citizens who register as foreign residents with the Registry of Italians Resident Abroad.

As of July 2016 there are 32,597 Italian residents in the consular jurisdiction, with 27,743 of those (85%) in Florida – a 7% increase in the state since 2014.

Of the Italian residents in Florida, 53% are male, 46% are female, 7,222 (26%) are in Miami, 745 (3%) are in Orlando and 494 (2%) are in Tampa.

"We have noticed during the last six months specifically that the number of Italians is rapidly increasing, and that's because of the Italian economic situation," Ms. Bellelli said.

"This has been a growing trend since the 1990s and has been very strong during the last three to four years... [during which] there have been more Italians investing in Miami and doing business here," said Nevio Boccanera, executive director of the Italy-America Chamber of Commerce Southeast.

"Most of the Italians who came here in the past were restaurateurs and pizza makers," Ms. Bellelli said. "Nowadays, a major part of Italians are still employed in the food service industry, however there are also professionals, in particular lawyers – the demand for lawyers is high due to immigration – entrepreneurs, artisans, engineers and architects – due to the high activity level in the construction industry."

Additionally, she said, Italian students come here for educational exchanges and professors come to teach at local universities, particularly for medical programs.

"Italians come here because they always hear about Miami and that you live well," Ms. Bellelli said, "so they say, 'let's think about going there because we will live well, the weather is OK, the lifestyle is OK and we can find a job.'"

"I would say that New York has been historically the gateway for Italian businesses but during the last five to six years, Italian economic agencies have started to look at other cities. I would say Miami, after New York, is the most popular," Mr. Boccanera said.

"What's important is that there is an attraction to this part of the world for Italians," Ms. Bellelli said. "The connection is very strong between the two countries."

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The Insider

TALBERT ON TV: **William D. Talbert III**, president and CEO of the Greater Miami Chamber & Visitors Bureau, is a featured guest on the *"Eat This, Drink That, Go"* radio/TV show with **Jimmy Cefalo**, which will be broadcast from 8 a.m. to 10 a.m., Aug. 13, on WIOD 610 AM, iHeartRadio and The Beach Channel.

William D. Talbert III

AUTHORITY OFFERS FREE PARKING: The Miami Parking Authority aims to help the Wynwood community by offering two hours of free parking to those who visit the area, effective 12:01 a.m. Aug. 10 through 11:59 p.m. Aug. 31. Wynwood has been identified as a hot spot in the Zika virus outbreak. The area covered by the parking program includes: the railroad tracks on the east to Northwest Sixth Avenue on the west, and from Northwest 20th Street on the south to Northwest 29th Street on the north. Additionally, MPA will offer a $3 flat rate to parkers who attend the Wynwood Art Walk this upcoming weekend.

HONORING REVEREND MAXI: Miami city commissioners supported the codesignation by the Florida Legislature of Northeast 73rd Street from Northeast Second Avenue to Northeast Third Court as Rev. **Wilner Maxi** Street. The city manager is to send the resolution to the state for sign installation. The resolution notes Rev. Maxi began his ministry in 1976 and was ordained pastor of Haitian Emmanuel Baptist Church in 1983 at the church's original location at Northwest Fourth Avenue and 77th Street. In 2012, the Wilner Maxi Community Center was established with youth, afterschool and elderly programs. Rev. Maxi hosts a pastoral fellowship program with 40 Baptist pastors from the community, and the church has built more than eight churches in Haiti.

NEW LOT FOR LIBERTY CITY: Miami's Off-Street Parking Board approved updating a plan for a surface parking lot at 1620-46 NW 58th St. The board authorized the Miami Parking Authority to pay the designers, RH Engineering Group, $27,500 to update a previous design and complete construction documents. "Lack of parking inventory on NW 17th Avenue causes patrons visiting the merchants in that area to spill over into the residential area," a staff report says. The mayor's office has made a commitment to cover the budget shortfall that stalled the project several years ago.

LEAGUE OF THEIR OWN: Miami city commissioners are backing the Police Athletic League, or P.A.L., with $25,000 from the Law Enforcement Trust Fund, as approved by the chief of police. The Police Athletic League provides several programs that merge sports and recreation with good citizenship activities, supplemented by substance abuse education, tutoring and career counseling. The programs are designed to prevent and combat violence, crime and juvenile delinquency.

HOMESTEAD COMPOSTING ON HOLD: Homestead's sewer waste composting project has been temporarily shut down due to damage caused by the city while working on ancillary equipment, according to the South Dade Soil & Water Conservation District. The facility, which turns Homestead's biosolid waste into super-strength fertilizer, was reported by Miami Today in April to not yet be running at full capacity. Equipment repairs are expected to take several weeks.

SLOW ADVANCEMENT IN PARKLET PROGRAM: The City of Miami Beach's Washington Avenue Pilot Parklet Permit Program has advanced little since Miami Today reported that as of May, the city has been working to make a manual available online specifying guidelines and criteria for the submission of "parklet" sketches. Parklets will be a business-owned space occupying a street parking space and are intended to beautify the city. To date, no businesses have applied for permits, said **Melissa Berthier** of the city's Office of Communications.

NO SAFE PLACE, YET: At a July 21 meeting of the Miami-Dade County Homeless Trust, **James Bernat**, special assistant to the Miami police chief and the homeless coordinator for the City of Miami, asked whether the trust could establish a safe place for homeless families while they wait for help. "Is there a way for future discussions of a safe and secure place where officers can bring a family until outreach can do an assessment?" **Ron Book**, trust chair, said that he empathizes with officers but is concerned about "creating something new" while other needs are still unmet, due to lack of resources.

James Bernat

Ron Book

TREES' FOREVER HOMES: West Kendall Baptist Hospital will host the county's next Adopt-a Tree event from 9 a.m. to noon Aug. 27, 15755 SW 96th St in the staff parking lot. The Adopt-a-Tree program, which saw its first event in 2001, is designed to strengthen the condition of our community's tree canopy and provides Miami-Dade single-family or duplex homeowners with two free trees every year. Adopt-a-Tree species, event dates and times are subject to change. Tree quantities are limited and will be given away on a first-come, first-served basis. Details: adoptatree@miamidade.gov, 305-372-6784

50 NEW JOBS: Serono, the healthcare business of Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, has relocated its Latin American headquarters from Sao Paulo to Miami. According to a recent report by the Beacon Council, the move will add at least 50 new jobs at an average annual salary of $200,000, and $1 million in new capital investment to the local economy within the next three years. EMD Serono specializes in developing therapies with groundbreaking potential to mitigate illnesses including cancer and has a strong market position in neurology, endocrinology and reproductive health.

CHECKS AND BALANCES: The Omni Community Redevelopment Agency board recently approved a resolution authorizing CRA Executive Director **Jason Walker** to retain the firm of Sanson, Kline, Jacomino, Tandoc & Gamarras LLP, to provide external auditing services to the Omni CRA for a term of three years, with the option to renew for three additional one-year terms, in an amount not to exceed $15,000 a year. The funds are to be allocated from the Omni tax increment fund entitled Accounting and Audit.

Miami-Dade addresses Zika concerns

By Susan Danseyar

During a special county commission meeting Tuesday, Mayor Carlos Giménez told residents and officials that Miami-Dade sends a mosquito control team out the moment there's a case suspected to be related to the Zika virus, and has been doing "whatever it takes" to protect residents' health.

That's the administration's first concern, he said, and then it's to lift a travel ban to Wynwood, the first travel ban ever in the US.

Meanwhile, the mayor is putting together a list of reimbursables as Gov. Rick Scott requested so the county can be paid back for what has come out of the budget to address public education campaigns, spraying the small area in Wynwood during early-morning hours and cleaning 150,000 storm basins every month through mosquito season to ensure they won't be a breeding ground for the bugs.

In addition, Deputy Mayor Alina Hudak said abandoned tires have been identified as a key issue for mosquito breeding so the county is doing a sweep of bulky waste pick-ups daily.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention sent a Zika Virus Emergency Response team here to conduct tests and advise county staff on spraying.

David Daigle, director of communication for the CDC's office of public health preparedness and response, said the team leader is looking at a plan and so far is seeing a "knock-down rate" from spraying with a chemical called Naled.

"When we see a number of cases in Wynwood, our plan is to stop transmission right away," he said. "We understand there are concerns about Naled although we don't have any – we're comfortable with it."

According to the Environmental Protection Agency and the CDC, Naled does not pose a health risk to people when sprayed in low concentrations.

The spraying takes place at dawn, Mr. Daigle said, when there are few people out and coinciding with the time mosquitoes are out in force. The CDC is also offering a clinic for pregnant women, free of charge, where they can be tested for the Zika virus.

Mr. Giménez said we can use help from our municipal partners cleaning the drains as well as state and federal support.

County Commissioner Danielle Levine Cava said she was gratified to hear how closely the state and the CDC are working together, although not yet Congress.

Commission Chairman Jean Monestime said until the governor declares a state of emergency, Wynwood businesses cannot receive FEMA funding and, when Mr. Giménez agreed the county should look into getting some type of relief from state or federal government, said he will come up with legislation toward that end.

I-395 signature bridge project advances

By Susan Danseyar

The Florida Department of Transportation is currently seeking design proposals after setting the minimum requirements for the signature I-395 bridge project, and for the open spaces underneath the elevated roadway, which are due back in late 2016.

At this time, six firms have been short-listed, according to Ivette Ruiz-Paz, media outreach specialist for the department's District Six.

Included in the request for proposals was the Aesthetics Manuel which sets the minimum requirements for the bridge and plaza, Ms. Ruiz-Paz told Miami Today on Tuesday.

"The minimum requirements for the bridge include a minimum suspended span length of 500 feet and a minimum elevation above the ground of 245 feet," she said. "The signature bridge must be a structural solution. The minimum requirements for the open spaces underneath are a combination of sidewalks and plantings. The drainage will be handled in a way to allow development of the full space in the future."

According to Ms. Ruiz-Paz, the next major step is the pass/fail of the Aesthetic Signature Bridge proposals. She said the proposers with passing concepts may submit a final design proposal. The department anticipates awarding the project to the winning proposer by spring of next year.

The scope of the project includes a signature bridge and open spaces under the bridge to encourage community gatherings, Ms. Ruiz-Paz said.

The project is estimated to begin construction late 2017, she said, and will take about five years to complete.

This is just one of several design proposals considered for I-395.

The total project consists of four separate components: I-395 re-construction, I-95 pavement reconstruction, Miami-Dade Expressway Authority's (MDX) widening of State Road 83611 and the Westbound Connector. The maximum construction funding for each component is: $555 million for I-395, $186 million for MDX SR 83611, $25 million for I-95 Pavement Reconstruction and $35 million for the westbound connector.

"This project addresses operational deficiencies, increases capacity, and improves safety," Ms. Ruiz-Paz said. "It builds a landmark in our community that will change the skyline of Miami with the signature bridge, while providing gathering areas under the bridge that will enhance the communities. The project also reconnects historic Overtown."

The Aesthetic Review Committee, involved in the evaluation of the aesthetics for the entire project, including the pass/fail of the Aesthetic Signature Bridge proposal, consists of five members: County Commissioner Audrey Edmonson, Alyce Robertson, executive director of the Miami Downtown Development Authority; Alberto Parjus, assistant city manager, City of Miami; M. John Richard, president and CEO of the Adrienne Arsht Center of the Performing Arts; and Brian Blanchard, FDOT assistant secretary for Engineering & Operations.

We want to hear from YOU!
Phone: (305) 358-2663

Staff Writers:

Camila Cepero
ccepero@miamitodaynews.com

Susan Danseyar
sdanseyar@miamitodaynews.com

John Charles Robbins
jrobbins@miamitodaynews.com

Letters to Editor
editor@miamitodaynews.com

People Column
people@miamitodaynews.com

Michael Lewis
mlewis@miamitodaynews.com

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New task force promotes creation of affordable housing

By Catherine Lackner

A newly formed group of the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce aims to help a broad spectrum of residents — from those just emerging from homelessness to middle-class working professionals — find housing that will not consume the majority of their budgets.

The Housing Solutions Task Force is a multi-sector, public-private partnership that will work to resolve the persistent affordable housing problem in Miami-Dade County, according to a July release by the group.

Bobbie Ibarra

The task force "will meet with developers, adopt best practice housing models, increase supply of rentals and take other actions that promote the creation and preservation of affordable housing units locally," it said.

"Miami is the third least affordable city in the country for renters, and housing costs can be up to 60% of income for many — doubling the recommended 30%. Access to affordable rental housing is key to preventing and ending homelessness."

It's also a significant concern to employers who might have second thoughts about relocating to Miami or opening branches of their businesses here, observers say.

Carlos Fernandez-Guzman

Given the chamber's track record in sparking community change by helping found the Beacon Council, One Community One Goal and the Miami-Dade County Homeless Trust, it was a natural vehicle for this important social and economic mission, said Bobbie Ibarra, executive director of the nonprofit organization Miami Homes for All.

Carlos Fernandez-Guzman, president of Pacific National Bank and former chamber chairman, will chair the group. Co-chairs are Ms. Ibarra; County Deputy Mayor Russell Benford; Guillermo Castillo, head of commercial banking for JPMorgan Chase in South Florida; Neisen Kasdin, Miami office-managing partner at Akerman LLP; and Steven E. Marcus, president and CEO of the Health Foundation of South Florida.

Other task force members will include grass roots advocates, real estate developers, community economic development coalitions, academia, the faith-based community and governmental officials, the release said.

"Following our [May 15] Housing Summit with the GMCC and other community partners, we identified nine policy outcomes that all of the high-level, multi-sector participants believe must occur to address the housing crisis," Ms. Ibarra said. "The creation of this task force was the first priority because together, we can elevate and sustain the matter of affordable housing as a critical issue in our community."

"By bringing together this task force, we can address the critical issue of making housing affordable so people don't risk being homeless because they can't afford rent," Mr. Castillo added.

JP Morgan Chase is providing funding support for the initiative, the release said. "In the past two years, the firm has invested more than $2 million in affordable housing opportunities that connect low- and-moderate-income people to economic opportunity in Florida in 2015 and 2016 by supporting housing nonprofits across the state from Miami to Jacksonville, and funding the first comprehensive data report with recommendations on how to end homelessness in the state.

"In Miami, the firm also seeded the creation of the University of Miami's Miami Affordability Project, a tool that provides data to visualize neighborhood-level market dynamics. The firm also supported the South Florida Community Land Trust in expanding the Land Trust Model to Miami-Dade County as a way to preserve housing affordability and support inclusive mixed-income communities," the release said.

The group is in the organizing stages now and expects to hold its first formal meeting next month, Ms. Ibarra said.

Ross Report on Real Estate

by Audrey Ross

Platinum Service – Platinum Return

So you're ready to sell your house—good for you! Not only do you want to sell your house to someone who'll enjoy living there as much as you have, but you also want to make sure that its closing price reflects the time and effort you've put into its maintenance, improvements and upkeep. So, how do you do it? What guidelines are you going to use to choose a Realtor®, one you can relate to and who can do the best job for you?

• **Knowledge** is one of the most important factors for finding the perfect Realtor® to meet your needs. Your ideal Realtor® should be intimately knowledgeable in the luxury home market for your area, possess top-notch marketing skills and should have a strong working relationship with other Realtors® of the same caliber.

• **Communication** between you and your Realtor® is essential. What are the goals you both have? Are your goals compatible? You and your Realtor® need to be able to talk about all aspects of the house selling process, from the initial listing process to virtual tours to how you want an open house conducted.

• **Ask for a marketing plan**. An in depth, point by point process of what the Realtor® will do to get your house sold in the least amount of time possible with the least amount of fuss should be a deciding factor when engaging services. Your ideal Realtor® will have a list of what you need to do as a seller to prepare your house for market. Co-operation between seller and agent is necessary for success, so choose your Realtor® wisely for the platinum service you deserve. For professional advice on all aspects of buying or selling real estate, please contact me at aross@miamirealestate.com or 305-960-2575, or come by the office at 355 Alhambra Circle, 9th Floor, in Coral Gables.

www.miamirealestate.com

Filming in Miami

These film permits were issued last week by the Miami-Dade County Department of Regulatory & Economic Resources' Office of Film and Entertainment, (305) 375-3288; the Miami Mayor's Office of Film, Arts & Entertainment, (305) 860-3823; and the Miami Beach Office of Arts, Culture and Entertainment-Film and Print Division, (305) 673-7070.

Machete Productions. Los Angeles. Wags Miami Season 1. Countywide, Unincorporated Miami-Dade County.

Yap Mosquito Productions Inc. Toronto. Mosquito. City of South Miami, Solid Waste Management Department.

Joy Collective Ltd. Brooklyn. B-Roll. Countywide, Miami Beach citywide.

