

# BEYOND OUR BEACHES



FLORIDA'S  
Great Northwest

## 2021 ANNUAL REPORT

# GOAL Diversify and Grow Northwest Florida

"I can't begin to tell you how much I appreciate your efforts and what the "dream team" did for us while we were there. Absolutely no one could have done it better or done more than what you all did to make us feel welcome and understand the opportunities in NW Florida."

— CEO Prospect Feedback after a Regional Site Visit

## PROMOTE

### PROMOTE NORTHWEST FLORIDA FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH AND DIVERSIFICATION

#### Broadcasting Northwest Florida

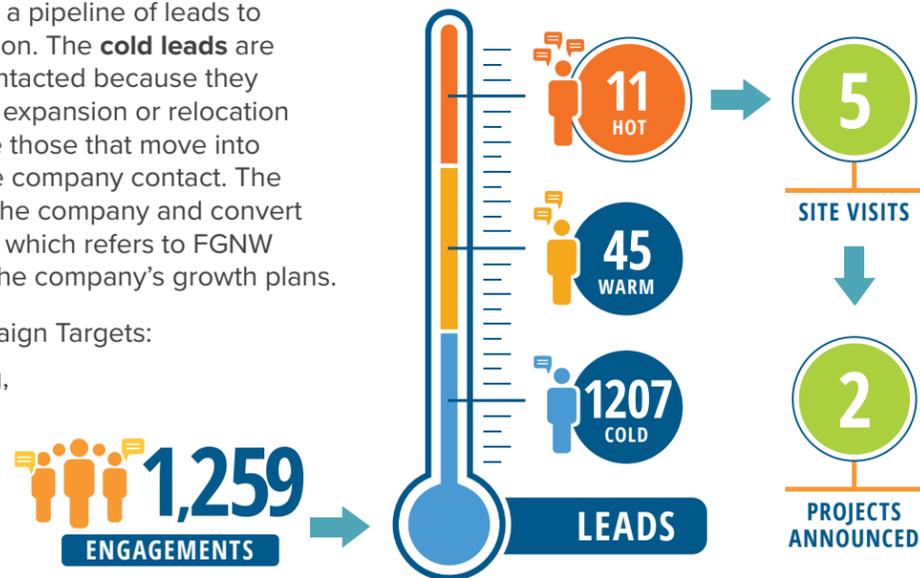
Our strategy to build awareness about the region through relationships with company decision makers, site selectors and other influencers is the primary focus under promotion. As we focus broadcasting the story about the region, built around our assets and advantages of doing business in Northwest Florida, we operate this ongoing strategy with **two main components**.

#### 1 Lead Generation for Job Creation

FGNW's outreach efforts, targeted by our artificial intelligence platforms, creates a pipeline of leads to be filtered throughout the region. The **cold leads** are companies that FGNW has contacted because they have shown signs of potential expansion or relocation opportunities. **Warm leads** are those that move into a further conversation with the company contact. The intention is to build trust with the company and convert the warm lead into a **hot lead**, which refers to FGNW receiving more details about the company's growth plans.

2021 Proactive Industry Campaign Targets:

Medical Device Manufacturing,  
Chemical Manufacturing,  
and Aerospace MRO.



#### 2 Digital Marketing

Our **social media platforms** allow us to engage with site selectors, company decision makers and our fellow Northwest Floridians. FGNW's social media content is carefully crafted to deliver timely, industry-focused and relevant posts that keep users engaged.



The video series, **Broadcasting Northwest Florida**, continued to provide a platform for organizations, companies and economic developers throughout the region to be spotlighted. The one-on-one video interview between the subject matter expert and FGNW focuses on their role in community and economic development, showcasing how we all work together to create a vibrant region.

**FGNW Newsletters** are produced monthly in-house to focus on relevant topics within our target industry sectors related to company announcements, workforce and education programs and available sites and buildings.

