

Prepared by the North Brevard Economic Development Zone (NBEDZ)

# Regional Economic Assessment

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## North Brevard

(A region including the City of Titusville, Florida and surrounding, unincorporated communities in the northern portion of Brevard County)

**Fall 2020** Version 5.0

For community/statistical data on the area, visit [www.NorthBrevard.biz](http://www.NorthBrevard.biz)

For more information on the NBEDZ, visit [www.NBEDZ.org](http://www.NBEDZ.org)

## Introduction

The following report was prepared by the **North Brevard Economic Development Zone (NBEDZ)** to help identify and understand the dynamics of the local economy operating within the northern part of Brevard County, Florida.

“North Brevard,” which is comprised of a municipality (Titusville) and unincorporated areas of Brevard County, does not exist as a separate political jurisdiction; however, for the purposes of this report, it is considered one region, and is referred to throughout the report as either “**North Brevard**” or the “**North Brevard Market Area (MA)**.”

The report is divided into five sections, which examine the region by assessing:

**Local economic conditions** – a review of select statistical information on the market area;

**Current economic activity** – a review of recent business activity in the region;

**Future trends and developments** – a forecast of expected or planned developments;

**Community attributes** – a brief summary of the area’s “quality of life;” and,

**Development capacities** – a listing of resources to induce business investment in the area.

Please note that the view of the local economy presented herein is that of the NBEDZ staff, which prepared this assessment using select demographic data and information obtained from conversations with local officials and field observations of activities taking place within the region. Source data has been referenced in the body of the report, or provided in footnotes.

## The Impact of COVID-19

With the onset of the Coronavirus in 2020, certain measures that are typically used to gauge business activity – such as the tracking of employment figures – experienced abnormal fluctuation during the year, largely from the period of March 2020 to October 2020. Although the virus remains a concern and health threat to the local (and global) economy, the gradual re-opening of businesses over the summer has permitted a number of business sectors to stabilize; in particular, this has been the case with aerospace and manufacturing activities in the region. The sectors which have not fared as well are hospitality and travel tourism (the latter due to the absence of passenger activity at nearby Port Canaveral). While the North Brevard area has a smaller share of businesses in these sectors, the impacts from the upheavals in those sectors has nonetheless been felt in the local economy, and may cause some data to lag.

**Note:** All information presented herein is deemed reliable, but not guaranteed.

## Local Economic Conditions

### *(Review of Select Statistical Data)*

According to statistics compiled by Applied Geographic Solutions (AGS) in a November 2020 data report, the **North Brevard Market Area (MA)** contains a population of 154,692.<sup>1</sup> This analysis included demographic characteristics within a 20-mile radius of downtown Titusville. [AGS data for the year 2010 listed a total population within the same geographic area of 144,476; that year saw great upheaval in the local economy, due primarily to downsizing activities at NASA's Kennedy Space Center, which are described later in this report. However, that figure still represented an increase over the area's population for the year 2000, which was 132,525.]

North Brevard is a geographic area measuring approximately 200 square miles on Florida's east central coast, and includes the City of Titusville and areas contiguous with the northern municipal boundary of the City of Cocoa, along with the unincorporated communities of Mims, Scottsmeer, and Port St. John. A portion of Merritt Island – located across the Indian River Lagoon and home to NASA's Kennedy Space Center – is also included in this geography.



<sup>1</sup> Report generated by Applied Geographic Services (AGS), and supplied by the Economic Development Commission of Florida's Space Coast. That analysis uses postal codes, which may include demographics from other, neighboring MSAs. Typically, the Titusville Market Area represents postal codes: 32780 and 32796 (both of which include Titusville), 32927 (the community of Port St. John), 32926 (parts of the city of Cocoa), 32754 (the community of Mims), 32759 (the community of Scottsmeer), 32709 (areas west of Titusville), and 32953 (the northern part of Merritt Island).

The **North Brevard MA** is comprised primarily of the following Census Tracts: #060100, #060200, #060300, #060400, #060500, #060600, #060700, #060800, #060900, #061002, #061001, #061100, and #071400. Additional statistical information can be found by accessing the 2010 U.S. Census Bureau for these particular tracts, along with interim updates from that federal agency. [Information on the 2020 U.S. Census count is not expected until the summer of 2021.]

