

Built & Grow

2024 - 2028

A FloridaWest Regional Strategy

FloridaWest
economic development alliance



A Message from our Campaign Chair and President of the FloridaWest Board of Directors



Built to Grow Campaign Leadership

Matt Davis
Hancock Whitney

Rick Johnson
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CareerSource Escarosa

Donnie McMahon
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Chris Plaeger
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Dr. Charletha Powell
Educator & Entrepreneur

Ryan Tilley
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In 2014, the City of Pensacola, Escambia County and community leaders came together and agreed that we must do better in how we approach and execute economic development strategies for ongoing growth and prosperity for our region. With that, the FloridaWest Economic Development Alliance was launched as a partnership between the City, the County and a small number of private sector investors.

Since that time, FloridaWest has had incremental success in its business and industry recruitment and retention efforts, such as, Navy Federal Credit Union, International Paper, ST Engineering and IRIS (Intelligent Retinal Imaging Systems). In addition, we have seen several successful graduates of FloridaWest's CO:LAB business incubator.

In October of last year, the Board retained Funding Solutions, a firm with more than 30 years of successful engagement with clients with a dedicated focus in economic development. Funding Solutions assignment was to take a deep dive into our organization and gather community consensus as to the role of our organization moving forward.

With the input from 79 public and private sector community leaders, Funding Solutions was able to affirm FloridaWest's path forward. The data confirmed that now is FloridaWest's time to take aggressive steps to advance to the next level of this organization's growth. Moving forward, FloridaWest will have an enhanced focus on its three main programmatic initiatives:

- Business and Industry Recruitment
- Business and Industry Retention and Expansion
- Innovation and Entrepreneurship

In order to strengthen our mission and ability to execute our strategic initiatives, FloridaWest is launching the **Built to Grow** campaign. Our Board leadership and staff recognize that to be successful we must be more collaborative with the public sector, business and industry leaders, as well as like-minded economic development organizations. We must provide stakeholders opportunities to invest, engage and provide direction moving forward.

The following pages summarize our strategy, execution and expected outcomes. It is my hope that you will take a hard look and see that FloridaWest's program execution success will result in growth and prosperity for all in Pensacola and Escambia County. In addition, I hope that you will consider joining me and the many others who are invested in FloridaWest's new regional growth strategy.

Best regards,

David Bear
Campaign Chair, **Built to Grow**
President, FloridaWest Board of Directors

FloridaWest Partners



Business and Industry Recruitment

Mission

Execute a systematic approach to business development and recruitment that aligns with economic base, intellectual capital and existing assets.

FloridaWest has identified and defined in the current strategic plan three specific sectors as the core focus of its business and industry recruitment efforts:

- Technology & Cybersecurity
- Aerospace, Aviation & Defense
- Advanced Manufacturing & Process Industries

Focused on these three core industry sectors, FloridaWest will execute recruitment program initiatives to produce defined outcomes and deliverables and will report metrics to confirm the success of the organization's efforts.



“Continuing to create economic opportunity in Pensacola is the most important public-private partnership we have. Your investment will stand alongside the City of Pensacola’s unprecedented efforts in fostering strong, smart growth where opportunity abounds, business thrives, and every resident can envision a brighter future.”

— Mayor D.C. Reeves,
City of Pensacola

“FloridaWest is a true partner in our economic development program outreach in Escambia County. Whether it is a site study, project meeting, or overall strategy, FloridaWest always steps up with professional help.”

— Steven Barry, Escambia County Commission District 5 and Chairman



Technology & Cybersecurity Deliverables

- 10 annual visits with vetted existing companies in the United States and abroad
- Increase number of new procurement opportunities generated for cybersecurity businesses by one (1) per year
- Development of a feasibility plan for additional office space at Cory Station
- Develop plan for existing companies to access Sensitive Compartmented Information Facility (SCIF) space
- Increase total amount of square feet of occupied space in the sector by 10% over five years
- Generate 50 new contacts annually through attendance at trade shows, events, etc. to create awareness
- Announce 5 new companies/jobs in information technology in five years
- Increase percentage of tenants in CO:LAB in cybersecurity industry to 10% of total tenants
- Retain 20% of existing military personnel exiting military in our county/region

- Implement a digital and social marketing campaign for the sector with measurable results including follow up with five contacts from the campaign
- Increase percentage of total prospects in this sector to 25% at each stage of selection process
- Establish targeted outreach to remote workers to support sector
- Increase net new jobs in the sector by 10% over five years
- Increase total payroll in the sector by 10% over five years
- Increase capital investment in the sector by 10% over five years
- Continue to strengthen partnerships with like-minded organizations locally, regionally and nationally to leverage resources and assets to further strengthen FloridaWest's opportunity for success

Aerospace, Aviation & Defense Deliverables

- 10 annual visits with vetted existing companies in the United States and abroad
- Increase the inventory of ready sites available for this sector including parcels of less than 50, 51-100, and 100+ acres
- Announce five (5) new or expanding companies in aerospace, aviation and defense over five years
- Retain 20% of existing military personnel that stay in county/region
- Implement a digital and social marketing campaign for the sector with measurable results including follow up with five contacts from the campaign



“CareerSource Escarosa works collaboratively with the local business community and provides resources for jobseekers to build a stronger, more prepared, and highly skilled workforce for the region. We are proud to be a strategic partner with FloridaWest. When workforce partners, educators and businesses work together, we provide the foundation for our area to thrive.”

