

# **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

## **CONDITIONS AND TRENDS**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The quality of life for the residents of north central Florida is, first and foremost, dependent upon a healthy regional economy. The north central Florida economic structure can be characterized as a combination of retail trade, health and educational services, and government employment (state prisons and the University of Florida). Since these industries tend to be low-paying and many involve non-taxable land and structures, this mixture has resulted in below-average median household and per capita incomes, above-average poverty rates, and a below-average local government tax base. Therefore, economic development, enhanced job opportunities, and an improved local government tax base are primary concerns of the regional plan.

The Economic Development Conditions and Trends Statement is divided into three sections. The first section describes the region's population growth and population projections. The second section describes the region's economic structure. The third section summarizes the strengths and weaknesses of the region concerning economic development and explores what the region has done and can do to expand its economic structure.

### **REGIONAL POPULATION**

As indicated in Table 2.1, the region's population increased between 1980 and 1999 by 46.2 percent. However, the region's healthy rate of population growth did not keep pace with statewide growth. During the same period, statewide population grew by 57.3 percent.

Alachua County experienced the largest increase in population, increasing from 151,348 in 1980 to 216,249 in 1999. Columbia and Suwannee counties were the next most-populous counties at 56,514 and 34,386, respectively, in 1999. Dixie and Gilchrist counties experienced the largest percentage increases in population during this time period at 73.9 and 132.5 percent, respectively, although their actual populations remain relatively small.

Although the region has enjoyed continuous population growth since 1910, population growth has occurred unevenly. When the region's two most-populous counties, Alachua and Columbia, are excluded, Table 2.1 indicates that the remaining region reached a population peak in 1930 and did not approach its 1930 population until the late 1970s. In fact, Hamilton, Lafayette, and Madison counties had larger populations in 1910 than in 1990.

**TABLE 2.1**  
**NORTH CENTRAL FLORIDA POPULATION GROWTH, 1910 - 1999**

Area	YEAR														
	POPULATION										PERCENTAGE CHANGE				
	1910 <sup>a</sup>	1920 <sup>a</sup>	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	1999 <sup>b</sup>	1960 1970	1970 1980	1980 1990	1990 1999	1980 1999
Alachua	26,037	24,242	34,365	38,607	57,026	74,076	104,764	151,348	181,596	216,249	41.4	44.5	20.0	19.1	42.9
Bradford	7,876	6,986	9,405	8,717	11,457	12,446	14,625	20,023	22,515	25,500	17.5	36.9	12.5	13.3	27.4
Columbia	17,689	14,290	7,344	16,589	18,216	20,077	25,250	35,399	42,613	56,514	25.8	40.2	20.4	32.6	59.6
Dixie	4,867	4,532	6,419	7,018	3,928	4,479	5,480	7,751	10,585	13,478	22.4	41.4	36.6	27.3	73.9
Gilchrist	3,131	2,915	4,137	4,250	3,499	2,868	3,551	5,767	9,667	13,406	23.8	62.4	67.6	38.7	132.5
Hamilton	11,825	9,873	9,454	9,778	8,981	7,705	7,787	8,761	10,930	14,376	1.1	12.5	24.8	31.5	64.1
Lafayette	6,710	6,242	4,361	4,405	3,440	2,889	2,892	4,035	5,578	6,961	0.1	39.5	38.2	24.8	72.5
Madison	16,919	16,516	15,614	16,190	14,197	14,154	13,481	14,894	16,569	19,632	(4.8)	10.5	11.3	18.5	31.8
Suwannee	18,603	19,789	17,731	17,073	16,986	14,961	15,559	22,287	26,780	34,386	4.0	43.2	20.2	28.4	54.3
Taylor	7,103	11,219	13,136	11,565	10,416	13,168	13,641	16,532	17,111	19,836	3.6	21.2	3.5	15.9	20.0
Union	6,214	5,517	7,428	7,094	8,906	6,043	8,112	10,166	10,252	13,833	34.2	25.3	0.9	34.9	36.1
<b>Region</b>	126,974	122,121	129,394	141,286	157,052	172,866	215,142	296,963	354,196	434,171	24.5	38.0	19.3	22.6	46.2
<b>w/o Al Co &amp; Col Co</b>	83,248	83,589	87,685	86,090	81,810	78,713	85,128	110,216	129,987	161,408	8.2	29.5	15.2	24.3	46.4
<b>Florida</b>	752,619	968,470	1,468,211	1,897,414	2,771,305	4,951,560	6,791,418	9,739,992	12,937,926	15,322,040	37.2	43.4	32.8	18.4	57.3

<sup>a</sup>Union County was a part of Bradford County for the 1910 and 1920 Census. Dixie and Gilchrist counties were part of Alachua County for the 1910 and 1920 Census. The actual 1920 population count for Bradford County was 12,503. In order to estimate a 1920 population for what would have been Union County, this table applies the proportion of 1930 population for Bradford and Union counties to these two counties. The same technique was applied to 1920 census counts for Alachua, Gilchrist, and Dixie counties to estimate 1910 population counts for these three counties. The actual 1920 population reported for Alachua County was 31,689.

<sup>b</sup>Estimated population.

Sources: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Thirteenth Census of the United States: 1910, Population Reports by States, Volume II, Table 1, Washington, D.C. 1912.  
U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Fourteenth Census of the United States: 1920, Population Reports by States, Volume III, Table 9, Washington, D.C. 1922.  
U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Fifteenth Census of the United States: 1930, Population, Volume I, Part 1, Table 13, Washington, D.C. 1932.  
U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Sixteenth Census of the United States: 1940, Population, Characteristics of the Population, Volume II, Part 2, Table 21, Washington, D.C. 1943.  
University of Florida, Bureau of Economic and Business Research, Florida Statistical Abstract, 1967, Table 2.122. Gainesville, Florida. 1967.  
University of Florida, Bureau of Economic and Business Research, 1981 Florida Statistical Abstract, Table 1.66. Gainesville, Florida. 1981.  
University of Florida, Bureau of Economic and Business Research, 1991 Florida Statistical Abstract, Table 1.67. Gainesville, Florida. 1991.  
Bureau of Economic and Business Research, University of Florida, Florida Estimates of Population, 1999.

The region is anticipated to continue to grow through the year 2020, although at a slower pace than statewide. As indicated in Table 2.2, north central Florida's population is anticipated to rise at an average annual rate of 1.6 percent compared to 1.9 percent statewide. In absolute numbers, the region is anticipated to increase from 354,196 persons in 1990 to 521,700 by the year 2020. Approximately one-half of the region's year 2020 population is projected to reside in Alachua County. Columbia and Suwannee counties are projected to be the next two most-populous north central Florida counties. On a percentage basis, Dixie and Gilchrist counties are anticipated to experience the highest rates of growth during this period at 84.1 and 116.2 percent, respectively. Hamilton, Lafayette, and Madison counties are all projected to surpass their 1910 population peaks during the 1990s.

**TABLE 2.2**

**NORTH CENTRAL FLORIDA POPULATION PROJECTIONS, 1990 - 2020**

Area	YEAR							
	POPULATION				PERCENTAGE CHANGE			
	1990 <sup>a</sup>	2000	2010	2020	1990 2000	2000 2010	2010 2020	1990 2020
<b>Alachua</b>	181,596	210,900	236,200	256,900	16.1	12.0	8.8	41.5
<b>Bradford</b>	22,515	25,600	27,000	28,500	13.7	5.5	5.6	26.6
<b>Columbia</b>	42,613	54,700	63,400	71,800	28.4	15.9	13.2	68.5
<b>Dixie</b>	10,585	14,000	16,600	19,200	32.3	18.6	15.7	81.4
<b>Gilchrist</b>	9,667	13,900	17,400	20,900	43.8	25.2	20.1	116.2
<b>Hamilton</b>	10,930	14,200	15,700	17,200	29.9	10.6	9.6	57.4
<b>Lafayette</b>	5,578	6,900	7,600	8,200	23.7	10.1	7.9	47.0
<b>Madison</b>	16,569	18,800	20,100	21,400	13.5	6.9	6.5	29.2
<b>Suwannee</b>	26,780	32,300	36,900	41,400	20.6	14.2	12.2	54.6
<b>Taylor</b>	17,111	18,900	19,400	19,900	10.5	2.6	2.6	16.3
<b>Union</b>	10,252	13,800	15,100	16,300	34.6	9.4	7.9	59.0
<b>Region</b>	354,196	424,000	475,400	521,700	19.7	12.1	9.7	47.3
<b>Florida</b>	12,937,926	15,527,500	17,958,400	20,349,700	20.0	15.7	13.3	57.3

<sup>a</sup>Actual population.

Source: University of Florida, Bureau of Economic and Business Research, 1995 Florida Statistical Abstract, Table 1.84. Gainesville, Florida. 1995.

As indicated in Table 2.4, the racial composition of the region has remained relatively stable since 1970. As of the year 2000, whites comprise 75.5 percent of the region's population. The percentage of blacks has declined slightly, dropping from 23.6 percent in 1970 to 19.3 percent by 2000. Other races has increased from 0.3 percent in 1970 to 5.2 percent by 2000.

**TABLE 2.3**  
**NORTH CENTRAL FLORIDA PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION BY RACE**  
**1970, 1980, 1990, AND 2000**

Area	Census Year											
	1970			1980			1990			2000		
	White	Black	Other	White	Black	Other	White	Black	Other	White	Black	Other
<b>Alachua</b>	78.9	20.6	0.5	78.8	19.1	2.2	77.6	19.0	3.4	73.5	19.3	7.2
<b>Bradford</b>	76.5	23.3	0.1	78.6	20.4	1.0	78.8	20.4	0.9	76.3	20.8	2.9
<b>Columbia</b>	74.9	25.0	0.1	80.1	19.3	0.6	80.5	18.1	1.4	79.7	17.0	3.3
<b>Dixie</b>	82.6	16.9	0.5	88.0	11.6	0.4	90.9	8.7	0.4	88.8	9.0	2.2
<b>Gilchrist</b>	91.8	8.1	0.1	93.4	6.3	0.3	91.0	8.5	0.5	90.5	7.0	2.5
<b>Hamilton</b>	60.3	39.6	0.1	61.9	37.8	0.4	59.4	39.0	1.6	58.8	37.7	3.5
<b>Lafayette</b>	88.6	11.4	0.0	92.4	7.1	0.4	83.0	14.1	2.9	79.3	14.4	6.4
<b>Madison</b>	56.1	43.8	0.1	57.1	42.6	0.3	57.6	41.8	0.6	57.5	40.3	2.2
<b>Suwannee</b>	76.3	23.5	0.1	82.0	17.6	0.4	83.6	14.8	1.6	84.5	12.1	3.4
<b>Taylor</b>	77.4	22.5	0.1	77.7	21.3	1.0	80.5	17.8	1.7	77.8	19.0	3.1
<b>Union</b>	71.4	28.4	0.3	40.9	17.2	41.9	75.5	23.2	1.3	73.6	22.8	3.5
<b>Region</b>	76.0	23.6	0.3	76.1	20.2	3.7	77.9	19.7	2.4	75.5	19.3	5.2
<b>Florida</b>	84.2	15.3	0.4	84.0	13.8	2.2	83.1	13.6	3.3	78.0	14.6	7.4

Sources: 1970 Census of Population, Characteristics of the Population, Florida, Table 34. 1972. 1980 Census of Population, Florida, General Population Characteristics, Florida, Table 15. 1982. 1990 Census of Population and Housing, Florida, Summary Tape File 3A, 1992. Census 2000 Redistricting Data Summary File, Matrices PL1, PL2, PL3, and PL4, 2001.

Table 2.4 reveals that north central Florida's percentage of total population age 65 and over is noticeably less than the statewide average. In 1990, 11.3 percent of the region's population was age 65 and over, compared to 20.0 percent statewide. While the region's rate of increase in persons age 65 and over between 1970 and 1990 is about the same as experienced statewide, the region's 21.7 percent increase during the 1980s was noticeably higher than the statewide rate of 15.8 percent for the same period.

Dixie and Suwannee counties have the region's largest elderly population, representing 17.5 and 16.9 percent of their respective county's total population. However, both of these counties are below the statewide average in terms of percentage of population comprised of persons age 65 and over. Dixie, Alachua, and Columbia counties experienced the largest increase in percent of total population comprised of persons age 65 and over. Between 1970 and 1990, Dixie County's percentage changed by 111.3 percent, while Alachua and Columbia counties increased by 46.9 and 47.1 percent, respectively.

**TABLE 2.4**  
**NORTH CENTRAL FLORIDA**  
**PERCENT OF POPULATION AGE 65 AND OVER, 1970, 1980, & 1990**

Area	Pct. of Population, Age 65+, by Year			Pct. Change in Pct. of Population Age 65+by Year		
	1970	1980	1990	1970-80	1980-90	1970-90
<b>Alachua</b>	6.3	7.1	9.2	13.0	30.0	46.9
<b>Bradford</b>	8.9	10.4	11.8	16.4	13.3	31.9
<b>Columbia</b>	9.1	10.2	13.4	11.8	31.6	47.1
<b>Dixie</b>	8.3	12.1	17.5	45.7	45.0	111.3
<b>Gilchrist</b>	11.2	11.0	13.9	(1.4)	26.5	24.7
<b>Hamilton</b>	12.0	13.2	11.4	9.8	(13.9)	(5.4)
<b>Lafayette</b>	13.5	12.2	10.8	(9.5)	(11.6)	(20.0)
<b>Madison</b>	11.8	14.2	14.1	20.7	(0.7)	19.9
<b>Suwannee</b>	12.1	13.9	16.9	15.2	21.3	39.7
<b>Taylor</b>	9.9	12.7	13.2	28.4	3.9	33.4
<b>Union</b>	7.0	6.0	7.3	(14.6)	22.1	4.3
<b>Region</b>	8.3	9.3	11.3	12.6	21.7	37.0
<b>Florida</b>	14.6	17.3	20.0	18.5	15.8	27.3

Sources: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1990 Census of Population and Housing, Summary Tape File 3A, Florida, Table P13, Washington, D.C., 1992.

U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1980 Census of Population, General Population Characteristics, Florida, Tables 14 & 46.

U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1970 Census of Population, Characteristics of the Population, Florida, Table 14.

The region's elderly population is projected to continue to comprise an increasing proportion of the region's total population through the year 2010. As indicated in Table 2.5, north central Florida's percentage of population comprised of persons age 65 and over is anticipated to increase from 11.3 percent in 1990 to 12.4 percent in 2010. The region contrasts with statewide trends, where elderly population as a percentage of total population is projected to decline from 20.0 percent in 1990 to 18.4 percent by 2010.

**TABLE 2.5**  
**NORTH CENTRAL FLORIDA POPULATION PROJECTIONS**  
**PERSONS AGE 65 AND OVER, 1990 - 2010**

Area	Year					
	Percent of Population, Age 65 and Over			Percent Change in Pct. of Population, Age 65 and Over		
	1990 <sup>a</sup>	2000	2010	1990-2000	2000-2010	1990-2010
<b>Alachua</b>	9.2	9.7	10.3	5.4	5.8	11.5
<b>Bradford</b>	11.8	12.7	13.0	7.6	2.4	10.2
<b>Columbia</b>	13.4	14.4	14.6	7.5	1.4	9.0
<b>Dixie</b>	17.5	17.9	17.5	2.3	(2.2)	0.0
<b>Gilchrist</b>	13.9	16.0	16.2	15.1	1.3	16.5
<b>Hamilton</b>	11.4	10.8	11.3	(5.3)	4.6	(0.9)
<b>Lafayette</b>	10.8	12.4	13.1	14.8	5.6	21.3
<b>Madison</b>	14.1	13.8	13.6	(2.1)	(1.4)	(3.5)
<b>Suwannee</b>	16.9	18.1	17.9	7.1	(1.1)	5.9
<b>Taylor</b>	13.2	14.3	14.2	8.3	(0.7)	7.6
<b>Union</b>	7.3	8.1	9.2	11.0	13.6	26.0
<b>Region</b>	11.3	12.0	12.4	6.5	3.3	10.0
<b>Florida</b>	20.0	18.6	18.4	(7.0)	(1.1)	(8.0)

<sup>a</sup>Actual population

Derived from the following sources:

University of Florida, Bureau of Economic and Business Research, 1995 Florida Statistical Abstract, Table 1.41. Gainesville, Florida. 1995.

U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1990 Census of Population and Housing, Summary Tape File 3A, Florida, Table P13, Washington, D.C. 1992.

Table 2.6 indicates that north central Florida's population growth, as with the state as a whole, has been fueled by in-migration as opposed to natural population increase. Table 2.6 indicates that 62.5 percent of the region's population increase between 1960 and 1990 is attributable to net in-migration. This figure is somewhat below the torrid statewide rate of 85.3 percent. Only Gilchrist and Hamilton counties have in-migration rates comparable to the statewide rate at 86.8 and 86.5 percent respectively.

**TABLE 2.6**  
**NORTH CENTRAL FLORIDA**  
**COMPONENTS OF CHANGE IN POPULATION, 1960 - 1990**

Area	Percent of Total Change Attributable to Natural Increase and Net Migration by Year							
	1960-1970		1970-1980		1980-1990		1960-1990	
	Natural Increase	Net Migration	Natural Increase	Net Migration	Natural Increase	Net Migration	Natural Increase	Net Migration
<b>Alachua</b>	46.0	54.0	24.6	75.4	49.7	50.3	37.8	62.2
<b>Bradford</b>	56.7	43.3	20.5	79.5	49.3	50.7	35.5	64.5
<b>Columbia</b>	56.5	43.5	25.8	74.2	39.5	60.5	37.2	62.8
<b>Dixie</b>	91.0	9.0	20.1	79.9	18.2	81.8	30.8	69.2
<b>Gilchrist</b>	45.1	54.9	8.6	91.4	10.2	89.8	13.2	86.8
<b>Hamilton</b>	(1067.1)	1167.1	68.6	31.4	29.6	70.4	13.5	86.5
<b>Lafayette</b>	4533.3	(4433.3)	16.1	83.9	11.5	88.5	18.5	81.5
<b>Madison</b>	(231.6)	331.6	61.5	38.5	52.5	47.5	137.0	(37.0)
<b>Suwannee</b>	240.5	(140.5)	16.6	83.4	13.5	86.5	26.8	73.2
<b>Taylor</b>	379.7	(279.7)	36.2	63.8	183.4	(83.4)	99.0	1.0
<b>Union</b>	24.5	75.5	20.5	79.5	560.5	(460.5)	33.5	66.5
<b>Region</b>	56.9	43.1	24.6	75.4	41.7	58.3	37.5	62.5
<b>Florida</b>	27.8	72.2	8.0	92.0	13.2	86.8	14.7	85.3

Derived from the following sources:

U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports, "Components of Population Change by County: 1960 to 1970", Series P-25, No. 461, June 1971, and the 1960 Census of Population. Washington, D.C.

