



**Find Your MRO Opportunity**

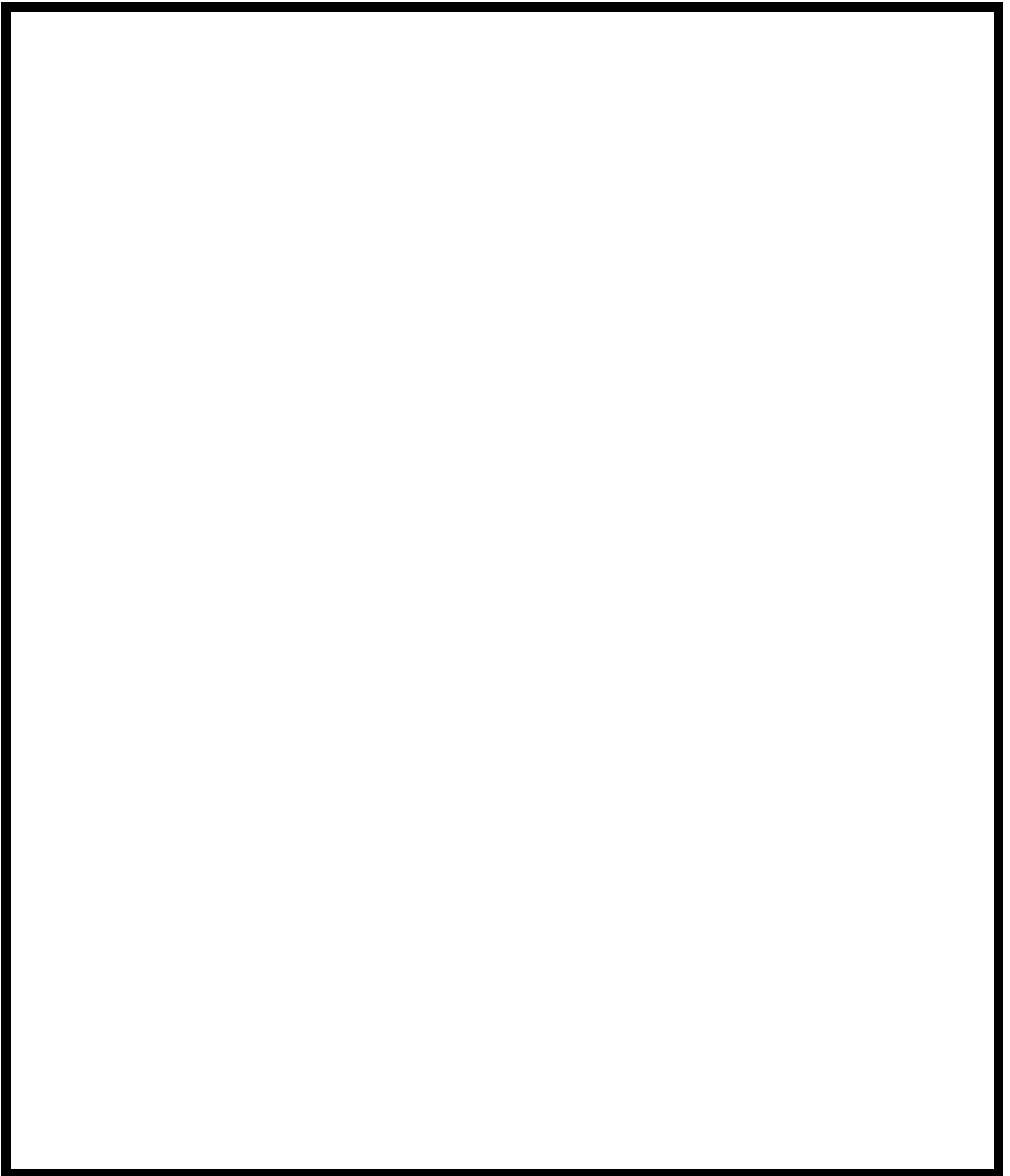
**at**

**Apalachicola  
Regional Airport**



**Submitted by:**

**Steve Kirschenbaum  
Chairman Franklin County AOED**





TO: Potential MRO operator or Defense Contractor

FROM: Steve Kirschenbaum Chairman Franklin County  
Airport Operations & Economic Development Board

