

# MIAMI TODAY

WEEK OF THURSDAY, APRIL 21, 2011

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**New hospital in last days of hiring, targets West Kendall needs, pg. 14**

## HEALTH UPDATE

**Martinez aim: abandon health trust, add financial recovery board, pg. 17**



**TASKFORCE MUM:** Jackson Memorial's Hospital Governance Taskforce has been seeking solutions to pull the cash-strapped public hospital out of its financial crisis for nearly a month now, but members aren't in a hurry to share their insight. According to **Donna Palmer**, an administrative officer with the county commission Auditor's Office, members decided April 14 not to discuss plans with media. Residents may attend meetings. *Details:*

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**TROLLEY STOP:** A vote to run City of Miami trolleys was postponed last week to April 28. Commissioner **Francis Suarez** said he'd like longer operating hours and questioned the fee structure. As proposed, fares would be \$1 regularly and \$2 for special events. Four routes are proposed, although only two, Brickell/Biscayne and Health/Stadium District, are funded.

**PLAYHOUSE PARKING:** The City of Miami Planning, Zoning and Appeals board was to vote Wednesday on whether to approve a zoning change at 3227-3247 Charles Ave. in Coconut Grove allowing for parking space at the Coconut Grove Playhouse. Miami-Dade County Commissioners have OK'd moving forward with plans to reopen the facility, closed since 2004. They have yet to decide whether to restore the theater or start from scratch, razing the building and constructing a new space.

**ARSHI SELLS 73%:** Art was in the air as Miami-Dade's Recreation & Cultural Affairs Committee received a financial report from the Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts. According to the report, the center hosted 48 events throughout February, which sold at 73%. Performances have sold at 71% throughout the first five months of fiscal 2011, resulting in nearly \$2.85 million in ticket sales. Based on these numbers, this year the center should rank in the top five performing arts centers in the US.

**HELPING CITY HALL:** The City of Miami Omni Community Redevelopment Agency's board is to vote Monday on granting up to \$148,000 to restaurant **City Hall**, a joint venture at 2004 Biscayne Blvd. between **Steve Haas**, the Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau's chairman and former co-owner and operating partner of Soyka Restaurant, and **Chef Tom Azar**, former executive chef of Emeril Lagasse's restaurants. The grant is to pay for new curbs, sidewalks and parking lot improvements, among other work costs, for the comfort-food eatery. The agency OK'd a different economic incentive for another known community name in March, granting a \$600,000 annual reimbursement of tax-increment funds for developer **Tibor Hollo's** Sonesta Mikado Hotel & Residences project at 1701 NE Fourth Ave.

## THE ACHIEVER



Photo by Maxine Usdan

**Scott Moss**

Building a stadium and a family construction company

The profile is on Page 4

## Hospitality jobs record just the start

By Ashley D. Torres

Fueled by 16 consecutive months of year-over-year growth, Miami-Dade County leisure and hospitality jobs have hit an all-time high.

Hospitality jobs, which include posts at attractions, hotels and restaurants, rose year-over-year 3.6% in March to 110,700 from March 2010's 106,900 jobs, according to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Employment also rose 1% month-over-month from 109,600 hospitality jobs in February to March's 110,700. Both numbers shatter the previous leisure and hospitality employment high of 108,400 from March 2008.

The hospitality industry remains number one in Miami-Dade, said **William D. Talbert III**, Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau president and CEO, and is now leading the community out of a global recession.

Record-breaking 2010 tourism also contributed to the hospitality job rise, with Greater Miami overnight visitors climbing 5.6% year over year to a 12.6-million high.

With every 85 Miami-Dade visitors sustaining or creating one leisure and hospitality job, record-breaking visitor numbers mean long-term, annual positions for the one in five county households that derive their living from tourism.

New hotel openings have also contributed to rising jobs, at 300 to 400 new hires per property.

Despite lagging occupancies and rates, said **Scott Brush**, owner of hotel consulting firm **Brush & Co.**, more rooms mean more visitors.

With seven hotels slated to open in 2011, including **Cipriani Ocean Resort and Club Residences** in June and **Element Miami International Airport** in August, local jobs are to continue rising.

