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Walgreens Bayside Business Forum to focus on bridging the IT skills gap

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The first Walgreens Bayside Business Forum of 2013 will feature a distinguished group of tech executives discussing strategies to bridge the IT skills gap.

The forum, “Fueling the Region’s Tech Sector Growth: A Progress Report on Tampa Bay’s IT Workforce Development Project,” will be held Friday, Feb. 8 from 7:30 a.m. to 9:00 a.m., at Franklin Templeton, 100 Fountain Parkway N, St. Petersburg. It is free and open to the public.

The Walgreens Bayside Business Forum is presented by the Dean’s Advisory Council of the College of Business at USF St. Petersburg. The series focuses on interdisciplinary collaborations that are shaping Florida’s business future.

Tampa Bay Technology Forum CEO Heather Kenyon and Director of Workforce Initiatives Pat Gehant will give an update on the implementation plan for the IT Workforce Study commissioned last year. They will then moderate a panel of local tech executives in a spirited conversation about the opportunities that lie ahead for the technology and business community.

The panelists include David Allen, SVP and CTO, Raymond James; Chris Cate, CIO, Valpak/Cox Target Media; Mark Lantzy, CIO, WellCare Health Plans, Inc. and Maria Zabetakis, retired CIO of the Americas, Transitions Optical, and global program manager, Western Computer, Inc.

“We are looking forward to starting off the 2013 season of the Bayside Business Forum with this topic covering our local technology industry, a sector that is experiencing tremendous growth while the rest of the economy remains sluggish,” said Maling Ebrahimpour, dean of the College of Business at USF St. Petersburg. “Like many other regions around the country, Tampa Bay hasn’t been able to keep up with the demand for skilled tech talent, and last year TBTF, along with its economic development partners, commissioned a study to help understand how best to bridge the IT skills gap that is keeping our tech companies from growing. I was impressed by the initial study and I look forward to hearing an update on the progress TBTF is making.”

Continental breakfast and coffee will be served. Seating is limited, so reservations are requested. To RSVP, please call (727) 873-4992 or e-mail bbf@stpete.usf.edu by Tuesday, February 5.

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