

glades region

# The Glades Region: Belle Glade, Pahokee & South Bay

Western Palm Beach County,  
the crossroads, gateway,  
and epicenter for unique  
businesses.

Business  
Development  
Board

**BDB**

Palm Beach County's Economic Development Resource



## Western Palm Beach County is vast and primarily agricultural.

On the southeastern rim of Lake Okeechobee lie the cities of Belle Glade, Pahokee, and South Bay, the westernmost communities in Palm Beach County. These cities possess a unique vantage point. They are...

- The crossroads for 12 million in South Florida – within a 100-mile radius of 85% of the state's population.
- A gateway, at 38 miles from the Palm Beaches and Florida's east coast 90 miles from Ft. Myers, Florida's west coast, and the Gulf of Mexico and 90 miles north of Miami.
- The epicenter of agricultural production – primarily sugar cane and 30 types of vegetables – with 500,000 acres annually harvested.
- The launch pad to Lake Okeechobee itself: bass fishing paradise and vital fresh-water resource.
- The home of 21st-century food processing and packing, sugar milling and refining, manufacturing, distribution, and operations centers with a firm understanding of sustainability.

The Lake Region is home to a unique set of industry clusters that play to its strengths:

- Agriculture
- Airport / Aviation
- Construction
- Distribution / Logistics
- Healthcare
- Manufacturing
- Renewable Energy and Green Technologies
- Wind Power / Energy / Biofuels



U.S. SUGAR CORP. OPERATIONS – EVAPORATOR BANK.



**Lake Okeechobee** means “big water” in the Seminole Indian language, an appropriate name for a water body whose opposite shore cannot be seen from the water’s edge. With a surface area of 730 square miles, it is the largest freshwater lake in the south-eastern U.S., and second-largest in the continental U.S. Despite its size, the lake is shallow at only a 9-foot average depth. “Lake O” and its wetlands are at the center of a much larger watershed,

the Greater Everglades, that stretches from the Kissimmee River through the Everglades and finally into Florida Bay. The Lake is also a key component of South Florida’s freshwater supply and flood-control systems. With the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers providing structural improvements, Lake Okeechobee continues to be a vital freshwater resource for all of South Florida, with irreplaceable natural and community values.

## Land

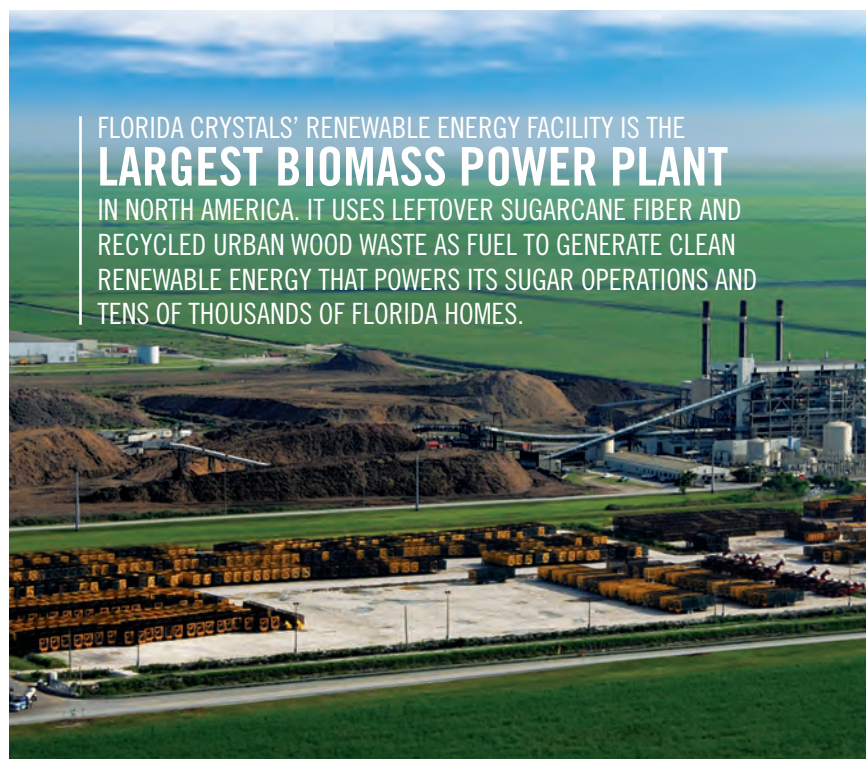
Belle Glade, Pahokee, and South Bay, known as “the Glades,” adjoin within 10 miles of one another, and 10,000 acres of developable, industrial and commercial properties lie within their annexed city limits or unincorporated areas. The Business Development Board of Palm Beach County maintains an online database of available property and land, and assists in matching businesses with expedited permitting, Enterprise Zones, Designated Rural Area Tax Credits, and other important property incentives. The area is also home to U.S. Sugar, Florida Crystals, and independent farm members of the Sugar Cane Growers Cooperative of Florida, with dedicated production that sustains four major sugar mills and two sugar refineries.

