

"Manufacturing" Alive & Well in Palm Beach County

By Sherry Howard, Deputy Director Palm Beach County Department of Housing and Economic Development

One of the State's top priority industries includes manufacturing. And according to Enterprise Florida, our State is one of the top 10 states in the nation for manufacturing. Benefits this industry brings to the County include that they are large job producers, pay high wages (with manufacturing jobs averaging \$75,993 annually versus an average of \$54,044 for overall Palm Beach County jobs), and not all positions require a college degree. Depending on the product produced and the machinery and equipment utilized, manufacturers require a wide-range of skill sets ranging from computer technology, electricians, engineers, welders and management and operations supervisors. Although the manufacturing sector experienced a more pronounced slowdown than other industries due to mandatory shutdowns caused by the pandemic, manufacturing is alive and well in Palm Beach County.

Even during the pandemic, the County continued efforts to encourage manufacturing companies to expand or bring their operations to Palm Beach County through various economic development programs approved by the Board of County Commissioners, and implemented by the Department of Housing & Economic Development. Just this year, the County's Section 108 Business Loan Program assisted in financing \$5M for the expansion of Oxygen Development, LLC, a manufacturing company in Palm Springs that will lead to the creation of 300 new full time jobs. The Company manufactures color cosmetics, skin care, hair care and over-the-counter drug-type products. The Company is expanding their business to produce gelatin based products with vitamins and antioxidants. The estimated five-year economic impact for this project is \$826 million. In 2010, the County initially provided \$5,947,740 in funding for their then new facility. The Company had committed to the creation of 400 new jobs, but has far exceeded that and to date has created over 1,200 new full time jobs. The County has also assisted in providing loan financing to other manufacturers including Prestige Commercial Kitchen, Scientific Organica and Shellco Construction, just to name a few.

The Glades Region remains one of the top priority areas for job creation and the County has provided incentives to two manufacturers in Belle Glade. This included Tellus Products, LLC a newly established business unit of Sugar Cane Growers Cooperative of Florida in 2017. The Company invested \$40M for the construction of a facility that produces biodegradable, molded packaging products out of recycled materials. This facility runs partially on renewable biomass power provided from the sugar mill and solar energy, creating an extremely efficient and environmentally sustainable operation. The Company committed to create 71 new jobs over a five (5) year period and to date has created over 90 jobs.

In 2021, a County incentive was provided to FINFROCK SOUTH FLORIDA, LLC, a design-build general contractor and precast concrete manufacturer based in Orlando and expanding their growing business in Belle Glade. The Company is making a capital investment of \$36M for the purchase 94 acres of land and the construction of a 140,000 square foot manufacturing facility. The Company will create 200 new jobs with a five (5) year economic impact estimated to be at least \$242 million. The expansion of FINFROCK to this area, supports the increasing demand for construction activities in South Florida, even during the pandemic. In Palm Beach County alone, the value of construction year over year grew from \$143M in May of 2020 to \$225M in May of 2021, and permits increased from 4,597 to 7,447 during the same period.

The continued industry diversity in Palm Beach County has contributed to our economic resiliency and manufacturing continues to play an important role in offering residents a vast array of job opportunities while furthering efforts to maintain a stable workforce. To learn more about the Department of Housing & Economic Development, or any of the County's economic development and business investment programs, please contact me at 561-233-3600 or showard@pbcgov.org.

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