

# The Glades Region:

**Belle Glade, Pahokee +  
South Bay.** Western Palm  
Beach County, the crossroads,  
gateway, and epicenter for  
unique businesses.



BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT BOARD

**PALM BEACH  
COUNTY**

Your Economic Development Resource





“Black gold,” the soil in Belle Glade was formed by decomposed plants that fell underwater in the Everglades thousands of years ago. Unlike sand and clay, it supplies its own nitrogen, making it **one of the richest soils in the country.**

## Western Palm Beach County is vast and full of opportunities

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...

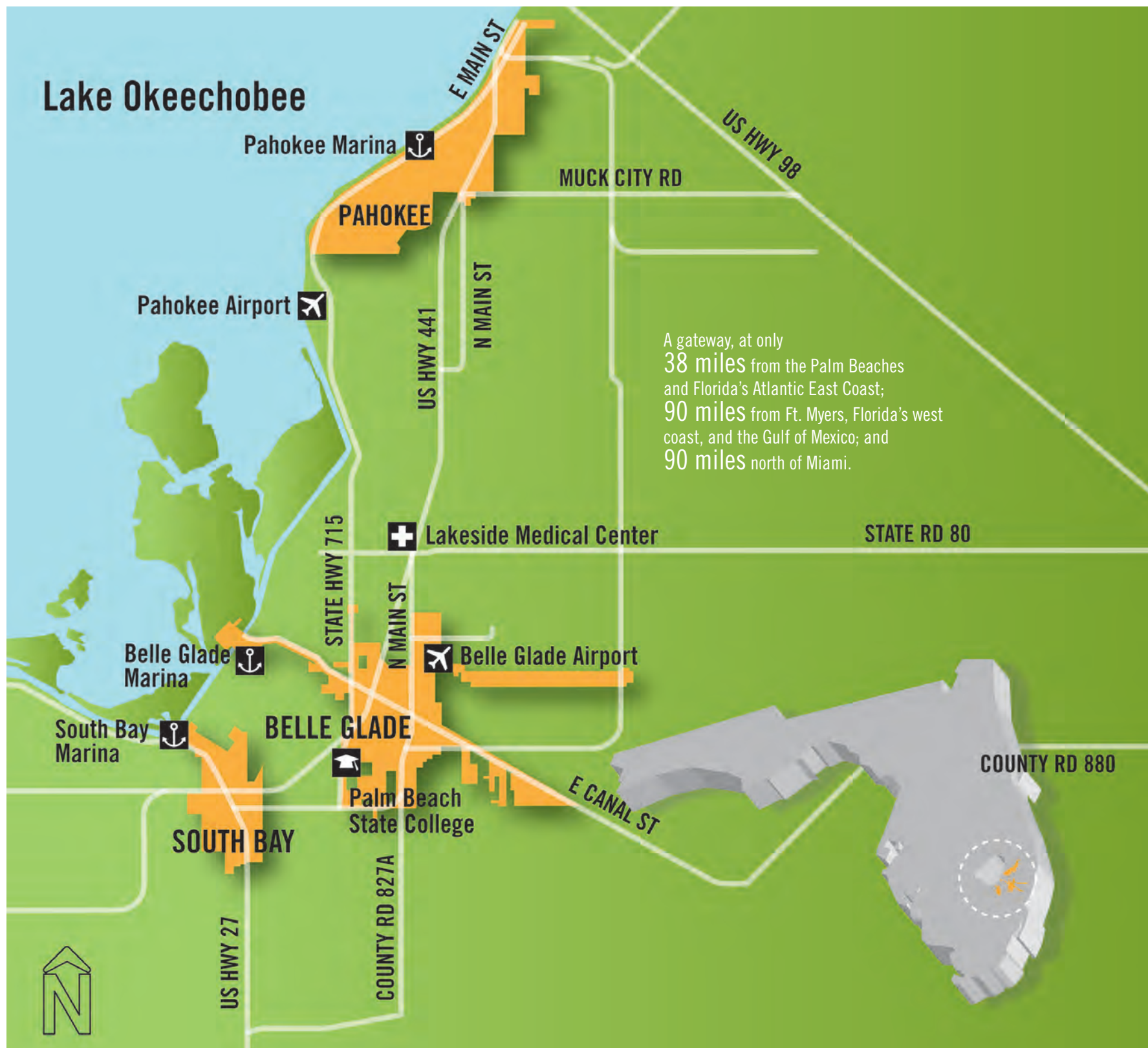
- The crossroads for 12 million in South Florida – within a 100-mile radius of 85% of the state's population.
- A gateway, at 38 miles from the Palm Beaches and Florida's east coast; 90 miles from Ft. Myers, Florida's west coast, and the Gulf of Mexico; and 90 miles north of Miami.
- The epicenter of 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 / Green Technologies
- Wind Power / Energy / Biofuels







**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 southeastern 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, 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.