SUBJECT: Proposed MRO or Defense Contractor Facility,

Franklin County is pleased to propose to you the use of our airport located in Apalachicola, a low-traffic facility suitable for your new maintenance, repair, and overhaul (MRO) aviation center that would be strategically located to serve Commercial or DOD customers in the southeast United States.

The Apalachicola Regional Airport is county owned and the county is eager to work with you on the development of an aviation facility on airport property. The county can offer direct taxiway access as well as separate highway access for the right client.

The airport is served by Duke Energy, and City of Apalachicola for water and sewer. Its location is adjacent to US Highway 98 and is 94 miles from Interstate 10 Exit 142 (major east-west corridor).

Franklin County is part of Triumph Gulf Coast, which has funds available for capital improvements in infrastructure (including the construction of leased buildings) and workforce training programs. Along with Triumph, the county is part of a Rural Area of Opportunity that also includes certain waivers and allowances for new economic improvements to enhance the community. A list of **potential** state, federal, and local **benefits** is included in this proposal and **could be valued over \$8,500,000.00. These benefits listed in this package are to a company bringing 50 or more skilled jobs to our County.**

TRIUMPH Gulf Coast funds could be used to partner with Space Florida, US Economic Development Administration, and Community Development Block funding sources for construction.  
*(There are benefits to companies of all sizes, let us tailor a package to your companies size and workforce.)*

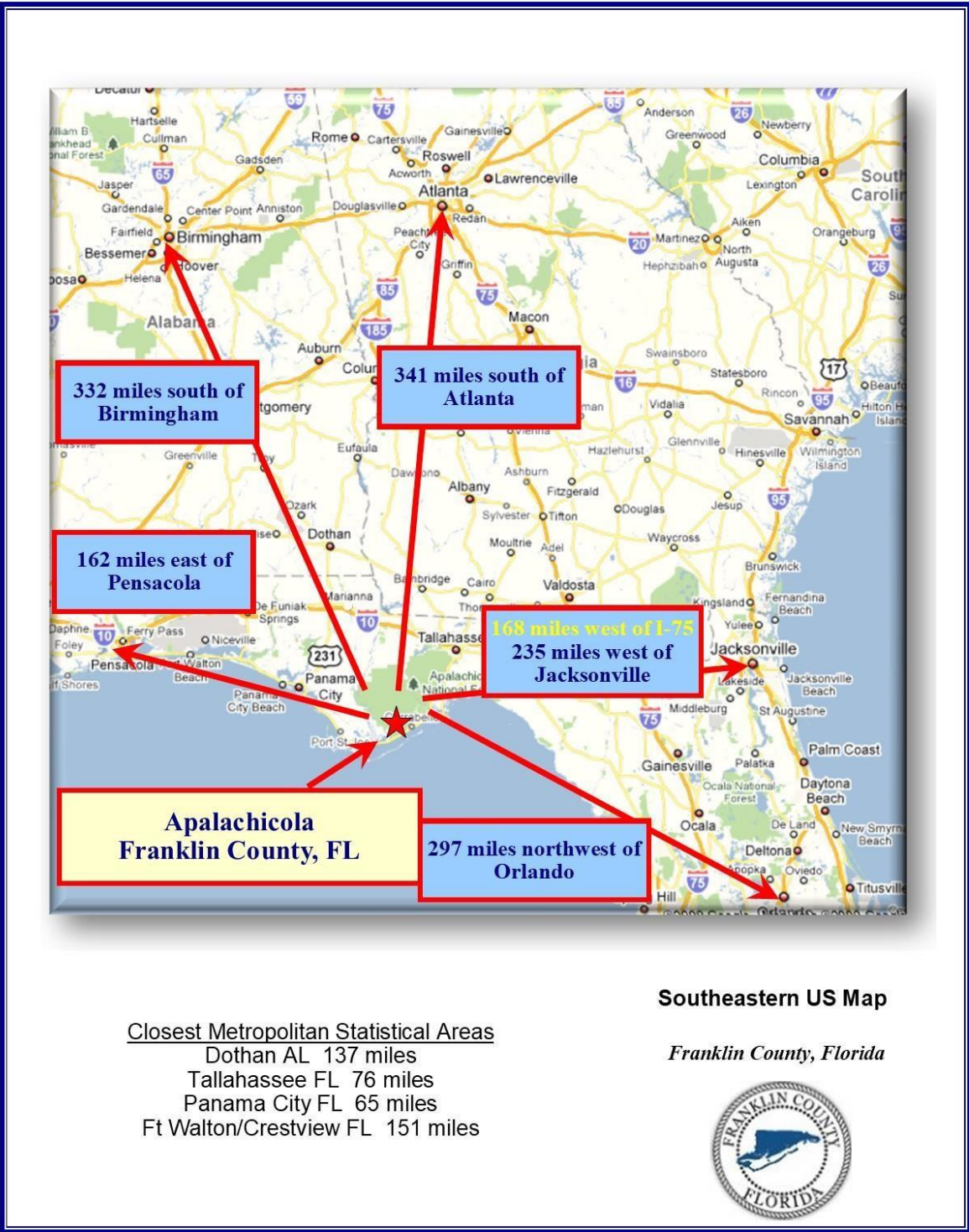
Workforce training programs specific to the aviation industry are already in place in a variety of educational institutions serving Franklin County. Additional training programs could be developed and be made available through the CareerSource Gulf Coast Workforce Board which serves Franklin County.

