



Central Florida Business Climate Survey

Public Employees

March 15-24, 2011 | n=64

Verbatim Open Responses

Why do you feel Central Florida is headed in the right direction?

- Amway center brought life to Central Florida. Bring in more sports complexes and a center for the arts with plays, etc.
- Assuming SunRail continues forward and items such as the Central Florida 2060 Strategic Regional Policy Plan move forward, we will be moving in the right direction. These items are a direct response to the How Shall We Grow process for Central Florida and need to advance. Otherwise, we will continue to sprawl and become more congested and neither of these items advance economic development.
- Commitment to smart growth through Myregion.org and commuter rail.
- Everyone sees the need to work together.
- Government is being more conservative and no longer out spending revenues.
- I do feel that we are heading in the right direction when I see the potential growth of the medical city. But we need this type of development all around Central Florida. The opportunity for jobs and education will make Central Florida attractive live in; but we do need to collectively address the crime in the community and address the educational system of our public schools as well as how we can attract commercial development.
- I feel the leaders in place have a vision of what is needed to be done to advance the community.
- I work fairly closely with all the business and industry groups in our City and any business owner I meet I ask them how things are looking for them and the overall response is positive. Retail and restaurant uses seem to be doing very well, other professional services are coming back up, real estate is still the laggard.
- I'm encouraged by Mayor Jacobs commitment to working to improve the business climate in Orange County.
- in spite of economy, leaders at local level are working to address issue.
- Leadership is focused on collaboration and respectful problem solving involving the delicate balance between fiscally responsible programs and appropriate social services.
- Local governments have recognized that economic development opportunities begin with efficient government operations, and providing opportunities for companies to create jobs. They are working to streamline permitting and provide incentives which are both key elements in the recruitment process.
- Strong focus on economy and economic development
- SunRail will help to create vibrant centers that are connected by a multi-modal transportation system.
- The vision or plan is on both the short and long term future of our region
- There are many efforts to collaborate and share resources. We're putting aside "territorial" behavior to work on what's best for the enter Central Florida area.
- Trying to go super



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- Vibrant communities of Orlando and Lakeland and still world attractor for amusement
- We are continually looking to enhance the region's industry complexion to include those outside of hospitality; most especially in the medical services/research and education arenas.
- We are still able to build businesses in this economy
- We have a great deal more inter-governmental planning taking place and also several working public / private partnerships.
- We have good plans and strategies that involve government and business in a partnership. As the national economy improves and as we implement the strategies, especially the ones that improve education as all levels and protect the quality of life, we will have success, as long as we do not follow the extreme approach being advocated by the Governor and the top legislative leaders.
- With the election for Mayor Jacobs she has started economic summits throughout the county to see what actions the county can make to improve our economic situation. Medical City has got to be at the front of the line for job growth.

Why do you feel Central Florida is headed in the wrong direction?

- Economy has not recovered. Haven't seen much new development & special event crowds in Volusia are low.
- Given the problems experienced by other states with historically strong innovation and manufacturing economies, I believe we are at a unique point in time when investing in getting smarter and better connected will yield extraordinary returns on investment. Instead, we are severely cutting education, research, and infrastructure. I doubt we'll ever have a better chance to improve our relative position as a knowledge economy.
- I would like to see a more business friendly environment
- I'm concerned about the backlash against public employees. Legislators are freely attacking public employee unions and public employee pension plans.
- In order to support the citizens of Central Florida we need to attract more businesses. Our mission on achieving this is not clear.
- The killing of High Speed rail and the possible derailment of commuter rail are horrible decisions.
- There is the recent perspective that government is at fault for the difficult economic times.
- There is very little data-driven decision making going on. Too many leaders are hanging onto ideology rather than applying intellectual rigor to facts.
- Too much squeeze on the middle class and too many breaks for the corporations, that only pocket the profits and do not add any jobs.
- Unemployment, economic factors (housing, food increase, toll roads, gasoline increases) to dependent on tourist, gap between haves and have nots is increasing (and I am a Republican).



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- Unfortunately with the Governor and State Legislatures making decisions that are not in the best interest of the public, our school systems, trying to take control from the municipalities. I feel like we are moving backwards.
- We relied on the housing and tourism industries as a foundation for our region. Although we received a good fright in the post 9/11 recession, we went right back. Now our economy is fractured, with deep holes we will probably never see rebound to the 2007 levels. But all we hear is to repeal impact fees, and no real action to diversify our economy.
- While there is much talk of working together, there is still too much "what's in it for me".

If your department or agency has to trim its budget in the next year to account for funding reductions, what changes would be made to the services you provide to businesses, if any?

