Ken Potrock remembers sitting around a table during an early committee meeting, not quite seeing what he wanted.

Orange County Mayor Teresa Jacobs prompted the gathering by asking the Orlando Economic Development Commission (EDC) to lead a new branding initiative to get Orlando onto the consideration set more often for strategic business location decisions.

“Orlando, indeed, had long enjoyed an outstanding reputation as a place to vacation or come for a convention but not as much as a business location.”

Res

earch revealed that Orlando didn’t have any negative connotations among target audiences, but despite achievements including being named the number one market for both job and population growth, it wasn’t as strong as it should be.

“When we asked people what they knew about Orlando, it was typically always about tourism,” Potrock says. “If we wanted to be considered in the economic development business, we had to tell a better story.”

The “other half” became the platform for conversations about a plentiful, young and diverse workforce, thriving industries, outstanding infrastructure and a generous quality of life.

Potrock affirmed, “We wanted to come up with something that was intriguing enough to say, ‘I’ll bite. Show me the other half.’”

Mayor Jacobs launched the campaign in early 2015 with the goal to get more “at bats” as Potrock likes to put it. Essentially, more companies needed to consider Orlando as a viable location to expand or locate their businesses.

“The branding effort is much more than an advertising campaign,” says Mayor Teresa Jacobs. “It’s a very targeted, deliberate and comprehensive campaign to help position Orlando in a new light, particularly with our target audience.”

With the help of a small group of volunteers, Potrock, senior vice president and general manager of Disney Vacation Club, Adventures by Disney and Golden Oak, was charged with making things happen. The volunteer group firmly agreed on a direction, but just weren’t landing in the right spot.

“We wanted something that was proprietary and really spoke specifically to what made Orlando unique,” says Potrock, explaining that if the names of random cities could be interchanged with Orlando in any tagline, it wouldn’t work.

The branding had to be built not on “Anywhere U.S.A.,” but on words that made sense only to Orlando, both rationally and emotionally.

The creative director at locally based ad agency Anson-Stoner put one final option on the table. The tagline read: Orlando. You don’t know the half of it. Done deal.

“Because Orlando rarely landed on the short list, the campaign needed to be provocative,” adds Jim Alessandro, a senior vice president of marketing for Disney Destinations and a longtime ad agency executive.

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Continued on 04
Despite many cities around the United States dealing with crumbling infrastructure, Orlando has managed to stay ahead of the game with smart planning and a robust tourism industry that helps generate millions of dollars. “Our key to success has been working together to advance a specific list of shared priorities and aligning and sequencing multiple needs supported by many,” says Jacob Stuart, president of the Central Florida Partnership. “This has been true for all of these projects, as everything we do should be focused on our shared quality of life.”

As a result of a healthy tourism revenue stream, strong consensus from both the private and public sector, and an unwavering commitment from all regional entities to the betterment of the entire community, Orlando sits in an enviable position. The city’s healthy infrastructure and the wherewithal to enhance that infrastructure will remain beneficial for the foreseeable future.

Investing in the Future

By Jack Roth

When one looks at the current and upcoming infrastructure investments that Orlando is making, it is hard to believe that many cities and regions across the country have roads, transit systems, and venues that are crumbling and in desperate need of a face lift. But a recent report from the International Economic Development Council says just that.

Meanwhile, Orlando has managed to buck the trend by maximizing regional resources and maintaining a progressive attitude toward future growth. In fact, Orlando is currently making a $15 billion investment in transportation infrastructure, competitive products and quality of life features.

“Federal infrastructure dollars have been drying up for a while, but Orlando is in a unique position because we have alternate income streams,” explains Dave Porter, senior vice president of business development for the Orlando Economic Development Commission. “Our tourism strength provides a constant revenue stream, and we understand that these infrastructure investments will pay off both economically and socially for the entire region.”

