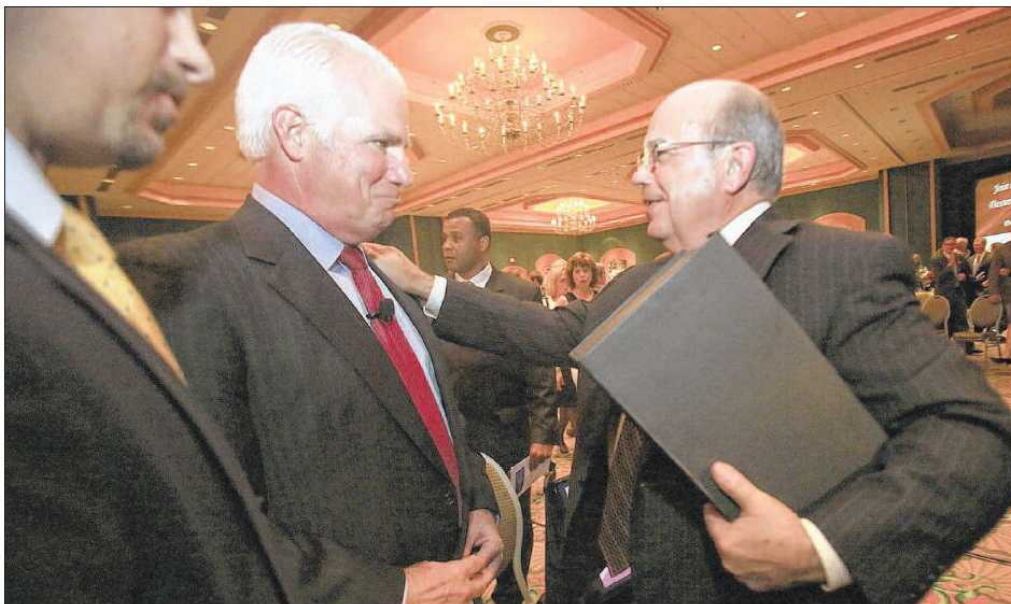


DAYTONA REGIONAL CHAMBER

Membership on the upswing

With numbers up, annual event draws big turnout



News-Journal/DAVID MASSEY

Atlanta Falcons Head Coach Mike Smith, left, talks with John Johnson, president of Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, at the 94th annual meeting of the Daytona Regional Chamber of Commerce Monday evening. Smith, who grew up in the Daytona Beach area, was the keynote speaker, while Embry-Riddle was this year's recipient of the enterprise award.

By CLAYTON PARK
clayton.park@news-jrn.com

DAYTONA BEACH — An estimated 800 people attended the Daytona Regional Chamber of Commerce's 94th annual meeting on Monday night, up from 620 last year.

While keynote speaker Mike Smith, the head football coach of the Atlanta Falcons who grew up in the Daytona Beach area, was a big draw, he wasn't the sole reason for the annual event's biggest turnout in years, according to Phil Maroney, the chamber's 2013 chairman.

"There's a renewed enthusiasm for the chamber," said Maroney, who noted that the group added 175 new members in the past year to grow its ranks to 950 today.

Many of those who have joined in recent months were previously members who chose to not renew during the Great Recession and the

"There's a renewed enthusiasm for the chamber."

PHIL MARONEY

Daytona Regional Chamber of Commerce's 2013 chairman, who noted that the group, which began 2013 with 821 members, has seen its ranks grow to 950 today

uncertain economic conditions in the years immediately following the downturn, Maroney told the audience at the Hilton Daytona Beach Oceanfront Resort.

Maroney, in his outgoing remarks before turning over the ceremonial gavel to the chamber's incoming 2014 chairman James Rose, credited George Mirabal, the longtime former chamber president who came out of retirement in March to fill in as interim president following the resignation of Larry McKinney, for bringing

much-needed stability to the chamber and its staff. He also praised the chamber's new president and CEO, Nancy Keefer, who was hired in October following a national candidate search, for infusing the group with a sense of renewed enthusiasm and energy.

"2013 was a year of action" for the chamber, Maroney told the audience, adding that the organization in the past year also greatly improved its financial condition.

Rose praised Maroney,

president of the Root Co. in Ormond Beach, for being instrumental in helping steer the chamber "through some troubled times" last year. "He was the right guy at the right time," Rose said of Maroney's stint as chamber chairman.

Rose, an attorney and partner in the Daytona Beach law firm Rice & Rose, said he believes the chamber and the community as a whole are "poised to do something special" in the coming years. That's especially true, he said, with all the big commercial development projects planned or underway, including the \$400 million Daytona Rising renovation of Daytona International Speedway, the proposed One Daytona entertainment/dining/retail complex across the street from the Speedway.

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News-Journal/DAVID MASSEY

Phil Maroney, left, the Daytona Regional Chamber of Commerce's outgoing chairman, stands next to Nancy Keefer, the chamber's new president and CEO, and attorney Jim Rose, who was installed Monday as the chamber's 2014 chairman during its 94th annual meeting at the Hilton.

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and the planned beachside Hard Rock Hotel and nearby Protogroup hotel/condominium project.

Also expected to give the local economy a tremendous boost is Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University's planned aerospace and aviation research park along Clyde Morris Boulevard, just south of the university's Daytona Beach campus.

Embry-Riddle President

John Johnson and Mori Hosseini, the university's board chairman, received the chamber's enterprise award on the university's behalf.

The chamber also honored Bob Coleman as the recipient of this year's Lou Fuchs award for community service, Susan Miller, owner of Home Instead Senior Care, who was named small business of the year, and local attorney Greg Snell as the winner of the Marvin Samuels leader-

ship award.

Smith, a graduate of Daytona Beach's Father Lopez Catholic High School, gave a talk on his "cornerstones for success," which he summarized as creating a culture for greatness, staying "consistent in everything you do," giving employees an opportunity to collaborate in the decision-making process, and ensuring that all involved are committed to working together to achieve one's goal.