#### Regional Project Announcements

- Amazon: 30 jobs, Logistics and Distribution
- Cowan Systems: 50 jobs, Logistics and Distribution
- Dunkin' Brands: 60 jobs, Food Manufacturing
- Eastern Shipbuilding: 125 jobs, Marine Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul

- Gulf Cable: 30 jobs, Industrial Cable Manufacturing
- McNeil Technologies Inc.: 25 jobs, Wastewater Infrastructure Manufacturing
- Probes Unlimited: 23 jobs, Sensor Manufacturing
- Proud Source Water: 15 jobs, Beverage Manufacturing



# CAMPAIGN LAUNCH

## GO BEYOND OUR BEACHES

The Beyond Our Beaches message was created this year and allowed FGNW to morph it into a multi-faceted promotional campaign that told our story to our target audience in a creative way.

An entire toolbox of marketing materials was created with the Triumph Gulf Coast grant dollars to provide an array of items for our local economic development partners:

- Labor Supply and Demand Analysis on Northwest Florida's Target Industry Sectors
- Video, fact sheet, pocket card and PowerPoint slides on the Triumph Gulf Coast incentive fund
- Triumph in Action Case Studies on Eastern Shipbuilding Group, Port Panama City, ST Engineering and Skyborne Technology with supporting marketing materials such as videos, fact sheets, PowerPoint slides
- Executive Summary and White Paper on Innovation and Investment in Northwest Florida
- Robust digital marketing and social media plan including scheduled posts, photography/graphics and media buys

**THE OPPORTUNITY** – find a fun, creative and memorable way to catch the attention of site selectors and company decision makers about why Northwest Florida should be considered for company locations or expansions.

**THE PLAN** – Craft breweries have been sprouting up across the 12-county region, from small towns to our bigger cities.

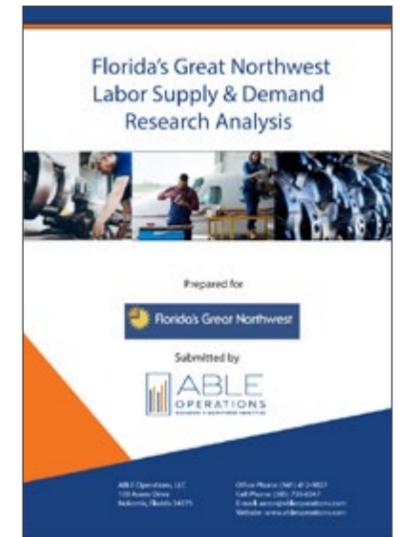
Local breweries were contacted, and six craft beers were selected. We selected a travel-size cooler to hold the six pack and koozies and a beautifully designed box in which the cooler and beer would be shipped in. Accompanying the liquid sunshine surprise was a brochure featuring a business-related item about each of the counties in the region and facts on Triumph Gulf Coast.



Nearly 100 boxes were mailed out to key influencers among our target audience. The response we received immediately was that of excitement! Our goals for this effort were to build or strengthen relationships with these recipients and to promote the region for economic growth. The bonds we have started or strengthened since the campaign have been tremendous. It will always give us a conversation starter and superior gift giving with a hint of education/information is what we feel will set us apart for years to come.



## TRIUMPH GULF COAST MARKETING AND RESEARCH TOOLS



## AWARD WINNING TEAM

FGNW shined bright in recognition in economic development circles across the country!

At this year's **Florida Economic Development Council Annual Conference**:

- Florida's Great Northwest was honored to receive an Innovation in Marketing Award as well as the inaugural **Melissa Medley Creativity – Best in Show Award** for our “Go Beyond Our Beaches” campaign.
- **Shane Chadwick** received the **Dan Webster Young Innovator Award** and scholarship. This award selects an outstanding young professional who focuses on using innovation in their work and the scholarship is intended to be applied towards achieving the Certified Economic Developer (CEcD) designation.