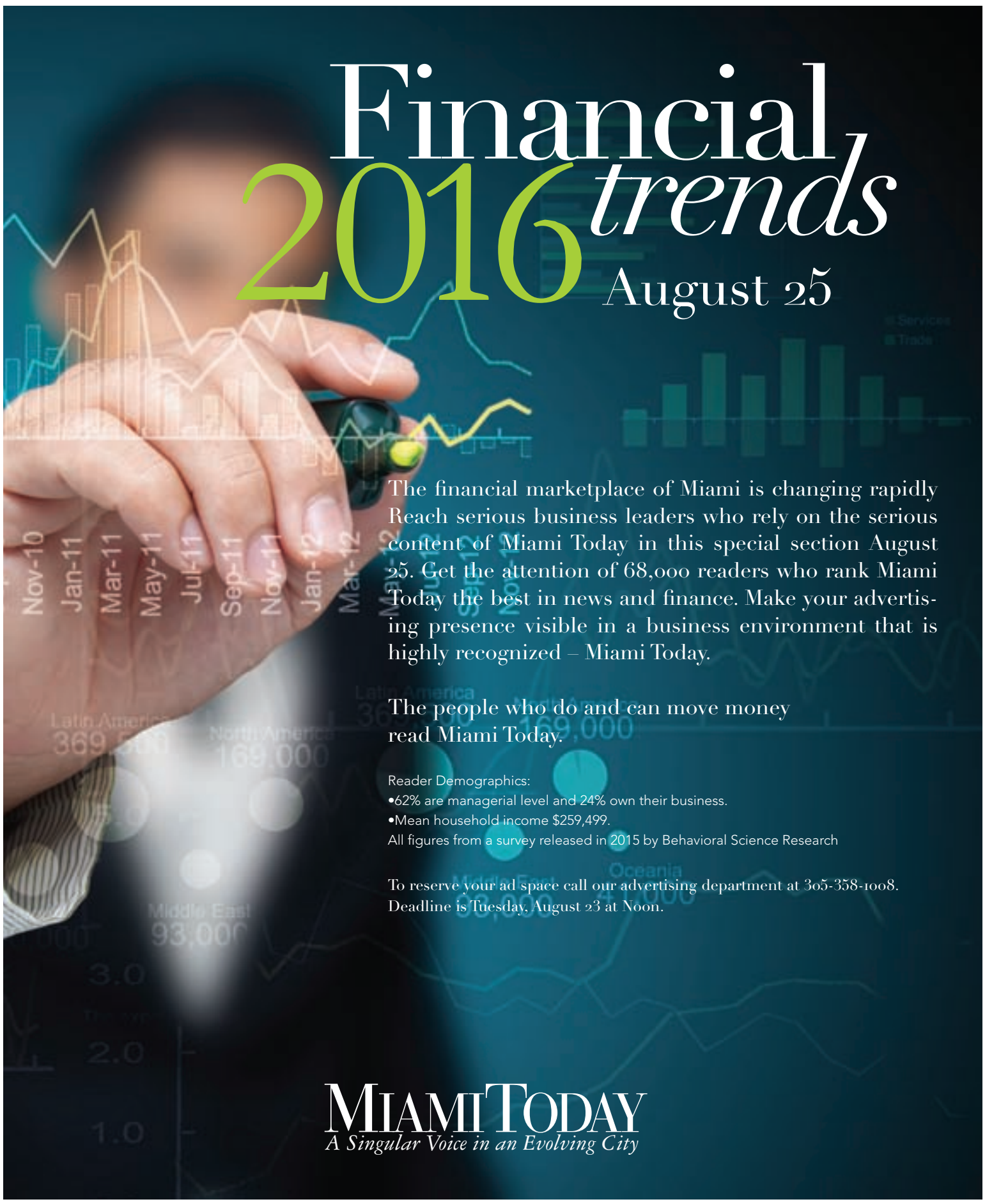
N House Productions. Miami. Carters. Countywide.

Stewart Tilghman Fox Bianchi & Cain P.A. Miami. Firm Photos. Courtroom 6-1.

First Option Productions Inc. Miami Beach. Peach Patrol. Countywide, Miami Beach citywide.

Photography by Depuhl. Miami. Miami-Dade County Parks Photoshoot II. Countywide.

Education Management Corporation. Pittsburgh. The Twelves Warriors. Greynolds Park.



Admiral Kurt Tidd is working closely with international...

Since beginning his new position as Commander of the US Southern Command six months ago, Admiral Kurt Tidd has been traveling for four of them. He's met a number of key civic and political leaders in the last two, and said he'll be reaching out even more now that he's settling into the job.

With a mission to protect the southern approaches of the country, Admiral Tidd said the most important security challenges he's focused on are the illicit networks that pose a threat to US safety. They range from purely economically-motivated criminal networks to purely ideologically-motivated terrorist networks, he said, but stressed the reality is there's a real blurring of the lines between them.

Admiral Tidd, whose career has been focused on diplomacy and counter-terrorism, comes from a military family and now his youngest daughter just joined the Coast Guard.

He said he probably had alternate plans a few times very early on but, when he was about 8 years old he visited the destroyer his father commanded. It seemed like such a fantastic thing to do, he said, that he knew he'd also serve in the US Navy.

Miami Today reporter Susan Danseyar interviewed Admiral Tidd at the US Southern Command.

Q: What's the mission of the US Southern Command?

A: Ultimately, US Southern Command exists to safeguard the southern approaches of the United States. The way we do that is by working very closely with international partners, primarily military partners, but really partners from all across the region to be able to ensure that the networks that pose a threat to our security are not able to operate freely.

Q: What's the command's area of responsibility?

A: It includes all of Latin America, so Central America south of Mexico, and then all of South America and the Caribbean.

Q: What are the security issues of the highest concern that you'll be focusing on?

A: The single most important are the illicit networks that pose a threat to our security. They range from purely economically-motivated criminal networks to purely ideologically-motivated terrorist networks but the reality is there's a real blurring of the lines between them. There are criminal networks that support terrorist activity; there are terrorist networks that support their efforts with criminal activity. It's the networks themselves that pose the threat to our security.

Q: Has the thaw in relations with Cuba affected your job?

A: It is obviously an area that shows interesting possibilities but ultimately the pace of any change that occurs as a result of this normalization of diplomatic activity will largely be driven by the Cubans themselves. Our US Coast Guard has had a relationship where we focus on mutual security interests but whether or not that develops beyond where it is today, where we exchange information to try to counteract the flow of drugs, primarily through the Caribbean, only time will tell. We are watchful; we're waiting. We'll see if there are opportunities out there but, frankly, we just don't know how fast it will develop.

Photo by Marlene Quaroni

Admiral Kurt Tidd says the US Southern Command has a shared responsibility to help protect shipping through the Panama Canal, working closely with the government of Panama.

The Achiever

Kurt Tidd

Admiral of the United States Navy
Commander of the United States Southern Command
9301 NW 33rd St
Doral 33172
(305) 437-1213
southcom.miami.sc-cc.mbx.omb-cmd-public-affairs@mail.mil
Age: 60
Born: Honolulu, Hawaii
Education: Bachelor's in naval science with a subspecialty in European affairs, United States Naval Academy; master's degree in political science, the University of Bordeaux, Bordeaux, France.
Personal Philosophy: Creating, preserving and never compromising trust.

Q: Does SouthCom do anything to facilitate the relationship?

A: No. We participate in a variety of conferences; we host some conferences in which Cuba has been included. But by law, military-to-military activity is not permitted so we just talk to each other and we share perspectives on the security challenges, in particular the illicit activities that occur in the Caribbean.

Q: Has the overt corruption in some of the major Latin American countries affected the way the Southern Command interacts with them?

A: You know well the history of this region, much like the history of the United States a century ago. Corruption was significant and a fact of political life. What's promising is we're seeing in a number of states where corruption was a real significant issue that the populations, for the first time ever, are able to hold their governments accountable thanks to social media. Governments are becoming responsive to social media. The fact that you've got a serving president of one of the Central American countries sitting in prison now, because the people held him accountable, is promising. We hope that will continue to evolve.

Q: You told Congress that we owe it to our Latin American partners to "do our part" to help them win their countries back from gangs and drug traffickers. What is our part and what form might this assistance take?

A: When I say we must do our part the significant illicit trafficking in drugs is driven largely by the insatiable demand in the United States to consume drugs, so that's a piece of it. That's not a military mission; it's a societal challenge that we're going to have to decide what to do about. We can expend significant effort to try to interdict those drugs but as long as demand remains high, it's going to drive the supply.

Now that said, we also have a shared responsibility to work closely with our partners throughout the region to help them develop their own capacity to deal with the insecurity that these illicit traffickers generate because of the massive amounts of money involved in illicit trafficking. When I say illicit trafficking, it's not just drugs. In fact, it's the trafficking in persons, the illegal smuggling of gold out of countries like Colombia and Peru where frankly the traffickers receive more money from trafficking in gold now than they do in moving drugs out of those countries.

It's this significant illicit activity on the part of the networks that we need to help the countries develop the capacity to deal with because, unlike perhaps some of the other regions around the world, in the US Southern Command the ultimate ability to deal with those problems rests in the hands of partner nation law enforcement, partner nation militaries, to a certain extent our own US federal law enforcement agencies have some authority stacked.

It's not a military mission to engage in that end game, but we can be enormously helpful in providing support: training some of the partner nation militaries through the US Department of State, help train some of the law enforcement organizations to be able to deal with these problems. We have a responsibility.

Congress has been enormously helpful in providing the resources for us to be able to train these partner nations to be more effective so that they can help resolve some of the problems themselves.

Q: What are the various activities that take place at SouthCom?

A: We engage in exercises with most countries throughout the region. In fact, this week (7/25) we are starting our largest exercise we run, called Exercise Panamax, which brings together about 25 different countries who share the responsibility to defend the Panama Canal. With the expanded Panama Canal recently opened, the economic prosperity of the region to an even greater extent will depend on the free flow of shipping through that canal. We have a shared responsibility and work with many countries here in the region but also as far away as Europe to be able to help protect the shipping through the canal. We work very, very closely with the government of Panama and with their security forces in order to come up with the means for us to partner together and be able to deal with it.

Q: What does the presence of the Southern Command add to the South Florida economy?

A: The latest figures I've seen are the military, which is largely made up of the US South Com headquarters and subordinate commands, contributes about $5 billion to the Miami-Dade area. If you look across the entire state of Florida, the latest figure for the Department of Defense is about $79 billion in a variety of different trades. So it's a significant economic stimulus to the region. We are very mindful of the fact that it's also a terrific place for our headquarters to be located for our families to live and we really have found a home here.

Q: Are there local businesses the Southern Command uses to meet its needs?

A: We work with a variety of businesses from the local contracting side all the way up to Miami International Airport playing a significant role because we travel throughout the region and shipping in and out of here, obviously, is very important. The international trade that goes through here, the various government consulates located here allows us to be able to deal diplomatically on a real time basis with countries from throughout the region. It's an international crossroads for Latin America and the Caribbean. In fact, often times it's easier to travel from one Latin American country to another by way of Miami than it is to travel directly between those countries just because of the robust international air travel that goes in and out of Miami.

Q: In addition to military activities, are there other tasks the command performs?

A: This is a military headquarters with military responsibilities so that is the principal area but we work very

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closely with our interagency partners – our federal law enforcement agencies, our intelligence community, our diplomatic community – and we have representation here within the headquarters of basically all of the elements of the national security enterprise. That allows us to deal on a regular basis with the Department of Homeland Security and its subordinate agencies: the Department of Justice, and the FBI. I would be remiss if I didn't call out the exceptionally important exchanges and work we do together with the US Coast Guard. The Coast Guard provides a significant presence of forces within the Caribbean and the eastern Pacific region. Frankly, we couldn't do our job without the tremendous support provided by Coast Guard.

Q: Do you perform humanitarian work as well with the diplomatic forces?

A: Many of the exercises we engage in are designed to help countries develop their own humanitarian assistance disaster response capabilities. We just completed a very large exercise in the Caribbean called Trade Winds. The Trade Winds exercise brings together countries across the Caribbean, Central America, and North America to develop their disaster response. We have the scenarios focus on things like hurricanes, tsunamis, relief from fires, volcanoes – all of the disasters which unfortunately are endemic throughout this region. We have some countries that have enormous capabilities in that respect. No single country has the ability to deal with all of the challenges that it might face on its own. We exercise our ability to come together as a cohesive team – we provide the means, some academics at the beginning of the exercise, we talk through best practices, different countries take on the responsibility of teaching different parts of the capabilities they have and then we do an exercise that is very challenging and provides an opportunity for a country to be able to organize itself and provide critical response in a timely manner to its population.

Q: Before coming to the US Southern Command, can you give me an overview of your career?

A: I did a little bit of a lot of different things. Basically, I was up in Mayport, Florida, as the commander of the US Naval Force Southern Command and US 4th Fleet. I've also spent a significant amount of time in the Middle East at Bahrain at our naval forces central command headquarters on deployments with carrier strike groups. Before that, I was stationed in Brussels when the Berlin Wall came down. Like a lot of my counterparts, I spent a lot of time in the Pentagon.

Q: You come from a Navy family. Did you always know you were going to follow the tradition?

A: I probably had some alternate plans a couple of times along the way but since I was about 8 years old my earliest memories of visiting my father's destroyer that he commanded seemed like just a fantastic thing to do. That was always something right up there at the very top of the list of things. I think I always knew.

Q: How are you acclimating to the Miami area?

A: Thoroughly enjoying it. We live in Coral Gables. The community is very warm and welcoming. We are getting to know the very vibrant multicultural experience here in Miami, the terrific restaurants.

Q: Have you met a lot of people in the community?

A: I've been in the job 6 months, 4 of those I've been on the road. In the 2 months that I've been here, the community has been very warm and welcoming. I've gone to the Chamber of Commerce, met with them and they very generously hosted an award ceremony for our enlisted troops from all different branches of the armed forces. I've met a number of the key civic leaders; the Mayor [Tomás Regalado] presented me with a key to the city and so the political leadership of Miami; and I've met the Doral political leadership as well as many in the larger Miami-Dade County.

Q: Are there partnerships, formal or informal, that you want to form?

A: I think it is important as a senior military leader with responsibilities that touch the business interests of this community to spend some time getting to know the leaders, understand and try to see this important region through their eyes to see what it is that drives their decision making. That will allow me to be able to do my job in a more informed manner.

Q: I noticed you are a French linguist. What sparked your interest in the language?

A: It was the era that I grew up in and French at that time was considered the diplomatic language and the focus was on the Cold War in Europe. Also, to be completely mundane, in my middle school you had 2 choices and it was French or Spanish. The French teacher was a native speaker as opposed to the Spanish teacher who was not a native speaker and I just thought I would learn better with a native teacher so that's how it worked out. It gave me the opportunity to open some wonderful doors, to work with the French military multiple times over the years as a midshipman doing exchange at the French Naval Academy and then to be able to do my post-graduate studies in Bordeaux as an Olmsted Foundation scholar to be able to spend 2 years studying at a foreign university.

Q: When you're not here at SouthCom, what are your hobbies and interests?

A: I'm an avid cyclist. I find that this is a challenging city to ride as a cyclist. Some progress could be made in making it a safer environment because it's a vibrant cycling community with wonderful weather so people can ride year around and it's important for it to be a safe area to ride.

Q: Tell me about your family.

A: As you said, I come from a military family. My father was career Navy, he did 34 years and is a member of the greatest generation; he's still with us. My brother, who is also a career naval officer, retired as the Chief of Navy Chaplains. My wife was a career military physician. She spent 7 years as an Army physician and 13 as a Navy physician so there's a lot of military in our family. Our youngest daughter has just joined the Coast Guard so we're trying to cover all the bases.

Q: Is there anything else about the US Southern Command or your job that you'd like people to know?

A: When people think about US Southern Command and particularly about this region, it's time that they recognize there are more important things going on besides the drugs. In reality, we have tremendous partners throughout this region who want to work and partner with us. We have common interests, we have a common cultural heritage and we have an ability to get after problems as real equal partners and so we need to take advantage of those opportunities. We need to work in close partnership with our friends whether it's Colombia, with whom we have sustained a decades' long relationship, as they have really reached a point where they stand on the edge of a historic peace that will end a 50-year civil war. We stood with them for the last several decades, we will continue to stand with them and we will need to continue to stand with them as they achieve the peace.

We also have wonderful partners with Brazil, with Peru, with countries across Central America. Chile is probably one of our most capable partners that we've been working with for many years.

So there are a whole host of critical strategic relationships with partners who have real capabilities and it's just a matter of us paying attention to them and finding new ways to work with them because we have security challenges down here and we need to pay attention to them.

