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Executive Panel

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financing quickly enough to capitalize on opportunities or navigate periods of uncertainty.



Katy Murless

For Katy Murless, Chief Financial Officer of Stewards, solving that challenge requires more than simply lending money. It requires rethinking how capital is raised, managed, and deployed. Stewards is a diversified financial platform that combines private credit with income-producing real estate. Its private credit business provides alternative, revenue-based funding solutions to small and mid-sized businesses across the United States, having supported more than 10,000 businesses since inception.

Its growing real estate portfolio strengthens the company's balance sheet, provides access to more competitively priced financing, and generates recurring cash flow that can be reinvested back into the lending platform.

"Our strategy is to build a financial platform where each part of the business supports the other," Murless said. "Private credit is our growth engine. Real estate strengthens the balance sheet

and lowers our cost of capital, and technology enables us to deploy that capital more efficiently." As the company scales, technology has become a key enabler of that strategy.

Historically, much of revenue-based lending has relied on fragmented systems and manual processes. Underwriters review bank statements and financial documents, often working across multiple systems, with decisions based on historical information rather than a complete, real-time picture of a business.

"Most lending is still very backward-looking," Murless said. "You're making decisions today using information that may already be several months old. Even when the turnaround is quick, you're still relying on a snapshot rather than a live view of the business."

That fragmentation extends beyond underwriting. Sales, underwriting, reporting, and portfolio management often operate in separate systems, limiting visibility across the business and making it more difficult to consistently learn from portfolio performance.

To address those challenges, Stewards is investing in a centralized data platform that brings infor-



Stewards Inc. leadership team: Scott McGowan, CMO, Katy Murless, CFO, Shaun Quin, President and CEO, Glen Steward, Chairman of the Board and Vaughan Korte, COO.

mation together into a single source of truth. The platform provides real-time visibility into the lending pipeline, portfolio performance, and capital deployment, while supporting standardized underwriting and more consistent decision-making.

that could further improve how capital moves through the platform. While those initiatives remain under evaluation, Murless emphasized that any adoption of emerging technologies will be driven by governance, regulatory compliance,



Katy Murless and Glen Steward with Mayor of Fort Lauderdale Dean Trantalis at the official launch of Riva Residence.

"Technology isn't the objective," Murless said. "The objective is removing friction from the lending process. When you have better data and better visibility, you make better decisions, you deploy capital more efficiently, and ultimately you can support more businesses." Looking further ahead, Stewards is also exploring digital infrastructure

and robust internal controls rather than innovation for its own sake. "Technology should make the business smarter, faster, and more efficient," she said. "But it only creates value if it's built on a foundation of strong governance and disciplined execution."

Tech and health care

As the former CEO and president of Cleveland Clinic Florida, Wael Barsoum led a regional health care enterprise that spanned from Fort Lauderdale to Florida’s Treasure Coast. Under his leadership, its flagship Cleveland Clinic Weston Hospital earned three consecutive #1 rankings by U.S. News & World Report in the Miami-Fort Lauderdale metro area.



Wael Barsoum

Today, as president and chief transformation officer of Healthcare Outcomes Performance Company (HOPCo), Barsoum continues to drive health care

innovation. Cheminand asked Barsoum how health care leaders are using technology and artificial intelligence to create a high-level experience for patients, physicians, the hospitals and the communities they serve. Barsoum noted how patients’



Stewards completed \$79M refinancing of 1818 Park strengthening its real assets strategy.

the highest quality, most complex care in the globe” he said. “But does not do a good job when it comes to things like administrative burden, transparency around cost, or understanding what your bill is going to be.” AI could play a role, by pouring through the billions of new pieces of healthcare data to transform clinical decision-making. The result will be “better solutions and more

clarity surrounding billing, and improved connectivity with their care provider. It’s already happening. Barsoum recounted the story of how one patient had scheduled an appointment on the HOPCo app in the time spent at a stoplight. Patients also can download their most current medical records.

