

# TREASURE COAST 2010:

## COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY



**TREASURE COAST ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT  
JULY 2000**

# **Treasure Coast Economic Development District**

## **Treasure Coast 2010: Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy**

**July 2000**

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

BDB	Business Development Board
C&SF	Central and South Florida
CEDS	Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy
CO	Carbon Monoxide
COE	Corps of Engineers
EDD	Economic Development District
FGFWFC	Florida Game & Freshwater Fish Commission
FIRE	Finance, Insurance and Real Estate
GMP	Gross Metropolitan Product
GSP	Gross State Product
HC	Hydrocarbons
HOI	Housing Opportunity Index
IWI	Index of Watershed Indicators
MSA	Metropolitan Statistical Areas
NAAQS	National Ambient Air Quality Standards
NACO	National Association of Counties
NAP	Network Access Point
NOX	Nitrogen Oxides
OEDP	Overall Economic Development Program
PSI	Pollutant Standards Index
SOX	Sulfur Oxides
TCRPC	Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council
TRI	Travel Rate Index
TSP	Total Suspended Particulates
VOC	Volatile Organic Compounds

# Executive Summary

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# INTRODUCTION

## Overview

*Treasure Coast 2010: Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Plan* serves as a framework of ideas and a broad-based program of action to promote the long-term economic vitality of the Treasure Coast Region. It presents a comprehensive overview of our Region's economy illustrating significant trends in employment, wages, income and industry. The plan examines the Region's economic foundations in technology, human resources and finances and suggests a comprehensive economic development strategy for the future of the Treasure Coast Economic Development District (EDD). Four central questions underpin the framework:

1. *Where Are We Now?*
2. *Where Do We Want To Be?*
3. *How Do We Get There?*
4. *How Are We Doing?*

An overall analysis of the Region's economy with a focus on its strengths and challenges and its economic foundations provides a snapshot in time of where we are now as a Region. Who and where we want to be in 2010 is a question that is addressed through the plan's community-based vision for the region and goals for the future. How we realize the vision for the future is addressed by a suggested program of action that recognizes that the Region's economic health is interconnected with the social well being of its residents and the sustainability of its natural environment. In order to properly evaluate progress towards reaching the goals established in the comprehensive economic development strategy, the 2010 Plan has established a series of community indicators. An indicator is something that highlights an issue or condition. Its purpose is to indicate how well a system is working. Effective indicators all have the following characteristics:

- They are easily understood
- They are reliable
- They are relevant to the community
- They provide timely information

The established indicators will help the District track its economic, social and environmental health on a yearly basis. This annual assessment of the District's economic and social health is the principal mechanism that will be used to evaluate the progress of activities and programs in achieving the vision and goals of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy.

The plan is not intended to be a detailed blueprint of action for overall economic development in the Region. Through its community-based vision it provides a readily accessible strategy that can be used by local governments, the public and business investors to inform and guide decisions. The plan vision outlines a set of clear goals and measurable indicators of progress towards achieving economic vitality for the Region. Economic vitality means a healthy and prosperous economy that provides high quality and high wage jobs, enables us to protect our natural resources and preserves our much-admired high quality of life.

Implementation of the regional 2010 Plan will require the efforts of all sectors of the Treasure Coast Region – government, private industry, economic development agencies, non-profit organizations, educational institutions, community groups and residents all must work in close partnership to achieve a common vision for the future. When appropriate, the District will take a leading role to implement programs identified in the Action Plan and in other instances work in close partnership with public and private organizations to carry out prioritized programs and opportunities.

## Outline of Report

Treasure Coast 2010: Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Plan is divided into four sections:

1. ***The Treasure Coast Region*** provides an overview of the District's economy, its overall performance and growth sectors and a highlight of the District's competitive advantage. The analysis consists of the following parts:
  - **“Who We Are? A Demographic Profile of the Treasure Coast”** provides a statistical overview of the Treasure Coast's population and its dynamics.
  - **“Where Are We? Employment, Wages and Income Trends”** details trends in the Treasure Coast Region and statewide over the past decade.
  - **“Where Are We Heading? Future Growth Prospects”** examines future growth prospects by exploring trends in emerging clusters and industries and the Region's strengths and challenges.
2. ***Regional Economic Foundations*** examines the comparative strengths and weaknesses of the District's economic foundations through indicators of human resource, technology, financial, infrastructure and quality of life capacity.
3. ***A Vision For The Region*** presents a vision for the economic vitality of the Region based upon developing competitive advantage.
4. ***Action Plan*** describes programs and projects designed to reach the desired vision for the District's future.