Exciting for us in NW Florida are our US Department of Defense contractors and six military bases, which have approximately 3,000 extremely skilled personnel that exit the service each year. They love NW Florida and want to stay here to start their second careers. This would be a great pipeline of workers for your MRO facility.

This document contains **photographs, drone aerial video, and general information** for this airport park plus area demographics along with labor wages and availability within a 60-minute radius.

We look forward to sharing more information with you in the near future. If you have any questions regarding this park or how we can help you expand your aviation industry position in the Southeast, please feel free to contact us.

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**Regional Airports**

*Franklin County, Florida*



**North-South Connector**  
U S Highway 231  
Bay Line Railroad

**East-West Connector**  
Interstate Highway 10  
U S Highway 90  
FGA Railroad



**Port Mobile AL**  
(245 miles)

**Port Jacksonville**  
(252 miles)

**Port Panama City**  
(57 miles)

**Regional Highways, Ports and Railroads**

*Franklin County, Florida*



# Franklin County Apalachicola Regional Airport



**638 Acres**  
**5,300 foot Paved Runways**

Drone Aerial Video:  
[Apalachicola Airport V3.mp4](#)



## Potential State, Federal, and Local Benefits

Listed are potential savings and tax benefits available when the company locates within the Rural Area of Opportunity community such as Franklin County, Florida, and is based upon the following factors:

- **The company will provide a qualifying capital investment in new equipment for a new production/manufacturing facility that will locate within FRANKLIN County, Florida; • Create a qualifying number of new full-time jobs (50) at the facility for employees who will reside within rural counties and earn an average of 115% of the current annual salary in FRANKLIN County (plus benefits), which would be \$38,185;**

