**Member Spotlight**

**Kristie Woodward**
*Branch Manager*

**Oculina Bank**
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Sebastian, FL 32958
(772) 581-3199
www.Oculinabank.com

Kristie Woodward has served the Sebastian Banking Industry for the past 18 years with the last 10 being dedicated to Oculina Bank. She works with a close-knit family of employees at the Sebastian branch of Oculina Bank that includes Alicia Wesley, Donna Goodwin, Diana Best and Misty Patterson. The Sebastian Team is an integral part of the Indian River County Community and boast a combined 143 years of banking experience.

As Sebastian natives we know all our neighbors and community and could not imagine being anywhere else. We can truly say we enjoy coming to work and being with one another and getting to see our customers who have become our friends and a part of our family.

Oculina Bank opened its first branch on South Hutchinson Island in Fort Pierce on January 2, 2004 and is named after a coral reef paralleling the Atlantic Shoreline from Fort Pierce to Cape Canaveral approximately 15 miles offshore. It is home to the largest concentration of a white tree-like coral named Oculina Varicosa, the reef is referred to as the "Oculina bank," A truly local name for a truly local bank.

We offer Free Business accounts along with many other products and services. Please feel free to visit our website www.oculinabank.com or call 772-581-3199 to learn more.

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If you would like to “make the front page” of our newsletter, make sure you schedule time this month at one of our networking activities, and maybe your name will be drawn for the monthly spotlight! Check out our calendar inside!
‘Tis the season for celebration and giving thanks! Last year at this time we were under construction at the Pelican Porch Visitor Center, so here at the Chamber we are particularly thankful for a beautiful new environment. It’s so lovely and inviting to open the porch doors and windows! Our return visitors and snowbirds have been very complimentary. Of course it could not have been accomplished without all of the Chamber businesses who contributed to the success, and we are very grateful!

We will give thanks and honor volunteers in our community at our December luncheon at Marsh Landing Restaurant. This is the one time of year where we recognize all of the community members who have given their time and efforts into making our area so special and improving the quality of life. There are many deserving volunteers that make our community tick!

We enjoyed helping the City of Fellsmere cut the ribbon at the new Fellsmere Visitor Center at the entranceway to the Fellsmere Trailhead Preserve. It’s a beautiful building in a serene and natural setting, showing the visitors all that is available for them to see and do when they travel along the Indian River Lagoon National Scenic Byway. As the third visitor center along the byway, we are making progress in our goal to educate our visitors about the natural, recreational, historical, cultural and scenic venues in our area!

And looking at the visitor count at Pelican Porch Visitor Center, we are enjoying all of the early snowbirds and visitors! We are now receiving over a thousand people a month, and the numbers keep going up! We hope that our business owners appreciate their opportunities to provide business cards and brochures to supplement all of the tourism information we have available to inform. Tourism numbers are still very positive, last report was that we were 6.6% above last year’s numbers.

And let’s not forget Light Up Night, which really kicks off the holiday season! We are receiving a nice response to our call to action for all of the businesses to open up and celebrate on Friday, Dec. 2. The Annual Sebastian Christmas parade follows the following evening, starting at the Chamber office and heading down Indian River Drive. The parade has grown tremendously year after year, thanks to a very special group of people who make sure that its “all about the kids”!

At the start of the new year the Chamber will be creating a new committee, “Health and Wellness”, under the leadership of Theresa Tolle of Bay Street Pharmacy. We will be recruiting members from the health and medical communities to help us build a group of people to focus on all of the healthcare issues, businesses and wellness needs in our community. If you are interested in joining and are part of the healthcare industry, give me a call for more information.

Many thanks to everyone for extending kindness towards me as my family deals with the loss of a loved one. There are many friends out there who have also experienced loss this year, we all go through it at some stage and while you may expect it, it is a human experience, but its never easy. Our thoughts go out to everybody who will miss family during this very special time of year.

Have a prosperous month and a bountiful Thanksgiving!
Chamber Networking Events

Great breakfast held at the Sebastian chamber Office. Thank you GFA International for being such wonderful hosts. And thank you to all who donated to the holiday food drive and Buddy Bear weekend.

Another wonderful networking lunch at Capt Hirams’s Resort. A big thank you to Kashi School of Yoga for being a terrific sponsor and the Veteran’s Council of Indian River County for the inspiration shared.

Thank you all for attending the Ribbon Cutting celebrating the opening of the brand new Fellsmere Welcome Center.

Thanks to everyone who came out and supported The Village Sandwich Shop and Grill at their Ribbon Cutting.

