



Q3 25/26 REPORT FOR POLK COUNTY

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

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

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

The third quarter reflected Polk County's continued momentum in its business development efforts. Four projects were announced this quarter representing \$52.5M new to Polk capital investment and nearly 200 new quality jobs. **Grey Birch Manufacturing** has moved its corporate headquarters and manufacturing operations to Lakeland. **Mitutoyo**, specializing in precision measurements, has opened a training center and operations office along County Line Road. **R.Riveter American Products**, a handbag manufacturer, has relocated their manufacturing facilities to Lakeland, and **Trimak Building Systems Inc.**, is building a 220,000 square foot corporate headquarters and manufacturing facility in unincorporated Polk County.

In addition to these announcements, six more projects—representing an estimated 650+ new jobs and \$3 billion in capital investment—are currently in the pipeline and awaiting formal announcement.

As the current Opportunity Zones are set to expire at the end of the year, CFDC developed materials for and submitted multiple eligible sites throughout Polk County. CFDC hosted a FloridaCommerce virtual workshop that provided guidance on the Opportunity Zone 2.0 program, eligibility requirements, and the application process. The submitted sites have undergone various levels of site readiness, infrastructure improvements, planning, or marketing efforts, positioning them as strong candidates for future industrial development. Successful designation would enhance the visibility and competitiveness of these sites for future economic development opportunities.

Throughout the quarter, the Business Development team attended key industry conferences and trade shows to promote Polk County, identify new business opportunities, and engaged with companies seeking locations that support future growth and investment.



Florida Advanced Air Mobility Symposium



MRO Americas Aviation Week



IAMC Spring Forum



FACILITATE COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS



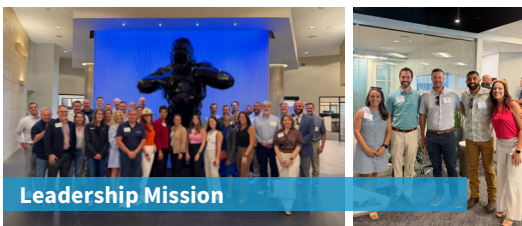
April Investor Meeting



April Investor Meeting



Leadership Mission



Leadership Mission



June Investor Meeting

We were pleased to host our **April Investor Meeting** at **The Ruthvens | Intersect Pace Innovation Center** in Auburndale, FL, showcasing a key asset within the Innovation District. Attendees also heard from an engaging lineup of speakers, including Brandon Clark of The Ruthvens, Chief Will Watts and Courtney Hance of the Florida Department of Transportation, City Manager Jeff Brown of the City of Auburndale, and CFDC Board Chair Emery Smith of Ben Hill Griffin.

This year's two-day **Leadership Mission** to **St. Petersburg** and **Pinellas County** marked our largest mission to date. Designed to strengthen regional partnerships and highlight economic development opportunities, the experience gave attendees an inside look at the innovation, entrepreneurship, and collaborative leadership driving growth within the St. Pete area. The mission began in the heart of Downtown St. Pete at the offices of Cydeo Wealth Partners, where attendees gathered for a reception and a conversation with Becca Brown, CEO of spARK Labs.

Attendees participated in two behind-the-scenes company tours. The first stop was Haddy, an advanced manufacturing company using AI-powered 3D printing technology to transform product development and production. The second tour brought the group to Power Design, a nationally recognized design-build multi-trade contractor with projects across the country. Special thanks to Pinellas County Economic Development and Greater St. Petersburg Area EDC for their invaluable support in coordinating this impactful visit and helping foster cross-county partnerships, as well as to all our partners and speakers.

Our **June Investor Meeting** was held at the **Orlando Health Watson Clinic Lakeland Highlands Hospital**, where attendees enjoyed an engaging program and an inside look at one of Polk County's newest healthcare facilities. Attendees heard from Dawn Willis, Community Relations Manager, and Victoria Wagner, Chief Operating Officer, who shared valuable insights into the hospital's mission, comprehensive range of services, and commitment to meeting the evolving healthcare needs of our region.



ADVOCATE FOR KEY BUSINESS ISSUES

The **CFDC Innovator Workshop**, held in April, brought together Visionary and Innovator level investor members for an engaging session, "From User to Builder: Engaging AI for Impactful Results." Led by Dr. Michael Steiner of Southeastern University, attendees explored practical applications of AI tools to enhance and streamline workflows. The session also provided valuable insight into effective prompt writing, equipping participants with the skills to produce more complex, high-quality outcomes with greater efficiency and minimal oversight.

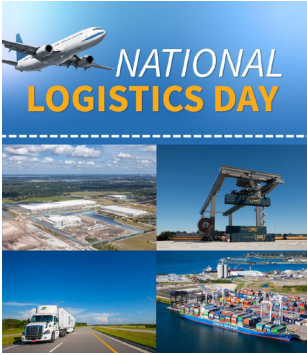


CFDC Innovator Workshop





ADVOCATE FOR KEY BUSINESS ISSUES (cont.)



During **Aviation Month** in **May**, the CFDC highlighted Polk's expanding aviation, aerospace, and defense sector. With three regional airports, access to five international airports within 75 miles, and a robust talent pipeline, Polk continues to attract investment and support innovation in aviation.