## REPORT FINDINGS

### Regional Profile

The “Regional Profile” (Section I of the report) provides an overview of the District’s economy, environment and demographic trends. It focuses primarily on overall economic performance highlighting employment, income and industry trends. Economic opportunities and challenges affecting the District’s future economic growth prospects are also examined.

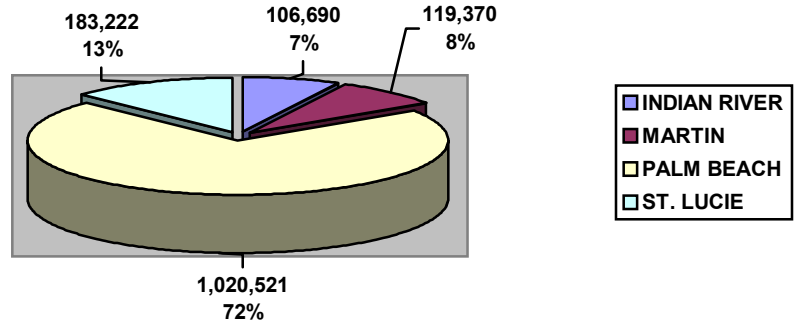
### DEMOGRAPHICS

Population growth is the primary engine of economic growth in the Treasure Coast Region. Over the last ten years, the Region has experienced a significant population increase of over 300,000 persons, or approximately 27%. Most of this rapid population growth can be attributed to a substantial and persistent positive net migration of over 26,000 persons per year. The Treasure Coast District’s current estimated (1999) population is 1,460,194. At a population of close to 1.5 million, the District would be ranked the 31st largest region in the Country just behind the Columbus, Ohio and Orlando, Florida Metropolitan Statistical Areas. By 2020, the Treasure Coast District population is expected to exceed 2 million growing at a faster rate than the State.

The Region is diverse in its make-up. Palm Beach County, the southernmost county in the Region, is metropolitan in character, while the northern portion of the Region is more rural and not as densely populated. However, the northern City of Port St. Lucie is the fastest growing city in the Region. Since 1970 when its population stood at 300, the City’s population has soared to more than 83,000, overtaking the City of West Palm Beach as the largest city in the Region.

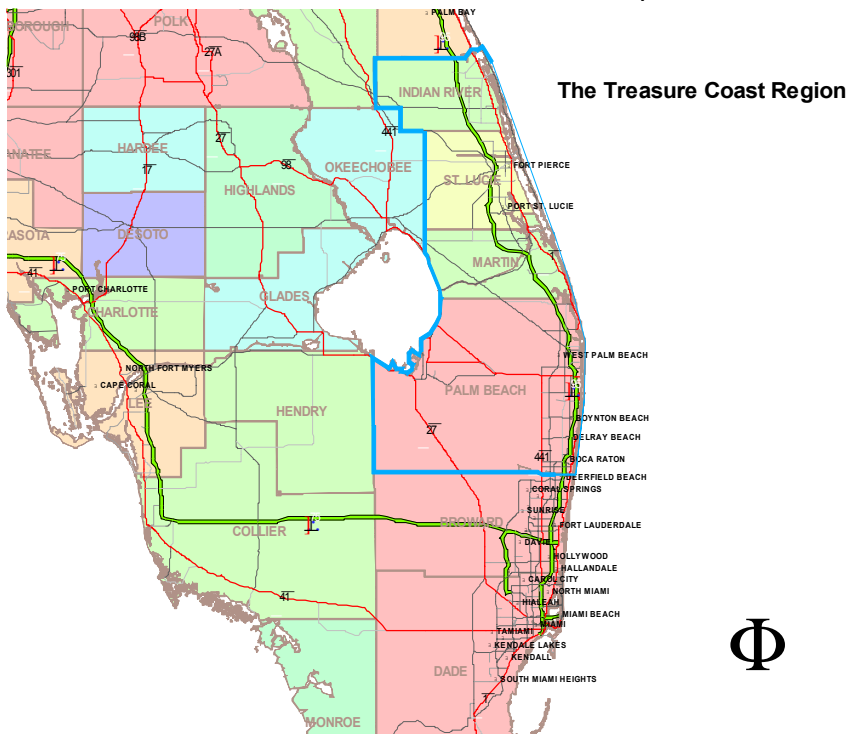
The Region's population is distributed among the four counties as indicated in Figure i. Palm Beach County has the largest proportion of the District's population at approximately 72%.