- Actually, changes made to services provided to businesses would be more beneficial such as improved speed with permitting, and incentives.
- As a City we have been reducing our budgets in all departments. As a result, we have less employees to attend to the needs of the community such as maintenance of right of ways or employees in the building department. We have cut social service funding as well. Unfortunately, this is when the dollars are needed most and only add to the decline of the economy. Programs being cut affect some businesses as well as they bring people to them.
- As a mortgage lender we provide customer service to clients; we secure home loans to purchase residential properties. If the budget was to be reduced or trimmed the end result would be longer hours with the same pay.
- As staff departs, will go longer before rehiring and/or will evaluate contracted services. It will take longer to respond to citizen concerns due to staff reductions. Anticipate budget decreasing slightly (Agency I belong to does not receive any ad valorem tax).
- Business disputes in the Court system could slow to a crawl especially if the organization of the courts eliminates are business courts. The delay and increasing uncertainty of litigation disputes will increase the cost for business and weaken the motivation for businesses to locate in the region.
- Businesses are our customers. . . we aim to provide an environment conducive to attracting executive talent and knowledge workers. When we can't invest in quality of life, businesses suffer whether they recognize it or not. We just invest less.
- Cannot afford to hire and must double up.
- Definitely will offer less services even reduce employee count.
- Don't know yet until the legislative session is over
- Education needs a stable source of funding. Could tax Internet sales and eliminate sales tax exemptions and this conversation in Tally of no money would not be happening. Governor who is pro business is way off base. Legislature continues to ignore the fact that education takes place when the teacher shuts the door.



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- Have no excess funds to be flexible and assist the public on any issues that are not specifically budgeted for.
- No need
- I oversee Development Services. Right now we are very committed to providing excellence in customer service and to that end we are very "hands on" with are customers and we try to accommodate our businesses in any manner we can when it comes to such things as scheduling inspections and meeting customers on site to discuss their projects and/or issues. If staffing levels are reduced (or if they remain the same as our ability to provide this level of service is already stretched) I am afraid that we will have to cut back on the time we spend with our customers along with limiting flexibility to meet their schedules.
- I would have to close one location and lay off two or three employees.
- If we are required to make significant reductions, this may impact the speed with which we can issue permits. We recognize that time is money to the business community and try to shorten the turn around time from application to issuance of a permit as much as possible.
- Less "real time" interaction between employees and customers. Heavy reliance upon email for questions/responses; voice mail for leaving messages. Less ability to immediately respond to the customer
- Less procurement of business goods and services.
- My Division has already proposed a 10% cut to next year's budget. The cuts are utility related and will have no effect on the end users.
- No change to business services
- No change to the level of service provided to existing or prospective business. We are pursuing a continuing initiative to be customer friendly.
- No plans to trim - thus far we are in growth mode.
- None
- None
- None, we will reduce expenditures for recruiting new companies
- Not sure at this time. Property Appraiser for Brevard County is estimating a decline in property values of 17% for FY2011/12. That would be our 4th year of double digit declines.
- Our City does not intend to reduce the services, or the employees that provide these services to the residents of our City. We have been very conservative thought the Nine-3 year terms the residents have reelected me; and will utilize, as needed from our reserves to provide the same or increased level of services for our residents. As for assistance for our existing and future Businesses; many temporary relaxing of current codes; such as for signs, impact fees, business licenses have been implemented.
- Personnel reductions. We've been making cuts for five years, and there is nothing left to cut except personnel.
- Reduced response times fore police and fire



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- Reduction/"freezing" of programs available to assist entrepreneurs
- Road maintenance, Fire Dept. equipment
- Services will be further gapped or reduced and there may be a slower response to permitting etc.
- State College budgets are getting slashed. We will not be able to provide as much access to workforce education as we otherwise could.
- The nexus between business recruitment/retention and preK-20 education is key to any business growth model. I know that some believe additional corporate tax cuts will sweeten the pie enough to attract more businesses to our region. I submit however, that until we make education a priority we will not be able to recruit and grow at the rate and with the companies we want to entice to our region.
- The school district is going to have a hard time making sure our students have what they need for the future. We continue to excel, but eventually doing great things with nothing will catch up to us.
- There will be a reduction in service levels.
- There would be no changes in the services my department provides.
- We are attempting to make our business services more efficient so that we can provide same or better services at less cost to the taxpayers.
- We are looking into a four-day workweek.
- We don't expect any reduction in services to businesses.
- We educate students in Seminole County Public Schools. We, like many others, already run lean. We will continue to do what is necessary to provide our students with a top-notch education. We will likely consider cuts in operation/personnel and capital outlay expenditures, as we are able.
- We have a popular matching grant program for businesses making physical improvements to their building exteriors. We just ran out of funding and future funding would be unlikely if tax base returns continue to be negative. We have also reduced staff, which reduces the time, and attention we can pay to new initiatives as we deal with simply keeping things running.
- We have been cutting since 2008 - Gov't should have to as well.
- We have reduced the size of our government by a third in the past four years. Consolidation of our fire department may make the most sense going forward from a cost cutting standpoint.
- We will be less flexible, and further delay capital projects.
- We will have to cut staff and programs. Customer service will be impacted.
- We will have to see, but if property taxes get reduced again as per the Governor's proposal, that will have a massive effect on capital improvement projects.
- We will look at social services and business improvement functions. We will also look at the small "extras" that we add back to the community such as movies in the park, arts and culture etc.
- We would expect more enterprise type program solutions, where applicants and participants in traditionally government-funded programs accept fee-based charges



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to cover services they require. We would also expect cross-training and co-branded type of solutions, whereby traditionally single focus agencies or service providers would collaborate to provide more for less.