— Marcus L. McBride, Ph.D.
Chief Executive Officer, CareerSource ESCAROSA

- Increase percentage of total prospects in this sector to 25% at each stage of selection process
- Increase net new jobs in the sector by 10% over five years
- Increase total payroll in the sector by 10% over five years
- Increase capital investment in the sector by 10% over five years
- Continue to strengthen partnerships with like-minded organizations locally, regionally and nationally to leverage resources and assets to further strengthen FloridaWest's opportunity for success
- Fully support the mission of the Northwest Florida Defense Coalition as a partner and active participant in its efforts to support and grow the military presence in Northwest Florida

Advanced Manufacturing & Process Industries Deliverables

- Five (5) annual visits with vetted existing companies in the United States and abroad
- Create pro forma examples of heavy process water users and the value to different industry types
- Create phases and budget for infrastructure improvements specific to access to Cypress Bluff and Magnolia Bluff parcels
- Increase the number of ready sites available for this sector by 10% including parcels of 50 acres or less, 51-100, 100+ acres
- Announce five (5) new or expanding companies of companies/jobs in manufacturing and process industries
- Increase the number of companies/jobs in manufacturing and process industries by 10% over five years
- Identification and targeting of 50 companies that are heavy process water users for specific ongoing marketing
- Implement a digital and social marketing campaign for the sector with measurable results including follow up with five contacts from the campaign
- Increase percentage of total prospects in this sector to 25% at each stage of selection process
- Increase net new jobs in the sector by 10% over five years
- Increase total payroll in the sector by 10% over five years
- Increase capital investment in the sector by 10 percent over five years
- Continue to strengthen partnerships with like-minded organizations locally, regionally and nationally to leverage resources and assets to further strengthen FloridaWest's opportunity for success



Business and Industry Retention and Expansion

Mission

Refine and deliver a robust retention and expansion program that is built upon ongoing business and industry feedback, market intelligence and data, leading to an existing industry base that continually invests in the community and its workforce.

FloridaWest will execute retention and expansion program initiatives to produce defined outcomes, deliverables and will report metrics to confirm the success of the organization's efforts.

Deliverables

- Hire a qualified economic development professional to lead the business retention and expansion program
- Complete sixty (60) visits per year with existing Pensacola and Escambia County companies including those in targeted sectors
- Develop a database tracking system that records the challenges, needs and trends in the industry sector as identified by visits
- Administer business and Industry committees to bring business leaders together to gather market data, promote collaboration, address challenges and share best practices
- Increase the number of existing companies, jobs and payroll by 10% over five years
- Announce 25 new expansions with increased jobs, wages and capital investment over five years
- Implement a digital and social marketing campaign for sector with measurable results including follow up with five contacts from the campaign
- Increase the number of expansion/retention projects by 20% over five years



“Our citizens’ quality of life depends in large measure on the prosperity and vitality of the business community both here in the City of Pensacola and throughout the area. The City’s collaboration with FloridaWest on smart economic growth impacts all our residents.”

— Erica Grancagnolo,
City of Pensacola
Economic Development Director

- Market to specific talent for relocation to area for open positions
- Increase by 10% the number of net new jobs from existing industry
- Increase new payroll by 10%
- Increase overall private capital investment by existing industries by 25% over five years
- Continue to strengthen partnerships with like-minded organizations locally, regionally and nationally to leverage resources and assets to further strengthen FloridaWest’s opportunity for success

“Growing our local economy is critical now more than ever in the increasingly competitive environment of economic development. FloridaWest is the driver of the Pensacola area’s economic growth, and FPL is honored to support FloridaWest so that we can continue to recruit industries, help expand local business and drive innovation.”

— David Peaden, FP&L and PEDC
Board Chairman



Innovation & Entrepreneurship

Mission

Drive programmatic solutions that support innovation and entrepreneurship utilizing existing spaces, programs, partners and initiatives. FloridaWest will lead in fostering an ecosystem that will facilitate business formation and drive innovation to support target industries.

FloridaWest, through its recruitment and expansion efforts, and in collaboration with its business incubator and growth accelerator CO:LAB, will execute innovation and entrepreneurship program initiatives to produce defined outcomes and deliverables and will report metrics to confirm the success of the organization's efforts.

