

Dunedin Protects Preserve

Community volunteers and
donates money to save habitat

By Vince Gizzi
City of Dunedin



The **City of Dunedin** underwent a community collaboration to acquire and protect the Gladys E. Douglas Preserve, an area with unique ecosystems and biodiversity. The preserve is one of the remaining undeveloped parcels in the Dunedin planning area. For its efforts, the City recently received the **Florida League of Cities (FLC)** Florida Municipal Achievement Award for Local Action.

The preserve is 44 acres of pristine environmentally sensitive habitat, with an 80-acre adjoining lake and wetlands. The City worked with **Pinellas County** in a regional collaboration of time, expertise and funding “to provide the best model for environmental stewardship and conservation,” said **Jennifer K. Bramley, City Manager**.

The community outpouring was unprecedented and historic. “The efforts to protect and preserve this beautiful property was nothing short of magical and monumental,” Bramley said. “The entire community came together to make this happen with volunteer efforts and donations. In total, there were over 1,700 unique donors, and \$4.5 million in funds were raised.”

The preserve was originally the homestead property of **Gladys E. Douglas**. Her home was situated along the shore of Jerry Lake and surrounded by a natural forest. In 2020, the property was under contract to a developer who intended to clear it for residential development. Individuals started a Facebook page to preserve the property and quickly gained over 1,700

members. Citizens volunteered to wave signs on the street corner to raise awareness. Local nonprofit organizations assisted with the preservation efforts, including the Pinellas and Florida chapters of the **Florida Native Plant Society**, **Florida Suncoast Sierra Club** and **Blue-Green Connections**.

The developer walked away from the project. This situation happened in the middle of a fiscal year during the height of the pandemic. While neither the City nor **Pinellas County** had the necessary funds set aside, they allocated \$5.5 million in land preservation funds at the expense of other projects. The City and County applied for and received a **Florida Communities Trust (FCT)** grant for \$2.4 million to assist in the acquisition.

The **Pinellas Community Foundation's** Fund Advisory Committee includes representatives of several environmental stewardship organizations. They needed to raise \$4.5 million toward the purchase price. They reached this ambitious goal through the generosity of 1,100 donors.

The property is now owned by Dunedin and managed in partnership with the County. An interlocal agreement outlines cooperative efforts, including the development of park amenities, conservation of environmentally sensitive areas, exotic plant removal, restoration of disturbed lands with native plantings, park maintenance and educational programming. In February, the City opened the preserve. Hundreds of residents came to celebrate, along with City and County officials and local donors.



◀ The Gladys E. Douglas Preserve includes signage describing the project.

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PRESERVE HAS UNIQUE CHARACTERISTICS

The preserve contains approximately 12 acres of Sand Pine Scrub and 2.7 acres of Rosemary Bald, a rare species. To the City's knowledge, this rosemary scrub is the last one in the County. The preserve is also home to otters, a golden eagle, bobcats and an active and healthy gopher tortoise population.

To the north of the property is Jerry Lake. Combined, these newly acquired properties greatly support the water quality in the region and provide freshwater recreational access.

The first phase of preservation includes a half-mile of walking trails that wind through the conservation area. Visitors find trail markers, maps and interpretive signage describing the trees, plants and wildlife. A field fence was installed along some walking paths to protect the conservation area and important native plants.

Tom Mahoney, Chairman of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee, said, "A park such as this property will add to all residents' health and well-being and add to the beauty of the City." The park protects the City's shrinking greenspace, Mahoney said.

The second phase, expected to open in 2025, will include access to the lake, a kayak launch, a fishing pier, a picnic pavilion, a wildlife observation platform, a nature museum and restrooms.

Bramley said, "We believe the Gladys Douglas Preserve is a shining example of public/public/private partnerships, amazing community support, exceptional characteristics and a model for regional governmental cooperation." (To see a video about the preserve, go to bit.ly/3pNjUo1.)

Vince Gizzi is the Parks & Recreation Director for the City of Dunedin. [QC](#)



◀ Education and community engagement were key to the success of the project.



▲ Residents of all ages were involved in the preservation effort.



Dunedin Wins a Florida Municipal Achievement Award

The **City of Dunedin** recently received the Florida League of Cities (FLC) Florida Municipal Achievement Award for Local Action.