Nationally, hospitality jobs have rebounded faster than anticipated, said **Joseph McInerney**, American Hotel & Lodging Association's president and CEO, and are to pick up more steam in coming months.

## Convention center remake seeking more advice

By Zachary Fagenson

Miami Beach is still deciding what kind of consultant it needs to navigate an increasingly complex plan for a massive convention center remake.

Commissioners, excluding **Jonah Wolfson**, agreed in early March to seek a firm with expertise ranging from traffic management to finding public-private partnerships.

"We've done a lot in house," City Manager **Jorge Gonzalez** said then. "We need outside assistance."

A request for proposals is "still being drafted," Tourism and Cultural Development Director **Max Sklar** wrote via email.

Once a plan is final, the city would go back to market to seek a private partner.

The plan would expand exhibit space from 500,000 square feet in four halls to more than 700,000 spread across six, add 1 million square feet to the center, add 81,000 square feet of previously non-existent ballroom area and an onsite garage that would boost parking from 3,700 cars to more than 4,100.

The center opened in 1957 with about

100,000 square feet of exhibit space. The last major upgrade, in 1989, expanded that to 502,000. An economic impact study cited letters from firms like Microsoft that had met at the center but wouldn't return unless it was upgraded.

**Mr. Gonzalez** said the consultant is to be paid from \$55 million that the county dedicated to the project and should cost "under \$100,000."

City commissioners in 2009 agreed to spend \$600,000 out of the same funding on a plan from architects **Arquitectonica**. That plan and its \$640 million price tag to build may be scrapped depending on this next consultant's input.

One possible change is height. Zoning doesn't permit area buildings above 100 feet. The restriction led architects to push plans to the property's edges, enveloping the Holocaust Memorial and raising residents' concern that it would be a "white elephant."

Commissioner **Deedee Weithorn** said a consultant needs experience broad enough to effectively integrate a new convention center with the surrounding community.

"I think we need to go beyond hotel operators," she said. "We have a unique site

with the Lincoln Road tie-in and the New World Symphony tie-in."

**Mr. Wolfson** wants a consultant who can minimize upset to the area, such as massive traffic delays resulting from a center garage having only one exit. "I understand there ha[ve] been tons of meetings," he said, "but I don't know that I feel that residents have weighed in fully on their feelings on how this is going to impact them."

Once a firm is found to help meet concerns, the city would seek a partner to build an attached hotel and foot part of the bill.

Whatever the final plan, there's little commission disagreement over whether an upgrade is needed but nagging uncertainty over how to fund it.

Two bills, one tying Sun Life Stadium improvements to the center's and one focused only on improving the center, were introduced in the state House and Senate in early March. There's been no action.

Both seek to raise taxes tourists pay in area hotels, but with the legislative session winding down, whether new funds will flow to the project is unclear.

## AGENDA

TASKFORCE TO TAKE STEPS TO FIX FLAGLER SIDEWALKS ... 2

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downtown location along the Miami River.”

**CULINARY CACHET:** House of Appliances, a high-end appliance and cabinet retailer, is making its way to Miami-Dade, with a new location in Coral Gables. The retailer signed a five-year, 2,600-square-foot lease at 360 Miracle Mile, an exclusive shopping and dining corridor in the heart of the Gables. House of Appliances, with stores in Delray Beach and Jupiter, has been catering to architects, builders and remodelers for 27-plus years. **Mindy McIlroy**, executive vice president at Terranova, brokered the deal. “House of Appliances selected Miracle Mile due to the affluence of the surrounding communities and the cachet of the Miracle Mile address,” she said. “Terranova is delighted that we are able to continue to contribute to the growth in the business development district.”