- We would have fewer dollars to promote the region to external audiences.
- We would have to provide fewer services, either by curtailing hours of operation or by increasing response times due to fewer staff.
- We would need to cut our FTE's.
- We would not be hiring contractors or buying supplies
- Will have less ability to graduate the educated workforce with the skills needed to meet the needs of an creative, information based economy that needs to maintain the U. S. as the intellectual and innovative leader.
- With the technology that we have put in place I believe we can do more with less.

What is the single biggest problem or barrier you face in serving your business customers in your jurisdiction?

- Because of slow business our advertising budget is small. We have a small strip shopping center. The other businesses as well cannot afford to advertise. They have put out flags, banners, & Balloons. But you can only get a permit from the county twice a year. With the business environment slow. It is the only way many can survive, yet the county promptly tickets them & we have had many tenant go out of business. The county & city need to allow a moratorium on this until the economy is better.
- Budget
- Budget constraints are limiting staffing resulting in reduced service levels.
- Budget cut backs have left us short staffed.
- Budget cuts that are cutting our customer service jobs
- Communication
- Communication is often the biggest issue. Difficulties understanding and using the permitting process either develop, redevelop, or open a business.
- Cutting through the clutter to share the value proposition of investing in quality of life issues such as art, history, education, etc.
- Cynical attitude about economy and government
- Declining funding for colleges and universities caused by Governors and legislators who seek to maintain control of government by cutting taxes rather than demonstrating visionary leadership.
- Declining property values resulting in declining tax revenues.
- Development projects are difficult because the ability to raise capital is challenging as the banks just are not lending.
- Failure of congress to approve an annual budget.
- Funding



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- Funding.
- Funding. Pure and Simple.
- Getting 80k and above professionals a job in Central Florida
- Government regulations.
- Hard to find good quality labor
- Have eliminated 300 jobs and will eliminate more jobs, so we are not able to provide the same level of service to customers.
- Having them know what we offer.
- I am a school board member. Budget is biggest problem in providing education of our students.
- I do not see any barrier created by our City that is hindering, and we will address any option that is presented that is seen as a restriction. The difficulty appears to be in residents and visitors not having the extra discretionary \$\$\$ to purchase items other than what is necessary for living expenses
- I would say the fact that each jurisdiction (local or other states) all have different rules and regulations and trying to educate the businesses on how government can assist in these issues as opposed to finding out after the fact and doing triage. Government is seen many times as the "Big Bad Wolf" and not as a provider of service to help your business.
- Incomplete or insufficient information on permit applications which will slow down the permitting process.
- Increasing cost of government, frequently because of circumstances beyond our control.
- Information and branding
- Insufficient funding. Retirees don't understand the importance of education and economic development to their quality of life in retirement.
- Insufficient revenue. State support for higher education is declining and Florida tuition is the lowest in the country. Tuition will gradually increase until it reaches the average for other state universities, but that will likely take over a decade. Given the history of appropriations in other states, I doubt that state funding will increase in the future.
- Lack of adequate staffing levels. We are being asked to do a lot more but are not given the resources we need to pull it off.
- Lack of funding and legal issues
- Lack of trust--regulations--limited engagement
- Lake Mary is getting along better than most and we are up to date on business permitting and inspections, and we have maintained contacts with the Chamber. The barrier faced is maintaining that level of service through the next 2 years, which is our estimate for continued tax valuation declines. We foresee a leveling of tax values in 2014.
- Meaningful incentives that compete with other states; lack of a statewide renewable energy policy that would attract renewable energy companies.



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- Name recognition and perception of the community. Unfortunately we get a lot of negative media attention and are named often as the location of a crime, even if it outside our city boundaries.
- Negative thinkers, and people who are resistant to change.
- Not having enough personnel for the current work load.
- Not having sufficient staff persons to be able to respond as promptly and thoroughly as I would like.
- Offer more on-line information/services. Also, business incentives. Brevard has seen success with incentives but has no dedicated funding source for them which is not sustainable nor does it allow the County to differentiate this community from all the other Economic Development noise across the country as a place to come and do business.
- One-is the understanding that K-12 employs are highly educated, support their local economies and are not just a drain on the economic condition. Sorry I can't leave it at just one problem...Two-The continued cuts to preK-12 education will have a long term consequences for our business climate.
- Operational efficiency and monitoring of the transportation network
- Our biggest problem for our business customers is leasing costs and promotion of our City and opportunities within our city.
- Providing financial assistance, which is the single largest request
- Public apathy
- Resources - state budget picture is dismal and business customers are not familiar with environmental regulatory requirements.
- The largest problem that we are facing in the banking/lending industry is the constant changes to financing guidelines
- The state legislature.
- The uncertainty of capital investments -- timing and availability of state and federal investments.
- Their budget constraints.
- They need to give a little to get a lot.
- Tight, restrictive regulations from past Commissions.
- Time to spend with all of those we could provide assistance to, and of course that relates to \$\$\$.
- To invest in advertisement.
- We need additional resources to make our career tech programs address what is needed for the next generation of students! Without funding from the state, which by the way is required by our constitution, I am afraid for the next generation.
- We need more local control over what we do and less restriction from DOE and the legislature.
- We started our own permitting/zoning/inspections department to help expedite the building process. We really don't have a barrier with our business customers.