## Workforce

The region is within an easy commute for 3 million skilled workers. The Glades’ total population is 41,120, and is home to 1,700 businesses, with micro-businesses accounting for 1,100 of them (one to five employees), indicating an entrepreneurial spirit. The Glades are also home to 80 medium and large corporations employing over 18,500 workers. In total, 30,000 people are employed in the Western Communities by businesses with annual earnings totaling \$8.5 billion.

CareerSource of Palm Beach County, chartered by the State of Florida to work with Palm Beach County businesses to provide job placement, recruitment assistance, and funds for skills training, has a local career center to assist businesses.

Palm Beach State College’s Belle Glade campus serves the Western Communities’ higher-learning needs and business occupational training.



## Special Incentives and Access to Capital

As a state-designated priority rural area, most companies in the Glades region are eligible for many State of Florida and Palm Beach County incentives, grants, and low-cost loan programs. Additionally, the BDB evaluates the potential for SBA 7A and 504 loans, USDA and HUD grant and loan programs, New Market Tax Credit packages, venture capital, angel funding, industrial revenue bonds, and other financing mechanisms. Ad valorem tax exemption is also available for major employers.

## Business Advantages

### Rural Areas of Critical Economic Concern

The Cities of Belle Glade, Pahokee, and South Bay are designated by the state as Rural Areas of Critical Economic Concern (RACEC). It allows for authorized waivers of criteria among the following incentives: Qualified Target Industry Tax Refund Program, Quick Response Training Program, transportation projects, brownfield redevelopment bonus refund, and rural job tax credit program.

### Employer Training Incentives

Employer-based incentive programs, administered by CareerSource and/or the state of Florida, are available. These programs are enacted and modified by laws at the federal, state, and/or local levels and can change at any time.

On-the-Job Training provides employers financial assistance for training new employees in the skills they need to effectively perform their jobs. A portion of a new employee’s wages may be reimbursed to the employer during the training period. Employed Worker Training provides grant funding for qualified companies that will enable them to provide training with the intent of advancing current employees’ wages and positions, and to assist them in retaining jobs that provide self-sufficient employment. Incumbent Worker Training provides reimbursement grant funding for training for current employees of existing for-profit businesses to provide them with additional skills and opportunities for advancement. The companies benefit through increased productivity and employee retention, leading to the ability to compete more effectively in the global marketplace.

Quick Response Training provides reimbursement grant funding for customized training for new or expanding businesses. The program is structured to be flexible and to respond quickly to meet the business’s training objectives. To receive a thorough review of city, county, and state incentives, please contact the Business Development Board of Palm Beach County at 561.835.1008.

## Logistics

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### By Air:

Not only is the Glades just 35 miles west of Palm Beach International Airport, it is also home to Palm Beach County Glades Airport in Pahokee. This airport is the county's designated general aviation, recreational, parachute operations, and sport-flying airport. The Belle Glade State Municipal Airport is a publicly owned single-runway airport that can accommodate corporate jets.

