

Looking Back at 2021 and Looking Forward to 2022



The Lake Nona Regional Chamber of Commerce shares the advances local businesses have made despite another challenging COVID year, and gives us a look into what 2022 may have in store for our area.

By Don Long, Lake Nona Regional Chamber of Commerce

The year 2021 brought the Lake Nona region numerous new opportunities and advances while also presenting challenges. Looking forward to 2022, local chambers of commerce are here to help business owners plan to build on opportunities while also addressing challenges of today and the future.

Orlando's vibrant communities change constantly as new progressive businesses, large and small, focus on the advantages of locating their businesses in Central Florida. Companies notice the local infra-structure improvements such as the autonomous shuttles from Lake Nona's Beep, approaching completion of the I-4 Ultimate project, future arrival of Brightline high-speed rail, opening of the Orlando International Airport's Terminal C, plans for a new Vertiport for electrically powered vertical takeoff and landing passenger aircraft, and the list goes on. For these reasons and others, the Lake Nona Regional Chamber of Commerce (LNRCC) welcomed more than 160 new business members to its membership rolls during 2021.

This year, several reputable global companies like Disney, Amazon and KPMG chose the Lake Nona community as the perfect location for their

new ventures, or as in Disney's example, the prime place to relocate approximately 2,000 of their professional level employees. Also of significant impact is the opening of the new UCF Lake Nona Medical Center in March 2021. This opening brought a full-service medical center to the community that already boasted the most modern VA medical center in the country and Nemours Children's Hospital.

One of the most exciting additions to Lake Nona in 2021 is the Lake Nona Performance Club, which opened in July and provides "a tailored approach to whole-person health." In November, the club celebrated the grand opening of the Chopra Mind-Body Zone and Spa. This collaboration with Dr. Deepak Chopra's Chopra Global presents proven programs to "improve overall wellbeing through a focus on physical, mental and spiritual health." Other noteworthy additions to the Lake Nona business community in 2021 are the new Springhill Suites Orlando/Lake Nona combined with The Wave Hotel plus numerous new eateries and recreational outlets. Starting construction in early 2022 is a new Aloft Hotel.

Over the past year, the COVID-19 Delta Variant presented persistent health and financial

challenges. LNRCC, alongside other regional chambers, continued to help distribute essential information from government agencies plus reputable health and financial sources. LNRCC specifically assisted several businesses with guidance in methods used to apply for financial aid and practices used to avoid COVID-19.

Additionally, with the help of partner AdventHealth along with the office of City of Orlando District 1 Commissioner Jim Gray LNRCC distributed more than 20,000 masks and hand sanitizers to the entire community. As 2022 approaches, LNRCC is proactively cultivating relationships with organizations that can help chamber members and the entire community. Readers may find out how to become involved by reaching out to LNRCC. **L**

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