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What are some of the ways your agency, department, or office have addressed overcoming that barrier?

- Building/Planning/Zoning have really expanded services on-line and have been recognized by the development community for their process improvements.
- Communications, including regional efforts.
- Cross training
- downsized the business
- Engaging governmental agencies in the process and education of same.
- Engaging the retired residents and trying to help them see the importance of education and economic development to their quality of life - better job at connecting the dots.
- Flex times, cross training, etc.
- Have tried in vain to education the last two governors and past legislative leaders.
- Implementation of technology and improved efficiency of work processes.
- Increased class sizes and changing faculty composition (replacing higher-paid world class researcher/thought leaders with lower-paid teaching-only faculty).
- Increased participation in business-related events and organizations.
- Increasing ability for customers to self serve on the internet and adjust to voice mail communications.
- Increasing/improving services to businesses, reduction/waiver of impact fees to reduce cost of doing business and getting businesses open
- Leaner budget and reduction in staff. Personnel taking on my responsibilities. Departments are constantly looking at ways to streamline operations.
- learning to do more with less.
- less networking expenses
- Live streaming Council meetings
- meetings with businesses and finding was to communicate that we are wanting to identify barriers and address them .working to become more business friendly
- Myself and two fellow board members just returned from two days in Tallahassee. We met with our legislative delegation and others who are involved in any way with education. We educated our legislature and asked for flexibility with categorical funding dollars. We feel that we were well received and consider the trip a success. We will continue to communicate with our legislators and keep them up to speed as to our students/districts needs.
- Not offering a choice between am or pm inspections, cutting back on the time we spend with each customer, we are installing new software that will tie together the information on all aspects of land use from business tax receipts, planning, building and code enforcement. Hopefully, once we have that in place it will help us to be more efficient.
- Nothing



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- Organizing a statewide coalition to support renewable energy policy development, frequent meetings and letters with legislative delegation.
- Our department works very closely with the local Chamber and Merchant associations, we attend their meetings and we regularly "walk the streets" and stay in touch with business owners. We've also set up a city board made up of business tenants and property owners to advise on matters. Additionally we publish numerous communication pieces including a Downtown Blast that goes directly to our merchants. We are also currently investigating our permitting process to see if a one-stop-shop format can be introduced to reduce miscommunication and the number of folks an applicant has to coordinate with.
- Personal contact
- Positive reinforcement in a zero based line item budget protocol environment.
- Present to legislators
- public workshops and incentives
- Re-organization and layoffs.
- Reduction in staff hours
- sound planning and public outreach and communication and purpose of our function
- Success stories.
- The answer is increased jobs for our unemployed, and the confidence for those that are currently working to purchase items above the minimum necessary for living.
- To overcome these obstacles we have increased communication with Colleagues on lending guidelines; Job share on running the office, maintaining equipment, answering phones. We work together as a team sharing contact and information to successfully close loans.
- Tried to be more efficient in educating our businesses as to the resources available to maximize the impact from staff visits.
- Upgrading to newer equipment and continued installation of transportation fiber optic communication network. Continue working with our other Central Florida transportation partners.
- We are consistently trying to collaborate with the county, city and business partners to come up with additional ways to fund educational needs. It is a hard winding road!!
- We are working to identify these barriers and find solutions that offer security without red tape.
- We continually meet with our local Chambers of Commerce. We participate in community outreach on a regular basis, and appoint business leaders to our school visioning committees.
- We continue to meet with those in our delegation to try and give them the best advice we can on how legislation can make our process more difficult and add to our cost but do nothing for the tax payer.
- We have already cut over \$40 million. Facing another \$40 million right now. This time it will involve a lot of employees. We are cutting administrative staff, cutting



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back on locally funded positions like media specialist, guidance, paraprofessional, school psychologist, deans, network managers, reading specialist especially in high school etc. Cutting back all school based personnel to 11 months and on and on.

- We have been involved with EDC Orlando and Seminole to attract new companies to Central Florida
- We have been more focused on EDC (hiring a consultant) with ways to increase opportunities for businesses to succeed.
- We have consolidated programs and are cross working staff to assist in areas that are lacking in funds and/or funding.
- We have initiated a PR & Marketing Campaign specifically for economic development and new business recruitment, focused on the many features/benefits our community offers.
- We have made significant progress in streamlining our permitting process and intend to do likewise with other service processes.
- We have provided training events to offices and to organization held seminars to enhance their understanding of what is needed from them in order to obtain permits, or other authorizations. We also offer to meet with applicants when we know that they will be submitting an application to us or when we send a letter with comments to them.
- We have talked about assembling parcels and developing our town center piecemeal.
- We hvae learned to do more with less, but the decrease in state funding has cut into muscle not fat and prividng our current level of service will be impossible.
- We often call the applicant or engineer of record to get the information quickly.
- We run a 5 year budget plan so we are able to more effectively plan for declines over a longer time than just one budget year. We also try to be somewhat liberal on our spending estimates, budgeting more than what we expect, but very conservative on our actual spending. Thus, budgeting \$300,000 for road projects that end up costing \$278,000 in an actual bid, gives a savings to carry into the following year's plan.
- We started our own permitting department to expedite the process.
- We use other agencies to help such as Kissimmee Main Street, the Chamber of Commerce, the Hispanic Business Initiative, and the local Realtors Association to provide information up front to prospective customers.
- We use the internet because of low cost. We can reach more people at a lower cost.
- Working more hours to try and keep up with the work load.