In addition, **Jennifer Conoley** was recognized by Consultant Connect, a national consulting firm bridging the gap between leading economic developers and site selection consultants, as one of **North America's Top 50 Economic Developers of 2021**.



## ADVOCATE

### ADVOCATE FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ISSUES THAT AFFECT THE REGION

#### 2021 ENDEAVORS

- Developed FGNW's first list of legislative priorities for the 2021 legislative session
- Met one-on-one with Northwest Florida's state legislative delegation throughout the year
- Strengthened partnerships and created new relationships with key leaders at the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity and Enterprise Florida

#### MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENT

Governor DeSantis signed SB 7054 into law. This bill recreated the trust fund for Triumph Gulf Coast and removed the sunset, which was set for June 30, 2021, and deleted any future sunset dates. This protects the Triumph Gulf Coast dollars to keep its intended use to diversify the eight disproportionately affected counties in Northwest Florida by the 2010 BP Oil Spill. FGNW's advocacy efforts, led by our lobbyist, Darrick McGhee with Johnson & Blanton, has allowed us to keep a watchful eye on the movement of these bills and advocate for the importance of the sunset's removal and the impact of Triumph to our economic development efforts.

## COLLABORATE

### COLLABORATE TO IMPROVE REGIONAL COMPETITIVENESS



Local economic development organizations in Northwest Florida work together on the regional mission of business vitality. To foster our collaborative efforts, we hosted our first FGNW Marketing Committee Retreat which included team building, brainstorming, statewide marketing planning with Enterprise Florida and detailed insights from a site selector.

We expanded our office presence. With a 12 county region, FGNW now has **three offices** to better service Northwest Florida.



## BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CASE STUDY

### PROJECT PURPLE RAIN

FGNW's specialized proactive lead generation program is designed to target companies across the globe with a need to relocate or expand their operations. When our team connected with this growing manufacturer in December 2020, it was just great timing.

**Company Need:** Probes Unlimited, a manufacturer of temperature sensing devices, employed 50 people at its headquarters in Pennsylvania. Its growing number of customer orders was outpacing output and they needed to expand. However, they were having trouble finding motivated individuals in their current location.

**"The company was growing faster than we could find employees back home in Pennsylvania, so when FGNW approached us about an opportunity, we explored it."**

*Robert Aurelia, Vice President of Operations, Probes Unlimited*

**Northwest Florida Opportunity:** After learning more from our team, the company's CEO was willing to receive a regional proposal from our communities to explore expansion opportunities. Over the next few months, he traveled down to Northwest Florida to visit three of our communities and soon after, came for a second site visit. By May, he selected to open a Florida operation for Probes Unlimited at the former Bonifay Middle School in Holmes County.

**Holmes County Story:** The Holmes County Development Commission (HCDC) purchased the former middle school to house some government offices and transform the remainder of the buildings into an emerging manufacturing campus. The company's CEO saw a vision to transform the 5th grade wing into his new manufacturing space. The HCDC worked to get the building suited to meet their production needs. Simultaneously, they worked with CareerSource Chipola to begin the recruitment efforts to fill the 18 jobs needed to begin production. In just a few weeks, there were 93 applications submitted for the job openings. Probes Unlimited began producing temperature sensors the week of July 12th. By August 3rd, the team was already implementing lean manufacturing techniques to become efficient as possible and was producing at 80-100% of the hourly industry standard. The company was so pleased with the talent at their Bonifay facility, plans to expand into their

second and third production pods were already underway.

**Rural Rebound:** In some cases, rural communities don't have the means to compete as often or as fiercely as some of the larger counties that have more resources.

