



**CENTRAL FLORIDA**  
DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

Polk County's  
Economic Development  
Partnership

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY

APRIL - JUNE 2019

# Q3 18/19 REPORT FOR POLK COUNTY

*Building partnerships and pathways for  
economic development in Polk County.*

### The CFDC's Organizational Pillars:



Promote Polk County as  
Florida's Best Place for Business



Advocate for Key Business  
Issues



Facilitate Collaborative  
Partnerships



Advance Strategic Initiatives



## Promote Polk County as Florida's Best Place for Business

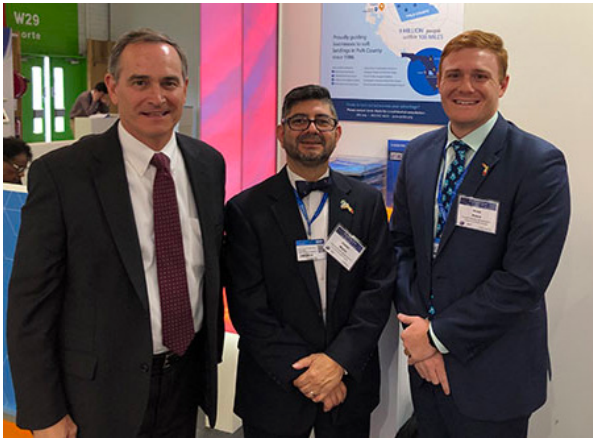


The **Florida Economic Development Council** presented the CFDC with the **Urban Deal of the Year Award** at its 2019 Annual Conference for landing Nucor Steel Florida in southeast Polk County. Working together, county officials and economic development and business leaders attracted Nucor to build their \$240 million micro steel mill in Frostproof. The award acknowledges the collaboration and 'get-it-done' spirit that made this project possible. Partners included Duke Energy, Enterprise Florida, City of Frostproof and Polk County Board of County Commissioners.



The **SUN 'n FUN Aerospace Expo** is the 2nd largest airshow in the nation and to further promote the aviation assets available within Polk County, the CFDC hosted business development staffers from **Enterprise Florida** at this year's SUN 'n FUN event. Aviation is an important target industry within our region and Polk County is uniquely positioned to meet talent and manufacturing needs for this sector.

**Molekule**, a leading innovator in clean air purification, announced that it plans to build out its innovation team in **Polk County, Florida** to create a hub for research, development and manufacturing. Molekule's first U.S. factory, PECO Zero, will be a catalyst for bringing cutting edge science into people's homes by enabling faster scalability of Molekule's research and development to meet consumers' increasing demands for clean air. "Moving our manufacturing facility next to the heart of our research and development was an intentional decision for us," said Dilip Goswami, CEO and co-founder of Molekule. "The proximity between PECO Zero and R&D will allow us to accelerate our innovations in clean air technology and deliver results to our customers and the world at an exceedingly fast pace for science."



Aviation business development also took place internationally at the **Paris Air Show** promoting Polk's aviation industry. CFDC represented Polk County as part of the Enterprise Florida pavilion meeting with companies that included Lockheed Martin, Tic Aerospace and Chichen Itza' International Airport. "We met with other countries and businesses interested in everything from increasing cargo and passenger travel to and from the Yucatán" to an aviation technology company from Europe interested in a strategic location in Central Florida, said Jake Polumbo, retired Air Force major general, founding partner of Two Blue Aces Consulting and CFDC vice chair.



Meetings with the University of Jaén, business leaders and business clusters in **Jaén Province in Spain** have yielded interest for future commerce and mutually-beneficial investment opportunities between Polk County and Jaén Province. The four-day trip to the region was facilitated by Grupo Alvic president, Javier Rosales and his deputy, Manuel Pizarro. Grupo Alvic is one of Jaén' leading companies with an important footprint and Spain and a competitive edge in the market throughout Europe and 90 other countries. **Alvic USA** with a **new facility in Auburndale, FL** is Grupo Alvic's subsidiary in the United States and has been established in response to the growing North American market for kitchen, office and bath components.



