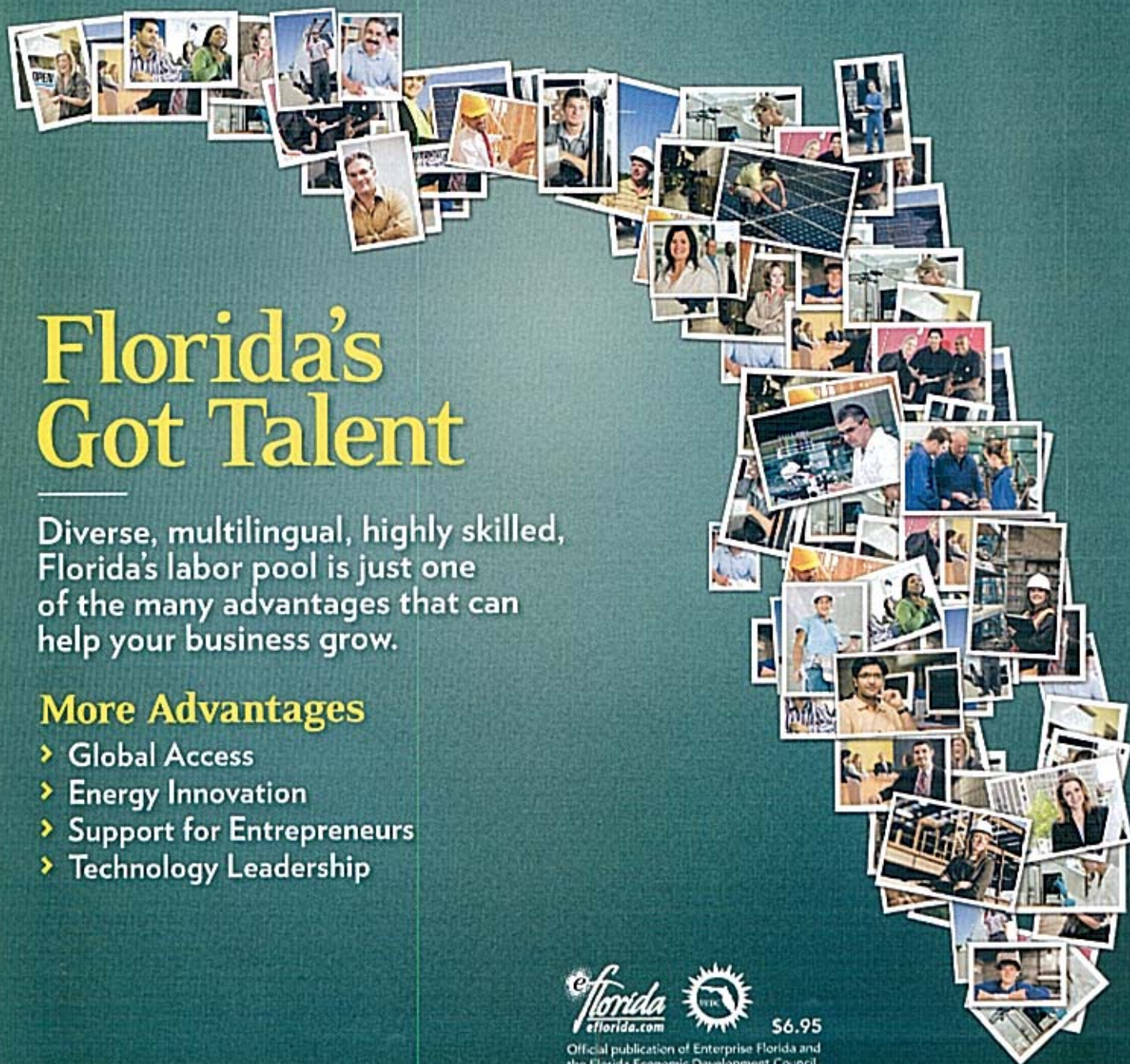


# Business FLORIDA

Your 2010 Florida Opportunity Guide



## Florida's Got Talent

Diverse, multilingual, highly skilled, Florida's labor pool is just one of the many advantages that can help your business grow.

### More Advantages

- › Global Access
- › Energy Innovation
- › Support for Entrepreneurs
- › Technology Leadership

One such success was Office Depot, the long-time county employer which just relocated to a new 635,000-square-foot facility in Boca Raton, retaining 1,700 jobs for the region.

