



Beth Cicchetti, CEcD, MEDP

Executive Director

Florida Economic Development Council

Beth Cicchetti is the Executive Director of the Florida Economic Development Council (FEDC), a professional association of 500+ economic, workforce and community developers whose focus is improving local communities and elevating Florida's global competitiveness. Beth is responsible for the organization's membership development, strategic planning, advocacy efforts and commitments to the Florida 2030 Blueprint.

A certified economic developer (CEcD) since 2009 accredited by the International Economic Development Council, Beth has a 36-year career in business, economic and workforce development and is the owner of Beth Kirkland Consulting LLC. As a complement to her leadership of FEDC, Beth consults with communities and businesses on strategic planning, marketing, and project development. She has served communities that have announced new jobs and capital investment in the sectors of IT, Healthcare, Energy,

Advanced Materials, Warehousing/Distribution, Transportation Solutions, Backoffice, and Manufacturing. These jobs have occurred in rural and urban markets, at airports, and as greenfield and expansion projects. Each project required unique and innovative solutions in the areas of workforce training, infrastructure, permitting and financing.

From 2007 to 2012, Beth served as the Executive Director of the Economic Development Council of Tallahassee-Leon County where she was responsible for raising private sector funding and maintaining investments by the City of Tallahassee and Leon County, marketing, and project development. During her tenure with the EDC, Beth was instrumental in establishing the Tallahassee - Leon County Entrepreneurial Excellence Program designed to guide start-ups through the most vulnerable stages of business formation. Serving Northwest Florida with distinction, Beth positioned the region as a strategic partner in the Florida Economic Gardening Institute - an Edward Lowe Foundation resource for scaling second stage growth companies now known as GrowFL. Beth instituted a Business Retention & Expansion (BRE) program in the Tallahassee MSA connecting industry, education and government to expand workforce training options for multiple industry sectors. She also served on the Governance Board for northwest Florida's Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development (WIRED) - a \$45 MM federally funded sixteen-county initiative to align secondary and post-secondary education with the business needs in the sectors of defense, IT, aviation/aerospace and advance manufacturing.

Recently Beth has leveraged transportation infrastructure in support of strategic sites identification and preparation. This has resulted in the Gulf to Gadsden Freight Logistics Zone - a four county initiative aligning air, sea, rail and interstate infrastructure serving qualified industrial sites and two greenfield developments with an economic impact over \$10 M. She was also instrumental in finding a solution for Amazon's quest to establish a Robotic Sorting Center in the MSA.

Beth graduated from the University of Louisiana-Monroe with a B.S. in Computer Science. She is also a graduate of the University of Central Florida with a M.S. in Engineering Systems Analysis.

Beth has led numerous Boards of Directors and Committees. She is a Past Chair of CareerSource Capital Region and is a current director with the National Association of Workforce Boards. She is a 2020 member of Class V of the Florida TaxWatch Citizenship Institute focused on government operations, regulation & permitting, and budget & taxation and a member of Leadership Tallahassee Class 17. Beth resides in Tallahassee with her husband, Mark. Together they enjoy five adult children and five grandchildren.



Anna Alexopoulos Farrar

Vice President, Corporate Communications
Space Florida

Anna Alexopoulos Farrar is a seasoned communications professional who brings senior oversight, energy and focus to every project. Anna leads all communications and branding at Space Florida and is charged with amplifying the brand through comprehensive communications strategies. She has more than 15 years of communications experience in the public, private, and nonprofit sectors. Anna most recently served as the global communications lead at a publicly traded company. Prior to this role, she served in senior-level positions at the Florida Department of Financial Services, working with two Florida chief financial officers, served as a vice president of accounts for a full-service public relations firm, and handled media relations for a nonprofit. She has extensive experience in developing and executing full-scale branded communications campaigns, message development, brand architecture creation, and crisis communications.

Anna received a B.A. in Political Science and Social Sciences from Florida Atlantic University (FAU) and a M.S. in Communications from Purdue University. She is frequently asked to speak on communications best practices, including presenting at her alma mater, FAU, and at Boston University.



Edgar serves as Vice President, Business Development for the Economic Development Commission of Florida's Space Coast. In his current role, Edgar is responsible for the development and implementation of a county-wide Business Development program, seeking to both recruit and help existing ones to grow. He works as a key liaison with partners and clients to market and expand economic development opportunities for the Space Coast.

His professional experience has been centered in the economic development field working with public-private, county, and municipal economic development organizations in Arizona, Texas, and Florida. Over an economic development career of more than 18 years, Edgar has had the opportunity to engage in almost every aspect of the profession, including economic research; incentives policy; business attraction, retention, and expansion; and supplier, industrial, and entrepreneurial development.

Edgar earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration, double major in Business Economics and Entrepreneurship from the University of Arizona. He also attended the University Pompeu Fabra in Barcelona, Spain where he completed courses in business and economics.

Edgar holds a Certified Economic Developer (CEcD) designation from IEDC; a Master Economic Development Practitioner (MEDP) designation from the Advanced Economic Development Leadership (AEDL) program offered by a consortium of public universities (Clemson University, Texas Christian University, the University of Southern Mississippi, and the University of New Mexico); and a Business Incubation Management (BIM) certificate from the International Business Innovation Association (InBIA).

JAAP DONATH, Ph.D.
Assistant Executive Director, Programs
Alan B. Levan NSU Broward Center of Innovation



Jaap Donath is Assistant Executive Director, Programs at the Alan B. Levan NSU Broward Center of Innovation where he oversees the four pillar programs, Ideate, Incubate, Accelerate and Post-Accelerate as well as other programs. Jaap has close to 30 years of economic development experience, including over 25 years with the Miami-Dade Beacon Council, the economic development partnership for Miami-Dade County, as Senior Vice President,

Research & Strategic Planning. In this role he has been involved in the entrepreneurship and innovation ecosystem in South Florida since the late 1990s, including BioFlorida Southeast Chapter leadership, Life Science South Florida Executive Committee and past member of the eMerge Americas Steering Committee. He also participated in tech tradeshows such as CeBIT (was the world's largest IT tradeshow) in Germany and MEDICA (world's largest medical device tradeshow) and BIO International Convention.

In addition, he was an Adjunct Professor at Barry University teaching "International Business" and "Business Consulting" in the MBA program and member of the Business School's Strategic Planning Committee and taught "Research & Inquiry" in the MBA program at Johnson & Wales University. He also taught at Florida Atlantic University, Florida International University and St. Thomas University.

Jaap Donath, a native of the Netherlands, received a Ph.D. in International Business and International Relations from the University of Miami. He received a M.A. in International Relations from the same institution and a B.A. in Education for History and Dutch Language at the Christelijke Hogeschool Windesheim in the Netherlands. He is fluent in English, Dutch, and German.

He has been a speaker at national and international economic development and business conferences. He has published internationally 26 articles, book reviews, and op-ed articles and lectured and presented papers at conferences in the Netherlands, Sweden and the United States. In addition, he has been interviewed by national, regional and local media, including *Time Magazine*, *Bloomberg News*, *Florida Trend*, and *the Miami Herald*.

His recent community involvement included being a member of the 21st Century Schools Bond Advisory Committee (Miami-Dade County Public Schools) overseeing a multi-year, \$1.2 billion capital improvement project and being a member of the Miami Dade College Hialeah President Campus Advisory Committee.