### By Rail:

The area is served by Florida East Coast (FEC) Railway Company and by the South Central Florida Express (SCFE). Both lines connect to CSX Railway and Norfolk Southern to provide service throughout Florida, the United States, and parts of Canada.

### By Roadway:

U.S. 27, which runs north/south from Miami to Indiana, intersects with State Road 80, traversing across the state from West Palm Beach to Ft. Myers. In South Bay, U.S. 27 is a major corridor that serves as an alternative to I-95 and the Florida Turnpike. Both U.S. 27 and State Road 80 are part of the State of Florida's Strategic Intermodal System (SIS), signifying transportation priority planning and funding to enable economic development. U.S. 441 runs northwest to southeast through the Tri-Cities area. All three communities are served by Palm-Tran, Palm Beach County's award-winning public transit system.

### Intermodal:

A planned development of an 850-acre, 2 million square-foot inland Intermodal Logistics Center is underway, a collaboration between the Port of Palm Beach, the Port of Miami, and Florida Crystals. They anticipate the 2015 completion of the Panama Canal Expansion will engender an economic boost in international trade, logistics, and freight handling. The partnership establishes formal cooperation in information exchange, marketing, market studies, planning and development, training, and technological interchange development, can readily tap an available workforce, and is proximate to key infrastructure such as U.S. Highway 27, and rural areas of critical economic concern programs.

## Education

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The region takes great pride in its students' educational achievements. Unlike many other rural Florida regions, the Glades' public, private, and charter school students have higher-than-average graduation rates within the State of Florida and good standardized testing scores. When Palm Beach County high schools and their students were awarded multiple honors through their participation in Advanced Placement (AP) courses and their successful performance on the culminating AP exams, Glades Central High School had two AP Scholars in 2011. Two students from Glades Central High School were selected as 2011 Gates Millennium Scholars (GMS); an estimated 23,000 students applied for the scholarship, but only 1,000 students were selected. Glades Central High School also served as a model school for the Lee County School district and was visited by 38 administrators from nine Lee County schools to study its model for success; Glades Central earned a "B" rating from the State of Florida in 2011.

Glade View Elementary School received an "A" rating from the State for 2011. The area's elementary reading teachers from five schools formed the Glades Homegrown Institute to develop teaching strategies for all of their students. Reading teachers from Glade View Elementary, Rosenwald Elementary, Belle Glade Elementary, KEC/Canal Point Elementary, and Pioneer Park Elementary formed the partnership to improve their Readers Workshop Program, and to set up their classrooms to make them more conducive to reading, and identify the needs of each student. In the Readers Workshop Program students learn to ask questions, make connections, recognize events, and improve their comprehension skills. Pioneer Park Elementary won a 2012 "Green School of Quality" Award from The Palm Beach County Green Schools Recognition Program.

There are 13 public K-12 schools in Belle Glade: five elementary, four middle, and four high schools, plus 10 preschools. In Pahokee, there are three public K-12 schools: one elementary school, one middle school, and one high school, as well as nine preschools. There is a single public elementary school in South Bay, as well as five preschools, and a single public elementary school in Canal Point near Pahokee. Palm Beach State College's Belle Glade branch boasts enrollment of 1,750 as well as a high school dual-enrollment program. All three communities have their own branch of the Palm Beach County Library System, which in addition to municipal library services, also provides Adult, Teen, and Children's Programs, as well as Computer Training Programs.

