



TREASURE COAST  
MANUFACTURERS  
ASSOCIATION

# TCMA VOICE

A newsletter presented by the Treasure Coast Manufacturers Association

SPRING 2022

## IRSC PRESIDENT OUTLINES NEW WORKFORCE CENTER AT ANNUAL MEETING

After two years of pandemic-related delays, more than 70 members and guests recently attended the **Treasure Coast Manufacturers Association's annual meeting.**

Board member and committee chairman Jack Chadam emceed a diverse program highlighting small- and medium-sized manufacturers held at the Boys & Girls Clubs of St. Lucie County's Westside Campus last month.

Jerry Jacques, association president, reviewed the benefits of membership in the organization and past year's activities, including its workforce readiness initiatives, social media outreach and partnership with the South Florida Manufacturers Association. He also previewed upcoming programs with Project LIFT, business tours and lunch-and-learn sessions.

Robert Plazola, SFMA president, shared information about the regional organization's events and recognition opportunities. Freshco/Indian River Select was a 2021 runner-up for the SFMA Manufacturer of the Year Award. Katie Sterling, the company's human resources and quality assurance manager, was named the SFMA 2021 Supervisory Employee of the Year.

**“Florida just surpassed Germany in GDP and 11,000-plus new businesses registered on the Treasure Coast in 2021.”**

— Duane Reiff



IRSC President Tim Moore addresses TCMA members at the association's annual meeting.

In 2020, Expert Shutter Services won the Manufacturer of the Year Award with Aquaco Farms, A-1 Roof Trusses and Freshco named as finalists.

### KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Indian River State College president, Dr. Tim Moore, encouraged members to partner with the college to help develop the workforce their companies need.

IRSC is building an Advanced Workforce Training Center, which has an anticipated opening for the next academic year. Moore said IRSC was the only college in Florida with this type of facility. It will link advanced technology and leading-edge industry training in specialized technical career fields such as advanced manufacturing; automotive, aviation and marine technology; welding; heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems; and more.

Moore said that 78.5% of IRSC graduates

stay in the community.

“If we change them, we change the community,” he said. “We have \$182 million sitting in the bank to deploy for areas of need, but I need to know what you need. Please call, we work for you. We are excited to work with you. I work for you. We are no longer a secret garden, but we’ve got to know what you need.”

Visit <https://irsc.edu/news/articles/advanced-workforce-training-groundbreaking.html> to learn more about the center and what it can offer.

### SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTER

“Florida just surpassed Germany in GDP and 11,000-plus new businesses registered on the Treasure Coast in 2021,” Duane Reiff said in his opening remarks, noting that huge opportunities are available to area manufacturers. >>

Reiff is the manufacturing specialist for the Florida Small Business Development Center at Indian River State College. The FSBDK also offers export assistance from consultant Emily McHugh who can help manufacturers sell their products overseas with an export marketing plan and connections to foreign embassies.

SBDC also offers free consulting to the region's businesses for sales, marketing and access to capital. Reiff said his mission is to work with the TCMA to put the Treasure Coast on the map for manufacturing.

**SMALL MANUFACTURER UPDATE**

Aquaco Farms founder and CEO Joe Cardenas shared a film clip of the St. Lucie County fish farm's operations by Sereia Films [watch at <https://vimeo.com/640415325>] and walked the attend-



Members of the Boys & Girls Clubs catered a delicious breakfast for TCMA members.

ees through his more than four-year, \$3.8 million mission to sustainably farm Florida pompano. Cardenas said it took two years to find the right site and get all the necessary permits. He started to build in 2018 and sold his first pompano in 2020. During 2021, he worked through capital access issues, pricing, costs, etc.

Cardenas's original concept was to sell the pompano to high-end restaurants and retailers. That plan was shut down by the pandemic, so he switched to retail and offered his fish at Publix and other stores. With proof of concept, he recently closed on a \$2 million round of funding and is expanding operations.