MIAMI TODAY

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Urban emergency plans shouldn't be a secret downtown

As reports of global urban attacks and emergencies echo, we'd taken it for granted that Miami, as one of the globe's most visible beacons, is well prepared not only for hurricanes that sometimes threaten but for the unknown disasters that are becoming more frequent.

Michael Lewis

Whether it's an epidemic or fire, flooding or tsunami, terrorism or plane crash, we were sure that plans had long since been drawn, all thoroughly checked by the Federal Emergency Management Agency and disseminated to all key players in Miami.

We're still sure that excellent plans exist. But now we're also sure that not all the key players know what they say.

At a recent Miami Downtown Development Authority meeting, its chairman, Miami Commissioner Ken Russell, asked "What are our preparations?"

"We have been on the fringes of emergency management," he was told by the authority's executive director, Alyce Robertson. She told Mr. Russell that she had reached out to the city manager and police chief to "quickly come up to speed."

That puts downtown Miami a long way behind in a world where anything can happen at any moment – and is in fact happening more frequently. The taxpayer-financed agency that runs downtown development and provides some public service help should long since have been up to speed and offering input in disaster plans. Who knows downtown better?

Everyone ought to know the plans, everyone from public agencies to major employers to elected officials. Yet in the Downtown Development Authority meeting a city commissioner was asking a public agency in a room full of business leaders and nobody knew downtown's disaster plans.

On reflection, we shouldn't be surprised that the obvious step of communicating plans hadn't happened – or at least hadn't reached these key players.

It wasn't the first time that local government has overlooked the obvious. The county let sewer and water upgrades go undone for decades as it approved more and more development. Now we're facing a consent decree with the federal government and more than $13 billion in work that should have been done but never was, work we will now pay for via spiraling water and sewer rates.

There was also the matter of rapid construction and population growth with few new roads and little added transit, resulting in the traffic congestion that has now taken on emergency proportions. It was so obvious that you couldn't keep adding people and cars without adding ways to get around that most of us assumed, wrongly, that someone was paying attention.

So now we discover that with urban crises – mostly of a terrorist nature – growing more frequent, the folks who run downtown don't know the game plan if something happens. We must also question whether whatever plans we have compiled took into account expertise from these guardians of downtown.

We are certain that a thorough and detailed master plan for urban disaster here does exist. We would hope that only the Downtown Development Authority and its members were incredibly skipped, and that everyone else involved was not only part of the planning but has the plan in hand, ready to use should it ever become necessary.

The problem is, while a plan is needed only after a disaster, it's needed immediately, with no time to disseminate or study a plan. It must be in hand and ready to go, in hopes that it never will be used but with full knowledge that if need should arise, everyone will be involved immediately in vital steps that cannot wait.

Those doing the planning must make clear well in advance to everyone involved – from churches to schools to businesses to volunteers – what their roles would be. You can't prepare for disaster afterward.

The gap that is now apparent is in communication. Either the Downtown Development Authority forgot to tell its directors that it has the disaster plan for downtown or it doesn't have the plan.

In either case, emergency planners at the federal, state, county and city levels all need to make sure that everyone is reassured that a plan does in fact exist, that it is thorough, that it can and will work, that it has been updated to include every method of terrorism, and that everyone who might be involved after a disaster knows what the plan says well before anything ever occurs.

Thanks to Commissioner Russell and the Downtown Development Authority for making clear that we have at minimum a communication gap to close immediately.

European Union banking mess: are Italian banks doomed?

In January, European Union bureaucrats based in Brussels passed an EU banking reform referred to as the BRRD. The BRRD stands for Banking Recovery and Resolution Directive. The reform rules were aimed at shielding EU taxpayers from bailing out troubled EU banks with taxpayer-sourced funding.

Fred Kingery

The rules were modeled after the Cyprus banking crisis solution referred to as a "bail-in." A bail-in is where bank bond holders and large bank depositors are all placed at the front of the line and used as funding sources to offset a write-down of bad bank loans. Taxpayer-based funding (a bailout) becomes a last resort.

What was significant about this is that for the first time bank depositors have been officially added to the list of funding sources for offsetting bad bank loans. Bank depositors all over the world took special note of this "bail-in." The BRRD is a one-size-fits-all approach to dealing with EU problem banks if and when the time comes.

Unfortunately, the time has come for Italy's banking system but there is a major problem. For perspective on the problem consider the following facts on the EU banking system:

The US GDP is roughly $18 trillion. The EU GDP (representing 27 countries) is slightly smaller. The US banking system has assets approximating $16 trillion, which is slightly smaller than the US GDP. The EU banking system is a monster that holds over $45 trillion in assets.

Stated another way, the EU GDP is slightly less than the US GDP but the EU has a banking system about three times the size of the US banking system.

Within the EU, the German economy is the largest, with a GDP of $3.35 trillion. German bank assets come in at 3.3 times German GDP (roughly $11 trillion).

France's GDP is number two at $2.41 trillion, and France has bank assets 4.1 times its GDP (roughly $9.9 trillion).

Italy's GDP is number three at $1.81 trillion, with an attached banking system that is 2.5 times GDP (roughly $4.5 trillion).

The top three EU countries have combined bank assets of over $25 trillion, or 1.5 times bigger than the entire US banking system.

Carried on Italian banks' books are non-performing loans (NPLs) of about $400 billion. These are loans not being serviced by the borrower and not written off the banks' balance sheet – yet. Italian banks have the largest NPLs of any banking system within the EU.

A write-off of NPLs of this magnitude could destroy the capital adequacy of the entire Italian banking system. In effect, in a worst-case scenario, any attempt at a write-off of this magnitude could cause a termination of all non-central bank funding of the entire Italian banking system and it would cease to function.

Italian banks have issued about $200 billion in unsecured subordinated bond debt to Italian citizens. This debt is a significant portion of the banking system's capital structure. These bondholders are also the same Italian taxpayers who the BRRD reform is supposed to protect from any banking crisis in Italy.

However, these taxpayers/bondholders have now been put at the front of the line to provide funding for any "bail-in" when the time comes.

Making matters worse is the perception by the bondholder/taxpayer that the bank bonds they hold are as safe as a bank deposit, which is not only now not true but would only be true if the depositor were a small one, where "small" has yet to be defined.

See the problem? If you are an Italian bank bondholder or a bank depositor of some size, you have every right to be nervous. Very nervous.

There is an Italian election scheduled for October that has nothing to do with Italian banking. This election is an attempt to reform the Italian constitution. The reform might help stabilize the future tenure of any elected government.

Italy has had 63 elected governments since World War II. The current Italian prime minister, Matteo Renzi, says he will resign if he doesn't get the change to the constitution he is seeking.

Usually the response to that threat would be a collective "so what." However, currently waiting in the wings of Italian politics is a Eurosceptic movement called the Five Star Movement. Current polling shows that Five Star has the political strength to potentially win a snap election and form a new government in Italy. Part of the current appeal of the Five Star movement is to leave the EU, dump the Euro and return the Italian currency to the Lira.

When Brexit happened, it happened with the British Pound Sterling in place. All of British business and banking relationships were defined in Britain's own currency. This feature of Brexit will make a transition of England out of the EU difficult but not impossible. Any Italian move out of the Euro or out of the EU will easily destroy the whole of the massive EU banking system.

Sometime between now and the October elections in Italy, Angela Merkel and the German people will have a critical decision to make. They will have to decide if Germany will offer its financial assistance in support of an Italian bank bailout.

The decision to assist or not will have profound implications for all of the EU. It will signal a willingness to further integrate the entire EU experiment or not. If Germany blinks, then the entire Italian banking system could unravel in a blink also.

The Writer

Fred A. Kingery is a self-employed private-equity investor in domestic and international financial markets from New Wilmington, PA, and a guest commentator for The Center for Vision & Values at Grove City College.

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PEOPLE

F. Capablanca

Armando Bucelo Jr.

Yara Lorenzo

Jason Trauth

D. Wagner Katzen

John Zalkin

Akerman names partner

Akerman LLP has named **Brian Gart** partner of its national bankruptcy and reorganization practice group. Mr. Gart had been a managing director and general counsel at Gordian Group. He holds a JD from the University of Miami.

McKenzie Construction hires lead architect

McKenzie Construction has hired **Gilbert Atick** as lead architect of its internal design team. Mr. Atick had been an architectural designer at Oppenheim Architecture + Design. He holds a bachelor's degree from Florida International University and a master's degree from the Southern California Institute of Architecture.

Douglas Elliman adds realtor associate

Douglas Elliman Real Estate has added **Cristina Diez** as a realtor associate. Ms. Diez had been a sales associate at Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty. She holds an associate's degree from Miami Dade College.

Norwegian Chamber elects president

The Norwegian American Chamber of Commerce-South East Chapter of the United States has elected **Bjorg Eikeland** president. Ms. Eikeland is an attorney at Hickey Law Firm P.A. She holds a JD from the University of Miami.

FIBA inducts two to hall of fame

The Florida International Bankers Association has inducted **Elaine Bloom** and **Fernando Capablanca** into its hall of fame.

Ms. Bloom is president and chief executive officer at Plaza Health Network. She holds a bachelor's degree from Columbia University.

Mr. Capablanca is managing director at Whitecap Consulting Group LLC. He holds a bachelor's degree from New York University.

To Submit Information

Miami Today welcomes news of job changes, promotions, hiring and awards. Please send your submissions to Katya Maruri at *People @Miamitodaynews.com* or mail them to Miami Today, 2000 S. Dixie Highway, Suite 100, Miami FL 33133. Be sure to include contact information. We will select submissions for publication.

St. Thomas School appoints to board

St. Thomas University Law School has appointed **Armando Bucelo Jr.**, **Martha Fornaris**, **Bonnie Levin** and **Yara Lorenzo** to its board of advisors.

Mr. Bucelo Jr. is chairman of Bucelo Law Group. He holds an associate's degree from Miami Dade College and a bachelor's degree & JD from the University of Miami.

Ms. Fornaris is an attorney at Fornaris Law Firm. She holds a bachelor's degree and JD from the University of Miami.

Ms. Levin is a group supervisor at the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives. She holds a bachelor's degree from Nova Southeastern University and a JD from St. Thomas University.

Ms. Lorenzo is an attorney at Hogan Lovells. She holds a bachelor's degree from Brown University and a JD from St. Thomas University.

Siegfried Rivera Law Firm names partner

Siegfried, Rivera, Hyman, Lerner, De La Torre, Mars & Sobel P.A. has named **Jason Trauth** partner. Mr. Trauth had been a partner at Lydecker Diaz. He holds a bachelor's degree from Texas A&M University and a JD from the University of Miami.

Bankers Association elects board chair

The Florida International Bankers Association has elected **Luiz Carlos Couto** as FIBA board chair. Mr. Couto is managing director at Bank of America Merrill Lynch. He holds a bachelor's degree from Faculdade de Administração de Sao Paulo.

Kluger Kaplan adds of counsel

Kluger, Kaplan, Silverman, Katzen & Levine P.L. has added **Diane Wagner Katzen** as of counsel. Ms. Katzen had been a partner at Richman Greer P.A. She holds a bachelor's degree from Boston University and a JD from the University of Miami.

KYMP adds partner

Kaplan Young & Moll Parrón PLLC has added **Juan Carlos Planas** as partner. Mr. Planas had been of counsel at Kurkin Brandes LLP. He holds a bachelor's degree from Florida State University and a JD from St. Thomas University.

Rivergate names VP of client services

Rivergate KW Residential has named **John Zalkin** vice president of client services. Mr. Zalkin had been managing director at Kent Services. He holds a bachelor's degree from Florida International University.

Kluger Kaplan promotes to partner

Kluger, Kaplan, Silverman, Katzen & Levine, P.L. has promoted **Marko Cerenko** to partner. Mr. Cerenko had been an attorney. He holds a bachelor's degree from Duke University and a JD from the University of Miami.

Allen Morris Co. adds associate

The Allen Morris Company has added **Natalia East** as an associate. Ms. East had been a realtor associate at Keller Williams/Real Estate Empire Group. She holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Texas at Austin.

Saks Fifth Avenue appoints VP

Saks Fifth Avenue has appointed **Ramona Messore** as vice president and general manager of its Brickell City Centre location. Ms. Messore had been an assistant store manager at Macy's. She holds an associate's degree from Dawson College.

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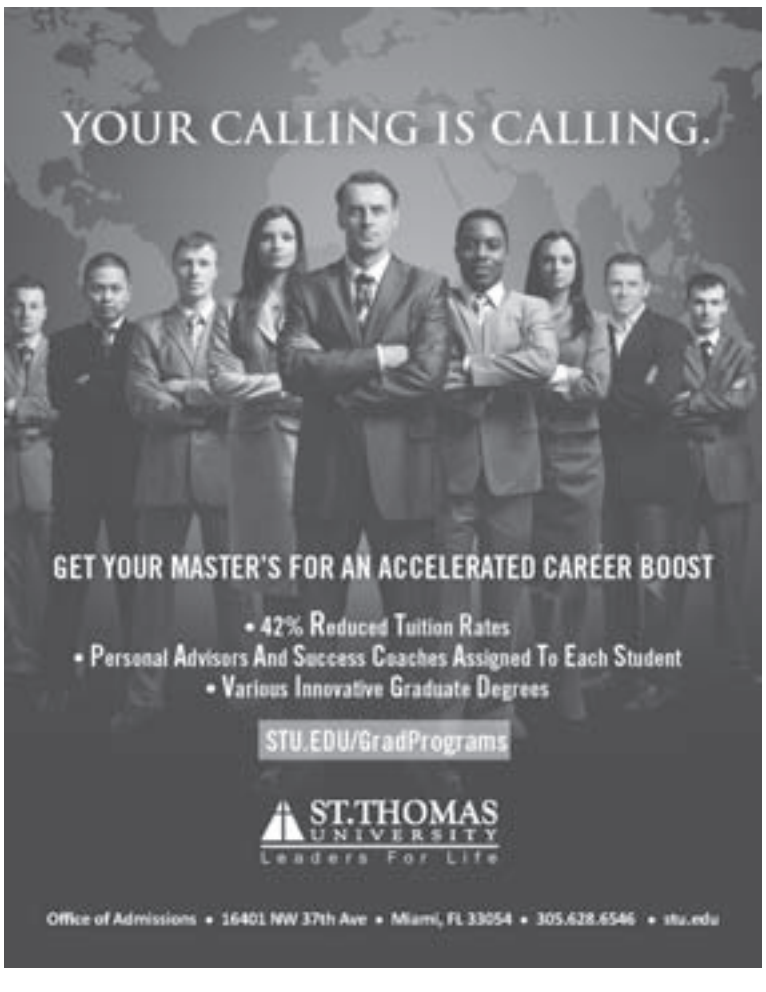

Medical marijuana industry could mean big bucks for the county

By Susan Danseyar

Developing an economic impact study for an activity that will become legal is challenging without actual data, but a report by the county administration analyzed anticipated jobs and sales for a future medical marijuana industry to estimate $61.9 million for Miami-Dade, growing to $62.8 million by 2025.

The production of medical cannabis by approved dispensing organizations, per state law, is anticipated to begin by September 2016, with dispensing in October 2016. The rules governing the Compassionate Medical Cannabis Act of 2014, signed into law by Gov. Rick Scott on June 16, 2014, dictates that Florida is divided into five regions with one producer per region.

Miami-Dade has been decaled in the Southeast region where the approved dispensing organization, which must have been a state-certified plant nursery for the past 30 years, is Costa Nursery Farms operating under the name of Modern Health Concepts.

The best-case scenario for sales is estimated to be nearly $125 million per year in Miami-Dade and more than $288 million per year in the Southeast region if all eligible people receive prescriptions and buy the medicinal product at a base cost of $3,000 per prescription, according to the report which county commissioners on May 6 directed the administration to conduct. However, the report said, sales are expected to be lower due to the lack of insurance coverage and competition with covered medication.

Mayor Carlos Giménez, who reported to the commission, outlined the facts upon which he based his estimates for the economic impact of legalized medical marijuana on Miami-Dade's agricultural area.

The state's approval of the medicinal use of non-euphoric marijuana to treat very specific illnesses – and the limitation on medical cannabis to terminally ill patients – greatly limits the customer base, he wrote. Such limits, coupled with legislation not requiring coverage by medical insurance, creates an extremely restrictive marketplace, Mr. Giménez said, adding that only 55 medical doctors statewide completed the Cannabis Continuing Medical Education pre-requisite needed to prescribe the marijuana derivative as of Nov. 6, 2015. "These facts could greatly affect the price and consumption of the product," the report said.

