



**Mission of the Citrus County Chamber of Commerce**

The Citrus County Chamber of Commerce is an organization of businesses unified in efforts to advance the economic growth of the region, promote the interests of the business community, provide key leadership on key commerce issues and preserve the county's quality of life.

# Chamber Connection

915 N. Suncoast Blvd., Crystal River, FL 34429 · 352-795-3149 · 203 E. Dampier St., Inverness, FL 34450 · 352-726-2801

## Chamber Thanks First Responders



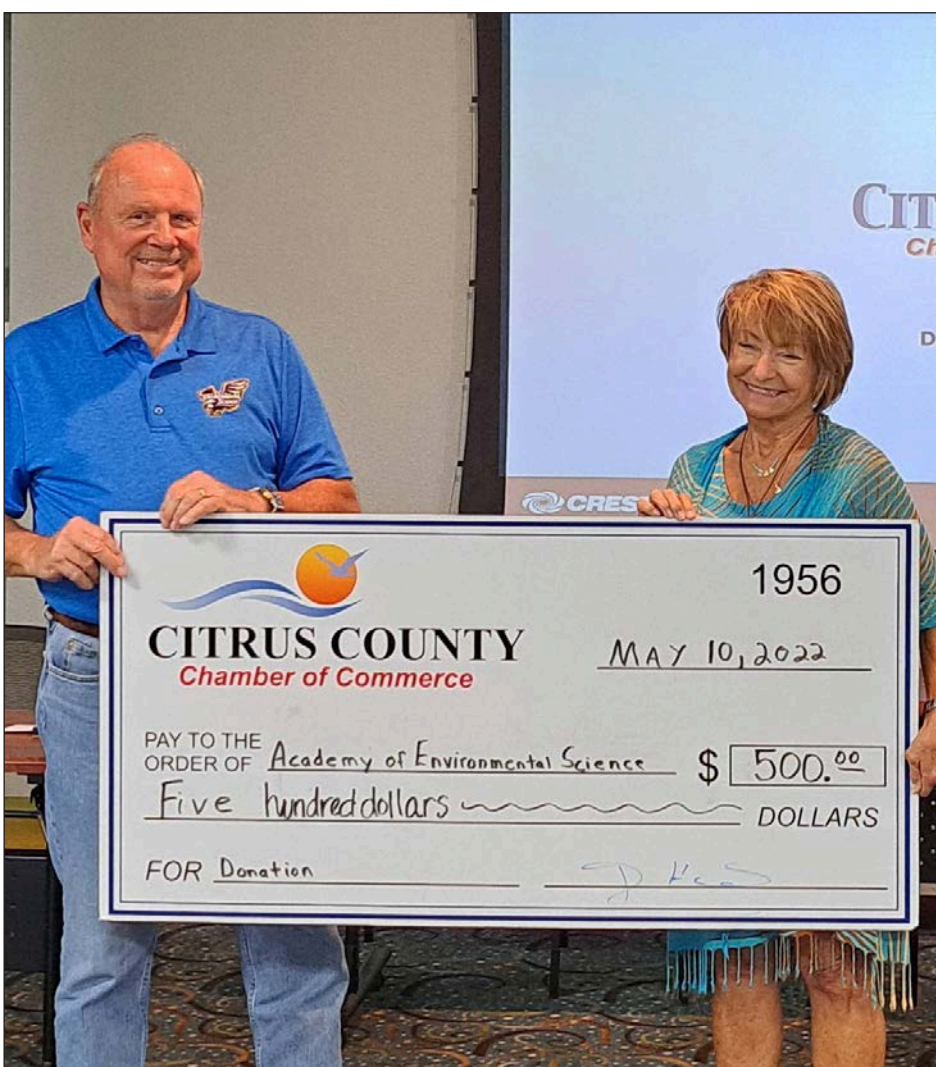
The Chamber recently hosted their annual First Responders Appreciation BBQ to say thank you to those who selflessly serve our community every day. It was a beautiful day in Crystal River full of salutes, smiles, and delicious food provided by our community partners.

We would like to thank all of our sponsors and supporters who helped make this event possible.

We would also like to thank our amazing volunteers from the Citrus County Chamber Ambassadors and the Citrus County Chamber Business Women's Alliance.



Food Sponsors: M&B Dairy, CoreCivic, Bravera Health Seven Rivers, Joe's Family Restaurant, Ag Alliance of Citrus County, MIKE SCOTT PLUMBING, HCA Florida Citrus Memorial Hospital, and Bubbaque's BBQ – Crystal River.



