



Carroll at Bellemeade, under construction.

Greensboro Swarm: City's new sports team generates serious buzz

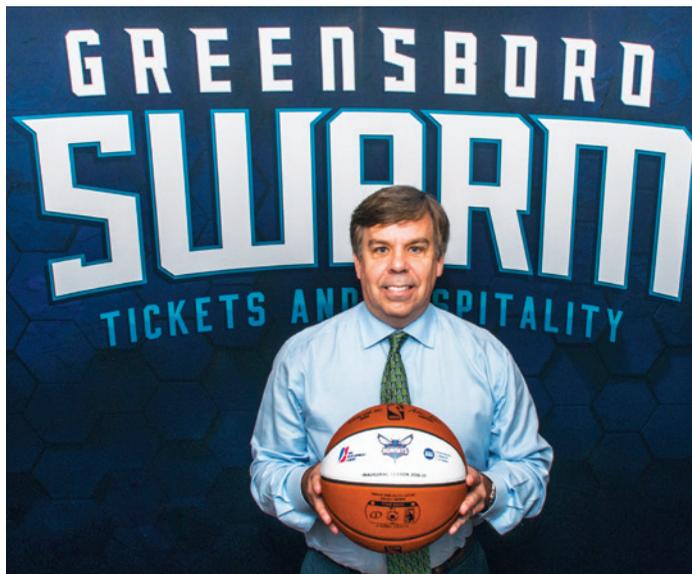
The first game is months away, but there's already some serious excitement about the Greensboro Swarm. One solid indicator: the best seats on the Swarm's home court go for \$1,650 for a season ticket, and they are sold out.

"We're closing in on 400 season tickets already," says Steve Sweto, president of the team owned by Hornets Sports and Entertainment.

The Swarm, affiliated with Michael Jordan's Charlotte Hornets, is one of 22 teams in the NBA's Development League. Think of the so-called D-League as a minor league organization, helping prepare players to one day compete at pro basketball's highest level.

"Look at us as a Triple-A farm team," says Sweto, who has spent more than 20 years in professional sports management. He most recently spent six years as president and chief revenue officer for the WNBA's Tulsa Shock.

Some years earlier, he worked with the Charlotte Bobcats. Now he leads a staff of seven full-time employees in offices on the second floor of the Greensboro Convention & Visitors Bureau on Gate City Bou-



Steve Sweto, president of the Greensboro Swarm.

levard. The staff is complemented by eight summer interns representing colleges and universities from across the state, including a Guilford College student.

Creating a franchise, Sweto says, "takes people, it takes resources, it takes infrastructure. It takes people to buy in to what you are doing, and it's really starting to come into fruition."

The team roster isn't known yet, and a coach has yet to be named. Expect those details closer to the start of the season in mid-

November, Sweto says.

Players likely will include former college athletes who weren't drafted by the NBA and chose not to play pro basketball overseas. It's possible that the Hornets

The team also expects to hold tryouts for walk-ons, so stars on neighborhood courts throughout the Piedmont Triad can demonstrate their moves.

The goal, Sweto says, is to "lead, coach and develop" players so that they can one day compete in the NBA. The same goes for those in the office. "The goal is to move everyone up the ladder," he explains. "It's our job to create that kind of synergy with the Hornets."

Almost a third of NBA players spend some time in the D-League at some point in their careers, says Kim Strable, president of the Greensboro Sports Commission.

In preparation for the Swarm, the Greensboro Coliseum Complex is upfitting the former Pavilion, now called The Fieldhouse. The Fieldhouse



Courtesy Greensboro Coliseum

The Swarm will play in the Fieldhouse, previously known as the Pavilion, at the Greensboro Coliseum Complex.

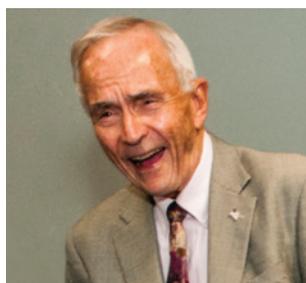
may send a player who needs extra seasoning to play with the Swarm when the Hornets are off for a few days. "People will be seeing true NBA stars, the stars of the future, with our team and our league," Sweto says.