This award is given to a city for a specific, single citywide effort that successfully addresses a local need.



In February 2023, the City opened the Gladys E. Douglas Preserve with a ribbon-cutting ceremony.

A Guide for Replicating The Project in Other Communities

The **City of Dunedin's** efforts to preserve the Gladys E. Douglas Preserve are the type of preservation project that can be duplicated in any community. The key factor is obtaining community buy-in. Once people saw the beauty of the property and the risk of losing it, members of the community were willing to help in any way they could.

Small and large donations came in. People lent their support with photography, scientific studies, artistic talents, writing and event planning. The **Florida Native Plant Society** hosted an outdoor fundraiser. The event raised over \$30,000, despite being held during the height of the pandemic and in torrential rain.

Media outlets regularly covered the community's actions. The events inspired a documentary titled "Instructions for Conserving an Ecosystem."

There is a dire need for scrub habitat preservation, conservation and restoration in Central and Southwest Florida, said **Jane Graham, Conservation Chair** of the Pinellas Chapter of the **Florida Native Plant Society**. "Introducing local citizens to this unique and endangered community of species and engaging them in conservation activities is essential for the long-term well-being of this rapidly disappearing part of natural Florida and the many rare and endangered plant and animal species that it supports."

Residential neighborhood in Groveland features street lighting that is dark sky-friendly and low Kelvin temperature.

Groveland Recognized for Conservation Initiative

City named
first Dark Sky
Community in
the Southeast

By Andrew Landis
City of Groveland

The **City of Groveland** has become the first city in the Southeast designated as a Dark Sky Community by **DarkSky International**. Fewer than 50 cities worldwide have achieved this status, and Groveland is one of the largest.

Led by the City's Conservation and Strategic Initiatives Division, the Dark Sky Initiative is designed to limit excessive lighting and light pollution. The initiative doesn't eliminate lights; it simply promotes the *right* lights: those that don't disrupt animal migration patterns, cause habitat degradation and raise carbon dioxide emissions.

For its efforts, the City was recently awarded the **Florida Municipal Achievement Award** for Environmental Stewardship by the **Florida League of Cities** (FLC).

Groveland couldn't have done it without the support of the entire community, **Mayor Evelyn Wilson** said.

"This effort has been a true partnership between our City, residents



◀ Marty Proctor is an advocate for dark skies.



▲ A display featuring DarkSky-approved lighting fixtures was donated by a local retailer and established at The Annex, a downtown community hub.

and businesses, all committed to reducing light pollution and preserving the natural beauty and charm of the night sky,” Wilson said.

The City’s initiative launched in 2020 as part of its new Community Development Code that serves as a road map for smart growth and enhanced quality of life. The Planning & Zoning Division conducted extensive research, explored more than two dozen municipalities with dark sky ordinances and developed an outline of specific measures to consider. In August 2022, the City Council adopted a robust Dark Sky Lighting ordinance based on DarkSky principles.

To educate residents, Groveland launched a public outreach program that included social media engagement, tabling at farmers markets and community presentations at workshops and events. A display featuring DarkSky-approved lighting fixtures was donated by a local retailer and established at The Annex, a downtown community hub. Resident volunteers are now trained to monitor light pollution using city-issued Sky Quality Meters that help to measure the initiative’s progress.

Perhaps the biggest success has been a Star Party event held in January 2023 at a local business, Cherrylake tree farm. More than 700 participants brought chairs and blankets to stargaze and enjoy being together as a community. Glow sticks, glow-in-the-dark games and other activities kept guests entertained. The

PHOTOS COURTESY OF STEVEN MILLER PHOTOGRAPHY

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▼ The City Council of Groveland issued a proclamation recognizing the City's achievement as the first certified Dark Sky Community in Florida.



► At a Star Party event, the Central Florida Astronomical Society demonstrated how to use telescopes.



Central Florida Astronomical Society demonstrated how to use telescopes. Since red light doesn't contribute to light pollution, event staff used red-light flashlights to guide guests, exterior lighting on food trucks was covered with red filters, and red lights were installed to illuminate walkways. Planning is already underway for a 2024 event.