Every year, June 28th, **National Logistics Day**, recognizes the industry that keeps goods moving, businesses operating, and consumers connected. According to JobsEQ by Chmura Economics, more than 21,000 Polk County residents are employed in the Logistics & Distribution sector. In 2023, the industry generated approximately \$1.4 billion in gross domestic product (GDP) for Polk County.



ADVANCE STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

Significant momentum continues within the Central Florida Innovation District further elevating Polk County's position within the state for research and innovation-driven projects. This quarter marked the opening of the Pace Innovation Center, a multi-tenant space developed in partnership by The Ruthvens and Intersect Development. Additionally, as FDOT leadership works to bring SunTrax air into operation, Chief Will Watts and Courtney Hance presented at the April Investor meeting. CFDC staff also participated in the Advanced Air Mobility (AAM) Symposium at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, expanding connections with industry and research partners while advancing opportunities aligned with the district's long-term vision.



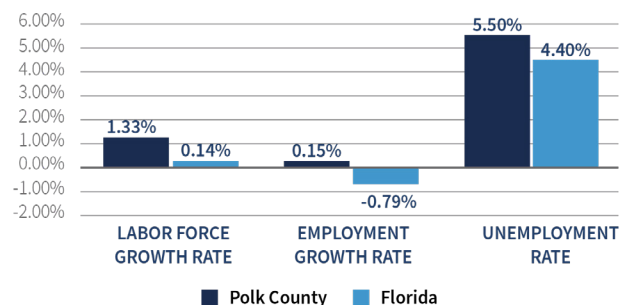
POLK COUNTY ECONOMIC UPDATE

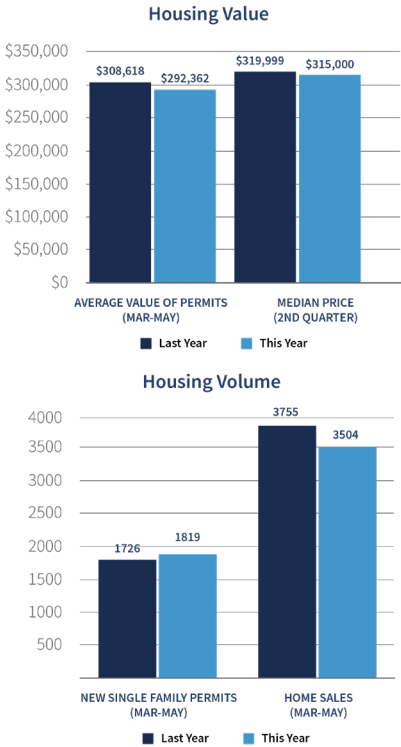
*Prepared by Jim Farrell, Ph.D., CFA,
Florida Southern College*

At both the county and state levels, labor market conditions remain largely unchanged. Polk County's unemployment rate held steady at 5.5%, while the statewide rate remained at 4.4%. Total county employment increased modestly to just over 343,000 workers. Overall, economic indicators continue to send mixed signals across local, state, and federal levels, suggesting that the region remains in a position similar to where it has been for the past six months.



Labor Market Statistics
MAY 2026





At the national level, the Federal Reserve is operating under new leadership while continuing to hold interest rates steady and signaling that future policy decisions will remain data-dependent. With inflation pressures rising, labor market conditions stable, and GDP growth slowing, uncertainty remains as to whether the Federal Open Market Committee will maintain its current stance or move toward additional rate increases in the near term.

Housing market activity also reflected a mixed outlook from March through May. According to My Florida Regional MLS, home sales declined 6.7% year over year, while median sales prices decreased 1.6%. Days on market remained relatively stable, ranging from 70 to 80 days. Census data for the same period showed that new single-family permit requests increased 5.4%, as the average permit value declined 5.3% year over year. Multifamily construction activity slowed, with 78 new permits issued compared with 157 during the same period last year. Although resale activity softened in both volume and pricing, the increase in single-family permitting at more attainable price points may help ease ongoing housing supply constraints.

In Quarter 3, CFDC hosted and attended the following events:

- April Investor Meeting
- BioInternational
- C2ER Conference
- CTAE Externship County Tour
- Duke Energy Next Level
- eVTOL Conference
- FDOT Advanced Air Mobility Symposium
- FloridaCommerce Opportunity Zone 2.0
- Florida Trend Listening Sessions
- Innovator Workshop
- Investor Relations Committee Meeting
- June Investor Meeting
- MRO Americas
- SEDC AmericanSouth Site Selection Summit
- SelectFlorida EDAC & Board Meeting
- SUN 'n FUN Red, White & Blue at 52!
- Talent Pipeline Committee Meeting

Thank you to our New &Renewing Investors!

APRIL 1 - JUNE 30

Visionary

Intersect Development Group

Innovator

Clear Springs ★

Connector

Hill Ward Henderson
Norlee Group ★
Spherion Staffing & Recruiting
The Colinas Group

Tucker Paving, Inc.
Voss Construction Management ★
W.W. Gay Mechanical Contractor, Inc.

New Investors



NORLEE
GROUP



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.

CONNECT TO NEW OPPORTUNITIES
cfdc.org | (863) 937-4430