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Specifically, what are you or your department working on (if anything) to improve any of the above barriers?

- A reasonable and equitable way to pay for transpiration needs which are critical to businesses involved in commerce
- Applying got loans
- As an educator who has worked in business and in local and state government, I have in the past worked to facilitate cooperation with all parties. But, with all due respect, the current tendency of some business leaders as individuals as and State Chamber of Commerce members to put the blame for their business difficulties on the factors above is wrong. The problems in our economy are the same as the ones that caused the economic collapse at the national level. Add to that the excessive reliance on real estate development construction and the assumption that people would continue to come to Florida at a high rate without recognizing that: 1) income for most Americans has been stagnant for the last decade; 2) the tax cut policy of state government has eroded the ability of the public schools and higher education to make Florida a leader (instead we wallowed in mediocrity, hardly attractive to the creative classes we needed to attract to Florida); 3) development interests much too successfully pushed development at the expense of the Florida environment that makes this a desirable place to live; and 4) Florida' infrastructure has eroded badly because Governor Bush and the legislature repeatedly raided the transportation trust fund and delayed the high speed rail project.
- As previously stated, the school district is looked upon by county government as the ugly stepchild and we need to be partners or it won't work!
- Attempting to work with cities and the county to develop one regulation that is required by the state, thus having a consistent rule county wide.
- Board of County Commissioners has: 1) implemented an impact fee moratorium, 2) reduced water and wastewater connection fees for commercial land uses, 3) Have not increased millage rates in spite of 40% reduction in taxable values, 4) Initiated several reviews to reduce local regulations, 5) Allocated general fund resources for an incentive program, 5) Expedited development review process for job creation opportunities.
- Calling, faxing, or writing our Congressmen & going to meetings.
- Decisions are in Tally not at the local level. Nothing to do but wait until May when the state budget passes.
- Designing outreach programs to improve the quality of entrepreneurs start up plans and access to competitively priced business services.
- expedited permitting and resource identification
- I am not specifically involved in reviewing Department regulations - this is being conducted in our Tallahassee headquarters. There are also incentives for certain businesses - I am just aware of it...
- I believe I addressed this previously
- In the development review and final site plan process, we try and coordinate state, county, local jurisdictions as early as possible so everyone is aware of the development & neither the public agency(s) or developer is surprised by unrealistic



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expectations.

- Incentives to rebate communication tax based on investment and wages. Impact fee suspension except for water and sewer. Utilizing the Brownfield designation for development
- Just advocating for our peers to limit regulation.
- Lobbying in Washington and Tallahassee.
- Many of these issues are being worked on at a higher level than a District Office. At the local level, we try to coordinate with agencies where there may be overlap to expedite the permitting process.
- Mentioned above
- N/A
- Our superintendent and other district personnel are very active within the chambers of commerce and business community. In addition, we have a Business Advisory Board. We truly partner with our business community. We recognize that when we partner it is a win for our schools, our students and our community.
- Overlapping: looking into expedited permitting, white glove treatment of applicants and one stop shop permitting. Reducing Tax Burden: As a CRA dept we've reduced our operational costs by 40% over 4 years while expanding our service and project offerings. Incentives: We recently approved participation in the State's Qualified Target Industry program for the creation and expansion of businesses coming to Florida with high wage jobs. We also adopted a local program to provide up to \$200K for businesses wishing to locate to Winter Park from elsewhere in the State (also tied to high-wage jobs). We've awarded over \$450K to small businesses through our Business Facade Matching grant program, and we operate a Microloan to assist small businesses with lending assistance. We are also looking at other incentive programs including, tax rebates, permit fee waivers, etc. Impacts and Permits: Currently considering language for giving some relief on impact fees and permitting fees. Loans and Capital: We act as facilitators for interested businesses looking to locate in our City. We often refer clients to local banks, venture firms, the regional Economic Development Commission, Entrepreneur centers, etc, for information or meetings.
- review of current regulations and identifying those to change
- Revising code for permits
- Tax wise, Brevard is already has the lowest overall tax rate (property tax, sales tax, public services tax, gas taxes) when you look at surrounding counties. Incentives as mentioned previously are critical, especially for businesses relocating to federally owned property (NASA, Cape Canaveral) where tax incentives are not applicable. Solutions to dedicated incentives is complicated.
- The City of Kissimmee in conjunction with Osceola County are looking to create a CRA on the 192 corridor so we can provide incentives to developers and businesses to create great spaces and places to live, work, shop and play. This is greatly needed in this blighted area. We are also looking at mobility fees vs. impact fees, which I believe will be a greater benefit to all.
- The Volusia County School District has a booth at the upcoming Volusia County Home Show in order to highlight our successes; we have met with and worked with our Chambers on many issues of mutual interest and importance.