BENEFIT	STATE BENEFIT FACTORS	POTENTIAL VALUE
<b>QUICK RESPONSE TRAINING GRANT (REIMBURSABLE GRANT)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Non-degree specialized skills training (for up to 12 months) that is not available at the local level</li> <li>• \$3,500 per new job in a rural county</li> <li>• Reimbursements can be spread over 24 months</li> </ul>	\$ 175,000
<b>INCUMBENT WORKER TRAINING GRANT (REIMBURSABLE GRANT)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Firm must be in business at location for one year</li> <li>• Used to retain employees by improving their skills \$3,500 per existing job (more than one year old)</li> </ul>	\$ 175,000
<b>RURAL JOBS TAX CREDIT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Up to \$1,000 per new job created in a Rural Area of Opportunity county</li> <li>• Must be taken against Florida Corporate Income Tax or Sales and Use Tax obligations</li> </ul>	\$ 50,000
<b>RURAL INFRASTRUCTURE FUND</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State infrastructure grant funds for use on a project in a Rural Area of Opportunity</li> </ul>	\$ 500,000
<b>BUILDING MATERIALS SALES TAX REBATE IN RURAL AREA</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State sales tax rebate on building materials for new construction within a rural county in FL Up to \$10,000 per parcel of land</li> </ul>	\$ 10,000
<b>COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Federal funds administered by the State for infrastructure needs</li> <li>• Use of the Grant's Economic Development category allows for more than \$750,000</li> </ul>	\$ 2,000,000
<b>FEDERAL BENEFIT FACTORS</b>		
<b>U S DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION GRANT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can be used to provide Public Infrastructure (road access, water, sewer, natural gas, etc.) and/or may be expended on improvements to municipally-owned buildings</li> </ul>	\$ 2,500,000
BENEFIT	LOCAL BENEFIT FACTORS	POTENTIAL VALUE



<p><b>“FREE” LAND LEASE</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>FREE land lease up to 12 acres</b> upon which to construct your new facility in Franklin County</li> <li>• Based upon stated eligibility factors mentioned above AND approved by vote of Board of County Commissioners</li> </ul>	<p>\$ 240,000</p>
<p><b>TRIUMPH GULF COAST GRANT</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• • <b>Grant for MRO building facility construction</b> Funds must approved and supplied by the Triumph Gulf Coast Board</li> <li>• Building would be owned by County with <b>favorable lease rates</b> to your company</li> </ul>	<p>\$ 3,000,000</p>
<p><b>LOCAL CAREER SOURCE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional recruiting and training dollars</li> </ul>	<p>\$ 100,000</p>
<p><b>LOCAL STATE COLLEGE “TAILORED” TRAINING PROGRAM GRANT</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Customized program tailored to meet the employer’s needs for ready-to-hire technicians to perform production, repair, and maintenance tasks in the employer’s local facility and other similar facilities in the region</li> </ul>	<p>\$ 50,000</p>
<p><b>FAST-TRACK PERMITTING</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff will review development order package for compliance with Land Development Code, and Public Works</li> <li>• Development order will be placed ahead of all other plans for fast-track review.</li> <li>• Outside professional review fees are excluded.</li> </ul>	<p>\$ 50,000</p>
<p><b>DEVELOPMENT ORDER/BUILDING PERMIT/TAP FEES</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development Order and/or Building Permit Fees may be partially waived or removed provided no variances are requested.</li> </ul>	<p>\$ 30,000</p>

**TOTAL POTENTIAL BENEFITS**

**\$ 8,880,000.**

**I. ECONOMIC PROGRAM BENEFITS**

The following summary outlines the business benefit advantages available in Jackson County, Florida:

## **STATE BENEFIT PROGRAMS**

### **(1) Quick Response Training Grant**

The program is a state-funded grant program that provides funding to qualifying businesses to train their net new, full-time (35+ hours per week) employees in qualified targeted industries. The company must be a “for profit” business and require non-degree, specialized skills based training of 12 months or less that is not available at the local level. These are high-skill industries with exportable goods or services and wages of 125 percent above state or local wages. (Wage levels may be waived in rural counties or brownfield areas).