University of Florida, Bureau of Economic and Business Research, 1981 Florida Statistical Abstract, Table 1.72. Gainesville, FL, 1982.

U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1990 Census of Population and Housing, Summary Tape File 3A, Florida. Washington, D.C. 1992.

Table 2.7 portrays the place of residence of north central Florida residents five years prior to the 1970, 1980, and 1990 decennial censuses. The table indicates that, while the percentage of north central Florida residents living in the same county five years prior to the census is similar to the statewide average, the region's percentage of persons who lived in another Florida county five years prior is noticeably higher than the state average. Furthermore, the discrepancy between regional and statewide trends has grown over time. For the 1990 census, 20.3 percent of the region's population resided in another Florida county five years prior, compared to 8.2 percent statewide.

**TABLE 2.7**  
**NORTH CENTRAL FLORIDA**  
**PLACE OF RESIDENCE FIVE YEARS PRIOR TO DECENNIAL CENSUS**  
**PERSONS FIVE YEARS OLD AND OLDER (PERCENT)**

Area	YEAR								
	1965			1975			1985		
	Same County	Dif. County	Dif. State or Abroad	Same County	Dif. County	Dif. State or Abroad	Same County	Dif. County	Dif. State or Abroad
<b>Alachua</b>	67.8	19.4	16.8	58.1	24.2	17.7	61.4	22.0	16.6
<b>Bradford</b>	75.6	15.7	8.7	72.9	19.7	7.4	72.7	20.2	7.1
<b>Columbia</b>	76.9	13.4	9.7	72.0	17.3	10.7	72.7	17.0	10.3
<b>Dixie</b>	79.0	7.6	12.7	75.0	16.3	8.7	69.4	20.5	10.1
<b>Gilchrist</b>	70.6	23.9	5.6	66.6	26.9	6.5	58.8	28.0	13.2
<b>Hamilton</b>	86.3	6.1	7.7	85.4	9.1	5.5	74.4	18.3	7.2
<b>Lafayette</b>	76.3	16.8	6.9	85.4	11.9	2.6	68.7	24.0	7.3
<b>Madison</b>	84.9	11.5	3.6	80.4	9.5	10.0	80.3	12.7	7.0
<b>Suwannee</b>	84.9	10.7	4.5	75.0	18.4	6.5	72.9	18.4	8.6
<b>Taylor</b>	84.1	8.4	7.5	86.0	6.4	7.6	80.1	12.6	7.3
<b>Union</b>	64.0	24.8	11.2	54.3	37.2	8.4	67.5	25.3	7.2
<b>Region</b>	72.0	16.0	12.0	66.3	20.7	13.0	67.0	20.3	12.8
<b>Florida</b>	70.9	10.5	18.7	69.9	7.8	22.2	71.0	8.2	20.8

Derived from the following sources:

U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1970 Census of Population: Characteristics of the Population, Florida, Tables 50 & 119. Washington, D.C., 1972.

U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1980 Census of Population: General Social and Economic Characteristics, Florida, Tables 65 & 174. Washington, D.C., 1982.

U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1990 Census of Population and Housing, Summary Tape File 3A, Florida. Washington, D.C., 1992.

These tables support a trend observed by many north central Florida local officials. Persons moving into the region appear to be largely composed of retirees who previously resided in more urban counties located in south Florida. In-migration has not had as large an impact on overall population growth and, correspondingly, the region's rate of population growth has not been as high as experienced statewide. These trends are anticipated to continue through the year 2020.

## **DESCRIPTION OF THE REGIONAL ECONOMY**

The following section describes the regional economy as well as the impacts of the region's economic structure upon income, poverty, unemployment, and the local government tax base. It describes the current state of the region, change over time, and the economic forces at work in the region.

### **EMPLOYMENT**<sup>19</sup>

Nearly one-half of all employment in the region, as measured by number of employees per industry by place of residence, consists of Retail Trade, Education, and Health services. As indicated in Table 2.8, these three employment sectors comprise 17.8, 16.0, and 11.8 percent, respectively, of the region's employed workforce. Besides these sectors, the region has a higher than average percentage of employees in public administration. Fully 7.6 percent of the region's 1990 employed residents were employed in the Public Administration sector, compared with 5.0 percent statewide.

Employment by economic sector, at least to some extent, reflects the region's rural character and slower growth rates. As can be seen in Table 2.8, the region has an above-average percentage of total employment within the Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishing sector compared with the statewide rate (4.6 and 2.9%, respectively) and a below-average percentage of total employment in Construction (6.0 to 7.8%) as well as Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate categories (4.5 to 8.1%).

Alachua County dominates the regional economy. As noted in Table 2.8 2.9, Alachua County represented 85,785 jobs, or 56.7 percent of all employment opportunities within the region in 1990. Removing Alachua County from consideration, employment by economic sector in the remaining 10-county area looks quite different. In 1990, 18.5 percent of the remainder of the region's employed residents were employed in Education Services and Public Administration (compared with 27.4 percent for Alachua County), 17.7 percent in Retail Trade (compared with 17.9 percent in

---

<sup>19</sup> Unless noted to the contrary, the Economic Development Conditions and Trends Statement discusses employed persons by their jurisdiction of residence, not the jurisdiction of the place of employment. Information regarding number of jobs by jurisdiction is regularly published by the U.S. Bureau of the Census in County Business Patterns. However, due to the small number of employers within the region, County Business Patterns withholds information for certain industrial sectors for several north central Florida counties in order to prevent disclosing proprietary information regarding the number of employees of a specific firm. The incidence of withheld information prevents the use of County Business Patterns data. Decennial census employment data, which reflects employed residents by jurisdiction, is used in this conditions and trends statement as a substitute measure for jobs by jurisdiction.

Alachua County), 7.8 percent in Health Services (compared with 14.8 percent for Alachua County), and 15.5 percent in general services, including Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate (20.8 percent for Alachua County). Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries employed 7.8 percent of the remaining 10-county area's residents, compared with only 2.3 percent for Alachua County.

**TABLE 2.8**

**PERCENTAGE OF NORTH CENTRAL FLORIDA EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRIAL SECTOR, 1990**

Area	Ag Forestry & Fishing	Mining	Construction	Manufacturing		Transport Comm & Public Utilities	Wholesale Trade	Retail Trade	Finance Insurance & Real Estate	Business & Repair Services	Personal Services	Entertain & Recreat Services	Health Services	Educational Services	Other Services	Public Admin
				Non-Durable Goods	Durable Goods											
Alachua	2.3	0.1	4.7	2.1	3.6	4.4	2.0	17.9	5.0	3.5	3.1	1.4	14.8	21.8	7.8	5.6
Bradford	4.3	2.0	7.3	4.5	5.1	7.4	2.5	18.6	3.9	3.5	3.6	0.4	7.0	9.2	4.4	16.3
Columbia	4.5	0.4	8.2	5.9	7.7	5.0	2.9	21.4	4.3	4.4	3.6	0.9	11.1	7.1	4.4	8.1
Dixie	6.5	0.3	5.6	4.6	12.3	5.8	5.7	19.1	3.5	2.1	1.9	0.6	4.9	8.1	4.2	14.8
Gilchrist	10.6	0.5	11.6	2.6	6.9	6.6	1.3	18.2	4.5	2.9	2.0	1.0	6.8	11.9	4.3	8.4
Hamilton	8.5	0.9	5.7	20.4	4.4	4.8	2.0	15.1	1.8	2.0	4.5	0.5	5.9	9.9	1.8	11.6
Lafayette	26.0	0.5	6.0	6.1	6.2	3.7	3.1	12.9	2.3	1.9	1.6	0.2	5.0	7.5	4.8	12.3
Madison	9.4	0.1	6.8	14.0	8.0	5.4	3.2	15.5	2.1	2.8	2.6	0.8	8.0	9.7	4.3	7.4
Suwannee	12.0	0.7	8.0	7.1	5.0	7.3	3.6	17.4	4.8	3.7	3.6	1.1	6.3	8.8	4.1	6.4
Taylor	3.8	0.3	9.8	14.9	13.7	4.1	2.9	14.2	3.7	5.4	3.0	0.5	5.5	7.6	5.9	4.7
Union	59.0	0.5	4.4	7.6	6.6	6.7	1.3	12.6	2.5	2.5	2.3	0.1	9.5	7.0	3.2	27.3
Region	4.6	0.3	6.0	4.8	5.3	5.1	2.4	17.8	4.5	3.5	3.1	1.1	11.8	16.0	6.3	7.6
w/o Al Co	7.5	0.7	7.7	8.3	7.5	5.8	2.9	17.7	3.7	3.6	3.2	0.7	7.8	8.4	4.3	10.1
Florida	2.9	0.2	7.8	4.0	6.5	9.4	4.6	19.6	8.1	5.6	4.5	2.3	8.4	6.9	6.2	5.0

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1990 Census of Population and Housing, Summary Tape File 3A, Florida. Washington, D.C. 1992.

**TABLE 2.9**

**NORTH CENTRAL FLORIDA EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRIAL SECTOR, 1990**

Area	All Industries	Ag Forestry & Fishing	Mining	Construction	Manufacturing		Transport Comm & Public Utilities	Wholesale Trade	Retail Trade	Finance Insurance & Real Estate	Business & Repair Services	Personal Services	Entertain & Recreat Services	Health Services	Educa-tional Services	Other Services	Public Admin
					Non-Durable Goods	Durable Goods											
Alachua	85,785	2,012	71	3,990	1,785	3,075	3,782	1,724	15,322	4,317	2,996	2,677	1,167	12,685	18,689	6,696	4,803
Bradford	8,251	356	164	600	370	419	613	208	1,538	323	287	295	32	575	762	361	1,348
Columbia	17,569	794	75	1,437	1,036	1,355	876	505	3,765	758	781	630	150	1,957	1,241	781	1,428
Dixie	3,335	217	9	187	154	410	194	190	637	117	70	64	19	164	271	139	493
Gilchrist	3,572	378	17	413	92	246	237	48	651	160	104	70	34	243	425	153	301
Hamilton	3,807	324	35	218	778	167	183	76	576	68	77	171	20	225	378	70	441
Lafayette	2,121	552	10	127	129	131	78	66	273	48	41	34	5	106	159	101	261
Madison	6,124	578	8	415	859	490	332	196	951	127	169	158	46	488	592	262	453
Suwannee	10,429	1,247	71	832	743	521	782	375	1,814	505	384	375	113	657	913	426	671
Taylor	6,850	261	20	668	1,020	936	283	198	976	254	373	204	32	379	521	406	319
Union	3,332	195	17	147	254	219	225	42	419	84	84	75	3	318	233	108	909
<b>Region</b>	151,175	6,914	497	9,034	7,220	7,969	3,863	3,628	26,922	6,761	5,366	4,753	1,621	17,797	24,184	9,503	11,427
w/o Al Co	65,390	4,902	426	5,044	5,435	4,984	3,803	1,904	11,600	2,444	2,370	2,076	455	5,112	5,495	2,807	6,624
<b>Florida</b>	5,810,467	167,418	11,095	450,503	231,576	377,245	377,972	268,740	1,137,121	468,324	324,679	259,038	134,164	488,093	398,696	357,946	291,067

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1990 Census of Population and Housing, Summary Tape File 3A, Florida. Washington, D.C. 1992.

Alachua County, as expected, has an above-average percentage of its employment base in health and educational services. As indicated in Table 2.8, 14.8 percent of Alachua County's 1990 employed residents were employed in the health care industry, compared with 7.8 percent for the remainder of the region and 8.4 statewide. In terms of Education Services, 21.8 percent of Alachua County's employed residents were employed in Education Services, compared with 8.4 percent for the remainder of the region and 6.9 percent statewide.

Alachua County is near the regional average in terms of percentage of total employment in Public Administration. As a major government employment center, Alachua County was anticipated to have an above-average percentage of employees in this category. Apparently, the large number of employment opportunities provided by state correctional facilities in the other counties of the region keeps the regional percentage of total employment within Public Administration above the statewide average.

Manufacturing is a historically small component of the regional and state economies. As indicated in Table 2.8, 1990 regional employment in Durable and Non-Durable Goods Manufacturing accounted for 10.1 percent of regional employment and 10.5 percent of employment statewide. These figures are substantially lower than the 1990 national rate of 18.0 percent.<sup>20</sup>

### **CHANGE OVER TIME**

North central Florida's employment opportunities grew at a healthy rate between 1970 and 1990. However, the region's rate of new job creation did not keep up with statewide trends. While the number of employed residents in the region grew from 77,173 in 1970 to 151,175 in 1990, an increase of 95.9 percent, the number of employed residents statewide increased by 139.5 percent.

As indicated in Table 2.10, Alachua County experienced the largest increase in the number of new employees between 1970 and 1990. A total of 46,146 new employed county residents, or 62.4 percent of all the new employed residents in the region, occurred in Alachua County. Gilchrist and Lafayette counties experienced the largest percentage increase in employment opportunities. The number of employees residing in Gilchrist County increased by 209.5 percent during this period while Lafayette County increased by 130.8 percent. Madison, Taylor, and Hamilton counties experienced the smallest percentage increases at 28.3, 39.6, and 47.3 percent, respectively.

Table 2.10 notes that Gilchrist County experienced an increase of 2,418 employed persons during this time period. A substantial proportion of Gilchrist County's increases occurred in Retail Trade (551 additional employed persons) and Educational Services (315 employed persons). Tables 2.8 through 2.12 report change in number of residents employed by industrial sector by place of residence, not by place of employment. Many county residents reported in these tables are likely

---

<sup>20</sup>U.S. Bureau of the Census, Statistical Abstract of the United States: 1992, Table 632, Washington, D.C., 1992. Non-durable goods manufacturing is thought to include mining employees employed by mining companies with ore beneficiation facilities located at their mine site.

to hold jobs located in counties other than in which they reside. In the case of Gilchrist County, it is suggested that a substantial portion of its increase was attributable to an increase in county residents commuting to jobs located in adjacent Alachua County (e.g., the University of Florida and regional shopping centers).

Between 1970 and 1990, Retail Trade experienced the largest increase in employees residing within the region, adding an additional 14,324 employees. Health Services experienced the second-largest increase, adding 12,013 employees, followed by Educational Services employees at 10,131. The next largest increase in terms of absolute numbers occurred in Public Administration, which increased by 7,067 (see Table 2.10). Mining was the only industrial sector to experience a decline in employment, dropping from 689 in 1970 to 497 in 1990.<sup>21</sup> Business and Repair Services and Entertainment and Recreation Services experienced the largest percentage increases in employment at 266.5 and 244.2 percent, respectively. Other Services (Museums and Galleries, Religious and Political Organizations, Labor Unions and Professional Membership Organizations, Household Help, Accountants, Engineers, etc.) increased by 218.8 percent while Health Services increased by 207.7 percent. Fire, Insurance, and Real Estate grew by 173.6 percent. Other than Mining, which experienced a 27.9 percent decline in total employment, Personal Services (Laundry and Cleaning Services, Beauty Shops, Shoe Repair Shops, Funeral Parlors, etc.) experienced the smallest rate of increase at 2.4 percent. Statewide, the largest percentage increases occurred in the same categories: Business and Repair Services (248.8%); Entertainment and Recreational Services (326.1%); Health Services (273.1%); and Fire, Insurance, and Real Estate (220.8%).

Manufacturing has become a smaller percentage of the region's economy. In 1970 manufacturing employment comprised 13.4 percent of all employed residents of the region. By 1990 the percentage of regional residents employed in manufacturing had declined to 10.1 percent. While manufacturing employment has grown, it has not kept pace with the rate of employment growth in other sectors and represents a continually smaller percentage of total regional employment. Regional Durable Goods Manufacturing employment rose by a below-average 31.3 percent between 1970 and 1990, compared with 103.9 percent statewide. When Alachua County was removed from consideration, the growth rate in the Durable Goods sector for the remaining 10-county area was an even lower 12.2 percent.

The region's 67.2 percent increase in regional Nondurable Goods Manufacturing employment was higher than experienced statewide (47.7%). However, Nondurable Goods Manufacturing represents a small 4.8 percent of 1990 regional employment. Statewide, Nondurable Goods Manufacturing employment represents 4.0 percent of statewide employment. Durable Goods Manufacturing represents a slightly larger percentage of total regional employment, at 5.3 percent. Statewide, Durable Goods Manufacturing represents 6.5 percent of total employment.

---

<sup>21</sup>Non-durable goods manufacturing is thought to include mining employees employed by mining companies with ore beneficiation facilities located at their mine site.

Below-average regional increases in employment also occurred in Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishing, Household Services, and Other Personal Services. Employment opportunities within the region for Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishing grew by 16.2 percent compared with 50.8 percent statewide. When Alachua County is removed from consideration, the employment growth rate in this category for the remaining 10-county area was an even lower 3.9 percent.

As can be seen by comparing tables 2.8 and 2.12, agricultural employment as a percentage of total regional employment dropped from 7.7 percent in 1970 to 4.6 percent in 1990. In 1970, employment in the Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries sector accounted for more than 10.0 percent of all employment in 7 of the 11 north central Florida counties (Bradford, Gilchrist, Hamilton, Lafayette, Madison, Suwannee, and Union). By 1990, only Gilchrist, Lafayette, and Suwannee counties had more than 10.0 percent of their employment in this category. Despite its smaller percentage of total regional employment, the actual number of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries employees increased from 5,950 in 1970 to 6,914 in 1990.

