
CHAPTER 11**ECONOMIC ELEMENT****Introduction**

This Economic Element provides an analysis of Levy County's economy from a historical and statistical standpoint. Since all aspects of life in the County are affected by the economy, it is important to have an objective view of the County's economic strengths and weaknesses. The goals, objectives and policies of this element are intended to utilize existing strengths and correct existing weaknesses in order to provide a higher standard of living for all of the residents of Levy County.

History Of Levy County's Economy

Levy County's economy is anchored in the area's abundant natural resources. During the Pleistocene Era, much of Florida was under water, and thick layers of limestone were formed over this part of the state. Uplifting resulted in the limestone being raised above sea level, and the salt-water within the porous limestone was gradually replaced with freshwater. Rainfall, being relatively acidic, began to dissolve solution channels in the limestone, a process which continues today. This process created the aquifer that is beneath Levy County. This abundance of water is a vital part of agriculture and recreation in Levy County today. The result of the uplifting and limestone presence is a fertile plain which is highly suited for agriculture.

The abundant natural resources of the area caused the early Spanish settlers to stay in the area. In 1830, the first census of Florida as an American territory recorded the presence of a number of residents in the County, including David Levy, Florida's first U.S. Senator 1/.

These early settlers lived off of the land. Gradually, the residents developed a lumber industry from the area's large quantity of trees. The arrival of the railroad in the area spurred the growth of the lumber yards and agriculture, and Williston became a commercial center. Other settlers took advantage of the waterfront location and gulf resources to establish the resort town of Cedar Key. The town was a regular stop for tourists on the steamboats traveling the Florida coast. 2/.

Growth in Levy County slowed tremendously as the nation's transportation system changed. Air travel took the northern tourists to southern Florida. When the federal highway system was constructed after World War II, I-75 was located to the east of Levy County. This bypass funneled still more tourists and trade away from Levy. Fewer people relocated here, and the area went into a long period of stagnation.

The national economic problems of the 1970's and the early 1980's were felt in Levy County, but not to the same extent that they were in other parts of Florida. The prosperity of Alachua and Marion Counties provided [and continue to provide] jobs for a large percentage of the area.

The abundance of water, timber, limestone and natural beauty that attracted the original residents of the area has long provided the economic base of the County. These resources must be protected and used wisely to promote economic growth in Levy County while preserving the quality of life expected by contemporary residents of the area.

1/ A History Of Levy County.

2/ Ibid.

Concerns

- (1) The environment and natural resources of Levy County must be protected and used wisely to insure the quality of life for Levy County residents.
- (2) An umbrella organization needs to be officially designated to coordinate economic development activities between the different communities and changes in Levy County, inclusive of Williston.
- (3) Too many residents must leave the County or commute long distances in order to earn a living.
- (4) Employment growth in certain sectors of the economy has increased the vulnerability of the County to State or national economic recessions.
- (5) Levy County's work force needs increased skills training to attract business and to increase the wage level.
- (6) Levy County's employment levels in manufacturing and wholesale trade are less than half of the national average.
- (7) The survival of the fishing and shell fishing industries is dependent on improving environmental conditions of the coastal waters.
- (8) Opportunities for business expansion and new or relocated industry must be encouraged in order to compete with neighboring counties. Vocational training is needed to make such competition viable.
- (9) The already low level of manufacturing activity in Levy County has declined further over the last ten years.
- (10) Increased dependence on the retail trade and the service sectors has made the local economy more vulnerable to State and National economic recession.
- (11) Adequate amounts of viable land must be available for development be each economic sector.
- (12) The perceived negative attitude towards business is detrimental to the economic growth in the County.

Planning Background

Economic Planning in Levy County has its roots in the Levy County Rural Area Development Council [LCRADC]. The LCRADC authored a Resources Development Plan for Levy County. This plan was the first known economic development plan for Levy County. The LCRADC became inactive in 1971. ^{1/}

In 1976, the Overall Economic Development Plan [OEDP] was requested by the Levy County Commission and prepared by Central Florida Planning and Development [CFPD]. The OEDP presented goals for economic development and policies for achieving those goals. An update for the OEDP was completed in 1988, also by CFPD.

^{1/} Overall Economic Development Program Document Update, 1988, Page 2-1.

In 1984, the Levy County Development Authority [LCDA] was established to provide direction in the area of economic development. At that time several communities declined the offer to participate in the organization. These same communities have recently shown interest in becoming involved in the work of the LCDA.

