Imagine a place where golf carts race by more often than huge SUVs. This place caters to its active adult community comprised of 55 and older residents. However, make no mistake; The Villages is not your grandma’s retirement community.

Crossman & Co., the Miller Center for Retailing’s sponsor, tailored a trip to The Villages, their massive, 36 square mile compound for JCPenney director Betsy Trobaugh and David F. Miller, retired Vice Chairman of JCPenney. Crossman & Co. could be said to follow the motto, “Go big or go home.” President John Crossman knows how to cater to his customers; Ms. Trobaugh and Mr. Miller did not tour The Villages by golf cart, they went up. “In order for us to better understand the lifestyle and enormity of The Villages, we were given a helicopter tour of the community,” said Betsy Trobaugh, “It was amazing to see such growth and opportunity for retailing in one place.”

The sheer size of The Villages is what is so shocking to most. The Villages is the largest single-site mixed-use residential development in the United States. Eventually, there will be a total of 2.7 million square feet of commercial building and retail tenants. Because of the overwhelming demand for retail, Crossman & Co. came to the University of Florida to begin a mutually beneficial relationship between the Miller Center for Retailing and The Villages.

Crossman & Co. now sponsors the David F. Miller Retailing Education and Research Department at the University of Florida in Gainesville and has committed to support the department by connecting college students with leaders in the retail industry. Such an investment in the future of The Villages along with the expectation of the quality of UF retailing students is what generates excitement in this new relationship.

It is a Great Day at Tires Plus Total Car Care!

“IT is a great day at Tires Plus Total Car Care!” These are the words you hear when you call your neighborhood store in search of the largest selection of tires and automotive service at an every day low price. Tires Plus is a great place not only for service and selection, but also because of our company’s greatest asset—our teammates! We consider ourselves not just leaders when it comes to taking care of our guests with honest, timely, and professional service, but a company of empowered teammates serving as brand ambassadors and taking care of guests’ vehicles as if they were our own.

Between 1991 and 2000 the company experienced tremendous growth with the addition of Michel Tires in the Central states, Avellino’s in the Northwest, Hibdon Tire in Oklahoma, Wheel Works in California and a 120 store chain in the Mid-West called “Team Tires Plus.” Each acquisition brought greater buying power and vast synergies of knowledge. Rather than doing business under six different identities we all united under the one name, “Tires Plus Total Car Care,” and proudly boasted our bright yellow signs on our buildings. We were a national brand and, thanks to our teammates, continually growing our reputation one customer at a time.

See Tires Plus on page 3...
The Highway to the Hess Way

By: Michelle Rossi

A short, two-hour drive away through the middle of Florida by way of the Turnpike brings one to a hub of tourism with the likes of Disneyworld and Universal Studios. Orlando is a happening place for students from Gainesville to see something exciting in the way of retail. Hess, the multi-billion dollar fuel giant has an unbelievable approach to serving their customers. While gasoline prices are the talk of every major news station, Hess is working hard to bring their guests inside after they use the gas pumps.

A new concept from the company is the Hess Express store. This is more than your normal convenience store with wall-to-wall soda coolers and bags of chips. Imagine being able to feed a group of 30 college students, better than they had eaten all week, from a gas station. Well, Hess did just that with delicious selections. With the help of the Retail Society and the Miller Center, Hess provided University of Florida retailing students with the opportunity to experience a new way of looking at the convenience store business.

The trip began on a sunny Friday morning. A full bus and about 100 or so miles later, the students arrived to Hess executives greeting them with open arms. After lunch, which consisted of oven-fresh pizza, chicken fingers, subs, and salad (all from the Hess Express location), students were treated to in-depth explanations of each area of a Hess Express store. The store manager (a University of Florida graduate), described the layout of his store and showed students the back office where he tracks sales and reworks his plan each day to make sure his store stays ahead. Other explanations of the store included merchandising and store set-up, the car wash (which brings in 90% profit!), and food selections.

Along with a full lunch and one-on-one executive breakout groups, the students traveled to the McLane distribution center about 10 minutes away from their first destination. Upon arrival, a cheerful receptionist and McLane's Hess account manager greeted the students. After receiving visitor's passes, the group was ushered into a training room for an explanation of McLane's role in the Hess Express stores.

Battery operated forklifts and carts were whizzing by while workers filled boxes specific to client requests. Whether it is one convenience item for restocking or a case of cigarettes for behind the counter, this distribution center provides Hess Express with all they need to provide customers with the best possible selection, usually within two days of the store's order.

McLane is currently expanding its operations as it works to be more automated in its processes. Until that time, this center works almost completely with human hands. Being able to see this aspect of the retail industry and the providers of all the goods that stock the shelves of these stores, was an important aspect of the Hess trip.

By six o'clock that night, the bus was unloaded and the students had dispersed. Opinions were inevitably changed in the minds of the retailing students that traveled to Orlando that day. Students learned that Hess Express is a growing entity for Hess Corporation with a thoughtful approach to customer service.
Build-A-Bear Workshop is obviously a beary exciting place for children, but this fall the Retail Society had the chance to experience the magic of building a bear on behalf of some less fortunate children. Build-A-Bear graciously donated about 20 bears to the Retail Society to create for the Children’s Pediatric Unit at Shands Hospital.

Build-A-Bear staff allowed the Retail Society students to choose from any of the more than 20 types of bears available for stuffing. Almost everyone chose a different bear. Choices included a dinosaur, a koala bear, cats, and then the always-favorite teddy bear. After the students made their careful selections, it was time for the heart ceremony. Everyone grabbed a red or checkered heart from a basket and then the Bear Builder associate led the group through a silly mix of dancing and wishes before the hearts could be placed inside the bears.

After the heart ceremony, it was time for stuffing! Students were allowed to choose the level of fluffiness or fat he or she wanted for their bear. Once the bears were stuffed, it was time to make it official. Most of the students decided to name their bears, others wanted to leave it up to the child receiving the bear. Thus birth certificates were made leaving most of the information blank for the children to fill out after the presentation. Some of the names included, Mr. Bumpkins, Snowflake, Mufasa, and Mikey showing the creativity and thought put into this event by the Retail Society students.

Retail Society President, Amanda Wheeler said, “Walking around, it brought tears to my eyes,” speaking about the gift that the Retail Society is providing for these less fortunate children during the holidays. Thanks to the overwhelming support from Build-A-Bear Workshops and the participation from the Retail Society, a group of special children will have a beary plush reason to smile. This event proves especially that retailing can be more than shopping and can touch lives in different ways.

The Kathleen Brown Outstanding Retail Student recognized this year was awarded to the student who demonstrated an unyielding desire to pursue a career in the retail industry. This year Daniel Ramos was selected to receive this prestigious award. Daniel has had two internships in retailing as an assistant buyer and as store manager. Daniel will graduate this December with a degree in Economics and has accepted a buying position with Macy’s.