**FIGURE i**  
**1999 POPULATION DISTRIBUTION**  
**TREASURE COAST REGION**



**THE ENVIRONMENT**

The Treasure Coast Region encompasses an area of over 4,400 square miles and contains a significant number of important natural systems including the Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge, Lake Okeechobee, the Loxahatchee Wild and Scenic River, Corbett Wildlife Management Area, the Indian River and Lake Worth Lagoons, the Savannas, and St. John's Marsh. The Region includes four counties - Palm Beach, Martin, St. Lucie and Indian River and 53 municipalities. From Boca Raton in the south,



the Region stretches 100 miles north to Sebastian Inlet and from the Atlantic Ocean west to Lake Okeechobee. The Treasure Coast District's population is primarily located in historic mainland cities including Boca Raton, Delray Beach, West Palm Beach, Boynton Beach, Lake Worth, Riviera Beach, Stuart, Fort Pierce and Vero Beach and in rapidly growing "suburban" communities such as Port St. Lucie, Jupiter, Palm Beach Gardens, Royal Palm Beach and Greenacres.

Water plays an important part of life and in the sustainability of the Region and the entire State of Florida which is surrounded by water. The Gulf of Mexico borders the west coast, and the Atlantic borders the east. The Treasure Coast Region includes part of the Everglades, historically known as the "river of grass," and Lake Okeechobee, the second largest fresh water lake in the United States. The Floridan and Surficial aquifers underlie the Region.

## **ECONOMY**

The Economic Development District boasts more than 630,000 jobs and over 1.4 million residents. At \$35.5 billion in 1998, the District's Gross Metropolitan Product (GMP) represents approximately 10 percent of Florida's Gross State Product<sup>1</sup> (GSP). Its total personal income of \$50.3 billion is almost 14% of Florida's total personal income of \$364 billion.

The District's economy focuses heavily on tourism, agriculture and the development of new communities to meet the house the rapidly expanding population. Services, retail trade and government are the largest employment sectors in the economy providing 67 percent of total regional employment. The Region attracts tens of thousands of seasonal residents and tourists primarily during the winter months. Tourism has become the largest income-producing sector of the Region's economy. The District maintains a primary role of agricultural production despite an overall decline in agricultural employment. Palm Beach County ranks first in the State in income from agricultural sales and is nationally recognized for the production of sugar cane and winter vegetables. St. Lucie County is the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest grapefruit-producing county in the State, and the Region is Florida's largest producer of citrus.

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<sup>1</sup> \$380.61 billion in 1997 according to Enterprise Florida, October, 1999

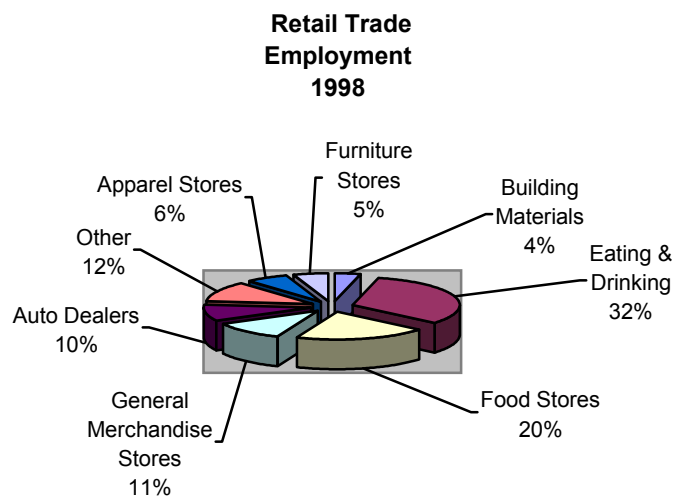
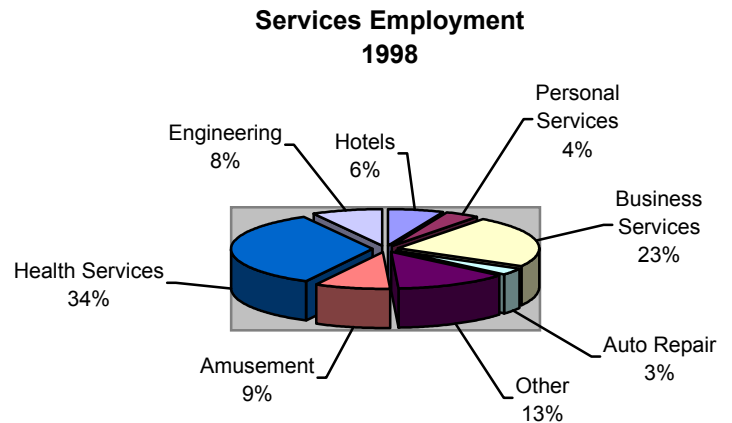
The Treasure Coast Economic Development District also possesses many essential economic resources that will drive the economy well into the new millennium. These resources include high technology industry and Internet infrastructure in Palm Beach County in the southern portion of the Region and advanced research and development facilities such as Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institution and the United States Department of Agriculture Research Lab located in St. Lucie County.