The LCDA created an affiliate group, the Levy County Economic Development Council [E.D.C.], in June 1990, to provide an avenue for broader public participation in economic development.

This Economic Element was prepared by the E.D.C. in 1991 as an optional part of the Levy County Comprehensive Plan required by the Florida Growth Management Act. It is the intent of the goals, policies and objectives of this element to strengthen the economic base of the County by encouraging planned, compatible growth. Where available, updated information has been added by Central Florida Planning and Development in 1992.

Inventory And Analysis

Population Projections

Levy County is projected to increase from a population of 25,923 in 1990 to 28,669 in 1995 and 30,901 by year 2000. ^{1/} Levy County intends to adopt designated "Municipal Services Districts" in the unincorporated areas contiguous to each municipality. Levy County's population potential at buildout, inclusive of the cities, is 1,645,000 persons.

- A. **Native Population.** Previously a large 62.2% of the population was native to Florida; however, immigration from other counties is increasing and relatively fewer persons each year are native to Levy County.
- B. **Foreign Born.** Only one percent [1%] of the residents are foreign born as of the 1990 Census.
- C. **Families With Children.** A total of thirty-seven percent [37%] of the married couples have children under age eighteen [18] in 1990, a decrease from 1980 when the total was forty-two percent [42%]. Of the one hundred twenty-six [126] single-parent, female households in 1990, 62.7 had children under eighteen [18] years. In 1990, there were six hundred fifty-one [651] single-parent, female households out of three thousand thirty-six [3,036] households with children ... this was twenty-one percent [21%] of the total.

^{1/} Central Florida Planning and Development, a division of Forestry and Environmental Services, Inc., 1992.

Income Characteristics

As of the date of preparation of revisions to this Chapter in August of 1992, limited income and other economic data from the 1990 Census are available. Older data on a County-wide basis are used in this section, with some updating from summary characteristics.

The Bureau of Economic and Business Research [BEBR] at the University of Florida estimated that 1987 per capita personal income for Levy County was \$9,553.00. 1/ This was considerably below the Florida and U.S. levels. As Figure 1 shows, Levy County has historically had a very low per capita income.

In addition to the very low per capita income [56th in the state 2/] a high percentage of County residents live below the poverty level. The 1980 census found that 16.6% of the County residents lived below the poverty level, compared with the State percentage of 9.9%. 3/ As documented below, this percent increased by 1990.

Sources of personal income are also an important indicator of the economic health of an area. There are three [3] sources of income: earned, including income from farm and non-farm labor; income from dividends, interest and rents; and, transfer payments, including government and business disbursements for which no services are rendered. A high percentage of income coming from transfer payments can indicate that an area has a high number of retirees or a large number of families receiving payments such as welfare or food stamps. Figure 2 shows the large percentage of transfer payments received by Levy County residents. Some of this difference is explained by the large number of retirees in Levy County, but most of the difference is due to other forms of transfer payments.

From the 1990 Census, Table 9 in the "Summary Social, Economic And Housing Characteristics" shows the following, by county and city for 1989:

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- 1/ Florida Statistical Abstract, 1988.
2/ Florida County Comparisons, 1989
3/ 1980 U.S. Census.

<u>Measure</u>	<u>Williston</u>	<u>Levy County</u>
1. Per Capita Income	\$10,224.00	\$ 9,386.00
2. Median Household Income	\$20,737.00	\$18,807.00
3. Median Family Income	\$25,238.00	\$22,743.00
4. Non-family Household	\$ 9,062.00	\$ 9,135.00
5. Families Below Poverty Level		
a. Number	60	1,238
b. Percent	11.6%	16.6%
6. Persons At Poverty Status (All Ages)		
a. Number	303	5,247
b. Percent	16.2%	20.7%

Housing Costs

Owner-occupied homes with a mortgage in Levy County averaged \$438.00 per month in 1990, based upon Table 15 of the summary data.

The cost of maintaining an owner-occupied home in Levy County is 12.7% of household income.

The median gross rent as a percentage of household income was 27.4% in Levy County. This represents a problem, as the threshold at which a household is considered to be overpaying is twenty-five percent [25%].

Educational Status

The educational status of a population provides an indication of their potential for skilled employment. In 1990, two hundred forty-five [245] of Levy County's youth between sixteen [16] and nineteen [19] years old are classified as "not enrolled in high school and not a high school graduate", which is highly discouraging.

Only 62.8% of those individuals aged twenty-five [25] and older are high school graduates, and only 8.3% have at least a 4-year college degree.