**TABLE 2.10**

**CHANGE IN NORTH CENTRAL FLORIDA EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRIAL SECTOR, 1970-90**

Area	All Industries	Ag Forestry & Fishing	Mining	Construction	Manufacturing		Trans Comm & Public Utilities	Wholesale Trade	Retail Trade	Finance Insurance & Real Estate	Business & Repair Services	Personal Services	Entertain & Recreat Services	Health Services	Educa-tional Services	Other Services	Public Admin
					Non-Durable Goods	Durable Goods											
Alachua	46,146	779	7	1,296	499	1,389	1,735	796	8,562	2,779	2,177	379	874	9,100	8,091	4,762	2,921
Bradford	3,488	(183)	5	225	81	48	267	110	768	216	210	68	(3)	267	392	232	785
Columbia	8,435	139	(10)	735	720	224	315	284	2,207	458	560	(71)	103	1,081	424	408	858
Dixie	1,571	98	1	61	(10)	(120)	89	147	415	94	63	(3)	10	143	57	100	426
Gilchrist	2,418	164	13	269	31	111	138	20	551	136	76	35	25	165	315	106	263
Hamilton	1,223	(137)	(151)	52	552	15	90	(103)	114	58	68	(25)	6	169	143	45	327
Lafayette	1,202	289	10	(6)	58	10	55	53	167	38	33	11	5	88	78	93	220
Madison	1,351	(514)	2	231	553	(184)	83	107	295	34	95	(102)	20	324	30	138	239
Suwannee	4,844	266	(97)	432	301	208	419	230	896	277	290	44	93	364	421	262	438
Taylor	1,942	95	20	366	(28)	143	93	125	149	138	290	(188)	14	206	135	308	76
Union	1,382	(32)	8	9	145	76	155	18	200	62	40	(35)	3	106	45	68	514
<b>Region</b>	<b>74,002</b>	<b>964</b>	<b>(192)</b>	<b>3,670</b>	<b>2,902</b>	<b>1,920</b>	<b>3,439</b>	<b>1,787</b>	<b>14,324</b>	<b>4,290</b>	<b>3,902</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>1,150</b>	<b>12,013</b>	<b>10,131</b>	<b>6,522</b>	<b>7,067</b>
<b>w/o Al Co</b>	<b>27,856</b>	<b>185</b>	<b>(199)</b>	<b>2,374</b>	<b>2,403</b>	<b>531</b>	<b>1,704</b>	<b>991</b>	<b>5,762</b>	<b>1,511</b>	<b>1,725</b>	<b>(266)</b>	<b>276</b>	<b>2,913</b>	<b>2,040</b>	<b>1,760</b>	<b>4,146</b>
<b>Florida</b>	<b>3,384,199</b>	<b>56,424</b>	<b>1,940</b>	<b>244,238</b>	<b>74,785</b>	<b>192,200</b>	<b>361,047</b>	<b>159,705</b>	<b>675,105</b>	<b>322,325</b>	<b>231,582</b>	<b>74,122</b>	<b>102,678</b>	<b>357,266</b>	<b>218,370</b>	<b>259,794</b>	<b>155,600</b>

Sources: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1990 Census of Population and Housing, Summary Tape File 3A, Florida. Washington, D.C. 1992.

U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1970 Census of Population: General Social and Economic Characteristics, Florida. Tables 47 & 123. Washington, D.C. 1972.

**TABLE 2.11**

**PERCENTAGE CHANGE IN NORTH CENTRAL FLORIDA EMPLOYEES BY INDUSTRIAL SECTOR, 1970-90**

Area	All Industries	Ag, Forestry, & Fishing	Mining	Construction	Manufacturing		Trans Comm & Public Utilities	Wholesale Trade	Retail Trade	Finance Insurance & Real Estate	Business & Repair Services	Personal Services	Entertain & Recreat Services	Health Services	Education Services	Other Services	Public Admin
					Non-Durable Goods	Durable Goods											
Alachua	116.4	63.2	10.9	48.1	38.8	82.4	85.0	85.8	126.7	180.7	265.8	16.5	298.3	253.8	76.3	246.2	155.2
Bradford	73.2	(34.0)	3.1	60.0	28.0	12.9	77.2	112.2	99.7	201.9	272.7	30.0	(8.6)	86.7	105.9	179.8	139.4
Columbia	92.3	21.2	(11.8)	104.7	227.8	19.8	56.1	128.5	141.7	152.7	253.4	(10.1)	219.1	123.4	51.9	109.4	150.5
Dixie	89.1	82.4	12.5	48.4	(6.1)	(22.6)	84.8	341.9	186.9	408.7	900.0	(4.5)	111.1	681.0	26.6	256.4	635.8
Gilchrist	208.5	76.6	325.0	186.8	50.8	82.2	139.4	71.4	551.0	566.7	271.4	100.0	277.8	211.5	286.4	225.5	692.1
Hamilton	47.3	(29.7)	(81.2)	31.3	244.2	9.9	96.8	(57.4)	24.7	580.0	755.6	(12.8)	42.9	301.8	60.9	180.0	286.8
Lafayette	130.8	109.9	n/a	(4.5)	81.7	8.3	239.1	407.7	157.5	380.0	412.5	47.8	n/a	488.9	96.3	1,162.5	536.6
Madison	28.3	(47.1)	33.3	125.5	180.7	(27.3)	33.3	120.2	45.0	36.6	128.4	(39.2)	76.9	197.6	5.3	111.3	111.7
Suwannee	86.7	27.1	(57.7)	108.0	68.1	66.5	115.4	158.6	97.6	121.5	308.5	13.3	465.0	124.2	85.6	159.8	188.0
Taylor	39.6	57.2	n/a	121.2	(2.7)	18.0	48.9	171.2	18.0	119.0	349.4	(48.0)	77.8	119.1	35.0	314.3	31.3
Union	70.9	(14.1)	88.9	6.5	133.0	53.1	221.4	75.0	91.3	281.8	90.9	(31.8)	n/a	50.0	23.9	170.0	130.1
<b>Region</b>	95.9	16.2	(27.9)	68.4	67.2	31.7	83.1	97.1	113.7	173.6	266.5	2.4	244.2	207.7	72.1	218.8	162.1
<b>w/o Al Co</b>	74.2	3.9	(31.8)	88.9	79.3	12.2	81.2	108.5	98.7	162.0	267.4	(11.4)	155.1	132.5	59.0	168.1	167.3
<b>Florida</b>	139.5	50.8	21.2	118.4	47.7	103.1	193.4	146.5	146.1	220.8	248.8	40.1	326.1	273.1	121.1	264.7	114.9

n/a = not available

Sources: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1990 Census of Population and Housing, Summary Tape File 3A, Florida. Washington, D.C. 1992.

U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1970 Census of Population: General Social and Economic Characteristics, Florida. Tables 47 & 123. Washington, D.C. 1972.

**TABLE 2.12**

**PERCENTAGE OF NORTH CENTRAL FLORIDA EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRIAL SECTOR, 1970**

Area	Ag Forestry & Fishing	Mining	Construction	Manufacturing		Trans Comm & Public Utilities	Wholesale Trade	Retail Trade	Finance Insurance & Real Estate	Business & Repair Services	Personal Services	Entertain & Recreat Services	Health Services	Educa-tional Services	Other Services	Public Admin
				Non-Durable Goods	Durable Goods											
Alachua	3.1	0.2	6.8	3.2	4.3	5.1	2.3	17.1	3.9	2.1	5.8	0.7	9.0	26.7	4.9	4.7
Bradford	11.3	3.3	7.9	6.1	7.8	7.3	2.1	16.2	2.2	1.6	4.8	0.7	6.5	7.8	2.7	11.8
Columbia	7.2	0.9	7.7	3.5	12.4	6.1	2.4	17.1	3.3	2.4	7.7	0.5	9.6	8.9	4.1	6.2
Dixie	6.7	0.5	7.1	9.3	30.0	6.0	2.4	12.6	1.3	0.4	3.8	0.5	1.2	12.1	2.2	3.8
Gilchrist	18.5	0.3	12.5	5.3	11.7	8.6	2.4	8.7	2.1	2.4	3.0	0.8	6.8	9.5	4.1	3.3
Hamilton	17.8	7.2	6.4	8.7	5.9	3.6	6.9	17.9	0.4	0.3	7.6	0.5	2.2	9.1	1.0	4.4
Lafayette	28.6	0.0	14.5	7.7	13.2	2.5	1.4	11.5	1.1	0.9	2.5	0.0	2.0	8.8	0.9	4.5
Madison	22.9	0.1	3.9	6.4	14.1	5.2	1.9	13.7	1.9	1.6	5.4	0.5	3.4	11.8	2.6	4.5
Suwannee	17.6	3.0	7.2	7.9	5.6	6.5	2.6	16.4	4.1	1.7	5.9	0.4	5.2	8.8	2.9	4.2
Taylor	3.4	0.0	6.2	21.4	16.2	3.9	1.5	16.9	2.4	1.7	8.0	0.4	3.5	7.9	2.0	5.0
Union	11.6	0.5	7.1	5.6	7.3	3.6	1.2	11.2	1.1	2.3	5.6	0.0	10.9	9.6	2.1	20.3
<b>Region</b>	7.7	0.9	7.0	5.6	7.8	5.4	2.4	16.3	3.2	1.9	6.0	0.6	7.5	18.2	3.9	5.6
<b>w/o Al Co</b>	12.6	1.7	7.1	8.1	11.6	5.6	2.4	15.6	2.5	1.7	6.2	0.5	5.9	9.2	2.8	6.6
<b>Florida</b>	4.6	0.4	8.5	6.5	7.6	7.7	4.5	19.0	6.0	3.8	7.6	1.3	5.4	7.4	4.0	5.6

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1970 Census of Population: General Social and Economic Characteristics, Florida, Tables 47 & 123. Washington, D.C. 1972.

Table 2.13 identifies the number of reporting units within the region. Reporting units are individual employment locations which are subject to the state's unemployment compensation law. For example, each supermarket in a supermarket chain is considered a separate reporting unit. An increase in the number of reporting units indicates an increase in the number of businesses. The number of reporting units is an important measure of economic stability. The more reporting units, the less likely the region will be adversely impacted should one unit lay off employees.

The region experienced a 55.9 percent increase in the number of reporting units between 1980 and 1999, and an 18.4 percent increase between 1990 and 1999. While the rate of growth was significant, the region lagged the statewide growth rate of 95.9 percent between 1980 and 1999, and 28.5 percent between 1990 and 1999. All north central Florida counties experienced an increase in reporting units between 1980 and 1999. For the 1990-1999 period, all north central Florida counties except Taylor experienced an increase in the number of reporting units. Alachua County experienced the largest increase in the number of new reporting units, rising from 3,023 in 1980 to 5,248 in 1999. Lafayette County experienced the largest percentage increase, rising by 87.7 percent between 1980 and 1999. Lafayette County also experienced the largest percentage increase of any north central Florida county during the 1990s, rising by 52.4 percent between 1990 and 1999.

**TABLE 2.13**

**NORTH CENTRAL FLORIDA EMPLOYMENT REPORTING UNITS  
COVERED BY UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION LAW  
1980, 1990, AND 1999**

Area	Number of Reporting Units			Percent Change		
	1980	1990	1999	1980-90	1990-99	1980-99
<b>Alachua</b>	3,023	4,302	5,248	42.3	22.0	73.6
<b>Bradford</b>	305	362	396	18.7	9.4	29.8
<b>Columbia</b>	799	957	1,166	19.8	21.8	45.9
<b>Dixie</b>	175	205	218	17.1	6.3	24.6
<b>Gilchrist</b>	124	165	208	33.1	26.1	67.7
<b>Hamilton</b>	184	170	208	(7.6)	22.4	13.0
<b>Lafayette</b>	73	90	137	23.3	52.2	87.7
<b>Madison</b>	285	325	365	14.0	12.3	28.1
<b>Suwannee</b>	451	548	610	21.5	11.3	25.3
<b>Taylor</b>	359	441	415	22.8	(5.9)	15.6
<b>Union</b>	91	143	156	57.1	9.1	71.4
<b>Region</b>	5,869	7,708	9,127	31.3	18.4	55.9
<b>w/o Al Co</b>	2,846	3,406	3,879	19.7	13.9	36.3
<b>Florida</b>	223,768	341,190	438,267	52.5	28.5	95.9

Sources: 1981 Florida Statistical Abstract, Table 6.14 & Agency for Workforce Innovation, and Office of Workforce Information Services, Labor & Market Statistics, ES202 Program.

## **LABOR FORCE CHARACTERISTICS**<sup>22</sup>

As north central Florida's population has increased, so has the size of its labor force. Table 2.14 notes that the region's civilian labor force doubled in size, from 79,302 in 1970 to 161,062 in 1990.<sup>23</sup> Besides an increase in size, the labor force participation rate also rose during this time period, climbing from 55.0 percent in 1970 to 58.1 percent by 1990. The region's 1990 noninstitutionalized labor force participation rate is comparable to the statewide rate of 60.0 percent.

The counties which experienced the greatest increases in the size of their noninstitutionalized civilian labor force are the same counties which experienced the greatest population increases. Alachua County's labor force grew by 49,813 persons (121.3%) between 1970 and 1990. Alachua County also received the majority of the region's labor force increase (60.9%) during this period. Other north central Florida counties which experienced above-average percentage increases in their civilian labor force were Gilchrist (219.2%) and Lafayette (137.3%). Counties with noticeably below-average percentage increases in civilian labor force were the same counties which experienced below-average increases in population, including Madison (33.5%), Taylor (47.6%), and Hamilton (60.4%).

North central Florida 1990 labor force participation rates vary noticeably from county to county. Counties with above-average labor force participation rates include Union (65.5%), Alachua (63.6%), and Lafayette (61.8%).<sup>24</sup> Counties with below-average participation rates include Suwannee (55.5%), Gilchrist (57.2%), and Taylor (57.9%). Dixie County was the only north central Florida county to experience a decline in its labor force participation rate. In 1970, the Dixie County labor force participation rate was 51.0 percent. The Dixie County rate dropped to 46.9 percent in 1990, representing an 8.0 percent decline.

---

<sup>22</sup>This section of the regional plan relies on labor force and population data developed by the decennial census to determine labor force participation rates. While more recent (1999) data on labor force size and unemployment rates are available from the Florida Department of Labor and Employment Security, reported in tables 2.20 through 2.22, updated information on population age 16 and over is not readily available. Therefore, this section of the element is limited to the review of labor force participation based on decennial census data from 1990 and earlier censuses.

<sup>23</sup>Civilian labor force is defined as noninstitutionalized civilians age 16 and over who, during the week of April 1st of the census year, either: (1) worked at any time during the reference week; (2) did not work during the reference week but had jobs or businesses from which they were temporarily absent (excluding layoff); (3) were on layoff; or (4) did not work during the reference week but who were looking for work during the last four weeks and were available for work during the reference week.

<sup>24</sup>The noninstitutionalized civilian labor force participation rate refers to the percentage of the noninstitutionalized civilian population age 16 and over which is part of the noninstitutionalized civilian labor force.

Simply put, the number of new jobs has not kept pace with the increase in population. As indicated in Table 2.10, the number of employed residents in the region grew by 74,002, or 95.9 percent, between 1970 and 1990. However, as indicated in Table 2.14, the civilian labor force increased by 81,760, or 103.1 percent, during this time period. When Alachua County is removed from consideration, the civilian labor force grew by 31,947 (83.5 percent); whereas, the number of employees grew by only 27,856 (74.2 percent).

**TABLE 2.14**  
**NORTH CENTRAL FLORIDA**  
**CIVILIAN LABOR FORCE AND LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATES**  
**1970 - 1990**

Area	Civilian Labor Force						Participation Rate <sup>a</sup>		
	Population			Percentage Change			1970	1980	1990
	1970	1980	1990	1970 to 1980	1980 to 1990	1970 to 1990			
<b>Alachua</b>	41,050	70,583	90,863	71.9	28.7	121.3	55.7	59.7	63.7
<b>Bradford</b>	4,985	7,258	8,669	45.6	19.4	73.9	56.5	55.5	60.1
<b>Columbia</b>	9,432	15,078	19,070	59.9	26.5	102.2	57.1	59.4	60.7
<b>Dixie</b>	1,821	2,668	3,639	46.5	36.4	99.8	51.0	49.0	46.9
<b>Gilchrist</b>	1,199	2,195	3,827	83.1	74.4	219.2	49.2	53.3	57.3
<b>Hamilton</b>	2,596	3,389	4,163	30.5	22.8	60.4	52.7	56.7	59.2
<b>Lafayette</b>	936	1,517	2,221	62.1	46.4	137.3	46.4	52.5	61.8
<b>Madison</b>	4,913	5,804	6,559	18.1	13.0	33.5	53.2	54.4	58.5
<b>Suwannee</b>	5,344	8,814	11,133	64.9	26.3	108.3	51.0	54.9	55.5
<b>Taylor</b>	5,023	7,168	7,413	42.7	3.4	47.6	55.3	59.7	57.9
<b>Union</b>	2,003	2,657	3,505	32.7	31.9	75.0	56.0	59.6	65.7
<b>Region</b>	79,302	127,131	161,062	60.3	26.7	103.1	55.0	58.2	58.1
<b>w/o Al Co</b>	38,252	56,548	70,199	47.8	24.1	83.5	54.1	56.5	53.2
<b>Florida</b>	2,521,245	4,217,665	6,167,236	67.3	37.4	144.6	52.0	55.8	60.0

<sup>a</sup>Per 100 noninstitutionalized civilians, age 16 and over. Civilian labor force and participation rates based upon individuals age 16 and over. Excludes inmates of institutions and military personnel.

Sources: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1990 Census of Population and Housing, Summary Tape File 3A, Florida. Washington, D.C. 1992.

U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1980 Census of Population. General Social and Economic Characteristics, Florida. Tables 67 & 176. Washington, D.C. 1982

U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1970 Census of Population. General Social and Economic Characteristics, Florida. Tables 53 & 121. Washington, D.C. 1972.