**Bio-business heats up:** In spring 2009, Delray Beach-based biofuel startup Ag-Oil LLC planted 20 acres of jatropha; when the trees mature in 18 months, the seeds will be used to make biodiesel fuel. The company received a \$2.5-million Florida renewable energy grant to build a \$20-million biodiesel production facility that is expected to support more than 1,000 direct and indirect jobs, says Brian Weprin, Ag-Oil's project manager. Why Delray Beach? The location is seven miles from I-95 and a CSX rail line, and close to expansive agricultural



Seeds from jatropha trees grown in Florida can be crushed and the resulting oil processed to produce a high-quality biodiesel fuel.

property should the concept take hold. Says Weprin: "Our goal is to make sure we have the most efficient seeds and strains, and the room to grow them."

**Signs of the times:** Baron Sign Manufacturing in Riviera Beach has been making signs for 26 years and in 2008, topped \$9.5 million in revenues. Ready to expand, founder Sandra Foland bought 4.5 acres in a county Enterprise Zone and built a 40,000-square-foot facility to house her 50 employees and growing operations. A half-dozen new businesses subsequently joined the sign manufacturer in the area, and Foland now has plans to add 15% more space to her existing building.

## MARTIN COUNTY

**Gaining recognition:** Three Martin County employers won Governor's Business Diversification Awards in 2008: Sol Inc. for export excellence; Advanced Technologies Group Inc. for innovation; and Ecosphere Technologies Inc. for "green" leadership ("Green-to-Gold" category).

**Expansion pending:** In July 2009, Vought Aircraft Industries Inc. – maker of various parts for commercial jet airliners – made tentative plans for a major expansion of its Stuart facility. If pending state incentives are approved, the \$12.9-million expansion will create 100 direct jobs over three years.

**Focusing on life science:** The Business Development Board and the Economic Council have established the Martin County Consortium for Life Science Research Technology Advancement to capitalize on the county's proximity to world-renowned life science research institutes and to grow the life science sector.

## Powering Up

>> Construction is under way at Florida Power & Light's new solar-thermal plant just outside Indiantown. One of three solar facilities FPL is building in Florida, the Martin Next Generation Solar Energy Center will be the second largest solar facility in the world and the first-ever hybrid facility connecting a solar facility to an existing fossil fuel plant. Slated for completion in 2010, the Martin Center is expected to power 11,000 homes with 75 megawatts of electricity. >>The \$480-million project is being built by Abilene, Tex.-based Lauren Engineers & Constructors with plenty of local help. Job fairs hosted by Martin County Workforce Solutions in April 2009 drew more than enough applicants for some 1,000 available construction jobs.

## ST. LUCIE COUNTY

**Growing Tradition:** The biotechnology research cluster in the town of Tradition continues to grow and prosper:

- In January 2009, Torrey Pines Institute for Molecular Studies moved into its brand new \$40-million, 100,000-square-foot research center; employment is already running 50% over projections.
- The Vaccine & Gene Therapy Institute division of Oregon Health & Science University has selected Whiting-Turner of Tampa to build its 105,000-

# HELPING YOUR BUSINESS DO BUSINESS.

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square-foot facility on an eight-acre site next door to Torrey Pines. Some 200 scientists and support personnel will eventually work there. V&GTI and its scientific director Rafick-Pierre Sékaly, Ph.D. (who, in June, announced a major research breakthrough on a possible method for eradicating HIV infection in humans) are temporarily housed in some excess space at Torrey Pines until the new facility is up and running.

- The Alfred Mann Institute has acquired 22 acres for its planned 400,000-square-foot medical and life sciences research facility.
- Martin Memorial Hospital – which does clinical trials for Tampa-based H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Center & Research Institute – awaits Certificate of Need approval for a 300-bed hospital.
- Two I-95 interchanges provide easy access to the community of Tradition, where The Landing at Tradition, a 600,000-square-foot shopping center, now boasts 96% occupancy.

**Extruding success:** Todd Holloway was a wanted man in 2008. Florida, Georgia and his native Indiana were bidding to become the new home of East Coast Plastics, a Florida-based company Holloway had acquired and was looking to grow in a 50,000-square-foot space. Ultimately, Port St. Lucie won over Holloway thanks to its strong workforce and attractive financial incentives. The company began production in late 2008 and in June 2009 completed its new administrative offices. In all, the company brings 50 jobs – with hopes of growing to 70 – and a client base spanning medical, military and commercial sectors. Though he commutes twice-

“This area has great potential for growth. The highways make it easy for our employees.”