**MIDSIZE MANUFACTURER UPDATE**

Gian Carlo Alonso, president and CEO of AmeriKooler, talked about taking cool further. A manufacturer of walk-in coolers in Hialeah, Alonso said his company kept selling and investing throughout COVID, which led to a boom in 2021 and a huge increase in market share for the manufacturer.

"The knee-jerk reaction would have been to downsize but we kept sales going and planted as many seeds as you can, like a fisherman who really chums the waters and when everything comes back, you have a huge catch," Alonso said. "I focus on what I have control over."

The company created a virtual showcase for sales and a virtual warehouse for instal-



After two years of pandemic-related delays, members of the TCMA Board of Directors and staff gather at the association's annual meeting.

lation training, combining cutting-edge entrepreneurial vision with traditional company operations. Go to <http://www.amerikooler.com/virtualshowcase/> to view the showcase.

**A HEAD START**

Tim Fischer, CEO of Southeast Elevator, moved to the Treasure Coast a year-and-a-half ago. New in the area, and having been very active with the Central Florida Manufacturers Association, Fischer immediately got involved with TCMA and the Treasure Coast Builders Association.

TCMA has been very valuable for Fischer as he reaches out for resources and contacts regularly, he said. In addition, he appreciates the focus the organization has on developing a future manufacturing workforce.

**St. Lucie federal trade zone reorganized to encompass entire Treasure Coast**

The International Trade Association recently announced that **St. Lucie County's Foreign Trade Zone No. 218** has been approved by the U.S. Foreign-Trade Zones Board for reorganization under its Alternative Site Framework, allowing for the expedited designation of sites for companies ready to conduct Foreign Trade Zone activities.

The service area for the newly reorganized zone has been broadened to encompass all of St. Lucie, Indian River and Okeechobee counties, extending significant potential benefits to the Port of Fort Pierce and Treasure Coast International Airport & Business Park.

"Foreign Trade Zone No. 218 will now become a powerful economic development tool for the entire Treasure Coast, and, in

particular, will support the dramatic and continued growth of manufacturing in St. Lucie County," St. Lucie County Commission Chairman Sean Mitchell said.

"Foreign Trade Zone benefits are key for manufacturers interested in exporting their goods. The expansion of our FTZ will help the Economic Development Council of St. Lucie County recruit manufacturers who can bring high-wage jobs to the county," added St. Lucie Economic Development Council President Pete Tesch. "This is particularly good news at a time when supply chain challenges are impacting existing manufacturing businesses and as companies look for alternative locations to the congestion in South Florida."

The FTZ designation provides federal tax re-

lief on merchandise that is shipped through the federally approved zone. The new Alternative Site Framework designation provides considerably more flexibility for companies looking to benefit from an FTZ.

St. Lucie County's original FTZ designation was approved in October 1996 under Central Florida Foreign Trade Zone Inc. at the St. Lucie County Airport. The FTZ board changed its name in 2012 to the Treasure Coast Foreign Trade Zone Inc. [St. Lucie County is the grantee of the FTZ.]

Businesses with questions about Trade Zone No. 218 should contact J. Stanley Payne, St. Lucie County air and seaport executive director, at [paynes@stlucieco.org](mailto:paynes@stlucieco.org) or 772.462.1450.

## Pursuit Boats reaches safety milestone

**Pursuit Boats**, a manufacturer of luxury sport fishing and cruising boats in Fort Pierce, has hit a monumental milestone. On Dec. 15, the company reached 1 million man-hours worked without a lost time incident. This milestone was achieved over 290 days.

The accomplishment is a testament to Pursuit's commitment to the safety of its workforce and the company celebrated with an award ceremony, catered luncheon and a four-day raffle for high-end gifts awarded to an employee on the hour.

"At Pursuit, safety is one of our top priorities," said Bruce Thompson, president of Pursuit Boats. "We are so proud of our team of employees and all their hard work, dedication and attention to detail that allowed us to reach this important milestone. This is a great success for us and we look forward to celebrating many more of these achievements."