Comparing the market area's population to that of the county overall, the region accounted for approximately 30% of the total number of persons living in Brevard County (which had a population of 543,376 in the 2010 U.S. Census, making it the 9<sup>th</sup> most populated county in Florida). In 2019, the county's estimated population was 601,942. During that same time period in 2010, the state's population was 18,801,310, and its population increase from year 2000 to 2010 made Florida the third fastest-growing state in the Union, trailing only Texas and California.<sup>2</sup>

Despite the effects of reduced missions at NASA's nearby Kennedy Space Center (principally the idling of the Space Shuttle program in 2011) and the nation's recovery from the Great Recession (2009-2012), the population of the **North Brevard MA** has continued to increase. Indeed, from year 2000 to 2013 – the period of the greatest economic upheaval for the area in recent decades – the market area's population still rose by 9.5%.<sup>3</sup> It is estimated that within just four years (by 2024), the region's population will be over 169,000 – a 9% increase<sup>4</sup> over the current year.

The market area's population characteristics reveal other noteworthy indicators. Among those is the percent of persons in the county aged 25 years or older with *at least a high school degree* or equivalent – 91%, one of the highest in the state. For the state, the figure remains near 85%. Furthermore, more than 38% of the population in the **North Brevard MA** hold an associate's degree or higher,<sup>5</sup> an increase from just a few years ago.

The median age for the market area is 46.3 years. Of the area's total population, 74,024 were listed as male (with a median age of 44.9), and 75,345 as female (with a median age of 47.6).<sup>6</sup>

## Housing

In 2020, the homeownership rate in the market area was 70.4%, representing 48,973 owner-occupied households.<sup>7</sup> This rate slightly exceeded the state's average, as reported in the 2010 U.S. Census (at 69.0%). The population by family type included 66% or 42,503 family households (with an average family household size of 2.94 members), and 34% classified as "non-family" households (with an average size of 1.2d persons).<sup>8</sup> The market area supports three public high schools (Titusville High, Astronaut High, and Space Coast Junior/Senior High), each with a student

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<sup>2</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census.

<sup>3</sup> The 2000 U.S. Census population figure for the market area was 132,627.

<sup>4</sup> AGS data report, 2020. Projected 2024 population.

<sup>5</sup> AGS data report, 2020. A total of 43,920 persons.

<sup>6</sup> AGS data report, 2020.

<sup>7</sup> AGS data report, 2020.

<sup>8</sup> AGS data report, 2020.

population of approximately 1,400 (pre-COVID-19 numbers). [NOTE: Space Coast Junior/Senior High includes two middle school grades, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>.]

The daytime population of persons classified as “employees” (again, pre-COVID-19) in 2020 was 55,889,<sup>9</sup> an increase of approximately 16% over the number from 2018. Data on commuting patterns obtained from the Brevard County Transportation Planning Office estimate that approximately 20% to 25% of the area’s daytime population are residents traveling to the area from neighboring counties, the largest percentage of which originate from Orange County.

In the years following the Great Recession (2009-2012), the local housing market has steadily improved. According to an October 2020 report from the Space Coast Association of REALTORS, the median sales price for a Brevard County single-family home was up 14.2% from a year ago, at \$274,150; last year during that quarter, the median sales price was \$240,000. New pending home sales in the county were up by 18%, along with new listings (by 4.8%). Closed sales for the quarter were up by an astounding 39.2% over the same period last year. The number of months’ supply of inventory – a key indicator of the available housing stock for buyers - was down by 46.4%, to 1.5 months; by contrast, in 2017, this figure was 2.7 months.<sup>10</sup>

In terms of foreclosure activity, Brevard County appears to have recovered from the effects of the housing bubble that crippled the residential housing market in 2008-2011. From a statistical high of 9,772 foreclosure filings in 2009 (county-wide), the number of foreclosures dwindled to less than 3,000 in 2015; the median sales price for those foreclosures in that year was \$99,950. According to the Space Coast Association of REALTORS, foreclosures in the current year (2020) dropped by 61.5% from the previous year, with the median sales price for these foreclosures in 2020 was \$244,000. Short sale closings were also down, by 100% from last year. Any effect that the pandemic was causing upon the local housing market was not evident as of October this year.<sup>11</sup> [For additional information on foreclosure activity in the county, see footnote below.]<sup>12</sup>

## Income

The median household income for the **North Brevard MA** in 2019 was reported as \$55,298, a 7% increase over the number reported for 2018 (\$51,786). The average household income was \$67,196, a 5% increase from 2018 (\$63,789).<sup>13</sup> The average family income (an AGS data point representing the buying power of a family unit) was reported as \$80,529 for the current year (2019).

[Per capita income figures are available for the cities of Titusville and Cocoa, but segregated figures for the immediate, surrounding unincorporated areas are not available.]