Improved access is reducing patient frustration, he said. Consid-

“From a convenience perspective, this is a huge step forward,” he said.

Timeless lessons of innovation

The lessons of efficient power generation are shared across markets. The City of Homestead Florida’s department of electric utilities has spent decades improving its electrical delivery solutions,



Glen Steward, Chairman of the board, Stewards, Inc., addresses attendees during a presentation.



An architect’s rendering depicts Stewards’ head office in Plantation, Florida. The organization acquired the property in March 2026.

appreciation for health care can be divided into two responses - their like for their doctor, and their dislike of the system. “We live in a country that provides

personalized care,” he said. Patient-facing improvements will come when it serves what patients want most - ease of appointment making, well-defined care plans,

er how often patients at the doctor’s office are asked about their medications or health status. AI could alleviate the duplication - and frustration, he said.

said Barbara Quinones, the city’s director of electric utilities. As a public sector utility provider, her office employs a spirit of innovation Quinones learned during

Designing the Future Executive Panel



Giselle Cheminand
President & CEO, GCI
Worldwide Corporation



Tim Oliver
Vice-President, Development,
FPL



Katy Murless
CFO, Stewards Inc.



Wael Barsoum
President & Chief
Transformation Officer, HOPco
(Health Outcomes Performance
Company)



Barbara Quinones
Director of Utilities, City of
Homestead, Florida



Phil Purcell
President & CEO, Marine
Industries Association of South
Florida MIAFSF



Jenni Morejon
President and CEO, Fort
Lauderdale Downtown
Development Authority (DDA)



Katherine O'Fallon
Executive Director, Marine
Research Hub



Greg Nordone
President & CEO, Greyson
Technologies



Manish Hirapara
Founder and CEO, Peak Activity

All these efforts also emphasize creation of high-wage jobs across a wide range of disciplines, from science and engineering to finance and marketing.

“A lot of the ideas are unfortunately still being left on the shelf, still in the IT stage and not being commercialized,” she said. The hub also works with city, county and facility leaders on understanding risks related to sea level rise and stormwater and flooding management. “We need to learn how to manage all of these things so that we can live, work and play here.”

Developing the future from the core

The Downtown Development Authority (DDA) of Fort Lauderdale plays a critical role in guiding responsible growth in one of South Florida’s fastest-evolving urban cores - one that generates some \$43 billion in economic output.

The DDA works to ensure that new development enhances, rather than overwhelms, the city’s infrastructure, neighborhoods, and overall quality of life, said Jenni Morejon, President and CEO of the DDA.



Jenni Morejon

she said.

As Fort Lauderdale continues to attract investment and population growth, the DDA focuses on balancing density with livability. This includes advocating for upgrades, especially for aging infrastructure, supporting smart land use planning, and ensuring that new buildings fit cohesively within existing neighborhoods. With a geograph-

ically compact downtown of some 2.2 square miles, the organization seeks to avoid unchecked urban sprawl while preserving the character of surrounding residential areas. The DDA also prioritizes long-term planning, addressing everything from aging infrastructure to transportation and walkability, she said. Growth brings opportunity, but also the responsibility of reinvesting in streets, utilities, and public spaces is essential to sustaining a vibrant urban environment.

The DDA’s efforts help ensure that as the skyline rises, the city remains accessible, functional, and enjoyable, she said, “preserving the qualities that make it an attractive destination for residents, businesses, and visitors alike,” she said.

“It’s not just one approach,” she said. It has to serve business interests, as well as its 65% residential base, with pets and children and who and support area restaurants

and retailers. “It’s creating a much more diverse economy, but also kind of lifestyle but it’s a constant challenge balancing cars and walkability to public transit. It doesn’t happen overnight and it’s a challenge that we continue to try and address.”

“True progress requires us to think differently—embracing the possibilities of AI and innovation while keeping humanity at the center,” said Cheminand.

“Leadership matters because the decisions we make today will shape how technology, people and communities evolve together. Our future depends on public and private sector leaders working collaboratively, recognizing that ultimately, we are all connected.”

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