There was a feeling of festivity at the plant and more than \$10,000 of raffle prizes were awarded during the week of Jan. 3. Prizes included items such as 70-inch LED TVs, iPads, laptops, 500-W portable speakers, Samsung sound bars, Nintendo Switches, Xboxes, power washers, smokeless grills, KitchenAid mixers, and much more.

Special recognition was given to Angela Musiol, Environment Health and Safety Manger at Pursuit Boats.

"Angie's dedication to our employees and to maintain a safe environment both plans was key in reaching this important milestone. We are thankful for her determination and enthusiasm," Thompson said.

For more information, visit [pursuitboats.com](http://pursuitboats.com)

## A-1 Roof Trusses adopts new corporate name

A-1, a leading manufacturer of pre-engineered wood trusses, announced today that it has changed its corporate name to **A-1 Industries of Florida Inc.**, effective immediately.



According to John R. Herring, company president and CEO, "2022 marks an important point in the evolution of the A-1 organization. As a leader in the industry, we look forward to continuing to expand with new products and locations to broaden our base to best serve our customers with new technology, quality and value. The rebranding strategy, under the A-1 banner, best represents the new face of A-1."

A-1 Industries of Florida Inc., founded in 1977, is headquartered in Fort Pierce with almost 300 employees and is a leading manufacturer of pre-engineered wood trusses.

As a well-known innovator with progressive leadership in the industry, its services include design, manufacture, inventory management and supply for the construction industry in the southeastern United States and the Caribbean.

A-1 has multiple employment opportunities for candidates looking to be part of the company's continued growth and share in its core values — Own it, Passionate, Honesty and Respect.

For more information, visit its website at [www.A1Industries.com](http://www.A1Industries.com), email Jessica Fornaro at [Jessica.fornaro@a1truss.com](mailto:Jessica.fornaro@a1truss.com) or call 772.409.1010.

## New partnership, leadership to strengthen TCMA services

Founded in 2016, the Treasure Coast Manufacturers Association was created to provide a unified voice for the region's manufacturing community and offer leadership in addressing industry sector challenges.

Remaining true to its mission, the TCMA is expanding the organization's member services and support programs through a close partnership with the Florida SBDC at Indian River State College.



Duane Reiff was named executive director of the TCMA.

Last year, aware of the increasing number of regional manufacturing operations and the rapid expansion of existing operations, the SBDC named Duane Reiff the center's manufacturing consultant specialist. Reiff was tasked with providing credentialed sales and marketing business consulting services to regional manufacturers.

After collaborating with Reiff and the SBDC through 2021, the TCMA board of directors recognized the unique opportunity to enhance and expand services for its members by tapping Reiff to serve as its executive director through a formalized partnership with the SBDC.

He will work with the board and members to increase services; represent the organization at trade association events; conduct one-on-one visits with TCMA members; and provide outreach to nonmembers. SBDC staff will handle the member communications, recruitment, programming and administrative tasks formerly provided by the Economic Development Council of St. Lucie County.

Reiff also will ensure that area manufacturers can easily access the SBDC's other services, including assistance with government contracting, international trade, human resources and financial management.

"We saw an opportunity to expand our organization's reach and create additional value for members by leveraging the administrative and consulting capacity of the Florida SBDC at IRSC," TCMA president Jerry Jacques said. "This partnership also provides a direct link for our members and regional manufacturers to Indian River State College and its resources and support programs, including the new advanced workforce training center."

The new agreement calls for the SBDC to provide business consulting services to regional manufacturers in government contracting, international trade, strategic assessment and planning, and sales and marketing. It will also assist manufacturers in achieving minority, veteran, disabled service veteran and women owned business certifications that can assist businesses seeking government contract work.

"With dedicated and innovative leaders and members and the jump start the EDC provided for the association, the TCMA has excelled in its mission to strengthen the region's growing manufacturing community," said Tom Kindred, SBDC regional director. "Our center is proud and honored to partner with the TCMA in supporting and serving an important Treasure Coast industry segment."