### Industry Trends

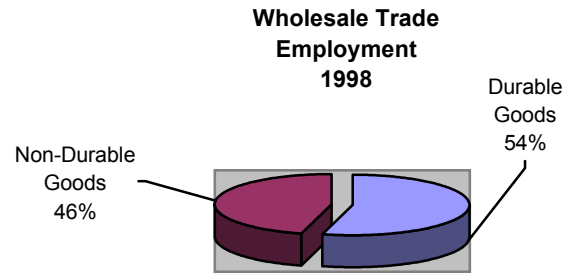
**Services.** The service industry is the largest employment sector of the Treasure Coast District. In 1998, services provided over 198,000 jobs or almost 34 percent of the District's workforce and contributed over \$5.8 billion in earnings or 33 percent of total earnings. It is also the fastest growing industrial sector in the District.

Business and health services combined are expected to generate six out of every ten new jobs in the Treasure Coast District over the period of 1996 to 2006 (Florida Department of Labor and Employment Security, August 1999).

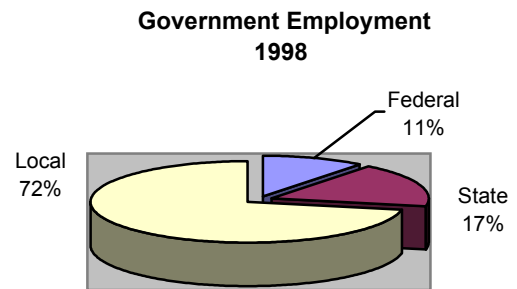
**Retail Trade.** The retail trade sector is a major component of the District's economy providing one out of every five jobs. In 1998, the District employed 123,521 retail workers. From 1990 to 1998, retail trade employment increased by over 13 percent and currently contributes almost \$2.2 billion dollars to the local economy. Eating and drinking places are expected to gain the largest number of new jobs in the retail sector by 2006.



**Wholesale Trade.** Wholesale trade employment grew by more than 54% in the period of 1990 to 1998 ranking second only to services in employment growth. This industry contributes slightly more than \$1 billion to the local economy and generates 4.5% of total regional employment.

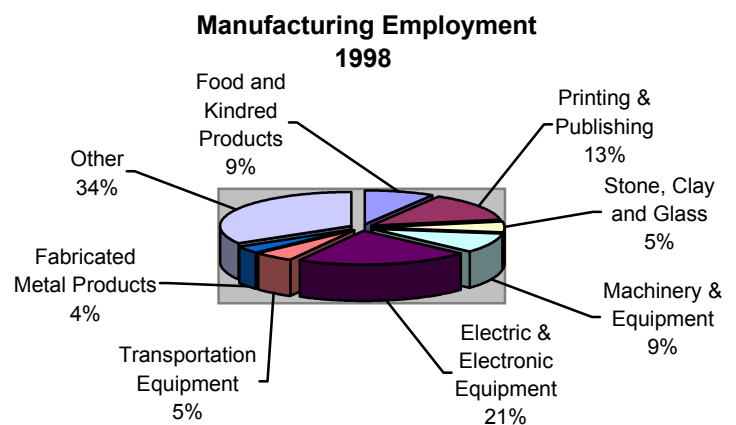


**Government.** The District's third largest employer is the Government sector providing over 71,000 jobs and contributing almost \$2.4 billion to the local economy. Addressing the diverse needs of a growing population has necessitated an expansion of government services over the years. Local government provides the largest employment base within the public administration sector. In 1998, local government provided 46,360 jobs or 7.9% of total District employment.



**Manufacturing**

Manufacturing provides 6.7% of the District's employment and contributes over \$1.8 billion to the local economy. This sector experienced a decrease in employment share over the last decade, losing almost 1,400 jobs between 1990 and 1998. In 1990, manufacturing jobs comprised 8.4% of total District employment. By 1998 the share had declined to 6.7% of total District jobs. The manufacturing division provided 17.7% of District wages in 1980. By 1998, manufacturing employment provided only 10.0% of District wages.