In 1990, Levy County had two hundred ninety-one [291] students enrolled in pre-primary school, four thousand three hundred thirty-five [4,335] in elementary or high school, and eight hundred eight [808] in college, totaling five thousand four hundred thirty-four [5,434] students.

Labor Force

Levy County's prime working age population, defined as those between the ages of 18 - 44, makes up 34.56% of the population. However according to the 1980 Census, 41.6% of this work force commutes out of the County to work. In 1990, this percentage had increased to forty-five percent [45%], indicating fewer in-county employment opportunities.

Another major indicator of the economic health of an area is the unemployment rate. This is defined as the percentage of the labor force actively seeking jobs but not working. The target unemployment rate, however, should not be zero. If the unemployment rate remains below the natural rate of five percent [5%] for very long, it is an indication that there is a shortage of available labor. [Neighboring Alachua County consistently has an unemployment rate around three percent (3%) -- this lack of in-county labor helps to explain why many Levy residents commute there to work.] This constricts the expansion of existing businesses and contributes to under employment. The ideal target rate should be slightly higher than the natural rate.

Levy County's unemployment rate has remained slightly high, but with the exception of 1983, did avoid the extreme highs that the nation and the state experienced in the early 1980's [Figure 3]. This was due to the large number of self-employed people in the County. Since 1984, however, the number of people employed in the service and retail sectors of the economy has grown. These two sectors are especially vulnerable to nation and state economic downturns. The unbalanced growth in these two sectors will hurt Levy County in the event of a future economic recession.

From the Florida Department of Labor and Employment Security, employment and unemployment in Levy County has been as follows on an annual average basis through 1991, with monthly data for 1992:

<u>Period</u>	<u>Employed</u>	<u>Unemployed</u>	<u>Unemployed %</u>
1987	8,698	557	6.0
1988	9,134	592	6.1
1989	9,650	898	5.8
1990	9,682	620	6.0
1991	9,269	726	7.3
Jan., 1992	8,775	981	10.1
Feb., 1992	8,756	956	9.8
March, 1992	8,867	835	8.6
April, 1992	8,916	774	8.0
May, 1992	9,001	787	8.6
June, 1992	9,157	850	8.5

These data indicate a severe recession, peaking at the end of 1991, with possible signs of recovery in 1992. It is noteworthy that both the number of employed persons and unemployed persons have been increasing during the second quarter of 1992, with the percentage of unemployment remaining steady or declining, and in every month, below the January 1992 level.

It is also noteworthy that the reported [Census] 1990 unemployment rate for Levy County was 6.2%. This is a very low rate.

About eight percent [8%] of the work force has a work disability but is able to work; i.e., available or already employed. This is important in terms of the Americans With Disabilities Act.

In building a healthy economy, the quality, as well as the quantity, of the labor force must be considered. Levy County's work force is largely unskilled, but there are numerous programs in place to help increase the work-force skill level. The County participates in available government programs to help businesses provide new skills training to employees, and in the Job Training Partnership Program. Levy County's location also gives it access to training programs at Santa Fe Community College, Central Florida Community College, and the University of Florida. The County School Board ranks eleventh [11th] in the State in per pupil spending for vocational education, and thirtieth [30th] in the State in overall educational spending. 1/

The programs needed to increase the skill level of the work force are in place, but the success of such a program depends upon an accurate picture.

The Tax Base

In 1988, Levy County had a total ad valorem tax base of \$430,159,000.00. This was an 82.29% increase from 1980 1/. The County still placed twenty-sixth [26th] in a ranking of the millage rates of Florida Counties 2/. In 1991, Levy County had a total ad valorem tax base of \$540,602,379.00. The low taxable value contributes to the County's small tax base. The tax base is also weakened by the proliferation of manufactured homes in the area. Many of these homes have an assessed value less than the \$25,000.00 Homestead Exemption, and so the County can collect no property taxes on them.

In order to maintain the existing infrastructure, improve services, and offer business incentives, the County must expand the tax base. This can be done by attracting or creating new businesses in the County, expanding existing businesses, increasing millage rates, increasing the assessed values of property, or lobbying for an end to the Homestead Exemption. The elected officials of the County need to review the alternatives and choose a course of action that is most appropriate for the County.

1/ Florida County Comparisons, 1989.

