

A New Resource for Florida Directors and Boards

Serving on a board isn't easy, especially in these times of unprecedented changes and challenges. Major accounting scandals, corporate failures, the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002 and international corporate governance initiatives have dramatically changed the corporate governance landscape and increased the regulatory, substantive, and time demands placed on boards of U.S. public companies. Even many private U.S. companies and some companies in other parts of the world, while not directly subject to Sarbanes-Oxley, are nonetheless affected by it. For example, if U.S. private companies plan to someday either go public or be acquired by a public company, their executives and directors need to be aware of the new corporate governance landscape. Many larger nonprofit boards, too, are finding themselves held to higher governance standards. And companies based outside the U.S. that seek international capital need to understand and position themselves to meet new transparency and governance standards, both in the U.S. and in countries such as Canada and the United Kingdom.

Knowing the need directors have for ongoing education, the National Association of Corporate Directors (NACD) has established a new Gateway Florida Chapter. Established in 1977, NACD is the only North American organization focused exclusively on providing information, education, research, and advice on all aspects of corporate board performance. NACD, which is based in Washington, D.C., has 15,000 members and customers. NACD members are primarily CEOs, directors, and boards, at organizations ranging from Fortune 100 and NASDAQ corporations to smaller private and closely held family firms.

The new Florida chapter of NACD is



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starting in the southeastern region of the state – in Dade, Palm and Broward counties — and plans to expand to the remainder of the state. It will be NACD's 20th chapter nationwide, and will be headed up by Gerald M. Czarnecki, chairman and CEO of The Deltennium Group, Inc. and chair of the Audit Committee, State Farm Insurance Company. The Florida NACD joins a network of chapters that stretches from Seattle to San Diego, from Los Angeles to Kansas City, and from Chicago to New York and New England. The Gateway Florida chapter of NACD will also serve Latin American and Caribbean directors and boards. This will allow the chapter to create programs of international interest.

NACD's Gateway Florida Chapter is currently in the process of organizing. The chapter's first programs will take place this fall, and its regularly scheduled meetings, to be held in the Miami, Ft. Lauderdale and Palm Beach areas, will feature educational panels of knowledgeable directors and content experts to inform attendees about important trends and best practices in contemporary corporate governance. Programs are tightly run and quite interactive.

The launch of this new NACD chapter is a reflection of the dynamism and ever-growing national and international importance of Florida's business community. If you are a director at an area business, we hope you'll attend NACD meetings and get involved in this new chapter. (For more information, please visit www.nacdfgateway.org.) Through the Gateway Florida Chapter of NACD, area directors can learn from one another and learn about governance best practices – and, in the process, help build the strongest and most effective boards for their organizations. ♦