Bordering Alabama, as Holmes County does, also adds another layer of competition from an economic development competitive state. However, if we can get the decision makers here, in our communities, to meet our people and understand the culture and values that make up our lifestyle, then we have a much greater chance at staying in the game – sometimes winning. Project Purple Rain

was special because a small business owner took a chance on a small town in Northwest Florida. Because he gave Northwest Florida and Holmes County, specifically,

#### Timeline

- Nov. 2020 Initial Email Outreach to Company
- Dec. 2020 Regional Overview Meeting Presented by FGNW
- Jan. 2021 Regional Proposal Feedback Session
- Mar. 2021 First Site Visit to the Region
- April 2021 Second Site Visit to the Region
- May 2021 Final Site Selection and Company Announcement
- July 2021 Probes Unlimited Opens Its Doors
- Sept. 2021 Ribbon Cutting Ceremony



a deeper look, the lives of over 20 individuals have been transformed for the better with a steady job, quarterly bonuses and employee benefits.



**Scarlett Phaneuf**  
FGNW Chair

“This year we’ve announced new job creation projects, generated new business leads and won marketing awards. The organization has exceeded expectations and I am very excited to see where we go from here.”



**John Daniel**  
Foundation Chair

“The efforts of the Foundation have continued to take shape over the past year. With the new ideas and direction from our leadership, our future is bright, and I look forward to seeing another year of accomplishments.”



**Jennifer Conoley**  
CEO

“I’m excited about our future! We’re seeing active projects turn into new employers, trained students landing high-paying jobs and Northwest Florida’s economy be enhanced by economic diversification. Watch out world — Northwest Florida is on the move!”

**FGNW EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

- Chair**  
Scarlett Phaneuf, PowerSouth
- Past Chair**  
Bruce Vredenburg, Hancock Whitney
- Vice Chair**  
Verdell Hawkins, Gulf Power
- Secretary**  
Danielle Ruiz, Duke Energy
- Treasurer**  
Chuck Landers, Saltmarsh, Cleaveland & Gund
- Sustaining Member**  
Lewis Bear, The Lewis Bear Company
- Sustaining Member**  
Roger Hall, Ascension Sacred Heart
- Economic Development Representative**  
Roy Baker, Opportunity Florida
- Higher Education Representative**  
Dr. John Holdnak, Gulf Coast State College
- Workforce Board Representative**  
Michele Burns, CareerSource Okaloosa Walton
- General Member**  
Megan Fry, Clark Partington
- General Member**  
Tom Watson, CBRE

**FGNW INVESTORS**

- AppRiver
- Ascension Sacred Heart
- AT&T
- Baptist Health Care
- Bay EDA
- Bayou Concrete
- Beach Bank
- Beggs & Lane
- Buffalo Rock
- CareerSource Chipola
- CareerSource Escarosa
- Career Source Gulf Coast
- CareerSource Okaloosa Walton
- Cat Country 98.7/ News Radio 1620
- CBRE
- Centennial Bank
- Chipola College
- Clark Partington
- Community Bank
- Culpepper Construction
- Duke Energy Florida
- Duncan McCall
- Farm Credit of Northwest Florida
- Florida State University Panama City
- FloridaWest EDA
- Fort Walton Machining
- Goldring Gulf Distributing
- Gulf Coast State College
- Gulf County EDC
- Gulf Power
- Hancock Whitney
- Hensel Phelps
- Holmes Co Development Commission
- Hopping, Green & Sams
- Jackson County EDC
- Landrum HR
- McMahon & Hadder
- Morris-Depew Associates, Inc.
- Navy Federal Credit Union
- Northwest Florida Beaches International Airport
- Northwest Florida State College
- One Okaloosa EDC
- Opportunity Florida
- Pen Air Federal Credit Union
- Pensacola International Airport
- Pensacola State College
- Port Panama City
- PowerSouth
- Regions
- Saltmarsh, Cleaveland & Gund
- Santa Rosa County EDO
- Synovus
- The Highland Group
- The Lewis Bear Company
- The St Joe Company
- Trust
- Trustmark
- University of West Florida Haas Center
- Walton County EDC
- Warren Averett
- West Florida Healthcare
- White Construction

**SUSTAINING INVESTORS:**