## OCCUPATION

Table 2.16 examines employment by occupation in 1990. The table suggests that the skill level of the region's work force, exclusive of Alachua County, is below-average in terms of technical training. When Alachua County is excluded from consideration, the region has a below-average percentage of persons employed in managerial and professional occupations (18.1 percent for the 10-county area compared with 25.2 percent statewide). In addition, the 10-county area has only 26.4 percent of its employed population in Technical, Sales, and Administrative Support occupations compared with 34.2 percent statewide. Conversely, the 10-county area has an above-average percentage of persons employed in Services (17.3 to 14.8, respectively) and Precision Operators, Fabricators, and Laborers (17.6 percent compared with 11.6 percent statewide).

North central Florida counties with the lowest percentage of persons employed in managerial and professional occupations in 1990 were Lafayette (13.5%), Hamilton (14.8%), and Dixie (16.0%). Counties with the highest 1990 percentage of persons employed in the Precision Operators, Fabricators, and Laborers's category were Hamilton (23.0%), Taylor (22.4%), Madison (20.7%), and Dixie (20.3%).

Between 1970 and 1990, the percentage of north central Florida residents employed in skilled occupations grew (see tables 2.15 and 2.16). In 1970, only 7.9 percent (7.2 percent excluding Alachua County) of the region's employed population were in professional and managerial occupations. By 1990, the percentage had grown to 28.3 percent (18.1 percent excluding Alachua County). Conversely, the percentage of north central Florida residents employed in lower-skilled occupations such as Precision Operators, Fabricators, and Laborers declined from 17.5 percent (22.3 percent excluding Alachua County) in 1970 to 11.6 percent (17.6 percent excluding Alachua County).

Table 2.16 reveals the rural nature of north central Florida employment opportunities and suggests the region has a higher percentage of unskilled laborers than statewide. Alachua County, due to its heavy reliance upon state employees at the University of Florida, its regional hospitals, and other state employees has a higher-than-average percentage of persons in managerial and professional occupations. Approximately 36.1 percent of the county's workforce was employed in managerial and professional occupations in 1990. However, when Alachua County is removed from consideration, the region has a below- average percentage of persons (18.1 percent) employed in this occupational category.

Employment skill level should not be confused with educational attainment. Despite the preponderance of low-skilled jobs in the region, the percentage of the region's 1990 adult population with either some college or four or more years of college was comparable to the statewide averages. As indicated in Table 2.17, 23.0 percent of the region's 1990 adult population had at least some college, compared with 26.0 percent statewide. The region's 1990 proportion of adults with four or more years of college (21.2%) was higher than the statewide average (17.9%). When Alachua County is removed from consideration, however, the remaining 10-county area's percentage of adults with some college declines to 19.9 percent and the percentage with four or more years of college drops to 8.8 percent.

**TABLE 2.15**

**NORTH CENTRAL FLORIDA EMPLOYMENT BY OCCUPATION, 1970**

Area	Number							Percent					
	Total	Managerial Professional	Technical Sales Admin Support	Services	Farming Forestry Fishing	Precision Production Craft Repair	Operators Fabricators Laborers	Managerial Professional	Technical Sales Admin Support	Services	Farming Forestry Fishing	Precision Production Craft Repair	Operators Fabricators Laborers
Alachua	39,639	3,374	19,988	6,045	1,002	4,071	5,159	8.5	50.4	15.3	2.5	10.3	13.0
Bradford	4,763	356	1,423	821	450	717	996	7.5	29.9	17.2	9.4	15.1	20.9
Columbia	9,134	756	3,184	1,624	483	1,460	1,627	8.3	34.9	17.8	5.3	16.0	17.8
Dixie	1,764	122	418	209	52	317	646	6.9	23.7	11.8	2.9	18.0	36.6
Gilchrist	1,154	38	306	160	209	225	216	3.3	26.5	13.9	18.1	19.5	18.7
Hamilton	2,584	199	562	352	411	320	740	7.7	21.7	13.6	15.9	12.4	28.6
Lafayette	919	53	210	95	253	168	140	5.8	22.9	10.3	27.5	18.3	15.2
Madison	4,773	275	1,204	639	1,015	455	1,185	58.0	25.2	13.4	21.3	9.5	24.8
Suwannee	5,585	413	1,626	849	916	740	1,041	7.4	29.1	15.2	16.4	13.2	18.6
Taylor	4,908	363	1,540	713	86	817	1,389	7.4	31.4	14.5	1.8	16.6	28.3
Union	1,950	144	449	492	198	275	392	7.4	23.0	25.2	10.2	14.1	20.1
Region	77,173	6,093	30,910	11,999	5,075	9,565	13,531	7.9	40.1	15.5	6.6	12.4	17.5
w/o Al Co	37,534	2,719	10,922	5,954	4,073	5,494	8,372	7.2	29.1	15.9	10.9	14.6	22.3
Florida	2,426,268	228,885	979,798	363,161	77,313	351,331	425,780	9.4	40.4	15.0	3.2	14.5	17.5

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1970 Census of Population: General Social and Economic Characteristics, Florida, Tables 54 & 122, Washington, D.C. 1972.

**TABLE 2.16**

**NORTH CENTRAL FLORIDA EMPLOYMENT BY OCCUPATION, 1990**

Area	Number							Percent					
	Total	Managerial Professional	Technical Sales Admin Support	Services	Farming Forestry Fishing	Precision Production Craft Repair	Operators Fabricators Laborers	Managerial Professional	Technical Sales Admin Support	Services	Farming Forestry Fishing	Precision Production Craft Repair	Operators Fabricators Laborers
Alachua	85,785	30,940	28,456	12,017	1,742	6,545	6,085	36.1	33.2	14.0	2.0	7.6	7.1
Bradford	8,251	1,532	2,327	1,669	289	1,156	1,278	18.6	28.2	20.2	3.5	14.0	15.5
Columbia	17,569	3,620	5,207	2,893	661	2,520	2,668	20.6	29.6	16.5	3.8	14.3	15.2
Dixie	3,335	533	799	675	289	361	678	16.0	24.0	20.2	8.7	10.8	20.3
Gilchrist	3,572	640	959	447	365	574	587	17.9	26.8	12.5	10.2	16.1	16.4
Hamilton	3,807	564	780	745	308	536	874	14.8	20.5	19.6	8.1	14.1	23.0
Lafayette	2,121	287	481	314	517	173	349	13.5	22.7	14.8	24.4	8.2	16.5
Madison	6,124	1,106	1,478	994	540	738	1,268	18.1	24.1	16.2	8.8	12.1	20.7
Suwannee	10,429	1,722	2,782	1,606	1,088	1,524	1,707	16.5	26.7	15.4	10.4	14.6	16.4
Taylor	6,850	1,291	1,637	1,015	259	1,117	1,531	18.8	23.9	14.8	3.8	16.3	22.4
Union	3,332	547	794	939	201	281	570	16.4	23.8	28.2	6.0	8.4	17.1
<b>Region</b>	151,175	42,782	45,700	23,314	6,259	15,525	17,595	28.3	30.2	15.4	4.1	10.3	11.6
w/o Al Co	65,390	11,842	17,244	11,297	4,517	8,980	11,510	18.1	26.4	17.3	6.9	13.7	17.6
<b>Florida</b>	5,810,467	1,466,762	1,984,668	860,316	153,286	670,385	675,050	25.2	34.2	14.8	2.6	11.5	11.6

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1990 Census of Population and Housing, Summary Tape File 3A, Florida. Washington, D.C. 1992.

Between 1970 and 1990 the region experienced a 14.7 percent increase in the percentage of adults with a high school degree, a 62.6 percent increase in the percentage of adults with some college, and a 33.3 percent increase in the percentage of adults with four or more years of college. The region's rate of increase in the percentage of adults with some college was comparable to the statewide increase of 65.6 percent. However, the region's 36.0 percent increase in the percentage of the adult population with four or more years of college lagged the statewide increase of 59.7 percent.

**TABLE 2.17**

**NORTH CENTRAL FLORIDA EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT<sup>a</sup>**

Area	1990 Percent of Population Age 25 and Over					Percent Change in Population Age 25 and Over, 1970-1990				
	Below 9th	9th-12th No Diploma	High School Graduate	Some College	4 Years or More College	Below 9th	9th-12th No Diploma	High School Graduate	Some College	4 Years or More College
<b>Alachua</b>	6.0	11.3	21.7	26.4	34.6	(305.6)	(40.3)	(13.1)	53.7	33.3
<b>Bradford</b>	14.3	20.7	36.8	20.1	8.1	(174.9)	(16.3)	30.1	68.0	44.8
<b>Columbia</b>	11.9	19.1	33.5	24.5	11.0	(209.7)	(2.9)	17.5	69.1	25.0
<b>Dixie</b>	16.8	25.5	33.0	18.6	6.2	(181.3)	27.5	24.5	79.8	8.3
<b>Gilchrist</b>	15.8	21.2	33.6	21.9	7.4	(213.4)	11.0	30.4	75.1	63.2
<b>Hamilton</b>	18.3	23.3	37.7	13.6	7.0	(182.7)	31.9	39.9	69.8	21.4
<b>Lafayette</b>	20.0	21.8	37.4	15.6	5.2	(163.7)	33.0	37.8	69.9	8.4
<b>Madison</b>	19.0	24.5	29.3	17.5	9.7	(162.3)	18.1	38.1	71.0	28.3
<b>Suwannee</b>	15.6	20.7	37.6	17.9	8.2	(192.8)	(0.6)	39.0	71.6	32.1
<b>Taylor</b>	15.1	22.8	36.2	16.0	9.8	(184.0)	9.5	30.9	68.9	35.2
<b>Union</b>	11.6	20.6	36.0	23.8	7.9	(246.1)	(25.1)	31.5	74.9	58.5
<b>Region</b>	10.6	16.5	28.6	23.0	21.2	(228.4)	(11.8)	14.7	62.6	36.0
<b>w/o Al Co</b>	14.9	21.4	35.0	19.9	8.8	(190.4)	3.7	30.6	71.1	32.1
<b>Florida</b>	9.5	16.1	30.1	26.0	17.9	(251.9)	(34.3)	3.6	65.6	59.7

<sup>a</sup>by highest level of educational attainment achieved.

Sources: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1990 Census of Population and Housing, Summary Tape File 3A, Florida. Washington, D.C., 1992.

U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1970 Census of Population: General Social and Economic Characteristics, Florida. Tables 46 & 120. Washington, D.C., 1972.

## **INCOME AND POVERTY**

North central Florida residents have historically experienced, and continue to experience, below-average incomes and above-average poverty rates when compared with statewide averages.<sup>25</sup> Table 2.18 reveals that north central Florida 1989 per capita income was \$11,083, 24.6 percent less than the statewide figure of \$14,687. No north central Florida county reported a per capita income figure above the statewide average. When Alachua County's \$12,252 per capita income, the only north central Florida county with a 1989 per capita income above the regional average, is removed from consideration, the per capita income for the remaining 10-county area drops to \$9,853, which is 33.0 percent below the statewide average.

Regional per capita income increased at approximately the same rate as statewide between 1969 and 1989. Regional per capita income increased by 364.6 percent compared with 367.6 percent statewide during this period. North central Florida counties experiencing above-average increases in per capita income include Union (536.4%), Madison (443.1%), Gilchrist (413.8%), Bradford (411.3%), and Hamilton (404.0%). Six counties experienced a below-average rate of increase in per capita income. Columbia County had the smallest increase in per capita income at 343.3 percent.

As indicated in Table 2.18, while north central Florida poverty rates have declined, the region's percentage of population living in poverty remains high. In 1969, fully 25.9 percent of the region's population for whom poverty status was determined lived below the poverty level.<sup>26</sup> By 1989, the percentage had dropped to 21.3 percent. The decline represents a 12.7 percent drop in the percentage of the region's population comprised of persons living below the poverty level. The regional decline was less than experienced statewide. The percentage of Florida's population comprised of persons living below the poverty line declined by 22.6 percent for this period, from 16.4 percent in 1969 to 12.7 percent in 1989. Despite the percentage decline in total population living in poverty, the actual number of north central Florida residents living below the poverty level increased by 29.3 percent from 52,047 in 1969 to 75,278 by 1989. The percentage increase in the number of north central Florida residents living in poverty was lower than the 32.3 percent increase experienced statewide during this period.

---

<sup>25</sup>Poverty is as defined by the Bureau of the Census. The average poverty threshold for a family of four was \$12,674 in 1989. Poverty thresholds were applied on a national basis and were not adjusted for regional, state, or local variations in the cost of living. For a fuller discussion of poverty thresholds, see U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1990 Census of Population, Social and Economic Characteristics, Florida, Section 3 of 3, pages B-27 through B-29, Washington, D.C., 1992.

<sup>26</sup>Excluding inmates of institutions, persons in military quarters and in college dormitories, and unrelated individuals under 15 years of age.

Alachua County was the only north central Florida county to experience an increase in the percentage of total population living below the poverty level. Alachua County's percentage increased from 22.1 in 1969 to 23.5 by 1989, an increase of 6.3 percent. Suwannee and Madison counties experienced the largest declines in terms of percentage of population living in poverty, declining by 42.1 and 34.1 percent, respectively, for this period.

Five north central Florida counties experienced an increase in the number of persons living in poverty between 1969 and 1989. North central Florida counties experiencing the largest increases, in terms of percentage of total county population between 1969 and 1989, were Alachua (47.1%), Dixie (44.2%), and Gilchrist (44.1%). Six counties experienced decreases in the number of persons living in poverty. North central Florida counties experiencing the largest decreases, in terms of percentage of total county population, were Hamilton (-8.8%) and Taylor (-6.7%) counties.

Table 2.19 examines north central Florida median household income between 1969 and 1989. Unlike per capita income, the rate of increase in north central Florida median household income has not kept pace with statewide trends. In 1969, the region's median household income of \$7,376 was higher than the statewide median income of \$6,476. By 1989, the region's median household income was \$21,489, 21.8 percent below the statewide median income of \$27,483. During the 1970s, the rate of increase in the region's median household income was 67.7 percent compared with 73.7 percent during the 1980s. The regional rates of increase were less than the statewide increases of 126.6 percent during the 1970s and 87.3 percent during the 1980s.

While the region's rate of increase in median household income slowed during the 1980s, the actual dollar increase was larger during the 1980s than the 1970s. As derived from Table 2.19, the increase in regional median household income during the 1970s was \$4,993, whereas the 1980s increase was \$9,120. The region lagged statewide increases of \$8,199 during the 1970s and \$12,808 in the 1980s.

**TABLE 2.18**

**NORTH CENTRAL FLORIDA INCOME AND POVERTY, 1969, 1979 AND 1989 <sup>a</sup>**

Area	1969			1979			1989			Percent Change, 1969-1989		
	Per Capita Income	Population Below Poverty Level	Percent Below Poverty Level	Per Capita Income	Population Below Poverty Level	Percent Below Poverty Level	Per Capita Income	Population Below Poverty Level	Percent Below Poverty Level	Per Capita Income	Population Below Poverty Level	Percent Below Poverty Level
Alachua	2,717	21,179	22.1%	6,094	33,365	23.5%	12,252	40,073	23.5	350.9	47.1	6.3
Bradford	2,012	3,157	23.8%	4,813	3,570	19.8%	10,287	3,023	15.8	411.3	(4.4)	(33.6)
Columbia	2,329	6,056	24.3%	5,702	6,844	19.4%	10,324	8,588	20.6	343.3	29.5	(15.2)
Dixie	1,904	1,531	28.0%	4,690	1,851	25.2%	8,527	2,743	27.4	347.8	44.2	(2.8)
Gilchrist	1,886	853	24.2%	4,804	1,082	19.3%	9,690	1,527	17.5	413.8	44.1	(27.7)
Hamilton	1,756	2,059	38.7%	4,350	2,310	26.6%	8,851	2,725	27.8	404.0	(8.8)	(28.2)
Lafayette	1,978	880	30.5%	4,934	862	21.4%	8,966	1,140	23.8	353.3	22.8	(22.0)
Madison	1,791	5,187	39.3%	4,205	4,485	30.2%	9,727	3,920	25.9	443.1	(32.8)	(34.1)
Suwannee	2,281	5,224	34.0%	4,908	5,237	23.9%	9,768	5,158	19.7	328.2	(1.3)	(42.1)
Taylor	2,334	3,774	27.8%	5,718	3,650	22.2%	10,331	3,536	20.8	342.6	(6.7)	(25.2)
Union	1,516	1,241	23.0%	3,703	1,056	17.9%	9,648	1,219	15.8	536.4	(1.8)	(31.3)
<b>Region</b>	2,385	52,047	25.9%	5,545	64,312	23.0%	11,083	75,278	21.3	364.6	29.3	(17.7)
W/o Al Co.	2,070	30,868	29.3%	4,975	30,947	22.4%	9,853	35,205	19.5	375.9	8.1	(33.7)
Florida	3,143	1,085,250	16.4%	7,260	1,287,056	12.5%	14,698	1,604,186	12.7	367.6	32.3	(22.6)

<sup>a</sup>Population below poverty level excludes inmates of institutions, persons in military quarters and in college dormitories, and unrelated individuals under 15 years.

Sources: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1990 Census of Population and Housing, Summary Tape File 3A, Florida. Washington, D.C. 1992.

U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1980 Census of Population. General Social and Economic Characteristics, Florida. Tables 68, 69, 124, & 125, Washington, D.C. 1982.

U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1970 Census of Population. General Social and Economic Characteristics, Florida. Tables 57, 58, & 124. Washington, D.C. 1972.

**TABLE 2.19**

**NORTH CENTRAL FLORIDA MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME, 1969, 1979, AND 1989**

Area	Median Household Income			Percent Change		
	1969	1979	1989	1969-79	1979-89	1969-89
<b>Alachua</b>	8,329	12,354	22,084	48.3	78.8	165.1
<b>Bradford</b>	6,905	11,816	24,625	71.1	108.4	256.6
<b>Columbia</b>	7,354	12,794	21,961	74.0	71.7	198.6
<b>Dixie</b>	5,666	9,631	15,380	70.0	59.7	171.4
<b>Gilchrist</b>	6,213	10,778	20,632	73.5	91.4	232.1
<b>Hamilton</b>	5,733	10,565	18,709	84.3	77.1	226.3
<b>Lafayette</b>	5,638	11,090	20,744	96.7	87.1	267.9
<b>Madison</b>	5,743	10,169	18,153	77.1	78.5	216.1
<b>Suwannee</b>	5,903	12,775	19,775	116.4	54.8	235.0
<b>Taylor</b>	6,814	15,784	21,380	131.6	35.5	238.5
<b>Union</b>	6,317	14,506	22,831	129.6	57.4	261.4
<b>Region<sup>a</sup></b>	7,376	12,369	21,489	67.7	73.7	191.3
<b>W/O Al Co<sup>a</sup></b>	6,467	12,385	20,780	91.5	67.8	221.3
<b>Florida</b>	6,476	14,675	27,483	126.6	87.3	324.4

<sup>a</sup>Regional totals represent the weighted statistical mean of county median values.

