

Glades communities' estimated unemployment rates drop -- Special to Glades Initiative newsletter

Tom Veenstra <TVeenstra@careersourcepbc.com>

Fri 12/8/2023 9:32 PM

To:Updates <updates@gladesinitiative.org>

Glades Communities' Estimated Unemployment Rates Drop According to Newly Released U.S. Census Statistics

West Palm Beach, Fla. (Dec. 8, 2023) – Here's a bit of good cheer for the holiday season -- estimated unemployment rates in the western Palm Beach County communities of Belle Glade, Pahokee and South Bay have all dropped lower than previous estimates by the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS), according to newly released five-year estimates.

The latest five-year estimates are for 2018 – 2022. They place South Bay with the lowest unemployment rate among the three communities at 9.4 percent. Belle Glade follows South Bay at 12.5 percent. Pahokee has the highest unemployment rate at 23.0 percent.

Previous estimates for 2016 – 2020 ranked South Bay with the lowest unemployment rate at 10.7 percent, Belle Glade at 13.3 percent, and Pahokee at 23.8 percent.

The ACS estimates unemployment rates in cities with populations under 25,000 and updates them annually. Population in the three communities is too small to be included in monthly releases of unemployment statistics from the Bureau of Workforce Statistics & Economic Research at the Florida Commerce Department.

“While the area still faces many challenges, significant progress has been achieved in working together with our community partners to increase employment and economic growth in the Glades communities,” said Julia Dattolo, President and CEO of CareerSource Palm Beach County, the nonprofit organization chartered by the state to lead workforce development in the county.

During the past five program years, CareerSource Palm Beach County has assisted about 4,600 residents in finding employment/reemployment (full-time, part-time, seasonal, and temporary) in the Glades communities. Also during this time, CareerSource awarded \$2.1 million in grants to area businesses and employees for training and educational assistance.

“The Glades communities' economy is largely based on agriculture, serving a vital role as a significant source of the nation's winter food supply. However, the area is transitioning to a stronger and more diversified economy,” said Charles Duval, CareerSource Palm Beach County Associate Vice President, who heads operations in the west county communities.

CareerSource works in partnership with the Business Development Board of Palm Beach County (BDB) to attract, retain, and help businesses expand in the area. CareerSource provides comprehensive labor market information/analysis, job candidate sourcing, training grants and placement support.

The strength and effectiveness of this partnership was recognized earlier this year when the National Association of Workforce Development Professionals (NAWDP) presented their National Workforce Employer of the Year award to CareerSource Palm Beach County and the Business Development Board of Palm Beach County for our partnership to improve economic and

employment development in the region.

Momentum is building for more potential companies coming to the Glades communities and improving/diversifying the economy in the area.

This summer, CareerSource hosted a Glades job fair with an estimated 300 eager participants in attendance. The event featured 17 local employers, including FinFrock, Tellus, Coca Cola, Amazon, US Sugar, Okeelanta, the Palm Beach County School District, PBC Utilities, and the Cities of Belle Glade and Pahokee. Mayors, City Managers, and Commissioners also came to lend their backing.

Significant progress is also being made on addressing the challenge of affordable housing, with the addition of two new housing developments that also provide rewarding jobs for residents.

Ryan Homes has planned the new construction of Hillsboro Estates consisting of 51 single family, 1,300-2,200 square foot homes in Belle Glade with prices starting in the mid \$200,000s. CareerSource held a community meeting in partnership with Ryan Homes, the city of Belle Glade, LORE and Guardians of Glades for residents to learn more about the new housing and programs available to assist with purchasing a home.

Additionally, a meet and greet was held for job seekers to apply for employment with the subcontractors who are building those homes with students trained by West Tech's construction academy pre-apprenticeship program.

The city of Pahokee has also planned the new construction of a 60-unit mixed-use affordable housing development with daycare called Everglades Townhomes. CareerSource is working with West Tech and the subcontractors who are building those homes in anticipation of placing job seekers in construction jobs to be created.

"Several employer hiring and community events, CareerSource's summer internship training program in partnership with the Palm Beach County School District, and increased collaboration with our community partners demonstrate progress in the area's employment and economic development," Charles added.

CareerSource's West Career Center, located in Belle Glade at 1085 S. Main St., offers job fairs, workshops, and facilities for job searches, grants for job skills training for those who qualify, career development and consulting. The organization also provides services to help build and sustain businesses, including recruitment, assessments, and referrals of qualified job candidates; space and staff assistance for screening/interviewing candidates; and grants for training employees. More information is available at www.careersourcepbc.com.

###

IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE STEVENS AMENDMENT:

CareerSource Palm Beach County, Inc. is the direct service provider for various workforce programs supported by the U.S. Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and other agencies as part of awards totaling \$14,386,462 (revised annually). Unless otherwise stipulated, all statements, news releases, requests for proposals, bid solicitations and other applicable documents are fully funded from federal sources.

Tom Veenstra

Vice President of Administration



Central Career Center
3400 Belvedere Road West Palm Beach, FL 33406

p: 561-340-1061 x2229

w: www.careersourcepbc.com



CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE: This email, including attachments, may contain confidential and privileged information, and is for the sole use of the intended recipient(s). Any unauthorized reviews, uses, disclosures or distribution is prohibited. If you are not the intended recipient, please contact the sender immediately and destroy all copies of the original message.

CareerSource Palm Beach County is an equal opportunity employer/program. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. All voice telephone numbers on this website may be reached by persons using TTY/TDD equipment via the Florida Relay Service at 711.

Please Note and read carefully: Florida has a very broad public records law. Most written communications to or from CareerSource Palm Beach County are public records available to the public and media upon request. Your email communications may therefore be subject to public disclosure