Special thanks to Marine Bank for hosting the Business N’ Pleasure and Ribbon Cutting. We would also like to thank all the many guests in attendance.
December 2016 Chamber of Commerce Calendar of Events

Chamber Networking Breakfast

Friday, December 2nd
8AM—9AM
Sponsored by Kashi Church Foundation
11155 Roseland Road, Sebastian

Chamber Luncheon Speaker Series

Tuesday, December 13th
Noon—1PM
Volunteer Luncheon

At Marsh Landing Restaurant
44 N Broadway Street, Fellsmere
Reservations requested, $15.00 with reservation, $20 at the door

Special Events

Ribbon Cutting

December 13th from 4-5PM
For the Love of Paws Senior Pet Sanctuary
21 S Cypress St., Fellsmere

Light Up Night

Friday, December 2nd
From 5:30—8:00PM
Various businesses in Roseland and Sebastian. Map will be available in the Press Journal on Friday, Dec 2nd

Business N Pleasure & Ribbon Cutting

Thursday, December 15th
Time: 5:00PM—7:00PM
Addicted 2 Stuff
905 US Hwy 1 Village Square, Sebastian

Committee Meeting

Executive Committee Meeting
Thursday, December 1st
From: 8AM—9AM
Chamber Office
700 Main St., Sebastian
6th Annual SRA SNAPSHOTS

December 15, 2016 - March 15, 2017

The winners will be announced on March 20th, 2017 on Facebook.

From Simple Pleasures to Authentic Treasures

Youth (Ages 6-12) Win a ELC Family Membership
Teen (Ages 13-17) Win a Paddleboard Tour for 2 with Capt. Christy
Adult (Ages 18+) Win a Tour with Indian River By Air

Upload your Photos to:
facebook.com/SebastianChamberVisitorsCenter

Share your striking digital images of Simple Pleasures and Authentic Treasures in the Sebastian River Area. It could be fishing, horseback riding, watching the sunrise, or dolphin spotting on a boat tour. It could be skydiving, enjoying our local festivals or even walking in your favorite park.

Upload your photo(s) to our Facebook page with the #SRASnapshots to be included in the contest.

Email hi-resolution photos, photo credit & age information to bmeichiori@sebastianchamber.com

Call 589-5969 for more information | Visit www.SebastianChamber.com
Click here to see Sebastian River Exterminating’s Banner Ad on the Sebastian Chamber website. Email bmelchiori@sebastianchamber.com for information on how to increase online exposure for your business.
ALL-RITE & CLARK WATER ARE CONVERTING TO A WEB BANNER AD

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The Vero Beach Regional Airport (VRB) is an award-winning airport with an established market service area that reaches the entire Treasure Coast region and beyond. Centered in Indian River County, Vero Beach Regional Airport serves a large number of businesses and residents who enjoy living, working and playing in a quiet and unspoiled area of Florida. The airport also serves as a year-round gateway to family vacations and weekend getaways in the sunshine.

Vero Beach Regional Airport was twice named General Aviation Airport of the Year by the Florida Department of Transportation and meets all safety and security requirements of the Federal Aviation Administration under CFR Part 139. With three runways, FAA air traffic control, 24-hour emergency response and multiple approaches, the airport handles over 200,000 air operations per year.

On December 10, 2016, Vero Beach Regional Airport is celebrating one year of partnership with Elite Airways. The airport and the airline joined forces last year, providing long awaited non-stop commercial jet service between Newark Liberty International Airport and Vero Beach.

The collaboration has proven to be a tremendous success. Elite Airways began its Vero Beach route with a 2-day flying schedule, expanding to a 3-day schedule of round-trip flights and has just expanded the flight schedule again to 4 days per week. This is all due to steady and positive growth for the airline and the continued demand by an appreciative public for the convenience of flying to the New York metro area directly from Vero Beach. Be sure to keep your eyes on Vero Beach Regional Airport and Elite Airways in 2017 – additional destinations may soon be available!

Vero Beach Regional Airport is located at 3400 Cherokee Drive in Vero Beach Florida. For more information please visit www.VeroBeachAirport.org.
We recently partnered with City of Sebastian on a tourism campaign to promote the city. The campaign consisted of advertising in the Oct/Nov 2016 issue of AARP, a VISIT FLORIDA retargeting campaign, as well as Google and Facebook campaigns. I've included some screenshots of our ads and campaigns with AARP and Facebook.

**AARP Oct/Nov Issue**
We purchased a half page ad and received a half page of editorial about the area. The campaign includes reader service leads where we can follow up with those interested in learning more about our area. We just mailed out a letter and visitors guide to 250 potential visitors throughout the country. We also added their email addresses to our monthly tourism eblast.

**Facebook Canvas Campaign**
Check out the screenshots of the Canvas Campaign we ran on Facebook this fall to promote the Sebastian River Area. We targeted mobile users with various interests such as travel, vacations, adventure, outdoors, nature, family, kayaking, wildlife, skydiving, fishing, etc. Demographics that we targeting include other parts of the state of Florida along with Canada, Massachusetts, New York, New Jersey, North Carolina, DC, and Atlanta. The call to action at the end of our canvas was “Plan your Sebastian getaway!” which directed people to a landing page on our website where they could request a visitor’s guide.