Sources: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1990 Census of Population and Housing, Florida, Summary Tape File 3A. Washington, D.C. 1992.

U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1980 Census of Population. General Social and Economic Characteristics, Florida, Tables 71 & 180. Washington, D.C. 1982.

University of Florida, Bureau of Economic and Business Research, 1983 Florida Statistical Abstract, Table 2.05. Gainesville, FL, 1983.

U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1970 Census of Population. Characteristics of the Population, Florida, Table 44. Washington, D.C. 1972.

## **UNEMPLOYMENT**

Between 1980 and 1999, north central Florida experienced unprecedented reductions in unemployment. Not only did the regional unemployment rate decline from 5.5 percent in 1980 to 4.3 percent in 1999, the total number of unemployed individuals declined. Furthermore, the number of unemployed individuals declined during a period of a growing labor force. As indicated in Table 2.22, the region's 1980 unemployed totaled 6,929. By 1999, the number of unemployed had dropped by 18.0 percent to 5,680. During the same period, the region's labor force increased by 36.5 percent.

The most significant declines in unemployment rates occurred in Lafayette and Alachua counties, where unemployment rates declined by 64.0 and 56.3 percent, respectively. Only two counties, Hamilton and Taylor, experienced increased unemployment rates between 1980 and 1999. The Hamilton County unemployment rate increased by 26.5 percent (from 5.2 percent in 1980 to 6.5 percent in 1999), while the Taylor County unemployment rate increased by 13.6 percent (from 6.8 percent in 1980 to 7.7 percent in 1999). The higher unemployment rates in these two counties are attributable to layoffs at Buckeye Cellulose in Taylor County, and Phosphate Corporation of Saskatchewan (PCS) in Hamilton County, both of which are the largest employers within their respective counties.

The most significant reductions in the number of unemployed persons occurred in Alachua and Union counties. Alachua County's total unemployed persons dropped by 39.0 percent, from 3,688 in 1980 to 2,248 in 1999. Union County's total unemployed persons declined by 37.5 percent, from 144 in 1980 to 90 in 1999.

The statewide unemployment rate dropped from 5.9 percent in 1980 to 3.9 percent in 1999. However, unlike the region, the number of unemployed persons increased by 13.4 percent, from 250,147 in 1980 to 284,000 in 1999.

**TABLE 2.20****NORTH CENTRAL FLORIDA UNEMPLOYMENT RATES, 1980, 1990, AND 1999  
(PERCENT)**

Area	Unemployment Rate			Percent Change		
	1980	1990	1999	1980-90	1990-99	1980-99
<b>Alachua</b>	4.9	3.4	2.1	(31.1)	(36.5)	(56.3)
<b>Bradford</b>	4.9	4.6	3.3	(6.6)	(27.6)	(32.4)
<b>Columbia</b>	6.1	8.3	4.3	35.8	(47.7)	(29.0)
<b>Dixie</b>	6.6	7.2	5.1	10.2	(28.8)	(21.5)
<b>Gilchrist</b>	4.2	6.3	3.9	49.9	(38.6)	(8.0)
<b>Hamilton</b>	5.2	8.4	6.5	61.9	(21.9)	26.5
<b>Lafayette</b>	6.1	5.7	2.2	(6.4)	(61.5)	(64.0)
<b>Madison</b>	4.8	7.4	3.7	55.1	(49.7)	(22.0)
<b>Suwannee</b>	5.4	8.0	4.0	48.0	(49.6)	(25.4)
<b>Taylor</b>	6.8	10.1	7.7	49.0	(23.8)	13.6
<b>Union</b>	3.5	4.1	2.7	16.0	(34.8)	(24.4)
<b>Region</b>	5.1	5.1	3.1	0.0	(39.9)	(39.9)
<b>W/o Al Co</b>	5.5	7.4	4.3	36.1	(41.4)	(20.3)
<b>Florida</b>	5.9	5.9	3.9	1.3	(35.1)	(34.3)

Sources: 1983, 1993, &amp; 2000 Florida Statistical Abstract, Tables 6.10 &amp; 6.11.

**TABLE 2.21****NORTH CENTRAL FLORIDA LABOR FORCE, 1980, 1990, AND 1999**

Area	Labor Force			Percent Change		
	1980	1990	1999	1980-90	1990-99	1980-99
<b>Alachua</b>	75,578	98,921	105,303	30.9	6.5	39.3
<b>Bradford</b>	8,006	10,272	9,613	28.3	(6.4)	20.1
<b>Columbia</b>	14,251	19,824	24,443	39.1	23.3	71.5
<b>Dixie</b>	2,926	3,886	3,729	32.8	(4.0)	27.4
<b>Gilchrist</b>	2,815	3,536	4,446	25.6	25.7	57.9
<b>Hamilton</b>	5,203	3,787	3,365	(27.2)	(11.1)	(35.3)
<b>Lafayette</b>	1,041	2,702	3,030	159.6	12.1	191.1
<b>Madison</b>	6,160	7,728	7,168	25.5	(7.2)	16.4
<b>Suwannee</b>	8,448	11,427	12,942	35.3	13.3	53.2
<b>Taylor</b>	6,487	9,346	6,801	44.1	(27.2)	4.8
<b>Union</b>	4,101	4,101	3,391	0.0	(17.3)	(17.3)
<b>Region</b>	135,016	175,530	184,231	30.0	5.0	36.5
<b>W/o Al Co</b>	59,438	76,609	78,928	28.9	3.0	32.8
<b>Florida</b>	4,267,054	6,365,245	7,366,000	49.2	15.7	72.6

Sources: 1983, 1993, & 2000 Florida Statistical Abstract, Tables 6.10 & 6.11.

**TABLE 2.22**

**NORTH CENTRAL FLORIDA UNEMPLOYMENT  
PERSONS UNEMPLOYED IN 1980, 1990, AND 1999**

Area	Unemployed Persons			Percent Change		
	1980	1990	1999	1980-90	1990-99	1980-99
<b>Alachua</b>	3,688	3,325	2,248	(9.8)	(32.4)	(39.0)
<b>Bradford</b>	394	472	320	19.8	(32.2)	(18.8)
<b>Columbia</b>	871	1,645	472	88.9	(35.6)	21.7
<b>Dixie</b>	192	281	1,645	46.4	(31.7)	0.0
<b>Gilchrist</b>	119	224	281	88.2	(22.8)	45.4
<b>Hamilton</b>	269	317	224	17.8	(30.6)	(18.2)
<b>Lafayette</b>	63	153	317	142.9	(56.9)	4.8
<b>Madison</b>	293	570	153	94.5	(53.3)	(9.2)
<b>Suwannee</b>	455	911	570	100.2	(42.9)	14.3
<b>Taylor</b>	441	947	911	114.7	(44.6)	19.0
<b>Union</b>	144	167	90	16.0	(46.1)	(37.5)
<b>Region</b>	6,929	9,012	5,680	30.1	(37.0)	(18.0)
<b>W/o Al Co</b>	3,241	5,687	3,432	75.5	(39.7)	5.9
<b>Florida</b>	250,147	378,392	284,000	51.1	(24.9)	13.4

Sources: 1983, 1993, & 2000 Florida Statistical Abstract, Tables 6.10 & 6.11.

Table 2.23 presents 1970, 1980, and 1990 unemployment rates by race and sex. As is the case statewide, north central Florida had markedly higher 1990 unemployment rates for black males and females than their white counterparts during this period. The discrepancy between black and white unemployment rates increased between 1970 and 1990. The 1970 regional unemployment rate for white males and females was 2.4 and 3.7 percent, respectively; whereas, the 1970 unemployment rate for black males and females was 2.4 and 5.9 percent. By 1980 the regional unemployment rate for black females soared to 10.2 percent, while the unemployment rate for black males was 5.3 percent. The 1980 unemployment rate for black males was 23.3 percent higher than the white male unemployment rate of 4.3 percent. By 1990, a large discrepancy in unemployment rates existed between white and black males, with blacks experiencing rates of unemployment twice as great as experienced by whites. The 1990 regional unemployment rate for white males and females was 5.1 and 5.3 percent, respectively, compared with 11.3 percent for black males and 12.5 percent for black females. North central Florida counties with higher than average 1990 unemployment rates among

black males include Dixie (21.0%), Columbia (15.7%), and Suwannee (14.0%). Counties with above-average 1990 unemployment rates for black females include Gilchrist (35.2%), Taylor (19.7%), and Lafayette (18.4%).

**TABLE 2.23**

**NORTH CENTRAL FLORIDA UNEMPLOYMENT RATES BY RACE AND SEX, 1970, 1980, AND 1990  
(PERCENT)**

Area	1970				1980				1990			
	Whites & Other Males	Whites & Other Females	Black Males	Black Females	White Males	White Females	Black Males	Black Females	White Males	White Females	Black Males	Black Females
Alachua	2.9	4.0	2.2	5.3	3.9	4.7	4.7	10.5	5.3	4.2	9.6	11.5
Bradford	2.4	6.5	4.2	10.2	5.0	8.5	8.5	12.2	4.4	4.7	10.3	3.6
Columbia	2.3	3.3	3.6	6.7	3.7	4.8	4.8	10.9	6.4	7.6	15.7	13.1
Dixie	2.6	4.3	0.0	8.8	7.4	8.3	8.3	7.4	4.7	11.3	21.0	17.0
Gilchrist	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	5.4	7.0	6.7	35.2
Hamilton	0.0	1.5	0.0	0.9	3.9	4.2	4.2	9.3	7.3	4.7	13.2	17.7
Lafayette	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	2.1	7.3	5.3	18.4
Madison	1.9	1.8	2.1	6.9	3.6	4.7	4.7	8.1	2.5	4.7	12.8	14.1
Suwannee	1.8	1.8	5.1	0.6	4.1	5.6	5.6	9.0	4.2	6.2	14.0	15.0
Taylor	1.4	2.9	1.2	7.2	4.0	7.4	7.4	12.3	4.8	8.7	10.1	19.7
Union	0.0	2.5	0.0	18.7	4.9	7.6	7.6	7.4	3.6	4.8	9.9	2.9
Region <sup>a</sup>	2.4	3.7	2.4	5.9	4.1	5.3	5.3	10.2	5.1	5.3	11.3	12.5
W/O Al Co <sup>a</sup>	1.8	3.2	2.6	6.4	4.3	6.1	9.9	15.1	4.9	6.8	13.3	14.2
Florida	3.0	4.3	4.4	6.2	4.1	5.1	5.1	8.1	4.8	5.0	11.7	11.5

n/a = not available

<sup>a</sup>Excluding Gilchrist and Lafayette counties for the years 1970 and 1980.

Sources: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1990 Census of Population and Housing, Summary Tape File 3A, Florida. Washington, D.C. 1992.

U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1980 Census of Population: General Social and Economic Characteristics, Florida. Tables 77 & 184. Washington, D.C. 1982.

U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1970 Census of Population: General Social and Economic Characteristics, Florida. Tables 53, 121, & 126. Washington, D.C. 1972.

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT TAX BASE

The taxable value of every north central county is considerably below the statewide average. In fact, the region's taxable value is so low that the combined taxable value of all 11 north central Florida counties is less than that of the average Florida county. Table 2.24 reveals the region's 1999 taxable value was \$8,002,607,000, which was 90.1 percent of the average Florida county taxable value of \$8,878,274,582. The rate of increase in north central Florida taxable value lagged statewide trends between 1980 and 1990. However, the region began to catch up with the statewide growth rate during the 1990s, rising by 67.9 percent compared to a statewide growth rate of 50.2 percent.

**TABLE 2.24**

### NORTH CENTRAL FLORIDA TAXABLE VALUE, 1980-1999 (THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS)

Area						
	1980	1990	1999	1980-90	1990-99	1980-99
<b>Alachua</b>	1,227,080	2,789,990	4,790,892	127.4	71.7	290.4
<b>Bradford</b>	113,888	214,351	340,636	88.2	58.9	199.1
<b>Columbia</b>	251,907	499,036	900,656	98.1	80.5	257.5
<b>Dixie</b>	71,815	140,155	187,853	95.2	34.0	161.6
<b>Gilchrist</b>	63,238	116,727	195,275	84.6	67.3	208.8
<b>Hamilton</b>	81,333	158,635	255,631	95.0	61.1	214.3
<b>Lafayette</b>	46,647	63,589	96,026	36.3	51.0	105.9
<b>Madison</b>	100,103	155,543	246,673	55.4	58.6	146.4
<b>Suwannee</b>	152,802	262,671	473,231	71.9	80.2	209.7
<b>Taylor</b>	159,878	312,593	410,773	95.5	31.4	156.9
<b>Union</b>	28,069	52,067	104,961	85.5	101.6	273.9
<b>Region</b>	2,296,760	4,765,357	8,002,607	107.5	67.9	248.4
<b>W/O Al Co</b>	1,069,680	1,975,367	3,211,715	84.7	62.6	200.3
<b>Florida</b>	139,262,653	396,038,215	594,844,397	184.4	50.2	327.1

Source: 1981-2000 Florida Statistical Abstract, Table 23.91.

The disparity in taxable values between north central Florida and the average Florida county is even more pronounced when factoring in variations in county population or geographic size. Table 2.25 takes into account variations in county size by reporting county taxable value on a per square mile basis. The table shows that no north central Florida county has a per square mile taxable value greater than the statewide average. In fact, Alachua County, with the highest per square mile taxable

value in the region, is 70 percent of the statewide average. Excluding Alachua County, no north central Florida county has a per square mile taxable value greater than one-fifth the statewide average.

**TABLE 2.25**

**NORTH CENTRAL FLORIDA TAXABLE VALUE PER SQUARE MILE OF LAND AREA  
(THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS)**

Area	Taxable Value			Percent Change		
	1980	1990	1999	1980-90	1990-99	1980-99
<b>Alachua</b>	1,404	3,191	5,480	127.4	71.7	290.4
<b>Bradford</b>	388	731	1,162	88.2	58.9	199.1
<b>Columbia</b>	316	626	1,130	98.1	80.5	257.5
<b>Dixie</b>	102	199	267	95.2	34.0	161.6
<b>Gilchrist</b>	181	335	560	84.6	67.3	208.8
<b>Hamilton</b>	158	308	497	95.0	61.1	214.3
<b>Lafayette</b>	86	117	177	36.3	51.0	105.9
<b>Madison</b>	145	225	357	55.4	58.6	146.4
<b>Suwannee</b>	222	382	688	71.9	80.2	209.7
<b>Taylor</b>	153	300	394	95.5	31.4	156.9
<b>Union</b>	117	217	437	85.5	101.6	273.9
<b>Region</b>	341	707	1,188	107.5	67.9	248.4
<b>w/o Al Co</b>	182	337	548	84.7	62.6	200.3
<b>Florida</b>	2,582	7,343	7,812	184.4	50.2	327.1

Source: 1982, 1991, 1994, 2000 Florida Statistical Abstract, Tables 2.2 & 23.91.

North central Florida's per capita taxable value also lags the state average. As indicated in Table 2.26, the region's taxable value per capita, excluding Alachua County, has been less than one-half the statewide average since 1980. As with taxable value per square mile, north central Florida taxable value per capita has increased faster than the statewide average between 1990 and 1999. As indicated in Table 2.26, the region's taxable value per capita increased by 37.1 percent during the 1990s, compared to 26.8 percent statewide.

**TABLE 2.26****NORTH CENTRAL FLORIDA TAXABLE VALUE PER CAPITA  
(DOLLARS)**

Area	Taxable Value per Capita			Percent Change		
	1980	1990	1999	1980-90	1990-99	1980-99
<b>Alachua</b>	8,106	15,363	22,160	89.5	44.2	173.4
<b>Bradford</b>	5,688	9,527	13,358	67.5	40.2	134.9
<b>Columbia</b>	7,116	11,715	15,941	64.6	36.1	124.0
<b>Dixie</b>	9,265	13,222	13,915	42.7	5.2	50.2
<b>Gilchrist</b>	10,966	12,034	14,573	9.7	21.1	32.9
<b>Hamilton</b>	9,284	14,554	17,752	56.8	22.0	91.2
<b>Lafayette</b>	11,561	11,355	13,718	(1.8)	20.8	18.7
<b>Madison</b>	6,721	9,370	12,585	39.4	34.3	87.3
<b>Suwannee</b>	6,856	9,801	13,757	43.0	40.4	100.6
<b>Taylor</b>	9,671	18,280	20,746	89.0	13.5	114.5
<b>Union</b>	2,761	5,055	7,606	83.1	50.5	175.5
<b>Region</b>	7,733	13,450	18,435	73.9	37.1	138.4
<b>w/o Al Co</b>	7,346	11,438	14,739	55.7	28.9	100.6
<b>Florida</b>	14,298	30,611	38,823	114.1	26.8	171.5

Source: 1982, 1991, 1994, & 2000 Florida Statistical Abstract, Tables 2.2 & 23.91.

The principal reason for the region's low taxable value is the relatively low market value of rural lands when compared with urban land values of the more developed areas of the state. State property tax exemptions exacerbate the regional disparity. Table 2.27 reveals that the percentage of assessed value that is taxable is low for north central Florida counties.

In 1999, only 47.4 percent of north central Florida assessed value was taxable, compared to 72.1 percent statewide. Furthermore, the gap between taxable and assessed values for north central Florida counties has remained relatively constant between 1980 and 1999, rising from 45.7 percent in 1980 to 47.4 percent in 1999.

