



# NEBA News

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Spring 2016 Edition

## 2016 Officers

**President: Barney Bishop**  
Barney Bishop Consulting  
LLC

**President elect: Will Croley**, Douglas M Croley,  
Inc

**Secretary: Cora Ann Chapman**, retired

**Treasurer: Jackie Wilson**,  
Tallahassee Technology  
Group

**Past President: Bert Bevis**,  
Bert Bevis Realty, Inc

## Board Members:

**Jim Ashlock**, retired

**Catherine Baer**, business  
activist

**Lt Nancy Burns**, LCSO

**Kris Dunn**, Dunn & Miller,  
PA

**Emily Fritz**, Florida  
Optometric Association

**Tom Napier**, Honor Flight,  
Tallahassee

**Peggy Munroe**, Mays-  
Munroe, Inc

**Ted Thomas**, Thomas  
Mitchell Realty

**Maureen Thompson**, Media  
Options

**Hugh Tomlinson**, North  
Florida Financial

## President's Message

**A**s I begin this year as your NEBA President I want to take the opportunity to thank the membership for electing me to the board of directors and for the board entrusting me with the job of presiding over this excellent organization.

NEBA has an impressive 25-year history of activism and advocacy on issues important to a healthy and vibrant free enterprise system of which small businesses are a cornerstone. While we continue to be a monthly public forum for the exchange of ideas, I take pride in being a NEBA member because we stand up for our member's best interests and we're not just a social organization.

I've also been impressed by the extraordinary number of past presidents who serve on the board clearly demonstrating their passion and on-going support for NEBA. But more importantly it provides us, and especially me, with a confidence that we always do what's right.

Every move that NEBA makes is vigorously debated at our board meetings and I find that comforting because it clearly means that the board takes their responsibility seriously. As long as we can continue to foster that ideal then NEBA will always be relevant in the life of Tallahassee-Leon County.

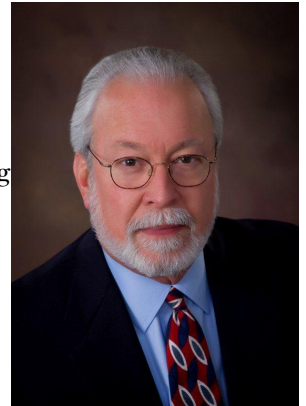
Since it's an election year almost all of our monthly meetings will be devoted to candidate forums, as is appropriate. We've had some interesting ones in the past, and I'm confident that we'll continue because we're not afraid to ask the tough questions.

While we continue to be on solid financial footing because of longtime policies adopted by the board, I'm hopeful that we may be able to institute a 25th Anniversary dinner sometime later this year. It's an idea that I've proposed to the board and a committee has been created to explore the possibility. Your thoughts and ideas on a dinner and a potential speaker would be appreciated and perhaps this can even become an annual event.

Mostly what I hope to accomplish this year is to continue to grow our membership and following in the footsteps of Presidents Terry Madigan and Bert Bevis and so thanks to our new Membership Chairman Hugh Tomlinson, as we're now at 236 dues-paying members.

The best news however, is that you have a dedicated board that has a conservative bent that has put NEBA in the historical position as the only business organization that advocates and takes strong, public positions on business matters. The board has voted to support returning to a property tax

*continued on page 4...*



Barney Bishop,  
NEBA President

**IMPORTANT: Since our monthly membership meetings will be Candidate Forums, please note that lunch will start being served at 11:15 am and our program will start at 11:45 to ensure that we're finished by 1 pm**

# City Manager: Everything is on the Table

By Emily Fritz


Tallahassee city manager Rick Fernandez, who served as assistant manager over utilities for 17 years and city auditor for 10 years, was appointed to his current position on November 21, 2015. A native of Cuba, he was raised in New York City, and has been a CPA since 1982.

Mr. Fernandez emphasized that “everything is on the table” as he assesses better ways to run the city, with emphasis

on best practices and transparency. He referred to his recent organizational restructuring, which eliminated three departments and 10 managerial positions, as a positive move that has been well received.

In an effort to prevent some of the objections raised during the last budget process, Fernandez intends to provide quarterly budget updates to the commissioners. The city administration

was scheduled to undergo an exercise by three representatives from the Governmental Finance Officers Association to review the city’s budget process and recommend best practices. This review included assessing what is an appropriate level of funding for the city’s reserve fund.

He took questions from the audience and thanked NEBA for inviting him, adding that he welcomes any and all input from the community. 

## Alex Baker: New Vision for the Old Tallahassee Mall

By Emily Fritz

The February 23 meeting featured Alex Baker, CEO of Blackwater Resources. Blackwater is the developer of the Centre of Tallahassee in the location of the former Tallahassee Mall. Blackwater Resources has developed 34 million square feet of property in 36 states and four countries.