The D-League has 22 teams currently. NBA leadership eventually wants 30 teams in the league, each affiliated directly with an NBA franchise.

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Trends is a publication of the Guilford Merchants Association.



Baseball picnic

Hamburgers, hot dogs, and Grasshoppers baseball – the perfect combination for a June evening in Greensboro. GMA members and guests gathered outside GMA headquarters for the pre-game picnic on June 14, with food provided by Culinary Visions Catering. They then headed across the street to see GMA President & CEO G. Mark Prince throw the opening pitch at New-Bridge Bank Park. The 'Hoppers went on to whip the Asheville Tourists 6 to 5.



A word from the chief

Greensboro Police Chief Wayne Scott briefed GMA members on law enforcement initiatives at a recent Center City AM Briefing. These regular events provide a forum for city staff and downtown organizations to present information and take questions in an informal setting. All GMA

members are welcome to attend Center City AM Briefings, which are held in GMA's newly remodeled Community Room. Walker Sanders, president of the Community Foundation of Greater Greensboro, will discuss the Tanger Performing Arts Center at the August 2 briefing.

Greensboro Swarm

Continued from page 1

will seat about 2,200 for Swarm games, creating an intimate environment for fans.

“It’s going to be one of the better facilities in our league,” Swetoha says. “People sitting in row six will feel like they’re sitting right on top of the action.”

Coliseum Director Matt Brown says the D-League team “is a huge win-win for the Coliseum Complex, the Swarm and the Charlotte

Hornets. The teams’ first season will offer local fans another exciting, affordable, family-friendly sports entertainment option right here in the Greensboro community.”

The Swarm “is not just a basketball team,” Swetoha says. “We are an organization that wants to make an impact on the community.

“We want to be good citizens and engage in the community and earn the respect of the business community. We’re going to treat this like an NBA franchise.

It’s all relative.”

The Swarm will play a 24-game season ending in March, followed by a three-week playoff schedule.

Not since the Carolina Cougars in the early 1970s has Greensboro seen pro-level basketball make its home here.

The stage is being set, Strable says, for another type of exciting basketball in the city called Tournament Town.

The Swarm, he says, is “getting set up for success. I’m optimistic about it.”

Piedmont Triad readies for the 2016 Wyndham Championship

Sedgefield Country Club again will be the site of the Wyndham Championship, which brings some of the world’s top golfers to the Piedmont Triad.

The tournament will be played August 15-21.

Last year’s tournament brought record crowds and excitement, thanks to the



Davis Love III, 2016 winner. presence of Tiger Woods.

Davis Love III, however, claimed the win. It was his third victory here.

The tournament, which began as the Greater Greensboro Open in 1938, is the state’s oldest professional golf event.

For ticket information, visit wyndhamchampionship.com.



**Courtyard by Marriott
Greensboro**

June 10, 2016



Paige Beard, Enterprise Rent A Car; Courtney Purvis, Kelly Office Solutions; Wilma Hairston, Triad Job Search Network.



Jesse Lewter, Mickey Truck Bodies; GMA President & CEO G. Mark Prince; Kyle McLaughlin, Mickey Truck Bodies.



Mike Taylor and Nikki Taylor, Cowtown Branding.



Connie Shoaf, Allegacy Federal Credit Union; Tori Baker, Allegacy Federal Credit Union; Gail Hornaday, Baskets by Lyn; Debbie McCliment, Allegacy Federal Credit Union.

GMA TRENDS
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TRENDS is published for the members of the Guilford Merchants Association.

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The Guilford Merchants Association is a nonprofit organization founded in 1906. The Association is a business membership organization focused on supporting member companies with educational programming, lead generation activities, marketing opportunities, and overall enrichment while serving as a catalyst for community growth and prosperity.



Golf for a cause

Members of GMA’s Competitive Advantage Networking (CAN) group played in an event benefitting the American Cancer Society. From left are Rob Whitestone, Cottman Transmissions; Rich Reid, All Star Chem-Dry; Anne-Christian Johns, Johns Plumbing, Heating, & Air Conditioning; and Josh Siebert, Sandler Training. The annual Johnnie Stewart Memorial Golf Outing took place June 24 at Holly Ridge Golf Links in Archdale.



