



# Q1 21/22 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

The CFDC kicked off the start of the 2021|2022 fiscal year with the 2021 Annual Meeting. During the meeting, investors awarded Polk County Newcomer Nucor Steel Florida and 34-year staple Springer Construction with Central Florida Development Council's most prestigious honors. Springer Construction received the **Jim Brantley Economic Development Award for Success in Small Business** and Nucor Steel Florida received the **George W. Harris Jr. Economic Development Award for Success in Large Business.**

Outgoing Chair Dr. Angela Garcia Falconetti presented state Senator Kelli Stargel with the **2021 Chair's Award** for her work supporting economic development in a ceremony prior to the annual meeting.

Also at the meeting, Bart Allen, an attorney specializing in land use and environmental law at Peterson & Myers in Lakeland, was installed as the new chairman of the board.

**Congratulations to the 2021|2022 Board of Directors elected by the investor membership during the annual meeting.**

- CHAIR**  
Bart Allen  
Peterson & Myers PA
- VICE-CHAIR**  
Maggie Mariucci  
Florida Polytechnic University
- SECRETARY/TREASURER**  
Gene Conrad  
Lakeland Linder International Airport
- PAST CHAIR**  
Dr. Angela Garcia Falconetti  
Polk State College
- TALENT PIPELINE CHAIR**  
Dr. Orathai Northern  
Polk State College
- COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS CHAIR**  
Deena Ware  
City of Winter Haven
- COMPETITIVENESS & ADVOCACY CHAIR**  
Dave Shepp  
The Southern Group
- INVESTOR RELATIONS CHAIR**  
Pete Frantzis  
Cydeo Wealth Partners

- AVIATION COMMITTEE CHAIR**  
Rick Garcia  
Gulf Coast Avionics
- COUNTY MANAGER DESIGNEE**  
Todd Dantzler  
SVN Saunders Ralston Dantzler
- COUNTY COMMISSION DESIGNEE**  
Commissioner George Lindsey  
Polk County Board of County Commissioners
- BOARD MEMBER**  
Emery Smith  
Ben Hill Griffin
- BOARD MEMBER**  
Drew Wilcox  
Nucor
- BOARD MEMBER**  
Randy Knapp  
RLK Real Estate & Development
- BOARD MEMBER**  
General Jake Polumbo  
Two Blue Aces





## PROMOTE POLK COUNTY AS FLORIDA'S BEST PLACE FOR BUSINESS

During the first quarter, CFDC received 14 new projects, which doubles the number of projects for the first quarter of the prior year. What is normally a quiet holiday turned into an intense quarter of new business opportunities and adds to the County's healthy pipeline of 78 projects. While most of the leads came from our state partners at Enterprise Florida (EFI), five leads (36%) were generated from centers of influence and the CFDC.

At the **CFDC Board of Director's Board Advance**, leadership set a goal that 60% of the new jobs and capital investment coming into Polk County will be within the strategic tech-enabled industries of health sciences, advanced manufacturing, autonomous vehicles and aviation & aerospace. First quarter project pipeline included 11 manufacturing projects in addition to one aerospace, and two R&D projects. **Tech-enabled projects for Q1 2022 reached 64%**, and we anticipate that the number of jobs and CapEx will trend similarly for those projects that land in Polk County.

During the quarter, CFDC Business Development staff participated in the Industrial Asset Management Council, the Fall Economic Development Institute, and the Area Development Consultants Forum as well as the International Economic Development and the Florida Economic Development Councils' conferences. Staff also attended the Automated Vehicle Summit.



## FACILITATE COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS

In November, the CFDC was pleased to partner with CareerSource Polk and the Countywide Higher Education Workgroup of the Talent Pipeline Committee to host the **2021 Veterans and Community Job Fair**. The event, held at the AdventHealth Fieldhouse and Conference Center in Winter Haven, attracted over 80 employers from throughout the county looking to recruit high-quality talent. Participants praised the in-person recruitment opportunity.

December featured CFDC's **Annual Investor Holiday Reception**. Thank you to our investors for joining us and for your continued support in building Polk County's economic prosperity.





## ADVOCATE FOR KEY BUSINESS ISSUES

October marked the conclusion of CFDC’s business resiliency workshops highlighting a variety of business resiliency topics for small and minority-owned businesses such as Financing Disaster Planning International Marketing Growth & Expansion Marketing and Business Continuity. Recordings of past workshops are available on the CFDC YouTube page.