The City's efforts continue. A phased streetscape improvement plan has been developed, and staff will soon install dark sky pedestrian-scale lighting and streetlights. Staff is also curating a selection of exterior dark sky lights for downtown businesses, including sign lights, pendant lights, carriage lights, wall packs and parking lot lights. All lighting owned by the city will be DarkSky-compliant within five years. Existing residents and businesses will have 10 years to retrofit exterior lighting.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF STEVEN MILLER PHOTOGRAPHY



◀ Staff will soon install dark sky pedestrian-scale lighting and streetlights.

The City is working with utility providers to offer dark sky lighting to development projects. The first dark sky-compliant lighting fixtures will soon be available at a local hardware store, with incentives to encourage retrofitting projects.

“Groveland’s continued commitment to environmental preservation and community engagement ensures the success of this innovative, forward-thinking program, and we couldn’t be more pleased with our collective progress,” Wilson said.

Andrew Landis is the Manager of the Conservation and Strategic Initiatives Division for the City of Groveland. [QC](#)

Exterior lighting on food trucks was covered with red filters since red light doesn't contribute to light pollution.



Florida Cities Join Efforts to Keep State’s Skies Dark

The **City of Groveland’s** Dark Sky Initiative is inspiring other local governments to join efforts to save Florida’s night sky.

The initiative seeks to educate and encourage other local governments to join the effort by adopting similar policies for dark sky lighting. The City is finalizing a Joint Planning Agreement with **Lake County** to include new dark sky lighting requirements in their land development code.

DarkSky International has cited Groveland’s ordinance as one that other cities can consider. Groveland city staff members have met with the **City of Okeechobee’s** Mayor to discuss dark sky policy strategies and to share Groveland’s ordinance as a guide.

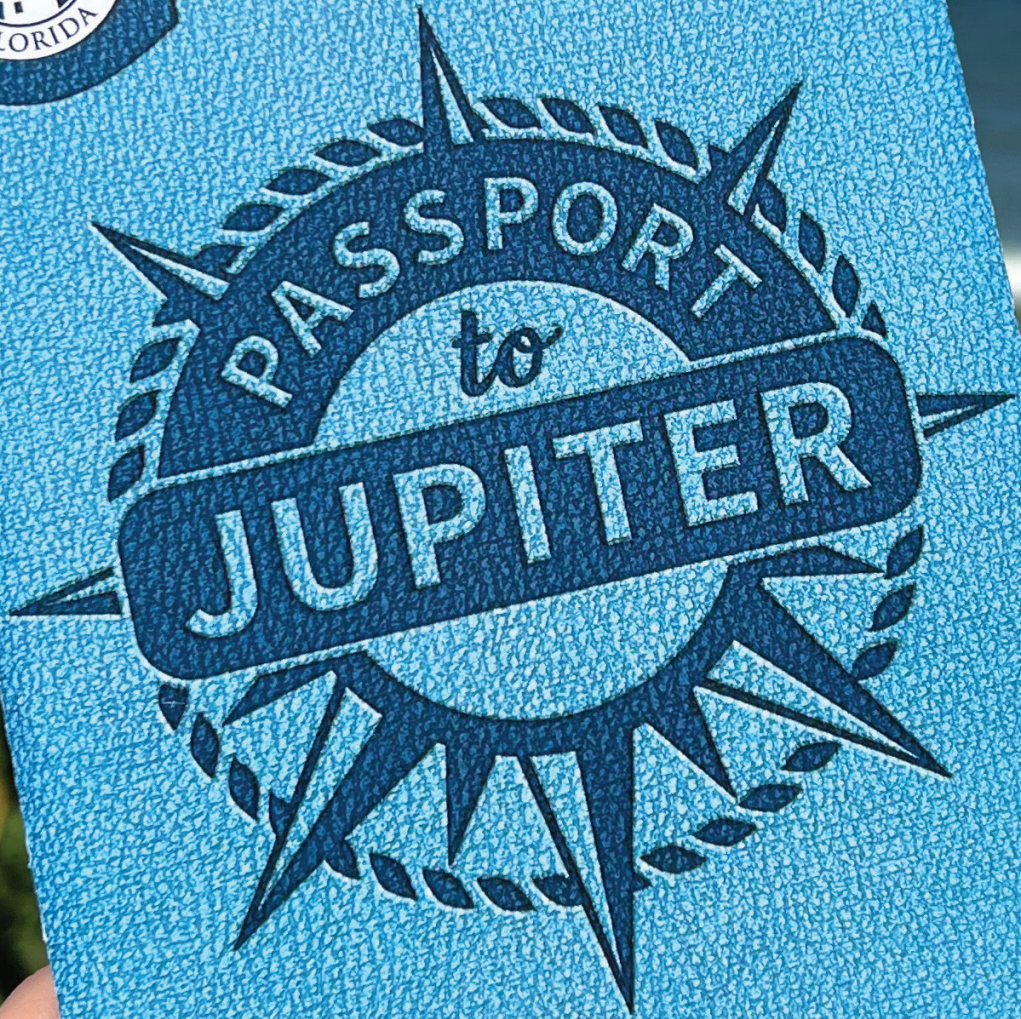
In April, the **Groveland City Council** passed a Dark Sky Proclamation with the **City of Orlando** and **Lake County** to promote International Dark-Sky Week.