Mindy McIlroy

**MIAMI LAKES SIGNINGS:** The Graham Cos. has completed a handful of commercial leases in the Miami Lakes area. The Town of Miami Lakes has leased 18,722 square feet in Miami Lakes Business Park West within Parkside Corporate Center II at 15150 NW 79th Court. A 2,734-square-foot office lease was signed by South Florida Obstetrics & Gynecology in Miami Lakes Town Center’s Plaza Royale office building at 15600 NW 67th Ave. Also, tenant Saltzman, Tanis, Levin & Jacobson PA leased 8,602 square feet in the Eagle Nest Center at 15507-15 NW 67th Ave. On the industrial side, DemeTech Corp. inked a 27,500-square-foot lease in Miami Lakes Business Park East at 14175 NW 60th Ave. In this lease, **Ernesto Casal** of Capital Commercial Group represented the tenant and **Carlos Velasquez** of Vivo Real Estate Group the landlord. GP Watches & Jewelry leased 967 square feet of retail space and Definitive Resolution 958 square feet in Miami Lakes Town Center. Also, sandwich restaurant Subway leased 1,560 square feet at Lake Patricia Shopping Center at 13955 NW 67th Ave. The Graham Cos. leases and manages more than 3 million square feet of commercial space in Miami Lakes.

**COZY DEAL:** Furniture retailer Mil Muebles has just signed a 4,117-square-foot retail lease at Southwest Eighth Street and Red Road. This will be the second Miami-Dade location for the furniture business, which was founded in 2005. The first store is at 7163 W Flagler St. **Cyril Bijaoui** of The Company Real Estate represented both the tenant and the landlord.



Cyril Bijaoui

**RECORD SALE:** A penthouse sold at South Beach’s Apogee condo for \$11.5 million — the highest price tag paid for a Miami-Dade condo in close to a year. **Esther Percal** and **Pablo Alfaro** of Esslinger-Wooten-Maxwell Realtors completed the deal. Apogee’s Penthouse A was bought by a European buyer from seller Moonlight LLC. The 67-unit Apogee at 800 South Pointe Drive features three penthouse units with panoramic waterfront views. Since tracking condo sales, this is the fifth highest price paid for a condo in the county through the Multiple Listing Service. “We have been seeing a great deal of activity in the high-end market, particularly from individuals who own multiple residences across the globe,” Ms. Percal said. “In the big scheme of global residential real estate, Miami-Dade’s South Beach properties are still a relative bargain, even at the almost \$1,700-per-square-foot price realized by this sale....” With \$566 million in total sales in excess of \$1 million over the past 12 months, EWM is leading the luxury market in Miami-Dade, selling 87% more dollar volume than its closest competitor.



Esther Percal



Pablo Alfaro

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Send information for THE REAL DEAL to [yfernandez@miamitodaynews.com](mailto:yfernandez@miamitodaynews.com)

240-unit Hyatt Miami at the Blue neighbors far

# Out of the blue, for hotel-condo

By YUDISLAIDY FERNANDEZ

The Hyatt Miami at The Blue, a new hotel-condo project in Doral, is making residential sales after a slow start.

The 240-unit property sits on 17 acres at 5300 NW 87th Ave., neighboring the world-renowned TPC Blue Monster at Doral golf course, where 11 units have closed in the past month and a half, said Edgardo Defortuna, president of Fortune International Realty, the firm handling sales.

“The condo hotel market is a slower market than regular condominiums,” Mr. Defortuna explained. “It took a while for us to get brokers to go out and realize this was a very attractive product because it is being managed by Hyatt and units are in spectacular condition, fully finished and furnished.”

Efforts to sell the 232-unit inventory, known as The Blue, Hyatt Residences, began in mid-January, but it wasn’t until recent months that sales picked up.

About 40 units have sold, including 11 in the past month and a half, he noted.

“The units overlook the Blue Monster golf course at Doral and for the foreign buyers, golf is very attractive,” he said.

The studios are about 500 square feet, one-bedrooms are close to 1,100 square feet and three-bedrooms are about 1,800, he added. The project has no two-bedroom units.

Prices range from \$120,000 for a studio to \$600,000 for a three-bedroom condo.

ING Clarion Development Ventures II, a fund advised by ING Clarion Partners, opened the Hyatt Miami at The Blue last

year. The project originated from

Most units are being sold primarily from Mr. Defortuna.

“This hotel project is one you could not find elsewhere but so far we have obtained a number of clients at the project,” he said. “There’s a strong community like the one we are looking for.”

A project like that the hotel and member of the golf facility.

The project consists of 232 units, each with a private

American-style center, heated swimming pool, private cabana, golf course options

restaurant, 53 poolside

Buyers place the program

participate in the Hyatt V Clubs.

Fortuna Horruit director with the agents.

“We are sales and Defortuna to take

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