Dr. Phillips Center for the Performing Arts, renovations to Camping World Stadium, the upcoming Orlando City Soccer Stadium, and the upcoming Orlando Magic Sports Entertainment Complex, which will be adjacent to the Amway Center. All told, these particular investments will exceed $2 billion.

Improvements to Orlando’s competitive product offerings, which bring both economic and job growth to the region and add additional revenue streams to continue to enhance infrastructure, are also underway. The creation of the International Consortium for Advanced Manufacturing Research (ICAMR) represents one of the most significant and forward-thinking, long-term investments to the region’s economic and job growth.

The city’s current and upcoming transportation infrastructure investments are broad in scope and include the I-4 Ultimate project; a new commuter rail system called SunRail; the creation of Brightline, an express train that will connect Orlando to Miami; upgrades and new terminals at Orlando International Airport and Orlando Sanford International Airport – whom together already offer more than 175+ direct daily flights around the world; a massive expansion at Port Canaveral including additional cargo terminals; and the completion of the region’s beltway system.

“Transportation is critical to economic development, as you have to be able to provide access for the movement of people and goods,” says Harry Barley, executive director of MetroPlan Orlando. “Investing in our transportation infrastructure creates immediate value in jobs, but also long-term value of much greater consequence.”

Barley stresses the need to build a consensus for these current projects, and how this supports the unified vision that has enabled leaders to forecast what will be required as the region continues to grow. “Strong partnerships between local governments, regional transportation entities, and the private sector are critical; they enable us to strategically plan and kickstart these projects by funding them with local revenue sources.”

Transportation is not the only area in which Orlando has either made, or is currently making, major investments. Among the amenities that have or will soon improve residents’ quality of life include the

Downtown Orlando, including the new Orlando Eye observation wheel, Orlando’s top tourist attraction. The entire Downtown Disney area, which includes numerous hotels, is being redeveloped to become The Exploria District. The Orlando City Soccer Club stadium will be adjacent to Camping World Stadium, and the upcoming Orlando Magic Sports Entertainment Complex, which will be adjacent to the Amway Center. All told, these particular investments will exceed $2 billion.

While the future remains uncertain in most of the United States, Orlando’s success continues to attract business leaders and new residents. The city has been named one of the best places to live in the United States, and business leaders continue to see the value in investing in Orlando’s future. “Our key to success has been working together to advance a specific list of shared priorities and aligning and sequencing multiple needs supported by many,” says Jacob Stuart, president of the Central Florida Partnership. “This has been true for all of these projects, as everything we do should be focused on our shared quality of life.”

As a result of a healthy tourism revenue stream, strong consensus from both the private and public sector, and an unwavering commitment from all regional entities to the betterment of the entire community, Orlando sits in an enviable position. The city’s healthy infrastructure and the wherewithal to enhance that infrastructure will remain beneficial for the foreseeable future.
Each year, millions of people experience the excitement and adventure of being immersed in a new, technologically created alternative reality when they enter Orlando’s world-renowned theme parks. The highly-skilled creative thinking that vows visitors is also transforming other cutting-edge industries that are diversifying and redefining Orlando’s economy. If you stop to think about it, the same type of technology that powers a Harry Potter ride, for example, trains our military men and women, our doctors and nurses, and our first responders.

So while people know Orlando as one of the world’s top tourism and convention destinations, the region is also a hotspot for tech with strongholds in modeling, simulation and training; film and digital media; optics and photonics and more.

The region’s ever-growing class of creative technologists are bringing Orlando global recognition as a place to work, a place to play; a vibrant, inclusive community to call home, and an inspiring place to work.

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By Necole Pynn

Tech Growth in the City Beautiful

Orlando’s thriving creative technologies industry includes digital media and film.

Learn more at OrlandoEDC.com

Orlando’s trendy co-working space.

Canvs – downtown Orlando. 150 members at any given time.