Kelly Krantz is branch manager for Yadkin Mortgage in Greensboro.

Volunteering with GMA 'gets her there'

Kelly Krantz is up-front about her motivations as a GMA volunteer.

"I like volunteering for a selfish reason," she says, "because it gets me there."

There, in this case, usually is an After Work Network, where Krantz helps welcome GMA members and passes out stickers for the get-acquainted exercise that makes introductions easy. She also volunteers at Noontime Network events.

Krantz, branch manager for Yadkin Mortgage in Greensboro, knows herself well. Like many of us, she sometimes finds it a challenge to match her intentions with the demands of hectic professional and personal schedules.

That's why she puts skin in the game and volunteers with GMA.

"It's easy to say, 'Yes, I'm going to that after work thing.' And then something will pop up and get in the way," she says. "But if I volunteer, then I've made a commitment. And that will help me show up."

Krantz, a Fayetteville native who came to Greensboro to attend UNCG, works from offices on Green Valley Road. Yadkin Mortgage is a division of Yadkin Bank. The bank was founded in Elkin in 1968, growing through mergers and acquisitions to become the state's largest community bank. Earlier this year, Yadkin Bank acquired Greensboro-

based NewBridge Bancorp. The company now has more than 110 branches in North and South Carolina, with headquarters in Raleigh.

Krantz says the bank's name will become more familiar throughout the Piedmont Triad as the NewBridge acquisition is completed later this year.

Attending GMA events, she says, gives her exposure to a vibrant side of the business community. "I like being in that atmosphere

where you've got that entrepreneurial spirit running through," she says. "I'm not an entrepreneur. I'm fascinated to be around people that can do that."

Krantz also attends other GMA events that she finds helpful in her business.

"One of my favorite things is the Center City AM Briefing," she says. "It's fascinating to hear the inner workings of what's going on." GMA events help Krantz recharge her batteries.

"We all like to say we take our businesses seriously, but we don't take ourselves seriously. I think that permeates the meetings," she says. "They're a fun way to meet new people in a very easy-going, light-hearted atmosphere."

Yadkin Mortgage
701 Green Valley Road
336-398-5249

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT



Officer honored

Greensboro police Sgt. Kory Flowers received the GMA Excellence in Crime Prevention Award at a banquet during National Police Week in May. From left are Greensboro Police Chief Wayne Scott, GMA Chairman Tim Templeton of Senn Dunn Insurance, Sgt. Flowers, and GMA President & CEO G. Mark Prince.



Social media insights

Kristen Daukas, director of social media and digital marketing at Atlantic Webworks, recently led a session on social media ad buys. She says paid ads are necessary to supplement a free social media presence on Facebook, Twitter, etc. The presentation at GMA headquarters was part of the ongoing Digital Marketing Institute. Sessions are free and open to all GMA members. The next session, on legal issues, is July 27. Get the details at mygma.org.



Planning for growth

GMA's RACERS are volunteers focused on activating members and program development. The RACERS recently met for a working lunch at Elizabeth's Pizza. Pictured are (from left) Ken Melton, Practical HR Solutions; Lisa Daas, GMA; Pennie Melton, Best Western; Stephanie Ward, Print Plus; Marcus Sims, Liberty Mutual; Kathy Haines, Re/Max; Ron Wiley, Applied Construction Technologies; Alison Huber, Sprint; Christy Ross, Manpower.

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Member draws upon his profession in supporting Wheels 4 Hope

John Hill's livelihood depends on transportation. He owns AutoTrends, an automobile service shop at the foot of Battleground Avenue in downtown Greensboro. He also owns Select Cycles, a motorcycle and scooter dealership on adjoining property on north Eugene Street.

Each and every day, he's aware of the role that personal transportation plays in the overall economy. In an area with limited mass transit services, Hill understands that a person without transportation can be stuck, literally and figuratively.