**TABLE 2.27****NORTH CENTRAL FLORIDA TAXABLE VALUE  
PERCENT OF ASSESSED VALUE WHICH IS TAXABLE, 1980-1999**

Area	Percent			Percent Change		
	1980	1990	1999	1980-90	1990-99	1980-99
<b>Alachua</b>	52.8	51.6	51.4	(2.3)	(0.4)	(2.7)
<b>Bradford</b>	44.0	38.0	46.8	(13.7)	23.2	6.3
<b>Columbia</b>	46.2	44.7	48.9	(3.3)	9.3	5.7
<b>Dixie</b>	42.6	31.8	39.9	(25.2)	25.5	(6.2)
<b>Gilchrist</b>	32.1	34.1	37.4	6.2	9.6	16.4
<b>Hamilton</b>	37.8	45.2	51.7	19.6	14.4	36.8
<b>Lafayette</b>	49.5	28.1	34.7	(43.3)	23.6	(29.9)
<b>Madison</b>	31.6	36.9	40.2	16.6	8.9	27.0
<b>Suwannee</b>	34.7	42.1	44.6	21.0	6.1	28.4
<b>Taylor</b>	45.6	43.8	46.6	(3.9)	6.3	2.2
<b>Union</b>	24.7	25.7	15.4	4.0	(40.0)	(37.6)
<b>Region</b>	45.7	45.8	47.4	0.1	3.5	3.6
<b>w/o Al Co</b>	39.6	39.5	42.4	(0.4)	7.4	7.0
<b>Florida</b>	70.1	71.5	72.1	2.1	0.8	2.9

Source: 1982, 1991, 1994, & 2000 Florida Statistical Abstract, Table 23.91.

**INDUSTRY SPOTLIGHT**

The following section of the Economic Development Conditions and Trends Statement focuses on four historically-important north central Florida industries: agriculture, fishing and shellfish harvesting, silviculture, and mining. The section also spotlights two promising areas for future economic development: tourism and export manufacturing.

## **AGRICULTURE**

North central Florida farms produce below-average incomes when compared to farms statewide. Table 2.28 reveals that north central Florida farms produce less than half the statewide income on a per acre basis, an average of \$96.70 per acre in 1997, compared to the statewide per acre income of \$207.50. However, the region is gaining on statewide trends. North central Florida experienced an 18.5 percent increase in farm income per acre between 1987 and 1997; whereas, a 5.8 percent decline was experienced statewide for the same period. Another measure of farm income is presented in Table 2.29, which measures total farm income on a place-of-work basis. As indicated by the table, north central Florida total farm income increased between 1987 and 1997; whereas, statewide, total farm income decreased.

While north central Florida farm income has increased, the amount of land in farms has decreased. Between 1982 and 1997, north central Florida farm acreage, as presented in Table 2.30, decreased by 28.1 percent, which is a greater rate of decline than the 18.4 percent decrease experienced statewide. However, between 1987 and 1997, the rate of farm acreage loss in the region was similar to statewide trends.

**TABLE 2.28**

**NORTH CENTRAL FLORIDA FARM INCOME PER ACRE, 1982 - 1997**

Area	Year (Dollars)				Percent Change		
	1982	1987	1992	1997	1982-92	1987-97	1982-97
<b>Alachua</b>	\$65	\$101	\$102	\$96	56.5	(5.0)	46.5
<b>Bradford</b>	58.1	153.2	98.0	109.3	68.5	(28.6)	88.1
<b>Columbia</b>	50.1	53.1	73.0	49.3	45.6	(7.2)	(1.7)
<b>Dixie</b>	6.6	28.6	26.7	47.4	305.3	65.6	619.2
<b>Gilchrist</b>	43.5	182.3	122.9	20.3	182.3	(88.8)	(53.3)
<b>Hamilton</b>	63.1	15.1	157.8	223.0	150.0	1,357.8	253.2
<b>Lafayette</b>	149.2	197.5	183.2	201.1	22.8	1.8	34.8
<b>Madison</b>	44.4	21.0	44.2	97.7	(0.6)	364.3	119.9
<b>Suwannee</b>	64.3	67.9	131.1	292.4	103.7	331.0	354.5
<b>Taylor</b>	13.1	14.8	13.5	32.5	2.6	119.1	146.9
<b>Union</b>	82.0	79.7	43.8	44.2	(46.6)	(44.5)	(46.1)
<b>Region</b>	50.1	81.5	97.3	96.6	94.4	18.5	92.9
<b>w/o Al Co</b>	47.3	77.5	96.2	96.1	103.4	24.0	103.3
<b>Florida</b>	106.3	220.2	258.1	207.5	142.7	(5.8)	95.1

Sources: 1985, 1989, 1994, & 2000 Florida Statistical Abstract, Table 5.30, and Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, and 1992 & 1997 Census of Agriculture, Washington D.C. September, 1994, and March, 1999, Table 1.

**TABLE 2.29**

**NORTH CENTRAL FLORIDA TOTAL FARM INCOME  
ON A PLACE-OF-WORK BASIS, 1982-1997 (THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS)**

Area	Year				Percent Change		
	1982	1987	1992	1997	1982-92	1987-97	1982-97
<b>Alachua</b>	14,312	19,346	19,535	18,941	36.5	(2.1)	32.3
<b>Bradford</b>	2,367	6,310	3,549	4,765	49.9	(24.5)	101.3
<b>Columbia</b>	5,845	5,238	7,080	4,787	21.1	(8.6)	(18.1)
<b>Dixie</b>	1,687	1,616	837	1,589	(49.8)	(1.7)	(5.8)
<b>Gilchrist</b>	4,186	15,947	8,723	14,800	108.4	(7.2)	253.6
<b>Hamilton</b>	5,040	1,112	10,952	5,354	117.3	381.5	6.2
<b>Lafayette</b>	10,354	18,733	17,558	18,792	69.6	0.3	81.5
<b>Madison</b>	7,799	2,782	5,842	12,859	(25.1)	362.2	64.9
<b>Suwannee</b>	12,907	12,378	21,228	46,325	64.5	274.3	258.9
<b>Taylor</b>	1,333	1,146	1,044	1,843	(21.7)	60.8	38.3
<b>Union</b>	5,181	5,362	2,116	2,765	(59.2)	(48.4)	(46.6)
<b>Region</b>	71,011	89,970	98,464	98,474	38.7	9.5	38.7
<b>w/o Al Co</b>	56,699	70,624	78,929	78,939	39.2	11.8	39.2
<b>Florida</b>	1,362,692	2,465,188	2,778,500	2,169,340	103.9	(12.0)	69.2

Source: 1983, 85, 92,94, 2000 Florida Statistical Abstract, Table 5.30.

**TABLE 2.30****NORTH CENTRAL FLORIDA LAND IN FARMS, 1982 - 1997  
(ACRES)**

Area	Year				Percent Change		
	1982	1987	1992	1997	1982-92	1987-97	1982-97
<b>Alachua</b>	219,337	192,255	191,140	198,193	(12.9)	3.1	(9.6)
<b>Bradford</b>	40,709	41,178	36,230	43,579	(11.0)	5.8	7.1
<b>Columbia</b>	116,586	98,620	96,968	97,100	(16.8)	(1.5)	(16.7)
<b>Dixie</b>	255,854	56,416	31,693	33,508	(87.6)	(40.6)	(86.9)
<b>Gilchrist</b>	96,163	87,500	70,987	78,090	(26.2)	(10.8)	(18.8)
<b>Hamilton</b>	79,837	73,603	69,405	66,379	(13.1)	(9.8)	(16.9)
<b>Lafayette</b>	69,387	94,847	95,833	93,434	38.1	(1.5)	34.7
<b>Madison</b>	175,519	132,173	132,208	131,577	(24.7)	(0.5)	(25.0)
<b>Suwannee</b>	200,607	182,409	161,936	158,406	(19.3)	(13.2)	(21.0)
<b>Taylor</b>	101,396	77,364	77,364	56,784	(23.7)	(26.6)	(44.0)
<b>Union</b>	63,173	67,317	48,280	62,503	(23.6)	(7.2)	(1.1)
<b>Region</b>	1,418,568	103,682	1,012,044	1,019,533	(28.7)	(7.6)	(28.1)
<b>w/o Al Co</b>	1,199,231	911,427	820,904	821,360	(29.0)	(9.9)	(31.5)
<b>Florida</b>	12,814,216	11,194,090	10,766,077	10,454,217	(16.0)	(6.6)	(18.4)

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1992 & 1997 Census of Agriculture, Table 1,16, Washington, D.C., September, 1994 & March 1999.

## **FORESTRY**

While north central Florida claims no more than 4.5 percent of Florida farm income, the region's silviculture industry represents a much larger share of statewide production. As indicated in Table 2.31, north central Florida silviculture production represented 30.3 percent of 1997 Florida production. North central Florida counties with the largest wood product output in 1997 were Columbia, Taylor, and Dixie.

North central Florida forest products, as well as forest products statewide, are primarily softwood products. A moderate climate, high annual rainfall, and flat terrain make the region well-suited to the production of pine trees on a 15- to 20-year cycle. As indicated in Table 2.32, 88.1 percent of north central Florida's 1997 wood production consisted of softwood products. This figure is comparable to the statewide average of 90.4 percent for the same time period. Only Dixie and Madison counties, where hardwood products comprised 33.0 and 24.8 percent of 1997 wood production, respectively, showed significant variation.

**TABLE 2.31**

**NORTH CENTRAL FLORIDA FOREST PRODUCT HARVEST, 1997  
(THOUSANDS OF CUBIC FEET)**

Area	All Products			Pulpwood		Saw/Timber Logs		Other Products	
	Total	Softwood	Hardwood	Softwood	Hardwood	Softwood	Hardwood	Softwood	Hardwood
<b>Alachua</b>	17,173	16,349	824	9,155	770	6,075	0	1,119	54
<b>Bradford</b>	11,698	10,613	1,085	5,456	1,085	4,928	0	229	0
<b>Columbia</b>	18,788	17,817	971	10,436	846	7,228	125	153	0
<b>Dixie</b>	15,535	10,404	5,131	4,750	4,142	4,568	541	1,086	448
<b>Gilchrist</b>	6,293	5,870	423	2,843	308	2,856	83	171	32
<b>Hamilton</b>	12,436	11,079	1,357	6,587	909	3,760	0	732	448
<b>Lafayette</b>	7,375	7,066	309	1,748	268	5,074	41	244	0
<b>Madison</b>	13,099	9,854	3,245	3,332	1,305	6,028	494	494	1,857
<b>Suwannee</b>	8,806	8,226	580	4,127	497	3,909	83	190	0
<b>Taylor</b>	34,970	30,616	4,354	20,432	2,116	9,296	381	888	1,857
<b>Union</b>	10,373	10,067	306	4,898	306	5,048	0	121	0
<b>Region</b>	156,546	137,961	18,585	73,764	12,552	58,770	1,748	5,427	4,696
<b>w/o Al Co</b>	139,373	121,612	17,761	64,609	11,782	52,695	1,748	4,308	4,642
<b>Florida</b>	517,355	467,597	49,758	251,618	35,883	185,058	6,634	30,921	7,241
<b>Region as Pct of State Total</b>	29.5	29.5	37.4	29.3	35.0	31.8	26.3	17.6	64.9

Source: USDA, Southern Research Station, Florida's Timber Industry - An Assessment of Timber Product Output and Use, 1997. Table 16.

**TABLE 2.32**  
**NORTH CENTRAL FLORIDA FOREST PRODUCT HARVEST, 1997**  
**PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL HARVEST**

Area	All Products			Pulpwood		Saw/Timber Logs		Other Products	
	Total	Softwood	Hardwood	Softwood	Hardwood	Softwood	Hardwood	Softwood	Hardwood
<b>Alachua</b>	100.0	95.2	4.8	53.3	4.5	35.4	0.0	6.5	0.3
<b>Bradford</b>	100.0	90.7	9.3	46.6	9.3	42.1	0.0	2.0	0.0
<b>Columbia</b>	100.0	94.8	5.2	55.5	4.5	38.5	0.7	0.8	0.0
<b>Dixie</b>	100.0	67.0	33.0	30.6	26.7	29.4	3.5	7.0	2.9
<b>Gilchrist</b>	100.0	93.3	6.7	45.2	4.9	45.4	1.3	2.7	0.5
<b>Hamilton</b>	100.0	89.1	10.9	53.0	7.3	30.2	0.0	5.9	3.6
<b>Lafayette</b>	100.0	95.8	4.2	23.7	3.6	68.8	0.6	3.3	0.0
<b>Madison</b>	100.0	75.2	24.8	25.4	10.0	46.0	3.8	3.8	14.2
<b>Suwannee</b>	100.0	93.4	6.6	46.9	5.6	44.4	0.9	2.2	0.0
<b>Taylor</b>	100.0	87.5	12.5	58.4	6.1	26.6	1.1	2.5	5.3
<b>Union</b>	100.0	97.1	2.9	47.2	2.9	48.7	0.0	1.2	0.0
<b>Region</b>	100.0	88.1	11.9	47.1	8.0	37.5	1.1	3.5	3.0
<b>w/o Al Co</b>	100.0	87.3	12.7	46.4	8.5	37.8	1.3	3.1	3.3
<b>Florida</b>	100.0	90.4	9.6	48.6	6.9	35.8	1.3	6.0	1.4

Source: USDA, Southern Research Station, Florida's Timber Industry - An Assessment of Timber Product Output and Use, 1997. Table 16.

**TABLE 2.33**

**NORTH CENTRAL FLORIDA FOREST PRODUCTS  
HARVEST BY PRODUCT AND BY SPECIES GROUP  
PERCENT CHANGE OVER TIME, 1987-1997**

Area	All Products			Pulpwood		Saw/Timber Logs		Other
	Total	Softwood	Hardwood	Softwood	Hardwood	Softwood	Hardwood	Softwood
<b>Alachua</b>	(58.1)	12.5	(96.9)	(96.6)	(96.4)	(96.4)	(100.0)	(94.3)
<b>Bradford</b>	(13.1)	(20.2)	586.7	(34.9)	595.5	2.4	(100.0)	106.3
<b>Columbia</b>	(5.6)	(9.7)	461.3	4.5	394.7	(14.4)	6,150.0	(88.2)
<b>Dixie</b>	14.2	(7.7)	120.1	(31.6)	95.0	8.1	161.4	934.3
<b>Gilchrist</b>	(30.7)	(33.7)	85.5	(36.0)	77.0	(32.8)	97.6	9.6
<b>Hamilton</b>	39.9	27.5	578.5	51.3	1,096.1	(13.3)	(100.0)	n/a
<b>Lafayette</b>	(12.4)	(15.4)	354.4	(64.9)	1,961.5	52.6	(25.5)	408.3
<b>Madison</b>	32.4	20.7	87.9	(26.1)	(12.9)	73.6	115.7	165.6
<b>Suwannee</b>	(31.5)	(35.7)	653.2	(48.4)	855.8	(17.4)	232.0	251.9
<b>Taylor</b>	1.8	(6.2)	152.8	(21.3)	50.8	43.0	19.4	387.9
<b>Union</b>	34.7	32.9	142.9	62.5	146.8	15.1	(100.0)	(29.7)
<b>Region</b>	(12.6)	(5.4)	(44.1)	(78.8)	(53.9)	(72.7)	(69.1)	(75.3)
<b>w/o Al Co</b>	0.9	(7.4)	160.8	(19.8)	103.5	8.7	73.6	86.7
<b>Florida</b>	7.8	3.1	88.4	(5.8)	67.4	10.9	42.5	57.0

Source: 1991 Florida Statistical Abstract, Table 10.07, and USDA, Southern Research Station, Florida's Timber Industry - An Assessment of Timber Product Output and Use, 1997. Table 16.

As indicated in Table 2.33, north central Florida experienced a 12.6 percent decrease in wood production between 1987 and 1997. The region's decrease contrasts with a statewide increase of 7.8 percent for the same period. Most of the decrease is attributable to declines in Alachua, Gilchrist, and Suwannee counties. North central Florida softwood production decreased by 5.4 percent during this period, while hardwood production declined by 44.1 percent. The region's decline in hardwood production contrasted with a statewide increase of 88.4 percent for this period. The significance of the data reported in Table 2.33 is unclear. To a large extent, wood production follows a cycle determined by prior harvests and replantings. Nevertheless, tables 2.31 through 2.33 at the very least suggest that silviculture remains a viable industry in north central Florida.

## **FISHING AND SHELLFISH HARVESTING**

Fishing and shellfish harvesting are important industries for the region's coastal counties; however, the passage of the 1994 constitutional amendment eliminating net fishing within Florida coastal waters has significantly reduced fish landings in the region. Table 2.34 reveals an 81.5 percent decline in the poundage of north central Florida coastal fish landings between 1992 and 1997. In fact, 1997 fish landings were below 1971 levels. In contrast to the decline in fishing, shellfish harvesting increased by 23.9 percent between 1992 and 1997, as shellfish harvesting began to replace fishing as a source of income for north central Florida commercial fishermen.

Potential problems exist for the shellfish harvesting industry. After similarly peaking in 1985 at 3,345,585 pounds, shellfish harvesting declined by 43.2 percent between 1971 and 1992. The Florida Department of Environmental Protection regularly closes the shellfish harvesting areas off the mouth of the Suwannee River after rain events due to high levels of fecal coliform. The effect of the shellfish bed closings is apparent in Table 2.34, which shows the region's shellfish harvest peaked in 1984-85, and has been on the decline ever since. The high fecal coliform count suggested a need for secondary wastewater treatment within the unincorporated town of Suwannee, located at the mouth of the Suwannee River in Dixie County.<sup>27</sup> In response to these concerns, a new wastewater treatment plant was recently constructed to service the Suwannee community.

Shellfish harvesting is anticipated to significantly increase. In addition to improved coastal water quality as a result of the wastewater treatment plant, the north central Florida shellfish farmers recently formed a non-profit corporation which has established a land-based shellfish nursery capable of producing over 20 million clam seeds annually. The first seed claims produced by the nursery were planted in coastal waters in 1999. It is anticipated that the first of these clams will be ready for harvest in 2001.

---

<sup>27</sup>See Need #2, page IV-47, and Policy 4.1.9. for associated need and policy statements.