The medical marijuana law allows for the highly regulated production, distribution, use and research of a marijuana derivative for medical treatment which would be available by physician's prescriptions for patients suffering from specific illnesses including cancer or conditions which chronically produce seizures or severe/persistent muscle pain that can be alleviated with a low percent of the substance in marijuana that produces the euphoric effect.

The medical marijuana industry estimates the state's market for non-euphoric medical marijuana is $785 million per year with approximately 260,000 patients statewide, the mayor wrote. He said the population estimates for the terminally ill patients allowed to use medical cannabis are currently much lower statewide at 47,000.

"If these statements are accurate, the population that qualifies for all forms of medical marijuana under the approved Compassionate Care Act is 307,000 statewide and 956,059 in the Southeast region," he said. "Based on population modeling, Miami-Dade would have approximately 41,515 patients."

Based on information provided by the organizations that applied to be dispensers and cannabis industry companies, employment projections for construction-related jobs is 102 with a payroll of $2.24 million over the construction period, Mr. Giménez reported. He said the anticipated number of jobs created in Miami-Dade for those operations will be 125 direct and 75 indirect, with the annual payroll for the jobs created by operations anticipated to be $11.15 million.

Changes are coming to I-95

By Catherine Lackner

Drivers will soon have a new – and many say improved – driving surface on I-95 between Northwest 29th and 79th streets.

The new surface is concrete, and "it will be completely, absolutely smooth," Harold Desdunes, director of transportation development for the Florida Department of Transportation's District 6, told directors of the Miami-Dade Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) at their July 21 meeting.

"Recently, we had an issue of doing patches, and patches don't work," he said. The department is also building several "refuge areas" adjacent to express lanes, for emergency stops, including those by law enforcement personnel, he said.

"Is this blacktop?" asked MPO member Dennis Moss, who is a Miami-Dade commissioner. "The roads here have these little rivets in them, but when you get to Broward County, it's all blacktop."

"We're going to keep the concrete pavement, but with the technology out there today, concrete is as silent as the asphalt pavement," Mr. Desdunes said. There are rivets now, but that's because the surface was poured in the 1960s, he said. The disadvantage of asphalt is that it only lasts about 12 years, he said.

Concrete lasts much longer than asphalt, he said. "You won't see us out there for 20 or 30 years having to do a repair. With the amount of traffic we have on I-95, the advantage is to use concrete, so we're not out there continually under construction."

"This is a 50-year-old road that you've been patching up," said MPO member Maurice Ferre, who is a former Miami mayor. Concrete is superior to asphalt and so gives a better return on investment, he said.

The transportation department also plans to replace the delineators – poles between the express lanes and regular traffic – and to place them much closer together, Mr. Desdunes said.

"And the new barriers will be much sturdier than plastic sticks you see out there now," he added.

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MIAMI TODAY
A Singular Voice in an Evolving City

MDX boasts of safer, faster, cleaner expressway system

By Catherine Lackner

In 2014, the Miami-Dade Expressway Authority (MDX) embarked on a massive project to "close the loop" on the five expressways it manages by removing toll booths and installing more toll gantries so that drivers couldn't evade tolls. Despite some grumbling from the public and some elected officials, the results have been positive, both for the agency and for the traveling public, observers say.

The project wrapped up in November 2014.

"Since MDX has completed the closing of the system and without the toll booths causing congestion and emitting more greenhouse gases due to idling vehicles in line to pay a toll, we have a safer, faster and cleaner expressway system," said Mario A. Diaz, public information manager for the authority, via email. "We have also seen an increase of traffic volumes on the MDX system.

"In order to improve safety, traffic congestion and quality of life for users, MDX leveraged technology to implement an all-electronic system that has helped reduce operating cost by nearly two-thirds of what it would have cost had we continued with manned toll booths," Mr. Diaz said.

Drivers who don't have transponders in their vehicles are billed by mail based on photographs of their license plates as they drive under the gantries, he explained.

In June 2015, Fitch Ratings upgraded the MDX's credit rating from A-to A, noting that the outlook for the authority was stable. "By achieving such a high credit rating, MDX will reduce the future interest rate the authority pays to fund transportation improvements in Miami-Dade County," the authority said in a release then.

Removing toll booths and installing toll gantries viewed positively by Miami-Dade Expressway Authority.

"These types of cost efficiencies, along with other savings and higher traffic volumes, allowed MDX to pass the savings along to users by way of our MDX Cash Back Toll Dividend Program and the MDX Multi Axle discount program," Mr. Diaz said.

In December, almost half of the 82,000 commuters enrolled in the dividend program received rebate checks, the authority reported.

"We are thrilled that our cash rebate program has connected with the community," said Louis Martinez, chair of the MDX board of directors.

The authority's success — and the increased toll revenues — did not go unnoticed. Last October, several members of the Miami-Dade Metropolitan Planning Organization formed a strategy to appropriate 25% of the authority's tolls for use on public transit projects. So far, it remains only in the discussion stage.

Meanwhile, the authority is moving forward with four major road improvement projects, Mr. Diaz said, "that have already begun and will eliminate bottlenecks throughout the system to further alleviate traffic congestion."

On State Road 836 (the Dolphin Expressway), the work program will add an additional lane between Northwest 17th and 57th avenues, eliminate left-hand exits and add various safety improvements along the corridor, he said.

Improvements to the Dolphin Expressway also include changes to the Northwest 87th Avenue interchange and reconstruction of Northwest 12th Street, adding three lanes in each direction between Northwest 82nd and 87th avenues.

"These projects will allow for MDX to fortify the median shoulder, which will allow Miami-Dade Transit to operate an express bus service as early as 2017," Mr. Diaz said.

The final project on State Road 836 is in partnership with the Florida Department of Transportation for improvements to the I-395 to I-95 corridor. These improvements will eliminate operational deficiencies between Northwest 12th Avenue and I-95, which now have drivers crossing from the extreme right to the extreme left lanes to enter I-95 northbound.

State Road 874 (the Don Shula Expressway) also will be extended to Southwest 128th Street. "This will provide a new entrance and exit to the expressway system for the region and help decongest the surrounding streets as motorists try to access the Florida Turnpike via Southwest 152nd Street and Southwest 120th Street," Mr. Diaz said.

"MDX, through its work program, is creating more than 10,400 jobs between 2015 through 2020, with an overall economic impact of $1.5 billion to Miami-Dade," Mr. Diaz said.

Coral Gables hopes to earn a seat on Miami-Dade MPO

By Catherine Lackner

Coral Gables remains adamant that it should have a seat on the Miami-Dade Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) based on population, and is deliberating between several strategies to get it, said Craig Leen, Coral Gables city attorney.

Suspecting that the population had grown, the city paid the US Census Department earlier this year to conduct an interim census, a special count to supplement the general census compiled every 10 years.

It was discovered that Coral Gables' population had topped the 50,000 mark, the requirement for a seat on the MPO, the group charged with establishing transportation priorities for the county.

But Miami-Dade County has said it wants a full special census, also called an inter-decennial census, which will cost more than $1 million to conduct and take nine to 10 months.

The census bureau would only tabulate the results (at a cost of $548,329); it would be up to Coral Gables to recruit and pay however many census workers are required to do the work, according to a letter by the US Census Bureau. That cost is estimated at $547,791.

"It's very expensive, and we need to be careful with the city's money," Mr. Leen said. "We may end up pressing the county on this issue, and asking them to accept the interim census. We're clearly over the 50,000 mark." The interim count showed about 51,000 residents.

'We're clearly over the 50,000 mark.'

Craig Leen

Coral Gables is also considering annexing two neighboring communities, High Pines to the south and Little Gables to the north, which together would add about 6,000 new residents. But that process will take about 15 months and requires approval by both the voters and Miami-Dade County.

"We haven't given up," Mr. Leen said. "The commission has made a legislative finding that our population is more than 50,000. We are determined to move forward."

"We've wanted to be part of the MPO for a long time," said James Cason, Coral Gables mayor, last December. The city has significant traffic problems because "everyone has to go through the Gables to get to somewhere else. We did a count — we have 189 entrances," he said.

There were 584,000 daily car trips through 14 entrances to the city during the week, he said. Considering that about 50,000 people work in Coral Gables, accounting for 100,000 of those trips, a great majority seem to be pass-through drivers, he said.

The city's police department found that about 90% of drivers who were involved in accidents were from outside Coral Gables, Mr. Cason added.

While the majority of space for single-family homes is built out, "the construction is now going vertical," he said in December. "We've been growing several percentage points each year, and finally reached the magic number."

Now, observers say, the challenge is to prove it to Miami-Dade County.

Short circuit fingered as culprit in Dec. 22 Skytrain derailment

By Susan Danseyar

A short circuit disabled all emergency brake commands which led to the Skytrain derailment last December at Miami International Airport, according to a recent report.

The Miami-Dade County Aviation Department didn't lose money paying for operations at the airport during downtime caused by the incident, the report says, and the manufacturer of the trains is replacing and repairing all damaged vehicles and infrastructure.

On Dec. 22, 2015, during a night-time maintenance period, the airport's North Terminal Automated People Mover, known as Skytrain, was shut down after a four-car train coasted, passed through a station, and collided with the buffer at the end of the track.

The two lead cars derailed and were damaged; the other two trailing cars remained on the track, according to the report county commissioners received at their last meeting before breaking for August, per a request from Dennis Moss on Jan. 20.

The traveling public was not at risk during any period of the collision, and at 9:50 a.m. on Dec. 26 the system was reopened to passenger service, according to Mayor Carlos Gimenez in his report to the commission.

Several major automated alarms were detected on a Skytrain vehicle a few weeks before on Dec. 4. Mr. Gimenez's report explains that the train was immediately removed from passenger service in accordance with operating procedures. Over the next two weeks, he said, operations and maintenance contractor Crystal Mover Services Inc. conducted "aggressive testing and troubleshooting to investigate the cause of these irregular alarms." The tests were conducted at night while the train was out of service.

Several major automated alarms were detected on Skytrain a few weeks before the December incident.

Within hours of the Dec. 22 derailment – which occurred while investigation and testing of the alarms was still in progress – the cars involved in the accident were removed from the guideway by cranes and transferred to a hangar area for further investigation, the mayor reported. He said Mitsubishi experts from the US and Japan were immediately sent to analyze the reason for the derailment and, by Dec. 25, determined the cause of the accident was a short circuit which disabled all service and emergency brake commands generated by the train's control system.

Normally, the circuit is only used for maintenance activities during manual operation, Mr. Gimenez wrote in his report. He said the circuit has since been modified by Mitsubishi engineers to remove the bypass function so it's no longer possible for the emergency brake commands to be disabled.

At its own cost, Mitsubishi tested and repaired the two cars that didn't derail. They re-entered service in April after safety certification, the report says.

As for the two derailed cars, they are being re-manufactured in Japan and are expected to arrive in Miami in April 2017, according to Aviation Department media and public relations officer Suzy Trutie.

Cosmetic damage to the concrete guideway and damage to surrounding metal fencing has been repaired by Mitsubishi, and any other areas of the terminal roof that were damaged during the derailment will also be repaired by Mitsubishi, says the report.

Damage to the terminal roof is primarily cosmetic, Ms. Trutie told Miami Today.

Mitsubishi, through its operations and maintenance subsidiary Crystal Mover Services, is responsible for providing 99.5% availability of passenger service, and in its contract is fully responsible for making any necessary repairs or replacement to the system, at no additional cost to the Aviation Department in order to maintain this level of service, said Ms. Trutie. She said the repairs and replacements in relation to this incident were paid for by Mitsubishi.

Due to the duration of the downtime while the incident was being investigated (Dec. 22-26), Crystal Mover Services did not receive any payment for the entire month of December, Ms. Trutie said, which would have normally cost the Aviation Department $552,640.92, according to the contract.

"Even though the system did provide service as required for 27 days of the month, due the existing contract structure putting Crystal Mover Services fully at risk, no one paid them for those 27 days of service," Ms. Trutie said.

Since September 2010, the elevated People Mover has been transporting up to 9,000 travelers hourly to and from four stations within mile-long Concourse D. Despite the loss of Skytrain for the full day, the airport saw 136,400 passengers Dec. 22, 4.5% more than Dec. 22, 2014, Aviation Department Communications Director Greg Chin told Miami Today at the time.

He said the weekend before Christmas Day saw the airport's three busiest single days of 2015. The tally was 147,841 travelers Dec. 18, 155,620 on Dec. 19, and 147,856 on Dec. 20.

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Miami-Dade MPO gives Beach Corridor project Priority 1 Status

By Catherine Lackner

The Beach Corridor project, which aims to connect Miami to Miami Beach with public transit, is quickly moving forward, despite the latter city's controversial decision to explore a locally funded initiative on its side of Biscayne Bay.

The Miami-Dade Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) voted unanimously July 21 to make the Beach Corridor a Priority 1 project, which means it joins the other five corridors of the Strategic Miami Area Rapid Transit plan as a front-burner item.

'From a federal funding perspective, it makes for more practical sense to coordinate with Miami-Dade County...'

Al Maloof

"Let me say that we have truly reached a major step in moving our transportation plan forward," said Jean Monestime, chair of both the Miami-Dade Board of County Commissioners and the MPO, when the item was passed.

"All six corridors are part of our development program now and are included into our mass transit plan," he said.

All of the parties to the Beach Corridor, which included Miami, Miami-Dade County, Miami Beach and the Florida Department of Transportation, have signed a memorandum of agreement that lays out how the project will be executed, said Aileen Boucle, MPO executive director, after the meeting.

Miami-Dade County will take the lead during the environmental and design phase, which is already funded, she said.

"The parties have all agreed to the inter-operability of the system, with intermodal connections," she said. On the mainland, the connections will probably be at Government Center and in Midtown, while on Miami Beach a likely location will be at Alton Road and Fifth Street. It hasn't been decided what mode or modes of transportation will be used.

"This is a significant milestone for the MPO, as it's the last of the six corridors to be amended to Priority 1 status," Ms. Boucle said. "Until it's a Priority 1, it hasn't commenced yet. All of the projects are starting to follow the federal process, so that now we can get our share of federal and state funding." Work will begin on environmental documents for this corridor by year's end, she said.

The Strategic Miami Area Rapid Transit plan, also known as SMART, identifies six corridors for improvements. The others are the:

- East-West Corridor, along State Road 836;
- Kendall Corridor, from Dadeland to Southwest 162 Avenue;
- North Corridor, along Northwest 27th Avenue from west of downtown to Northwest 215th Street;
- Northeast Corridor, from downtown to Aventura, largely along the Florida East Coast Railway tracks; and
- South Corridor, from Dadeland to Southwest 344th Street, along US 1.

It proposes various modes of transportation for each corridor, includes express-bus routes for "first and last mile" connectivity, and posits that all six corridors can proceed simultaneously.

Miami-Dade County has said it will apply for federal and state funding for its part of the Beach Corridor, and Ms. Boucle said Miami Beach's exploration of a local alternative is not a detriment to that process.

But Miami Beach Mayor Philip Levine has derided the federal process as being too slow. A July 16 press release by City Manager Jimmy Morales confirms that the city is in negotiations with Greater Miami Tramlink Partners, an affiliate of the French company Alstom, to initiate light-rail service.

'In order to get funding, the federal government significantly prefers everyone to be on the same page'

Neal Sklar

If those negotiations fail, the city will then move on to the other two proposers, Connect Miami Beach and Miami Beach Mobility Partners, the release said.

"From a federal funding perspective, it makes far more practical sense to coordinate with Miami-Dade County and jointly apply," said Al Maloof, managing partner of GJB Consulting, an affiliate of the Genovese Joblove & Battista law firm. The federal government has special evaluation criteria that take into account a project's regional impact, he said. "It will all be looked at collectively, and this may signal that Miami Beach has its own agenda."

"The county should be driving this," said Mr. Maloof, who is a member of the American Public Transportation Association. "First and foremost, we want to assess inter-operability, and how the system will work in the region it serves." If a public-private-partnership is the financial model Miami Beach chooses, that should be supported by a public referendum before any city dollars are committed, he added.

Nevertheless, he hailed it as progress, driven in large part by County Mayor Carlos Gimenez "who has been the most effective advocate for improving mobility in the region," and Alice Bravo, director of the county's Transportation and Public Works Department, "who has done an extraordinary job."

"In order to get funding, the federal government significantly prefers everyone to be on the same page," said Neal Sklar, a partner in the Peckar & Abramson law firm and organizer of last September's P3 transportation conference, which explored public-private partnerships.

"Miami Beach's moving forward could result in the federal government not providing funds, though Miami-Dade County can still pursue those funds," he said. "It's a long process."

There are difficult aspects to the project, in that it crosses Biscayne Bay, "but that just takes engineering," Mr. Sklar said. Mr. Gimenez and Ms. Bravo "are firmly committed to making this connection."