Two of the region’s ever-growing class of creative technologists are bringing Orlando global recognition as a place to work, a place to play; a vibrant, inclusive community to call home, and an inspiring place to work.
audience of c-suite executives and site location consultants. Of course, advertising is a part of the campaign but it involves so much more than that. And we continue to find new ways to leverage the message across multiple platforms.”

Since the campaign began, the business development pipeline has increased 50 percent and the EDC just completed its best year ever with more than 5,600 new jobs projected by more than 30 companies making a nearly $200 million capital investment in the region.

“I give 100 percent of the credit to the branding campaign. It is paying off,” asserts Dave Porter, the Orlando EDC’s senior vice president of business development. The change in perceptions reminds Porter of the strides made in Austin, Texas, where he spent 11 years at the Austin Chamber of Commerce, leading a campaign called Opportunity Austin. “The Orlando EDC’s results are far exceeding the early results in Austin,” Porter notes. “When we look back in 10 years, we will be in awe at how far we have come.”

Alessandro compares the messaging platform to an empty vessel that will continually be filled with news and notes about Orlando. “We have so many different things to say to share the ‘other half’ of Orlando,” he says.

For instance, do you know about downtown Orlando? You should. Orlando has a vibrant downtown core ррап with new community venues including the Amway Center, home of the Orlando Magic and Orlando Solar Bears hockey team; the Dr. Phillips Center for the Performing Arts; the newly renovated Camping World Stadium; and an upcoming soccer stadium for the Orlando City Lions and Orlando Pride.

Orange County is home to the simulation procurement commands for the U.S. Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines and Coast Guard. Lake County’s National Training Center

The Whole Story
About the “Half of it”
Orlando is where aspiring Olympic athletes go to train in track, swimming and gymnastics. Osceola County has the first industry-led consortium for manufacturing of smart sensors, the International Consortium for Advanced Manufacturing Research (ICAMR). Seminole County is a hub for information technology companies.

“A great deal of stuff is going on here,” says Alessandro. “That newsworthiness becomes the legs of the campaign. If it’s as good as what we think and hope it to be, this is something that will have staying power even 10 years into the future.”

“We’ve received a tremendous amount of positive feedback. The campaign is so well done, and makes instant sense to site-selectors and other targeted audiences – they’re intrigued and want to know more,” says Jacobs. “I share the branding campaign materials constantly. I even use the ‘Orlando. You don’t know the half of it’ luggage tag on my suitcase when I travel, and that’s provided lots of opportunity for me to share the other half of the Orlando story.”

“Orlando. You don’t know the half of it.” appears to be a winner.
Ten minutes from the Orlando International Airport, the most advanced development lab and fabrication facility in the world is currently under construction. Set to open in early 2017 in Osceola County, Fla., the International Consortium for Advanced Manufacturing Research, or ICAMR, will provide more than 109,000 square feet of lab and office space for researchers to develop the next generation of smart sensors, photonics, and optics that connect the world through the Internet of Things (IoT). That connection will change the way we live and help solve some of the planet’s biggest problems.

To get there, companies must test technology in a specially designed environment. ICAMR’s facilities, which will include a vibration and particle free cleanroom – even better than Class 1,000 – are unique and among just a handful of advanced manufacturing facilities of its kind in the world. “There’s a sophisticated process associated with manufacturing sensors and photonics devices,” explains Chester Kennedy, CEO of ICAMR. “We’re providing the perfect infrastructure for advanced manufacturing companies to be successful.”

Kennedy says ICAMR will foster collaboration among government, universities and industry, and allow researchers to develop tools and processes in an environment where technology can be tested before it goes into mass production. “The key is allowing industry to solve issues together,” he adds.

ICAMR’s partners include Osceola County Government, the University of Central Florida, the Florida High Tech Corridor Council, Enterprise Florida, the state of Florida and the Orlando Economic Development Commission as well as Harris Corporation, Photon-X, PhotonDeltia, Argonne National Laboratory, Aurora Semiconductor, BrainPort and imec, the world-leading nanoelectronics research center.