2/ Ibid

The Economic Base

The Federal Government divides business and industry into major Standard Industrial Classification [SIC] categories. These categories are used to track levels of employment in different sectors of the economy. The major SIC classes existing in Levy County are: agriculture, forestry and fisheries; mining; contract construction; manufacturing; transportation and public utilities; wholesale trade; retail trade; finance, insurance and real estate services [FIRE].

Each of the SIC sectors will be analyzed individually using a statistical tool called the "location quotient" [LQ]. The location quotient compares the percentage of an area's total work force working in a sector with the national percentage for the same area. The location quotient identifies the sectors providing basic and non-basic employment. Basic activities bring money into the area economy. A location quotient greater than one [1.00] indicates a basic activity. Non-basic activities are sources of cash leakage from the economy. If a non-basic situation can be corrected, the local economy benefits. A location quotient of less than one [1.00] indicates a non-basic activity.

The Diversity Index for the Levy County economy has also been calculated. The Diversity Index measures over-reliance on individual sectors. Such over-reliance makes the economy vulnerable to national and state economic recessions.

Major Economic Sectors

As shown here, the predominate sectors of Levy County's economy by Location Quotient are: agriculture services, forestry and fisheries; mining; contract construction; and, retail trade. The three [3] areas of weakness are manufacturing; transportation and public utilities; and, wholesale trade. For the last one quarter [1/4] of 1991, the average number of employees in each category are proved in a separate column.

	<u>Location Quotient</u>	<u># Employees (1990)</u>
Agriculture, etc.	4.75	422
Mining	3.60	87
Contract Construction	2.04	485
Retail Trade	1.61	1,316
Services	0.83	775
FIRE - [Finance, Insurance, Real Estate]	0.85	235
Transportation, etc.	0.61	204
Wholesale Trade	0.55	165
Manufacturing	0.36	276

Agriculture. Activities grouped under this category include agriculture production of crops and livestock soil preparation, veterinary medicine, landscaping and commercial fishing, hunting and forestry.

While only 2.7% of the County's work force was employed under the agriculture category, the location quotient for 1987 was 4.75. This means that on a percentage basis Levy County has nearly five [5] times the national average employment in this sector. This indicates that Levy enjoys an advantage in this area, and that future expansion in this area should be considered.

Agriculture in Levy County is diversified. Fishing and shell fishing are centered along Cedar Key. Areas of croplands, orchards and groves are centered in the northwest and eastern sides of the County. Forest lands fill the center and southern parts of the County.

The seafood and shellfish industries have declined in recent years due to storm activity in the Gulf and declining water quality. Efforts are currently underway with the State to develop an aquaculture project to revive the oyster industry.

The first dairy farm came to the County in 1985. Plans for additional dairies were announced in late 1989. These new dairies are expected to open in late 1990. The large amounts of available land and water make the continued expansion of the dairy industry and related industries a viable source of basic economic growth for Levy County. The growth of this agri-business has, in 1992, created increased concerns about water use, groundwater pollution, and "quality of life".

The forestry land covers 183,289 acres. Value added activities involving forestry products have decreased dramatically since 1980.

By contrast, activities in the landscape and ornamental horticulture areas have increased since 1980. This sector is still at the non-basic level, but the availability of land and water resources in Levy County provide a strong foundation for further expansion.

Mining. Mining makes up 3.38% of the employment in the County, and has a LQ of 3.6. This makes it another important basic industry to Levy County. Activities in this sector consist mainly of the removal of limestone and other non-metallic rock from the earth. Employment in this sector has remained fairly constant over the last decade and there is no reason to expect a change in the foreseeable future. [Levy County obtains limerock from a quarry at the Williston Airport.]

Construction. Activities under contract construction include building construction; heavy construction; and, special trade construction such as carpentry, electrical work and plumbing. Construction is a basic industry with a LQ of 2.04. This sector is extremely strong in the areas of heavy construction and street/highway construction. The last decade has seen strong growth in the areas of electrical work and special trade contractors. There is still a shortage of these people in the southeastern part of the County where many residents must rely on service from professionals from Marion or Citrus Counties.

Manufacturing. Activities under manufacturing include the chemical or mechanical transformation of materials or substances into new products, assembling or sub-components of manufacturing products, and blending of materials. Manufacturing has the lowest LQ of any sector of the County's economy -- 36. The sector has declined county-wide since 1980, due mainly to the loss of wood processing and the decline of fish packing activity; however, a number of successful businesses are located at the Williston Airport, where employment is steadily increasing.