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<sup>9</sup> AGS data report, 2020.

<sup>10</sup> 2020 MLS Statistics, distributed by Space Coast Association of REALTORS, October 2020.

<sup>11</sup> Space Coast Association of REALTORS, 2018. Additional information, including stats on townhomes and condos, can be viewed at [www.SpaceCoastMLS.com](http://www.SpaceCoastMLS.com).

<sup>12</sup> Brevard County Clerk’s Office. Statistics can be found at “reports/judicial statistics” at [www.brevardclerk.us](http://www.brevardclerk.us).

<sup>13</sup> AGS data report, 2020.

By comparison, the median household income for the state of Florida was \$55,660 in 2019.<sup>14</sup>

### **Local Taxation**

Property taxes in the region are affected by whether a parcel is located within the corporate limits of Titusville or in the unincorporated areas surrounding the city. Within Titusville and the unincorporated area, the total amount of property tax collected by the county in 2020 increased, due to increasing property values;<sup>15</sup> the total millage for 2020 in Titusville was 20.13 (per \$1,000 of assessed value). Currently, Titusville has set its general property tax rate at 7.936 mils, but the overall property tax rate for all taxing authorities (county general fund rate, mosquito control, schools, recreation, and environmentally sensitive lands) decreased slightly.

For the unincorporated areas of the region (and depending upon the applicable taxing authorities under which the parcel lies for services such as fire protection and recreation), the total millage for 2018 ranged from 12.19 to 14 mils.

The total sales tax levied on consumer goods in the region is 7%, with a half-cent allocation recently added to fund efforts to maintain the health of the Indian River Lagoon. This overall sales tax levy contrasts with rates in the region's neighboring counties, namely: 6.5% in Orange County, 7.0% in Osceola County, and 6.5% in Volusia County. The current 7% figure includes a half-cent sales tax referendum that was recently re-approved in 2020 to support capital improvement projects within the Brevard Public School System (K-12).

There is no local or state personal income ("occupational") tax levy.

### **Employment**

According to the AGS-produced demographic report on the North Brevard region, the number of employed persons (equivalent of the BLS's Civilian Labor Force) totaled 68,093 in 2020, which represented an increase of 6% over the number reported by AGS in 2018 (64,138).<sup>16</sup>

For the summer (July 2020), the unemployment rate for the City of Titusville rose to 10.7%, largely due to impacts from the pandemic; a year ago for the same month, the unemployment rate was just 3.7%, according to the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity. This reflected a total civilian labor force size of 21,574 persons.

For Brevard County, the unemployment rate during the same time period was 9.2% (out of a total civilian work force of 281,541). [Florida's unemployment rate was 11.5%, reflecting a total of 10,033,000 in the civilian labor force.]<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, 2019 projections.

<sup>15</sup> [Brevard County releases proposed \\$1.02 billion budget](#), Florida Today, July 13, 2015.

<sup>16</sup> AGS data report, 2020.

<sup>17</sup> Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, Local Area Unemployment Statistics, 2020.

Although impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Brevard County MSA (Palm Bay-Melbourne-Titusville) has fared better than the state, posting a lower unemployment rate for its civilian labor force, while the City of Titusville's civilian labor force actually shrunk by the smallest percentage among the three governmental jurisdictions.

Continuing with labor force statistics on Palm Bay-Melbourne-Titusville MSA, the area's total workforce (total non-agricultural employment) according to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics (and reported by the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity) totaled 286,900.<sup>18</sup> This number included 44,700 workers classified as "good producing" and 156,400 classified as "service providing," however, the number does reflect the loss of jobs in the leisure and hospitality sector due to the pandemic. In addition to these totals, 28,700 persons in the local workforce were identified as "government" workers.<sup>19</sup> North Brevard represents approximately 30% of the MSA's total workforce.

The median hourly wage for the area was listed by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (according to 2019 survey data) as \$17.98 for "all occupations," with an annual mean wage of \$51,180, based upon a 40-hour work week.<sup>20</sup> The MSA, since 2013, has continued to be listed in Forbes magazine as one of the best places in the nation to do business, and has continued to rank high (when compared to other MSAs) for workers' educational attainment,<sup>21</sup> particularly given its high concentration of engineering specialists.