“We’re setting up a design center [co-located with ICAMR]. In fact, it’s our first photonics design center in the U.S.,” says Luc Van Den Hove, imec President and CEO.

The design center will allow experts to work together and synthesize products while breaking down the barriers that often stop innovation in its tracks. It also puts ICAMR in a strong strategic position to pursue federal contracts and attract other major industry players who are among the most well-regarded institutions in the world. A significant contract was awarded in 2016 giving ICAMR, UCF and MIT the ability to work on a multi-million dollar Department of Defense initiative to create smart fiber technology for military and commercial applications.

Kennedy stresses ICAMR’s development will continue to evolve over the next several decades and represents a long-term investment in the region’s economic infrastructure. He says ICAMR will serve as a catalyst for transformational economic growth impacting the entire Orlando regional economy.

“We’re only a few exits down the Florida Turnpike, so Lake County is well positioned to benefit from ICAMR,” says Robert Chandler, director of economic growth for Lake County. “We’re doing a lot to keep up with the demand in technology-based jobs, and with ICAMR, the demand is only going to grow exponentially.”

The impact is already being seen in the region’s four school districts where STEM programs have been incorporated into primary schools, starting as early as kindergarten. The programs are helping to prepare students for higher-level courses such as those now being offered at Valencia College’s Advanced Manufacturing Training Center, Lake Technical College, and at the College of Optics & Photonics at the University of Central Florida.

“ICAMR represents one of the most transformational initiatives this region has ever seen,” says Kennedy. “The positive impacts will be felt for generations to come. It will enhance economic and job growth, and it will solidify this region as a true research and development hub.”
From miles away, you hear applause erupt from tens of thousands of passionate fans—GOAAAL!!! The star player’s kick clenches the win over a rival team. You may feel like you’re in Brazil or England, given the amount of fanfare, but you’re in Orlando where a groundswell of support for world-class competition and athletic performance innovation is spurring some of the nation’s best-known sports markets.

In the last decade alone, the Orlando region has attracted Major League Soccer, the National Women’s Soccer League, Copa America, Prince Harry’s International Invictus Games for Wounded Warriors, the NFL’s Pro Bowl, the NBA All-Star Game, College Football’s ACC Championship and even the United States Tennis Association’s (USTA) “New Home for American Tennis.”

What’s attracting world-class athletics to a region traditionally known for its theme parks? Grit, perseverance and focus from business and community leaders committed to creating an atmosphere with cutting-edge technology and top-notch facilities. The Amway Center, home to the NBA’s Orlando Magic and the ECHL’s Orlando Solar Bears, was built in 2010 and is a sustainable, environmentally-friendly facility with unmatched technology and premium amenities. It’s been named among the best in the NBA and there are plans for an adjacent $200 million entertainment complex.

Less than a mile away, in the heart of downtown Orlando, is the recently renovated Camping World Stadium, which regularly hosts the Florida Citrus Sports Bowl. Fans will get the opportunity to cheer on star Khalil Mack and Alex Morgan at the soon-to-open Orlando City Soccer Stadium, which will host the MLS’ Orlando City Lions and the NWSL’s Orlando Pride. In between the Amway Center and Camping World Stadium.

But Orlando isn’t just a place where athletes come to compete; it’s a place where they come to train. State-of-the-art facilities can be found throughout the region. At the National Training Center in Lake County, Olympians train alongside stalwarts in the 37,000-square foot facility with fitness studios, an aquatic center, athletic fields, outdoor track and field complex, a cross country course and a Human Performance Lab for sports science testing. The facility attracts all ages and skill can play at a brand new $27 million multi-sports complex in Seminole County that comes with 162 acres of baseball, softball, football, soccer and lacrosse-ready fields.

Near the Orlando International Airport, Lake Nona — named one of the next great American cities by FORTUNE Magazine — has a Sports and Performance District that focuses on six broad categories—media, equipment and soft goods, associations, nutrition, facility and performance innovation—to attract key sponsors, companies, teams and experts to the sporting industry.