### **(2) Incumbent Worker Training Grant**

Most companies who apply for funding will be eligible to have up to 50% of their direct training costs eligible for reimbursement through their approved IWT grant. For companies that meet specific criteria, the reimbursement percentage is increased to 75%. These specific criteria include:

- Having 50 or fewer employees
- Being in a rural area, rural county, distressed area, Brownfield or Hub zone
- First time business applicants
- Businesses in a qualified targeted industry
- Businesses whose grant proposals represent a significant upgrade in employee skills;
- Businesses who are seeking to utilize the program to train individuals with barriers to employment; and
- Businesses whose grant proposals represent a significant layoff avoidance strategy.

### **(3) Rural Jobs Tax Credit**

This grant is provided to new or expanding employers in Rural Area of Opportunity (RAO) counties. It is valued up to \$1,000 per new job and is good for a two-year period, plus a 5-year carry-forward period. No pre-approval is needed prior to the company’s decision to locate in the RAO county. This credit may only be taken against the Florida Corporate Income Tax or Sales and Use Tax owed by the company to the State.

### **(4) Rural Infrastructure Fund**

This grant is used to facilitate the planning, preparing, and financing of traditional economic development or nature-based tourism infrastructure projects that encourage job creation and capital investment in rural communities.

### **(5) Sales Tax Rebate on Building Materials – New Construction in a Rural County**

A refund is available for sales taxes paid on the purchase of building materials used for rehabilitation or new construction of real property located in a rural area of opportunity county. Benefit may be up to \$10,000 per parcel. [FL Statute 212.08(5)(r)]

### **(6) Community Development Block Grant**

This grant comes from federal funds actually administered through the State. They are available for use (in an economic development environment) to provide infrastructure work for qualifying businesses (certain levels of number of new jobs created, wage levels, and capital investment).

## **FEDERAL INCENTIVE PROGRAMS (1) Economic Development Administration**

This is a federal public infrastructure grant that is awarded by the U.S. Department of Commerce. It may be used for road access, water, sewer, natural gas, etc. This is designed to help recipients in the nation's most distressed communities to revitalize, expand, or upgrade their physical infrastructure to attract new industry, encourage business expansion, and generate or retain long-term private sector jobs and capital investments.

## **LOCAL BENEFIT PROGRAMS**

### **(1) "FREE" Land – County – Property Owners**

The County is willing to enter into a favorable long-term arrangement with a targeted industry that is advantageous for the employer, City, County, and its citizens.

Based upon the new jobs created at an average annual wage and a capital investment mentioned above, we are prepared to offer a building site of up to 12 acres upon which to building your new 100,000 sq ft maintenance, repair, and overhaul facility.

### **(2) Triumph Gulf Coast Grant**

This grant may allow for an infusion of capital approved by and from the Triumph Gulf Coast to improve the community's infrastructure or workforce skills so that new or existing companies may create new or improved jobs, thus positively impacting the life quality of the county's residents. Funds can be spent on buildings. Funds can be partnered with other entities such as Space Florida. Drone and aviation training programs are currently being offered in and around Franklin County with funds from TRIUMPH Gulf Coast.

### **(3) Local Workforce Development Board Grant**

This grant is for additional recruitment and training funds that may be used to fill gaps left by other training funding sources. Examples of how the funds may be used are:

- Local print and radio advertisements
- Job listings
- Applicant screening and testing to the employer's specifications

#### **(4) Local State College “Tailored” Engineering Tech Program Grant**

This grant is for the development of a tailored engineering tech program and acquisition/use of training equipment to meet the needs of this targeted industry manufacturing employer. This program could become part of the Engineering Technology Certification Program or the Advanced Manufacturing **Engineering Technology** AS Degree. Examples of the training skills could be:

- CNC technology and machining
- Virtual and practical manual training
- Industrial maintenance, plant engineering, and mechatronics

#### **(5) Fast-Track Permitting Services**

Your company’s development order work will be placed ahead of all other plans for fast track review. Outside professional review fees are excluded.