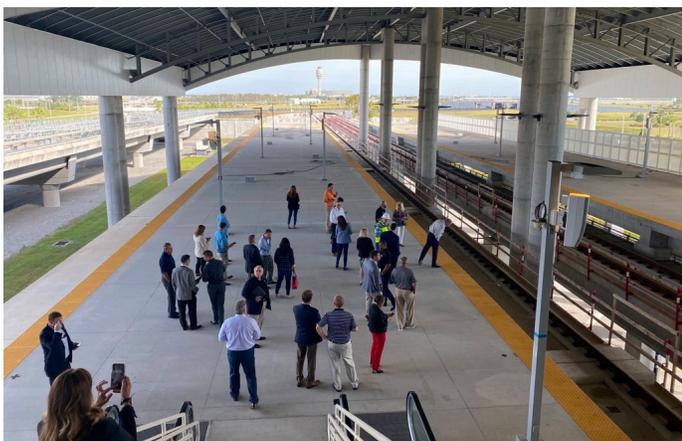
A report by Emsi Burning Glass analyzed all U.S. counties to see who’s finding success in talent attraction. Overall, **Polk County ranks 9th** in the nation for large counties (100k+ population). Rankings are based on how well counties draw new residents, grow a skilled workforce, and increase educational attainment.



## ADVANCE STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

A Central Florida Development Council-led trip to nearby Lake Nona showed attendees a “great example of **purposeful development**” that focuses on advanced mobility, a targeted industry in Polk County. Lake Nona is a tangible example of what can happen with collaboration, innovation and public/private partnerships working together to produce a high-quality product. During the visit participants heard from leadership with Tavistock, the developer of Lake Nona, Beep and Lilium.

Attendees also visited the intermodal terminal at MCO to meet with officials from Brightline, which operates a privately run train in South Florida and is now expanding to Orlando. SunTrax and the Florida Turnpike Enterprise, which operates it, GOAA (the Greater Orlando Aviation Authority) and Lilium, a company that’s developing air taxis and providing its first service from Lake Nona, also provided attendees with information.



# POLK COUNTY ECONOMIC UPDATE

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

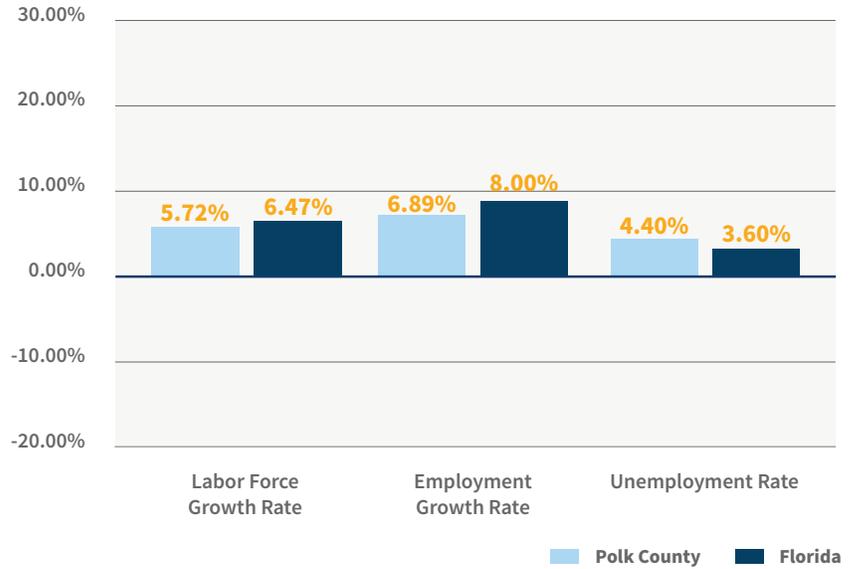


During the fourth quarter of 2021, the Labor Force and Employment levels for Polk County climbed to all-time highs, with year-over-year gains of 5.72% and 6.89%, respectively. Additionally, Unemployment levels continue to drop towards record lows.