The City has become a state leader in dark sky lighting policy and education. It will continue working with communities and partners across Florida to enhance efforts to minimize light pollution.




Groveland Wins a Florida Municipal Achievement Award

The **City of Groveland** recently received the Florida Municipal Achievement Award for Environmental Stewardship from the **Florida League of Cities**. The Environmental Stewardship Award recognizes a city program that promotes conservation, improves and protects environmental conditions or provides environmental education and outreach programs.



ore what makes us
Uniquely Jupiter



A passport booklet includes stickers that serve as the “passport stamp.”

Passport to Jupiter

Town boosts visitor and resident interest in area locations

By Shawn Reed
Town of Jupiter

As the world began to emerge from the coronavirus pandemic in 2021, the **Jupiter Town Council** turned its attention to its strategic plan. The Town Council wanted to highlight the variety of interesting locations in the Jupiter area. As strategic planning progressed, the Council developed an initiative to establish “a program for the notable destinations in the community so that residents and visitors have access to a more guided experience to all Jupiter has to offer.”

From this strategic initiative, the Passport to Jupiter was born. The passport program encouraged residents and visitors to visit multiple area sites. It led to Jupiter being awarded the **Florida League of Cities (FLC)** Florida Municipal Achievement Award for Public Engagement.

The passport was produced in two forms: a booklet with stickers that serve as the “passport stamp” and an app for mobile devices that stamps the passport by geolocation services. “Our staff’s forethought to make the Passport to Jupiter in book format and as an app has helped increase the

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appeal to all of our target audiences,” said **Mayor Jim Kuretski**. “The design and ease of use make the program accessible to everyone.”

Town staff members identified 71 locations for the Passport program, including parks, art and beaches. To provide the most complete list of locations of interest, the program included nearby sites, such as a major county park just outside the Town boundaries and a popular turtle rescue hospital in a nearby municipality. To prevent the number of sites from being overwhelming for participants, staff used color coding to organize the locations by category. The booklet includes information about each site, and many participants keep their booklets after participating in the program.

Since the program was based upon visiting, the idea was to create a passport booklet with passport “stamps,” stickers that participants placed on their booklets once they visited a site. To create the booklets, staff used a lot of information and images that they had on hand from history tours and website content. More photographs were taken by staff members, some of whom used their cellphone cameras.

Town staff contracted with Eventzee (also known as Freeze Tag) to create the mobile passport. That app included a passport stamp that was added through geolocation or by participants checking in at the location. The app created a game out of the passport by introducing a scoreboard and awarding points for each location visited.

The Town created a prize pack for participants who visited 30 featured locations. Once acquiring 30 “passport stamps,” a participant simply had to visit Town Hall with their stamped passport to claim this prize pack. The prize pack includes a compass with the contest branding, a coaster, postcards, stickers and a bag with branding.

Launched in January 2022, the Passport to Jupiter was an immediate hit. Booklets could be picked up or requested via

the postal service, and they were mailed to 30 states, Canada and communities throughout Florida.

The response to the program far exceeded all expectations. The Town handed out the entire initial order of 1,000 books from Town Hall in the first month. A second order of 2,500 books followed and was distributed by the end of March, which led to another order of 2,500 books. In total, more than 5,000 books were distributed within the program’s first year. Meanwhile, the mobile app launched in June 2022 and received more than 800 downloads in its first month. By the end of 2022, the app was downloaded more than 1,600 times.