#### **(6) Development Order/Building Permit/Tap Fees**

The County may waive part or all of the development order, building permit, and tap fees for a qualifying company in a targeted industry or zone. County staff will review your development order package for compliance with the Land Development Code, and Public Works (provided no variances are requested).

### **Franklin County, Florida DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE AND DATA**

Franklin County, Florida, is included in the 12-county economic coalition known as “**Florida’s Great Northwest**” and is also in the State of Florida-designated Rural Area of Opportunity (RAO), a regional group of ten rural Florida counties known as “**Opportunity Florida.**” As a result of the RAO designation, special economic development considerations are available to new businesses locating within Franklin County. County profile data follows:

**Climate:** Franklin County’s climate is moderate with four seasons. Residents enjoy year around Florida sunshine and great outdoor living. **The average winter temperature is 56 degrees F; average spring weather is 74 degrees F; average summer temperature is 81 degrees F; average fall temperature is 62 degrees F. The average annual total rain fall is 52 inches.**

**Population:** The 2020 population for Franklin County was 12,451. Approximately 7,232 residents are in the working age group of 18-64 years.

**State/County Tax Rates:** The State of Florida and Franklin County offer liberal tax rates. There are no state income taxes; the state corporate income tax rate is 5.5%; retail sales tax is 7.5% (state 6% and 1.5% local option); motor fuel tax per gallon is \$0.19 (state) and \$0.06 (local option); intangible tax is 1.5 mills per dollar. The 2021 real estate tax millage was 10.5541 “total” mills. The same millage is used for “tangible personal property” (equipment) in each respective county location.

**Cost of Living Index:** The cost of living rating index for Franklin County totals 101.5 based on a Florida weighted average of 100.00. Specific rates are: Food – 98.7, Housing – 114.5, Health Care – 118.5, Transportation – 76.5, Personal Goods and Services – 94.5.

**Monthly rental rates for 2 bedrooms average \$757 (Florida average is \$1,350) while 3 bedroom places average \$1,075 (Florida averages \$1,790).**

### **Labor Market and Workforce Availability:**

The **one-hour** (50 mile) commute “**labor-draw area**” encompasses **36,432** people. *If necessary, as an inducement, the EZ Quick Response Training Program would fund and provide for “specialized training” at the discretion of company officials.*

Franklin County’s current labor force totals 4,924 (May 2022). The most recent Franklin County monthly unemployment rate was 2.1%. The county provides an available workforce that is solid, well-motivated and ethical. Much of the workforce is also job ready, thanks to the tech schools located in the region.

The county’s average hourly wage is currently \$15.96. The 2020 per capita income for Franklin County was \$26,574 and the median “household” income was \$46,643.

### **Franklin County’s major private employers and contacts include:**

Weems Memorial Hospital– 125 employees – Healthcare Services – (850) 653-8853  
Water Street Seafood- 125 employees- Food Service and Seafood processing- 850-653-8902

### **Colleges and Universities:**

Seventy-nine percent (**79%**) of Franklin County’s populace has a **high school diploma** and sixteen percent (**18%**) have a **bachelor’s degree** or better from a college or university. **Franklin County is centrally located to provide access to several institutions of higher learning.** All are within 79 miles of Franklin County.