His preference would be to see the entire project done in the P3 model, which he called "the wave of the future."

But that would require all of the partners to get together, create a proposal, and shop it to the private sector, Mr. Sklar said. "Let the private sector come in and explain how best to do this," he said. "P3s are a significant tool in the arsenal of officials who want to get public transportation projects done, and they should be explored."

Miami Beach officials are in negotiations with an affiliate of French company Alstom for light rail service.

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MIAMI-DADE COUNTY

Plans for Tri-Rail's downtown link on track for inclusion

By Catherine Lackner

With most of the partner agreements in place, final details are being smoothed out for Tri-Rail commuter service to steam into downtown Miami before the end of next year.

"We are looking at insurance issues we'll have to deal with in the future, and we got All Aboard Florida to give us a tour of its Miami station," said Jack Stephens, executive director of the South Florida Regional Transportation Authority, Tri-Rail's parent.

Jack Stephens

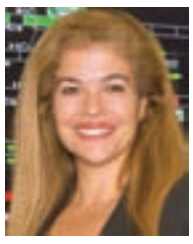
"It's amazing. By this time next year they expect to be in service [to Fort Lauderdale and West Palm Beach] and told us we would not be far behind in completion of our part of the station," he said.

That means Tri-Rail trains could be in service as early as the fall of 2017 "which is what I'm hoping for, assuming no glitches," Mr. Stephens said.

The insurance underwriters were impressed by progress on the station, he added. "For two years, we have been saying, 'This is coming.' Now we can say, 'This is what it looks like,' and see if we can get good prices on the insurance we will need."

The authority must obtain insurance for the 8.5-mile segment of track that it will share with All Aboard Florida and Florida East Coast Railway, which will continue to ship freight on those tracks, he explained.

Authority staff is focusing on "critical path items" that need to be resolved, one of which is the agreement with the Southeast Overtown/Park West Community Redevelopment Agency. There are no real conflicts, Mr. Stephens said, "but it is the most complex of the agreements, and the CRA is working it out with the city."


Alice Bravo

All of the money to support the project has been pledged "but money won't begin to move until we get a bill from All Aboard Florida" for what it has spent so far on the station, Mr. Stephens said. That bill will be split on a percentage basis among the partners, a process that could begin as early as next month, he said.

The project hit a bump when the Florida Department of Transportation pulled out over insurance concerns, but it still is supported by Miami's Downtown Development Authority, Miami-Dade County, the Citizens Independent Transportation Trust, the City of Miami, the Bayfront Park Management Trust and both the Omni and Southeast Overtown/Park West community redevelopment agencies.

After the state transportation department bowed out, the South Florida Regional Transportation Authority agreed to accept more of the financial burden, but none of the other parties were asked to contribute more money than was previously agreed.

On May 2, Alice Bravo, director of Miami-Dade's Transportation and Public Works Department, advised all of the parties that agreements had to be finalized quickly or All Aboard Florida might withdraw its offer to have commuter service operate out of MiamiCentral, the downtown station to be shared by All Aboard Florida and Tri-Rail.

All Aboard Florida, a wholly owned subsidiary of Florida East Coast Industries, "has advanced construction of the commuter rail platforms and is incurring significant costs since the station has gone vertical and columns have been erected," Ms. Bravo's letter said. "If we are not able to execute agreements by the aforementioned date, All Aboard Florida has advised us that they will be forced to cease construction on the commuter rail infrastructure.

"Without a definitive plan of action and inter-agency coordination to pursue new agreements, we could forfeit this unique opportunity to bring commuter rail to the central business district," Ms. Bravo's letter had warned. Fortunately, the crisis was averted and work never stopped on MiamiCentral.

Tri-Rail trains could be in service as early as the Fall 2017, joining the Brightline Passenger rail service at MiamiCentral in the urban core.

Tri-Rail will be a main player at the new MiamiCentral, now under construction at the site of the old depot West of NW First Avenue.

The heart of downtown Miami will again welcome trains, along with retail, residential and office space.

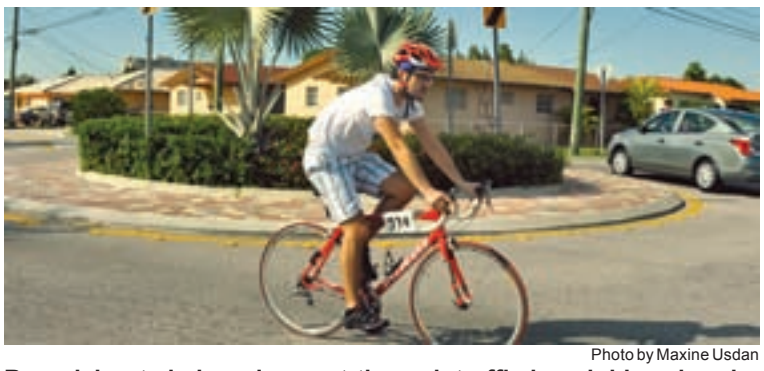


Photo by Maxine Usdan

Roundabouts help reduce cut-through traffic in neighboorhoods.

Traffic Circles a big plus

By Catherine Lackner

Members of Miami-Dade County's Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) discussed at their July 21 meeting the prospect that roundabouts can help calm traffic and make neighborhoods safer for pedestrians and cyclists.

Billy L. Hattaway, Florida Department of Transportation secretary for District 1 (which covers the southwestern part of the state) said support for roundabouts — also known as traffic circles — is part of the department's Complete Streets program, which was partially inspired when four Florida cities made the top-10 list of most dangerous locales for pedestrians. "We need local governments to help us with this initiative."

"Roundabouts are helpful in reducing cut-through traffic," said Francis Suarez, Miami city commissioner and MPO vice-chair. "As US 1 and Coral Way become more stressed, applications on phones are taking people through our neighborhoods," he said.

"We've worked with the county to allow cities to have more autonomy in implementing traffic circles, because the severity of an accident is largely dependent on speed," Mr. Suarez said.

"This is the most effective traffic control we have," Mr. Hattaway said. "We're providing support for modern roundabouts and emphasizing road diets, because 45% of accidents occur at signalized and stop-sign intersections. Roundabouts are safer because they remove conflict points," and most slow traffic down to 20 miles per hour, he said.

"If you have a crash, there is a 90% chance for pedestrian survival in this environment," added Mr. Hattaway.

"Roundabouts have been around for125 years," and they work in Paris, said MPO member Maurice Ferré, a former Miami mayor.

"But why does the traffic circle on Granada Boulevard in Coral Gables not work?" asked MPO member Xavier Suarez, who is a Miami-Dade County commissioner and former Miami mayor. "Is it the size of the lanes, or are they not set up to show you where to go, or is it that, in Coral Gables, people don't obey speed limits?"

"Speed control is crucial," Mr. Hattaway said. "You have to control the entry speed, the circulating speed, and the exit speed. If you don't design the roundabout properly, that allows people to behave improperly."

"What is being done about education, so people understand who has the right of way?" asked MPO member Dennis Moss, who is a Miami-Dade County commissioner.

"Whenever we've gone into a community, we first tell the residents how to drive a roundabout," Mr. Hattaway said. That turns out not to be so difficult, because whoever is in the roundabout has the right of way, he added. "We tend to make change more complicated than it needs to be."

"I'm going to use this to tell my commissioners why traffic circles are so important," Francis Suarez said. "We cannot put a police officer on every intersection, but what we've learned is that implementing these devices is a quality-of-life issue."

Trucks pound the county pavement

By Susan Danseyar

Multi-axle vehicles and trailers affect traffic and take a heavy toll on pavement surfaces in Miami-Dade County, a recent report states, which the county's Department of Transportation and Public Works accommodates with a blueprint that provides a 20-year life.

The department is responsible for design, construction, maintenance and repair of all county-maintained road surfaces and right-of-way infrastructure which the heavier multi-axle vehicles affect with sheer size and weight, according to the report requested by commissioners. The board adopted legislation directing the administration to identify the number of multi-axle vehicles and trailers registered in Miami-Dade, the impact they have on traffic patterns and county road surfaces and the amount of taxes paid – if any – by registered owners of these vehicles.

According to the report prepared for Mayor Carlos Giménez by the Department of Transportation and Public Works, the heavy multi-axle vehicles cause traffic bottlenecks and shorten the lifespan of the county's approximate 3,198 asphalt centerline miles of roadway and 209 bridges.

The county uses a pavement design called the Superior Performing Asphalt Pavement System to produce an average 20-year life for all pavement surfaces, based on methods similar to those employed by the Florida Department of Transportation, the report states. This asphalt mix takes into account amount of traffic, climate conditions as well as the number of trips the vehicles take, the percentage of trucks that are using the roadways and the projected life of the pavement.

"Studies regarding bridges have shown that the gross weight, axle weight and axle configuration of heavy multi-axle vehicles directly affect the service life of highway bridge superstructures," the report says. "With the growth of highway transportation, the increased frequency of heavy trucks contributes to fatigue damage."

Damage usually occurs on the bridge deck and in the main superstructure elements including floor beams and girders, joints and bearings. Thus, the report points out, bridge maintenance becomes more frequent, difficult and costly.

The multi-axle vehicles and trailers occupy more space in the travel lane and thus the speed of a corridor as well as create sight obstructions, leading to lower speeds. Additionally, the report states that heavier multi-vehicle traffic creates congestion at signalized intersections. "When a roadway network is operating close to capacity, this heavy traffic can cause bottlenecking and gridlocking," the report says. "As a result, less passenger vehicles cross an intersection since multi-axle vehicles are larger and move at a slower speed."

The estimated number of multi-axle vehicles registered in Miami-Dade with the state's Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles (DMV) is 90,413.

No taxes are paid to the county for the vehicles but the state charges vehicle registration fees based on weight.

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Chinese investors are showing great interest in North Miami

By Camila Cepero

North Miami has Chinese investors excited to dive into the city's planned Chinatown Cultural Arts & Innovation District after hosting a 12-member delegation from Shanghai last month.

The Chinatown Cultural Arts & Innovation District, championed by Vice Mayor Alix Desulme and designated by the North Miami City Council in February, is comprised of 15 blocks over commercially zoned land along Northwest Seventh Avenue between 135th Street and 119th Street.

In May, six city officials traveled to Beijing, Tianjin and Shanghai during a 12-day trip, seeking investors and cultural inspiration, and meeting with Chinese government officials and business leaders to discuss commercial opportunities in the new district.

North Miami took its turn hosting a delegation last month, when 12 representatives visited from Shanghai for one day, enjoying tours of the city, presentations and a cultural experience.

In July, 12 representives from Shanghai visited the City of North Miami enjoying tours and culture.

"The members of this delegation were here to actually come physically see the designated Chinatown area. We were able to provide them with info on all of the property availability," said City Manager Larry M. Spring Jr.

The area is undergoing a redesign process, he said, meant to enhance roadways and streetscapes to be more pedestrian-friendly, all while adopting "more of a Chinese or Asian theme to enhance tourist attractability."

"We were able to have them meet with the development team doing SoLe Mia [a 183-acre development in North Miami including residential and commercial complexes] and got a pretty good, full tour of the entire city, so that the delegates can have context about where it's physically located compared to downtown Miami and within South Florida," Mr. Spring said.

The delegation included representatives from a number of industries in China, he said, such as food and beverage and real estate development.

The city's Chinatown development plans include spending millions on infrastructure and building façades to create an authentic visitor experience.

"There are steps we've already taken," Mr. Spring said. "We've hired professional design companies with experience in this specific area of redesign and aesthetic."

A committee composed of residents, business owners, real estate developers, Chinese consultants and city staff is currently drafting the Chinatown Master Plan.

'The members of this delegation were here to... see the designated Chinatown area.'

Larry Spring Jr.

A partnership with Florida International University has been executed, allowing university officials involved with the school's hospitality and tourism management program in Tianjin to sit on the committee.

"We're getting the appropriate level of input and professional consulting guidance to make sure that it's a very interesting tourist area," Mr. Spring said.

"We have a council that is 100% supportive – the vice mayor brought the idea forward. We're invested day to day; making sure staff is reaching benchmarks and goals. We're doing outreach to make sure we're getting our intended results."

Just days after the delegation departed, a Miami-based representative reached out to Mr. Spring, informing him that investors are very interested in bringing their ideas to North Miami and are ready to move forward.

"I am 100% sure it's going to be beneficial to the city and all of our residents, but it's also going to be beneficial for all of Miami-Dade County," said Mr. Spring.

Health update 2016 September 8

Healthcare reform issues and the impact on healthcare options continue to be burning issues. Miami Today will update readers in this special section on the economics of health issues here and the link between medicine and our community.

If you are a healthcare institution, provider or offer healthcare insurance options, then your message should be here.

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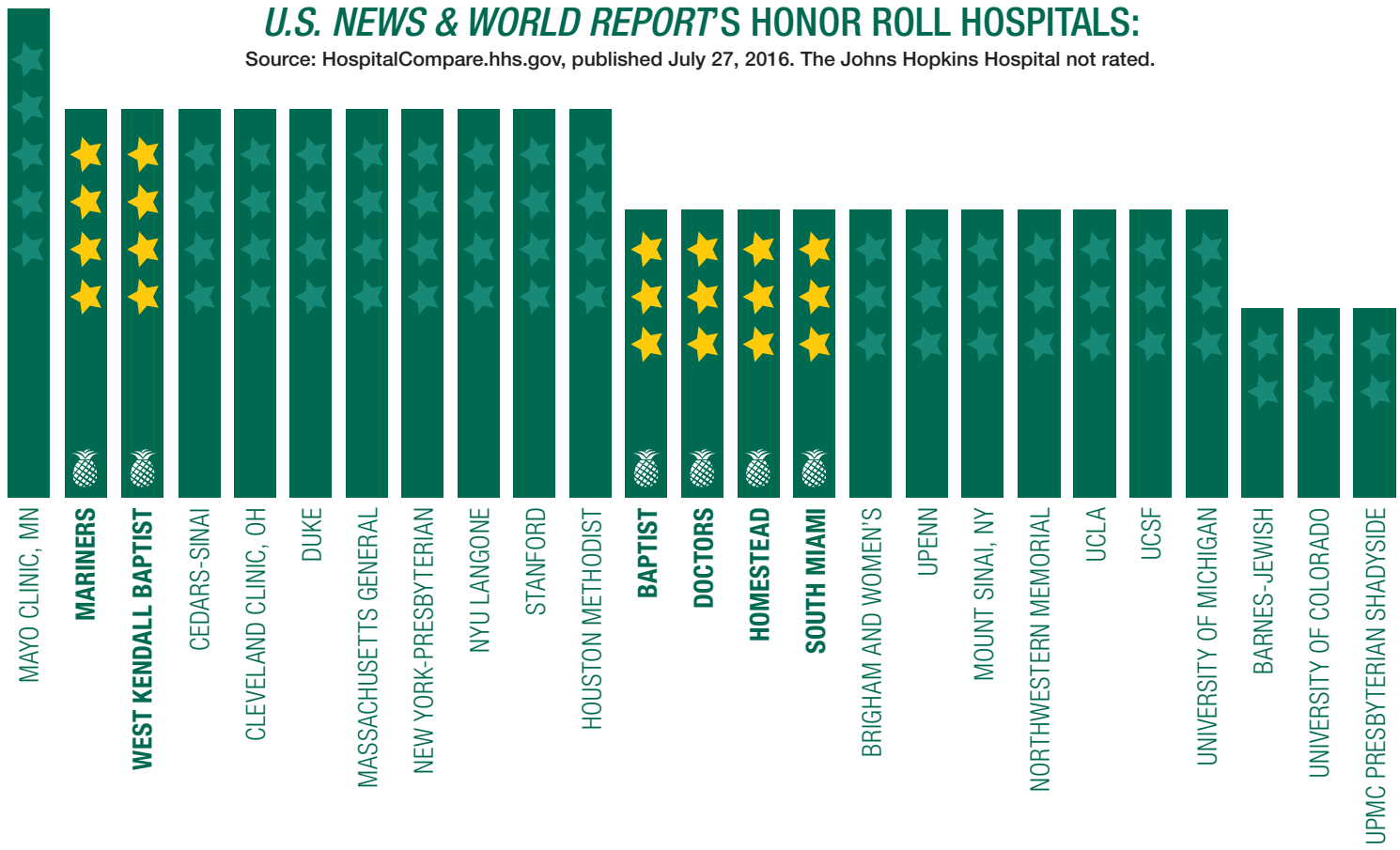
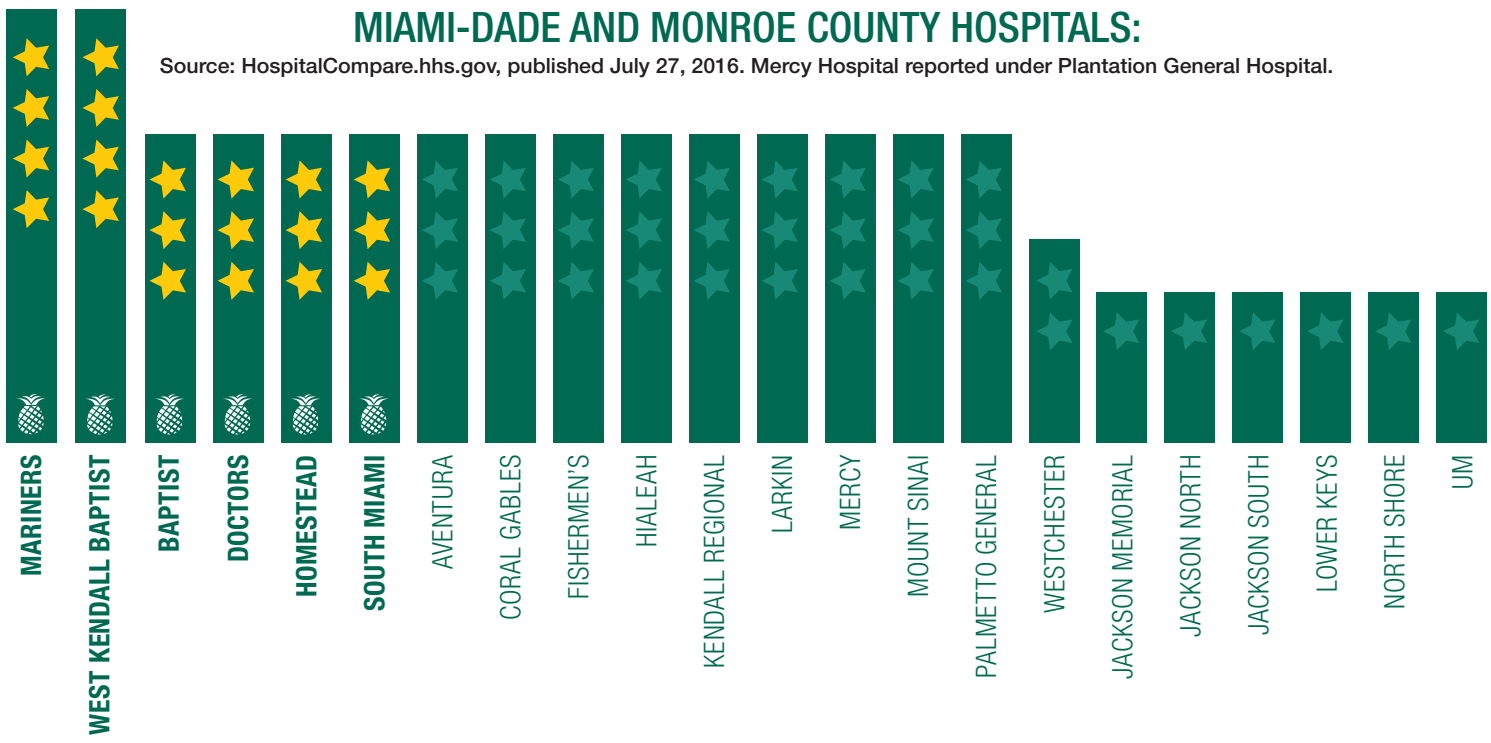
BAPTIST HEALTH SOUTH FLORIDA AND *U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT*'S HONOR ROLL HOSPITALS:

Source: HospitalCompare.hhs.gov, published July 27, 2016. The Johns Hopkins Hospital not rated.



INDIVIDUAL RATINGS FOR MIAMI-DADE AND MONROE COUNTY HOSPITALS:

Source: HospitalCompare.hhs.gov, published July 27, 2016. Mercy Hospital reported under Plantation General Hospital.



BaptistHealth.net

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'Perfect storm' conditions impact health costs in South Florida

By Marilyn Bowden

A recent report from the Obama administration announced that median deductibles for insurance plans listed on HealthCare.gov – the federal health insurance exchange website – fell from $900 annually to $850 this year, a 5.5% decrease.

The news is not so good for residents of Miami-Dade County, where deductibles skyrocketed to more than five times the national average since 2015.

An analysis of 2016 premiums and deductibles for all exchange plans offered in the county conducted by Sarah Weintraub, manager of business analysis at Baptist Health South Florida, shows that the average deductible for a silver plan in Miami-Dade is around $4,297. The average maximum out of pocket is around $6,477.

"If you're making $25,000 and have to pay a $4,000 deductible before insurance takes over," said Brian Keeley, Baptist Health's president and CEO, "you really don't have insurance."

MIAMI-DADE HEALTH INSURANCE MARKETPLACE SILVER PLANS 2016

PREMIUM & DEDUCTIBLE SURVEY (NO SUBSIDY)

INSURANCE PROVIDER	NUMBER OF PLANS	MONTHLY PREMIUM RANGE	ANNUAL DEDUCTIBLE	MAXIMUM ANNUAL OUT OF POCKET
Ambetter from Sunshine Health	9	$247-$577	$4,500-$6,500	$6500
Molina Marketplace	1	$262-$557	$2000	$6850
Coventry	1	$288-$614	$2750	$6850
Florida Bue	8	$294-$1,129	$5,500-$6,100	$6850
Humana	1	$346-$738	$3800	$6300
United Healthcare	2	$350-$750	$3,600-$4,000	$3,600-$6,600

Source: Baptist Health South Florida

The disparity, Ms. Weintraub said, is the result of a "perfect storm" of conditions unique to South Florida.

"Actuaries in insurance companies look at medical claims to determine how sick the population is," she said, "and that gets put into a formula to determine the deductible. In Miami we have high rates of people who are uninsured and never had access to elective healthcare before.

"What that means," Ms. Weintraub said, "is your claims spike. That's because someone who has access is going to go to the doctor. So when a big population of people gets access within a short period of time, insurance companies are all of a sudden seeing more people taking charge of their healthcare. And South Florida differs from much of the rest of the country in that there are not many options, except for the wealthy."

In addition to having an older, sicker population, Ms. Weintraub said, Miami is home to a high percentage of people retiring in their late 50s or early 60s who are not yet eligible for Medicare, and they start shopping in the exchange.

"The actuaries count all the claims they see and set fees for the next year based on what they feel they will experience. So the rates are high not because of the providers, but because of the type of people who live here. Despite higher cost-sharing with the consumer, many of these plans are losing money and exiting the market. United Compass and Humana will exit for 2017.

"That's the reason we saw such a sharp rise in costs from 2015 to 2106," she said. "The government will pay a subsidy to those who need it, but that gets shifted onto the people who don't need subsidies."

Also complicating the issue is the state government's refusal to expand Medicaid coverage to poor families, a decision that, according to the informational site Obamacare.com, leaves 800,000 state residents uninsured.

A recent study by the Florida Community Health Action Information Network – a nonpartisan, consumer-based advocacy for expanded healthcare access – found that one in three working-age adults in Miami-Dade is uninsured, said CEO Mark Pafford, now in his last session as Minority Leader for the Florida House.

"As with personal injury protection auto insurance," Rep. Pafford said, "if more people had healthcare insurance it would cost less.

"The fact that the state has not taken a strong stand on expansion of Medicaid is really unfair. My hope is that in the next four years there'll be an opportunity to change the trajectory in Florida. It did take five years for Florida to participate in the original Medicaid program in the 1960s. Right now, Miami-Dade is one of worst areas in the country in the way we provide healthcare."

Because Florida did not expand Medicaid, Ms. Weintraub said, many people are falling into the Medicaid gap – too rich for Medicaid, too poor to qualify for an Obamacare subsidy.

With no insurance options, she said, "their only choice is to find a free clinic" – and those are few and far between.

Baptist Health provides onsite insurance counseling in its emergency room through a not-for-profit community partner, Ms. Weintraub said. "But the ER is not the right solution for the uninsured."

Early indications suggest that rates will soar even higher in 2017.

According to a spokesperson for the Florida Office of Insurance Regulation, which reviews requests from providers for rate increases, of the 15 companies that have filed for rate hikes for 2017 – 11 of which are requesting to sell via the federal exchange – the average rate increase requested is 17.7%. Among 15 companies that filed small-group products, the average increase requested is 9.6%.

Some of the insurance dilemmas people find themselves in are caused by their own bad choices, Ms. Weintraub said.

Arts & Culture 2016
September 22

The world of Arts and Culture is constantly changing and now more than ever it's being tested, whether it's in the performance hall or the halls of government, where funding decisions are being made. From the Performing Arts Center to the Book Fair; from our fabulous ballet to the theater; unique symphony to the museums — Miami Today will highlight the latest developments and trends in an authoritative special report.

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MIAMI TODAY

calendar of events

week of thursday, august 11, 2016

RAY LAMONTAGNE: The Fillmore Miami Beach presents indie musician Ray LaMontagne as he performs songs from his latest albums "God Willin & the Creek Don't Rise," "Ouroboros," "Supernova" and more as part of his Ouroboros tour. 8 p.m. Aug. 13. The Fillmore Miami Beach at the Jackie Gleason Theater, 1700 Washington Ave., Miami Beach. $42.50-$56.50. Details: (305) 673-7300 or *http://www.fillmoremb.com/.*

ART

Thursday 8/11

BASQUIAT: THE UNKNOWN NOTEBOOKS

Pérez Art Museum Miami presents "Basquiat: The Unknown Notebooks," which showcases poetry fragments, wordplay, sketches and personal observations ranging from street life and popular culture by Jean-Michael Basquiat. 7-10 p.m. Pérez Art Museum Miami, 1103 Biscayne Blvd., Miami. Details: (305) 375-3000 or *http://pamm.org/.*

Friday 8/12

PEOPLE ON THE MOVE

Art Bastion Gallery presents "People on the Move" as part of its art for amnesty program. The exhibit will display works focused on refugee and migrant rights. 6-10 p.m. Art Bastion Gallery, 2085 NW Second Ave., #104, Wynwood Art District. Details: (305) 509-8338 or *http://www.artbastion.com/.*

Tuesday 8/16

HANDMADE RITUALS

David Castillo Gallery presents its summer exhibition "Handmade Rituals," which will showcase works by Yasmin Khalaf, Gardner Cole Miller and Johnny Robles. Noon-8 p.m. David Castillo Gallery, 420 Lincoln Rd., Miami Beach. Details: (305) 573-8110 or *http://davidcastillogallery.com/.*

BOOKS

Thursday 8/11

CORPORATE SURVIVAL GUIDE

Kayla Buell discusses her book "Corporate Survival Guide for Your Twenties," which utilizes the author's experiences to explain how young adults can face the corporate world post-college. 8 p.m. Books and Books, 265 Aragon Ave., Coral Gables. Details: *www.booksandbooks.com.*

Friday 8/12

GUANTÁNAMO BAY

Carol Rosenberg discusses her book "Guantánamo Bay: The Pentagon's Alcatraz of the Caribbean," which chronicles the author's experience as a correspondent for the Miami Herald as she reported on a US military mission at Guantanamo Bay known as Camp X-Ray. 8 p.m. Books and Books, 265 Aragon Ave., Coral Gables. Details: *www.booksandbooks.com.*

Thursday 8/18

LOVE WINS

Debbie Cenziper discusses her book "Love Wins," which tells the story of the lovers, lawyers, judges and activists behind the Supreme Court case that led to the legalization of same-sex marriage. 8 p.m. Books and Books, 265 Aragon Ave., Coral Gables. Details: *www.booksandbooks.com.*

BUSINESS

Thursday 8/11

HOW TO BECOME A FOOD ENTREPRENEUR

StartUP FIU hosts its how to become a food entrepreneur seminar and workshop series. 6-9 p.m. FIU MARC Pavilion, 11200 SW Eighth St., Tamiami. Free. Details: *http://startup.fiu.edu/.*

Saturday 8/13

QUICKBOOKS FOR BUSINESS

The Doral Chamber of Commerce hosts its QuickBooks for business seminar, where guests can learn how to navigate through QuickBooks and learn business growth strategies. 8:30 a.m. Doral Chamber of Commerce, 8181 NW 36th St., #21a, Doral. $147. Details: *http://doralchamberofcommerce.org/.*

Tuesday 8/16

BUSINESS REFERRAL GROUP

The Business Referral Group hosts its networking lunch, which will include a discussion with Wilson Alvarez from WilsonAlvarez.com. Noon. Love is Blind, 225 Altara Ave., Coral Gables. Free. Details: *http://www.businessreferralgroup.org/.*

Wednesday 8/17

XXV ALLIANCE BUSINESS EXPO

The Foreign Trade Association hosts the "XXV Alliance Business Expo," which will include seminars, panel discussions, raffles and more. 1-8 p.m. Miami Free Zone, 2335 NW 107th Ave., Doral. Details: (305) 471-07387 or *info@ffta.com.*

Thursday 8/18

MAKERS MIXER

The Wolfsonian-FIU hosts its maker's mixer for artistic professionals and entrepreneurs. Attendees can network and receive feedback on topics including branding, finding space and growing your business. 7-9 p.m. The Wolfsonian-FIU, 1001 Washington Ave., Miami Beach. $10. Details: *http://www.wolfsonian.org/.*

CHILDREN

Saturday 8/13

SENSORY SATURDAY

The Miami Children's Museum hosts its sensory Saturday, which will include yoga, art and music activities for children with special needs. Lights and sounds will be dimmed to create a comfortable environment for children to explore. 9-11 a.m. Miami Children's Museum, 980 MacArthur Cswy., Watson Island. RSVP required. Details: *www.miamichildrensmuseum.org.*

CONNECTING WITH NATURE

HistoryMiami Museum hosts its connecting with nature family fun day, which will include an arts and crafts session, interactive story time and more. 10 a.m.-5 p.m. HistoryMiami Museum, 101 W Flagler St., Miami. Free. RSVP. Details: (305) 375-1492 or *http://www.historymiami.org/.*

WORDPLAY @ PAMM

Pérez Art Museum Miami presents wordplay @ PAMM. Guests can explore Jean-Michael Basquiat's notebooks as part of the museum's latest exhibit and create their own unique sketchbooks. 1:30-4 p.m. Pérez Art Museum Miami, 1103 Biscayne Blvd., Miami. Details: (305) 375-3000 or *http://pamm.org/.*

DINING OUT

Sunday 8/14

SUNDAY BRUNCH

The Vagabond Kitchen & Bar hosts its Sunday brunch with food prepared by Chef Roberto Dubois. Each dish will be paired with unlimited mimosas and Bellinis. 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Vagabond Kitchen & Bar, 7301 Biscayne Blvd., Upper Eastside. Details: (786) 409-5635 or *https://www.facebook.com/vagabondkitchenandbar/.*

BRUNCH ON THE BAY

The Majestic Group hosts its brunch on the bay. 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Lique Miami Waterfront Restaurant and Lounge, 3945 NE 163rd St., North Miami Beach. Details: *https://www.eventbrite.com/e/brunch-on-the-bay-a-waterfront-bruch-experience-its-a-brunch-party-tickets-26575913272?aff=es2.*

Wednesday 8/17

TO LIVE AND DINE

Miami Magazine hosts its eighth annual To Live and Dine food tasting. 7-9 p.m. Private Key Club, 567 NW 27th St., Wynwood Art District. $45-$65. *http://www.modernluxury.com/miami.*

EXHIBITS

Thursday 8/11

THE LIVES OF BOOKS

Dina Mitrani Gallery presents its summer group exhibition "The Lives of Books," which showcases photographs of books and magazines. Exhibits through Aug. 27. Dina Mitrani Gallery, 2620 NW Second Ave., Wynwood Art District. Details: (786) 486-7248 or *http://www.dinamitranigallery.com/.*

THE INVERSE

The Institute of Contemporary Art presents "The Inverse," which showcases a site-specific installation that entangles the gridded support beams of the museum's Atrium Gallery with industrial nylon rope. Exhibits through Oct. 30. Institute of Contemporary Art Miami, 4040 NE Second Ave., Miami Design District. Details: *https://www.icamiami.org/.*

ART EXPLORES THE UNKNOWN

Mindy Solomon Gallery presents "Political Fold" by Geandy Pavón and "About the Absolute Truth" by José Manuel Mesías. The exhibit will showcase paintings that reveal the conceptual strength of an image while focusing on the idea of art as a means of exploring the unknown. Exhibits through Aug. 13. Mindy Solomon Gallery, 8397 NE Second Ave. Details: (786) 953-6917 or *www.mindysolomon.com.*