For more detailed information on the MSA workforce – including employment numbers by occupation sector – can be found at the website for the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics: [https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes\\_37340.htm#00-0000](https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_37340.htm#00-0000)

In 2020, the top major industries/sectors in the northern part of the county<sup>22</sup> (in terms of total employment, as noted prior to the onslaught of the pandemic) were the following firms:

- Kennedy Space Center (NASA) – space exploration/services – 8,500 employees
  - Includes federal employees and contract labor positions
- Parrish Medical Center (PMC) – health services provider – 1,100 employees
- Knight's Armament – weapons/firearms/munitions manufacturer – 300 employees
- Professional Aircraft Accessories – aviation components manufacturer – 160 employees
- Boeing – aerospace (office) – 150 employees
- Barn Light Electric – electrical fixtures manufacturer – 110 employees
- Ecklers' Industries – automotive parts and components – 75 employees
- Blue Origin – rocket manufacturer – 490 employees
- Lockheed Martin – aerospace components assembly – 195 employees

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<sup>18</sup> Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (DE)), 2020.

<sup>19</sup> IBID.

<sup>20</sup> U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2020.

<sup>21</sup> Forbes, 2013 Listing of Best Places for Business and Careers.

<sup>22</sup> All employment numbers reported are approximate; numbers also reflect "provisional" labor pool, employees used on a contract basis. Among retailers, employee turnover can be much higher, causing greater fluctuation in employment numbers.

- Astrotech (entity of Lockheed Martin) – aerospace – 100 employees
- SpaceX – rocket manufacturer/launch operations – 75 employees
- Paragon Plastics – thermos-formed plastics maker – 75 employees
- Vectorworks Marine – boat manufacturer – 65 employees
- MAG Aerospace – technical services for defense industry – 25 employees
- Gold Tone – manufacturer of musical instruments – 35 employees

The top retail sector employers<sup>23</sup> in the northern portion of the county were:

- Wal-Mart – 500 employees (includes seasonal and part-time)
- Publix (combined workforce at three locations) – 355 employees
- Lowe’s – 220 employees
- Winn-Dixie (combined workforce at three locations) – 165 employees
- Home Depot – 200 employees
- Hobby Lobby at Titus Landing – 90 employees
- Beall’s at Titus Landing – 85 employees
- Epic Theatres at Titus Landing – 15 employees

### **Construction Data**

The City of Titusville has reported that the number of commercial and industrial building permits issued last year (2019) represented an infusion of new capital investment totaling more than \$40 million. Included in that total was a \$14 million expansion project by aerospace firm Blue Origin.

Residential construction activity continued to improve in 2019, with more than 125 permits issued in 2019 for new single-family residential construction – projects estimated to cost more than \$35 million.<sup>24</sup>

Despite the pandemic, the pace of residential construction has continued in 2020, as evidenced by the number of new residential subdivisions currently underway in the city. Attached as an appendix to this report is a list provided by the city’s Community Development Department, showing more than 1,500 units presently under construction, with another 3,700 units projected.

The out-of-state development group behind the recently completed Solamere Grand Apartments complex (containing 210 units) has purchased additional land along U.S. Highway 1 in Titusville for a 215-unit apartment complex, to be known as River Walk Apartments. Construction on that project is expected to begin in 2021. And a development group from south Florida recently took title to a 13-acre parcel in downtown Titusville – across from the Titusville city marina – for a three-building luxury apartment and mixed-use development, one that is expected to add another 300 rental units to the city’s housing stock.

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<sup>23</sup> Retail numbers include part-time worker totals and shift numbers, but not employees hired seasonally.

<sup>24</sup> City of Titusville – Economic Development Department, 2020.

### Unique Characteristics of North Brevard Metropolitan Area (MA)

The **North Brevard MA**, wholly contained within Brevard County, is part of the US Census Bureau’s “Palm Bay-Melbourne-Titusville” Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), which covers the entire county on Florida’s east coast. As noted in previous reports, the MSA and its northern portion are characterized by several unique features:

- **First**, the MSA, and in particular the northern part, encompasses a large area of government-controlled lands, property set aside either for use as conservation areas or for Federal, state, or local public installations and facilities (NASA, Patrick Air Force Base, and Port Canaveral). Given this, the amount of land remaining for privately-held commercial and industrial development is limited, but not non-existent. Indeed, there remains an abundance of under-utilized and vacant developed property that contains all utilities and already has in place the public infrastructure (roads, storm sewers) to support development. “Greenfield” sites (those not been previously disturbed and utilized for a development) do exist in the market area, and a few of those sites are listed under the “Development Capacity” section of this report.
- **Second**, there are several major economic drivers in the MSA beyond the NASA complex, although the aerospace industry – both public sector and private sector-directed aerospace – does represent a significant percentage of all jobs available in the MSA (estimated at approximately 30% to 35%).