Developing a booklet and mobile app allowed the program to engage participants of all ages. Town staff researched and included sites often overlooked. Longtime residents spoke about finding locations they had never visited or hadn’t visited in decades. The program was innovative in several ways, which extended to its marketing. Town staff created postcards featuring the Passport to Jupiter with pictures of various locations. Participants mailed the postcards to friends and family and provided free marketing for the program.

The decision to include the passport stamp proved to be one of the most talked about features of the program. Participants love to brag about the number of stamps they’ve collected.

“The Passport to Jupiter has been a wonderful program for the Town of Jupiter as it has exposed Jupiter residents and visitors to a variety of locations of interest within our Town,” Kuretski said. “Our staff did a marvelous job in identifying a wide range of locations, which has helped introduce the users of this program to everything from local historical sites to the arts and other forms of entertainment to our beautiful natural areas and beaches.”

Shawn Reed is the Community Relations Manager/Public Information Officer for the Town of Jupiter. 



Town of Jupiter Receives a Florida Municipal Achievement Award

The **Town of Jupiter** recently received the **Florida League of Cities (FLC)** Florida Municipal Achievement Award for Public Engagement.

This award focuses on a city program that builds a more vital, participative community. The program must develop civic awareness, increase education and knowledge of local government functions or promote active participation among residents, businesses and visitors.



Other Communities Can Adapt Jupiter Passport Program

The Passport to Jupiter program is easily adaptable to other municipalities.

Regardless of its size, each town has areas of interest, from historical locations to parks and natural areas, that residents and visitors enjoy visiting. The program is especially successful in highlighting locations that are often overlooked but are a point of pride for a town.

Working with staff in other departments, including Zoning, Parks and Recreation, and Engineering, is useful for identifying sites for a passport program. These departments also can help confirm the accuracy of the information for the passport.



◀ An app for mobile devices stamps the passport by geolocation services.



Miami Beach Makes Bold Move

Successful ad campaign beckons
entrepreneurs and businesses

By Alina T. Hudak
City of Miami Beach

Famous for beaches, world-class hospitality and a vibrant cultural scene, the **City of Miami Beach** is quickly becoming one of the nation's most sought-after business relocation hubs, with a special focus on the finance, tech and health care industries.

Every year, for the past decade and beyond, 75% of venture funding has gone to California, New York and Massachusetts. But the COVID-19 pandemic accelerated a shift in funding outside of these concentrated areas as firms turned toward rising cities and vibrant locales. Tech talent spread everywhere, and South Florida was one of the country's top beneficiaries.

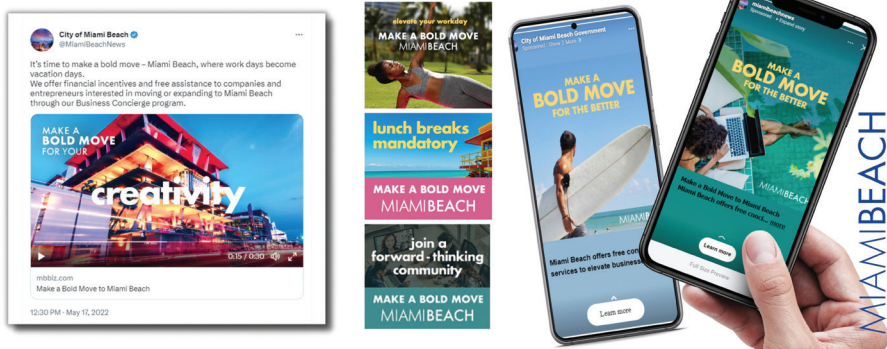
This shift is due in no small part to the City's "Make a Bold Move" campaign. The campaign led to the City recently receiving the **Florida League of Cities (FLC) Municipal Achievement Award** for Economic Advancement.

The campaign encapsulates two of the City's most successful business incentive programs: the Job Creation Incentive Program (JCIP) and Expedited Plan Review and Permitting Program. The JCIP program rewards companies that create a minimum of 10 full-time jobs that pay 125% of the average wage in Miami-Dade County. Expedited plan reviews are available for companies in the financial services and technology sectors that undertake renovations or construction of offices or ancillary spaces. The perk is also available for any company that establishes a corporate or regional headquarters in the city.