Manufacturing activity creates jobs, increases the tax base, and brings money into the local economy. The loss of manufacturing activity in the area over the last ten [10] years is the most serious economic problem facing Levy County. The County must begin a concerted effort to attract manufacturers. This effort should at least include:

- (a) Further development of the industrial parks in Chiefland and Williston;
- (b) Industrial zoning of adequate amounts of viable lands for development;
- (c) A comprehensive list of available industrial sites and buildings;
- (d) An aggressive marketing campaign targeted at prospective industries;
- (e) The development of a list of specific criteria that relocating industries must meet;
- (f) Funding and support for a central agency with the primary responsibility of industry attraction and expansion.

Efforts must also be undertaken to create value-adding processes in existing industries. Examples of such activities could include packaging of seafood, shaping and packaging of timber products, and further processing of dairy products.

While strengthening Levy County's manufacturing base is crucial, it must not be done at the expense of the environment. The important agriculture, fishing and tourist industries all rely on clean and abundant natural resources for their survival. The expansion of one sector does not warrant the destruction of three others.

Retail And Wholesale Trade. Activities included in the trade sector include the selling of goods to commercial, industrial, institutional and professional establishments, as well as to other wholesalers.

The LQ for retail trade is 1.61. There has been significant growth in this sector since 1984 when the LQ was 1.42. In 1987, more than one thousand three hundred [1,300] people were employed in the retail trade sector, the highest number employed in any sector in the County's economy. Part of the growth in this sector is directly attributable to the creation of one hundred thirty-five [135] jobs at the new WalMart in Chiefland. Other areas of strength include food stores, car dealers and gasoline service stations, and restaurants. Restaurants are especially important to the economy of Cedar Key, where they are part of the tourist trade.

In 1991, the retail trade sector employed more than one thousand three hundred [1,300] people, by far the largest employment sector in the County. ^{1/} The problem with such heavy employment reliance on this sector is that it traditionally does not fare well in periods of economic recession.

Wholesale trade in Levy County has a LQ of only .55. This shows that Levy County retailers are sending much of their money outside of the County to purchase the goods that they sell. The sector has been declining steadily since 1980.

Table 13-1 [at the end of this chapter] shows historic sales tax revenues for Levy County as a whole, as well as just the unincorporated area. From the data provided, it may be concluded that:

- (1) In spite of a recession, county-wide retail sales have increased in every fiscal year since 1987.
- (2) Retail sales in the unincorporated area represent about twenty-four percent [24%] to twenty-seven percent [27%] of all sales in Levy County. This documents the continued importance of the municipalities as trade centers.
- (3) Gross retail sales in Levy County will reach \$12,612,803 in fiscal year 1992, a seventy-four percent [74%] increase over the 1987 level of retail sales. This represents a growth in retail sales of 14.8% per year ... for greater than population growth and indicative of a booming increase in retail sales.

Large regional wholesale distribution operations exist in Polk and Marion Counties. These operations take advantage of the interstate highways in these counties. The presence of these counties that have established records as distribution centers makes it unlikely that Levy County could attract a major center away from them. Efforts at wholesale expansion must be targeted at smaller scale operations that could benefit from the County's low labor costs. If, however, the proposed turnpike extension does come to Levy County, the chances for distribution expansion would obviously increase.

^{1/} 1988 Florida County Business Patterns.

Finance, Insurance And Real Estate. The LQ for finance, insurance and real estate [FIRE] for 1987 was .85. This category encompasses all types of banking, insurance offices, and real estate agents and property management. This area has shown moderate growth since 1980. The only unusual aspect of this sector is in the area of banking, where the subcategories are nearly twice as high as the national average. Since the growth of employment comes from the diversification of the banking system in Levy County since 1980, the employment gains made here will probably be long term gains.

Services. The service sector is a trade sector in which no physical goods change hands. The sector is divided into two major parts: (1) business services and (2) personal services.

Personal services include beauty shops, educational services, health services and recreational facilities. There is need for expansion in the area of indoor recreational facilities.

Business services include personnel firms, data processing, and advertising. In 1987, the LQ for services was .83, making it a non-basic activity. The low level of employment in the business services subcategory is the reason that the overall services LQ is non-basic. This is logical given the County economic base of agriculture, mining and construction.

The last decade has been a boom period for the service sector. In 1980, service employment was seven hundred forty-eight [748] ^{1/}. By 1987, it had swelled to one thousand five hundred twenty-nine [1,529] ^{2/}. The service sector, like the retail trade sector, does not historically fare well during slow economic times. By 1991, services employment dropped to only seven hundred seventy-five [775] as a result of a recession. Any growth in jobs is positive, but growth in recession-resistant sectors is more important.