## Recreation

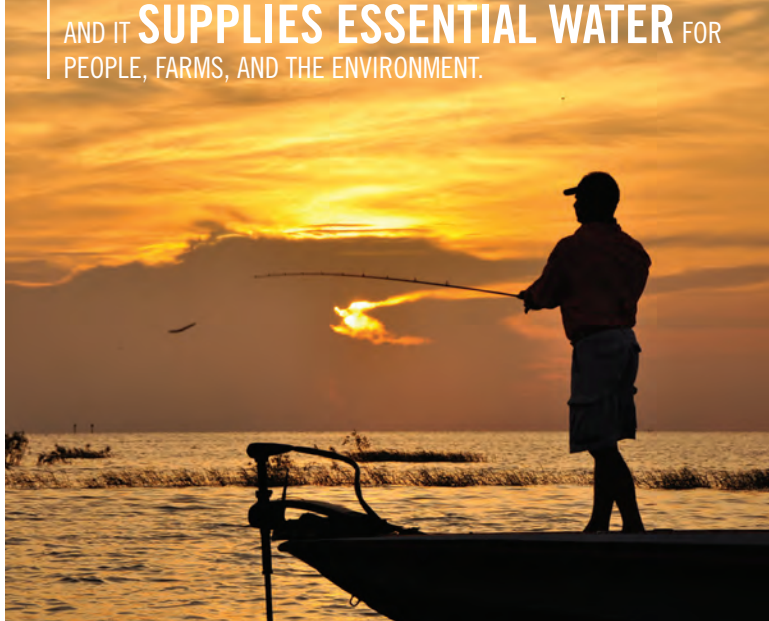
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"Lake O" is a paradise providing a teeming habitat for fish, wading birds and other wildlife, and it supplies essential water for people, farms, and the environment. The Lake provides flood protection and attracts recreation enthusiasts from around the world. It is also home to sport and commercial fisheries. Birds, alligators, large-mouth bass, and endless species of fauna and flora create an outdoor environment perfect for boating, kayaking, canoeing, bass fishing, airboat rides, water and jet skiing, hiking, and camping. Outdoor enthusiasts have plenty of options with the Torry Island Campground and Marina (formerly the Belle Glade Marina Campground), the 18-hole Belle Glade Public Golf Course, the City of Pahokee Marina and Campground, Lake Okeechobee Outpost Campgrounds, and the South Bay RV Park, Campground, and Boat Ramp.

The historic 1,400-mile Florida Trail, which begins in Big Cypress and ends just outside of Pensacola at Gulf Islands National Seashore in the panhandle, circles Lake Okeechobee. The Southern and Eastern Trail follow the Herbert Hoover Dike, encountering the Port Mayaca Lock and Dam, one of five lock-and-dams on the cross-state Okeechobee Waterway, which extends from Stuart on the east coast to Ft. Myers on the west coast, running through The Lake and accommodating commercial vessels, fishing boats, and pleasure craft. Scenic views of The Lake, adjacent agricultural lands, sandhill cranes, and a variety of wading birds can be seen feeding in pastures east of the Dike. There are great views of the Everglades and lakeshore wildlife, and the best views of Lake O are along the dike's east rim. Major recreation areas are accessible from the trail at Clewiston, Lake Harbor, South Bay, Pahokee, and on Torry Island west of Belle Glade.



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## Quality of Life

The Glades offer the perfect combination of modern growth balanced with a relaxed country lifestyle. The area is home to the Grassy Waters Festival, Afro Arts Festival, Black Gold Jubilee, and three-day Pahokee Heritage Music Festival.

High school football is a significant pastime for residents in Western Palm Beach County where the most hyped game is the annual Muck Bowl, played between Glades Central and Pahokee at the end of the regular season. The schools boast 12 state titles among them and countless current and former NFL players.

On Labor Day, 2011, ESPN broadcast the first nationally televised high school game in county history between William. T. Dwyer High School and Glades Central High School.

Belle Glade is proud of the Dolly Hand Cultural Arts Center located at the Palm Beach State College Glades Campus, which presents play productions, music of all genres, and ballets. Business forums are also hosted here.

