

HAMILTON COUNTY DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

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Press Release

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Celebrity Chef Art Smith Hometown Project Tied to Walt Disney World Resort

Tuesday, Hamilton County Development Authority welcomed Chef Art Smith with a celebratory reception where Board Members presented Chef Art Smith with keys, turning the building and property over to him as he prepares to begin renovations.

The building, a 55 thousand square foot former jai alai facility purchased by Hamilton County Development Authority for this project, will be home to a multi-phase project creating hundreds of jobs in Smith's home town, Jasper, Florida, beginning with a commercial bakery. The bakery will supply baked goods to his new restaurant "Homecoming Florida Kitchen and Southern Shine" in Disney Springs at the Walt Disney World Resort. Other phases include a southern farm-to-fork restaurant, promotion of environmental and agricultural assets, and much more.

A large crowd gathered in attendance at the Key Ceremony including Hamilton County Development Authority Board Members, numerous Officials from Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO), staff from United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), local and State elected officials, Public Officials from area Counties, media personnel and a large public turnout from the North Florida region.

Chef Art Smith is former chef of two Florida Governors and Oprah Winfrey, a two time James Beard Award Recipient, United Airlines Ambassador and frequently appears on national tv shows. He was recently on the cover of People Magazine as well. He has cooked for many celebrities, President Obama, heads of state, even royalty.

HCDA Chairman, R.B. Davis: *“Art left Hamilton County, proved himself vastly successful using the skills and talents he gained and developed in Hamilton County. This speaks volumes about Hamilton County and who we are! Chef Art’s coming home to raise his family and his commitment and investment in his hometown will be felt for generations to come.*

Hamilton County Development Authority is catalyzing a new industry which in time will generate the second largest private employer in Hamilton County, an impressive return on investment. It is through the ongoing support of Representative Elizabeth Porter, Senator Bill Montford along with Governor Rick Scott and our partners at Florida Department of Economic Opportunity that we are able to make this project a success and to market Hamilton County as a business friendly community.”

Representative Elizabeth Porter: *“It is folks like Chef Art Smith who return to their communities that reflects the very entrepreneurial spirit of our communities here in North Florida. Welcome Home Chef Art! When I went to Tallahassee to be a voice for North Florida, I made it a priority to help facilitate and foster an economic friendly atmosphere for endeavors such as this. It is time to stem the flow of our young people moving away to find good paying jobs and with the help of Chef Art, Susan Ramsey and the Hamilton County Development Authority and the Disney Corporation, this is a great beginning.”*

Senator Bill Montford: *“This is a wonderful addition to Hamilton County, not only the jobs in the restaurant and bakery but also the opportunities at the cooking school and the potential for increased tourism. Art Smith’s bakery will draw attention to the rich culinary history of North Florida. I look forward to being there to have a bite of the first cake!”*

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Hamilton County Development Authority is an Independent Special District, created by the Florida Legislature, as the Official Economic Development Agency for Hamilton County. It consists of Eight Gubernatorial Appointed Board Members. Hamilton County is home to the first three exits in Florida on Interstate 75, near the I-10 corridor.