

## ECHO

**\*Please note this meeting will be at the FSU Alumni**

**Tuesday, July 23rd**

Lunch Buffet	11:30 AM
Program Begins	12:00 PM
Introductions	12:10 PM
Presentation Begins	12:15 PM
Q&A	12:50 PM
Meeting Adjourned	1:00 PM

## Onsite & Virtual Program

**FSU Alumni**  
**1030 W Tennessee St**  
**Tallahassee, FL 32304**

To RSVP, please email  
[mail@economic-club.com](mailto:mail@economic-club.com)  
 or  
 Call: (850) 224-0711

**PLEASE RSVP BY Noon on Friday, July 19th**

## Contact Us

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## Development Trajectory of the Internet and AI – Will History Repeat Itself, or Just Rhyme?



**Michael Heekin**  
 Founding COO and board member  
 WebMD

This month's speaker continues our education and exploration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and its growing application in business, our personal lives, and in society and the greater economy. **Michael Heekin** was the founding chief operating office and board member of WebMD, the heart monitoring company that turned into a leading publisher on the Internet for health and medical information. He'll discuss the rapid dynamics of AI and how it may impact business operations in the next five to ten years.

"We're going to focus on the development of the Internet and compare it to the development of AI," Mr. Heekin told Club Officers in a recent conference call. "In the early days of the Internet, there were internet companies and then there

were brick and mortar companies, is what we used to say. But now every company is an internet company. Today, there's AI companies and then there's other companies, but everybody's going to be an AI company."

In addition to his early work with WebMD, Mr. Heekin has held leadership roles in several other health information and healthcare services companies. He served as advisor and then chief operating officer in Tampa to Moffitt Cancer Center's M2Gen subsidiary, a visionary oncological bioinformatics and drug discovery venture. Earlier in his career, he was associate dean of the Florida State University College of Law and later an investment banker. That followed his

military service as a captain in the United States Army on active duty for four years in Fulda, Germany, and Washington, DC, and in the United States Army Reserve for an additional nine years.

Mr. Heekin is a graduate of the University of Florida with degrees in accounting and law as well as a graduate of the Wharton School with a master's degree in business administration. He was Chairman of Florida Governor Jeb Bush's Health Information Advisory Board. He has also served on the Board of Trustees of the University of Florida, the board of the Research Foundation of the Atlanta Veterans Administration, and on the Executive Board of the Boy Scouts of America Atlanta Area Council.

## Thank you to our July Luncheon Sponsors



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You can access membership applications on the club's website at [www.economic-club.com](http://www.economic-club.com).

Encourage a friend to become a member today!

## Name Badges



We have newly designed name badges. If you have an old name badge and would like one with the new design, the cost is \$15.

If interested, you can purchase a new name badge at the [Club's website](#) or call the office at 850-224-0711.

## Florida's Booming Economy

The June Club meeting featured **Clark Mica**, President of the Institute of Makers of Explosives (IME), a trade group representing U.S. manufacturers and distributors of commercial explosives. Its new economic impact study highlights the critical role of these explosives in building the U.S. and Florida economies.

"There are a couple things you need to have a modern society, or successful society, and that's energy, water, and food," Mr. Mica told the Club. All of those things require explosives to produce, what he refers to as "the ultimate power tool."

Explosives have played a critical role in building Florida's infrastructure, from roads and bridges to subdivisions and skyscrapers. Explosives are used widely in the space industry at Cape Canaveral. Shaped charges are what separate the stages of NASA's rockets. Limestone aggregate used in construction is blasted from the ground in South Florida. Explosives bring down old buildings and help mine the products for new ones.

"All of these things are critical to our modern way of life," said Mr. Mica.

The IME [study](#) states the commercial explosives industry (which excludes fireworks and defense contracting) has a \$19.1 billion total economic impact in the U.S. (including direct and induced impacts) and a \$431.8 million impact in Florida. There are 432-people working directly in the industry in Florida and those jobs create many more. The largest users of explosives are the oil and gas industry and the mining and quarry industry.

Mr. Mica said the industry faces similar challenges as others in finding an available workforce, supply chain disruptions, and rising transportation costs. He also addressed the industry's environmental impact and its impeccable safety record. (You can read more and listen to the Club's podcast with Saif Ishoof on our [Podcasts and Summaries webpage](#).)



Left to right: Marion Hoffmann, Ida Thompson, Clark Mica, Katrina Rolle and Joshua Walters.

## Did you know?

The Economic Club is actively seeking new members. Our organization welcomes leaders and interested individuals from all sectors who have a curiosity about the world and would like to hear from world class speakers. If you know someone that would be a good fit for our organization, please contact a board member or ask our Executive Director for an application packet or visit [www.economic-club.com](http://www.economic-club.com) and click on membership.

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**August 6, 2024**



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**President**

LM White Consulting  
(Autonomous Trucking Expert)

**FSU Alumni**

**September 24, 2024**



**Jessica Harvey**  
**CEO**

Guy Harvey Foundation  
**Dunlap Champions Club**

**November (TBD)**



**John Cohlan**  
**Chief Executive Officer**

Margaritaville

**TBD**

## Member Spotlight

**Brett Ewing** is the owner, Senior Financial Advisor, and Chief Market Strategist of First Franklin Financial Services. A third-generation financial planner, he took over his father's firm, originally founded in 1966 as George F. Ewing Insurance. Through its subsequent modernization, the firm's team of ten today provides retirement and investment services to individuals, businesses, and organizations across 25 states. It has been named Top Advisory branch of the year among 650 offices with Centaurus Financial, which named Mr. Ewing Top Advisor in 2022.



Mr. Ewing is a Club Trustee, a group whose extra financial commitment helps the Club fulfill its mission. "I'm an economic nerd. I live economics and I'm curious and always learning. I like to hear what the Club's speakers have to say and it helps me in my quarterly briefings with clients. The Club is a local treasure."

A Tallahassee native, Mr. Ewing graduated with a dual degree in Economics and Finance from Florida State University and received his Master's of Business Administration from the University of Central Florida. He and his wife Courtney have three daughters, Sydney, Morgan, and Sophie. Mr. Ewing has been involved in many community organizations. He is a Lifetime Trustee of the Tallahassee Quarterback Club Foundation and is a charter board member and current Vice President of the local chapter of First Tee. When he's not in the office or with family, you can find him on the golf course.

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