— Jose E. Rivera  
J.J. Taylor Companies  
Jupiter

monthly from Indiana, Holloway is pleased with the home he has found. “If it wasn’t for Port St. Lucie, there’s a chance we would have left Florida. They’re very forward thinking here.”

**Collaborations drive underwater research:** In May, Florida Atlantic University’s Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute partnered with the University of North Carolina-Wilmington to spearhead

NOAA’s Cooperative Institute for Ocean Exploration, Research and Technology. With a \$23-million grant, they will jointly pursue deep-water oceanographic research. Also under investigation: breast cancer research with deep-water sponges – in partnership with Burnham Institute for Medical Research; bluegreen algae biofuel work with the Smithsonian Institution; and additional research with submersible turbines for generating electricity.

**Worker training:** Accounts receivable firm Oxford Management Services received a \$257,000 Workforce Florida Quick Response Training (QRT) grant commitment in October 2008 to hire and train 303 new employees at its new Fort Pierce location. Likewise, Port St. Lucie-based medical supplier Liberty Medical worked with the local economic development council, Enterprise Florida, Indian River State College and Workforce Solutions to secure its own QRT grant in January 2009 to train some 2,300 new and incumbent employees on new software.

**Mas cerveza, por favor:** Jupiter-based J.J. Taylor Companies has acquired from

Thies Distributing the beer distribution rights to Martin, Okeechobee, Indian River and St. Lucie counties and is out to bid for a \$5-million warehouse and distribution facility. The new 25,000-square-foot plant will be located in Crossroads Park on S.R. 70 between the Turnpike and I-95. “This area has great potential for growth,” says Vice President of Operations Jose E. Rivera. “The highways make it easy for our employees.”

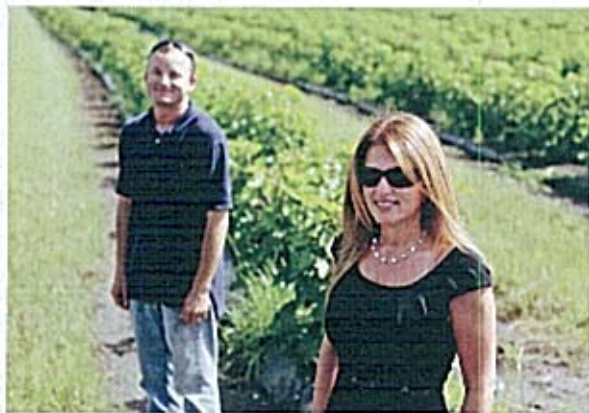
## Educational Opportunities

>>Indian River State College opened its new Treasure Coast Public Safety Training Complex in September 2009. The \$40-million, 50-acre complex at Ft. Pierce houses trainees in counter-terrorism, homeland security, FEMA and emergency management in custom facilities that include a built-to-scale courtroom and an airplane once owned by boxing promoter Don King. Also opening this fall at IRSC: an \$18.5-million Science, Technology, Engineering & Math (STEM) building. Elsewhere, Florida Atlantic University’s Port St. Lucie campus has undergone a \$12.2-million expansion.

## INDIAN RIVER COUNTY

**Flying high:** Vero Beach-based Piper Aircraft – fresh off its May acquisition by investment management company Imprimis – is slated to roll out its \$2.19 million PiperJet “very light jet” by 2012.

**Play ball:** Dodgertown – the Vero Beach facility that was vacated in 2008 when the Los Angeles Dodgers moved their spring training to Arizona – is undergoing rejuvenation. Minor League Baseball now holds three five-year leases on the four-diamond facility and is making big plans. With 89 rooms, tennis courts, an Olympic-sized pool, conference center and up to 300 employees during peak events, this unique facility has undergone a \$2-million facelift and will host college and high school tournaments, Major League umpire training and corporate team building, says Craig Callan, vice president of Minor League Baseball-Vero Beach. “Our target is 40 to 45 weeks of business a year.”



Ag-Oil’s Dylan Bailey and Teri Gevinson look forward to 2011 when seeds from the 9,500 jatropha trees at the firm’s 20-acre plantation in Delray Beach will be ready for processing into biodiesel fuel.

Photo by Gary Coronado, Palm Beach Post