

NewsRoom

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Section: News

Shaping Sarasota's future

Sarasota Herald-Tribune

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The class will explore the region's most pressing topics, including economic development, education, local government, health care, and more.

A distinguished group of professionals representing multiple industries and backgrounds and united by a commitment to shaping the future of Sarasota were recently selected for the Greater Sarasota Chamber of Commerce's 2025-26 Leadership Sarasota Class.

Leadership Sarasota equips emerging and established leaders with a deeper understanding of the critical issues and opportunities facing the community. Through immersive experiences, site visits, and leadership development sessions, participants develop tools and relationships needed to make a lasting impact.

"We are excited to welcome this impressive group," said Heather Kasten, president and CEO of the Chamber and a graduate of both Leadership Sarasota and Leadership Florida. "Their passion, expertise, and dedication to bettering our region will strengthen not only their individual leadership journeys but also our community as a whole."

The incoming class includes Kelly Addington, Sarasota Performing Arts Foundation; Jennifer Barbaro, Keiser University; Megan Baxter, Teen Court of Sarasota; Taylor Bennett, The Mall at University Town Center; Will Bobbit, Purmort & Martin Insurance Agency; Tyler Brown, Icard, Merrill, Cullis, Timm, Furen & Ginsburg; Kassandra Burdwood, Willis Smith Construction; Michael Butler, J.E. Charlotte Construction Corp.; Hunter Carpenter, Visit Sarasota County; Lisa Charles, Yes! Coach Lisa; Terry Connor, Sarasota County School District; Read Corley, The Corley Company; Susan Courter, Wessell Construction; Jerry Dakin, Dakin Natural Soils; Alex Davis, AGA Tax and Consulting Services; Cameron Dees, Mariner Wealth Advisors;

Also, Brett DeHart, First United Methodist Church; Renee Di Pilato, Sarasota County Government; Austin Dickinson, PNC Bank; Luis Dynia Sanchez, S-One; Miles Fox, RITE Technology; Cassie Friedman, Horizon HR & Bookkeeping; AJ Fritsch, Tandem Construction; Darren Gambrell, USF Sarasota-Manatee; Alia Garrett, City of Sarasota; Dan Greenwald, J.L. Bainbridge & Company; David Hall, Michael Saunders & Company; Victoria Hasselbring, All Faiths Food Bank; Zach Henkel, Greater

Sarasota Chamber of Commerce; Jeanine Johnson, SailorGirl Companies; Heather Koester, Engel & Voelkers Sarasota; Xavier Koffman, Sunwest Bank; Ariana Laboy Mena, Dickinson & Gibbons;

Also, MaryEllen Mancini, SPARCC; James O'Donnell, **Shumaker, Loop** & Kendrick; Kaitlyn Perez, KPC Strategies; David Plotkin, Unwind Massage & Wellness Studio; Jeffrey Pourchier, New College; Arianne Roberts, Children First; Lane Ruise, Creative Arts Academy; Amber Rylak, Education Foundation of Sarasota County; Kristin Scarborough, SunCoast Blood Center; Kyle Sebastian, Four Winds IT; Virginia Shearer, Sarasota Art Museum; Jamie Smith, State College of Florida; Devin Smith, Diamond Banc; Kevin Thompson, Gecko's Hospitality Group; Stacy Van Buren, Gulf Coast Community Foundation; Stephen Wells, JPL & Associates; and Carrie Wilks, Compass Business Solutions.

Throughout the program year, the class will explore the region's most pressing topics, including economic development, education, local government, health care, and more – all while building the collaborative leadership skills needed to address them. Visit sarasotachamber.com.

Submitted by Hayley Nau

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