

DEVICES CALM TRAFFIC BUT AGGRAVATE RESIDENTS, SO MIAMI IS HITTING THE BRAKES, pg. 9



HOW MUCH DUE? City of Miami officials want to find out if the sale of the Miami Marlins baseball team will result in some revenue to the city. The city commission last week approved a resolution directing the city's independent auditor general to work with the Miami-Dade County administration to ascertain the appropriate percentage of the proceeds due to the city from the sale of the Miami Marlins L.P. The resolution says the city contracted with the county and the Marlins for the construction and operation of Marlins Park and related parking facilities on city-owned land in East Little Havana, the former site of the city-owned Orange Bowl stadium. **Jeffrey Loria's** sale of the franchise for \$1.2 billion to a group led by **Bruce Sherman** and **Derek Jeter** was approved by Major League Baseball owners and was concluded this week. The city's resolution says the county and the city have a financial interest in the sale.

NEW POLICE HEADQUARTERS: In January, Miami commissioners directed the city manager to prioritize development of a request for proposals to design and build a new police headquarters at the urging of Commissioner **Francis Suarez**, who noted the deteriorating police station at 400 NW Second Ave. Since then, police administrators have been evaluating many potential sites, including 81 city-owned parcels larger than 2 acres. At the commission's Sept. 28 meeting, a police official said they'd settled on a perfect location, city-owned land at 150 NE 19th St., north of City of Miami Cemetery and near Fire Station No. 2. He said the department wanted approval from commissioners to request proposals to design a headquarters for that site. No vote occurred, as this was a discussion item. Commissioner **Ken Russell** said the Omni Community Redevelopment Agency is also interested in the site and he doesn't know if it's the "best spot" for a police station.

NEW NAME, NEW STRUCTURE: The Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce has changed the name and format of what used to be known as its annual Goals Conference. Rechristened the Impact Conference, the event will be held May 31 to June 2, 2018, at the Turnberry Isle Resort & Club in Aventura. Annual goals that committees have been steadily working to develop will be announced, and there will be a board retreat for the executive committee. Details: (305) 350-7700.

HELPING HANDS: Chamber volunteers, along with those from Bank of America, Florida International University, Carnival Cruise Lines and Wells Fargo, will travel Friday (10/6) to Big Pine Key on a bus donated from Carnival Cruise Lines to help the Red Cross deliver essential supplies to residents of the island, which was devastated by Hurricane Irma. Space on the bus is limited. Interested volunteers should email Lshowers@miamichamber.com or call (305) 577-5433.

THE ACHIEVER



Photo by Cristina Sullivan

Ray Baker
County veteran now directing Public Library System
The profile is on Page 4

City woos California accelerator

By CATHERINE LACKNER

"Confidential project X" will get a \$300,000 grant from Miami's Downtown Development Authority if it establishes "a world-class technology accelerator program in downtown Miami," directors voted last week.

The grant will furnish the unnamed company, which "runs a successful technology accelerator and venture capital investment fund in Silicon Valley which has made investments in over 1,700 businesses" with a focus on diversity, with \$150,000 a year for the first two years, according to a memo. The authority can extend the grant to a third year.

"One of our strengths is diversity," said Nicholas Martinez, development authority senior manager for urban economics and market development. "They are looking to open a second accelerator outside of Silicon Valley."

The grant would cover operating costs, including rent, but not many jobs would be created initially, Mr. Martinez said. "We're seeding at the front end."

"We've looked at what they've done," he said. "We went to California in August. They have a reach to all parts of the globe and they would have a fully operational headquarters here. They have 50 employees in Silicon Valley; we would hope for the same."

Beginning early next year, the company would help at least 35 tech businesses to scale up, he added, mostly in financial services, healthcare and education. "We're No. 1 in tech business creation, but No. 39 when it comes to scale up," Mr. Martinez said.

"This would put us on the map," said board member Danet Linares, executive vice president of Blanca Commercial Real Estate. "This is huge."

Board member Marta Viciedo, a founding partner of Urban Impact Lab, asked whether the 35 companies would be from South Florida or elsewhere. Mr. Martinez said the mix would probably be 60% international and 40% local businesses.

The board unanimously endorsed the grant.

39% of firms expect Irma's impact to last a year

By CATHERINE LACKNER

A survey of CEOs, presidents, owners and decision makers has unveiled their conclusions about how the aftermath of Hurricane Irma is affecting Miami's business community, with nearly two in five expecting negative consequences to linger for at least a year.

The survey by the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce and the MBAF accounting firm found an impressive 76% of respondents had a disaster plan before the storm hit; 99% of them said the plan was very or somewhat effective.

That may be the reason most respondents (69%) said the hurricane will have a negative effect on their businesses only over the next three months. Only 39% said they expected the negative consequences to continue for a year.

Less reassuring was the finding that "32% of business leaders are less optimistic about the health of their business, compared to before Hurricane Irma," the survey said. A few months ago, when the chamber and MBAF produced an executive summary of their earlier survey, 77% of respondents were optimistic, said Wolfgang Pinther, MBAF director of marketing. The abrupt

drop "is kind of scary for our community," he said.

However, respondents have witnessed a series of disasters — hurricanes Harvey, Irma and then Maria — in short order, he added. "We've seen one tragedy after another."

More than half (57%) said they are neither more nor less optimistic about the health of their business since Hurricane Irma. Surprisingly, 31% of businesses said that the storm "would increase their marketing opportunities," the survey said. "I do understand that," Mr. Pinther said. "We were able to put out more content to our clients and contacts. It did increase our marketing opportunities."

Perhaps because of widespread power outages, 88% of respondents found calls and texts the most effective way of communicating, followed by business emails (82%) and personal emails (60%).

Most respondents (81%) said the storm would have no impact from a hiring standpoint over the year, while 16% said the storm would force them to decrease full-time staff. From a budget standpoint, 52% said the storm would affect them; 23% of respondents would decrease their budgets, 15% would be forced to reallocate and

14% would be forced to increase their budgets, the survey said.

Some of respondents' comments:

- As many of our clients' offices were not open for over a week, they have fallen way behind in their payments, which has a serious effect on cash flow.
- Projects delayed or cancelled. Clients with no money.
- Short-term reduction in staff productivity due to disruptions caused by power outages and downed trees.
- Clients stopped calling.
- Loss of revenue due to office closure for almost two weeks.
- Loss of new business due to cancellations of appointments with new clients.
- We will have much more properties to inspect, clean up and maintain.
- No significant impact other than lost time.
- Employee stress.
- Better planning and lessons learned for the next catastrophic event.

Surveys were distributed to more than 5,000 email addresses in the chamber's and MBAF's proprietary databases. There were 109 responses.

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