Guiding Growth

Regions Bank Miami-Dade President Angel Medina Jr. is serving a one-year term as chairman of the Beacon Council, Miami-Dade’s economic development agency.

F.T.: What will be the greatest challenges in attracting companies to relocate and to expand in Miami-Dade in the coming year?

A.M.: The same as those faced by other major metropolitan areas — transportation, workforce housing and, as a coastal city, the cost of insurance.

F.T.: In recent years job retention, rather than recruitment, has been given a greater priority by the Beacon Council. Is that still true?

A.M.: We’ve always thought that you have to maintain a strong foundation in order to continue building. Retention of jobs is important, but we’ve also been helping to add over 2,500 new jobs per year.

F.T.: Miami-Dade brands itself as the Gateway to the Americas, but other cities are angling for the same tagline. How strong is the challenge?

A.M.: It’s a real one because they are putting forward more financial resources than we can afford to. Of course, they need to spend more because they don’t have the same conveniences, the same resources and the same ease of doing business as we do. But you have cities within our state, Orlando, Tampa, Jacksonville and outside, like Houston and Atlanta, that are aggressively challenging us.

F.T.: Geography aside, what sets Miami-Dade apart?

A.M.: The entire country is looking at diversity and sensitivity to diversity as a positive thing, and that’s our life, day in and day out. In our schools, our students learn to function within a global environment, working side by side with students from all over the world. Diversity is a tremendous attribute for a gateway city like ours.