Attraction by this concept, the United States Tennis Association (USTA) brought its divisional headquarters to Orlando. A state-of-the-art facility with 162 courts houses the USTA’s Community Tennis and Player Development divisions as well as the University of Central Florida’s tennis teams. This facility is divided into dedicated areas that focus on the pathway from the youngest players to recreational players, to college, to future professional players and professional tennis-level players. The sought-after amenities are also attracting others including the United States Professional Tennis Association which is relocating its world headquarters there, as well as Orlando City Soccer’s decision to build a 25-acre home for the club’s major league, minor league and development teams.

“We know from the experience of building a life sciences cluster that when you enable synergistic and collaborative relationships, when you seek out great partners with the right missions and endless passion for results, tremendous outcomes become possible,” said Raoul Thakkar, senior managing director, Tavistock Group.

Established annual events like the Arnold Palmer Invitational, Professional Bull Riders Association (PRCA) Rodeo, Ram National Finals Rodeo and Silver Spurs Rodeo in Ocala County and the hundreds of competitions in 60 sports held at the ESPN Wide World of Sports Complex at Walt Disney World® Resort, continue to attract world-class and amateur athletes and their fans around the globe. Orlando’s extensive range of sports activities, human performance innovation and premier facilities make it a magnet for world-class athletics.
Orlando’s diverse dining options cater to any palate with 5,000+ restaurant offerings.

We’re a town without a true cultural identity because we are a melting pot with strong Hispanic, Latino, Asian and Southern roots. Our food reflects this incredible diversity and independence with a new wave of independent restaurants springing up—from food trucks to haute cuisine.

While Universal and Disney deserve credit for long-ago elevating Orlando’s dining with Victoria & Albert’s at Disney’s Grand Floridian Resort & Spa and Emeril’s Orlando at Universal Orlando Resort, the wave of celebrity chefs keeps building. The new Disney Springs is now home to restaurants under the watchful eye of four James Beard Foundation-nominated chefs: Masaharu Morimoto (Morimoto Asia), Wolfgang Puck (Wolfgang Puck’s), Art Smith (Homecoming: Florida Kitchen and Southern Shine), and Rick Bayless (Frontera Cocina).

And Orlando hotels host other James Beard winners: Norman Van Aken at Norman’s at the Ritz-Carlton, Grande Lakes; Todd English (Todd English’s Bluezoo at the Walt Disney World Dolphin, and Melissa Kelly’s Primo outpost at the JW Marriott Grande Lakes.

Now a whole new generation of culinary stars lights up the Orlando skyline, with restaurants opening almost every week. The "local" vibe made headlines when James Beard Foundation-nominated Chefs James and Julie Petrakis opened the Ravenous Pig in Winter Park, then expanded with Cask & Larder and adjacent Swine & Sons, all focused on local and sustainable sourcing. Winter Park is also home to award-winning Luma and Prato, both overseen by Chef Brandon McGlamery, a Florida native who supports local farmers and fishermen.

In downtown Orlando, the new Dovecote neighborhood brasserie is dishing up tomato water risotto and butter-roasted chicken, joining the Rusty Spoon, where James Beard Foundation-nominated Chef Kathleen Blake only sources locally for her menu.

Other not-to-be-missed spots with a local vibe: the Pharmacy on Sand Lake Road, a cozy hole that turns back to Prohibition-era speakeasies with custom-blended cocktails and delectable small plates made with local products; 4 Rivers Smokehouse, a barbecue empire that started in 2009 in John Rivers’ Winter Park.

Orlando’s dynamic dining scene is a real dichotomy: we’ve got celebrity chefs and innovative restaurateurs, but we’ve also got the best Puerto Rican mofongo, Asian char kway teow and Peruvian ceviche in tiny, tucked-away eateries.

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