The campaign highlights why Miami Beach has become an attractive location for entrepreneurs and businesses seeking to expand their operations or establish new ones. It also focuses on ensuring that the City continues to nurture and grow the talent base in the community and gives top employees a reason to move to Miami Beach and set up a remote work environment with their existing employers.

THE CREATIVE

Reinventing the boardroom concept, welcoming you to your new office from anywhere (poolside!) and inviting you to elevate your workday.



◀ Promotional materials for the Make a Bold Move campaign visually communicate the year-round tropical warmth in Miami Beach.

Moreover, the Make a Bold Move campaign showcases the City’s one-of-a-kind vibrant culture and energetic lifestyle. It also promotes the ease of doing business in the City and the lifestyle benefits that workers expect, such as access to professional sports teams, a focus on health and wellness as well as beautiful weather. The campaign highlights what makes the City the most ideal destination for business relocation and remote working, including its focus on existing infrastructure, qualified workforce and work/life balance.

Seeking to retain top talent, Miami Beach businesses can incorporate wellness into the daily lives of their employees with top-rated schools, dozens of parks and pristine beaches that run along the 7-mile Beachwalk. Miami Beach is a family-friendly destination with free activities and programs for all ages, numerous cultural institutions and one of the nation’s largest and most notable public art collections.

“Make a Bold Move” is the umbrella tagline promoting superior quality of life. The campaign promotes all that Miami Beach offers as a place to live, work and play. Ads visually communicate the year-round tropical warmth in Miami Beach, which suggests that working from this location is akin to a permanent vacation. Headlines include “Say Hello to Your New Boardroom” beside images of ocean waves and surfers and “Elevate Your Workday” with images of people enjoying health and wellness initiatives in the fresh air.

Designed for business leaders and the creative class workforce, the

THE CREATIVE

"Make a Bold Move" and join a forward-thinking community.

The campaign tapped into existing branding for Miami Beach and developed ads inspired by the 'bold' and bright colors of the tropical island itself.



MIAMI BEACH

THE CREATIVE

We leveraged the high performance of video assets.

By animating campaign stills, we optimized programmatic ad algorithms to yield better ROI. Through text motion graphics we also developed an eye-catching end tag for the videos that promoted the website.



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campaign has successfully stimulated economic investment as established companies seek to provide their executives with a better work-life balance.

ANALYSIS OF A SUCCESSFUL CAMPAIGN

The campaign's initial phase launched on digital and social channels in May 2022 and targeted key finance and tech hubs around the state and the country with a total spend of about \$43,000.

The first phase was executed across digital and social channels at specially targeted industries: finance, health care, financial technology, startups and wealth management. Ads targeted key markets including Silicon Valley, Los Angeles, San Francisco, New York, Chicago and Connecticut.

The City measured success based on its predetermined key performance indicators (KPIs), including unique impressions, website visits, engagements and cost per thousand (CPM). These statistics were monitored through digital programmatic ad platforms such as Google Ads Manager (search and display ads), Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube and Reddit. The campaign was innovative in that it was optimized across digital channels only, where it could hypertarget ads to an exclusive audience.

The City set a goal to deliver 3.5 million impressions and 30,000 website visits with an average CPM of \$9. The campaign's leaders knew they were seeking a premium, niche digital audience that would require a higher-than-average bid for keywords and topics. The City was competing against many top destinations and Fortune 500 companies for the same share of voice.

Ensuring that most of the media used for promotional ads were videos helped to optimize performance across all channels, as the algorithms were naturally drawn to this format. Through continuous optimization across all ad sets, the City far exceeded its KPI and drove nearly 6 million impressions of the message, half a million views and more than 71,000 website visits, with an average of 1.48 sessions per user. The overall campaign CPM was \$7.48 across all channels. Twitter ads performed

THE TARGETING

Companies in the technology and finance industries as well as other professional services firms with high paying jobs.

Applicants to our Job Creation Incentive Program (JCIP) must create or relocate a minimum of ten (10) new, fulltime equivalent jobs which average annual wages meeting or exceeding 125% of the County's average wage.