**TABLE 2.34**

**DIXIE AND TAYLOR COUNTY FISH AND SHELLFISH LANDINGS  
BY TYPE OF SPECIES, 1971-1992  
(POUNDS)**

Year	Landings		
	Total	Fish	Shellfish
1971	2,912,000	1,116,000	1,796,000
1974	3,100,000	1,156,000	1,944,000
1978	3,835,815	916,095	2,919,720
1981	3,686,364	1,075,733	2,610,631
1982	2,534,168	737,665	1,796,503
1984	4,550,662	1,205,077	3,345,585
1985	4,815,019	1,012,490	3,802,529
1988	5,250,007	2,998,457	2,251,550
1989	6,351,779	4,028,486	2,323,293
1990	4,814,637	3,394,327	1,420,310
1991	2,216,443	1,704,813	511,630
1992	4,419,362	3,398,498	1,020,864
1994*	3,823,753	2,408,169	1,415,584
1995	2,369,407	1,095,147	1,274,260
1996	2,201,840	624,298	1,577,542
1997	1,893,275	628,828	1,264,447
<b>Percent Change, 1971-97</b>	(35.0)	(43.7)	(29.6)
<b>Percent Change, 1992-97</b>	(57.2)	(81.5)	23.9

\*Year fish net ban went into effect.

Sources: University of Florida, Bureau of Economic and Business Research, 1972 Florida Statistical Abstract, Table 11.030, and 1980-99 Florida Statistical Abstract, Table 10.4.

## **MINING**

Mining activities occurring in the region include phosphate, lime rock, sand, gravel, clay, and peat. Open pit limestone quarries can be found in Alachua, Dixie, Lafayette, and Suwannee counties. Mining is particularly important to the economies of Bradford and Hamilton counties. The Phosphate Corporation of Saskatchewan (PCS) in Hamilton County and Dupont DeNemours in Bradford County are the largest mining operations in the region.

The most extensive and economically important mining activity in the region is land pebble phosphate mining conducted by Phosphate Corporation of Saskatchewan (PCS). Their current mining area comprises approximately 100,000 acres. Approximately 24.0 percent of all jobs as well as 36.0 percent of total salary and wage income in Hamilton, Suwannee, and Columbia counties are attributable directly or indirectly to PCS mining operations in Hamilton County.<sup>28</sup> PCS is the largest private employer in the region. The mining and chemical processing operation employs approximately 2,150 workers at full employment. However, hundreds of workers were laid off from Hamilton County phosphate mines during the 1990s. While some of these workers have been recalled, most of the layoffs appear to be permanent. PCS' current mines are scheduled to close in 2011, at which time PCS will either open a new mine or cease its north central Florida mining operations.

## **TOURISM**

Throughout the 1980s, north central Florida provided increased services to automobile-bound tourists while the number of these tourists stopping to visit north central Florida attractions declined.

During the 1990s, the region was more successful in attracting tourists. Table 2.36 reveals that total attendance at the region's state parks declined from 563,986 in fiscal year 1985-86 to 475,902 in FY 1991-92, but gradually increased to 640,421 in 1999. Unlike state park attendance, restaurant seating capacity and hotel/motel rooms steadily increased from 1980 to 1999. As indicated in Table 2.35, restaurant seating capacity increased by 47.3 percent between 1980 and 1990, and by 46.7 percent between 1990 and 1999. The number of hotel/motel rooms increased by 30.3 percent between 1980 and 1990. Between 1990 and 1999, the number of north central Florida hotel rooms increased by 15.4 percent.

According to the Florida Department of Commerce, Bureau of Tourism, one job is created for every 52 visitors entering the state. In 1991, more than 650,000 individuals in Florida were employed in a tourism-related job. Although tourism is Florida's number one employer, north central Florida has not captured its share of that market. The number of individuals employed in tourism in the region is not known with certainty; however, it is estimated the number is small.

---

<sup>28</sup>PCS estimates that due to an employment "multiplier" each job at the mine adds 3.66 additional full-time equivalent indirect and induced jobs in Florida; 1.99 of these additional jobs are located within Columbia, Hamilton and Suwannee counties.

A recent study by the North Central Florida Regional Planning Council concluded that the region has great potential for attracting a larger number of tourists.<sup>29</sup> Each additional percentage increase in Florida's tourism business captured by north central Florida is estimated to create approximately 550 new jobs in the region.

---

<sup>29</sup>North Central Florida Regional Planning Council, Tourism Development Strategic Plan, 1992-1995, Gainesville, FL, November, 1992.

**TABLE 2.35**

**NORTH CENTRAL FLORIDA TOURIST FACILITIES  
HOTELS, MOTELS, & FOOD SERVICE ESTABLISHMENTS, 1980-1999**

Year	Licensed Hotel & Motel Rooms	Number of Seats
		Food Service Establishments
1980	5,365	34,779
1981	5,335	35,164
1982	5,365	35,608
1983	5,449	35,296
1984	5,806	36,069
1985	5,554	36,834
1986	6,069	51,543
1987	6,507	52,462
1988	6,721	52,366
1989	6,584	52,569
1990	6,988	51,214
1991	7,178	53,380
1992	7,273	50,364
1993	7,315	51,563
1994	7,478	51,965
1995	7,426	53,277
1996	7,400	53,677
1997	7,739	54,376
1998	7,697	55,963
1999	8,067	57,999
Region III Percent Change, 1980-90	30.3	47.3
1990-99	15.4	46.7
1980-99	50.4	66.8
Florida Percent Change, 1980-90	25.6	83.5
1990-99	10.4	14.5
1980-99	38.6	110.1

Source: 1981-2000 Florida Statistical Abstract, Table 19.60.

**TABLE 2.36**

**NORTH CENTRAL FLORIDA STATE PARKS AND AREAS ATTENDANCE  
FISCAL YEARS 1985-86 AND 1990-91 THROUGH 1999-2000**

State Facility	Fiscal Year											Percent Change 1985-86/ 1990-91	Percent Change 1990-91/ 1999-00	Percent Change 1985-86/ 1999-00
	1985-86	1990-91	1991-92	1992-93	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00			
Devil's Millhopper	74,050	66,873	58,953	45,669	47,456	45,604	45,834	45,032	45,416	44,934	42,373	(9.7)	(36.6)	(42.8)
Dudley Farm	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2,277	2,782	-	-	-
Econfina River	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5,626	8,108	11,093	-	-	-
Forest Capital	24,780	30,062	27,913	28,385	28,532	26,748	24,949	26,704	23,951	22,953	25,702	21.3	(14.5)	3.7
Ichetucknee Springs	182,512	130,384	134,402	159,453	167,135	155,860	189,025	170,890	195,054	184,607	219,447	(28.6)	68.3	20.2
Rawlings Homesite	30,194	27,168	21,705	22,509	20,753	21,883	23,009	23,875	22,853	21,300	20,609	(10)	(24.1)	(31.7)
O'lono State Park	61,009	54,581	46,548	45,990	56,608	60,030	61,635	65,852	59,784	58,683	60,766	(10.5)	11.3	(0.4)
Paynes Prairie	70,658	83,379	83,323	101,962	91,399	99,234	105,961	132,225	162,327	126,564	125,674	18	50.7	77.9
Peacock Springs	-	-	-	-	-	8,948	8,464	7,683	5,736	10,995	10,117	-	-	-
River Rise	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2,900	1,938	-	-	-
San Felasco Hammock	8,264	23,677	20,175	20,651	11,829	13,588	24,278	23,744	25,596	27,709	27,272	186.5	15.6	231.2
Stephen Foster	59,063	51,765	51,382	56,606	62,912	57,753	67,711	64,712	60,142	67,021	61,203	(12.4)	18.2	3.6
Suwannee River	53,456	32,003	31,501	39,751	44,002	45,877	48,909	48,320	56,517	55,389	30,858	(40.1)	(3.6)	(42.3)
Troy Springs	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,554	3,386	748	487	-	-	-
<b>Region</b>	<b>563,986</b>	<b>499,892</b>	<b>475,902</b>	<b>520,976</b>	<b>530,626</b>	<b>535,525</b>	<b>599,775</b>	<b>610,591</b>	<b>666,388</b>	<b>634,188</b>	<b>640,421</b>	<b>(11.4)</b>	<b>28.1</b>	<b>13.6</b>

Source: 1987- 2000 Florida Statistical Abstract, Table 19.52.

## **STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF THE REGION'S ECONOMIC STRUCTURE**

This portion of the conditions and trends statement explores the strengths and weaknesses of the region for economic development, describes existing regional economic development programs, and suggests avenues for future economic development efforts.

### **STRENGTHS**

The region has a number of assets that can be used to the area's advantage in economic development:

1. Great location.

North central Florida is intersected by Interstate Highways 10 and 75 which provide access to many auto travelers and freight haulers from Florida and other states. These major highways connect the area to the rest of the country. Interstate Highway 75 travels through the Midwest to the Canadian border. Interstate Highway 10 connects the region to southern California. The region's north Florida location reduces the time required to reach out-of-state markets when compared to central and south Florida.

2. Proximity to other states and counties.

Madison and Hamilton counties border the State of Georgia. A number of individuals in the northern portion of the region often seek employment in Georgia and contribute to that state's available labor force. Similarly, proximity to the state's border allows the region to take advantage of Georgia markets, suppliers, manufacturers, and labor.

3. A good ground transportation network.

The region is easily reached through a well-developed road and rail network. Besides I-75 and I-10, other major roads include U.S. 19, U.S. 301, U.S. 90, U.S. 27, U.S. 41, and U.S. 441. Freight rail service is available from CSX throughout the region. There are many north central Florida industrial locations with road and rail access available to new and expanding businesses. The ground transportation network is an asset which can be used to enhance the region's image as a viable industrial location.

4. A constant, moderate, clean-air climate.

The region has mild winters and warm, humid summers. Every north central Florida county is classified as an air attainment county by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The area's rainy season is typically from June to August. The fall, winter, and spring provide excellent weather for outdoor recreation. Unlike other parts of Florida, the region enjoys a change of seasons. The comfortable climate is an asset that attracts newcomers to the area.

5. The University of Florida.

The University of Florida (UF) provides a wealth of research and development opportunities for local businesses. The University aided the development of Progress Center, a research and technology park created to link university research with industry. Progress Center helps entrepreneurs transfer new technologies from the laboratory to the marketplace. In addition, UF's many colleges and specialties allow local businesses to tap the assistance of University experts and access data to stay abreast of recent discoveries.

6. A large concentration of medical centers and hospitals.

North central Florida, Alachua County in particular, is home to several large hospitals and medical centers. Steady advances in health care and a rapidly aging population are creating greater demand for skilled health service workers. Over the next five years, hundreds of millions of dollars will be spent on expansion projects at Shands Hospital, the University of Florida College of Medicine, Alachua General Hospital, the North Florida Regional Medical Center, and other smaller hospitals throughout the region. The expansion programs will generate new job opportunities in health-related professions and health support services.

7. Low housing costs combined with a high quality of life.

The cost of living is much lower in north central Florida than in many other parts of the state. The region has a relaxed atmosphere. A commitment exists to maintaining the region's natural resources. The region is largely forested. Residents tend to value and respect nature. There are few locations, with the exception of certain parts of Gainesville, that have high traffic levels and congestion. Many cultural and artistic centers and programs are located in Gainesville. The area appeals to fitness-oriented people. The hurried and congested aspects of urban living are missing, making the region a great place to get an education, work, raise a family, and retire. These attractive aspects can be used to attract new businesses to the area, particularly to Alachua County where these attributes are concentrated.

8. Low cost of land.

Another factor enhancing the development potential of the region is the low cost of land. Low land costs, coupled with the availability of transportation and low labor costs, enhances the competitive position of the region and raises its standing in the relocation and expansion decisions of industrial firms.

9. A large concentration of unspoiled, natural attractions.

The region has many outdoor recreational resources for young and old. North central Florida is home to the famous Suwannee River. It and several other rivers are excellent for fishing, canoeing, and boating activities. The rivers have a large concentration of cave-diving spots and crystal-clear springs for swimming and freshwater recreation. The region also has many parks and recreational areas for bicycling, hiking, and camping. The north central Florida coast offers untapped resources for off-shore fishing and boating activities. These attractions can be better used to diversify the economy through tourism development.

10. Ample water supply.

North central Florida is underlain by the Floridan Aquifer, one of the largest freshwater aquifers in the world. The aquifer provides local residents and industry with a low cost supply of high quality water. Most of the existing industrial parks and urban areas have centralized municipal water systems. Of the 33 incorporated municipalities in the region, 26 have a municipal water supply system, while 20 also provide municipal sewer service.

11. Workforce development initiatives.

A consortium including Santa Fe Community College, the Alachua County School Board, and the Bradford County School Board has been formed as a public/private partnership to bridge the gap in the school-to-work transition. This linkage among education, business, and civic government entities assists in increasing the percentage of high school graduates gaining employment in highly skilled, high-wage occupations.

## **WEAKNESSES**

The region's ability to grow is hampered by various chronic conditions which are difficult to overcome. They impose limitations on regional development and aggravate the area's inability to capture a greater share of industrial and commercial activities. Below are the major weaknesses affecting the area's economic growth.

1. Lack of infrastructure, services, and utilities.

Despite improvements to local government infrastructure, many north central Florida communities, with the notable exception of the City of Gainesville, still lack the infrastructure necessary for economic development. Owing to the rural nature of the region and its correspondingly small population, many north central Florida communities are lacking some of the facilities and infrastructure normally associated with and necessary for industrial activities. While the region has sixteen industrial parks, only nine have central water and sewer and six of these are located in Alachua County.

Directly associated with the lack of an infrastructure is the lack of local financial resources with which to finance the cost of infrastructure improvements. As indicated by the region's low taxable value, many north central Florida local governments do not have the financial capacity to purchase sites suitable for industrial development or to extend the necessary utilities to those sites. Nor can most finance improvements such as central water and sewer systems, recreation facilities, or cultural centers. The provision of adequate water supply and sewage treatment is essential to advance economic development, while recreational and community facilities make a community more attractive to private investors.

Generally, emergency response services are less than optimal to handle large-scale industrial fires and hazardous waste spills. Cellular telephone coverage is spotty in the region's more rural areas.

2. High cost of energy.

The region's sensitivity to the availability and the cost of energy will continue to be a potential constraint to economic development. An increase in the cost of energy can have a significant impact since nearly all of the region's energy requirements are met with imported oil and gas. High energy costs will cause energy intensive industrial firms to avoid north central Florida.

3. Lack of a skilled labor force.

Although the region has many individuals available for employment, the labor force in the rural areas of the region is predominantly unskilled. The unskilled labor force restricts the development of industries that require a readily available pool of skilled workers.

4. Lack of available housing.

New industry moving into the region and bringing in employees would have a difficult time locating housing in the region's smaller communities.

5. Limited air transportation services.

The Gainesville Regional Airport provides passenger and commercial air service to the region. Unfortunately, only two major air carriers service the area: U.S. Air and Delta. A relatively low demand results in a limited number of daily flights to only a few Florida cities and two out-of-state hub airports. As the region grows in population, demand for expanded service will rise, reducing the cost of air travel from Gainesville and increasing the number of daily flights. Although there are no international airports in north central Florida, the region has reasonable access to such facilities in Jacksonville, Orlando, and Tampa.

6. Lack of cultural, recreational, and educational facilities outside of Gainesville.

The rural parts of the region do not have cultural, recreational, and educational facilities similar to those enjoyed by Gainesville residents. Amenities are important to business owners and company executives looking to locate companies. The lack of facilities reduces the region's chances of attracting new industries and major employers.

7. Lack of experience with industrialization.

Since the region has historically been a rural, agricultural economy, north central Florida local governments have limited experience with urbanization and economic development. The exception is Gainesville, the largest municipality in the region, which has begun to deal with traffic and urban sprawl due to growth. Should the area begin to grow at a more rapid pace, local communities are not adequately equipped to handle the pressures and costs that come with increased growth.

8. Lack of staff support at local government level.

Due to a low tax base, north central Florida local governments continue to require technical assistance in pursuing economic development. Local government planning and economic development departments continue to be small, and in some cases, nonexistent. Most north central Florida local governments use the technical services available through the North Central Florida Regional Planning Council to apply for economic development assistance.

9. Scarce small business financing resources.

It is widely recognized that small- and medium-sized businesses employing less than 100 people create 80 percent of all new jobs in the nation. However, small- and medium-sized businesses are often unable to find affordable long-term financing. Given the lack of available capital from private markets, the economic development potential of small- and medium-sized businesses in the region is adversely affected.

With any reduction in financial assistance from federal agencies such as the Small Business Administration, the Rural Economic and Community Development Service (RECD), and the Economic Development Administration, many small businesses will be unable to obtain financing through private financial institutions.<sup>30</sup> Thus, economic opportunities that would have been created will be lost.

---

<sup>30</sup>Formerly known as the Farmers Home Administration.

## **NORTH CENTRAL FLORIDA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS**

The region's economic development efforts have sought to capitalize on existing resources while improving areas of weakness. The Council and the region's local governments have been involved in infrastructure and community development, vocational training, business financing, and tourism development.

### **INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

The Council has been a designated economic development district (EDD) since 1978. Designation as an EDD allows north central Florida local governments to receive financial assistance from the federal Economic Development Administration. In order to receive and maintain EDD designation, the Council maintains and annually reports on its Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)

The initial CEDS (then known as the Overall Economic Development Program) was submitted to the Economic Development Administration in October, 1977. An update and a major revision to this document was completed in 1993. The CEDS contains economic development goals and objectives for which applications for EDA financial assistance must further. The goals and objectives of the CEDS are incorporated to the greatest extent feasible into the goals and policies of the regional plan to assure compatibility between the two documents.

The rural nature of the region continues to present many constraints to industrial development. Some smaller north central Florida communities lack adequate public utilities and the basic framework for economic development. As of January, 2000, 26 of 33 north central Florida municipalities had at least a portion of their jurisdictions served by central water supply systems. Only 20 communities (plus one unincorporated community) had centralized wastewater treatment systems. Many of these systems are old and too small to accommodate much additional growth. A number of the region's smaller communities need new or additional centralized water and wastewater treatment capacity in order to accommodate significant new urban development.