**2017 Photo Contest**
This year’s photo contest theme is “From Simple Pleasures to Authentic Treasures” which really encompasses any and everything in our area! We are so excited to expand our categories to include kids this year! We will have an Adult, Teenage & Youth category. We look forward to the different perspectives that the teenager and youth participants will bring to our photo contest! It will kick off the 15th of this month and run through March! Be sure to submit your photos! We have some great prizes lined up. Please see the flier included in the newsletter.

**Social Media**
We are actively posting on Facebook & Instagram and building a great following. Please follow us:
- [www.Facebook.com/SebastianChamberVisitorsCenter](http://www.Facebook.com/SebastianChamberVisitorsCenter)
- [www.instagram.com/visitsebastianriverareafl](http://www.instagram.com/visitsebastianriverareafl)

Have a very Happy Thanksgiving!
The hustle and bustle of the holiday season is upon us. There is no better time to reach out to your customers, bring new clients in, and boost repeat and referral business! Here are some marketing trends every small business can leverage!

**Promote the Shop Local Movement!**

Shopping Local is worth every cent! This should go without saying, but it’s so very important! Andersonville Study of Retail Economics reports “local business generates 70% more local economic activity per square foot than big box retail”. Swing by the Chamber and pick up our Shopping Guide and don’t forget to utilize the Shop Local Logo on all your holiday advertising!

**Holiday shoppers have mobile on their mind and so should you!**

According to the Mobile Marketing Association (MMA), “mobile is expected to have an impact on 87% of all holiday purchases”! This reinforces the importance of having a mobile-friendly website! The MMA also notes that “101.7 million consumers in the US will make purchases via their mobile devices this holiday season, a 37.3% increase from last year.” Be sure your site is mobile friendly and don’t miss out on valuable web traffic and subsequent sales! Social Media is a holiday shopper’s best friend! Have a Facebook page? Twitter account? What about Pinterest? Data shows that “64.8% of shoppers WILL use social media to find the perfect gift”. (Source: Crowdtap) Ensure social media accounts are regularly updated with relevant content and aim to make your customers’ shopping experiences easy!

**Online is great, but not everything!** Online shopping is, with good reason, all the rage these days; but we can’t forget about the diehard holiday shoppers who camp out the night before for the best holiday sales. ShopperTrak reports that “90% of US retail sales are projected to occur in brick and mortar stores”. Now is the time to tap into your creative side to market and showcase your wares and build your holiday bottom line!

**Last, but certainly not least, GIVE!** Yes, your goal this holiday season is to increase sales, but don’t discount the importance of giving back. If you support a local cause, now is a great time to donate a percentage of sales to charity! You’d be surprised what can happen when you commit to a company culture of giving!
Shop Local for the Holidays

By shopping local, you are helping our community grow. Mom and Pop shops rely on the customers within their county to keep coming back on a daily or weekly basis.

1) **Community Well Being.** By shopping at local shops, you will most likely run into your friends and family more often, which helps unite the community together as a whole. Local business owners are also more likely to donate more to local causes than big box stores are.

2) **Competition.** Big box stores often drive mom and pop shops out of business, which means there is no competition. With no competition, the big box stores can charge higher prices. By having a multitude of local stores within your community, all of the stores will need to keep their prices competitive in order to gain your business.

3) **Product Diversity.** Local shops will need to stock their stores with products that their local customers will want, so if you have many local shops within your community, there will be a much broader range of product choices.

4) **Jobs.** Local shops employ local residents, which means there will be more job opportunities within your community. The increase in jobs, one of the five benefits of shopping locally, also has a domino effect. Local stores will need to hire other local residents to help with accounting, create store signs, etc.

5) **Tax Base.** One of the benefits of shopping locally is the increased tax base. By shopping locally, more sales tax is being generated by your favorite local stores, and that tax can be used within your community. Common uses for local sales tax include investments in infrastructure, police and fire departments, libraries, and parks.

Local Businesses have roots in our community, have skin in the game, care about what happens here. They are involved in key development decisions that can shape our lives and local environment. To find a list of local businesses check out our website at [www.sebastianchamber.com](http://www.sebastianchamber.com)
Convert Your Ad to a Chamber Web Banner Ad and Increase Your Exposure

This program is designed to provide advertising opportunities to our Members who are looking to increase their online exposure. We offer exclusive ad space: No rotating banners! Track the number of impressions and clicks your ad receives. Strategic placement and 4 ad sizes to choose from.

Click here to see Sebastian River Exterminating’s Banner Ad on the Sebastian Chamber website. Email bmelchiori@sebastianchamber.com for more information on becoming part of the program.

REMAX CROWN has joined the many other members converting to a web banner ad
Sebastian River Area Chamber of Commerce
Board of Directors, 2015-2016

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Kim Ellis, Vintage to Vogue — Immediate Past Chair

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