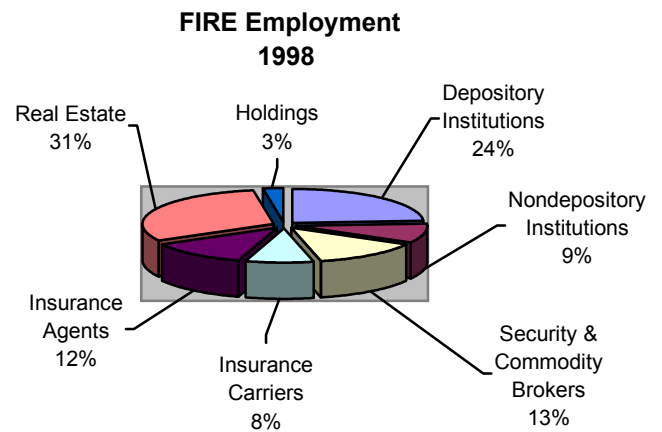


Palm Beach County provides the District's largest proportion of manufacturing employment. In 1998, approximately 80% of manufacturing employment took place in Palm Beach County. Major regional manufacturers include Florida Power & Light Co. - electrical generation; Pratt & Whitney - jet engines; Motorola, Inc. - communications; Siemens - communication devices; Northrop Grumman - aviation; New Piper Aircraft - aviation; and Tropicana Products - citrus juice.

The dominant SIC group within the manufacturing division was the electronic and other electronic equipment group (SIC code 36). This group represented 1.4% of all District jobs in 1998. The overwhelming proportion of electronic equipment jobs are located in Palm Beach County. In fact, each of the District's counties seems to specialize in a particular SIC group within the manufacturing division. In Indian River County the machinery and equipment group (SIC code 35) provided 381 jobs in 1998 or 14.5% of County manufacturing jobs. In Martin County, the transportation equipment group (SIC code 37) comprises 27.3% of County manufacturing jobs. The dominant manufacturing SIC group in St. Lucie County is also transportation equipment (SIC code 37), which represents 376 jobs in 1998, or 14.4% of County manufacturing jobs.

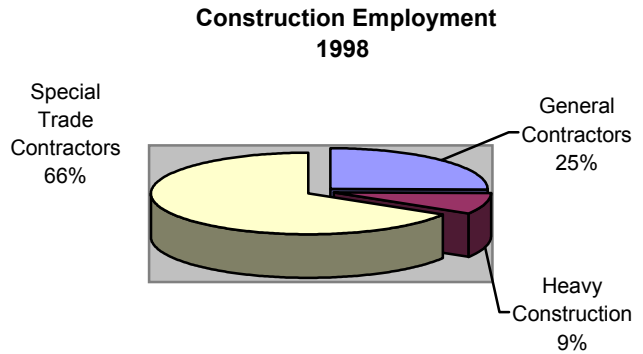
### Finance, Insurance and Real Estate

This sector's share of total District employment has remained virtually the same over the last decade (1990 to 1998) and it has gained just over 5,000 employees. It provides almost 39,000 jobs in the District and contributes almost \$2.0 billion to the local economy. Real estate is expected to gain the most jobs in this industry division according to the Florida Department of Labor as people seek second jobs to supplement their incomes (Florida Department of Labor and Employment Security, 1999).



### Construction

The construction industry provides almost 35,000 jobs in the District and over \$1.0 billion to the local economy. This sector's proportional share of District employment and earnings has decreased markedly over the last decade. In 1990, construction services supported approximately 7.4% of all District jobs and contributed over 13% of total industrial earnings. In 1998, the industry provided 6.0% of total District jobs and 5.9% of total District earnings.



The construction industry is driven to a great extent by tourism and the continued in-migration to the District. However, the industry is also cyclical in nature and employment trends closely follow downturns or upswings in the economy. During the last recession (1988-1991), for example, the District lost over 12,200 construction jobs. The dominant SIC group within the construction division is special trade contractors (SIC code 17). This group provided 23,185 jobs in 1998, or 4.0% of all jobs in the District. Employment in this group is projected to grow as more general contractors continue to subcontract construction work.

**Agriculture.** The agriculture, forestry and fishing industry provides over 30,000 jobs in the District and comprises 5.2% of the District's total employment. In 1990, agricultural employment provided 5.8% of total District wages.