## TREASURE COAST MANUFACTURERS ASSOCIATION 2022 MEMBERS

A-1 Industries of Florida, Inc.  
 Advanced Machine & Tool, Inc.  
 Aluma Tower  
 Apple Machine & Supply Co.  
 D&D Welding & Fabrication LLC  
 Derecktor Shipyards  
 EB Airfoils, LLC  
 Expert Shutter Services  
 Fasco Epoxies, Inc.  
 Fastsigns Vero Beach  
 Florida Architectural Precast, Inc.  
 Girard Equipment  
 Helena Agri Enterprises  
 Hi-Tide Boat Lifts  
 HOG Technologies

Hot Pie, Inc.  
 Indian River Select/Freshco  
 Islamorada Beer Company  
 Lawn Chair USA  
 Lenco Marine Solutions, LLC  
 Maverick Boat Group, Inc.  
 Nylacarb Corporation  
 OCULUS Surgical  
 Orchid Island Juice Company  
 Paradigm Precision, Inc.  
 Phoenix Metal Products, Inc.  
 Piper Aircraft  
 Pursuit Boats  
 Real Stone & Granite  
 Ross Mixing Inc.

Southern Sewer Equipment Sales  
 Southeast Elevator Inc.  
 St. Lucie Battery & Tire  
 The Porch Factory  
 TNT Custom Boatworks LLC  
 Triumph Aerospace Structures  
 Unique Tool & Die, LLC

Dean, Mead, Minton & Moore  
 Economic Development  
 Council of St. Lucie County  
 Express Employment Professionals  
 HBK CPA's & Consultants  
 Indian River County Chamber  
 of Commerce  
 Indian River State College  
 Manpower  
 Marine Bank & Trust Company  
 Plastridge Insurance  
 Seacoast Bank  
 SouthState Bank  
 Spherion  
 UBU Brands

**AFFILIATE MEMBERS**  
 Business Development Board  
 of Martin County  
 CareerSource Research Coast  
 Carr, Riggs & Ingram  
 CBIZ  
 Clear SEM Solutions

### Web site update wins award

The 2021 update of **Treasure Coast Manufacturers Association's web site** by TCMA affiliate member **Clear SEM Solutions** won an Addy Award from the Treasure Coast Chapter of the American Advertising Federation.



The Addy Awards are the advertising industry's largest and most representative competition, recognizing and rewarding the creative spirit of excellence in the art of advertising.

Founded in 2007, Clear SEM Solutions is a web development and digital marketing agency in Port St. Lucie. Jennifer Wiggins is the CEO and the company's TCMA member representative.

If you haven't had a chance to log on to [www.tcmamfg.com](http://www.tcmamfg.com), do so soon. TCMA members can create in-depth directory listings and post free help wanted ads.

### TCMA Board of Directors

- Jerry Jacques**, Advanced Machine & Tool, TCMA president
- Bill Wilcox**, Phoenix Metal Products, TCMA vice president
- Pete Tesch**, EDC of St. Lucie County, TCMA secretary
- Brian Bauer**, CareerSource Research Coast
- Helene Caseltine**, Greater Treasure Coast Partnership
- Jack Chadam**, CBIZ
- Lee Dobbins**, Dean, Mead, Minton & Moore
- Mike England**, Express Employment Professionals
- Tim Fischer**, Southeast Elevator
- Mike Gordon**, Piper Aircraft
- Tom Kindred**, Florida SBDC @ IRSC
- Bradd Lexer**, Indian River Select/Freshco
- Brooks Price**, Phoenix Metal Products
- Chad Rockefeller**, Expert Shutter Services
- Jarrod Trefelner**, SouthState Bank

## EXPANDING YOUR BUSINESS?

**Contact the economic development organization serving your county**

**Indian River County Chamber of Commerce, Economic Development Division**  
[www.indianrivered.com](http://www.indianrivered.com)

**Economic Development Council of St. Lucie County**  
[www.youredc.com](http://www.youredc.com)

**Business Development Board of Martin County**  
[www.bdbmc.org](http://www.bdbmc.org)



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