Government. The employment data from County Business Patterns does not include government employees. In location quotient analysis, government employment is considered to be non-basic. Employment by local, state and federal government totaled one thousand two hundred fifty-five [1,255] in 1987 ^{1/}. This number has increased to one thousand four hundred five [1,405] in 1991, based upon fourth quarter data provided by the Florida Department of Labor and Employment Security.

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- ^{1/} 1981 Florida County Business Patterns.
^{2/} 1988 County Business Patterns.
^{3/} Florida County Comparisons, 1989.

The Diversity Index

The diversity index is a statistical tool used to measure the dependence of an economy on certain economic sectors. The more diverse an economic base is, the greater is the economy's ability to weather periods of recession. The diversity index scale ranges from 1 to -1. A positive value indicates that an economy is less diversified than the national economy, and a negative value indicates that it is more diversified. The 1987 Diversity Index for Levy County was -.11, indicating that the Levy County economy is slightly more diversified than the national economy. The Diversity Index for Levy has been dropping as the retail and service sectors expand. If the trend continues, the Index will turn positive and the County economy will become vulnerable to outside economic forces [Figure 5].

Amenities For Business And Industry

Numerous factors are taken into account by a business when it decides to relocate. Among these are quality of life measures, financial climate for business, infrastructure, labor force, and community attitudes toward business. It is important to have an objective view of what Levy County can offer a new business so that areas can be targeted for improvement and more businesses can be attracted.

Climate

Levy County has a subtropical climate which allows agricultural production nearly year round. Summers are hot and humid while winters are cool and dry. The maximum monthly mean of 81.6 degrees occurs in August. The minimum monthly mean of 55.6 degrees occurs in January. Annual rainfall averages 59.34 inches, with more than half [1/2] of the yearly total occurring between June and September. ^{1/}

Labor Force

In 1988, eight thousand four hundred sixty-six [8,466] persons in Levy County were between the prime working ages of 18-44. According to the 1980 Census, 41.6% of the Levy County work-force left the County everyday to work. Virtually all are to Alachua and Marion Counties. Comparable data are unavailable for 1990. It is reasonable to assume that many of these people would have preferred to work closer to home if quality employment had been available. A business locating in the County could also potentially draw workers from adjacent counties if necessary.

Levy County's work-force is largely unskilled. While this is a weakness, it is one that is already being corrected. The County ranks eleventh [11th] in the State on vocational educational spending per student unit. The academic resources of nearby Central Florida Community College, Santa Fe Community College, and the University of Florida offer potential for training programs. Such programs done between the City of Orlando and the University of Central Florida have been a major factor in the growth of Orlando's high technology industries. The Sunshine State Skills Program provides training and financial assistance to businesses while employees are being trained. All of these resources can be used to improve the skill level of the work-force.

^{1/} Levy County Initial OEDP Update, 1988, Page 3-1.

Access To Transportation

Rail. Rail transportation [a single track] is still available to some extent. Much of the original track in the County has been taken up in recent years. The main use of the track today is to transport materials through Levy County to the Crystal River Power Plant in adjacent Citrus County. The rail is owned by CSX Railroad.

Airports. There are two [2] airports in the County. The George T. Lewis Airport in Cedar Key is a utility airport used primarily to bring tourists to Cedar Key. The Williston Municipal Airport, located adjacent to the Williston Industrial Park, is a former military airport. The 7,000 foot lighted runway is capable of handling corporate aircraft. This airport was designated in 1992 as the preferred site for a regional airport within twenty [20] years.

In addition to the airports located within the County, a regional airport is located in Gainesville, and international airports are located in Tampa, Orlando and Jacksonville.

Trucking. Three [3] trucking firms are currently serving Levy County. These are MR & R Trucking Company, Central Florida Truck lines and Consolidated Freight Ways.

Highway Transportation. Levy County is served by two [2] primary north/south arteries -- U.S. 19/98 / U.S. Alt. 27, and U.S. 41. There are no primary east/west arteries other than S.R. 24 which intersects I-75 at Gainesville. A complete survey of the County road system is included in the Traffic Element of the Comprehensive Plan. U.S. 27 is now on the D.O.T. work program for 4-laning from Ocala to Chiefland.

