

FINANCIAL NEWS &amp;

# Daily Record

*Chronicling Business & Law in Jacksonville*

## Johnson urges more economic opportunities for minorities

06/08/2012 by David Chapman, Staff Writer

Opportunities for minority business owners and entrepreneurs are critical for global competitiveness, businessman Robert L. Johnson said Thursday at the JAXUSA Partnership quarterly program.

“There needs to be a greater opportunity for minority Americans to prove unequivocally that they can participate in creating and contributing to the economic growth and development of this nation,” said Johnson, the chairman and founder of The RLJ Companies.

Johnson also is the founder and former chairman of Black Entertainment Television. He sold it for \$3 billion, becoming the first black U.S.

billionaire. On Thursday, Johnson spoke to about 450 people at the Hyatt Downtown.

Johnson said it was imperative for communities to tap into the Hispanic and African-American populations, which he said were the fastest-growing segments of the U.S. population.

“Without doing so, there is no way to compete in a growing world market,” he said.

Johnson advocated for business solutions to social problems and he pushed for more financial lending to minorities.

He asked the Jacksonville business community to provide more jobs and business opportunities and to help “even the economic playing field” to benefit the country.

“If we come together and work together for a common objective, we can solve many social problems,” he said.

The next JAXUSA Partnership quarterly program is scheduled Sept. 4 at the Osborn Center. It will be the chamber’s annual kickoff program for the Jacksonville Jaguars season.



From left, JAX Chamber Chair Tom Van Berkel, JAXUSA Partnership Chair Robert Hill, The RLJ Companies Chairman Robert L. Johnson, Mayor Alvin Brown and JAXUSA Partnership President Jerry Mallot gathered before the JAXUSA Partnership program Thursday at the Hyatt Downtown.

dchapman@baileypub.com

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