



PASCO EDC
NORTH TAMPA BAY, FLORIDA.

BUSINESS CONNECTIONS TASK FORCE

TASK FORCE REPORT

AUGUST 2025

TASK FORCE MEMBERS

The Pasco Economic Development Council would like to recognize and thank the members of the Business Connections Task Force for their time, insight, and dedication to enhancing the value we provide to our investors and stakeholders.

- **Chair: Mike Bishop, Thirsty Buffalo Brewing Co.**
- Thomas Dionne, Synovus
- Rickey Gude, Withlacoochee River Electric Cooperative
- Stacy Myers, E-Assessments, Inc.
- Frank Rygiel, Construction Services, Inc. of Tampa
- Ryan Schell, Clifton Larson Allen LLP
- Mark Sopcik, J.P. Morgan
- Heidi Tuttle-Beisner, Commercial Asset Partners Realty
- Mike Wolf, Columnar
- Amber Lake, Pasco EDC
- Deanna Sourk, Pasco EDC
- Turner Arbour, Pasco EDC

FOR MORE INFORMATION



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“IT WAS A PLEASURE TO WORK ALONGSIDE THIS DEDICATED GROUP OF PROFESSIONALS TO EXPLORE HOW WE CAN MAKE PASCO EDC'S INVESTOR COMMUNITY STRONGER AND MORE CONNECTED. THE RECOMMENDATIONS IN THIS REPORT REFLECT REAL OPPORTUNITIES TO BUILD RELATIONSHIPS, SHOWCASE OUR MEMBERS, AND DRIVE BUSINESS OUTCOMES.”

MIKE BISHOP, TASK FORCE CHAIR

BUSINESS CONNECTIONS TASK FORCE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Business Connections Task Force was established to strengthen Pasco EDC's investor engagement through increased collaboration, enhanced visibility, and a sharper focus on delivering value to stakeholders. The group delivered two high-impact initiatives: an Investor Support Guide and a First-Time Exhibitors Area at the 37th Annual Awards Trade Show, both aimed at enhancing the investor experience and increasing the return on participation.

GUIDING STATEMENT

The Business Connections Task Force aims to facilitate collaboration and attract investment for economic development. It focuses on developing relationships between Pasco EDC investors, organizing stronger networks, implementing effective communication strategies, and providing Pasco EDC investor support services. By fostering strong networks and keeping stakeholders informed and engaged, the task force seeks to enhance the region's visibility and attractiveness to investors, driving economic growth and development.

METHODOLOGY

The Business Connections Task Force conducted a series of six structured meetings between November 2024 and June 2025. Each meeting focused on a distinct aspect of investor engagement, cross-program collaboration, and increasing value for Pasco EDC investors. The task force gathered qualitative feedback, reviewed past program performance, evaluated peer best practices, and hosted guest speakers from aligned organizations to inform its recommendations.

MEETINGS & DISCUSSIONS

1. November 20, 2024 – Kickoff & Goal Setting

The first meeting established the purpose and structure of the task force. Members discussed historical context, reviewed investor engagement challenges, and proposed initial ideas for enhancing visibility and connectivity among investors.

2. January 29, 2025 – Branding and Visibility

This session focused on how Pasco EDC can better communicate the value of investment. Members examined current branding and communication strategies, including marketing touchpoints, collateral materials, and the evolving role of the Pasco 50 and Annual Awards events.

3. February 12, 2025 – Peer Engagement Models

The task force welcomed Beth Galic, Executive Director of the Bay Area Manufacturers Association (BAMA). Beth shared BAMA's approach to strengthening member value through networking, education, and industry visibility. Members discussed how Pasco EDC could adapt similar tactics to foster connections across investor tiers.

4. April 9, 2025 – Alumni and Leadership Models

The group explored long-term engagement strategies with Angel Cook, Leadership Pasco President. Angel provided insights into how alumni networks and cohort-based programming drive ongoing involvement. Discussion centered on sustaining investor interest beyond the point of joining.

5. May 7, 2025 – Event Strategy and Activation

This session addressed how to leverage existing events to deepen connections among investors. Members shared feedback on past trade show-style experiences and helped shape the concept for a First-Time Exhibitors Area at the Annual Awards event. The discussion also informed the development of the Investor Support Guide, later published as a core deliverable of the task force.

6. June 11, 2025 – Final Review and Recommendations

The final meeting was used to review draft recommendations, confirm strategic priorities, and identify next steps. Members emphasized the need for practical follow-through, clear ownership of ideas, and measurable success indicators. Suggestions included stronger cross-program alignment, more structured onboarding, and consistent touchpoints throughout the investor journey.

Throughout the process, task force members provided candid feedback, tested concepts, and guided the creation of two foundational tools: the Investor Support Guide and the First-Time Exhibitors Area. Their insights and the guest speakers' contributions directly shaped the final recommendations presented in this report.

GOALS, FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

GOAL 1: STRENGTHEN INVESTOR ONBOARDING & ENGAGEMENT

Findings:

- There is uncertainty about how to most effectively navigate investor benefits and how to best get involved with Pasco EDC programming.
- The variety of investor sizes and motivations creates different onboarding needs.

Recommendations:

- Develop an investor support guide for new investors.
- Host onboarding networking opportunities or virtual sessions to help new investors connect and identify ambassadors that can help orientate them as new investors.
- Incorporate a brief check-in survey 3–6 months after onboarding to gather feedback.

GOAL 2: EXPAND VISIBILITY & B2B OPPORTUNITIES FOR INVESTORS

Findings:

- Investors value B2B exposure and networking but want more structure around making those connections.
- Investors expressed interest in a more prominent presence at events.

Recommendations:

- Create and build upon an enhanced networking opportunity for investors at the Annual Awards and other signature events.
- Offer optional B2B spotlights in newsletters or digital platforms.
- Designate special investor showcases during key events to highlight businesses aligned by sector or interest.

GOAL 3: LEVERAGE EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDER PARTNERSHIPS TO SUPPORT INVESTOR AND BUSINESS COMMUNITY VALUE

Findings:

- Partner organizations such as Bay Area Manufacturers Association (BAMA) and Leadership Pasco expressed enthusiasm to collaborate more formally.
- These organizations have unique channels and overlapping audiences with Pasco EDC.
- Strategic alignment can boost investor visibility while supporting the broader business ecosystem.

Recommendations:

- Co-host cross-promotional events or roundtables with BAMA and Leadership Pasco.
- Explore reciprocal benefits for investors engaging with partner programming.
- Establish a shared calendar with partner orgs to avoid event overlap and identify collaboration opportunities.

APPENDICES

- Investor Support Guide
- First-Time Exhibitors Area