The City of Belle Glade is home to the Lawrence E. Will Museum: A Museum of the Glades. Its mission is to conserve, display, and organize, for educational and research goals, the artifacts, memorabilia, photographs, and written records pertinent to this unique region adjacent to Lake Okeechobee and the upper Everglades, and the significance of the Will family in settling the Glades and preserving its early history. The Museum, as the “interpreter of the Glades experience,” is expanding its areas of interest to include muck and sugarcane agriculture, and water management. The Museum is home to the largest known collection of artifacts of a prehistoric Native American people known as “the people of the Belle Glade Culture,” who lived throughout the Kissimmee River and Lake Okeechobee Basin for 3,000 years, and were present when the Spanish arrived in 1513. The Belle Glade Culture built the largest canal system of prehistoric North America (that connects the Atlantic to the Gulf through Lake Okeechobee). The museum promotes its Belle Glade Culture collection to researchers and tells the story of people throughout Florida, starting with a major Viva Florida 500 exhibit in early 2013 funded by the Division of Historical Preservation. The Lawrence E. Will Museum also houses extensive information about the history of the Tri-Cities’ settlement, the various hurricanes that affected the region, and many of the Will family’s privately owned artifacts, photographs, paintings, notes, writings, records, maps, and charts.

Residents have access to rehabilitation and medium- and long-term care facilities such as Alzheimer’s Community Care Specialized Adult Day Center, Butterfly Rehabilitation, Florida Community Health Center, Glades Healthcare Center, Glades Health Initiative, as well as Lakeside Medical Center (LMC). Owned and operated by the Healthcare District of Palm Beach County, the 50-acre, Joint Commission-accredited, 70-bed acute care facility was built in 2009 and offers centers of excellence in Women’s Health, Emergency Care, Critical Care, Surgery, Physical Therapy, and all private rooms.

## The Glades

### Belle Glade

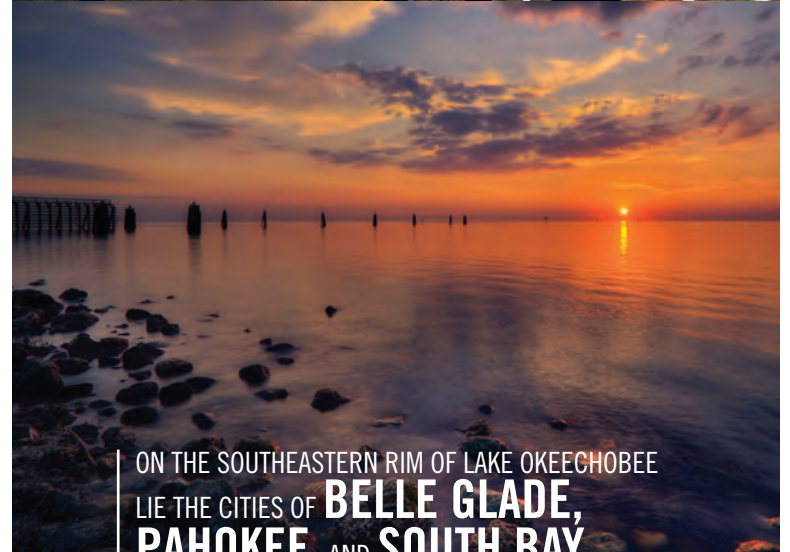
Belle Glade is the largest of the three cities in the Lake Region. Its motto is, “Her Soil is Her Fortune,” since agriculture is a top industry where the conditions are ideal for sugarcane, vegetables, ornamental landscaping, and sod farming. “Minutes away and a world apart,” Belle Glade is delightfully different from the Florida known to most visitors.

### Pahokee

That’s “Grassy Waters” in Seminole. Pahokee is located directly on the shore of Lake Okeechobee, known as Palm Beach County’s “Other” Coast. Seven miles of majestic towering royal palm trees greet visitors driving into this quaint Old Florida community. It is characterized by a tropical climate and moderating balmy breezes from the Lake.

### South Bay

“The Crossroads of South Florida,” South Bay is nestled where east-west State Road 80 and north-south U.S. 27 intersect. As with Belle Glade and Pahokee, available labor, low taxes, cooperative local government, and strong infrastructure make South Bay well suited for virtually any industry – from distribution to manufacturing to tourism and recreation. Although it is the smallest among the cities, South Bay ranked as the third-fastest growing major metropolitan area in the U.S. during the last decade.