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- We are a govt. agency so we receive funding from state, national and local taxes.... not really involved except to try to get rid of unfunded mandates and fight for exceptions
- We are attempting to create unique incentives that are within our tight budget constraints.
- We are reviewing our land development code to identify opportunities to streamline the development review process.
- We are reworking our entire downtown zoning code, and our city wide landscape codes, to encourage simplified/streamlined, more economically sensible and business/applicant friendly development with lower costs and faster service.
- We are trying to eliminate redundancy in regulations, streamline the permitting, site planning and subdivision processes.
- We are working closely with our legislative delegation in Tallahassee and Washington to make sure decisions about growth and regulation stay at a local level, made by locally elected officials.
- We cannot because we are home-based business
- We can only be involved if we are invited by the government, or agencies working to attract new companies to Central Florida.
- We don't really have any issues with the above.
- We have reduced permit fees and amended our land development codes to streamline the approval process (in addition to greatly increasing the density and intensity of use allowed). We would like to be more involved in providing resources and incentives for business expansion but we really don't have the resources to take on too much more work.
- We have used a CRA to our advantage to attract investment, improve infrastructure, and offer incentives to existing businesses to upgrade their facades.
- We have waived building permit fees until 12/31/2011 and also waived transportation impact fees for commercial development.
- We now have on-line homestead exemption and tangible personal property tax filing on-line. Filing FPP on-line will save individuals and business needless expense for filing paper. Our web site is a great recourse to the whole business of real estate. Again saving time and money by have a one-stop shop of property information.
- We recently reinstated an impact fee assistance program that offsets 50% of permit and impact fees for new and expanding businesses. Transportation impact fee ordinance, which will not require impact fees for existing structures or changes of use.
- With matching funding from the Small Business Administration we host a Small Business Development Center that helps with business planning and loan applications for capital formation. We also help companies apply for Quick Response Training grants, and we provide academic and customized training programs to help expanding companies achieve a high performance workforce.
- Working with local government to continue moratorium on impact fees and streamline permitting; submitted ideas to Governor Scott for meaningful incentive programs that compete with other states.



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- Working with the business to determine their specific needs, then helping them with specific solutions.

What suggestions do you have for city and county agencies inside and outside of your jurisdiction to help them improve the business climate in the region?

- Ensure local regulations are only those that are essential to public safety and welfare. 2) Ensure development review process is expedited for job creation opportunities.
- Adopt codes that are based on common sense. Streamline approval processes and provide predictability.
- Be open to options that are outside of the box to assist businesses.
- Business summits
- Collaborate with local Chamber, EDC's, Business Associations, CRA's, Main Street's or other agencies that work with existing businesses and potential new businesses. Discuss what they feel the barriers are so you know what needs to be improved upon.
- Communicate!
- Communicate. Be accessible. Enable web based access to programs, information, and submittals. Stop saying NO before considering YES.
- Communication and partnering between city and county agencies to include chambers, private business organizations and government is our greatest opportunity to create the best climate in the region. Communication creates dialogue whereby thoughts, challenges and opportunities are discussed enabling a better understanding of the needs in our business environment.
- Communication to determine what their issues are.
- Consider regionalism in each business decision.
- Continue to think/work collaboratively across jurisdiction lines as a healthy region will eventually lift all boats.
- Customized, friendly services that align with business success.
- Dedicate an individual to business recruitment and retention.
- Focus on business retention and expansion, and find more ways to provide assistance to the existing businesses. Support business incubation and economic gardening. Work with communities to help them develop the infrastructure to support new and expanding businesses. Emphasize and support education and workforce development.
- Get to know ALL businesses and their leaders; whether big or small. Who are the high potential businesses and leaders of Central Florida; why are they here, what is their vision, and where do they see potential?
- I am not involved enough to answer this question.
- I believe the current economic conditions are not influenced greatly by local government, however, I believe local governments should in this quiet time



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evaluate/stream line their processes so that they will be ready once the economy starts to improve to improve conditions in their area.

- I interact with City and County agencies on a regular basis; I am always able to reach someone by phone. I find the local government web sites easy to surf and gather information easily. I would like to see some of the local counties government sites be similar for ease.
- Improve the processing of permitting and inspections without unnecessary delay and without sacrificing the quality of effective protection of health and environmental regulations.
- Incentives
- Interestingly, I feel that our local government agencies have excellent relationships with businesses in the Volusia area. I feel the disconnect is more apparent on the state rather than the local level. Examples...state chamber supported SB6 and TABOR--local chambers in our area that was not the case. Just FYI--SB736 is a different bite at that apple--more inclusive and more thoughtful. Our local government has set up a business incubator facility and established partnerships with our local universities to capitalize on the "intellectual capital" present in our county. Our school district's superintendent sits on executive cabinet of the County's Chamber's "Team Volusia" and was an integral part of the vetting processor our new Team Volusia CEO.
- Keep sales tax rates low. Improve customer service and frontline response to new businesses coming in for permits, relocation assistance, or just general questions. Streamline internal review and accountability to reduce the number of people an applicant must talk to.
- Keep their focus on what they do and not what everyone is doing.
- Leave the malaise as you leave the house in the morning.
- Less regulation, more partnerships
- Let the state enforce rules that are under their jurisdiction and do not duplicate.
- Maintaining low property tax levels, maintaining a first-rate school system, and keeping up with transportation needs are all-important inter-agency goals.
- Not sure
- Offer incentives to bring new business and retain current business. Market...
- Open communication, getting involved, and building those relationships with those in the private sector. It may lead to opportunities that both parties may benefit from.
- Provide as much temporary short term relaxing in our regulations, and fees.
- Reduce or eliminate permitting requirements and fees that are duplicative of state requirements - or in the alternative, seek delegation from the State for these programs where there is duplication.
- Reduce redundancies and reduce regulation without a wholesale elimination of some very important rules and regulations that keeps the business environment fair and safe.