"I know the complexities of our bus system and mass transit in Greensboro," Hill says. "If you don't have a car, how are you going to get to a job or get to school?"

A few years ago, Hill came across a non-profit based in Raleigh that helps individuals who are trying to get



Regan Kajangu hugs his 2001 Honda Civic. Now a student at Laurel University, he was referred to Wheels 4 Hope by Malachi House II.



Deborah Bryant is external communications coordinator for Wheels 4 Hope.

ahead solve their transportation problems.

Wheels 4 Hope was created by a Raleigh church in 2000. The non-profit accepts donated used cars. Vehicles

that can be put in good repair affordably and efficiently operated are matched with individuals who need reliable transportation. Vehicles that aren't appropriate for a low-income operator are sold, creating funds to support the program.

In Raleigh, Wheels 4 Hope has close relationships with a number of automobile service shops. The shops help the non-profit get access to parts and supplies. They also perform specialized repair work beyond the scope of the non-profit's staff mechanics.

The operation made sense to Hill and appealed to his social concerns.

"I've always been involved with ministries and non-profits," he says.

He thought Wheels 4 Hope could help fill a need in the Triad, so he began networking and building the



John Hill, owner of AutoTrends on Battleground Avenue in downtown Greensboro.

case to establish a Wheels 4 Hope branch in Greensboro. Hill recruited other shop owners to volunteer repairs and reached out to potential donors.

"First Presbyterian Church was one of the biggest sponsors," Hill says, "and still is."

Wheels 4 Hope's Greensboro branch opened in 2012. It is a GMA member.

Wheels 4 Hope works closely with human services agencies to ensure that vehicles end up in the right hands. Recipients must be referred by one of the non-profits partnering agencies.

"The case manager must feel confident that the person is going to be self-sufficient and a responsible car owner," says Deborah Bryant, external relations coordinator for the Greensboro office.

The recipient pays Wheels 4 Hope \$608 for a

vehicle, \$500 plus title fees and taxes.

Wheels 4 Hope in Greensboro placed 38 vehicles last year, Bryant says. The goal for this year is 48 vehicles.

The value of vehicles donated to Wheels 4 Hope is tax deductible.

"We don't turn away any car," Hill says. "But there are only certain cars that we can give a single parent. Most of the cars we use in the program are four-door, four-cylinder automatics."

Four years after helping Wheels 4 Hope establish in the Piedmont Triad, Hill's faith in the program is as strong as ever.

Those who receive cars, he says "are on such a slim budget. Most people have benefitted greatly."

*Wheels 4 Hope
4006 Burlington Road
Greensboro
336-355-9130*



Happy birthday, Bill Porter

The Networking Gurus surprised member Bill Porter (center) with a party at the Guru's regular June 27 meeting to mark his 80th birthday. Porter, of Streetlevel Media, is a dedicated GMA member who often volunteers at events such as After Work Networks. Also pictured with some of the Gurus and Porter was Madison Canoy of U.S. Lawns (left), who was invited by Porter to the meeting to learn about networking opportunities at GMA.

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The year was 1995, and Mary McIver's direct mail business was just getting started. She'd been in the Piedmont Triad for less than a decade, after moving from her native New Orleans to marry a Greensboro lawyer. She was searching

LOYAL MEMBER

The company now operates from spacious quarters on Norwalk Street, where it functions as a full-service printer in addition to providing sophisticated direct mail services.

Working alongside McIver every day is her son, Robert.

ing opportunities to connect with professionals throughout the business community, and GMA was on her radar.

"It was very clear that the most active group, the people I wanted to be with, was the Merchants Association," she says. "I decided that was the place I needed to be."

More than two decades later, Piedmont Direct Mail is a faithful GMA member and a vastly different company from the one McIver started in a spare bedroom.

The two operate on the same high-energy wavelength. They often finish one another's sentences.

McIver operated a franchised coupon-mailer advertising business before settling on direct mail. The business-to-business aspect of direct mail appealed to her, and she still enjoys partnering with businesses of all types and sizes.

"We get to talk to all types of people and get insights into their businesses and what they're trying to accomplish," she says.