SENSUOUS SURFACES

ArtSpace Virginia Miller Galleries presents "Sensuous Surfaces," which will display multi-layered abstractions inspired by Italian painter Giotto di Bondone. Exhibits through Sept. 25. ArtSpace Virginia Miller Galleries, 169 Madeira Ave., Coral Gables. Details: (305) 444-4493 or *http://www.virginiamiller.com/.*

A UNIVERSE OF FRAGILE MIRRORS

Pérez Art Museum Miami presents "A Universe of Fragile Mirrors," which depicts the ironies of post-colonial conditions in the Caribbean while blurring the boundaries between reality and fiction through the use of film. Exhibits through Nov. 13. Pérez Art Museum Miami, 1103 Biscayne Blvd., Miami. Details: (305) 375-3000 or *http://www.pamm.org/.*

YOU'VE GOT TO KNOW THE RULES

The de la Cruz Collection presents "You've Got to Know the Rules... to Break Them." The exhibition will showcase new American paintings with German Neo-Expressionism, while antagonizing accepted practices by drawing upon themes including cultural, historical and sociopolitical modes. Exhibits through Nov. 12. de la Cruz Collection Contemporary Art Space, 23 NE 41st St., Miami. Details: (305) 576-6112 or *info@delacruzcollection.org.*

CHILDHOOD MEMORIES

The Miami Dade College Museum of Art + Design presents "Childhood Memories from the Other Side of the Water" by Eduardo del Valle. The exhibit will display photographs depicting childhood experiences and recollections of Cuba from the artist's perspective. Exhibits through Aug. 28. MDC Museum of Art + Design, Freedom Tower at MDC, 600 Biscayne Blvd., second floor, Miami. Details: (305) 237-7700 or *museum@mdc.edu* or *www.mdcmoad.org.*

FILM

Thursday 8/11

FROM AFAR

The Miami Beach Cinematheque screens "From Afar," which tells the story of wealthy, middle-aged Armando, who lures young men to his home with money. 7 p.m. Miami Beach Cinematheque, 1130 Washington Ave., Miami Beach. Details: (305) 673-4567 or *http://mbcinema.com/.*

JULIEN DONKEY-BOY

The Miami Beach Cinematheque screens "Julien Donkey-Boy," which explores the mind of an adolescent schizophrenic and how dealing with that affects his family. 8:50 p.m. Miami Beach Cinematheque, 1130 Washington Ave., Miami Beach. Details: (305) 673-4567 or *http://mbcinema.com/.*

Friday 8/12

OUR LITTLE SISTER

The Tower Theater screens "Our Little Sister." Sisters Sachi, Yoshino and Chika live together in a large house in the city of Kamakura. When their absentee father dies, they travel to the countryside for his funeral and meet their shy teenage half-sister Suzu. Times vary. Tower Theater, 1508 SW Eighth St., Miami Details:

calendar of events

FILM

The Childhood of a Leader.

Brady Corbet

The Miami Beach Cinematheque screens "The Childhood of a Leader" by Brady Corbet. Amidst the turmoil of World War I and its aftermath, the film follows the young son of an American diplomat living in France as he learns to manipulate the adults around him. 6:45 p.m. Aug. 12. Miami Beach Cinematheque, 1130 Washington Ave., Miami Beach.

Details: (305) 673-4567 or *http://mbcinema.com/.*

ART

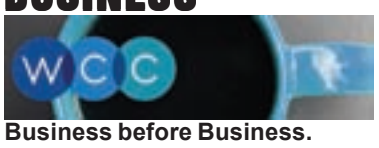
The Politics of -Isms.

Historic Memorabilia

The Wolfsonian-FIU presents "The Politics of -Isms," which showcases historic memorabilia that examines how politically charged labels such as fascism, communism and socialism have shaped American electoral campaigns of the 20th century. 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Aug. 18. Wolfsonian-FIU, 1001 Washington Ave., Miami Beach.

Details: (305) 531-1001 or *http://www.wolfsonian.org/.*

BUSINESS



Business before Business.

Networking Breakfast

The Women's Chamber of Commerce hosts its business before business networking breakfast. 8-9 a.m. Aug. 17. Location to be determined. $10 members. $15 members.

Details: *http://womenschamberofcommerce.org/.*

DINING OUT

Jack Daniels Collection Dinner.

Wine & Spirits Dinner Series

BLT Prime hosts its five-course Jack Daniels collection dinner as part of its wine & spirits dinner series. 7 p.m. Aug. 12. Trump National Doral Miami, 4400 NW 87th Ave., Doral. $95 per person.

Details: (305) 591-6066 or *https://www.trumphotelcollection.com/miami/.*

MUSIC

Sir Angel Romero.

Summer Concert Series

The Community Arts Program presents Spanish classical guitarist and conductor Sir Angel Romero as he performs Sevillanas from Suite Espanola by Isaac Albéniz. 8 p.m. Aug. 18. Coral Gables Congregational Church, 3010 De Soto Blvd., Coral Gables. $30-$50.

Details: (305) 448-7421 ext. 120 or *http://www.communityartsprogram.org/.*

CHILDREN

Monster Jam.

Revs Into Town

The BB&T Center hosts Monster Jam. Guests will see custom-designed 12-foot-tall, 12-foot-wide monster trucks fly up to 125 to 130 feet in the air. Guests can take up-close photos of the monster trucks and meet the drivers at the "Party in the Pits" pre-event. 11:30 a.m. Aug. 13-14. BB&T Center, 1 Panther Pkwy., Sunrise. $10-$20.

Details: *http://www.thebbtcenter.com/events/detail/monster-jam-1*

OUTDOORS

Sunset Cruise with Dr. George.

Stiltsville & Key Biscayne

HistoryMiami hosts its Stiltsville and Key Biscayne sunset cruise with historian Dr. Paul George. Attendees can sail past the Cape Florida Lighthouse and listen to the history of Stiltsville and the city of Miami. 6-8 p.m. Aug. 14. HistoryMiami Museum, 101 W Flagler St., Miami. $25-$60.

Details: (305) 375-1492 or *http://www.historymiami.org/.*

SPECIAL EVENT

Anjelah Johnson.

Comedy Tour

Magic City Casino presents comedian Anjelah Johnson as she performs standup comedy as part of her nationwide comedy tour. 9 p.m. Aug. 13. Magic City Casino, 450 NW 37th Ave., Miami.

Details: http://anjelah.com/.

SPORTS

Miami FC.

FC vs. Strikers

The Miami FC Soccer team takes on the Fort Lauderdale Strikers. 8 p.m. Aug. 13. Ocean Bank Field at FIU Stadium, 11310 SW 17th St., Tamiami. $10-$20.

Details: *http://www.miamifc.com/home.*

FILM *cont.—*

(305) 643-8706 or *http://www.towertheatermiami.com/.*

FLORENCE FOSTER JENKINS

The Tower Theater screens "Florence Foster Jenkins." A wealthy heiress attempts to become an opera singer despite her horrible singing voice as her husband goes above and beyond to make sure his wife never figures out how awful her voice actually is. Times vary. Tower Theater, 1508 SW Eighth St., Miami Details: (305) 643-8706 or *http://www.towertheatermiami.com/.*

THE LAST DETAIL

Coral Gables Art Cinema screens "The Last Detail." When sailor Larry Meadows is sentenced to eight years in a New Hampshire prison, Navy lifers Billy Buddusky and Mule Mulhall are assigned to escort him to Virginia. Along the way, they warm up to their prisoner and as they get closer to their destination, their fondness for Larry makes it harder for them to execute their orders. 11:45 p.m. Coral Gables Art Cinema, 260 Aragon Ave., Coral Gables. Details: (786) 385-9689 or *http://www.gablescinema.com/* or *info@gablescinema.com.*

FEAR INC

O Cinema screens "Fear Inc." as part of its popcorn frights film festival. When a horror junkie and his friends sign up with a company that brings their customer's greatest fears to life, they must quickly determine if its demented employees are there to scare them or make them pawns in their own sick and deadly game. 7 p.m. O Cinema Wynwood, 90 NW 29th St., Wynwood Art District. Details: (305) 571-9970 or *http://www.o-cinema.org/.*

THE BLACKCOAT'S DAUGHTER

O Cinema screens "The Blackcoat's Daughter" as part of its popcorn fights film festival. The film follows two young students at a prestigious prep school for girls as they are assailed by an evil, invisible power that strands them at school over winter break. 9 p.m. O Cinema Wynwood, 90 NW 29th St., Wynwood Art District. Details: (305) 571-9970 or *http://www.o-cinema.org/.*

Saturday 8/13

DHEEPAN

The Miami Beach Cinematheque screens "Dheepan." To escape the civil war in Sri Lanka, former soldier Dheepan flees, taking with him two strangers, a woman and a little girl, hoping that they will make it easier for him to claim asylum in Europe. In Paris, he finds work as the caretaker of a run-down housing block and works to build a new life for his 'wife' and his 'daughter,' but the daily uncertainty he confronts quickly reopens his wounds, forcing Dheepan to reconnect with his warrior's instincts to protect the people he hopes will become his true family. 4:30 p.m. Miami Beach Cinematheque, 1130 Washington Ave., Miami Beach. Details: (305) 673-4567 or *http://mbcinema.com/.*

CITY OF GOD

Coral Gables Art Cinema screens "City of God," which follows the life of young photographer Rocket as he grows up amidst the carnage and drug-induced stupor that permeates Brazil's Cidade de Deus neighborhood. 11:45 p.m. Coral Gables Art Cinema, 260 Aragon Ave., Coral Gables. Details: (786) 385-9689 or *http://www.gablescinema.com/* or *info@gablescinema.com.*

THE WIZARD OF OZ

O Cinema screens "The Wizard of Oz." Swept away by a tornado to the magical Land of Oz, Kansas farm girl Dorothy Gale embarks on a surreal quest to find the wizard of Oz. Joined along the way by a Scarecrow, a Tin Man and a Cowardly Lion they are pursued by the vengeful Wicked Witch of the West and her evil flying monkeys. 11:30 p.m. O Cinema Miami Beach, 500 71st St, Miami Beach. Details: (786) 207-1919 or *http://www.o-cinema.org/.*

Sunday 8/14

ELEVATOR TO THE GALLOWS

Coral Gables Art Cinema screens "Elevator to the Gallows," which follows the wife of a rich industrialist and her ex-paratrooper lover, who plot to kill her husband so that they can carry on their affair. 11:45 p.m. Coral Gables Art Cinema, 260 Aragon Ave., Coral Gables. Details: (786) 385-9689 or *http://www.gablescinema.com/* or *info@gablescinema.com.*

Thursday 8/18

ON THE EDGE OF PARADISE

The Miami Beach Cinematheque screens "On the Edge of Paradise," which follows a Michael Jackson impersonator who is living in Paris when he is invited by a Marilyn Monroe look-alike to join her commune of misfits in a remote Scottish castle. 8:50 p.m. Miami Beach Cinematheque, 1130 Washington Ave., Miami Beach. Details: (305) 673-4567 or *http://mbcinema.com/.*

MUSIC

Thursday 8/11

ALEX BERTI TRIO

Cava Flamenco Lounge Restaurant presents Maria Alejandra Rodriguez and the Alex Berti Trio featuring Mauricio Quiros and Rodolfo Zuniga. 8:30 p.m. Cava Flamenco Lounge Restaurant, 3850 SW Eighth St., Coral Gables. Details: (305) 433-7666 or *http://www.cavamia.com.*

Friday 8/12

FRIDAY NIGHT SESSIONS

The Nautilus Hotel hosts its Friday night sessions featuring live jazz performed by local bands. 9 p.m.-Midnight. Nautilus Hotel, 1825 Collins Ave., Miami Beach. $7-$35. Details: (305) 503-5700 or *http://sixtyhotels.com/hotel/nautilus.*

Saturday 8/13

MEMORIES OF ELVIS

Parker Playhouse presents "Chris Mac Donald's Memories of Elvis in Concert," featuring performances by tribute artist Chris Mac Donald and an eight-piece band as they perform some of Elvis's most popular songs. 8 p.m. Parker Playhouse, 707 NE Eighth St., Fort Lauderdale. Details: *https://www.parkerplayhouse.com/.*

Sunday 8/14

REGGAE SUNDAYS

The Wynwood Yard hosts its Reggae Sundays featuring performances by Red Lyte & Sound Movements. 4-11 p.m. The Wynwood Yard, 56 NW 29th St., Wynwood Art District. Details: *http://thewynwoodyard.com.*

YAN CARLOS ARTIME

Le Chat Noir presents a performance by pianist Yan Carlos Artime and saxophonist Felipe Lamoglia. 8-11:45 p.m. Le Chat Noir, 2 S Miami Ave. Overtown. Details: *http://www.lechatnoirdesalis.com/.*

OUTDOORS

Saturday 8/13

WALKING TOUR OF MIAMI BEACH

The Miami Design Preservation League hosts its gay and lesbian walking tour of Miami Beach, which will include an overview of the gay and lesbian history of the city. 11 a.m. Art Deco Welcome Center, 1001 Ocean Dr., Miami Beach. Details: (305) 763-8026 or *http://www.mdpl.org/welcome-center/.*

YOGA IN THE PARK

Bayfront Park hosts its yoga classes taught by certified yoga instructors. All participants must be at least 18 years old and must sign a waiver. Everyone must bring a yoga mat, water and towel. In case of rain, classes are in the Bayfront Park office. 9 a.m. Free. Details: (305) 358-7550 or *www.bayfrontparkmiami.com/pages/yoga.html.*

Sunday 8/14

LINCOLN ROAD FARMERS' MARKET

The Market Company hosts its Lincoln Road farmer's market, which will include fruits, vegetables, fresh cut flowers, plants, bread, honey, jams and jellies from local vendors. 9 a.m.-6 p.m. Along Lincoln Road between Washington and Meridian avenues, Miami Beach. Details: *http://themarketcompany.org/.*

PUBLIC MEETINGS

Thursday 8/11

COCONUT GROVE BID

The Coconut Grove Business Improvement District Board meets. 9:30 a.m. Mayfair Hotel & Spa, Conference Room, 3000 Florida Ave., Coconut Grove. Details: (305) 461-5506.

SELECTION COMMITTEE

The Selection Committee meets. 10 a.m.-Noon. City of Miami, Miami Riverside Center, 444 SW Second Ave., Suite 1001, Miami. Details: (305) 416-1426.

calendar of events

To submit

This is a calendar of selected events in Greater Miami for the week beginning Thursday, August 11, 2016.

Information must be received in writing two weeks before the event.

Include costs, details, relevant phone numbers and photos if possible.

Send to:
Miami Today Calendar
Attention Katya Maruri
2000 S. Dixie Highway, Suite 100, Miami, FL 33133
E-mail:
calendar@miamitodaynews.com

PUBLIC MEETINGS *cont.—*

Tuesday 8/16

CIVIL SERVICE BOARD

The Civil Service Board meets. 10 a.m. Lummus Park, 404 NW Third St., Miami. Details: (305) 416-2020.

CIVILIAN INVESTIGATIVE PANEL

The Civilian Investigative Panel meets. 5:30 p.m Miami City Hall, Commission Chambers, 3500 Pan American Dr., Coconut Grove. Details: (305) 960-4952.

Wednesday 8/17

ECONOMIC ADVISORY TRUST

The Miami-Dade Economic Advisory Trust meets. 3:30-5 p.m. Stephen P. Clark Center, 111 NW 1st St., Miami. Details: (305) 375-5661.

COMMUNITY ADVISORY BOARD

The Community Advisory Board meets. 3 p.m. Miami City Hall, City Manager's Conference Room, 3500 Pan American Dr., Coconut Grove. Details: (305) 416-1005.

RED LIGHT CAMERA

Red Light Camera Hearing. 8:30 a.m. City of Miami Police, College Auditorium, 350 NW Second Ave., Miami. Details: (305) 416-2037.

RED LIGHT CAMERA

Red Light Camera Hearing. 10:30 a.m. City of Miami Police, College Auditorium, 350 NW Second Ave., Miami. Details: (305) 416-2037.

SUNSHINE MEETING

Sunshine Meeting between Downtown Development Authority Board Member Kim Stone and Commissioner Ken Russell. 10:30 a.m. Miami City Hall, District 2 Office, 3500 Pan American Dr., Coconut Grove. Details: (305) 579-6675.

Thursday 8/18

WEST LITTLE RIVER

The West Little River Community Advisory Committee meets. 6-8 p.m. Arcola Lakes Park Recreation Center, 1301 NW 83rd St., Arcola Lakes. Details: (786) 469-2203.