1. Florida State University – Panama City campus, 65 miles
2. Florida State University (Tallahassee, Florida) 77 miles  
\* Home to the National High Magnetic Field Laboratory, the largest and highest-powered magnet laboratory in the world
3. Florida A&M University (Tallahassee, Florida) 75 miles
4. Tallahassee Community College (Tallahassee, Florida) 79 miles

### **Medical Community:**

High-quality medical service is widely available in Franklin County and the surrounding area:

1. Weems Memorial Hospital (Apalachicola, Florida)
2. St. James Health and Rehab (Carrabelle, Florida)
3. Bay Medical Center (Panama City, Florida) 49 miles
4. Calhoun Liberty Hospital (Blountstown, Florida) 71 miles
5. Tallahassee Memorial Hospital (Tallahassee FL) 78 miles
6. Capital Regional Medical Center (Tallahassee FL) 82 miles

### **Commercial Airline Services:**

Two (2) major commercial airports are located within distance (1 1/2 hours) from Apalachicola: Tallahassee, Florida (76 miles) and the new Northwest Florida Beaches International Airport in West Bay (Panama City), Florida (82 miles). Additionally, **Apalachicola Regional is a municipal airport** with three (2) 5,200 foot runways and (1) 5,400 foot runway. Runway 14/32 is scheduled to be expanded to an overall length of 8,000 feet and will have an ILS system. AAF is located **in Apalachicola** FL and offers private aircraft service, Tie downs, Fuel, parking, Rental Cars and many other corporate and recreational opportunities.

### **Support Services:**

Franklin County has available personnel services through the CareerSource Gulf Coast (regional workforce development) Board and Gulf Coast State College. Services include employee screening, interviewing, and training. Gulf Coast has successfully trained thousands of employees in cooperation with Enterprise Florida through the “Quick Response Training” Program. This program typically provides full reimbursement of training expenses to the local provider.

Franklin County has availability of UPS, FedEx and other major package carriers, along with all major truck-load and less-than-truckload common freight carriers.

## **QUALITY OF LIFE**

### 1. Recreation:

- a) Public parks.
  - b) Gulf of Mexico white sand beaches
  - c) Deep sea and lake fishing
  - d) Apalachicola National Forest. (1) Acres of trails
    - (2) Picnic areas.
    - (3) Canoe trips.
    - (4) Full hookup campsites.
  - e) Cultural events such as:
    - (1) Florida State University Theatre and Symphony Series (Tallahassee)
2. Reasonable housing and land cost.

**Occupation Wages, Average Hourly in Apalachicola Airport - 60 min radius, 2020**

Occupation	Mean	Entry Level	Experienced	Percentiles					
				10%	25%	50% (Median)	75%	90%	
49-3010 Aircraft Mechanics and Service Technicians	\$26.38	\$14.25	\$32.44	\$13.32	\$16.42	\$27.35	\$35.99	\$40.01	
49-2091 Avionics Technicians	\$27.11	\$16.68	\$32.32	\$15.50	\$19.38	\$25.78	\$33.07	\$41.56	
Aircraft Structure, Surfaces, Rigging, and Systems									
51-2011 Assemblers	\$19.03	\$10.87	\$23.12	\$8.81	\$12.60	\$18.63	\$24.70	\$29.24	
43-5071 Shipping, Receiving, and Inventory Clerks	\$16.20	\$12.35	\$18.12	\$11.89	\$13.38	\$15.59	\$18.60	\$22.26	
11-3012 Administrative Services Managers	\$36.22	\$17.63	\$45.51	\$15.72	\$21.37	\$32.86	\$44.55	\$70.36	
17-2199 Engineers, All Other	\$54.83	\$41.97	\$61.26	\$38.29	\$48.25	\$54.26	\$64.29	\$70.82	
00-0000 Total - All Occupations	\$20.96	\$10.63	\$26.13	\$9.55	\$11.87	\$16.31	\$24.20	\$36.31	

[Source: JobsEQ®](#)

Wage data are as of 2020 and represent the average for all Covered Employment  
Exported on: Saturday, July 23, 2022 10:55 AM

Labor Availability at Entry Level Wage

49-3010 Aircraft Mechanics and Service Technicians	57	8	48
49-2091 Avionics Technicians	8	1	7
Aircraft Structure, Surfaces, Rigging, and Systems			
51-2011 Assemblers	1	0	1
43-5071 Shipping, Receiving, and Inventory Clerks	69	10	59
11-3012 Administrative Services Managers	5	1	5
17-2199 Engineers, All Other	32	4	28





