

Annual State of Florida Report  
Lake County

- A. Lake Economic Area Development (LEAD) – Contracted entity through the Ocala Metro Chamber & Economic Partnership (Ocala Metro CEP)  
Heather Shubirg, Chief Growth Officer; [Heather@LeadingLake.com](mailto:Heather@LeadingLake.com)
- B. Lake County Government  
Jennifer Barker, County Administrator
- C. Lake County Annual Contract Amount: \$500,000.00
- D. Total of all funds received from other governmental bodies for the Year: \$67,500.00
- E. Funds received from private investors this Year: \$252,300.00
- F. Administrative Cost for the LEAD for the Year: \$476,325
- G. Number and names of businesses assisted by LEAD and the type of assistance provided (LEAD assisted 51 existing businesses, visited 77 existing businesses, 51 entrepreneurs, and worked with 14 active projects in 2024 and responded to 24 leads, from Florida Commerce and other sources.

Project Name*	Target Industry	Jobs Committed	Capital Investment Committed	Average Wages Committed	Annual Payroll	Assistance Provided	Status
Marmaduke's Lodge (Leesburg)	Retail/Restaurant	20	\$ 1,700,000	\$ 50,800	\$ 1,016,000	site selection, workforce, technical assistance	Project Complete
Senninger (Clermont)	Manufacturing	20	\$ 20,000,000	\$ 48,000	\$ 960,000	site selection, technical assistance	In Progress
Durawatt Generators (Leesburg)	Manufacturing	5	\$ 500,000	\$ 55,000	\$ 275,000	technical assistance, workforce	In Progress
Wire 3 (Countywide)	Telecommunications	100	\$ 100,000,000	\$ 55,000	\$ 5,500,000	technical assistance, site selection, workforce	In Progress
ALTR Tool (Mt. Dora)	Manufacturing	2	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 75,000	\$ 150,000	site selection, workforce, technical assistance	In Progress
*Reported by the Company							

H. Total capital investment of businesses who have been assisted by the LEAD: \$124.2 million.

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I. Total foreign investment of businesses who have been assisted by the LEAD: \$0

J. Number of new direct jobs resulting from a business being moved into Lake County or expanding within the County due to assistance provided by the LEAD: 147 (The following is a list of some of the larger projects from the year).

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K. Number of these jobs retained and the length of the job retention: N/A

L. The type of incentives and the amount of incentives that the LEAD has successfully assisted businesses in receiving:

Assisted Crooked Can Brewery with Florida Job Growth Grant Fund Application.



M. Any additional information that would show an economic benefit to Lake County Government because of the LEAD.

In LEAD's second year, the team has continued to increase the positive perception of Lake County through each strategic initiative.

Business Creation celebrated the one-year anniversary of the Lake/Eustis Chapter of Kauffman's 1 Million Cups Chapter (Eustis) to represent all of Lake County's entrepreneurial efforts with 740 unique visitors and 50 unique presenters. In addition, several classes for the Kauffman FastTrac® Program we held throughout the County. The LEAD team continues to partner with Lake County Government's Economic Development staff, the University of Central Florida's Business Incubation Program, State Small Business Development Center and several other key educational institutions with entrepreneurial efforts. The Small Business Database through StartUp Space has been implemented in 2024, which showcasing programming and provides an opportunity for businesses to interact through the platform.

Business Retention and Expansion efforts resulted in approximately 77 business visits in 2024 and 51 direct assists. As a result of these visits, many connections were made to area networks for continued business engagement. These referrals include, CareerSource Central Florida, FloridaMakes, Manufacturing Association of Central Florida, Lake-Sumter State College, Lake Tech and several other organizations. Additionally, the LEAD team, along with the Lake County Economic Development team, facilitated a displaced workforce day to assist those employees who were laid off from the Cultrale Plant Closure. The team is actively working to identify a new business opportunity for this facility.

Additionally, the team has stood conducted 11 industry councils. The intent of these councils is for continued interaction and solutions-based conversations relative to workforce development. The team partners with educational institutions throughout Lake County, as well as the Lake County Government Economic Development staff.

Business Attraction efforts focused on site development opportunities in 2024. LEAD continued to move the Strategic Sites Readiness information, provided by The State of Florida along with Duke Energy funding, forward to the next level. LEAD, along with the City of Minneola and Lake County assisted on a Florida Job Growth Grant Fund Application for the Minneola Hills industrial development project that would create over 2 million square feet in industrial space in the County for attraction efforts. The team hosted several promising site visits with both domestic and international clients. The current LEAD pipeline of leads and projects is strong, with over 14 active opportunities. In addition, the team continues to promote the Christopher C. Ford Commerce park's latest developments with nearly 2 million square feet of available speculative development, the Wellness Way Development, Minneola Hills Industrial Development and Wolf Branch Innovation District.