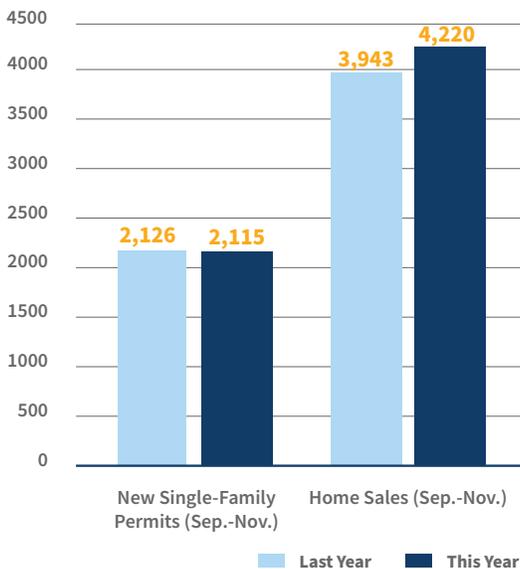
As of November, the unemployment rate in Polk County fell to 4.4%, while Florida's unemployment rate fell to 3.6%. The labor markets are still in a period of adjusting to the shocks of the COVID-related shutdowns, re-openings, and stimulus funds, along with widespread supply chain issues. There is an expectation that the Federal Reserve will act to cool things off and prevent runaway inflation.

From September through November 2021, according to My Florida Regional MLS, home sales were effectively flat (down 0.5%), while the median sales price was up 16.9%, year-over-year. According to the Census, new single-family permit requests increased 7.0% while the average value of each permit increased by 14.3% year-over-year. In addition to the single-family home permits, the Census reported 511 multi-family permits between September and November. The data through November reflects an increase in housing demand, coupled with limited availability of homes and rising costs of new construction. There is an expectation that the real estate market may cool off a bit with rising interest rates, but overall fundamentals remain sound with demand being driven by local economic growth.

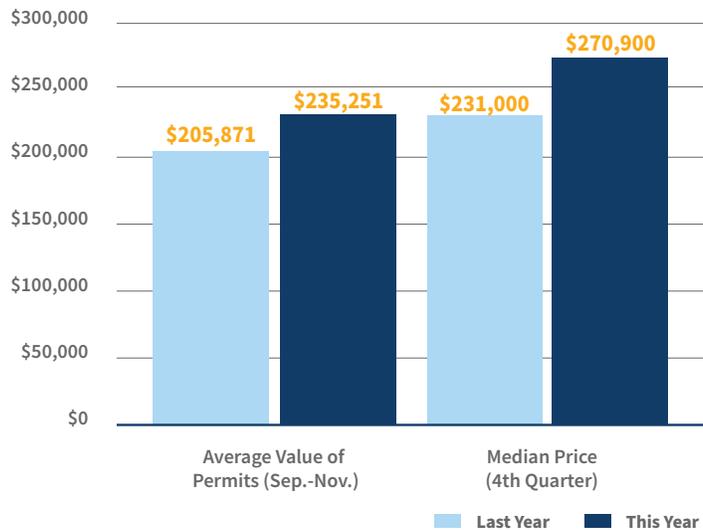
## LABOR MARKET STATISTICS (NOV 2021)



## HOUSING VOLUME



## HOUSING VALUE



*In Quarter 1, CFDC held the following events:*

- Business Resiliency Workshop
- Leadership Mission to Lake Nona
- Select Florida Foreign Investment Expo
- Holiday Investor Reception

*Thank you to our Q1 renewing investors*

*\*as of 12/31/2021*

AAA Top Quality Asphalt	Hancock Whitney
ACT Environmental & Infrastructure	J. Everett Allen & Sons
A.O. Construction Company, Inc.	JSK Consulting
Bank of Central Florida	Legoland Florida Resort
Ben Hill Griffin	The Lunz Group
Broadway Real Estate Services	McEnany Roofing
Central Florida Media Group	The Mosaic Company
Citrus Connection	Nucor Steel Florida, Inc.
City of Aubundale	Prime Meridian Bank
City of Bartow	Rita Staffing
City of Fort Meade	Rodda Construction
City of Lakeland	TECO Energy
City of Polk City	The Ruthvens
City of Winter Haven	Saddle Creek Logistics Services
Clifton Larson Allen	Southern Homes
CNP	Straughn Trout Architects
Cydeo Wealth Partners	Suncoast Credit Union
Duke Energy	Town of Dundee
Emily Rogers Consulting	PCPS Workforce Education
Florida Polytechnic University	
Florida Southern College	
Gapway Groves Corp.	
Golder	
Gray Robinon PA	

*New Investors*



**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*

(863) 937-4430 • [cfdc.org](http://cfdc.org)