REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Economic development, defined as activities or investments that promote economic growth or prevent economic decline in a community, is crucial to preserving and enhancing the quality of life in the Apalachee Region. Efforts to encourage economic development and recruit businesses to the Apalachee Region are aided by the many amenities the Region offers potential businesses and residents. Nevertheless, regional economic conditions and predicted trends present both opportunities and challenges to improve the economic health of the Apalachee Region.

Employment is the engine of local economies, helping to sustain and encourage growth in local communities. At the end of the decade, the State and the Region experienced significant growth. However, the projected employment through 2013 indicates a slower growth structure. This growth structure parallels national and state trends, which have reflected a general decline in goods production and growth in the services sector.

Table ED-1: Employment for Florida and the Apalachee Region (in thousands).

FLORIDA	1990	2000	Change 1990-2000	2003	Change 2000 - 2003	2013*	Change* 2003-2013
Nonagricultural wage and salary jobs	5387.3	7080.6	1693.3	7285.5	204.9	8999.2	1713.7
Apalachee Region	**1990**	**2000**	**Change 1990-2000**	**2003***	**Change* 2000-2003**	**2013***	**Change* 2003-2013**
Nonagricultural wage and salary jobs	154.1	192.0	37.9	212.1	20.1	236.4	24.3

*Figure given is a projection. Source: Florida Long-Term Economic Forecast 2002, Vol. 2; Enterprise Florida, 2004

Another indicator of the status of employment is the unemployment rate. In 2003, all nine counties have lower unemployment rates than the State rate. The low unemployment rates in Leon, Liberty, and Wakulla Counties can be accounted for by the presence of the State Capital in Leon County, which provides a source of steady employment to residents of these counties. Looking to the year 2015, projections of unemployment rates in four of the nine counties are consistently within .5 of the State's projected rate. Unemployment rates are projected to rise in all counties except Gadsden, Jefferson and Leon counties. Additionally, Gulf county is projected to have a significantly higher rate than the projected State rate.

Based on current trends, the unemployment rates projected for future years reflect changes in government employment, a mainstay of the Apalachee Region. According to the Florida Statistical Abstract (2001, 2002 & 2003), for the period 1999 - 2002, state government created 549 jobs in Leon County. However, for the Apalachee Region, overall, 303 state government positions were lost during the same period.

Table ED-2: Unemployment Rates.

	2003	2004*	May, 2004	*2005	Apr, 2005	*2007	*2009	*2011	*2013
FLORIDA	5.7	5.1	4.8	5.0	4.2	5.0	4.7	4.1	4.5
Calhoun	4.4	5.6	5.2	5.6	4.3	4.8	4.3	3.9	4.5

Franklin	3.2	3.1	3.6	3.3	3.8	3.6	3.9	3.9	3.9
Gadsden	5.0	4.6	4.8	4.5	4.2	4.5	4.3	3.8	4.1
Gulf	4.5	7.7	4.4	7.7	3.9	7.8	7.6	7.1	7.4
Jackson	3.3	5.3	4.2	5.2	4.1	5.3	5.1	4.7	4.9
Jefferson	4.9	4.6	3.7	4.5	3.3	4.7	4.5	4.1	4.3
Leon	3.2	3.0	3.9	3.0	3.4	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0
Liberty	2.3	3.5	4.3	3.4	3.1	3.5	3.3	3.0	3.2
Wakulla	3.5	3.8	3.3	3.8	2.9	3.8	3.7	3.5	3.6

*Figure given is a projection.
Source: The Florida Long-Term Economic Forecast, Vol. 2,; Enterprise Florida, 2003
Florida Agency for Workforce Innovation, http://www.labormarketinfo.com/library/laus.htm

Most recently available data from Florida's Agency for Workforce Innovation indicates that there are some improvements in the projected data. Posted numbers for 2004 are generally lower than those that were projected in 2003 and well lower in Gulf and Wakulla Counties. These two are experiencing better than recent growth in their coastal vacation housing sectors.

Current data posted for 2005 so far indicates that there are sustained changes in the unemployment numbers for all counties in the Region except for Franklin and Leon Counties. One external factor influencing these numbers in the northwestern counties is the recent opening of a major distribution center in Jackson County which is driving improved employment numbers in that area. Also, the 2004 hurricanes have had the effect of drawing workers from the area, on at least a temporary basis to participate in the massive reconstruction and repair efforts in the far western panhandle and also further south where widespread damage was felt. The state in general is seeing improved unemployment numbers due to the massive workforce assembled to repair and rebuild after the storms. It will remain to be seen if these employment numbers can be sustained as the immediate needs for reconstruction are met. However, the drain on all available help in the construction related sectors has created an employment vacuum for new home building generally and has helped fuel the continuing prices increases in housing.

A continuing concern for the region, is that most of the counties have a high percentage of their labor force commuting to other counties for employment. Leon County is the center of government employment. Figure ED-1 graphically presents the percentage of each Counties workforce traveling across county lines to work each day. The impact of Leon County on the region is enormous with more than half of Wakulla County's workforce and nearly half of Gadsden and Jefferson Counties' workers making the daily commute. The total inter-county commuting as reported by the 2000 Census is shown in Table ED-3. These much higher than the state average commuters in seven of the Region's counties indicate not only that these counties do not have local economies sufficient to support their labor force, but also that Leon County's government and service sectors provide employment opportunities for its more rural neighbors. The cost to the region is lost time in commuting and wasted dollars in fuel costs.

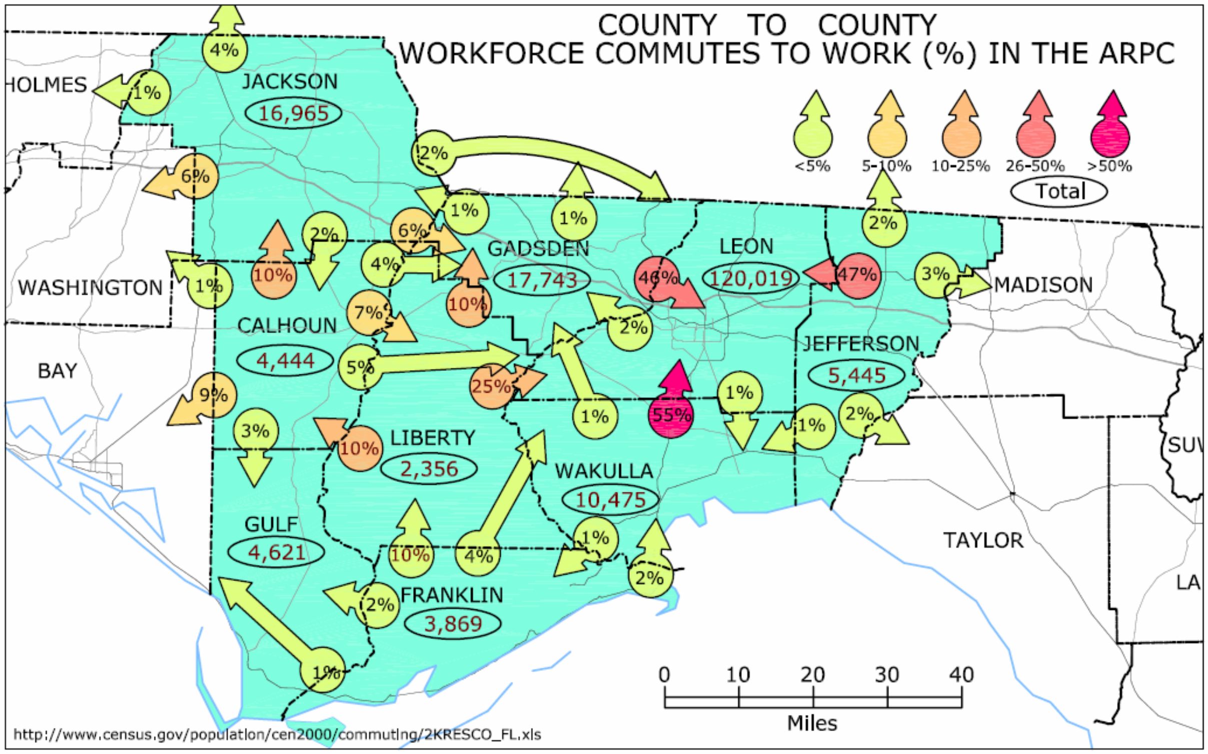

Figure ED – 1

Table ED-3: Employment in Labor Force, County of Residence, 2000

	Percentage Employed Outside County of Residence, 2000
FLORIDA	18.1
Calhoun	43.8
Franklin	11.8
Gadsden	51.0
Gulf	31.9
Jackson	25.6
Jefferson	56.8
Leon	5.0
Liberty	51.8
Wakulla	61.4