Tallahassee Mall is the fourth “dead mall” Blackwater has revitalized. The Centre of Tallahassee sits on 97 acres, with 841,000 of retail square feet. 350 apartments targeting young tenants will be located above the retail area. Construction on a limited service boutique hotel will begin in the fourth quarter of this year. The School of Arts and Sciences is currently

under construction on the second floor of the former Dillard’s store (Gayfer’s to those of us who have lived here a long time).

The Centre will offer an Urban Food Market that will include five restaurants with a variety of food offerings, including fine Italian cuisine. The restaurants will share a 500 seat dining area. This allows people to dine together but order food from different restaurants. Another restaurant, Dreamland Barbeque, will open in May.

The Centre includes a 10,000 seat amphitheater with three performances


scheduled in April. Baker promised that two shows that will be held on consecutive days will bring 17,000 people to the area in a two day period. To handle the anticipated parking challenges, the Centre will offer an app to inform patrons of the locations of vacant parking spaces.

In the Q & A section, Mr. Baker was praised that this project was done without the utilization of taxpayer dollars. NEBA members left the meeting with enthusiasm about the new Centre of Tallahassee. 

## In Memoriam: Carolyn Pippenger

With great sorrow the NEBA Board has learned that on April 15, 2016 we lost Carolyn Pippenger, long time Board member and NEBA member since 2005. Carolyn and her husband Alan owned SignPrinters (they recently sold the business) and were active in the Westside Business Association before joining NEBA when the organizations merged. Carolyn served on NEBA’s Board as Secretary, Treasurer, and as a Director until cancer

reared its ugly head and she decided not to run for re-election.

All who knew Carolyn remember her bright smile, sparkling eyes, and unflinching optimism. She was the light of her husband’s life and a true friend who lit up every room she walked into. Our deepest sympathies go to her husband Alan, sister Charlene, and the extended family & friends who are touched by her loss. 



Carolyn, husband Alan, and their dog Sophia Joy



# The Candidates for State Attorney Discuss Their Plans

By Emily Fritz

The March 22 meeting featured the three candidates for State Attorney: Jack Campbell, Sean Desmond, and Pete Williams. Campbell and Desmond will face off in the Democratic primary in August. Williams, a Republican, will face the primary winner in November.



Jack Campbell

Campbell graduated from Samford-Cumberland School of Law. He emphasized his 15 years in the state attorney's office, which includes trying 20 homicide cases. Campbell believes his relationships with law enforcement and the community are an important part of the job.

He warned the audience that internal people in businesses can be criminals, and he would assist businesses with this problem. He believes the office should go paperless to cut costs. His special interest is child sexual abuse, which is now initiated through the internet. If elected, Campbell promised to have an open ear and open heart.



Sean Desmond

Desmond graduated from Florida State University College of Law. He has worked the criminal justice system from both sides: as a prosecutor and as a criminal defense lawyer. He said the most important thing he would bring to the job


is what he learned while working from the other side. Desmond said he would have "the guts to say no, even to law enforcement." If elected, he would reallocate more

resources toward violent crime and work to prevent young people from becoming criminals for life. He would work to reduce the high turnover of prosecutors.



Pete Williams

Williams graduated from the University of Florida College of Law. In addition to working as an assistant state attorney, Williams served as the Statewide Prosecutor under Attorney General Charlie Crist. He believes too many frivolous cases in the state attorney's office are taken to trial. He would use more pre-trial diversions, drug court, and faith-based programs. He promised to treat people the same, adding that minorities are currently being treated differently. If elected, he would implement a code of ethics that the state attorney cannot solicit contributions from attorneys who work in the office.

Campbell won the straw poll, with Williams placing second and Desmond placing third. 



NEBA fills entire room to hear candidates discuss their platform.



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millage rate of 3.7 mills, and we've also voted to oppose the emerging idea of a "mobility fee" which is really just a new tax on business.

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Thankfully NEBA has always stood for pro-growth policies and sound fiscal decision-making by our elected officials. And we understand intuitively that our prodding, asking, demanding may very well cause discomfort for our city and county commissioners. But that's the legacy of NEBA and I for one wouldn't want it any other way.

Thanks for allowing me to serve this year and if you have any ideas and suggestions to improve our club and grow our membership, please reach out to me at barney@barneybishop.com or to any of our board members.

## Akins Campaign Strategy

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### Upcoming Meetings

**April 26 - Candidate Forum for City Commission, Seats 1 & 2**

**May 24 - Candidate Forum for Leon County Sheriff**

**June 28 - Candidate Forum for Leon County School Superintendent**

**July 26 - Candidate Forum for Leon County Commission, District 2**

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