

NORTH CENTRAL FLORIDA
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT

Proposed Amendments to the
COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY
2008-2012

COMMENTS:

Comments should be received no later than **December 13, 2011 by 5:00 p.m.** and should be submitted either by emailing thomas@ncfrpc.org or writing to: **Bryan Thomas, Economic Development Director, North Central Florida Regional Planning Council, 2009 NW 67 Place, Gainesville, Florida 32653.**

Grant Period: January 1, 2008, through December 31, 2012

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f. A proposed rail extension in Taylor County would include approximately 16 miles of new track and the upgrading of approximately 16 miles of existing track. The expansion into western Taylor County would connect to the CSX main rail line and provide economically feasible access to many of Florida's large markets that are currently inaccessible. The rail extension would provide a boost to the mining and silviculture industries, currently the two most prevalent industries in Taylor County, and provide a means for other industrial development along the rail extension corridor.

Primary responsibility: Individual counties will work with prospective businesses that are looking to locate in the area and increase job creation through these projects.

LONG RANGE PRIORITIES

In addition to the priority projects listed above, the region will support the following long range projects.

1. **Regional Energy Facilities:** As the state grows, there will be a continued need for energy. A proposed energy facility in Taylor County would provide critical energy for growing communities in north and central Florida, and would provide approximately 180 high paying jobs. Additionally, a recent \$20 million bio-fuel plant development grant through the University of Florida is another example of a potential energy generating facility that may be located within the region. Bio-fuels and energy industry classifications are target industries identified by Enterprise Florida and by the Rural Area of Critical Economic Concern.

2. **Regional Airport Facilities:** The development of the region's airport facilities is an important element of the overall economic development strategy for the North Central Florida region. The Gainesville Regional Airport is part of the state's Strategic Intermodal System and is a key component to economic development in the region. Likewise, the Lake City airport is slated in the Florida Department of Transportation master plan for new terminal and hangar facilities, which will enhance the region's ability to attract Aviation Services and Products which is a target industry of the North Florida Rural Area of Critical Economic Concern. Therefore, expansion of municipal and rural airparks and the Gainesville Regional Airport's business park in the next few years are long range priorities for the region.

3. Regional Water Resources: Because north central Florida has a much higher reliance on ground water than the rest of the state, sustainable water resource management is an important component of the region's economic development strategy. In 2000, 68.5 percent of all north central Florida water withdrawn for human use came from ground water sources, compared with 25.2 percent statewide. Approximately 80.6 percent of north central Florida water withdrawals are used for industrial, agriculture and thermoelectric uses. In addition, approximately 17.7 percent of regional water withdrawals are used for public and domestic uses.

Because of the region's dependence on quality groundwater, the Long Range Priorities of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy shall include the following goals:

- a. **Use the groundwater resources of the region in a sustainable manner.**
- b. **Maintain an adequate supply of high-quality groundwater to meet the needs of north central Florida residents, in recognition of its importance to the continued growth and development of the region.**
- c. **Maintain the quantity and quality of the region's surface water systems in recognition of their importance to the continued growth and development of the region.**
- d. **Maintain and strengthen local control of area surface and groundwater systems and supplies.**