## Advocate for Key Business Issues

Polk County offers within its boundaries 19 opportunity zones. The goal of the new community development program is to encourage long-term investment with the zones by allowing investors to minimize some taxes when they develop within a zone. To better understand how Opportunity Zones can be beneficial, the CFDC **Community Stakeholders Committee** hosted a special presentation by Michael Minton and Stephen Looney, attorneys and Opportunity Zone experts with Dean Meade.



## Facilitate Collaborative Partnerships

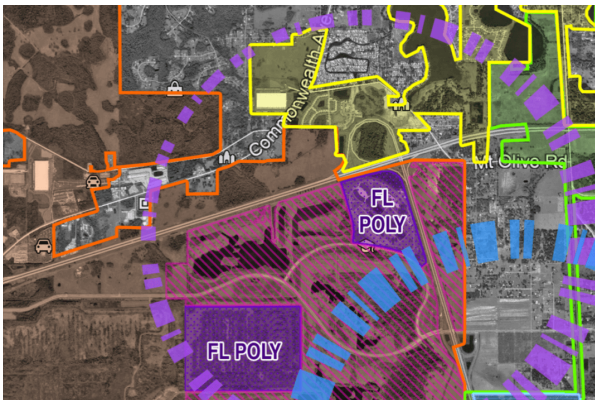
During the **April Investor Meeting**, the CFDC welcomed Major General (ret) Rob Polumbo to present his Near Rocks, Far Rocks managing practices. Major Gen. (ret) Polumbo is a consultant with Two Blue Aces.

Thank you to **Five Star Growers** and **Kilgroe, Frantzis, Quinty, & Associates UBS Financial Services** for hosting the reception for investors that followed the meeting.



## Advance Strategic Initiatives

Nearly forty attendees joined the CFDC on a **leadership mission to NC State Centennial Campus** to explore the research park and learn more about its powerful role within the region. Polk County has a unique opportunity to develop a high-skill, high-wage educational and industry ecosystem centered around technology, innovation and R&D. The Central Florida Innovation District is being developed to leverage the strength of anchor institutions Florida Polytechnic University and SunTrax, America's Center for Transportation Innovation.

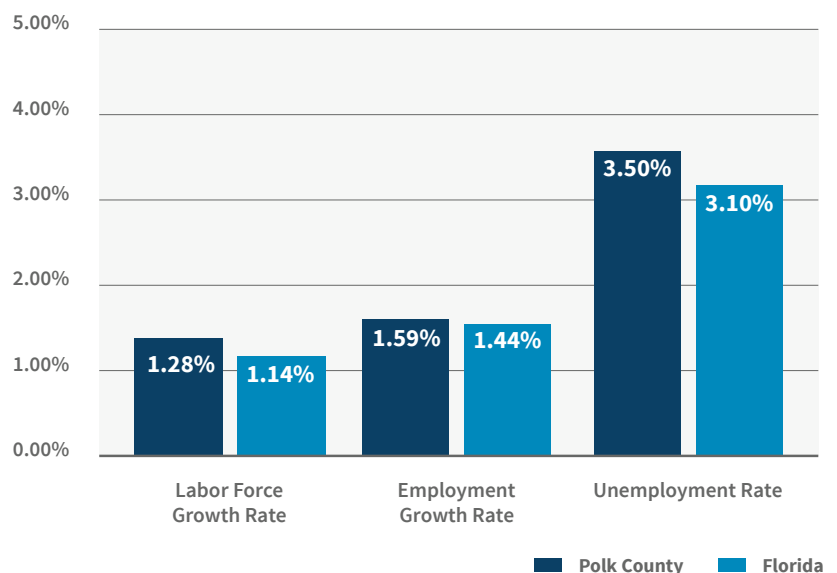


## POLK COUNTY ECONOMIC UPDATE

*Prepared by Jim Farrell, Ph.D., CFA,  
Florida Southern College*

The unemployment rate has improved from February, with the county and state rates at 3.5% and 3.1%, respectively for May. We are near historic lows for unemployment rate and should not expect to see much improvement beyond these levels. Polk County labor force (1.28% growth to 301,843 people) and employment levels (1.59% growth to 291,231 people) grew at slightly faster rates than the state for the prior 12 months. Despite some lingering recession fears, the local labor market remains steady.