### Non-Sugar Businesses:

- |  |                           |
|--|---------------------------|
| Arman Irons                            | Knight Welding Supply     |
| ASAP Installations                     | Pahokee Airport           |
| Cemex                                  | Tellus Products           |
| Everglades Equipment Group             | TreeTown USA              |
| Everglades Research & Education Center | Tripp Electric            |
| General Sheet Metal Works              | Universal Forest Products |
| Grower’s Management                    | Van Linda Iron Works      |
| Harmack Co.                            | World Trade Petroleum     |
| Hedrick Brothers Construction          |                           |



Florida Crystals’ renewable energy facility is the largest biomass power plant in North America. It uses leftover sugarcane fiber and recycled urban wood waste as fuel to generate clean renewable energy that powers its sugar operations and tens of thousands of Florida homes.

## 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 – indicating an entrepreneurial spirit. The Glades is 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. Its Technical Education Center offers programs such as welding, heavy bus/truck mechanic, corrections, sustainable building construction, and construction trades including carpentry, masonry, plumbing, and electrical. In addition, it houses the Sugar Technology Institute offering the only sugar technology degree in the United States.

## 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 relocating and expanding companies from Palm Beach County.

## Business Advantages

### Rural Areas of Opportunity

The cities of Belle Glade, Pahokee, and South Bay are designated by the state as Rural Areas of Opportunity (RAO). 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

Tellus Products, Belle Glade





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. Incumbent Worker Training provides reimbursement grant funding for training 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

### 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, in South Bay. The Panama Canal Expansion will engender an economic boost in international trade, logistics, and freight handling. The ILC would foster 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. 27, and rural areas of opportunity programs.

## Education

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. 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, 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 "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 campus 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.





The Glades Region offers a lifestyle that ranges from myriad outdoor activities on “Lake O,” to annual festivals, to arts and entertainment performances at the Dolly Hand Cultural Arts Center



Annual Muck Bowl



Treehouse, Torry Island, Belle Glade

## Recreation

“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, 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, 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.

## Quality of Life

The Glades Region offers 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 high schools at the end of the regular season. The schools boast 12 state titles among them and countless current and former NFL players.

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 people of Belle Glade Culture built the largest canal system of prehistoric North America (the Atlantic Ocean to the Gulf coast 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- to 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.

## Major Employers Located in the Glades Region

Duda & Sons	Okeelanta Corporation
Everglades Farm Equipment	Pioneer Growers
Florida Crystals	Ray’s Heritage
Hugh Branch, Inc.	Royal Family Businesses
Hundley Farms	Sugar Cane Growers Co-op
King Ranch Sod Operations	Tellus Products
Lakeside Medical Center	TKM Farms
Morning Star Harvesting	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



## Who We Are

The Business Development Board of Palm Beach County is the official public/private economic development organization for Palm Beach County, and Palm Beach County partner of Enterprise Florida. Founded in 1982 as a not-for-profit corporation, our primary purpose is to attract and retain a spectrum of 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:

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

During the past five years, the BDB has assisted companies that have created more than 12,822 direct jobs with average salaries greater than \$69,062, resulting in more than \$777 million in capital investment to Palm Beach County and an economic impact that exceeds \$6.87 billion. Our economic development work in the county is enhanced through our partnerships with the County Commissioners, Palm Beach County's Department of Housing and Economic Sustainability, CareerSource, Chambers of Commerce, educational institutions, and our 39 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.

Additional information can be found at the BDB's websites, [www.BDB.org](http://www.BDB.org), and [www.PBCglades.org](http://www.PBCglades.org)



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# Launch Relocate Expand Develop

In The Perfect Business Climate



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



Glades Region