Agriculture continues to be a vital basic industry to the Treasure Coast District because it provides significant income to the local economy through exports. Palm Beach County ranks first in the State in amount of agricultural cropland acreage and farm income cash receipts from agricultural products. In 1994, farm

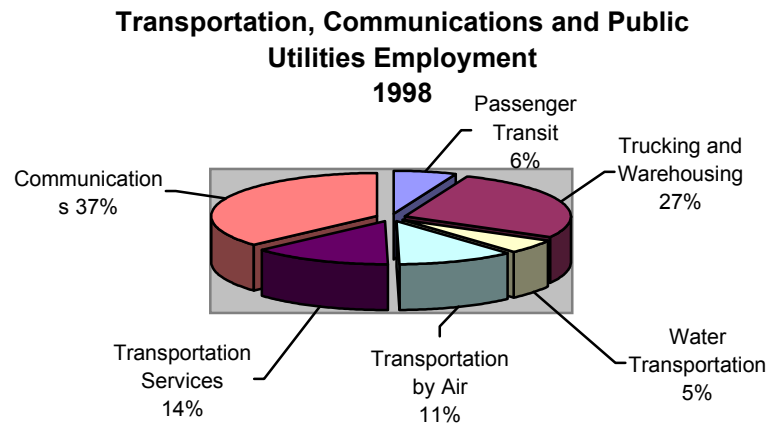
income for Palm Beach County was just under \$1.2 billion. St. Lucie County is a leader in grapefruit production and is a major exporter of oranges as is Indian River County.

The dominant SIC group within the Agriculture division is agricultural services (SIC code 07), which accounted for 18,710 jobs in 1998 or 3.2% of all District jobs. The Florida Department of Labor estimates that agricultural services will generate the largest increase in new jobs in the agriculture division over the next seven years as a growing number of employers in this group continue to increase their services to nonagricultural customers (Florida Department of Labor and Employment Security, 1999).

**Transportation, Communications**

**and Public Utilities.** This sector provides employment for 20,800 people in the Treasure Coast and \$800 million in wages and salary earnings to the local economy. The major transportation facilities in the District include Palm Beach International Airport, St. Lucie International Airport, the Port of Palm

Beach, and the Port of Fort Pierce. The dominant SIC group within the transportation, communications, and public utilities division is communication (SIC code 48), which provided 5,907 jobs in 1998, or 1.0% of total District jobs. Over the 1996 to 2006 period, air transportation (SIC code 45) will surpass communications as the largest industry group in the transportation, communications, and public utilities division (Florida Department of Labor and Employment Security, 1997).



## **REGIONAL STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES**

The District's economy is strong and has positive growth prospects for the future. In the next decade, employment growth will continue to outpace that for the state and the nation, per capita income will continue to rise and the gap between the national average annual wage and the District's annual average wage per worker will narrow. Despite these indicators of relative prosperity however, the economic vitality of the Treasure Coast District is tempered by persistent structural problems in terms of stagnating high-wage growth, good job opportunities for low-skilled residents and the growing shortage of skilled workers. Economic sustainability is also affected by the State's level of economic development as reflected in its relatively poor performance in job quality and earnings.

The quality of the jobs that are being created reflects growth in locally serving, non-basic industries such as business services, food stores and eating and drinking places. These sectors do not, generally speaking, bring in wealth from outside of the region. Additionally, high-wage job growth as measured by the proportion of regional jobs that pay above the regional average annual wage has essentially stagnated. Almost two-thirds of the Region's workers earn relatively low wages. Persistent workforce adequacy in terms of skills and labor availability is a problem that continues to be highlighted throughout the region. This problem has been noted at both the national and regional levels.

**Strong Economic Growth.** The Treasure Coast Region's economy has grown significantly over the past decade and is becoming more diversified and technologically advanced. Over the next ten years, the Region's economy is projected to grow by an annual average rate of 2.5 percent creating over 200,000 new jobs by 2010. Short-term (next three to four years) personal income growth in the Region is expected to average between 6.0 and 7.5 percent outperforming both the state and the nation.

**Emerging Industries.** Emerging industries with high growth potential are helping to diversity our economy into high technology, business to business and specialized agricultural research and development sectors. Over the last decade, for example, Business Services, Health Services and Engineering and Management Services were three of the fastest growing industry groups and are projected to continue growing at significant

rates. These industry groups have been identified as examples of emerging cluster industries sectors that are driving the District economy.

**Income Inequality.** Perhaps somewhat paradoxically however, the growth of high technology industry does not ensure increased social equity or a rising standard of living for the overall workforce. One such study of income inequality nationwide noted that, in the 1990's the average income of high-income families grew by 15%, while the average income for the lowest income families stayed the same<sup>2</sup>. Closer to home, the 1999 Development Report for the States found that Florida created too few quality jobs and is wrestling with poor annual average earnings. The Treasure Coast District is finding itself in the same dilemma – high economic growth accompanied with stagnating high-wage job growth and growth in low-wage sectors such as food and beverage, health and social welfare.

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<sup>2</sup> Economic Policy Institute, Press Release, January 18, 2000.