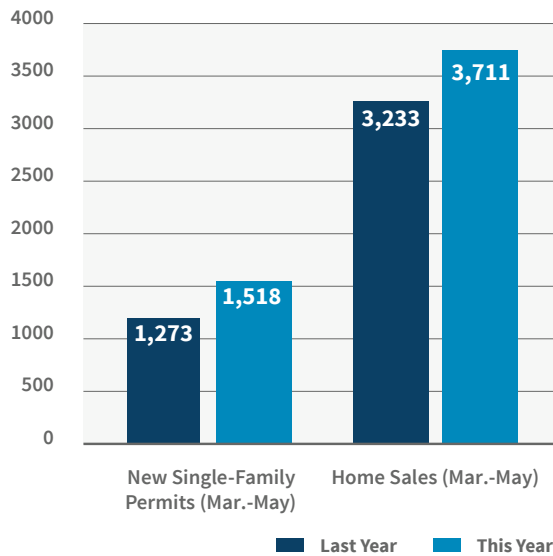
### LABOR MARKET STATISTICS (FEBRUARY 2019)



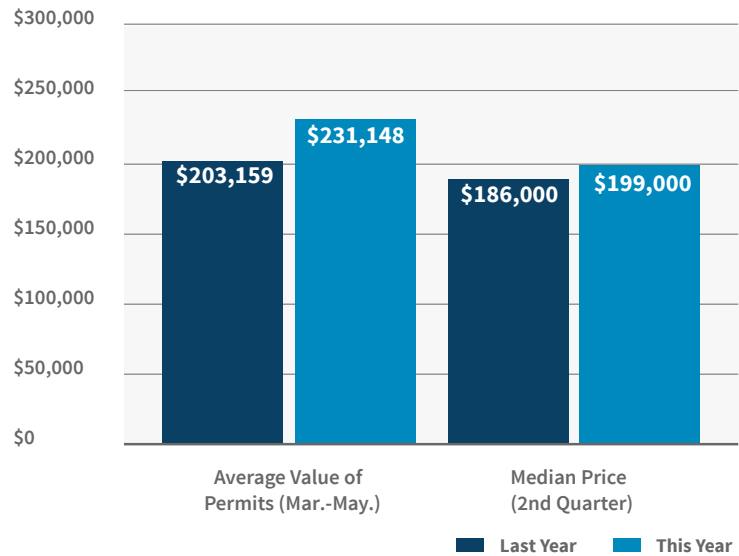


From March 2019 through May 2019, according to My Florida Regional MLS, home sales were up 14.8%, while the median sales price was up 7.0%, year-over-year. According to the Census, new single-family permit requests increased 19.2% and the average value of each permit increased by 13.8% for the period. In addition to the single-family home permits, the Census reported 332 multi-family permits for May. While sales and new permits had seen steady increases in the prior quarters, price had been leveling-off, this quarter saw a return to significant price and value gains. The real estate gains along with solid job market performance position Polk County competitively when compared to surrounding areas and we should continue to see new growth.

### HOUSING VOLUME



### HOUSING VALUE



### WELCOME NEW INVESTORS

**TOWNEPLACE  
SUITES®**  
BY MARRIOTT

### In Quarter 3, the CFDC held the following meetings and events:

- Enterprise Florida SUN n' FUN Visit
- April Investor Meeting
- Understanding Opportunity Zone Information Session
- NC State Centennial Campus Leadership Mission
- Florida Economic Development Conference
- Enterprise Florida New York Mission
- International Development Activities in France and Spain
- Past Chair's Luncheon



**ABOUT CFDC** The Central Florida Development Council is Polk County's economic development partnership responsible for recruiting new businesses to Polk County and helping existing businesses expand.