SERVICE CONNECTED DISABILITY

Service Disconnected Disability Meeting. 9:30-11:30 a.m. Stephen P. Clark Center, 111 NW 1st St., 21C Conference Room, Miami. Details: (305) 375-1589.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Saturday 8/13

WISH LIST DRIVE

Ronald McDonald House of Charities South Florida hosts its 34th anniversary wish list drive. Guests can participate in kids' activities, go on house tours and view an animal show and exhibiton. 11 a.m-4 p.m. Ronald McDonald House of Miami, 1145 NW 14th Terrace, Miami. Details: (786) 476-2177 or *veronica@rmhcsouthflorida.org.*

WYNWOOD ART WALK

Wynwood Art Walk hosts its second Saturday art walk showcasing art galleries, restaurants, concerts, vendors and live graffiti demonstrations. 6-10 p.m. NW Second Ave and NW 23rd St., Wynwood Art District. Details: *http://www.fimeshow.com/.*

Wednesday 8/17

FULL MOON VINYASA YOGA

The Deering Estate hosts its full moon vinyasa yoga session led by certified yoga instructors. 6:30-7:45 p.m. Deering Estate, 16701 SW 72nd St., Cutler Ridge. Details: (305) 235-1668 or *www.deeringestate.org.*

SPORTS

Friday 8/12

MIAMI MARLINS

The Miami Marlins take on the Chicago White Sox. 7:10 p.m. Marlins Park, 501 Marlins Way, Miami. Details: (305) 480-1300 or *www.miami.marlins.mlb.com*

Saturday 8/13

MIAMI MARLINS

The Miami Marlins take on the Chicago White Sox. 7:10 p.m. Marlins Park, 501 Marlins Way, Miami. Details: (305) 480-1300 or *www.miami.marlins.mlb.com*

Sunday 8/14

MIAMI MARLINS

The Miami Marlins take on the Chicago White Sox. 1:10 p.m. Marlins Park, 501 Marlins Way, Miami. Details: (305) 480-1300 or *www.miami.marlins.mlb.com*

THEATER

Thursday 8/11

STALKING THE BOGEYMAN

GableStage presents "Stalking the Bogeyman." Based on a true story, the play follows journalist David Holthouse's secret pursuit of justice for a crime hidden that has been hidden for 25 years. 8 p.m. Additional performances through Aug. 28. GableStage at the Biltmore, 1200 Anastasia Ave., Coral Gables. Details: (305) 445-1119 or *www.GableStage.org.*

6 To Plan 4

ART & HEALTH PALATE TO PALETTE

The Patricia & Phillip Frost Art Museum and West Kendall Baptist Hospital host its art & health palate to palette mixer, which will explore how medical professionals can benefit from art experts and vice versa. Sept. 17. 11 a.m.-2 p.m. Patricia & Phillip Frost Art Museum, 10975 SW 17th St., Tamiami. $35 per person. Details: (305) 348-1899 or *jlettsom@fiu.edu.*

AFRO ROOTS WORLD MUSIC FESTIVAL

Community Arts and Culture hosts its 18th annual afro roots world music festival featuring performances by the Chicago Afro Beat Project, Aurelio Martinez, Uma Galera, DJ Moses and more. 5 p.m. Sept. 3. North Beach Bandshell, 7275 Collins Ave., Miami Beach. $15-$25. Details: *www.communityartsandculture.org/afro-roots-festival.*

10TH BIRTHDAY PARTY

The Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts hosts its 10th birthday party. Guests can participate in an outdoor dance party, family-friendly activities and view performances, concerts and more. 11 a.m. Oct. 8. Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts, 1300 Biscayne Blvd., Miami. Details: *www.arshtcenter.org/10.*

THEFITEXPO

TheFitExpo hosts its two-day expo, which will include meet and greet sessions with fitness celebrities, over 150 health and wellness products and services, free fitness classes, cooking demos and fitness competitions. Oct. 8-9. Fort Lauderdale Convention Center, 1950 Eisenhower Blvd., Fort Lauderdale. $25-$40. *www.thefitexpo.com.*

ILLUMINATIONS GALA

Chapman Partnership hosts its illuminations gala, which will include a cocktail reception, dinner, live entertainment and dancing. 7 p.m. Oct. 15. JW Marriott Marquis Miami, 255 Biscayne Blvd Way, Miami. Details: https://www.chapmanpartnership.

HARVEST MOON WINE

Deering Estate hosts its 15th annual "Wine On Harvest Moon" festival, showcasing wine, food and art from South Africa. Oct. 15. 7:30-10:30 p.m. Deering Estate, 16701 SW 72nd Ave., Palmetto Bay. Details: *www.deeringestate.org.*

MEETINGS & CONVENTIONS

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

The University of Miami Environmental Health and Safety Dominion Tower hosts its college meeting. About 120 attendees expected. Aug. 7-10. Miami Marriott Biscayne Bay, 1633 N Bayshore Dr., Miami. Details: *http://www.miami.edu/finance/index.php/environmental_health_safety/.*

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF HOME BUILDERS

The National Association of Home Builders hosts its fall board of directors meeting. About 1,300 attendees expected. Aug. 8-11. Fontainebleau Miami Beach, 4441 Collins Ave., Miami Beach. Details: *https://www.nahb.org/.*

SOURCE: GREATER MIAMI CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

Second home buyers turning to Snowmass, CO, near Aspen

By Catherine Lackner

It's August, and as the heat and humidity soar, a sticky miasma descends over the southern part of the peninsula, and thoughts turn to escape.

Traditionally, Miami residents have bought summer homes in the mountains of North Carolina. Real estate is relatively cheap, and it's a short flight to Atlanta (or Charlotte, now that American Airlines and US Airways have merged) and then a scenic drive to a cluster of small towns perched in the Smoky Mountains. It seemed tailor-made for Floridians, but, some observers say, that generations-old trend may be changing.

"As long as you're getting on a plane, you might as well go someplace really special, with a really different climate," said Ruth Kennedy Sudduth of LandVest, a Boston-based Christie's International Real Estate affiliate.

"We have a younger wave of people who are dual citizens of South Florida and Maine," she said. "It's a pretty easy flight into Boston." Some smaller airlines fly even closer to trendy communities clustered along the Atlantic seaboard.

The new second-home buyers, "are attracted to the hip, urban vibe, but on a smaller scale," she said. That includes farm-to-table cuisine, art galleries, music, and boutiques. "No one has to wonder if they'll be able to get kale."

Families enjoy a comfortable summer climate in Snowmass, CO, where air conditioning is not needed.

Prices can vary greatly, she added. "For those who have the means to look at this kind of thing, it can get very expensive, but a lovely little cottage just sold for $300,000," Ms. Sudduth said. "There hasn't been an enormous run-up in prices, and there is a wide array of options, including lakes, coastlines, and so on."

Summers are mild, with little or no humidity, and the area offers a range of leisure activities. "There's a good reason that Maine uses 'Vacationland' as the slogan on its license plates," Ms. Sudduth said.

"Miami and Aspen have a deep connection," said Jonathan Boxer, head of sales for the Residences Viceroy Snowmass in Snowmass, Colorado, near Aspen. "You don't need air conditioning here in the summer."

Aspen and surrounding towns are evolving into four-season destinations rather than just ski areas, he said, with summer music festivals, hot-air ballooning, river rafting and other warm-weather activities coming to the fore. The Aspen airport can accommodate large aircraft, and there are several regional airports, he said.

Rocky Mountain towns have come into their own as cultural centers with up-and-coming restaurants, including an outpost of Nobu that offers "the best sushi in the world," boutique shopping and vibrant nightlife, he added.

"There is a very broad range of product," when it comes to vacation homes, Mr. Boxer said. While a smaller condominium can probably be had for around $300,000, most units in the area run in the $400,000 to $500,000 range, and can sleep six. Rental programs, in which the owner can recoup some of his or her investment when not using the unit, are popular.

"There's really something for everyone," Mr. Boxer said, "whether it comes to recreational activities, or the type of unit you want to buy."

But rumors of his state's demise as a summer destination are exaggerated, said Reed Jackson, managing partner and founder of Ivester Jackson Properties/Christie's International Real Estate in Charlotte, North Carolina.

"Florida remains a top state of origin for inbound migration to North Carolina," he said via email. "As recently as 2013, the state census ranked Florida second amongst states of origin for North Carolina, with close to 30,000 people making the move. The reasons for this range from the obvious (more temperate climate in the summer in the high country of Asheville, Cashiers, and Blowing Rock) to the more subtle," including access to booming business centers such as Charlotte and The Research Triangle.

"The North Carolina coast draws from the Northeastern and Midwestern vacation buyer market, as well as those coastal dwellers who desire less hustle and bustle than you see in more populated areas," Mr. Jackson said. And, continuing the tradition, "The high country draws from both the Northeast and Florida due to its temperate climate and replication of the Catskills vibe," he said.

Miami-Dade Aviation officials see progress on a direct Asia link

By Camila Cepero

As Miami-Dade Aviation Department officials continue down the long road of negotiations in their quest to establish a direct air link from Asia, the exact origin destination is still unknown. Nonetheless, good news is on the horizon as officials anticipate an announcement within two years regarding a direct flight to Asia.

Although conversations about the possibility of establishing the air link using Taiwanese air carriers are "very advanced," Miami International Airport (MIA) isn't interested in playing favorites, said Miami-Dade Aviation Department director, Emilio González.

"We are very agnostic as to which Asian carrier flies to Miami first. Whichever does – Taiwanese, Chinese, Korean, Japanese – it doesn't matter to us, because that airline will do very well."

One reason for the advanced talks with Taiwanese aviation officials, he said, is that two Taiwanese air carriers are making investments into the type of aircraft expected to have the necessary endurance and fuel capacity to make the roughly 18-hour trips.

China Airlines and EVA Air both have the Boeing 777-300ER in their fleet.

The Boeing 777 is a family of the world's largest twinjets and has a typical seating capacity for 314 to 451 passengers, with a range of 5,235 to 9,500 nautical miles.

China Airlines is introducing Airbus A350 XWB planes into its fleet this year, while EVA Air opted for the Boeing 787 Dreamliner. Both planes are positioned to compete with each other in terms of passenger capacity and fuselage.

Last year, aviation officials put together the MIA Asia Task Force to engage businesses with Asian origins or interests by using questionnaires, inviting foreign aviation representatives and working in collaboration.

"With the Asia Task Force, our next step is to approach different air carriers, and we will formally make the case that we need them to consider MIA [for direct flights]," Mr. González said.

Ongoing conversations with air carriers, however, are steadily moving along, he said.

"We exchange technical data, we exchange information on the viability of routes, we do a lot of computer modeling in regards to how profitable a route will be if you fly three times a week as opposed to four times a week. We look at load factors throughout Asia, who flies where ... We package that and we send it to other airlines and I meet with CEO's of Asian carriers. We're in contact with carriers for different reasons. Some are very preliminary and some are very advanced."

'All of our stakeholders are eager...'
Emilio González

"All of our local stakeholders are eager, and based on our studies, we can tell you that they don't have a preference as to where they go in Asia," Mr. González said.

In May, Miami Today reported that with 290,480 passengers traveling from Miami International to Asia in 2015, it was second to Orlando in the top 20 US-Asia passenger markets without nonstop service.

There were 415,399 passengers whose origin or destination was Miami or Asia in 2015, indicating Miami has strong passenger numbers to Asia – with Manila ranking first and Bangalore ranking 15th – despite the lack of nonstop service, airport officials said.

"My expectation is that we should hear some good news in regards to a direct Asia flight within the next 18-24 months," Mr. González said.

The expected announcement will mark the beginning of what is typically a year-long prepping process that needs to be completed before the first plane ever leaves the ground, he said. Throughout that time, the airports and airline "do their homework" to synergize logistical concerns and do appropriate levels of marketing and advertising.

For many Italians, Miami vacation turns into something more

By Camila Cepero

For most people, great vacations are rarely more than a relaxing time to unwind and make memories. But for some of the 500 Italians a month coming to Miami, their great vacation spot turned into their future home where they would find opportunities to invest and start their own businesses.

According to Italian Consul General Gloria Marina Bellelli, a large number of Italians who will eventually call Miami home became infatuated with the city after experiencing it first-hand.

"Many Italians come here for vacation, [which is one] reason they know Miami," Ms. Bellelli said. "They come here for a while and then the moment in their life when they decide where to go – if they have to leave Italy – they go where they have been already and where they know, so that it's easier to settle."

Consulate data shows that of the 27,743 Italians currently living in Florida, 32% fall into the 31-50 year-old age group.

The high percentage of middle-aged Italian immigrants can be partly explained, Ms. Bellelli said, by the idea that they're the only group who can afford the move and have the energy to do it.

"When you have more money, you can make an investment," she said. "That means that you need to be almost 40 or 50 years old before you can [afford to] open a restaurant, an activity, a showroom. So that's perhaps why middle-aged people are actively coming here."

"We see that, of course, there are different reasons why Italians are investing here," said Nevio Boccanera, executive director of the Italy-America Chamber of Commerce Southeast.

"Of course, globalization is a factor – you need to move to the markets to survive. Also, Miami is gaining international recognition as a gateway to Latin America, and the infrastructure is good."

Italians invest here for different reasons: Nevio Boccanera.

Last week, Miami International Airport announced that Italian airline Meridiana will begin serving the airport with two weekly flights from Milan starting on Dec. 2, 2016.

Meridiana will add to MIA's current service to Italy, which includes daily direct flights to Milan with American Airlines and to Rome with Alitalia. MIA serves more than 275,000 passengers annually to and from Italy, the airport said.

"Many people come here on vacation, and many entrepreneurs come here to see a vibrant city and they see a lot of other Italians, and they say 'wow, I can open a restaurant, distribute shoes I produce in Italy, or I can open a warehouse,'" Mr. Boccanera said.

"We have much more people investing than people coming to look for a job," Ms. Bellelli said. "That's why you see middle-aged people – because they are people that are already independent and can make an investment, and then they come with their family."

"Italians involved in heavy machinery exporting will probably consider Chicago, [but if they're] in the furniture business, they will consider New York and Miami, and Miami has a good chance of being chosen because the costs are much less than New York," Mr. Boccanera said. "If they are in the yacht industry, [they go to] Fort Lauderdale. The US is a continent where every state has different industries and characteristics, so you cannot do a general approach – you have to do an evaluation based on your sector."

Many Italians come here for vacation: Gloria Marina Bellelli.

"Many of them come because they work in construction, so they know that here, people construct a lot. You also need interior design, and if you construct a lot, you need a lot of furniture," Ms. Bellelli said. "Not only in Miami, but in South Florida there are big investments in construction, so we have architects and engineers [coming here]."

The Italy-America Chamber of Commerce Southeast currently has about 200 corporate members representing a wide range of sectors including the "very alive and thriving" high-end luxury furniture sector, Mr. Boccanera said.

Additionally, "everything related to hospitality" and food and beverage can be found among its membership, he said, from ice cream shops to hotels to wine distributors.

"More towards Broward ... there are some commercial offices of yacht companies from Italy, because Italy is a big producer of yachts and superyachts."

"In Europe, if you want to make your business very big and competitive, you need to have connections," Ms. Bellelli said. "Here, it's easier to introduce yourself because the market is still not so big, so you can have fewer competitors in certain sectors because you won't find so many people."

Nonetheless, she said, "the trend seems to indicate that after having repeatedly visited, people become interested in relocating here either with the intention of opening a new business or a branch of an Italian company."

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Announcement

YWCA of Greater Miami-Dade, Inc. invites CPA firms to submit a proposal for the preparation of its audited financial statements and related tax filings for a 3-year period beginning with the 2016 FYE 6/30. Contact 305-377-9922 x204 or smejia@ywca-miami.org for RFP by 8/18/16 @ 3 pm. Deadline for questions 8/19/16 @ 3pm – proposal due 8/26/16 @ 4 pm.

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Legal Advertising

Fictitious Name

Notice Under Fictitious Name Law Pursuant to Section 865.09, Florida Statutes NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the undersigned, desiring to engage in business under the fictitious name of **ELLE TACO** located at 7535 North Kendall Drive, #1420, in the County of Miami-Dade, in the City of Miami, Florida, 33156, intends to register the said name with the Division of Corporations of the Florida Department of State, Tallahassee, Florida.

Dated at Miami, Florida, this 3rd Day of August, 2016.
ELLE TACO LLC
Owner

Fictitious Name

Notice Under Fictitious Name Law Pursuant to Section 865.09, Florida Statutes NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the undersigned, desiring to engage in business under the fictitious name of **PAWN BROKER** located at 121 SE 1st Street, in the County of Miami-Dade, in the City of Miami, Florida, 33131, intends to register the said name with the Division of Corporations of the Florida Department of State, Tallahassee, Florida.

Dated at Miami, Florida, this 3rd Day of August, 2016.
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