As a result of the technical assistance provided by the Council to local governments, chambers of commerce, and development authorities since then, the region's communities have attempted to develop the infrastructure necessary for economic development. In some cases, industries have moved into the region or expanded their current facilities with the resultant creation of new jobs and increased personal income. Feasibility studies have been undertaken for the development of industrial parks in several north central Florida counties, most of which have installed water and sewer facilities to serve prospective tenants.

Through its local government technical assistance program, the Council has assisted many north central Florida local governments prepare grant and loan applications to expand or create local wastewater treatment plants, sewage collection systems, and centralized water supply systems. Local governments have pursued funding from the Economic Development Administration, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Rural Economic and Community Development Service, the Department of Housing and Urban Development as well as other sources. North central Florida local governments have also sought to develop recreation areas to improve the overall quality of life within their jurisdictions.

Over 75.0 percent of north central Florida local governments sought assistance to revitalize their neighborhoods and housing stock through the federal Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG). Since 1974, most of the region's communities have received grants for neighborhood and housing improvements. Using CDBG funds, local governments have repaired and enhanced deteriorated housing stock; paved streets, and improved storm sewer systems, sewage collection systems and water delivery systems.

Several communities have implemented downtown revitalization programs. Alachua, Jasper, and Starke revitalized their downtowns using CDBG funds. High Springs, Lake City, Live Oak, and Madison have initiated downtown revitalization using local funds. Gainesville also has a downtown redevelopment program. Through this program, downtown Gainesville has diversified and increased its share of office, residential, retail, and entertainment uses, creating a vibrant downtown business and cultural center.

### **INDUSTRIAL RECRUITMENT EFFORTS**

The Council has been involved in economic development efforts since 1978. For the most part, these efforts have not yielded the fruits hoped for by local governments. The most concerted multi-jurisdictional industrial recruitment effort began in 1987. The program was carried out by individuals from chambers of commerce, development authorities, the JTPA Private Industry Council, and local governments who represented the eleven counties.

A broad and expensive national advertising campaign was undertaken. Mailings were sent to companies that responded to the ads. Brochures, video tapes, and mementos were distributed to respondents. Local business leaders collaborated with county economic development officials to help attract new businesses.

The program continued for several years but results of the program were disappointing. Although a few new companies became established in the region during this time frame, the number of firms that located in the area as a consequence of this program is not known with any degree of certainty. The program was disbanded in 1990 due to a lack of success and, ultimately, a lack of funding.

Most recently, in 1991, Alachua County created an organization called the Council for Economic Outreach (CEO) to recruit new industries to the county. This organization is funded through a public-private partnership between major employers and local governments. The goal of the CEO is to recruit new businesses to the county that can take advantage of three major county strengths: The University of Florida, an abundance of medical centers, and the transportation network. The major industries targeted by the CEO are medical and pharmaceutical manufacturers and suppliers, engineering firms, and agricultural organizations. Thus far, the effort has had limited success; however, as with any new program, a certain amount of time is required before the investment can be expected to reap dividends.

In addition to Alachua County's efforts, chambers of commerce and industrial development authorities in other north central Florida counties continue to carry out industry recruitment efforts. However, most have very limited resources for industrial recruitment. These local governments depend upon regional efforts supported by the Council to assist them in promoting economic development.

### **VOCATIONAL TRAINING PROGRAMS**

In October, 1982, Congress passed and the President signed the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA). The JTPA provided federal funds passed through the state to local Service Delivery Areas (SDAs) to be used for running job training programs. One of the main features of the JTPA was the requirement for a partnership between public and private sectors to achieve the goals of the program.

As a result of a 1996 legislative initiative to combine JTPA with other state and federal initiatives to reduce the welfare rolls, the state created Work Force Development Boards which are charged with overseeing and coordinating activities and programs aimed at reducing the state's welfare rolls. One result of their efforts was a restructuring of the JTPA program. Prior to 1996, the JTPA Service Delivery Area (SDA) was coterminous with the boundaries of, and administered by, the Council.

In 1996, the Board broke the region into three SDAs which coincided with the service areas of the region's three community colleges (Lake City Community College, North Florida Community College, and Santa Fe Community College). As a result, three work force development boards were created, one for each new service area. When the three boards were created, it was no longer possible for the Council to continue to provide staff services to the three separate boards. The three community colleges currently provide staff for the Boards. The North Central Florida Private Industry Council and the Job Training Consortium were subsequently disbanded. Their functions were absorbed by the work force development boards which are now responsible for administering the JTPA program.

## **BUSINESS FINANCING**

In the aftermath of the savings and loan crisis of the 1980s, lending institutions tightened their lending practices, making it more difficult for borrowers to fund business projects. However, many area lenders have begun taking advantage of the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) loan programs. The North Central Florida Regional Planning Council and the North Central Florida Areawide Development Company (ADCO) are educating commercial loan officers in the region on the benefits and eligibility requirements of the SBA programs. It is the goal of the Council to achieve greater participation from area lenders to fund business projects which bring new jobs and tax revenues to the local economies.

## **POSSIBILITIES FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

In addition to the Council's technical assistance programs which help local governments prepare grant applications, four avenues exist through which the Council can promote economic development of the region. These include tourism development; diversification of the region's existing agriculture, silviculture, and fishing industries; assisting the expansion of existing north central Florida businesses; and assisting the formation of new businesses.

## **DIVERSIFICATION OF FOREST, AQUACULTURE, AND AGRICULTURE INDUSTRIES**

Possibilities exist for diversification in the forestry, aquaculture, and agriculture industries. Other regions have developed alternative uses for forest lands which may be successfully exported to north central Florida. For example, a timber-dependent community in a rural area of California obtained a grant from the U.S. Forest Service to explore the feasibility of creating commercially viable volumes of herbs and special forest products. Timber-dependent areas within north central Florida must also investigate new ways of developing sustainable alternatives for economic growth.

Cooperatives can be developed to train fishermen to cultivate, hatch, and harvest crabs, shrimp, catfish, roe, oysters, and a number of other species and products. The JTPA program has been used in north central Florida to train fishermen to harvest oysters. This program is operating successfully and is a model for future efforts.

Farms can harvest new crops which take advantage of seasonal change. Such crops can be grown earlier in north central Florida and be brought to market at a time when they command a premium price. The Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS) at the University of Florida actively studies new crops that will grow under local conditions and climates. As developments are made, the University's extension agents work with local farmers to diversify their crops. Examples include strawberries, blueberries, and black mushrooms. Additional opportunities can be developed through IFAS to help broaden the variety of local crops.

Farms can harvest tourists. Many farm and ranch owners across the country open their properties to visitors looking to experience farm life. Visitors pay farm and ranch owners for the chance to do farm chores, feed animals, ride horseback, fish the local streams, eat by a campfire, sleep in a lodge, and experience a lifestyle often only read about or seen on television.

### **THE NORTH CENTRAL FLORIDA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP AND THE BIG BEND TRI-COUNTY TASK FORCE**

The Council assisted in creating a new interlocal agreement agency, the North Central Florida Economic Development Partnership, which joins the resources of 11 counties to address regional economic development problems and opportunities. The formation of the regional partnership in 1996 set in motion the opportunity for local agencies to take full advantage of the realignment of functions of the Florida Department of Commerce into the Office of Tourism, Trade, and Economic Development within the Executive Office of the Governor, and to take advantage of the newly-created Enterprise Florida, Inc.

Recognizing that the region has a number of functioning local economic development programs in addition to several regional efforts, the Partnership provides a forum to coordinate, complement, and enhance those economic development programs. The regional partnership requires financial or in-kind commitments from the private and public sectors. Efforts to-date have been directed to promoting a regional identity, creating a regional data base for business properties available throughout the region, and providing expertise and overseeing the tourism and aquaculture activities for the *Original Florida's Hidden Coast* counties (Dixie, Levy, and Taylor counties).

Subsequent to the successful attainment of a grant from the Ford Foundation, the Big Bend Tri-County Task Force was formed with the assistance of the Council in late 1995. The task force was comprised of residents, business owners, and local government officials from Dixie, Levy, and Taylor counties. The Council utilized the grant to employ a coordinator to work with the task force as it addressed the economic revitalization of the tri-county area in the aftermath of the constitutional amendment banning net fishing. Given the successes and progress of the program in its first two years, the Ford Foundation agreed to continue providing financial assistance to the Council over a second two-year period commencing October 1, 1997.

The Ford Foundation grant allowed the Council to continue working with the task force in 1998. As a result of recommendations put forward by the Big Bend Tri-County Task Force, in 1998 the Council assisted shellfish farmers in forming a non-profit corporation named the "Hidden Coast Shellfish Producers Association, Inc." With technical assistance from the Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, Harbor Branch International, and the Council, along with grant funds from the State of Florida and a donation of land by the Dixie County Commission, the Association was successful in building a land-based shellfish nursery capable of producing over 20 million clam seeds annually for area clam farmers.

## **TOURISM**

Rural tourism is a major area of opportunity for economic development in north central Florida. A 1992 study by the North Central Florida Regional Planning Council explored how tourism can be used to boost the regional economy. The study found many small rural communities throughout the United States use tourism as an economic development tool. The abundance of unspoiled natural resources in the region offers the potential for a strong ecotourism industry that can have a positive impact on the regional economy.

Tourism's economic impact can be significant. Visitor data published by the Florida Department of Commerce, Bureau of Tourism, and the U.S. Travel Data Center in Washington suggests that each percentage point increase of Florida's tourism market captured by north central Florida could bring an additional \$33 million per year to the region. An increase in tourism activity will raise the number of new business establishments and add hundreds of jobs.

## **THE ORIGINAL FLORIDA TOURISM PROMOTION TASK FORCE**

The Council serves as staff to the Original Florida Task Force which was formed in 1991. The task force is comprised of representatives of the region's 11 counties who are appointed by county commissions to oversee and direct a regionwide tourism promotion effort. The members have varied background, but they share one thing in common; the desire to carve out their share of the number of tourists who visit Florida each year, and to do so without harming the natural resources which are the mainstay of the region's attractions.

In 1994, the Task Force hired a public relations firm to assist in promoting The Original Florida area. By 1996, 62 travel writers had visited the area who, in turn, have written and had published in various news media (travel magazines, travel sections in major newspapers throughout the country, etc.) a total of 16 articles, reaching an audience of approximately 30 million readers. By 1998, the numbers increased to 96 visiting writers, 389 articles, and 63 million readers.

In 1998, lodging establishments and businesses in the region began participating in a campaign promoting January as "Canadian Month." Participating organizations throughout *The Original Florida* region offer discounts on lodging to Canadian citizens during the month of January. The Task Force believes the program can be enhanced by creating and promoting private/public partnerships. As such, the task force entered into a partnership agreement with Florida Living Magazine. The arrangement promotes *The Original Florida* region as a tourism destination, both nationally and internationally.

Finally, the Task Force was successful in its efforts to have the Florida Commission on Tourism create an eighth tourism district for the state of Florida. All 11 of the region's counties (along with five other counties) are now in one region called the North Central Florida Region. The region's counties were previously split between two tourism districts.

## **INTERSTATE 75 CORRIDOR COUNCIL**

The Council serves as staff to the Interstate-75 Corridor Council. The I-75 Corridor Council was formed in 1997 to develop a program of improvements for Interstate Highway-75 from the Georgia state line to Wildwood. The corridor council is comprised of local elected officials whose charge is to assist with the planning for physical improvements to the corridor, to create a program of interchange maintenance, to consider uniform outdoor advertising standards, and to promote alternative advertising methods to promote north central Florida tourism.

## **EXPANSION OF EXISTING BUSINESSES**

Studies have shown that small businesses provide most of the new jobs created in America. The local chambers of commerce have ongoing programs to help local businesses develop to their potential. Existing businesses can expand by taking advantage of several federal and state supported loan programs.

## **NEW SMALL BUSINESS FORMATION**

The recent losses incurred by the banking community and the subsequent increase in bank regulations imposed by federal agencies have created tighter lending practices among financial institutions. Entrepreneurs find it increasingly difficult to obtain new business financing and venture capital. Through the help of the SBA and the Economic Development Administration (EDA), business loans can be made available to small business owners through programs which provide attractive incentives to gain participation by local banks.

The North Central Florida Regional Planning Council has recently begun to package SBA 7(a) loan applications for private entrepreneurs in the region. The Council also operates the North Central Florida Areawide Development Company, Inc. which is licensed by the SBA to administer the 504 loan program in the eleven counties of north central Florida. Both programs are expected to affect the area's economy by helping small businesses obtain capital.

The Council is hoping to establish an intermediary relending program with a low-interest loan from the Rural Economic Community Development Service. The program will allow the Council to balance its current loan programs to meet different objectives than those of the SBA and increase the number of participants eligible for low-interest loans.

## **PROBLEMS, NEEDS, AND OPPORTUNITIES**

The Council identifies the following economic development problems, needs, and opportunities:

1. An opportunity and need exists to retain and expand existing businesses in the region.
2. A need exists to expand the region's agriculture, aquaculture, and forestry industries.
3. A need and opportunity exist to assist in the formation of new small businesses.
4. A need exists to increase the income level of the region's households.
5. A need exists to increase economic development in Dixie and Taylor counties to minimize the adverse economic impacts of the Florida coastal waters fish net ban.
6. An opportunity exists to expand the regional tourism industry.
7. A need exists to maintain economic stability throughout the region.
8. A need exists to ensure adequate public facilities to serve businesses and industrial development throughout the region.

## **REGIONAL GOALS AND POLICIES**

**REGIONAL GOAL 2.1.** Attract new high-paying, value-added industries and expand existing businesses in the region.

### **Regional Indicator**

In 1999, the average number of monthly employment reporting units located within the region was 9,127.

**Policy 2.1.1.** Support and maintain the North Central Florida Areawide Development Company, Inc., an SBA 504 Certified Development Company which serves the region.

**Policy 2.1.2.** Maintain the region's Economic Development District Designation as recognized by the U.S. Economic Development Agency.

**Policy 2.1.3.** Provide assistance to the business community in the retention and expansion of their businesses by packaging SBA 7a loans.

**Policy 2.1.4.** Assist and coordinate with the University of Florida, the Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, and other organizations to encourage the application of new technologies in mature industries so as to prolong and enhance their contributions to the regional economy.

**REGIONAL GOAL 2.2.** Raise the median family income of north central Florida households.

**Regional Indicators**

1. The 1990 median household income for north central Florida residents was \$21,489.
2. The 1990 per capita income of north central Florida residents was \$11,083.

**Policy 2.2.1.** Attract high-paying industries that are compatible with the environment by providing technical assistance and information.

**Policy 2.2.2.** Assist small businesses in capital formation and locating within the region.

**Policy 2.2.3.** Provide longer and more complex training programs for workers in the region in order to attract high-tech industry that looks for well-trained and cross-trained employees. Apply new technologies in mature industries by drawing on workers as they are trained by these programs. Provide programs matching the demand for and supply of well-trained and cross-trained workers for both new and mature industries.

**REGIONAL GOAL 2.3.** Expand north central Florida food, agriculture, aquaculture, forestry and related industries in order to be a competitive force in state, national, an international marketplaces.

**Regional Indicators**

1. In 1990, 6,914 north central Florida residents were employed in Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishing.
2. In 1990, 4.6 percent of all north central Florida employed residents were employed in Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishing.

**Policy 2.3.1.** Protect and expand agricultural and forestry resources and activities by implementing initiatives such as best management practices.

**Policy 2.3.2.** Continue working with the University of Florida to improve the regional economy.

**Policy 2.3.3.** Establish public/private partnerships to provide technical, financial, and information services to the agricultural sector.

**Policy 2.3.4.** Coordinate actions directed to mitigating the adverse impacts created by the fish net ban.

**REGIONAL GOAL 2.4.** Expand the regional tourism industry.

**Regional Indicators**

1. In 1993, there were 7,315 licensed hotel and motel rooms in the region.
2. In 1993, the licensed seating capacity of all north central Florida restaurants was 51,208.
3. In Fiscal Year 1993-94, total annual attendance at state parks, preserves, and other state-owned areas located in north central Florida was 530,626.

**Policy 2.4.1.** Assist local governments and organizations with tourism planning and related promotions.

**Policy 2.4.2.** Coordinate multi-agency efforts to expand tourism development in the region.

**Policy 2.4.3.** Conserve the region's natural resources of regional significance as economic as well as natural resource assets.

**Policy 2.4.4.** Assist the Interstate-75 Tourism Task Force in addressing physical improvements to Interstate Highway 75, creating a program of interchange maintenance, considering uniform outdoor advertising standards, and encouraging alternative advertising methods to promote tourism in north central Florida.

**REGIONAL GOAL 2.5.** Maintain a regional unemployment rate of no greater than 4.0 percent.

**Regional Indicators**

1. The 1999 regional unemployment rate was 3.1 percent.
2. The 1999 unemployment Rate in Dixie County was 5.1 percent.
3. The 1999 Taylor County unemployment rate was 7.7 percent.
4. The 1999 Hamilton County unemployment rate was 6.5 percent.
5. In 1999, the regional labor force consisted of 184,231 persons.
6. In 1999, 5,680 north central Florida residents were classified as unemployed by the Florida Department of Labor and Employment Security.

**Policy 2.5.1.** Develop a plan to assist Hamilton and surrounding counties in minimizing adverse impacts resulting from the cessation of phosphate mining.

**Policy 2.5.2.** Continue working with the North Central Florida Economic Development Partnership to address regional economic development problems and opportunities including economic development issues affecting Dixie, Levy, and Taylor counties.

**Policy 2.5.3.** Support and coordinate with the Rural Economic Development Initiative of the Florida Department of Commerce, the Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, the Florida Farm Bureau, and other organizations in addressing economic issues facing the region's agricultural, forestry, and fisheries industries.

**REGIONAL GOAL 2.6.** Ensure adequate public utilities and facilities to serve business and industrial development throughout the region.

### **Regional Indicator**

In 2000, 26 of the region's 33 incorporated municipalities had centralized water and 20 (plus one unincorporated community) had centralized sewer.

**Policy 2.6.1.** Provide technical assistance to local governments in applying for state and federal grants to construct or expand public facilities necessary to attracting and accommodating businesses and industries.

**Policy 2.6.2.** Provide technical assistance to local governments in updating and maintaining local comprehensive plans which address the adequacy of local public utilities in accommodating future growth and development.