Mary Swoope  
Industry Recruitment Manager  
Duke Energy Florida  
1011 E. Highway 98  
Port St. Joe, FL 32456  
601-278-4740

July 25, 2022

Mr. Alan Pierce  
Franklin County Board of County Commissioners

Subject: Project Pebbles Letter of Support

Dear Alan,

It is a pleasure to partner with you to support Project Pebbles for Franklin County. Duke Energy Florida, a subsidiary of Duke Energy, owns a diverse generation mix of natural gas, coal and renewables, providing about 10,200 megawatts of owned electric capacity to approximately 1.8 million customers in a 13,000-square-mile service area. Duke Energy is committed to offering our support in providing electric infrastructure, electric vehicle infrastructure and sustainability resources to meet our client's needs.

We look forward to offering support to Project Pebbles looking at the Apalachicola Regional Airport in Franklin County. This site is a competitive option to support the project's needs. In fact, the Apalachicola Regional Airport site has been identified as a premier site in the Duke Energy footprint and is in the process of completing the Duke Energy Florida's Site Readiness Program. As the electric provider to the property, we would like to address how we will serve and support the project.

#### **Electric Infrastructure**

- The site is a 12.47 kV distribution line, with distribution lines on site. The nearest substation is less than 1.3 miles from the site. We will be glad to discuss further details as we learn more of the company's electrical needs.

#### **Energy as a Service (EaaS)**

- We collaborate with customers throughout North America to provide comprehensive energy solutions that fit their unique needs. As a non-regulated offering, we leverage our team's expertise, invest resources and capital to create an energy portfolio along with financial programs that are billed as a monthly service fee.

This method of providing system resiliency allows the customer levelized costs, lower risk of failure and operational expertise versus the typical customer capital outlay and ownership responsibility. EaaS allows the flexibility to concentrate on your core business and increase profitability. Our Energy as A Service Portfolio includes backup generation, on-site micro grid, solar, district cooling / heating, compressed air, lighting, combined heat & power (CHP), boilers / steam, energy storage, central energy plant, substation, uninterruptible power supply (UPS)

#### **Service**

- Duke Energy Florida will extend the most cost-effective overhead electric service to your development and will do so at no cost assuming the cost to serve is equal to or less than four times the estimated annual non-fuel electric revenue of the customer (for example, a \$100,000/year estimated revenue customer would be eligible for up to \$400,000 worth of overhead electrical infrastructure to

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- serve their facility, based on the most cost-effective design). Any electric infrastructure costs you may incur will be minimized, transparent and in keeping with our regulatory requirements. At the customer's request, we can also explore underground service, redundant feeds, or other tailored infrastructure services or equipment and their associated costs.

### **Sustainability**

- Energy efficiency programs and conservation measures are available and can improve energy utilization throughout your operations. These programs include existing facility retrofit options and new construction support.
- Duke Energy is committed to fostering long-term energy sustainability. We will explore innovative energy solutions, including solar options, demand-side renewable energy systems, and energy storage. Developing highly efficient systems that combine on-site small renewable power production and flexible load control will promote conservation and emission-free technologies.

### **Cost Effective Rate Options**

- Duke Energy recognizes the complex nature of project location decisions and values the economic impact that these projects have within the community. In an effort to help make your decision easier, Duke has many rate options including a program providing a flexible and competitive electrical rate (tariff) for economic development projects. The [Economic Development Rider \(ED-2\)](#), for qualified projects, provides a discount on a customer's electricity rate for up to five years yielding a significant savings.

In summary, Duke Energy is a company engaged at every level to assist in the delivery of jobs, capital investment and tax base to the communities we serve. We offer a wide range of services to support our customers' growth. We stand ready to work with you as the plans develop and the project moves forward. Please call on us at any time.

Sincerely,

Mary Swoope