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- Reduce the paperwork they have to go through. Provide one-stop shops for all business services in the area. At least a web site with links.
- Reduce unnecessary regulation and be pro-active with business retention, expansion and recruitment.
- Simplify rules and regulations and communicate clearly
- Stay involved with business organizations
- Streamline processes that support business. Use modern workflow automation to make internal processes more efficient, faster and less costly reducing the tax burden.
- Support and empower economic development agencies.
- Survey businesses for their suggestions
- The State, Counties, Cities have to have an attractive plan to bring more businesses to Central Florida. My Company can attract any talent we need to run a successful business. We have experienced year over year growth. I can continue to be successful in this niche however I want to be able to support people at all levels in Central Florida so that our families are taken care of. In order to do that we need more businesses to move here. We need to come up with an attractive business plan that provides a short and long term financial benefits.
- They need to remove some of the regulations that are too costly and take too much time. By the time many are close to getting a permit they are close to losing their business or loan. Or by the time they succeed with the permit their loan is not enough to cover the impact fees or other green environmental items that was not anticipate.
- To expedite the building permitting and license process, as well as inspections.
- We need to focus on improving education and developing knowledge economy assets (e.g., improved workforce, facilities, strong innovation companies, etc).
- Work together to find real solutions rather than letting politics stand in the way of progress.

What suggestions do you have for state agencies to help them improve the business climate across the region?

- More local jurisdiction over development approvals. 2) Ensure there is consistent application of regulations across the State from the various special districts and regional offices. 3) No more unfunded mandates on local government.
- Allocate funds
- Allocate resources wisely. Don't just cut across the board since that is the easy but unenlightened solution to complex problems.
- Ask their customers where the problems are (don't assume you know).
- Be more business friendly. Make websites more customer friendly/oriented. Increase access to capital from the State.



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- Be more operationally efficient - ensure your investments in projects, people and tools align with your vision, mission and the expectations of taxpayers.
- Be responsive and consistent. Just because the statute allows so many days to issue a permit, you don't have to take that long.
- better funding of needed transportation infrastructure and simplified regulations which are clear
- Better incentives and less regulation in areas such as Water Management Districts.
- Due to the decentralized nature of the state divisions and even decentralized nature within the same state agency, it is very difficult to get a fast decision. The State Agency(s) should create a multi-disciplined fast reacting task team that is able to make firm binding decisions related to economic development. I've suggested this to the Florida DOT previously. In a business environment where getting a new major road constructed may take 8 to 20 years (depending upon federalization & funding)(Study: 2 yrs, design: 2 years, purchase right-of-way: 2 years, construction: 2 years), a new business way of thinking is needed. Also, remember - the Florida DOT 1st priority is the Strategic Intermodal System (SIS) facilities, not the majority of state or local roads where economic development occurs.
- Eliminate any duplication of services- not good for business. We need to think more regionally about business and share with each other as opposed to everything being "Top Secret". Competition is healthy and I believe we would be stronger if we all worked closer together.
- Eliminating duplicative or overlapping regulatory requirements and development of incentives to enhance environmental stewardship
- Emphasize workforce development and our educational assets. Find ways to assist in infrastructure development for new buildings.
- Florida is fairly competitive regionally with no income tax rate and a relatively low sales tax and very low property tax rate. I would suggest the same type of streamlined treatment of business interests as suggested for local gov't. Appoint point people to handle requests and don't make applicants deal with multiple departments. Businesses are our customers.
- Get used to doing a lot more with a lot less and then being blamed for it not getting done to others unrealistic expectation.
- Help us, not try to run local business.
- I believe if state agencies spent time speaking and understanding the challenges (what works and what does not)of our business community, the climate would improve. State agencies should decrease the layers of government.
- I would like to investigate this before commenting
- Identify and eliminate overlapping jurisdiction and roles.
- If you just have to implement something new: think it through and phase it in.
- Incentives
- Increase accessibility with local "sister" agencies.
- Invest in education, targeted research programs, and infrastructure that improves connectivity.