Source: Data Set: Census 2000 Summary File 3 (SF 3) - Sample Data
GCT-P12. Employment Status and Commuting to Work: 2000

Another concern is the quality of employment, often judged by salary. Table ED-4 shows that, all counties in the Region, with the exception of Gulf and Franklin counties, experienced increases in average earnings per job. Jackson, Liberty and Wakulla counties experienced increases in average earnings above the State's increase.

However, average job earnings for the remainder of the region continue to be below the State average. Only Liberty County's average was similar to the State's average. This highlights the fact that the Region has not yet achieved parity with the rest of the State. One anomalous result in the recent data presented in the Florida Statistical Abstract is the dramatic decrease in earnings for Wakulla County for the period 2001-2002. This counter trend may even out in future reporting periods.

Table ED-4: Average Earnings Per Job, 1992, 1997 and 2000.

	1998 Average Earnings Per Job	2000 Average Earnings Per Job	Average Annual Percent Change 1998-2000	2001 Average Earnings Per Job	Annual Percent Change 2000-2001	2002 Average Earnings Per Job	Annual Percent Change 2001-2002
FLORIDA	$29,446	$31,534	3.6	$34,815	10.4	$35,736	2.6
Calhoun	$21,303	$22,733	3.3	$23,960	5.4	$24,532	2.4
Franklin	$19,285	$19,237	-.1	$20,505	6.6	$21,163	3.2
Gadsden	$25,039	$26,063	2.0	$27,880	7.0	$29,590	6.1
Gulf	$25,987	$25,092	-1.8	$27,373	9.1	$27,041	-1.2
Jackson	$22,239	$24,523	5.1	$27,201	8.4	$27,786	2.2
Jefferson	$20,473	$21,143	1.6	$23,648	11.8	$24,304	2.8
Leon	$29,245	$31,049	3.1	$34,175	10.1	$35,499	3.8
Liberty	$25,091	$26,924	3.7	$31,035	15.3	$31,205	0.5
Wakulla	$23,859	$25,948	4.4	$31,242	20.4	$24,681	-21.0

Source: Florida Statistical Abstract; 2001, 2002 and 2003, Table 6.02 and Table 6.03 (2004 version).

As shown in Table ED-5, the Region also has low per capita income relative to the State. Despite the gradual increase in per capita income in the Apalachee Region, the high-income disparity in per capita income between the Region and the State has not improved as with average earnings per job. Only Leon County has per capita income similar to the State. This disparity is likely to continue without changes in the structure of local economies.

Table ED-5: Personal Income Per Capita.

	1995	2000	Percent Change 1995-2000	2002	Percent Change 2000-2002	2004*
FLORIDA	$23,512	$27,764	18.1	$29,758	7.2	$31,242
Calhoun	$13,374	$15,627	16.8	$17,543	12.3	$17,962
Franklin	$11,373	$19,259	69.3	$22,300	15.8	$21,482
Gadsden	$15,497	$19,097	23.2	$20,653	8.1	$21,806
Gulf	$15,362	$17,921	16.7	$18,285	2.0	$19,728
Jackson	$15,442	$18,410	19.2	$20,065	9.0	$20,810
Jefferson	$16,560	$21,728	31.2	$23,362	7.5	$25,185
Leon	$22,595	$26,564	17.6	$28,056	5.6	$29,865
Liberty	$13,665	$15,547	13.8	$19,297	24.1	$17,776
Wakulla	$18,438	$22,556	22.3	$21,514	-4.8	$22,052

*Data given are estimates or projections. Sources: Florida Statistical Abstract; 1999 and 2002; Table 5.10. Florida Trend; 2003; Enterprise Florida 2004

Finally, the number of residents living below the poverty level and the amount of transfer payments paid to the Region's residents are troubling, as they indicate that poverty is a fact of life for many of the Region's households. Table ED-6 shows the percentage of households living below the poverty level in the Region's counties. Although the trend from 2000 to 2002 was positive, (fewer of the total households were in poverty for those counties registering negative percent change), the overall picture is still bleak for many of the Region's families. Only Leon and Wakulla Counties post numbers better than the State's average with Wakulla's being skewed by a growing population of retirees along the coast and an increase in relocating families from Leon County. Excepting these two, the other seven counties have severe problems with endemic poverty in some areas with its accompanying social problems. Almost a fourth of Gadsden County's school age and younger children are living in poverty. For the remaining counties the numbers are about a fifth at school age and about a sixth of all persons. The attendant social problems of under achievement in schools, diabetes, unwed school age parents and increased crime rates point to longer term problems in workforce development if these problems are not addressed.

Table ED-6: Income and Poverty Estimates: 2002.

	Median Household Income 2002	**Percent Change from 2000**	**Poor Persons**		**Persons under age 18 in poverty**		**Related Children Living in poverty**	
			Total	**Percent**	**Total**	**Percent**	**Total**	**Percent**
FLORIDA	38,226	-1.4	2,137,435	12.8	689,303	17.7	461,273	16.5
Calhoun	26,172	-3.2	2,279	20.2	646	22.4	467	22.3
Franklin	27,862	0.4	1,436	15.2	403	20.2	313	21.8
Gadsden	29,598	-3.4	7,782	18.2	2,851	24.2	1,995	24.1
Gulf	29,618	-1.3	2,287	18.9	529	19.4	388	18.8
Jackson	28,947	-2.5	6,956	17.0	1,992	20.0	1,409	19.9
Jefferson	32,156	-2.3	2,090	16.8	615	21.4	430	20.6
Leon	37,760	-2.7	29,639	12.8	7,426	14.5	4,850	13.5
Liberty	29,132	-0.49	1,190	20.3	313	20.6	233	21.6
Wakulla	36,732	-2.73	2,996	12.2	898	14.7	646	14.3

Source: Florida Statistical Abstract; 2005, Table 5.48

Transfer payments are government payments to individuals, including unemployment, Social Security, veterans benefits, and food stamps, usually on the basis of economic distress in a household. Table ED-7 lists payments made to county residents in 1992, 1998, 2000 and 2001 as percentages of total income. Transfer payments as a percentage of total income have risen from 1998 to 2001 in all counties in the Region, except Wakulla County. Additionally, seven of the nine counties in the Region had over 20 percent of total personal income derived from transfer payments in 2001. Only Leon and Wakulla counties had lower transfer payments as a percentage of total income than the State's average. Benefits paid to retirees and veterans are not disaggregated from these totals, but the Region does not have unusually high concentrations of either population. In this context, these totals may serve as an other indicator that a number of the Region's households are experiencing poverty and/or unemployment, with this number possibly continuing to increase unless addressed by policy measures.

