

BUSINESS BRIEFS

DeLand Zaxby's earns national honors

Now in its third year, the **National Fund for Workforce Solutions'** Young Adult Employer Champions program honors employers who provide high-quality jobs and successfully hire and retain 18- to 25-year-old young adults who are unemployed or underemployed and not enrolled in school.

This year, **Zaxby's** of DeLand is one of seven Young Adult Employer Champions recognized for their exemplary work with community partners and training providers to identify, prepare, and hire young adults.

"We are thrilled to have been recognized by the organization, as well as our ongoing participation in hiring qualified young adults in our community," said **Courtney Blackburn**, a principal at Zaxby's in DeLand.

Zaxby's has some heady company; the other recipients were **Walgreens Corp.** in Illinois; **Starbucks** outlets in Boston and Philadelphia; **Nationwide** in Des Moines, Iowa; **Brown's Super Stores Inc.** in Philadelphia; and **Montefiore Health System** in the Bronx, New York.

West Volusia tourism authority boosts staff

The **West Volusia Tourism Advertising Authority** has hired **Kristine Spence** as marketing coordinator. Spence has more than 15 years' experience in tourism, and holds the Certified Guest Service Professional designation — the highest acknowledgment of award-winning guest service for employees in the lodging industry.

Spence's duties include acting as liaison with area tourism partners, as well as attending trade and travel shows to cultivate the WVTAA's group-tour marketing and international market.

A DeLand native, Spence was most recently the marketing director for the **American Hotel & Lodging Educational Institute** in nearby Orlando, where she had worked since 2000.

Spence is a member of the **Hospitality Sales & Marketing Association International** (currently serving as the organization's vice president of education), and holds A.S. and B.S. degrees in hospitality management.

The West Volusia Tourism Advertising Authority's mission is to develop and support marketing and advertising programs that bring increased tourism to West Volusia, and to demonstrate the desirability of West Volusia as a tourism destination. For more information, visit <http://visitwestvolusia.com/>.



Kristine Spence

Halifax Health - Hospice Grief Centers seek volunteers

Halifax Health - Hospice Grief Centers are in need of volunteers for the DeLand, Daytona Beach and Flagler locations.

Compassionate individuals are sought to volunteer to facilitate groups for grieving children and adults. A free, comprehensive training program will be offered by a mental-health professional that includes the skills needed to work in that environment.

Halifax Health - Hospice Grief Centers were established to serve the needs of children and adults who have lost loved ones. Services include support groups, memorial services, special events and workshops, children's grief services, and an award-winning traumatic-loss program. The centers' supportive, experiential approach has proved to make a difference for children and their families during the grieving process.

For more information, contact **Cintia Ribar** at 386-425-3100 or Dr. **Kim Beck-Frate** at 386-425-3339.

Hospital names new director of critical-care nursing

Florida Hospital DeLand has selected **Michele Lebron** to serve as the new director of critical-care nursing.

In this role, Lebron will oversee inpatient nursing departments, and will collaborate across all disciplines to ensure that patients receive compassionate care in an efficient, cost-effective approach that also extends the healing ministry of Christ.

Lebron has 14 years of experience, and has been with Florida Hospital for nearly 13 years. Most recently, she served as the nurse manager of an intermediate care unit at **Florida Hospital Orlando** and was responsible for planning, coordinating and evaluating the clinical practice activities for the unit.

An Orange City resident, she earned a Master of Science in Nursing, Clinical Nurse Specialist program, from the University of Central Florida and is a member of the **American Association of Critical Care Nurses**. She also received nursing-excellence awards in 2013 and 2015.



Michele Lebron

— *Compiled by Business Editor Joe Crews*
Send us your news — We want your business news. Send news items and photographs via email to info@beacononline-news.com. Please include a contact telephone number. When sending photos, please send high-resolution, uncropped files, and identify the individuals pictured.

Longtime Stihl dealer mentors younger employees

BY JOE CREWS
joe@beacononline-news.com

Triple D Equipment has been around for nearly three decades, but owner Larry DeLong has never forgotten his company's small-business roots.

DeLong, whose business is an authorized dealer for Stihl power tools and other outdoor equipment, such as Kubota tractors and Gravely mowers, believes it is the collective power of the many small businesses in the DeLand area that led to the city winning the title of "Best Main Street" in the recent "America's Main Streets" contest.

The contest was sponsored by Independent We Stand, a Stihl-backed effort that focuses on independently owned businesses and educating people on the benefits of buying locally.

Triple D was a key supporter of the contest as the only authorized Stihl dealer in the area, but DeLong said many others share the credit.