## Regional Economic Foundations

This section of the report (Section II) examines the strengths and weaknesses in regional economic infrastructure capacity. Economic infrastructure refers to a wide array of specialized economic resources including workforce development, transportation and communications infrastructure and business climate – foundations that provide competitive advantage to regions. The essential elements that comprise the Region’s economic infrastructure can be classified into seven categories:

1. **HUMAN RESOURCES**
2. **TECHNOLOGY**
3. **FINANCIAL CAPITAL**
4. **BUSINESS CLIMATE**
5. **INFRASTRUCTURE**
6. **ADVANCED COMMUNICATIONS**
7. **QUALITY OF LIFE**

The Region’s economic infrastructure or foundations is also benchmarked against the following eight competing regions in the nation:

- Austin, Texas
- Fort Lauderdale, Florida
- Jacksonville, Florida
- Portland, Oregon
- Salt Lake City, Utah
- San Jose, California (Silicon Valley)
- Raleigh-Durham-Chapel Hill, North Carolina
- Tucson, Arizona

These comparison regions were chosen based upon relatively comparable population and labor force size but, more importantly, based on the fact that these regions have

been characterized as “Booming Regions”<sup>3</sup>. Booming or Opportunity Regions are places that are experiencing the most rapid relative job growth and are proactively preparing for the future. Our District could also be classified as a Booming Region based upon rapid job and population growth and merits comparison to the above-noted regions.

The capacity of each economic infrastructure element – i.e. Human Resources is measured through the use of conceptual indicators. For example, Human Resource capacity is measured by educational attainment standards and the proportion of the Region’s workforce employed in high technology jobs. The indicators chosen are intended to reflect the fundamental condition of the Region’s economic infrastructure or “resources” that underlie the economy. The indicators are intended to tell us how we are doing – whether we are moving forward or backward, up or down, getting better or worse, or staying the same. They are by no means definitive and will require further refinement. In some cases, data at the metropolitan level was unavailable prompting the need to use state level data or other proxy measures. The overall intent in the indicator design was to construct effective and meaningful indicators that are easily understood and reliable.

**Human Resources.** *Educational Standards are Improving.* The District’s workforce has become better educated over time as evidenced by the increasing percentage of the population over age 25 that has obtained a bachelor’s degree or more. Since 1990, educational attainment for this population group has increased from 18.3 percent to 22.5 percent.

*Low Proportion of High Technology Jobs.* At about 3%, the share of high technology jobs to total jobs in the District is lower than the national average of 4.5% and significantly lower than most of the comparison regions.

**Technology.** *Increasing Patent Growth and Concentration.* Treasure Coast patent growth has increased significantly along with patent concentration. Patents in the

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<sup>3</sup> As defined in, *America’s New Economy and The Challenge of The Cities: A HUD Report On Metropolitan Economic Strategy*, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, October, 1996.

District have increased by more than 45% over the past five years. Comparatively, the District leads five out of the eight comparison regions in patent concentration.

*Low Level of University Research and Development.* From 1991 to 1998, total research and development expenditures in the District have increased by a significant margin of over 153%. Comparatively, however, the District's R&D level is lower than any other region.

**Financial Capital.** *Florida Venture Capital Investment Soars.* Venture capital investments in Florida have doubled over the past two years from \$301 million in 1998 to over \$724 million in 1999. The District garnered almost \$41 million in venture capital in 1999, ranking sixth among comparison regions.

**Business Climate.** *The Region's Business Climate Needs Improvement.* The District's business climate needs improvement, although it ranked third overall as measured by the "Cost of Doing Business" indicator. However, when businesses were asked in a recently completed survey to identify the barriers to commerce, two to one indicated that local government was an impediment to economic growth.

**Infrastructure.** *Our Transportation Infrastructure Capacity to Accommodate Traffic is Declining.* On average, drivers in medium-sized metropolitan areas like the Treasure Coast experienced a 240% increase in delay per driver during peak period travel. This translates to a dramatic change from an average annual delay per driver in 1982 of 7 hours to 31 hours in 1997.

**Advanced Communications.** *Internet Connectivity is Relatively Low.* With an online adult population of approximately 37 percent, the District's Internet connectivity ranks lower than any comparison region or the nation.

**Quality of Life.** *Threatened Quality of Life.* This indicator tracks progress in housing affordability, overall crime rate, environmental quality and proliferation of urban sprawl. Generally, while measures of overall crime and environmental quality (air and water) suggest improvement in conditions, housing affordability has declined, and rates of urban sprawl are threatening the Region's rural and unincorporated areas.