Table ED-7: Transfer Payments As a Percentage of Total Income, 1992, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001 and 2002

	1992	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002*
FLORIDA	18.4	15.4	15.2	15.1	15.4	16.2
Calhoun	33.0	27.9	27.1	29.0	31.5	30.3
Franklin	31.3	25.9	25.6	25.2	24.4	25.2
Gadsden	30.5	22.9	22.5	22.3	23.3	23.4
Gulf	31.5	27.8	29.6	29.6	30.1	29.7
Jackson	32.0	26.5	27.2	28.0	29.6	29.5
Jefferson	25.0	19.5	19.3	20.1	20.5	20.4
Leon	13.0	9.8	9.7	9.8	10.5	11.3
Liberty	33.3	21.0	20.9	21.1	21.7	19.3
Wakulla	20.5	14.0	13.1	12.8	12.6	16.1

Figures are not revised. Source: Florida Statistical Abstract; 2002 - 2004, Table 5.39.

To evaluate the relative economic status of the Region's population, we can compare the costs of goods and services of the nine counties with the rest of the state. Table ED-8 presents the relative costs of basic living expenses in comparison with the state average which is indexed at 1.00. The latest data (for 2003) indicates, in comparison with data from 2002, that the cost of living in most counties is approaching the state average. As the indices approach 1.0, local prices approach the state average. It can be seen that the although the ranking for most of the Region's counties is increasing, this rank is an indication that overall, the counties are actually more affordable as living locations than the rest of the state. Essentially the same bundle of housing, food, transportation, costs less in these counties than the state average. Only Leon County ranks in the upper half of the State's 67 counties. This may have a positive effect for relocations of retirees from south Florida and new relocations from the northern states.

Table ED-7's data predates the most recent spike in housing costs. Therefore, it will remain to be seen if the trend will continue or if the local housing market begins to have a more profound effect on the total costs of goods and services in the Region

As stated previously, a significant percentage of the Region's households live below the poverty level. While prices in the Apalachee Region are lower than some of the other areas of the State, the gap between prices and the purchasing power connoted by the Region's income levels is not great enough to indicate that basic needs can be met for a significant percentage of the Region's residents. While employment and income growth in the Apalachee Region appear to be growing at rates similar to those seen at the State level, the disparities among the counties of the Region are a concern, as counties do not appear to be experiencing comparable economic growth and opportunity among themselves and relative to the rest of the State.

Table ED-8: Relative Level of Prices, 2003 (Change 2002 to 2003)

	Price Index All Items (Annual Change)	Rank of Florida's 67 Counties (Annual Change)	Food	Health Care	Housing	Personal goods and services	Transportation
FLORIDA	100.00		100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Calhoun	92.81 (+4.47)	67 (+1)	93.94	84.40	79.83	95.46	98.02
Franklin	95.49 (+0.48)	36 (+9)	97.67	100.93	86.37	92.31	99.16
Gadsden	95.03 (3.06)	46 (+3)	101.04	94.01	83.12	95.33	98.57
Gulf	95.43 (+3.82)	37 (-13)	100.55	90.12	87.84	91.06	98.87
Jackson	93.71 (+4.41)	62 (-1)	101.88	88.08	80.15	93.93	96.96
Jefferson	94.66 (+0.95)	50 (+18)	102.44	86.01	83.10	95.64	99.04
Leon	96.71 (+1.15)	24 (+3)	102.90	93.81	87.57	97.82	99.28
Liberty	93.90 (+2.30)	61 (+10)	102.03	86.66	82.32	94.65	97.26
Wakulla	94.81 (+0.96)	48 (+17)	102.58	92.54	84.37	93.82	95.55
Regional Average	94.73	38.37	100.65	91.06	84.46	95.22	98.05

Source: Florida Statistical Abstract; 2003, 2004, Table 24.80.

Strategic Issue 1: Lack of Economic Diversification

Trends and Conditions

As demonstrated in the previous section, employment serves as the foundation of a healthy economy, and the number and diversity of jobs in the Region are important indicators of economic health. Tables ED-9 and ED-10 show the rates of job creation and new business growth in the Apalachee Region from 2000 to 2002. During 2001, seven of the Region's counties created jobs at a higher rate than the State and with Gadsden County experiencing a net job loss. Franklin County experienced the largest rate of change for jobs created in the Region in 2001. Likewise, during 2002, seven of the Region's counties created jobs at a rate higher than the State. However, Gadsden and Leon counties experienced a net job loss and Liberty County had the largest change in rate. Additionally during this period, three of the Region's counties created new businesses at a rate greater than the State but six performed at or below the State rate. Only Franklin County created both new jobs and new businesses at a rate greater than the State's rate.

Tables ED-11 and ED-12 display employment by sector in the counties of the Apalachee Region. All counties show government as the sector with the largest or second largest employment, as well as large employment in services. All but Wakulla county have a higher percentage of employment in the public sector than the State average, ranging from 13 percent to 41 percent, compared to Florida's 13 percent. In context of the Region's poor job creation rates and limited new business creation, this indicates that the Region has an underdeveloped private sector to provide income and employment in the Region.

Table ED-9: Job Creation, 2000-2003.

	Number of Employees , 2000	Number of Employees , 2001	Number of Employees, 2002*	Number of Employees, 2003	Percent Change, 2000-01	Percent Change, 2001-02	Percent Change, 2002-03
FLORIDA	7,221,000	7,639,000	7,653,000	7,744,000	5.79%	0.18%	1.19%
Calhoun	4,321	4,601	4,670	4,590	6.48%	1.50%	-1.71%
Franklin	4,390	4,865	5,067	5,299	10.82%	4.15%	4.58%
Gadsden	19,131	18,664	18,101	18,174	-2.44%	-3.02%	0.40%
Gulf	4,422	4,737	4,895	5,370	7.12%	3.34%	9.70%
Jackson	16,412	17,442	17,793	18,280	6.28%	2.01%	2.74%
Jefferson	4,465	4,867	4,775	5,264	9.00%	-1.89%	10.24%
Leon	127,271	133,873	132,463	137,393	5.19%	-1.05%	3.72%
Liberty	2,149	2,370	2,741	2,939	10.28%	15.65%	7.22%
Wakulla	11,191	12,116	12,481	12,909	8.27%	3.01%	3.43%

Source: Florida Statistical Abstract; 2002, 2003, and 2004; Table 6.11.

Table ED-10: New Business Creation.

	Number of Establish-ments 1999	Number of Establish-ments 2000	Percent Change, 1999-2000	Number of Establish-ments 2001	Percent Change, 2000-2001
FLORIDA	424,089	428,438	1.0	434,583	1.4
Calhoun	232	221	-5.0	198	-11.6
Franklin	302	318	5.3	313	-1.6
Gadsden	597	575	-3.8	582	1.2
Gulf	255	251	-1.6	267	6.4
Jackson	797	774	-3.0	776	.02
Jefferson	245	239	-2.5	236	-1.3
Leon	6,410	6,436	.04	6,539	1.6
Liberty	90	93	3.3	84	-10.7
Wakulla	321	346	7.8	354	2.3

Source: County Business Patterns, respective years, Census Bureau, U.S. Department of Commerce.

Table ED-11: Percentage of Employed by Sector, 2003

	Agricultural, forestry, and fishing	Mining	Construction	Manufacturing	Transportation, Communications and Public Utilities	Wholesale Trade
FLORIDA	1.36	.07	5.58	5.31	3.01	4.08
Calhoun	3.21	NA	5.41	2.12	NA	4.36
Franklin	.77	NA	3.45	2.96	1.24	3.12
Gadsden	9.75	NA	3.31	7.73	1.19	1.70
Gulf	1.23	NA	3.15	NA	.14	3.04
Jackson	1.12	.28	2.99	3.54	.73	2.04
Jefferson	6.35	NA	2.83	1.45	1.23	1.21
Leon	.17	NA	4.38	1.65	1.02	1.96

Liberty	3.52	NA	NA	NA	1.70	1.15
Wakulla	.06	NA	2.87	3.50	.90	.87

Table ED-12: Percentage of Employed by Sector, 2002 (cont.)

