



PALM BEACH COUNTY'S NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACHIEVEMENTS

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The Palm Beach County economy is strong, thanks in part to economic development efforts of Palm Beach County through the Department of Housing and Economic Sustainability (HES) and our partners, including the Business Development Board (BDB). Our hard work is getting noticed at the national level, as evidenced by two recent awards received by the County.

The National Association of Counties (NaCo) recognized the Glades Regional Master Plan (GRMP), developed through the leadership of HES in conjunction with the Cities of Belle Glade, Pahokee, and South Bay; the Belle Glade and Pahokee Chambers of Commerce; Canal Point Community Development Inc.; the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council; County Departments; and a variety of other stakeholders. A Community Challenge Grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development supported the development of the GRMP. NaCo acknowledged the GRMP as an innovative and effective "County Resilience, Infrastructure, Energy, and Sustainability" program. Most importantly, NaCo recognized economic improvements manifesting in the Glades Region that are directly attributable to the implementation of the GRMP. To date, \$212.1 million has been committed for infrastructure improvements, \$97.2 million for housing, and \$23 million for economic development in the GRMP target area. The cumulative impact of these projects that are consistent with the recommendations of the GRMP is the creation of approximately 3,000 construction and permanent jobs and nearly 1,200 housing units!

The strategic recommendations of the GRMP are used as a roadmap to identify improvements based on community-driven priorities. Most recently, in response to the GRMP's recommendation to implement much-needed upgrades to infrastructure to ensure improved quality of life and economic sustainability, the County applied for a Florida Job Growth Grant Fund Public Infrastructure Grant to help install fiber optic broadband and free Wi-Fi internet service to the Glades Region.

The International Economic Development Council (IEDC) awarded "Gold Excellence in Economic Development" to Palm Beach County for business and economic development programs implemented by HES. The award recognized how the County's public/private partnerships with key collaborators like the BDB improve our community, strengthen and diversify our economy, and increase the Palm Beach County tax base. With an overall goal to increase economic activity and create jobs by stimulating business development and investment, HES connects a broad range of businesses to loans, incentives, bonds, and technical assistance providers. Collectively, these economic development efforts have to date generated an estimated \$8.4 billion economic impact in the county; leveraged an additional \$113 billion in federal, state, and private funding to support local businesses.

Recognition from NaCo and IEDC reminds us of what we have collectively accomplished in service to the Palm Beach County business community. But, these awards also can inspire us to do more. For our part, HES is committed to continuous quality improvement to ensure we remain a valuable resource to area businesses. To that end, over the next few months, we are revamping our print- and web-based marketing materials, application packages, and contractual documents with an eye towards providing better information, a higher degree of customer service, and streamlined processes. We trust these

efforts will help us maximize every available resource we offer to businesses and will result in a stronger and more diverse economy with an ever increasing number of well-paying jobs and always improving quality of life for Palm Beach County's residents.

To learn more about the Department of Housing and Economic Sustainability or any of the County's business and economic development programs, please contact me at 561-233-3653 or showard@pbcgov.org.