Robert McIver and his mother, Mary, founder of Piedmont Direct Mail.

"We work with a wide gamut of clients," Robert says, to which his mother adds, "We're grateful for every single one of them."

She continues the thought. "We have some that mail 500 pieces twice a year. And we have some that mail a couple of million pieces a month. It's really wide ranging. That's one of the fun things about the business."

"Without the post office, we wouldn't ex-

ist," Robert says. "And without companies like us, the post office would be having a much harder time. We have a good working relationship."

McIver is as keen about GMA today as when she first joined. GMA, she says, "has always been the leading edge of what was going on ... the pulse of the city."

Piedmont Direct Mail
901 Norwalk St.
Greensboro
piedmontdirectmail.com
(336) 855-2622

GMA provides gateway to small business community

Wireless Ventures, a provider of wireless headsets as well as transcription devices and speech recognition software for medical professionals, is based in Alamance County.

PARTICIPATION = SUCCESS

Podolle joined GMA around the start of the new year, and he's been pleased with his decision.

"GMA really focuses on the small business entrepreneur," he says. "It's an

absolutely wonderful organization."

Podolle says his GMA membership already has paid for itself through new business that's he's generated through contacts and referrals.

Membership, he says, "has been very worthwhile."

wirelessventuresusa.com
336-213-4990

As owner Mark Podolle was considering ways to expand his company's reach into Greensboro and the rest of the Piedmont Triad, he came across a copy of Trends, the newspaper for GMA members. The stories and photos in the newspaper piqued his interest. Podolle began asking friends and associates about GMA, and he liked what he heard.

"It seemed like a very engaging organization," he says. "I decided that if I was going to be part of an organization outside of Alamance County, this would be it."



Mark Podolle

Name: Eileen McCaskill
Age: 31
Hometown: Greensboro
Residence: Greensboro
Education: UNC Wilmington B.A., Elementary Education
Business: Edmunds, Hunt & Associates
Position: Client Concierge
Duties: Anything and everything! It's service to clients, but it's also marketing. I help when we do events from start to finish. Anything anybody needs, I find out the answer and get back to them. I help clients with all the online tools that we have. I also manage our social media.



On GMA: It's been a really neat experience, letting me explore everything GMA

has to offer. After GMA speakers and events, I'll come back to the office and make a plan about how we can use it, and I'll present that to the staff. I always take something away from those events. I always come back excited.

Goals: There are so many Ameriprise Financial practices; I want everyone to know we are Edmunds, Hunt & Associates. That's a personal goal when I am out in the public, to speak well of the team and what we do. And just to grow. Networking is key.

Personal: My husband, Taylor, and I like to cook. We like to support lots of local sports.

Watching downtown grow and evolve on GMA's doorstep

Every day, as I look outside from my GMA/FirstPoint office, I am amazed at how much the downtown landscape and vibrancy continues to grow at a much faster pace than in the past.



Prince

The Carroll at Bellemeade hotel and apartment complex, LeBauer Park and Tanger Performing Arts Center are quickly progressing. Soon the skyline of Greensboro will transform again.

When GMA built its downtown headquarters in 1983 on Commerce Place, we were on the edge of downtown with little new economic development around us.

Now, there is a renewed energy and visible evidence of this growing and thriving block.

NewBridge Bank Park, home of the Greensboro Grasshoppers, brings hundreds of pedestrians through this area as does Co//ab and Elon College School of Law.

Charles Aris, an international executive recruiting firm, opened its stylish building last year at the cor-



ner of Bellemeade and Greene.

Commerce Place provided an excellent and different venue for the Beach Music Blast in June, and National Folk Festival events will be here in September.

Much more development is planned on the GMA side of downtown. All of us at GMA/FirstPoint are excited about the direction of our downtown and welcome our new neighbors.

G. Mark Prince
President & CEO



Heritage Greens Greensboro

May 10, 2016



Whitley Shannon, ACC Championships; Derek Whitefield, Triad Job Search Network.