L-R: Tom Gotterup, AES Board Member/ Scuba program Director; Ardath Prendergast, Chamber VP of Operations/BRE.

## June Luncheon to feature Senator Jeff Brandes

The Chamber is pleased to welcome Senator Jeff Brandes as the keynote speaker for its June 10th Chamber luncheon at Citrus Hills Golf & Country Club. Senator Brandes will provide an update on the May special session along with information on the 501(c)(4) non-profit policy think tank that he is forming.

Luncheon reservations are only \$20

for Chamber members; \$25 for non-Chamber members and must be made in advance no later than 5PM on Friday, June 3rd. Easily make your reservations online at [www.CitrusCountyChamber.com](http://www.CitrusCountyChamber.com). No walk-ins will be accepted.

Thank you to our June luncheon sponsor, Mike Bays State Farm.



Jeff Brandes

**Senator Jeff Brandes**, a true Florida native, was born and raised in St. Petersburg and attended Northside Christian School, where his mother served her entire career as an educator; first as a teacher, then as principal, and finally as headmaster. Like his father and grandfathers before him, Jeff had a deep-rooted desire to serve his country. He joined the United States Army shortly after graduating high school. After graduating from Marion Military Institute in Marion, Alabama, he attended Florida Southern College and subsequently Carson-Newman College in Jefferson City, Tennessee, where he graduated in 1999 with a degree in Business Administration. Frustrated by the status quo's lack of leadership, Brandes ran for the Florida House of Representatives in 2010 and defeated a two-term incumbent in one of the state's most competitive districts. In 2012, Brandes successfully ran for the Florida Senate and was re-elected in 2014, 2016 and 2018. In his short time in the Legislature, Brandes has made a name for himself as a pragmatic leader that embraces innovative technology and brings creative solutions to the problems facing our state. With a particular interest in transportation, Brandes sponsored the bill bringing Google's autonomous vehicle technology to Florida, where it is currently being tested. When the Federal government's failure to act on Flood Insurance created a crisis for homeowners, Brandes sponsored legislation creating a private, Florida-based marketplace that offered lower rates.

Term limited after this year in the Senate, Brandes has focused on addressing the property insurance crisis in Florida. When meaningful reform was not passed during the regular 2022 session, he instigated the special session that has now been called by Gov. Ron DeSantis starting May 23.

## Chamber supports AES

Chamber VP of Operations/BRE, Ardath Prendergast, was pleased to present a donation to the Academy of Environmental Science following last week's fundraiser for their building, maintenance, and improvements budget. AES is an incredible Charter school in Citrus County, partnered with our Citrus County School District, that provides the perfect

setting for ninth- and 10th-grade students to explore their environment. Under the guidance of highly qualified subject area specialists, who bring the content to life, students encounter the environment first-hand as they explore estuaries and rivers by kayak and canoe while staying on track with a regular curriculum. <https://aes.citruschools.org/>

## Congratulations, Graduates!

This week we will be celebrating the 2022 graduates from our local schools. Please join us in congratulating these amazing students for their hard work and dedication. They are our future and we are excited to watch you continue to grow!



### 2022 Graduation Schedule

- Withlacoochee Technical College – May 23rd
- Crystal River High School – May 24th #GoPirates
- Citrus High School – May 25th #GoHurricanes
- Lecanto High School – May 26th #GoPanthers
- Seven Rivers Christian School – May 27th #GoWarriors

## Chamber Legacy Partners

The Chamber recognizes our Legacy Partners that have made a special investment in the Chamber to support the programs and mission of the Chamber. For information on becoming a Legacy Partner, please contact the Chamber by emailing [Corrine@CitrusCountyChamber.com](mailto:Corrine@CitrusCountyChamber.com).



## Upcoming Events

- 6/10 — June Chamber Luncheon; Speaker: Senator Jeff Brandes; Location: Citrus Hill Golf & Country Club; 11AM – 1PM; Sponsor: Mike Bays State Farm
- 6/15 — BWA Breakfast; Speaker: Sandra "Sam" Himmel; Location: Citrus Hills Golf & Country Club; 8AM; Sponsor: CoreCivic
- 6/16 — June Chamber Mixer host TBD; Location: TBD

### Save the Date: July Political Candidate Forum!

Save the date for the Chamber's Political Candidate Forum during the July 8th luncheon at Citrus Hills Golf & Country Club. The luncheon will feature a panel of the current County Commission candidates answering questions designed by the Chamber's Governmental Affairs committee. Reservations are available online at [www.CitrusCountyChamber.com](http://www.CitrusCountyChamber.com)