Deliverables

- Increase the number of new business startups supported by FloridaWest by 10% annually
- Identify three (3) potential innovation opportunities with existing businesses and business recruitment targets annually in partnership with FloridaWest recruitment efforts, University of West Florida, Pensacola State College and private sector businesses

“If the Pensacola area is to develop greater economic opportunity, attract and retain our young talent, it is of paramount importance that FloridaWest is successful in its objectives. Attracting high growth businesses in the cyber and technology sectors while supporting those that are already here is the formula for expanding economic diversity.”

— Dr. Kenneth Ford, IHMC (Institute for
Human & Machine Cognition



“I am living proof that if you have a great idea, are willing to take some risks and work hard; CO:LAB, FloridaWest and this community will encourage and support you in developing a thriving business.”

— Dr. Sunil Gupta, Founder, IRIS
(Intelligent Retinal Imaging Systems)

- Increase the number of individuals completing entrepreneurial training programs internally as well as with external training partners by 10% annually
- Prepare asset maps and develop metrics to report outcomes of participants utilizing each asset within 18 months
- Map progress of startups and collaboration with community partners within 18 months
- Provide progress reports of fostering the entrepreneurial ecosystem two (2) times per year
- Implement digital and social marketing campaigns across innovation and entrepreneurship sectors and develop and track measurable results metrics
- Share implementation highlights of residents, alumni, external assisted start-ups and partner organizations
- Continue to strengthen partnerships with like-minded organizations locally, regionally and nationally to leverage resources and assets to further strengthen FloridaWest’s opportunity for success
- Achieve CO:LAB tenant occupancy of 80%
- Produce overall increase in tenants in CO:LAB by industry sector/targeted industry sector in conjunction with FloridaWest recruitment efforts annually each year over five years



FloridaWest's Metrics for Success

Built to Grow will provide the resources needed for our organization to fully execute the program initiatives laid out in this document. It will allow us to PROMOTE, COLLABORATE and GROW in order to provide exemplary service to our existing business and industry, targeted recruitment of new business and support innovation and entrepreneurship; all to

deliver sustainable economic growth and prosperity for all in our area.

To show our organization is delivering on its mission, FloridaWest will provide quarterly updates to investors, as well as produce an annual report to ensure we are clear in our communications and transparent in the metrics of our results.

Key Performance Metrics, 2024-2028

Announced New Jobs	5,000 jobs over 5 years
Capital Investment	\$1 billion over 5 years
Average Income for Announced Jobs	15% increase over previous wages

Our FloridaWest reporting metrics will include:

- Business and Industry Recruitment Report
- Business and Industry Retention and Expansion Report
- CO:LAB Occupancy Report
- Individual Project Summaries

Additional Performance Metrics to be Tracked and Reported

- Net Employment Change
- Net Available Workforce Change - Labor Force Growth
- Personal Income Change
- Employment Growth by Industry Sector
- Construction Investment
- Population Growth
- Cost of Living
- Gross Domestic Product
- Exports
- Grants
- Education Attainment
 - High School Graduation Rates
 - 2 Year Degree/4 Year Degree
- Workforce Alignment



“FloridaWest’s dedication to nurturing every facet of our community, embracing diverse businesses, and fostering inclusivity is a driving force for positive change that will continuously uplift and empower our entire community.”

— Dr. Charletha Powell,
Educator & Entrepreneur



“As the former Mayor of Pensacola and now an executive in the private sector, I know that collaboration is the key to success in business, in politics, and in life. FloridaWest and its leadership team understand that too, and that’s why they continue to deliver long-term economic results for the City of Pensacola, Escambia County, and the people of Northwest Florida.”

— Ashton Hayward, Andrews
Research & Education Foundation

Your Investment in FloridaWest is an Investment in Economic Growth & Prosperity

FloridaWest is pinpoint focused on launching, growing and sustaining economic prosperity in Pensacola and Escambia County. Successful economic development strategies have immediate and lasting impacts not only for the business community itself but for every citizen that calls our area home.

Investment in FloridaWest is an investment in transformational change. Investment in FloridaWest is an investment in the vision of improving the community as a whole. An investment should be representative of individual capacity, interest in positive growth for our community and measurable ROI.

With its specific focus on economic development initiatives, a committed concentration on collaborative partnerships and an obligation to bring accountability and transparency, FloridaWest has and will clearly communicate:

- #1 – What programs and activities will be implemented under the three strategic initiatives
- #2 – Where the money will be spent
- #3 – What are the expected metrics, outcomes and impacts

Annual Investment Levels

President’s Circle	\$40,000 +
Transformational Partner	\$30,000 +
Strategic Partner	\$20,000 +
Growth Partner	\$10,000 +
Community Partner	\$5,000 +

Campaign Goal

Annual :	\$740,000
Five-Year :	\$3,700,000

How Your Dollars Are Spent

The five-year private sector investment goal for the campaign is \$3.7 million over five years (\$740,000 per year) in dollars over and above existing revenue received from The City of Pensacola and Escambia County.