## A Vision for The Region

This section of the report (Section III) establishes a vision and associated goals to enhance the Region's economic vitality based upon an evaluation of the Region's economic opportunities and challenges and an assessment of areas of competitive advantage that need to be more fully developed. Three principles underlie the vision statement: developing a competitive regional economy with broadened prosperity for all citizens, enhancing the Region's quality of life and natural resources and promoting regional collaboration and problem-solving.

### VISION STATEMENT

*The Treasure Coast Economic Development District is committed to creating a globally competitive regional economy with increased economic opportunity for all residents through support of quality job growth creation, creation of liveable communities and promotion of regional collaboration.*

***Principle #1: Developing a Globally Competitive Regional Economy with Increased Opportunity for All Residents.***

Making the transition to a globally competitive economy rests upon strategic investments in human resources and knowledge infrastructure and the promotion of innovation. These investments must also be supported by measures to promote the creation of more quality jobs for residents and economic opportunities for families and individuals that enable them to achieve higher standards of living. Essentially, we need to support



the creation of a sustainable economy. Particular attention needs to be focused on small business needs – increased access to capital for small business startups and expansions and access to specialized informational databases critical to

success in the new economy. Our review of the District's overall economic performance and analysis of its economic foundations suggests unique opportunities that are available to enhance our Region's competitive advantage and challenges that need to be mitigated to promote broadened economic prosperity.

***Principle #2: Enhancing Our Quality of Life and Natural Resources.***

The Region's high quality of life and exceptional natural resources have always been defining elements and two of our key competitive advantages.

As we move into a new knowledge-based economy, companies and individuals can exercise more freedom to choose places where they want to live and work. In fact, as the distinction between "economy" and "community" blurs, people are beginning to see the important relationship between these two concepts. Regions have become the staging ground for economic development and are becoming recognized as natural

locations for industrial clustering to occur. Our Region strives to embrace the concept of "liveability" through natural resource protection, a distinctive quality of life and an emphasis on community, environment and economy. A continuing concern for regional economic



development is encouraging economic development while simultaneously improving the quality of life. One of the important ways to maintain our high quality of life is to preserve our Region's natural resources as noted below.

Continued expansion of agricultural and urban development in the Treasure Coast will impact natural resources of regional significance. The natural systems of the Treasure Coast District should be preserved. The quality of life enjoyed in the District depends on the conservation of the natural environment. A plan for the Treasure Coast District should chart a clear strategy that identifies significant natural systems and proposes

methods to preserve them. There must be many types of land uses in a well-planned District. The ideal pattern of development for addressing natural system preservation is a series of compact urban areas (cities, towns, and villages) surrounded by the countryside (nature preserves and rural uses such as agriculture). While land uses on many properties may be flexible through time, the nature preserves are easier to determine and should not be expected to change in the future. Therefore, a plan for the District must start by determining the natural areas that should be preserved. Once nature preserves are identified, it will be easier to plan the areas that should be open for development.

Nature preserves, together with other rural uses, should form a permanent greenbelt that bounds development areas. They should be accessible to the public to the extent that it does not affect the health of the native ecosystems. They provide recharge areas for potable water and stormwater attenuation for urban and rural uses.

***Principle #3: Promoting Regional Collaboration and Problem Solving Capacity.***

Our District's ability to achieve a globally competitive region characterized by increased economic opportunity and an enhanced quality of life can only be realized through collaborative action. Developing our District's competitive advantages requires fostering connections between the public, private and non-profit sectors; an understanding of common regional needs and opportunities; developing a shared vision of the future and a commitment to partnering for the development of collaborative action plans.



Our Region's future is dependent on the investments that we make and the action that we take collectively to address the existing and future needs of the Treasure Coast economy. This collaborative, regional economic development strategy has four distinct phases.

**Phase I**

**Mobilization**

Mobilize community stakeholders – economic development leaders, business executives, government officials and individual citizens to discuss regional economic opportunities and challenges.

**Phase II**

**Analysis**

Regional economic assessment and competitiveness audit.

**Phase III**

**Collaborative Strategy**

Convene economic leaders and stakeholder organizations and develop a framework for collaborative vision and action.

**Phase IV**

**Implementation**

Develop an appropriate mechanism for implementation of action plans to promote economic vitality and enhanced quality of life (Nonprofit corporation, consortium, etc.).

## Our Action Plan

The final section of the report (Section IV) outlines a series of programs and projects designed to implement the desired vision for the District's future. The action plan prioritizes program activities and identifies responsibility, resources, time frames and priorities for implementation.

Three overall program frameworks are developed to organize projects and activities:

1. **Enterprise and Innovation Program**
2. **Quality of Life Program**
3. **Regional Connections Program**