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- Involve the existing agencies with the opportunities already underutilized. Grant availability for one
- Let us have local control
- Lower corporate tax rates.
- Not certain because most agencies have made progress and seek to work well, but certain development interests seem determined to eliminate any attempts to have planned growth, protection of water by Water Management Districts and environmental issues by the Department of Community Affairs. Current efforts to cripple them will cause major longterm problems in the future if they succeed.
- Not sure
- Offer incentives to bring new business and retain current business. Market...
- Open communication, getting involved, and building those relationships with those in the private sector. It may lead to opportunities that both parties may benefit from.
- Provide an attractive incentive plan. Review the companies that did not choose to move to Central Florida in the past ten years and look at what they asked for. Jet Blue, Office Depot...
- Provide for all elimination of duplicate regulations that are not necessary, especially those that are already being addressed by County and Cities.
- Quit micro-managing!
- Reduce regulatory powers and pass jurisdiction on to local government. Strip water SWFWMD of autocratic and abusive powers.
- review regulations and get rid of as many as possible
- Rigorous outcome monitoring with personnel changes related to same.
- Same as above
- same as above.
- Same as above.
- see above
- stop giving money to wealthy/corp stop reducing their taxes and stop punishing the middle class
- Stop unfunded mandates, allow home rule, and abolish DCA.
- The state needs to be present as a helper in local growth but NOT a regulator and controller.
- To not limit the small cities and municipalities on TABOR. The cities need to be able to run themselves, and they can work with the business community. We also need to improve education in the state.
- We need to have more business people in the position of these agencies. Because most of the current state workers do not know what it takes to run a business or how much it costs in time and money for a small business for the impact fees or permits and many don't care.



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- Work at the speed of business, not government.
- Work in partnership with local governments and recognize that "one size does not fit all" and each city/county is unique. Eliminate unfunded state mandates to local governments.

What suggestions do you have for federal agencies to help them improve the business climate across the region?

- Eliminate the numeric nutrient criteria for storm water in Florida. This is going to result in higher levels of taxation with minimal impact on water quality. The EPA is out of touch with reality on this issue. 2) Put in requirements for responsiveness from the Corp of Engineers in the issuance of permits.
- Act more quickly on issues requiring sign off when state agencies are issuing permits. There are instances where the state has expeditiously finished their review of an application and are ready to issue but the law requires a federal sign off and we are all left waiting.
- Again, another layer of government further removed from the needs of business owners.
- Again, we need people with a business background to oversee these agencies. Because the current federal agencies do not have people any idea how to run a business and how costly their environmental requirements, impact fees, taxes, and permits are. And most of the time these agencies do not care.
- Allocate funds
- Consider the deficit commission proposals. These offer hope that we can invest in education and research while drawing down the deficit.
- Create more attractive federal tax incentives for businesses.
- Ditto above
- Do not duplicate what the local and state agencies are charged to do and send money with their requirements which have unintended consequences that cost other governmental agencies money
- Do not know
- Emphasize workforce development and our educational assets. Find ways to assist in infrastructure development for new buildings.
- Federal agencies should back up and let business be conducted and allow capital markets to operate.
- Get banks to lend money.
- Grants
- I do not see this as a federal issue
- Increase access to capital.
- Just give the State, County, and City Agencies the necessary allocation of budgeted funds then get out of the way. They should be providing or coordinating necessary guidance on best practices and training. If we federalize a County transportation



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project, we typically adjust our cost estimate +25% to +35% and our project schedule is sometimes doubled (Design: 1 year, wait 1 year, Construction: 1 year).

- Leave it to the states and local jurisdictions
- Less regulation - Federal government impedes business development.
- Let the State of Florida oversee environmental regulations. While they are definitely not pushovers, they understand the local environment better than someone in Atlanta or Washington.
- Let us have local control. Shut down some national offices and let us do local
- Mass transit. We have got to relieve the congested roads, provide mass transportation, and have walkable communities.
- More stimulus funding
- Not sure
- Not sure
- Offer incentives to bring new business and retain current business. Market...
- Open communication, getting involved, and building those relationships with those in the private sector. It may lead to opportunities that both parties may benefit from.
- Pay for public transportation operational cost. Reduce environmental reviews and red tape Streamline all agency review processes to speed up
- Provide a vision and stand behind it. Honor your commitments. NASA is still trying to figure out their future and the last shuttle flies in 3 months.
- Push control down to the state and local levels.
- Quit putting burdensome regulation like the current clean water standards being imposed.
- Reduce all available taxes for profits on income created by Businesses.
- Regulations need to be science based, repeal the numeric nutrient criteria rule.
- Same as above.
- See above, only print it in larger type
- Speed approval process with more impute from our congressman so they are in the loop
- Stop the political grandstanding and bickering across the aisle; do what is right and what makes sense rather than what the party says to do.
- The corporate tax rate is the only item that can really make a difference in my mind. With other areas in the world having considered lower rates, anything that reduces that rate will encourage business and job creation on a general level and help consumers as taxes are just passed through.
- The feds are just hopeless, at this point.
- The feds tried to help with transportation and the state slapped them in the face. However, easing regulations that are redundant would help.



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- The same as above.
- The same comment, don't over control funding dollars. For example, give the state \$2.4 Billion dollars for high-speed rail and let the state decide where to put it.
- Work with everyone...listen and communicate!
- You mean other than allocating \$2.4 billion for high-speed rail.