	Retail Trade	FIRE*	Services	Other	Government	Total 2002 Employment**
FLORIDA	12.10	4.20	41.58	3.20	13.27	7,642,000
Calhoun	7.04	1.77	8.65	1.9	19.15	4,854
Franklin	9.09	2.45	24.30	1.16	13.85	5,060
Gadsden	6.62	.96	11.93	1.70	28.01	18,424
Gulf	7.92	1.66	21.25	.90	27.12	4,856
Jackson	10.97	1.50	17.71	1.14	32.24	18-284
Jefferson	5.30	2.75	8.50	1.90	18.50	4,938
Leon	11.88	3.29	36.37	.52	41.48	132,149
Liberty	3.45	NA	11.51	1.33	28.49	2.692
Wakulla	3.98	1.36	14.35	.73	11.70	12,308

*Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate.
**Total wage and salary jobs. Detail may not add to totals due to disclosure, editing and/or rounding.
Source: Florida Statistical Abstract; 2003, Table 6.06, and 23.74

Excluding government, the largest private employers in each county in the Region are shown in Table ED-13. These are mainly in health care services, lumber-agriculture, and other services, with several companies in the service sector. In several counties, these companies employ significant percentages of the labor force in their respective counties. However, despite the Region's gradual diversification, the private sector in the Region's counties is still underdeveloped and could benefit from economic development initiatives.

Table ED-13: Products/Services of Largest Private-Sector Employers, May 2003

County	Products/Services of Three Largest Private-Sector Employers	Number Employed by Three Largest Private-Sector Employers	Percent of Total Labor Force
Calhoun	Trucking, Extended Health Care, Health Care	735	15.31
Franklin	Seafood, Utility, Healthcare, Real Estate	197	3.59
Gadsden	Mushrooms, Lumber, Printing, Computer circuits, Joists, Wholesale Food Distributor, Furniture, Mining, Utilities, Healthcare	2,420	12.64
Gulf	Telecommunications, Nursing Home & Rehabilitation, Hospital, Chemicals, Seafood, Grocer. Trusses, Electric COOP	821	15.28

Jackson	Laundry Equipment, Information technology, Wood Products Production, Auto Parts Distribution, Asphalt/Concrete Distributor, Wholesale Food Distributor, Highway Contracts, Elevators, Tool Manufacturing	619	8.14
Jefferson	Nursery, Nursing Home, Grocer, Greyhound Racing, Financial, Utilities, Distribution Center, Fertilizer, Art Framing	614	11.66
Leon	Health Care, Truck/Taxi Transportation, Grocer, Retail, Newspaper, Legal, Utilities, Defense Manufacturer	8,486	6.17
Liberty	Road Contractor, Lumber, Poles	320	10.63
Wakulla	Ordnance, Aerospace, Electronic Products, Computerized Statement & Invoice Billing, Nursing Home, Filters	700	5.23

Source: Enterprise Florida, 2003.

The economic benefits of natural resource-based industries in the Apalachee Region are immense. Natural resource-based industries employ thousands of people in the Apalachee Region and pump millions of dollars into local economies. To illustrate, the impact of agriculture industries is shown in Table ED-14.

Table ED-14: Economic Impact of Agriculture, 2002.

	Number of Farms 2002	**Market Value of Crops**	**Market Value of Livestock, Poultry, and Their Products**	**Number of Non-Seasonal Farm Workers***	**Number of Seasonal Farm Workers****
Calhoun	151	$13,152,000	$1,238,000	184	85
Franklin	20	$0	$385,000	D	D
Gadsden	343	$90,268,000	$1,108,000	1,192	1,136
Gulf	30	D	D	D	D
Jackson	920	$24,845,000	$11,624,000	261	572
Jefferson	418	$9,317,000	$11,837,000	218	117
Leon	281	$4,432,000	$2,228,000	83	119
Liberty	67	D	D	D	18
Wakulla	126	$642,000	$942,000	8	78

*Workers who are employed 150 + days; ** workers who are employed less than 150 days/year.
D indicates information not given to avoid disclosure of confidential information.
Source: 2002 Census of Agriculture, Census Bureau, United States Department of Commerce.

While natural resource-based industries contribute much to the Region's economy, they do not add value to products through processing to the same extent as other industries, such as manufacturing, making employment diversity desirable. Also, reliance on a few industries, especially if they traditionally pay low wages, can inhibit local economies and subject them to wider economic fluctuations. In this type of situation, loss of a major employer or a natural occurrence like an algae bloom in Apalachicola Bay will have adverse impacts on local economies in the Apalachee Region.

This lack of diversity is aggravated by the degree to which utilization of natural resources is affected by legislative restrictions, the breakdown of barriers to trade, or other factors, which may decrease future employment opportunities in these industries. To illustrate, the Net Ban Amendment, formally known as Article X, Section 16, of the Florida Constitution, was approved by the voters of Florida to limit the use of gill and other entangling nets in Florida waters. In addition, the breakdown of barriers to trade through treaties such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) means the Region faces increasing competition from other countries involved in resource-based industries, potentially driving down prices and profits. The reduction of tariffs through NAFTA and economic and market conditions like the devaluation of the Mexican peso can create a situation in which the Region's farmers lose competitiveness.

While natural-resource industries are a cornerstone of the Regional economy, the challenge for the future is the utilization of these resources in ways that will not be affected by scarcity, restriction of access, or other factors. Three ways to meet this challenge are to (1) diversify employment, (2) increase international trade to develop new markets and (3) increase employment, and develop alternative means of utilizing natural resources. These efforts would position the Region for greater economic growth and are key to ensuring the future economic health of the Region.

International trade is increasingly important as countries continue to move toward a global economy. It is the consensus of many that "rural counties, particularly those that rely on a single industry or economic sector, are not likely to fare well in international competition with Third World counterparts that have cheaper resources, land, or labor."[1] Increased global competition may have negative consequences for communities that are not prepared to create and expand new industries and markets.

International trade development is fostered by several programs in the Apalachee Region. The Governor's Office of Tourism, Trade and Economic Development, Enterprise Florida Inc., and the Florida International Affairs Commission have several programs at the state level. The City of Tallahassee has a "sister city" in Sligo, Ireland. The Apalachee Regional Planning Council is involved in a economic development exchange with the East Thuringia Region, State of Thuringia, Federal Republic of Germany, organized by the National Association of Development Organizations Research Foundation in cooperation with the German Federal Economics Ministry. These programs' missions range from information exchange and increased awareness to market development.

Another means of utilizing natural resources is through the development of ecotourism, the "travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and sustains the well-being of local people."[2] Ecotourism could provide the Region with a mechanism to preserve the numerous unique natural features and relatively undisturbed natural areas identified in the **Natural Resources of Regional Significance Element**, while keeping these resource areas in a productive use. Also, ecotourism would highlight the natural, cultural, and historical amenities the Region has to offer, contributing to efforts to increase tourism and business development in the Apalachee Region.

Current national and state trends in tourism are moving toward increased interest in and visitation of cultural, natural, and historical resources. The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation estimates that outdoors-oriented activities have a $7.8 billion impact on the state's economy[3] With the marketing efforts of agencies such as Visit Florida, nature-based travel in Florida has increased from 3.2 percent to 6.5 percent from 2002 to 2004. To illustrate the economic benefits of nature trails, the direct economic impact of the St. Marks Trail to Leon and Wakulla Counties has been estimated at $789,000 annually, with secondary impacts almost doubling this figure.[4] Ecotourism is a boom to communities, with low environmental impacts and high economic returns.