ACROSS WEB + SOCIAL MEDIA

22 - 55 year-olds with interest in tech, finance, crypto and other relevant topics. Lookalike audience for key target publications (Fast Company, TNW, Wired, WSJ).

ON LINKEDIN (Targeting via job title to reach)

Business leaders (founder, CEO, investor, entrepreneur, etc.)
Creative Class (Designers, Developers, etc.)



THE REACH: OWNED

640,858 total impressions with 1,620 attributable click throughs to the site



Social Media

275,959 impressions, 9,161 engagements, 2,306 reactions and 1,620 link clicks across 189 social media posts



Email Marketing

364,899 sends across 24 e-blasts with an average open rate of 44%

Press Releases

1. May 22 Miami Beach Hosts New Small Business Technical Assistance Training in Partnership with Prospera
2. Jul 22 Two Respected Financial Services Firms Choose Miami Beach for Expansion Plans
3. Nov 22 Miami Beach Supports Small Business Saturday
4. Dec 22 Global Investment Management Firm Pretium Chooses Miami Beach for Expansion
5. Jan 23 Miami Beach Announces the Opening of North Beach Community Redevelopment Agency (NBCRA) District Office

THE RESULTS



6,358,057 impressions across all channels.



398,405 web page views with an average of 2.48 sessions per user.



72,889 link clicks from digital and social media collateral.



441,182 views of the PSA via YouTube and Connected TVs.

THE MEDIA MIX

Owned and earned media with a \$44,000 paid media budget.

Through the use of geofences and bid limits, programmatic digital and social advertising maximized our budget and allowed us to reach our target demographic.



Owned Media

MBBiz.com, email marketing, organic social media channels and targeted promotional options.



Earned Media

Pitched media stories and presence at key events or participation in partnerships to drive social conversations, engagements and buzz.



Social Media

Ads across Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Reddit and LinkedIn leveraging lookalike audiences and job title segmentation.



Digital Banners and SEM

Digital display ads across the Google Ads Network targeting key topics and placements in addition to search engine marketing.

so well that they achieved a 29% click-through rate (CTR) by the end of the campaign.

Through continuous optimization of keyword targeting and bids, the campaign's cost per click (CPC) decreased from \$3.68 at the onset to an average of \$0.34 by the end. Similarly, the CTR went from 0.16% to 3.74% throughout the campaign.

Completing the paid advertising campaign also served as a catalyst for a complete redesign of the City's business website (*MBBiz.com*) to ensure that the website offered a look and feel similar to the campaign. The restructuring of the information architecture, navigation and content was completed in March 2023. The new page launched in April 2023 and saw a 200%

increase in traffic during the first month.

The City's success is reflected by the country's top firms making "a bold move" and opening in or expanding their businesses to Miami Beach.

City leaders are committed to creating a thriving economy that fosters balanced growth by connecting businesses, communities, people and jobs. Miami Beach provides businesses with assistance and resources to thrive in the City's diverse economy and resilient community.

Alina T. Hudak is the City Manager of the City of Miami Beach.

QC

How Other Cities Can Adapt

This campaign could easily be adapted by other cities, especially those with similar amenities as the **City of Miami Beach**. The essence of the creative was communicating that a work-life balance is nonnegotiable in the current professional environment. In promoting the campaign, the City continues to invite everyone to elevate their workday, make lunch breaks mandatory and say "hello" to their new office ... poolside.

Sunshine-filled days in a place with no personal income tax is an offer that most Florida communities can make. The City promotes its connection to world-class infrastructure and status as an arts, entertainment and cultural hub.

Campaign copy and visuals have been adapted for the City's business website (*MBBiz.com*) to serve as a year-round promotion for the business hub even when the City isn't actively advertising. Beyond using campaign creative for paid advertising, the "Make a Bold Move" designs also became the style guide for economic development collateral used at special events, conventions, trade shows and other engagements, which further increased awareness of the Miami Beach business brand.



City of Miami Beach Wins a Florida Municipal Achievement Award

The **City of Miami Beach** recently received the **Florida League of Cities (FLC) Florida Municipal Achievement Award** for Economic Advancement.

This award focuses on a city program that supports, highlights or partners with a city's local business community to improve the economic well-being of a city.