



## ***Scripps and Beyond – the Diversification of Palm Beach County’s Economy***

By Sherry Howard, Deputy Director  
Palm Beach County Department of Economic Sustainability

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It’s hard to believe that more than ten years have passed since the County brought the Scripps Florida Research Institute to this community. During that time, I had the distinct privilege to work with County Administration on the Scripps program and the construction of the institute’s state-of-the-art facilities in Jupiter. Nothing could truly prepare us for what this economic development investment would mean in raising the profile of Palm Beach County in the realm of scientific discovery and in growing an industry cluster that would shape the curriculum for science programs in our educational institutions.

Scripps reports advances in diverse areas of research from cancer therapies, to addiction treatment, to discoveries in Parkinson’s Disease, Alzheimer’s and diabetes just to name a few. They have formed collaborative relationships with no less than 8 major universities and research institutes around the state, and have recruited Florida graduate students for their bi-coastal Ph.D. program at the Scripps Kellogg School. More than 500 jobs have been created at the Scripps campus in Jupiter.

While biotech spin-off companies were anticipated, subsequently landing the internationally-renowned Max Planck was beyond anyone’s wildest dreams. Their new 100,000 square foot facility located next to Scripps and Florida Atlantic University (FAU) currently houses more than 100 employees and is the institute’s only location outside of Europe. Max Planck Florida Institute is collaborating with universities, hospitals and other research institutes throughout the state, as well as with Scripps, and teamed up with FAU to create a program in Integrative Biology and Neuroscience, offering a broad range of training. Additionally, Max Planck offers summer internships for area high school students.

Scripps and Max Planck combined have been awarded more than \$285 million in research grants. What experts in the field will tell you is that scientists want to be where the research is happening, so the expansion of bioscience start-ups in the county is not surprising.

For example, Somahlution, a biotech start-up company that moved to Jupiter from North Dakota in 2012 and is engaged in research and development to improve organ transplant procedures, saw the advantages of locating near industry giants, Scripps and Max Planck. They have already hired dozens of employees and have plans for more. Somahlution’s chief executive, Satish Chandran, recently told the *South Florida Business Journal*, “We wanted to be in this area...to be able to be involved in scientific and entrepreneurial changes that will happen.”

The BDB is currently tracking more than 70 biotechnology and related businesses. The growth of this industry, which is considered one of the most important economic drivers in the U.S., has made a significant impact on how the county is viewed as a place to do business. Palm Beach County will always enjoy a stellar reputation for our beaches, cultural venues, natural areas, world-class golf, and winter vegetables; however, we are no longer strictly identified with tourism and agriculture. Our economy is truly diversifying and that translates into more jobs and a better quality of life for our residents.

For more information about the county’s business assistance programs, contact Sherry Howard at DES, (561) 233-3653.