"The recognition goes to all the small businesses around here," DeLong said.

DeLong strives to live up to the motto coined by his mother many years ago: "A hometown feeling." As part of that effort over the years, DeLong has quietly

supported the community, such as the local FFA chapter.

"A lot of FFA kids I helped grew up and now have kids of their own, and they come into the store and visit me," DeLong said.

He treats employees like family, even mentoring younger males who come to work for Triple D.

"During the past 26-plus years, I've called the younger guys my sons," he said, although he doesn't have any kids of his own. "I am proud of these young men and our future, and this makes Triple D Equipment 'A Hometown Feeling.'"

Slade Smith, for instance, started at Triple D when he was in high school.

"He got his college degree while working here, and now he's our sales manager," DeLong said.

One of his more recent success stories is Cody Resciniti, who was 19 when he was hired a little more than two years ago.

"I have known his dad, James Resciniti, and his uncle, Jason Hunt, [since] before Cody was even born," DeLong said. "Cody was lost and dropped out of DeLand High School. He tried working jobs, but they never worked out because



BEACON PHOTO/JAN GIROUX

Mentor and mentee — Larry DeLong, left, and Cody Resciniti stand in front of a display of Stihl products recently at Triple D Equipment. Resciniti is one of the latest "young bucks" at Triple D who have been mentored by DeLong over the years.

he was bored."

So when DeLong and his parts manager, Jason Panton, hired Cody Resciniti, the young man was told they would help, but he would have to earn his General Educational Development (GED) certificate within a year.

Less than a year later, Cody came to work and showed off his certificate.

"You've got to motivate people to do better," DeLong said. "That's the important thing."

For his part, the young-

er Resciniti said he knew DeLong meant it when he said Cody needed the GED certificate for himself, not for the company.

"It was a tremendous weight off my shoulders," Resciniti said. "I am very proud of that achievement."

Resciniti said his own father is one of the best he could ever ask for, but DeLong is almost like a second father.

"He treats all of us young bucks here like his own," he said. "He's an awesome guy."

Checkers coming to Orange City

BY JOE CREWS
joe@beacononline-news.com

If all goes according to plan, a new Checkers drive-thru restaurant in Orange City will be serving up burgers and fries by the end of this year.

The franchised eatery will be taking the place of a shuttered Sunoco station at 1625 S. Volusia Ave., across from a medical office, said Nick Pell, one of the Clearwater-based partners who will be running the new restaurant.

Pell and his partners — Ben Mercer and Nick's wife, Laura — also are opening another Checkers in the Orlando area under their corporate name, Northwest Taco Co., through which they've been operating Taco Time restaurants in Western states.

"Taco Time is ... like an upscale Taco Bell," Pell told *The Beacon*. "But we're now transitioning into Checkers."

Pell said he and his partners like the growth Checkers has shown in recent years, as well as the simplicity of its operation.

"It's very streamlined, and [stores have] a small footprint," he said. "The franchise model is fantastic."

Pell and his partners are especially pleased with their site in Orange City.

"We have a lot of confidence in that location," he said. "It has good visibility and good access."

The plan is for demolition of the Sunoco to begin around Oct. 1. Once the building is razed, crews will make sure the site is environmentally cleaned up to federal Environmental Protection Agency standards.

The construction of a



PHOTO COURTESY CHECKERS & RALLY'S

Prefab concept — A new Checkers restaurant in Orange City will look similar to this one, with prefabricated modules built off-site and assembled in place. The new eatery will have a single drive-thru lane, which the franchisee believes will be more efficient than the double lanes common at other locations.



PHOTO COURTESY NICK PELL

Two partners — Nick and Laura Pell — shown here with their kids Jackson, age 3, and Hudson, 1, and their dog, Nola — are two of the three partners behind the new Orange City Checkers restaurant. Nick is the company president; Laura is the chief operating officer. The third partner, Ben Mercer, is vice president.

new single-lane drive-thru restaurant will commence immediately after any required cleanup. The Pells and Mercer will use Checkers' new Model 4.0 construction style, in which prefabricated modules built off-site are assembled at the new location.

The prefab restaurants are expected to be faster to

construct and cost about \$100,000 less than traditional builds, according to a Checkers and Rally's release.

"Some franchisees want a two-lane drive-thru, but Checkers believe a single lane is better and more efficient," Pell said. "Our goal is to provide excellent food, and outstanding and quick cus-

tomers service. Service times should be very good. Single drive-thru is definitely the way to go here."

The partners plan to hire "close to 70" employees, including management positions, from the local area, Pell said.

"I think we do a really good job of hiring good people," he said.