The Apalachee Region is well-positioned to take advantage of the growth of ecotourism because of its beautiful historic downtowns, cultural attractions, parks, trails, and archeological and historical sites, several of which are listed in Table ED-15 below. The attendance at State of Florida parks for the fiscal year 2002-2003 was 20,298,188. The attendance at State of Florida parks and historical sites in the Region are given below.

The Region's natural resources are a unique economic advantage that have been utilized to the Region's benefit for decades. Developing international markets and other uses for these resources adds value to natural resources that will position the Region for economic growth in future decades. Combined with efforts to diversify employment, these efforts will help to ensure a vital, well-developed economic base for the Apalachee Region.

Table ED- 15: Visits to State Parks and Historical Sites in the Apalachee Region, Fiscal Year 2002-2003

Facility	County	Number of Visitors
John Gorrie State Museum	Franklin	3,519
Orman House	Franklin	1,627
St. George Island State Park	Franklin	255,522
Constitution Convention State Museum	Gulf	3,314
Dead Lakes State Recreation Area	Gulf	1,895
St. Joseph Peninsula State Park	Gulf	205,471
Florida Caverns	Jackson	106,256
Three Rivers State Recreation Area	Jackson	21,770
Lake Jackson Mounds State archaeological Site	Leon	60,908
Lake Talquin/River Bluff Picnic Site	Leon	21,929
DeSoto Site	Leon	1,728
Alfred B. Maclay State Gardens	Leon	130,354
Natural Bridge Battlefield Historical Site	Leon	13,052
St. Marks Trail	Leon	166,098
Torreya State Park	Liberty	20,461

Ochlockonee River State Park	Wakulla	40,309
San Marcos de Apalachee State Historic Site	Wakulla	22,006
Wakulla Springs State Park	Wakulla	203,765

Source: State of Florida, Department of Environmental Protection, Recreation and Parks Management

REGIONAL GOAL ED 1.1: Employment diversification.

REGIONAL POLICY ED 1.1.1: Increase growth in the number of firms and employment in sectors or industries where the Region has little employment.

Implementation Strategies:

1. The ARPC will coordinate with local agencies to catalog the available development conditions and development incentives in the Apalachee Region.
2. The Governor's Office of Tourism, Trade and Economic Development; Enterprise Florida, Inc.; and Opportunity Florida, Inc., will assist local governments and economic development agencies in utilizing available incentives and programs at the state level designed to diversify employment, such as the Florida Qualified Industry Program.

REGIONAL POLICY ED 1.1.2: Provide vocational curricula that reflects the current and projected needs for training in the Region.

Implementation Strategies:

1. Chambers of Commerce and economic development organizations will coordinate the development of vocational curricula with business representatives.
2. The Governor's Office of Tourism, Trade and Economic Development; Enterprise Florida, Inc.; and Opportunity Florida, Inc., will assist local governments and economic development agencies in utilizing available incentives and programs at the state level designed to diversify employment, such as the Florida Quick Response Training Program.

Indicators:

1. Distribution of firms in employment sectors.
2. Distribution of jobs in employment sectors

REGIONAL GOAL ED 1.2: Enhancement of international trade opportunities for businesses located in the Apalachee Region.

REGIONAL POLICY ED 1.2.1: Increase efforts to develop international markets and contacts for businesses in the Apalachee Region.

Implementation Strategies:

1. Local officials and other agencies involved in agriculture should explore the feasibility of specialty-crop production and the development of processing enterprises

to add value to agricultural production and increase the number of products available for export.
2. The State of Florida should continue to provide assistance for trade development in the Region.

REGIONAL POLICY ED 1.2.1: Increase the range of products from the Region sold internationally.

Implementation Strategy:
1. The ARPC, in cooperation with local governments, Chambers of Commerce, business representatives, and economic development organizations, will develop a regional marketing strategy for international application.

Indicators:
1. Dollar value of exports from the Region.
2. Change in the number of products exported from the Region.

REGIONAL GOAL ED 1.3: Sustainable use of the Region's natural resources.

REGIONAL POLICY ED 1.3.1: Develop initiatives to increase and promote ecotourism as an alternative use of natural resources.

Implementation Strategies:
1. The ARPC will compile a Regional ecotourism report identifying relevant facilities and successful efforts, as well as groups involved in ecotourism.
2. Local economic development organizations and governments, with assistance from the ARPC, should inventory existing and potential ecotourism attractions in the Region, their ownership, and needed infrastructure.
3. Local governments, if feasible, should consider infrastructure improvements that support ecotourism as part of their Capital Improvements Program.
4. Local governments should build public-private partnerships between government and private landowners to ensure the development of ecotourism facilities is coordinated and occurs to mutual benefit.

REGIONAL POLICY ED 1.3.2: Promote the Region's unique natural features and tourism activities to areas of the state and nation most likely to send visitors.

Implementation Strategies:
1. The ARPC, in conjunction with local governments, Chambers of Commerce, Florida Department of State, the Governor's Office of Tourism Trade and Economic Development (OTTED) , Visit Florida, and economic development organizations, will design and implement a regional recreational facilities promotion campaign to attract visitors to the Region. The campaign should include advertisement, publications, visual aids, and presentations.

2. Local governments and Chambers of Commerce should consider the adoption of informal or formal agreements to participate in the promotion of the Region as a whole.
3. A team, consisting of representatives of local government, Chambers of Commerce, Florida Department of State, OTTED business, and public land stewards, should prepare a study determining the geographic areas to target when promoting the Region's attractions.

Indicators:

1. Number of acres which are managed and available for ecotourism in the Region.
2. Number of visitors and visitor days to the Region's national and state forests, parks, and other recreation areas.

Strategic Issue 2: Limited Resources for Economic Development

Trends and Conditions

The current economic development environment makes the development of human, physical, and financial resources all essential for economic growth. Nearly 50,000 economic development organizations nationally compete for the 500 major industry relocations or start-ups that occur each year.[5] These organizations and their host communities, competing for industry against difficult odds, make the development of an integrated strategy utilizing various types of efforts critical.

One type of effort, the attraction of large companies, is pursued by communities for the influx of revenues and large number of jobs these companies provide. The Apalachee Region has available large parcels of inexpensive land, a mostly low-wage labor pool, and other attractive features to potential employers. However, the ability of counties of the Apalachee Region to compete for large-employer relocations is constrained by several factors. First, economic development organizations usually have few staff members and limited budgets. Second, business support services vary in their availability by county.[6] Finally, many local governments do not have the funds to provide additional infrastructure and may not be able to provide required matching funds needed for available grant programs. These factors make the attraction of large companies a component, not a cornerstone, of an effective economic development strategy.

Turning to small business, the percentage of employment provided by small business in each county is provided in Table ED-16. All counties in the Apalachee Region report small businesses as a significant percentage of total private employment. One of the reasons for the high percentage of small businesses in the Region is that they generally require fewer incentives and infrastructure for their promotion. Clearly, initiatives to address economic development concerns in the Region should incorporate measures to promote small business development.

While they provide a significant share of employment, small business owners may have difficulty establishing and expanding their businesses. Entrepreneurial problems cited by the local economic development community and local small business owners include the inability of some local entrepreneurs to put personal funds into their businesses, undercapitalization, lack of knowledge regarding national and state economic trends likely to affect their business, and lack of business skills such as business planning. In addition, small businesses, especially those seeking capital to begin operations, may have difficulty getting loans from banks because of the higher risk involved in these transactions. An empirical analysis of the lending practices of banks in the Apalachee Region is made difficult by the fact that banks do not report information on business lending based on size of business to the federal or state government. However, increased access to capital is seen by many in the economic development, business, and banking communities as an important factor in encouraging regional business development, job creation, and economic growth.

