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## 8 things to know, including a source for proactive AI strategies



Image: (Photo by OCTAVIO JONES/AFP via Getty Images)

Earlier this year, NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg spoke to military personnel of the United States Special Operations Command headquarters at MacDill Air Force Base. Read more about how the base collaborates with the Tampa Bay Business community below.

OCTAVIO JONES



By [Alexis Muellner](#) – Editor, Tampa Bay Business Journal  
Nov 30, 2024

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First, here are three eye-catching stories you may have missed from the TBBJ newsroom this past week.

## 1) MAS Global CEO Monica Hernandez merges U.S. market expertise with Latin talent

A compelling quality of doing business journalism in Tampa Bay is learning backstories. That's the case with this week's TBBJ Interview profile of MAS Global CEO Monica Hernandez. As TBBJ Technology Reporter and Tampa Bay Inno Lead [Anjelica Rubin](#) shared, the Medellin native and her team have built their data and digital services consultancy to 200 people, 70% of whom are based in Latin America. [Read more about her story](#) and the proactive AI strategies she's helping clients pursue.

Hernandez joined the TBBJ's September [roundtable discussion](#) on "AI at work: Tampa Bay tech executives from finance, aviation, energy and more talk strategy." She also participated in the Tampa Bay Chamber's recent [generative AI learning series](#).

## 2) Pinellas County's Employment Sites Program helps Agora Edge expand

Agora Edge says it has the infrastructure to construct an additional 32,000 square feet beyond the nearly 48,000 square feet it recently added to its headquarters in St. Pete. As TBBJ Pinellas County Real Estate and Economic Development Reporter Henry Queen posted, Agora Edge serves the fire, medical, military, and computing industries. The new facility will employ 50 people and is across from Mazzaro's Italian Market on 29th Street N.

Florida's manufacturing sector has been experiencing strong growth, with over 427,600 jobs reported in May 2024, representing a consistent increase since April 2021, FloridaCommerce's inaugural Florida Manufacturing Report said.

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### **3) Coram, a CVS specialty infusion services pharmacy in Tampa, will shut down**

CVS Health has laid off 53 employees at the 8508 Benjamin Road office of Coram, its specialty infusion and nutrition therapy unit. As TBBJ Banking, Finance and Companies Reporter [Christina Georgacopoulos](#) reported earlier this year, CVS (NYSE: CVS) said it planned to discontinue certain services and close 29 of the Coram infusion pharmacies. Learn more in her reporting about the market environment for specialized, complex services. CVS Health is a significant local employer. It has more than 100 retail locations in the Tampa Bay region. No exact number of regional employees is available, but CVS Health likely employs several thousand here amid a total workforce of more than 300,000 nationally.

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Next, **five more things** that happened...while you considered alternatives to a traditional turkey dinner for Thanksgiving, like ham or ravioli, and then thought again.

### **4) Johns Hopkins All Children's Hospital to provide late-night urgent care for kids in North Tampa expansion**

Johns Hopkins All Children's Hospital will start after-hours pediatric urgent care at 12220 Bruce B Downs Blvd. in early 2025. Half of emergency center visits are avoidable, with many handled in an urgent care setting, the system said its data supports. It will operate Monday to Friday from 5 p.m. to midnight and 11:30 a.m. to midnight on weekends.

## 5) Land deal for surf park concept in Two Rivers

The developer of a planned 35-acre destination surf park said he signed a land agreement in Two Rivers – a 6,000-acre master-planned mixed-use development in Pasco County. Development costs and the timeline to close on the property were not disclosed. It pledged to create 700 jobs annually by 2027 when it expects to open. Affiliates of Eisenhower Property Group are developing the mixed-use Two Rivers.

## 6) MacDill deepens its connection to HCA Florida South Tampa Hospital and its CEO

HCA Florida South Tampa Hospital CEO Ned Hill has been inducted into the 6th Air Refueling Wing Honorary Commander Program at MacDill Air Force Base. Its commander, Col. Ed Szczepanik, invited him and other civic leaders to participate in the program. MacDill AFB established the program in 2009 as a forum to exchange ideas and experiences and collaborate with the greater Tampa Bay community.

While these kinds of numbers are speculative based on algorithms, the Tampa Bay Defense Alliance estimates the economic impact of MacDill Air Force Base on the Greater Tampa Bay Region is \$3.9 billion. Retiree populations within roughly 50 miles of the base bring that impact to \$5 billion, the group says.

## 7) Another example of doing business with MacDill: Shumaker Partner named to MacDill Support Council

Shumaker Partner Andrew J. Mayts, an advocate for the base and military families, has been appointed to the MacDill Support Council. Established by the 6th Air Refueling Wing, the council serves as a forum for civic leaders who have previously served as Honorary Commanders and have demonstrated a sustained commitment to the base and the Air Force's mission.

## 8) Lake Michigan Credit Union names UGA grad as chief retail officer for Florida

Lake Michigan Credit Union named Karen Koundourakis as its chief retail officer for Florida. A release said she has over 25 years of credit union experience and is a [University of Georgia](#) graduate with a bachelor's degree in social work. The institution said she is also a graduate of Harvard Business School's Strategic Leadership training, Harvard HBX Process Improvement Program. LMCU surpassed 600,000 members earlier this year, it said.

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