Say 'hi' to new members

GMA's ranks continue to expand with new members and new hires at existing members. More than a dozen newcomers attended a recent orientation session led by GMA staff and member volunteers. Pictured in the front row are Tyrone Williams, 911 Restoration of the Triad; Stephanie Baubie, Keller Williams; Joanne Wheelus, ProMessenger; Cherelle Cobbs, U.S. Health Advisors; Kai Robinson, R&R Transportation; Pam Kline, Allegacy Federal Credit Union; Cameron Ferrell, Acclaim Federal Credit Union; Eric Charaba, CarLotz; and Mike Taylor, Cowtown Branding. Middle row: Isaac Vellekamp, Sign Resources of N.C.; Dean Ballard, Brightview; Blinn Cushman, Cushman Law Firm; Karen Anderson, U.S. Health Advisors. Back row: Christopher Claywell, U.S. Health Advisors; Pennie Shiflett Melton, Best Western; Alison Huber, Sprint.



Steve Wall, BrightStar Care; Alletha Muzorewa, N.C. Works Career Center



Ora Ferguson-Bell, First Citizens Bank; Susan Keener Garner, Debbie's Staffing.

Exclusive programming for Risers – young professionals in GMA

Who are the Risers? They're GMA members of a certain age. Specifically, GMA members age 37 and under.

Risers are the young professionals among the membership.

"GMA has been working with our Risers committee members who have helped us develop some programming specifically geared towards young professionals," says GMA Vice President Michelle Bolick.

Upcoming Risers' events include:

Trivia Night at Winestyles

7-9 p.m., August 16
Team competition. Call Lisa Daas at 336-378-6350 to register.

Risers Seminar

11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., September 15
GMA headquarters

Information of interest to Risers will be presented in a special program. Visit mygma.org for more detailed information closer to the event.

GMA's Race & Seek

October 21

This event is open to all employees of GMA member companies.

Networking for Young Professionals

11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

GMA headquarters

Tips from networking expert and author Abby Donnelly.

If you are a young professional employed by a GMA member company and would like more information about Risers, contact Lisa Daas at 336-378-6350. Her email address is ldaas@mygma.org.



Richele Wilkins, Caring Hands.



Amber Khan, ITT Tech; Marcus Sims, Liberty Mutual.



Kim Paschal, Paschal Promotions; Thomas Comer; Stephanie Barr, CCAC Building Solutions; John Thomas, IDeACOM of Central N.C.

August 4 Workplace Workshop



Karel Murray
on
Business Ethics



**'Character Counts
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with
Karel Murray

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7:30 a.m. refreshments
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*Registration
deadline: August 2*

Call 378-6350
or register online at
www.mygma.org

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Dancin' in the streets

Commerce Place in downtown Greensboro was the site of the Bill Black Beach Music Blast, held each Thursday in June. Fans turned out to enjoy live music by some of the state's best-known beach music bands. Proceeds from the annual event, sponsored in part by GMA, benefit the Children's Home Society of North Carolina. In September, Commerce Place will be one of the venues for the National Folk Festival, returning to Greensboro for the second year.

Get ready for Race & Seek

Members, mark your calendars.

GMA's 2016 Race & Seek team competition will be held Friday, October 21.

If you were on a team during last year's inaugural event, you know what participation did for team building in your organization.

Jose Sandoval, with American National Bank, experienced the benefits firsthand.

"Half of our group was from one office, and the other half was from another office," he says. Competing in Race & Seek "gave us time to get to know one another. It was great."

Another benefit for Sandoval, who was relatively new to Greensboro, was learning more about the city's geography and GMA member businesses.

Teams of four (a driver and three pas-

sengers) followed clues in a sealed packet to make their way to GMA member businesses around the city. Only by visiting the business could each challenge be met by collecting a photo or an item from the business.

"It was a two-way moment," Sandoval said. "They smiled to see us, and we smiled to see them."

Look for registration details coming soon at mygma.org.



Jose Sandoval and the American National Bank team check off another challenge by making a selfie with a Greensboro police officer during last fall's inaugural Race & Seek.



Speaker Terry Watson shared tips on professional development at the June workshop.

Scenes from June's Workplace Workshop



Taking notes and sharing tips with colleagues at the office is recommended.