Table ED-16: Small Business Establishments and Employment, 2001.*

	Small Business Establishments, 1993	Percentage of Total Private Employment, 1993	Small Business Establishments, 2001	Percentage of Total Private Employment, 2001
Calhoun	168	70.54	190	95.95
Franklin	200	63.60	308	98.40
Gadsden	477	34.92	557	95.70
Gulf	170	30.51	263	98.50
Jackson	529	42.81	748	96.39
Jefferson	187	75.45	231	97.88
Leon	4,381	49.71	6,199	94.80
Liberty	69	52.44	82	97.61
Wakulla	184	50.20	349	98.58

* Small business is defined as firms with 49 employees or less.
Source: County Business Patterns, U.S. Census Bureau, 2001.

Several, local programs exist to assist entrepreneurs with business planning and capitalization. Two Small Business Development Centers (at Florida Agricultural & Mechanical University in Tallahassee and at Gulf Coast Community College in Panama City) serve the Apalachee Region and help entrepreneurs with business planning and locating capital. Furthermore, there are several public financing programs intended to provide gap financing when the private sector is unable to do so. These programs include the microlending programs of Community Equity Investments, Inc. (located in Pensacola and providing capital to a 16 county area that includes the Apalachee Region); First Florida Finance Capital Corporation (which provides SBA 504, fixed asset financing); Rural Economic and Community Development of the United States Department of Agriculture (which provides business loan guarantees); and the City of Tallahassee's Revolving Loan Fund Program.

In addition, the ARPC operates two Revolving Loan Funds (RLFs). The larger fund is funded by EDA and the smaller fund which is designated primarily for micro-lending is funded by the ARPC. Both RLFs operate as sources of capital for businesses in the Apalachee Region. The ARPC's RLFs accept more risk in their lending portfolio than local banks, meaning entrepreneurs can access capital more easily. While these programs have assisted business owners in the Region, as a whole, small business start-ups appear to lack the training and capital necessary for stability.

The challenges of economic development in the national climate of competition make the maximization of economic development resources essential. This can occur through careful planning and shared efforts at the Regional level, as well as incorporating strategies that address the needs of firms large and small, existing in and relocating to the Apalachee Region. The commuting patterns of the labor force mentioned previously highlight the fact that employment in one county benefits others, as their citizens travel to other counties to find employment. Acting as one, the counties of the Apalachee Region can work together to the greatest effect by sharing resources and efforts.

REGIONAL GOAL ED 2.1: Job creation and retention.

REGIONAL POLICY ED 2.1.1: Increase the flow of capital aimed at assisting entrepreneurs with job creation.

Implementation Strategies:

1. The ARPC will develop a Regional database of sources of capital for small business and note accessibility to entrepreneurs.
2. The ARPC will expand the marketing program for the ARPC Revolving Loan Fund, a source of capital for business owners who are unable to access private lender funds.

REGIONAL POLICY ED 2.1.2: Improve the flow of information to businesses and industries inside and outside the Region to better inform them of the opportunities for startup, expansion, or relocation in the Region.

Implementation Strategies:

1. ARPC staff will use its Geographic Information System to classify land and infrastructure available for development.
2. The ARPC will facilitate the creation of sites on the World Wide Web for economic development agencies in the Region.
3. Local economic development organizations will note the availability of business services in their communities and make this information available to the ARPC.

REGIONAL POLICY ED 2.1.3: Provide economic development leadership training and coordination to maximize the limited resources of local economic development organizations.

Implementation Strategies:

1. Local governments should identify, establish, or designate a lead economic development organization.
2. The ARPC will develop and implement a regional economic development training strategy workshop for the membership of local economic development organizations.
3. The ARPC will make its services available to design and implement a regional marketing campaign, in cooperation with local economic development practitioners.

REGIONAL POLICY 2.1.4: Assist small businesses in obtaining capital for start-up and expansion.

Implementation Strategies:

1. The ARPC , in coordination with local Chambers of Commerce should conduct community surveys to determine the needs of small business in the Apalachee Region.
2. The ARPC, FAMU Small Business Development Center, and local economic development programs should establish a working relationship with local banks and encourage bank-sponsored programs for small businesses in the Region.
3. Local economic development organizations should increase efforts to make information about business financing available to local entrepreneurs.

Indicators:

1. Number of entrepreneurs accessing capital.
2. Number of businesses created.
3. Number of jobs created.

Strategic Issue 3: Barriers to Labor-Market Entry and Quality Employment

Trends and Conditions

In the Apalachee Region, barriers to labor-market entry and quality employment have been noted previously as they relate to employers, particularly lack of employment diversity and low average income from wages. To balance this picture, a discussion of these barriers as they affect economic development is required. Major barriers in the Apalachee Region include the education levels of the labor force; the special needs of women, particularly female heads of household; and the availability of affordable housing near job centers. These barriers may contribute to the high percentage of residents in the Region that live below the poverty level.

The earnings of the labor force are, to some degree, related to educational attainment. The educational attainment of persons aged 25 and over in the Region is listed in Table ED-17. The educational attainment of the labor pool determines the type of employment potential employees may pursue and the compensation they are likely to earn. Over the past 20 years, the opportunities for a person with a high-school education or less to obtain a well-paying job have greatly diminished, with income disparities likely to occur between persons of different educational backgrounds.[7]

Another barrier to obtaining quality employment is the special needs of women. As seen in Table ED-6, households headed by women are more likely to be living below the poverty level, especially if they include young children. The quality and availability of employment for these women, likely the sole wage earners in their households, is key to raising their families' incomes above the poverty level.

Table ED-17: Educational Attainment of Persons Aged 25 and Over, 2000.

County	Total	Less than 9th grade	Some High School	High School Diploma	Some College	Associate Degree	Bachelor's Degree	Graduate or Professional Degree

Calhoun	8,884	12.8%	18%	38.6%	18.6%	4.3%	4.7%	3%
Franklin	8,202	8.1%	23.6%	36.4%	16.2%	3.3%	6.3%	6.2%
Gadsden	28,932	11.2%	18.1%	35.9%	17.8%	4%	8%	4.9%
Gulf	9,527	8.6%	18.8%	37.1%	20%	5.2%	6.6%	3.5%
Jackson	31,771	11.2%	19.7%	32.7%	18.6%	5.1%	7.9%	4.9%
Jefferson	8,911	10.4%	16.4%	32.2%	19.6%	4.5%	11%	5.9%
Leon	137,537	3.1%	7.8%	18.9%	20.3%	8.2%	24%	17.7%
Liberty	4,828	9.9%	24.6%	40.4%	14.7%	3%	4%	3.4%
Wakulla	15,211	6.3%	15.3%	34.9%	21.8%	5.9%	10.1%	5.6%

Source: Census 2000, U.S. Bureau of the Census; 2000.

A final barrier to attaining quality employment is the lack of affordable housing located near job centers. Table ED-3 showed high percentages of the labor pool commuting to work in some counties of the Region, with five of nine counties having 38 percent or more of the workforce leaving their respective counties to find employment. These commuting patterns place personal burdens on workers and act to limit employment if a worker does not have adequate transportation. These commuting patterns also have negative effects on resident county revenues, as workers generally spend their incomes near places of employment for convenience.

Initiatives to address the barriers to employment outlined above would contribute to the economic health and prospects of the Region. Greater incomes from employment result in higher amounts of disposable income, which increases personal prosperity and the likelihood that more dollars will circulate through local economies. These benefits will be realized by increasing educational and employment opportunities available in the Region and making them more accessible to the labor force.

REGIONAL GOAL ED 3.1: A well-trained labor force.

REGIONAL POLICY ED 3.1.1: Coordinate with the Workforce Investment Act programs and other vocational and education programs in the Region to develop and implement training programs that will complement economic diversification efforts.

Implementation Strategies:

1. Vocational programs should coordinate with business, industry, community development corporations, and economic development organizations in the development of vocational curricula.
2. Vocational programs and educational institutions should coordinate to assess the number of sites and location of available programs to determine if any service gaps exist.
3. Local economic development organizations should facilitate the development of new service sites or program offerings through assistance with site selection and grant development.
4. The ARPC will act as a clearinghouse of educational and vocational resources, including available programs, grants, and funding information.