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THE WESTERNMOST COMMUNITIES IN PALM BEACH  
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VANTAGE POINT.



## Who We Are

The Business Development Board of Palm Beach County is the official public/private economic development organization for Palm Beach County and Enterprise Florida. Founded in 1982 as a not-for-profit corporation, our primary purpose is to attract and retain new industry, business investment, high-quality jobs, and workforce development through corporate relocations, expansions, and international trade, stimulating economic energy, promoting business diversity, and enriching the County's vitality. The Business Development Board is essentially your one-stop resource for information on relocating your business to or expanding in Palm Beach County. The BDB offers free and confidential services, including:

- Information on grants, financial assistance, and incentives available through the State of Florida, Palm Beach County, and local municipalities.
- Site inventory on available industrial buildings, land, and office space.
- Site tours conducted by our relocation and expansion staff.
- Government zoning and expedited permitting assistance.
- Introductions to elected officials and local business leaders.
- Local buyer and supplier information and resources.
- Available services and rates for utilities, communications, and transportation.
- Introductions to the CareerSource employee-training programs.
- Review of available housing and cost-of-living data.
- Demographics and labor market information.
- Introductions to public and private educational institutions.
- Overview of Palm Beach County's lifestyles, including recreational and cultural amenities.

During the past five years, the BDB has assisted companies that have created more than 12,600 direct jobs with average salaries greater than \$67,000 resulting in more than \$693 million in capital investment to Palm Beach County and an economic impact that exceeds \$5.87 billion. Our economic development work in the county is enhanced through our partnerships with the County Commissioners, Palm Beach County's Department of Economic Sustainability, CareerSource, Chambers of Commerce, educational institutions, and our 38 municipalities. The BDB's ongoing commitment to the pursuit of economic prosperity is one reason why Palm Beach County is THE place to live, work, learn, and play.

### Headquarters:

310 Evernia Street  
West Palm Beach, FL 33401  
p: 561.835.1008  
f: 561.835.1160

[www.BDB.org](http://www.BDB.org)

### Glades Office:

1085 S. Main Street  
Belle Glade, FL 33430

## Major Employers Located in the Glades Region

Duda & Sons  
Everglades Farm Equipment  
Florida Crystals  
Hugh Branch, Inc.  
Hundley Farms  
Morning Star Harvesting  
Pioneer Growers  
Ray's Heritage  
Royal Family Businesses  
Sugar Cane Growers Co-op  
TKM Farms  
U.S. Sugar

## Available Real Estate:

ADDRESS:	CITY:	SQ FT:	TYPE:
1185 S Main Street	Belle Glade	300,376	Industrial
1541 W Canal Street N	Belle Glade	237,402	Industrial
1125 South Main Street	Belle Glade	92,065	Industrial
NW Avenue L	Belle Glade	65,340	Industrial
NW 16th Street	Belle Glade	65,340	Industrial
South Main Street	Belle Glade	40,319	Industrial
NW 16th Street	Belle Glade	28,998	Industrial
73 SE Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd	Belle Glade	27,007	Office
916 NW 12th Street	Belle Glade	14,740	Warehouse
125 N Main Street	Belle Glade	11,008	Office Building
2248 State Road 880	Belle Glade	7,280	Commercial
134 SW 16th Street	Belle Glade	7,224	Warehouse / Showroom
890 S Main Street	Belle Glade	5,181	Office Building
617 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd	Belle Glade	3,035	Commercial
1001 Rim Canal Road	Pahokee	15,553	Industrial
1090 Farmers Market Road	Pahokee	5,094	Industrial
185 S Barfield Highway	Pahokee	4,745	Office
1030 N State Market Road	Pahokee	4,164	Office
1001 Rim Canal Road	Pahokee	1,135.61	Industrial
Palm Beach Road	South Bay	522,720	Industrial
US Highway 27	South Bay	8,860	Industrial
370 N US Highway 27	South Bay	7,889	Office
101 NW 1st Avenue	South Bay	1,632	Industrial

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT BOARD





# Launch Relocate Expand Develop

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