The potential area of highway transportation does offer one of the greatest areas for economic development. If the proposed turnpike extension is constructed, it will join U.S. 19/98 near Lebanon Station. This extension would increase tourist flow through Levy County, offer direct road access to the markets of Central and South Florida for distributors, and allow better inflow of supplies to manufacturers.

Taxes

Levy County is a low tax base County in a low tax State. The 1988 millage rates were 8.3360 for County Government and 7.7830 for the School Board District for a County total of 16.1190 1/. There were no special tax districts in the County. Levy ranked twenty-sixth [26th] out of Florida counties in millage rates 2/. In 1992, the fiscal year 1993 millage rate for Levy County is 9.184 mils, a reduction which is indicative of a healthy economy, increased tax base and fiscal responsibility.

Financial Incentives To Business

There is currently no set package of financial incentives offered to business to encourage them to relocate to Levy County.

Availability Of Land

Availability of adequate amounts of land for development across all economic sectors is necessary for economic growth. At the same time this available land must be located in areas where its use will not conflict with the surrounding land uses or the quality of life of residents. Specific land use needs and zoning are addressed in the Land Use Element of the Levy County Comprehensive Plan and on the Future Land Use Map.

Climate For Business And Industry

There are reports that some businesses do not feel that they receive adequate support from the business community. Some also feel that the County as a whole is against business expansion and growth. Whether

or not these feelings are justified, they must be addressed because they have a detrimental effect on efforts to locate new businesses in the County.

In June, 1990, the Levy County Development Authority started the Levy County Economic Development Council [EDC] as an affiliate organization. The EDC is open to all individuals and businesses in Levy County who are interested in economic development. In the future, the EDC will address the needs of existing businesses and work to build a positive attitude towards business in the County.

Utilities

The City of Williston is the only community in Levy County with surplus sewage treatment capacity as well as surplus water capacity. Figures 4-1 and 4-2 from the Comprehensive Plan [1992 data base update] document these facts. The City of Williston also operates its own gas and electric distribution systems.

1/ Florida County Comparisons, 1989.

2/ Ibid.

FIGURE 1
PERSONAL INCOME COMPARISON 1980-1987

FIGURE 2-A

1987 U.S. INCOME BREAKDOWN

FIGURE 2-B
1987 FLORIDA INCOME BREAKDOWN

FIGURE 2-C

1987 LEVY COUNTY INCOME BREAKDOWN

FIGURE 3

COMPARATIVE UNEMPLOYMENT RATES / 1980 - 1988

FIGURE 4A
1980 EMPLOYMENT BY SICK CLASSIFICATION

FIGURE 4B
1987 EMPLOYMENT BY SIC CATEGORY

TABLE 11-1
SALES TAX RECEIPTS BY YEAR,
WILLISTON VERSUS ALL OF LEVY COUNTY

<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Levy County</u>
1987	4,336,259
1988	5,504,042
1989	6,068,446
1990	7,172,534
1991	7,345,420
1992 *	7,567,682

* The 1992 projections are preliminary estimates, prepared by Central Florida Planning and Development.

Source: Florida Department of Revenue, Purchasing, 1992.

Summary of Economic Development Conditions at the Date of the EAR

Because the 1990 Comprehensive Plan generally utilized 1980 Census data, this EAR has sought to update the plan’s database with 1990 Census data whenever possible to assure statistical comparability. The Economic Development Element was updated in 1992, and includes some data from the 1990 Census as well as data from other sources that may not be comparable with the Census. For the sake of future statistical comparability and consistency, the following summary of 1990 data (and some from 1995) has been included herein. Unless otherwise noted, this data was taken from the 1990 Census. Other economic development issues and concerns discussed in Part One, Chapter 13, “Summary of Economic Development Conditions at the Time of Plan Adoption” are considered unchanged in 1996 and are not addressed in this section.

**ECONOMIC SUMMARY
Levy County, Florida**

POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

<u>POPULATION</u>	<u>1990 (a)</u>	<u>1995 (b)</u>
Bronson	875	857
Cedar Key	668	704
Chiefland	1,917	1929
Fanning Springs	263	291
Inglis	1241	1282
Otter Creek	136	124
Williston	2168	2258
Yankeetown	635	617
Unincorporated	18009	21781
COUNTY TOTAL	25912 (a)	29843 (b)

(a) Revised 1990 Census. (b) Bureau of Economic and Business Research.