Indicators:

1. Number of new vocational and educational programs offered.
2. Number of vocational and education program sites.

REGIONAL GOAL ED 3.2: Improved opportunity for female heads of household living in poverty.

REGIONAL POLICY ED 3.2.1: Develop employment opportunities and improve their accessibility for female heads of household living in poverty.

Implementation Strategies:

1. Local governments, with the assistance of local economic development organizations and the ARPC, should develop projects to assist persons living in poverty and pursue funding from programs that assist low-to-moderate-income persons, such as the Community Development Block Grant Program.
2. Local governments and economic development organizations should enhance relationships with non-profit organizations and government agencies serving the needs of women living in poverty, such as Project Independence of the Florida Department of Labor, to assess community needs and service gaps.
3. Local economic development organizations should seek to match local employers with qualified job applicants in their communities living in poverty.

Indicator:

Number of persons assisted with finding employment through the Region's One-Stop centers.

Strategic Issue 4: Integration of Land and Infrastructure Planning with Economic Development Initiatives

Trends and Conditions

Proper land use and infrastructure planning, a benefit to any community, is particularly important to the Apalachee Region. To illustrate, in Liberty County, which includes the Apalachicola National Forest, the federal government owns 51 percent of the land in the county. When the holdings of state government and large corporations are factored in, only 12 percent of Liberty County's land is available for development. This figure does not account for development suitability issues, such as land use designation and the carrying capacity of the land, which may further reduce the total land available for development. Additionally, available land may not be served by centralized water and sewer infrastructure or adequate roads. The State mandates concurrency, the provision of adequate services to an area before development occurs. Therefore, appropriate locational decisions regarding development and infrastructure placement are an essential component of economic development.

Infrastructure and other services, such as adequate transportation systems, are crucial to development in the Region. New or expanding industries may have a need for land that is not currently being served by infrastructure, or may demand greater infrastructure capacity than is present. These conditions may restrict the type of development that can be attracted to, or expanded in, the Region and influence location of development within the Region. These limitations contribute to development disparities between the Apalachee Region and other areas of Florida, resulting in fewer employment opportunities and smaller economies for the counties of the Region.

The high capitalization needed for infrastructure installation often exceeds the available fiscal resources of local governments. The tax base in counties of the Apalachee Region usually cannot support the costs of providing new infrastructure for several reasons: lack of industry; smaller tax revenues from land used in silviculture; and low housing values.

Governments' ability to garner revenue through property taxes is limited by a 10 mill statutory cap on the millage rate.[8] A mill is an assessment of $1.00 for every $1,000 of taxable assessed property value. As Table ED-18 illustrates, many of the Region's governments are currently assessing at or are close to the maximum rate, limiting their ability to compensate for future revenue shortages through an increase in property taxes. As revenue from federal grants declines in a climate of fiscal austerity, governments are being forced to cut expenses and capital improvements, or develop new funding sources.

Table ED-18: County Base Millage Rates,2004-2006

County Government	2004	2006
Calhoun	10.0000	10.0000
Franklin	5.5970	3.8437
Gadsden	10.0000	10.0000
Gulf	6.5000	4.6371
Jackson	8.5050	8.0000
Jefferson	10.0000	10.0000
Leon	8.5600	7.9900
Liberty	10.0000	10.0000
Wakulla	9.5000	8.1800

Source: Telephone Survey, 3/8/07.

By directing growth through increased densities and careful planning of infrastructure development, local governments may be able to overcome the apparent lack of land and infrastructure for some types of development, spurring economic development in the area. In addition, in the Apalachee Region, the majority of the public facilities for development, such as water systems, sewer systems, solid waste facilities, and roadways, are located within or adjacent to incorporated areas with discernible downtowns. These areas serve or have served as centers of commerce and community activity. The reuse of existing facilities may also concentrate development where infrastructure already exists, and have the additional benefit of preserving historic buildings and downtown areas. These planning efforts should be complemented by the development of additional funding sources for local governments to enable them to provide necessary infrastructure in a well-planned manner.

REGIONAL GOAL ED 4.1: Integration of land use planning and economic development programs.

REGIONAL POLICY ED 4.1.1: Improve local land use controls in the Region to assure that development is directed to those areas which have in place, or agreements to provide, the land and water resources, fiscal abilities, and the service capacity to accommodate growth in an environmentally acceptable manner.

Implementation Strategy:

The ARPC will provide technical assistance to local governments in the preparation of their Evaluation and Appraisal Reports. This assistance will include, but not be limited to, assessment of land development regulations and implementation of their adopted local comprehensive plans.

REGIONAL POLICY ED 4.1.2: Direct new development to areas that have underutilized infrastructure and service capacity and away from those areas that do not have these capacities.

Implementation Strategies:

1. Local Planning Agencies, with assistance from Florida Department of Community Affairs, Florida Department of Transportation, and the ARPC, should study the impacts to existing and planned infrastructure when considering changes in zoning, density, or land use, as adopted in their comprehensive plans.
2. Local governments should consider the adoption of impact fee ordinances for developments creating a need for new public facilities.
3. Local governments should inventory public and private infrastructure, noting the condition of facilities.

REGIONAL POLICY ED 4.1.3: Use the maximum operational capacity of existing public facilities before new facilities are constructed.

Implementation Strategy:

Local governments should designate in their comprehensive plans those areas in which there is a below-capacity use of existing public facilities, and each new public facility development project should show evidence that:

a. it will be serving demand over and above that required to fully utilize existing public facility carrying capacity; or
b. the cost of new construction is less than the cost of rehabilitating, expanding, or reusing existing facilities.

REGIONAL POLICY ED 4.1.4: Reuse existing facilities prior to capital improvement expenditures for new construction.

Implementation Strategies:

1. The ARPC will collect and maintain information regarding downtown redevelopment efforts and will make this information available to local governments upon request.

2. The ARPC will review proposed downtown development plans for local jurisdictions as requested. The ARPC will request assistance from the Florida Department of State and the Florida Department of Community Affairs in reviewing these documents.

REGIONAL POLICY ED 4.1.5: Promote the multi-jurisdictional use of unused or underutilized public facilities within the Region.

Implementation Strategy:

Local governments should enter into local agreements to jointly fund and operate public facilities that have interjurisdictional service areas.

REGIONAL POLICY ED 4.1.6: Improve integration of public facility planning and economic development into local planning and growth management.

Implementation Strategies:

1. The ARPC will provide technical assistance to local governments concerning the implementation of a Concurrency Management System and a Capital Improvements Program.
2. The ARPC will assist local governments to incorporate economic development activities into their local comprehensive plans.
3. Businesses, institutions, agencies, and governments within the Region should cooperate to exchange ideas and information on the funding of public facilities.
4. The ARPC will collect information about public facility financing and will make it available to local governments in the Region through the Council's publications and library.
5. ARPC will request the assistance of colleges and universities in the Region in the preparation of forums and workshops on public facility financing.

REGIONAL POLICY ED 4.1.7: Use public facilities to guide development and implement adopted local and regional plans.

Implementation Strategies:

1. All local governments in the Region will comply with the provisions of their locally adopted comprehensive plan when considering the siting of new public facilities in the Region.
2. Local planning personnel should review each proposed new public facility to determine if it will only meet projected needs or if it will attract new growth to its service area.

REGIONAL POLICY ED 4.1.8: Ensure that new development which creates a demand for new public facilities be responsible for financing its fair share of the cost of the new facilities.

Implementation Strategies:

1. Local governments in the Region should consider the adoption of ordinances that will transfer the cost of development impact to those creating the impact.
2. ARPC should collect information about impact fee ordinances and make it available to the local governments in the Region.