With the additional funding, FloridaWest will have the resources to provide programming and execute further strategies in the following areas:

- Expansion of Existing Businesses
- Business Recruitment and Deal Closing
- Support of Infrastructure and Property Development
- Image Enhancement and Talent Attraction



“More than ever, our local economy needs leadership from the business community to help local companies grow, attract new business into the region and support our emerging entrepreneurial sector. FloridaWest is well positioned and is the best choice to accomplish that. Our investment in FloridaWest reflects our commitment to economic development. It is our way to give back to the community that helped make our business successful. To ensure that our local economy can continue to thrive in the future, we invest in **Built to Grow** today.”

— Freddy Donovan,
Baskerville Donovan

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PEDC Board of Directors

(Pensacola-Escambia Promotion & Development Commission)

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Escambia County Appointee – Jeff Bergosh, *County Commissioner District 1*

The Town of Century Council Member Appointee – Alicia Johnson, *The Town of Century Seat Four*

FloridaWest Board Appointee – Donnie McMahon, *McMahon & Hadder*



“We must stay focused on economic growth and developing the workforce in our area. Pensacola State College is committed to partnering with both the academic and business communities in the development of innovative educational and training programs incorporating the latest in technological advancement while at the same time providing a skilled workforce for traditional vocational and technical careers in our region.”

— Dr. Ed Meadows, *Pensacola State College*

FloridaWest Staff

Chief Executive Officer – Rick Byars (interim), *FloridaWest Economic Development Alliance*

Chief Business Development Officer – Danita Andrews, *FloridaWest Economic Development Alliance*

Operations Manager – Tabitha Lee, *FloridaWest Economic Development Alliance*

Director of Entrepreneurial Development – Patrick Rooney, *CO:LAB Pensacola*

Built to Grow: A FloridaWest Regional Strategy



Rick Byars
Interim CEO

The process of economic development, including visioning, planning, preparing and executing, is both a challenge and an opportunity for any community. Economic development organizations that perform each of those tasks well position their communities for success, and those that don't will likely underperform. By leveraging Pensacola/Escambia County's strong leadership, resources and advantages, I am certain that our community can perform at a higher level, meaning more jobs and investment, as well as a better quality of life for all.

The list of what I'm excited about is quite long, but a few key assets stand out:

- Diverse technology capabilities, such as cybersecurity, medical, robotics and aerospace
- An exceptional quality of life that is attractive to top talent from the U.S. and abroad
- A unique mix of current and future business locations capable of supporting industrial, technology and office employers
- Strong community leaders — including public officials and private sector leaders — who understand the importance of economic development and are committed to achieving success

Regarding leadership, the FloridaWest Economic Development Alliance and the Pensacola-Escambia Promotion & Development Commission are both supported by FloridaWest staff, and because effective economic development is a matter of teamwork and collaboration, we also work closely with numerous economic development allies as well as local, regional and state

partners to achieve our shared objectives.

Having been through the complete process many times, from visioning and planning to preparing and winning, I can tell you that the benefits of successful economic development are enormous. Economic development doesn't happen in a vacuum—success is achieved one issue, one company and one location at a time. In **Built to Grow**, performance metrics and meaningful communication with our stakeholders are a given, but also, with every development, how our community is viewed by others, and how we see ourselves, results in an enhanced image that is also important.

Looking ahead, our investors can expect accountability through a series of reports, one-on-one meetings and events, all designed to illustrate our progress. Key performance indicators such as announced jobs and capital investment from new, expanding and early-stage companies are always a top priority, and additional performance metrics will compare Pensacola-Escambia County with our historical data and with other national locations.

Some of the most visible and measurable expectations of **Built to Grow** are:

- Physical development and new employers at Tech Park, OLF8, The Bluffs, and other industrial properties
- 5,000 announced jobs and \$1 billion in capital investment from new and expanding companies.

Because the competition for economic growth is so fierce, a complete and well-balanced strategy is essential, and we have a cutting edge plan already in place. But, a plan is meaningless without good implementation. Development of the resources needed to fully execute the five-year plan is the focus of the **Built to Grow** campaign. Funding economic development, after all, is really an investment in our community's future.

On behalf of our Board and local leaders who trust in and expect much of FloridaWest, and on behalf of our dedicated staff, thank you for considering what economic growth means to you and your business. It is our hope that upon review of our commitment to an enhanced economic development process, you will join others by supporting and investing in **Built to Grow!**



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