



TEAMVOLUSIA
GREATER DAYTONA REGION
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

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Performance sunglasses manufacturer selects New Smyrna Beach site for HQ

Volusia County, Florida USA – Fishing is a passion for more than 50 million people. They – along millions more who are passionate about the great outdoors – are serious about their essential gear starting with performance sunglasses. Now, executives who have played a key role in development of the high-end eyewear market have formed a new company dedicated to engineering and manufacturing technologically advanced sunglasses. It is located in New Smyrna Beach, Volusia County.

The company is Bajío and its veteran leadership team is headed by founder, president and CEO Al Perkinson and Chief Financial Officer Randy Parker. Perkinson is an alumnus of Costa Del Mar, an industry-leading company formerly located in Volusia County. During his time at Costa Del Mar, Perkinson built and managed the company’s brands and helped its revenues grow from \$7 million to \$160 million. Parker is former president of LR Parker & Company, a boutique investment and merchant banking firm following his tenure at JP Morgan & Company, Lehman Brothers and Kidder Peabody Incorporated.

As Costa’s parent company elected to move Costa from Volusia County, Dr. Kent Sharples, President & CEO Business Alliance saw an opportunity as key Costa managers decided to form a new company. They landed in New Smyrna Beach – close to the Atlantic Ocean. They found a local investor who comes to the table with experience in the sunglasses market and the CEO Business Alliance helped the new corporate entity get wired into the community. “Bajío is laser-focused on the high-end user who counts on sunglasses to perform under harsh conditions at sea and elsewhere,” said Sharples. “Its executives helped build the very market they plan to lead under the Bajío flag. With several Costa alumni involved in the formation of Bajío, we preserve the heritage of industry-leading sunglasses being produced here in Volusia County.”

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Bajío’s vision is to respond to consumer preferences for performance sunglasses. They spend a disproportionate amount of time outdoors and require maximum protection from the sun.

“We are investing heavily in lens technology and focusing on lenses that manage blue light,” said Perkinson. “The sun produces more blue light than any other source, and our lenses are engineered to filter out the amount of blue light that reaches the eyes. Less eye strain and fatigue mean more and safer fun on the water.”

The company is launching its initial product line and plans to have a presence at major boat shows. The first collection features twelve frames and six lens options.

In addition to protection from the sun, the company is equally committed to environmental leadership and sustainability. Bajío strives to minimize its impact on the planet and its oceans. Frames are constructed of plant-based materials such as castor beans and coconut husks. Lenses are made from recyclable glass. Cases are made from remnant materials and products are shipped in 100% recyclable packaging. Its website <https://bajiosunglasses.com> offers news of its environmental initiatives including efforts to save the ocean, “one flat at a time.”

Speaking for the city of New Smyrna Beach, City Manager Khalid Resheidat is pleased to welcome his community’s new corporate citizen. “We are thrilled to be the home of Bajío and its industry leading products. As it becomes a global brand, we are proud that workers from our community will contribute to the company’s success starting with this week’s ribbon cutting celebration.”

Team Volusia Economic Development Corporation has assisted the company with its real estate needs and other factors governing development of the new corporate complex. The company’s New Smyrna Beach plant houses administrative offices, light industrial functions, production, repair, warehousing, laboratory functions, internet technology, accounting, shipping and purchasing.

“We are proud to welcome Bajío to Volusia County,” said Team Volusia President and CEO Keith Norden. The sale of Costa Del Mar and its consolidation of operations elsewhere actually resulted in an opportunity for a new company to be created to serve the growing performance sunglasses market and New Smyrna Beach is an exceptional location from which to do so.”

Bajío, which is Spanish for “the shallows,” projects creating 20 jobs during its first three years, with a capital investment of \$3 million. Its average annual wage is \$45,000 and payroll is projected to exceed \$900,000 annually.

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