REGIONAL POLICY ED 4.1.9: Base public facility location on projected population trends and the contiguous extension of existing services.

Implementation Strategy:

Local governments should prioritize the extension of public services with areas contiguous to existing service areas taking precedence over non-contiguous areas.

Indicators:

1. Percent reduction in unused or under used facility capacity.
2. Number of existing facilities which are adapted for future facility needs.
3. Number of multi-jurisdictional public facilities.
4. Number of Economic Development Elements added to local government comprehensive plans.
5. Number of new developments served by existing facilities.

REGIONAL GOAL ED 4.2: Downtown redevelopment.

REGIONAL POLICY ED 4.2.1: Improve technical assistance in the review, financing, and implementation of downtown development and redevelopment plans.

Implementation Strategies:

1. The ARPC will collect and maintain information regarding downtown redevelopment efforts and will make this information available to local governments upon request.
2. The ARPC will review proposed downtown development plans for local jurisdictions as requested. The ARPC will request assistance from the Florida Department of State and Florida Department of Community Affairs in reviewing these documents.

REGIONAL POLICY ED 4.2.2: Increase the adaptive reuse of existing buildings, particularly those of historical or architectural significance.

Implementation Strategies:

1. The ARPC will recommend policies to encourage adaptive reuse of historical structures, especially in downtown areas, during the review of local comprehensive plans and amendments.
2. The ARPC will maintain information regarding financial assistance for the preservation of historic structures and will make this information available to local governments upon request.
3. Local governments and agencies concerned with downtown redevelopment will be assisted in the submittal of applications to the Main Street Program of the Florida Department of State.

Indicators:

1. Number of strategic plans established and implemented to redevelop downtown areas.
2. Number of municipalities with community redevelopment agencies, designated enterprise zones, CDBGs for downtown investment projects, tax increment financing, or other tax incentives for private investment in downtown areas.
3. Number of capital improvements and development approvals within downtowns areas.
4. Number of successful Main Street Program applications to the Florida Department of State.

Strategic Issue 5: Developing Emerging Technology and Telecommunications Assets

<u>Trends and Conditions</u>

Many economic development and business professionals have stressed the importance of telecommunications in the "New Economy", characterized by a national shift of workers away from manufacturing and into services, a sector that is growing at an unprecedented speed through the use of computer power.[9] Enhanced telecommunications can bring a brighter economic future to rural communities, but also "spell disaster for those communities who are not prepared."[10] With lower population densities, fewer businesses demanding technology services, and less funding for infrastructure improvements, rural areas are often in danger of being overlooked by private providers of technology services.

In the Apalachee Region, Leon County has a telecommunications infrastructure that is far above the norm, spurred by the presence of both the State Capital and major universities. As the seat of state government, Tallahassee is the site of more than half of Florida's computer power.[11] Also, the presence of Florida State University's Supercomputer Computations Research Institute led to the creation of Tallahassee Freenet, a community-based electronic network offering Internet and World Wide Web access. Tallahassee has more than 450 Local Area Networks (LAN) and a Metropolitan Area Network (MAN), which is a fiber-optic cable encircling downtown. This infrastructure allows businesses to network dispersed computing sites and use video-conferencing and other applications.

The availability of telecommunications infrastructure has "significantly influenced location decisions for industries such as telemarketing, financial services, mail-order retailing, and...processing operations,"[12] as companies relocate or grow where infrastructure and skilled workers are available. Tallahassee is recognized as being in a competitive position for this development.[13]

The remainder of the Apalachee Region is served by local telephone companies, but their distance from the service centers of major long-distance companies in Tallahassee can result in higher charges for services. Traditional telecom companies have limited high speed presence in rural areas. Citing low customer densities, the telecoms have not deployed high speed internet access. Citing unfair competition they are also attempting to frustrate the involvement of local governments in providing their own cable or wireless systems.

Lacking a strict definition, high-technology industries are usually classified as those that devote a high percentage of resources to research and development and those that heavily utilize scientific, engineering, or technical employment or processes.[14] The national shift to a "New Economy" has brought growth in these industries, primarily in information services and management.

Looking at a broader perspective, the Region's technology and telecommunications infrastructure, combined with its educational facilities, present the Region as a likely candidate for growth in high-technology industries. The presence of Florida State University and Florida Agricultural & Mechanical University position the Apalachee Region for the development of high-technology industries clustered around their facilities, including the National High Magnetic Field Laboratory, the Supercomputer/Computations Research Institute at Florida State, and numerous technology-based programs enjoying a national reputation. The idea of "clustering" holds that an area with universities or firms in a particular industry can achieve a critical mass in the industry, as more firms in the industry are attracted to the area by the specialized expertise, suppliers, and the available labor pool with needed skills. This type of critical mass would hold benefits for all counties in the Region, as new employers and firms are attracted to and expanded in the Region. Also, greater private-sector investment in technology infrastructure in the Region would occur, as companies demand more and better services and other companies invest in infrastructure to supply this demand. Finally, the Region's workers would have more skills to offer employers, increasing employability and wages.

<u>REGIONAL GOAL ED 5.1:</u> Telecommunications capacity enhancement.

***REGIONAL POLICY ED 5.1.1*:** Increase access to telecommunications and technology by agencies and individuals in the Region.

***Implementation Strategies*:**

1. The ARPC will assist efforts to educate local communities regarding the use and applications of local telecommunications infrastructure.
2. The ARPC will explore possible grant funding, as well as offer grant-writing expertise to local governments and non-profits, to increase telecommunications and technology resources and education in the Region.
3. Local governments should support outreach and education efforts focusing on emerging technologies.

***REGIONAL POLICY ED 5.1..*:** Promote the Region's technology and telecommunications assets to businesses inside and outside of the Region.

Implementation Strategies:

1. The ARPC will act as an information resource for economic development practitioners on telecommunications and technology issues.
2. Economic development practitioners and agencies should promote technology and telecommunications assets as part of their marketing efforts.

3. The ARPC will support local government deployment of public or public-private enterprises that bring high speed internet access to business and private customers in the Region.

REGIONAL POLICY ED 5.1.3: Provide skills training and retraining for the regional labor force in order to increase workers' technological expertise.

Implementation Strategies:

1. Vocational programs should coordinate with business, industry, and local community networks to develop vocational curricula that increase the technological literacy and expertise of the regional labor force.
2. Local community networks should develop training opportunities tailored to the labor force, with the support of local economic development organizations and the private sector.

Indicators:

1. Number of registered users of local networks.
2. Number of users assisted through education efforts.
3. Worker placement as a result of retraining.

REGIONALLY SIGNIFICANT RESOURCES AND FACILITIES

Regional labor force
Tallahassee Freenet
Gadsden Community Network
Public-sector programs that promote international trade development
Public-sector financing programs
Financial institutions
Electric power generation plants and substations
Power transmission lines of 230 kv and lesser voltage serving a multi-county jurisdiction
Fiber-optic cables and other telecommunications infrastructure
Affordable housing located near job centers
Educational Institutions and Facilities
Florida State University (FSU)
Florida Agricultural & Mechanical University
National High Magnetic Field Laboratory at FSU
Supercomputer Research Institute at FSU
FAMU/FSU Engineering School
Lively Technical Center
Chipola College
Tallahassee Community College
K-12 schools
Economic Development Organizations
Apalachee Regional Planning Council
Local Chambers of Commerce
Industrial Development Authorities
Private Industry Councils
Small Business Development Centers
Community Redevelopment Agencies
Florida Department of Community Affairs
Florida State Rural Development Council
Opportunity Florida
Florida's Great Northwest
Enterprise Florida
Federal Economic Development Organizations
Main Street Programs
Community Development Corporations
Archaeological and Historic Sites Listed on the Department of State Master Site List

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