GENDER DISTRIBUTION, 1990

	<u>1970</u>	<u>1980</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>GROWTH 1970-1990 (%)</u>
MALE	48.97%	48.51%	47.82%	98.45%
FEMALE	51.03%	51.49%	52.18%	107.80%

AGE CHARACTERISTICS, 1990

	1970	1980	1990	Growth 1970-1990 (%)
Median Age	31.1	34.5	38.5	+7.4 years
Elderly, Aged 65+	1679	3103	4916	192.79
Elderly, % of Population	13.16%	15.62%	18.96%	+5.8

RACE (PERCENT OF TOTAL POPULATION), 1990

White	74.79.	83.32	86.20	134.23
Black	25.13	15.98	12.39	0.19
Other	.09	.70	1.40	3218.18

INCOME

	1970	1980	1990	Growth 1970-1990 (%)
Total Personal Income (millions)	\$34.4	\$113.0	\$304.0	784
Per Capita Income	\$1997	\$5100	\$9386	370.01
Median Family Income	\$5821	\$12464	\$22743	290.71
Persons Living in Poverty	3495	4076	5247	50.13
% of Population in Poverty	27.50	20.80	20.70	-6.8

LABOR FORCE AND EMPLOYMENT

	1970	1980	1990	Growth 1970-1990 (%)
Labor Force	4566	7291	10282	125.19
Unemployment	N/A	5.20	6.00	N/A

Unemployment in June 1996 was 5.08%.

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRIAL SECTOR

	1970	1980	1990	Growth 1970-1990 (%)
Agriculture, forestry, Fishing	621	751	697	12.24
Mining	29	45	124	327.56
Construction	551	940	969	75.86
Manufacturing	625	755	697	11.52
Transp., Communi., Utilities	251	511	696	177.29
Wholesale Trade	105	225	258	171.43
Retail Trade	741	1087	1979	167.07
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	111	342	419	277.48
Services	1178	1701	3078	161.29
Government	227	464	705	210.57

HOUSING**HOUSING STOCK, 1990**

	1970	1980	1990	Growth 1970-1990 (%)
Housing Units	4760	9068	12307	158.55

HOUSING UNITS BY TYPE, 1990

	1970	1980	1990	Growth 1970-1990 (%)
Single Family	3891	5709	6196	59.24
Multi Family	275	518	357	29.82
Mobile home	555	2416	5754	936.76

Note: more detailed housing data can be found in Part 2, Chapter 3, “Summary of Housing Conditions at the Time of the EAR.”

Industrial and Commercial Infrastructure

In 1995 the regional Overall Economic Development Plan reported the following information about available industrial and commercial sites in Levy County:

Chiefland Area

City Industrial Park, 16 acres
 Mims Equipment Building, 15,000 square feet buildings available; 20 acres
 Catherine Heights, 120 acres
 Georgia Pacific, former plant site, 388 acres

Williston Area

Southwind Industrial Park, 600 acres
 Florian Industrial Park, 80 acres
 Former DriTech site, 3.73 acres
 Rutland site, 22 acres

Otter Creek Area

Crab Plant Site. 5000 square feet building; 6 acres

Inglis Acres

Florida Power Plant Site, 44 acres
 Levy County Port Authority, 63 acres

Gulf Hammock Area

Florida Rock Industries site, 40 acres

Source: Overall Economic Development Plan, Withlacoochee Regional Planning Council, 1995.

Economic Development Projects

The regional OEDP included a list of economic development projects eligible for consideration for applying for construction grants from the US Economic Development Administration. Future economic development projects desired by economic development officials in Levy County in 1994 included:

Levy County

1. New industrial park in southern Levy County to coincide with the extension of the Turnpike into the Lebanon Station Area.
2. Extension of sewer and natural gas lines into the Williston Industrial Park, including certification of the park through the Department of Community Affairs.
3. Expansion of sewer capacity at the City of Chiefland Industrial Park.
4. Revolving loan fund for shellfish farming seed capital and other small businesses. Proposed to be operated by the Department of Commerce via Florida First Capital Finance Corporation.
5. New sewer treatment plant and creation of industrial park for the Town of Bronson.

Town of Bronson

1. New sewer treatment plant and sewer lines.
2. Establishment of an industrial park.

City of Cedar key

None.

City of Chiefland

1. Sewer capacity expansion at the industrial park.
2. Natural gas service (new construction).
3. Industrial park land purchase and development of US 19 acres (parcel 1782).

City of Fanning Springs

None.

Town of Inglis

None.

Town of Otter Creek

None.

City of Williston

None.

Town of Yankeetown

none.

Source: Official Projects List, OEDP; Withlacoochee Regional Planning Council, 1995.