One of the individuals standing is about to win a cash door prize.





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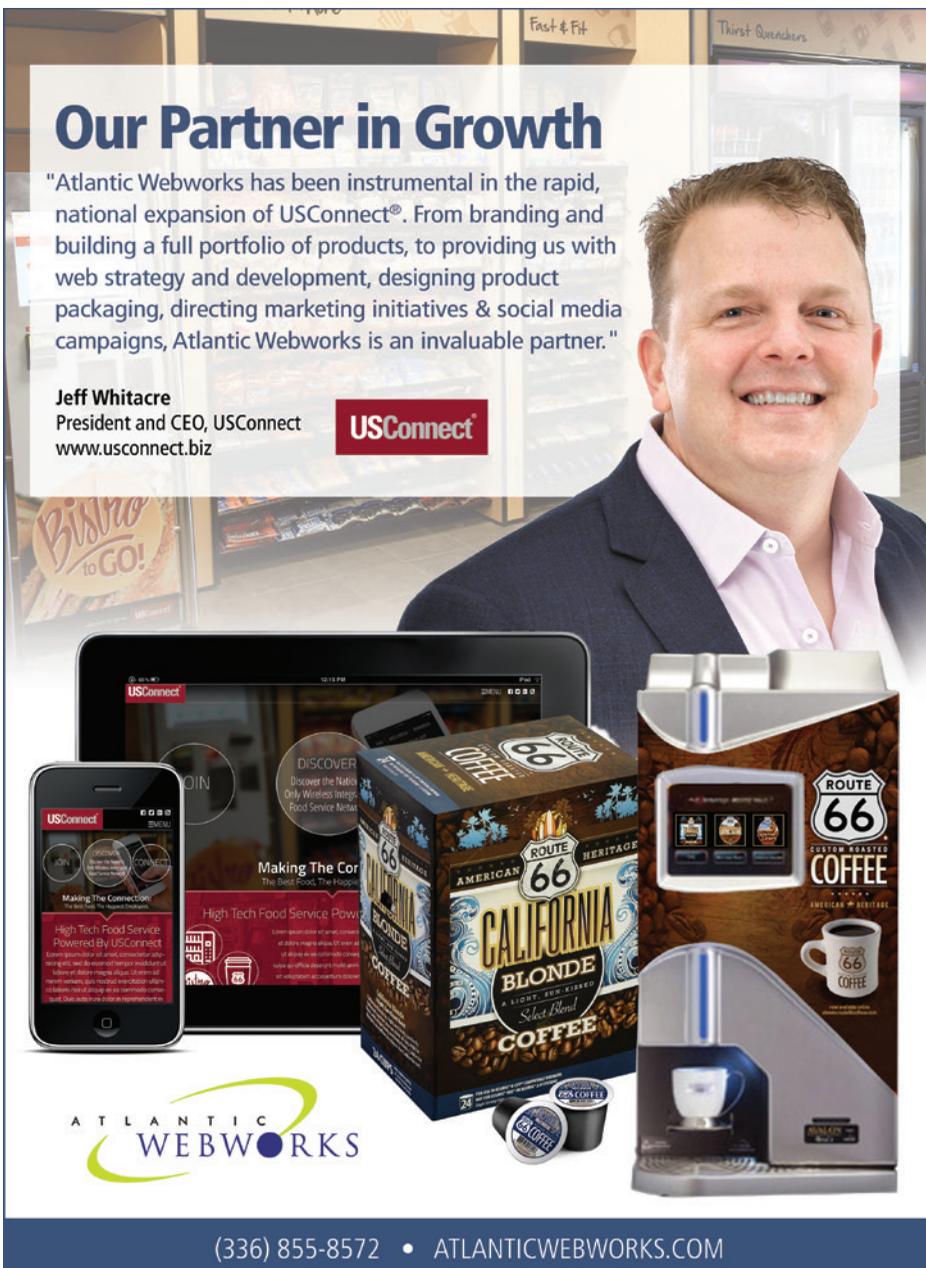
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Jeff Whitacre
President and CEO, USConnect
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