In addition to NASA, the dock facilities and corporate presence at Port Canaveral – consistently ranked as the 2<sup>nd</sup> busiest port for cruise (recreational) ships in the nation, with more than 4.5 million passengers annually, pre-pandemic – employs more than 200 people directly, but impacts more than 20,000 jobs indirectly.<sup>25</sup> Combined, the cruise and tourism traffic at the port accounts for more than \$2.2 billion in impact to the local and regional economy. To view the port’s 2019/2020 annual report, visit:

<https://www.portcanaveral.com/Publications/Annual-Report-Directories/Annual-Report-Directories>

- **Third**, despite its close proximity to Orlando (located in adjacent Orange County), the area does operate as a separate region and economy. Although approximately 23% of Space Coast residents travel outside the county for employment (the single biggest destination being neighboring Orange County), the majority works within county lines, traveling north and south, with the highest areas of employment concentrated in the incorporated jurisdictions and along the Atlantic Coast (and State Road A1A).<sup>26</sup>

The bulk of Brevard County’s 286,000-person workforce reported living and working within the county, evidencing that the county operates as a separate local economy from its central Florida neighbor. [The same 2010 Census from which FDOT drew its statistical

<sup>25</sup> The 2019/2020 Directory - Port Canaveral, 2019.

<sup>26</sup> “Commuting Flow Trends in Florida,” FDOT Trends and Conditions, 2013.

information reported that Brevard County residents had a mean travel time to work of 23.9 minutes.]

As a general summary, the economy for the **North Brevard MA** is comprised of aerospace, aviation, manufacturing, healthcare, boat/marine production, and tourism. Due to the presence of the Kennedy Space Center, the Cape Canaveral Air Force Station, and Patrick Air Force Base, there is also a significant defense industry sector represented in the region. One example of this can be seen in Titusville, where in 2017, a US Navy contractor took possession of a 20,000 sq. ft. industrial building (a former equipment rental business) for conversion into a naval lab.

In particular, Patrick Air Force Base (located between Satellite Beach and Cocoa Beach) has a significant impact on the entire county. Home to the 45<sup>th</sup> Space Wing and the Air Force Space Command base, it has a resident population of approximately 1,200.<sup>27</sup> Since the air station works with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) as well as NASA, activity at the base pulls in private military contractors. [The base is also home to the 920<sup>th</sup> Rescue Wing, part of the Air Force Reserve Command.] It is also estimated that more than 100 service members separate each year from the base and seek employment locally before considering other options.

In late 2019, a new dynamic was introduced to Florida's Space Coast when President Donald Trump signed into law the creation of a U.S. Space Force, as a separate military wing under the U.S. Defense Department. This action has led to operational changes impacting several federal facilities in Brevard County, including Patrick Air Force Base (now known as "Patrick Space Force Base"). It is anticipated that the area will see an employment increase locally among administrative and civilian personnel assigned to the new military division's facilities in the area.

Lastly, in early 2020, the U.S. Air Force announced that it would consider a new location for its U.S. Space Command, which was revived by President Trump in a separate executive act. The site selection process – as of late 2020 – had identified Brevard County (and specifically, a site in Titusville) as one of the six finalist sites for the command. No decision on the location of the Space Command HQ is expected before the summer of 2021.

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<sup>27</sup> See [www.patrick.spaceforce.mil](http://www.patrick.spaceforce.mil).

## Current Economic Activity

### *(Recent Business Activity in the Region)*

Despite the ongoing pandemic, the North Brevard area has witnessed significant development activity within several sectors over the last two years, namely:

***Merritt Precision Technologies***, now a division of Correct Craft, is a manufacturing and tooling company that purchased industrial property in 2019 at the Spaceport Commerce Park for the construction of a new 15,000 sq. ft. facility. The company, which also builds production molds, utilizes gantry robotic machinery to produce machine parts for customers in the marine, aerospace, aviation, and defense industry sectors. The project is expected to cost more than \$1.8 million. Merritt Precision currently employs 8 people; with the project, the company expects to create 12 new jobs. Additional information on the company can be found at [www.MerrittPrecision.com](http://www.MerrittPrecision.com).

***E3 Tele-Acoustics***, a medical equipment services and supply company, recently moved into a vacant 10,000 sq. ft. building in the Spaceport Commerce Park. The company provides diagnostic services for hearing instruments and devices; it distributes products throughout Florida, Virginia, and the Carolinas. A founding member of the National Association of Special Equipment Distributors (NASSED), the company has origins dating to the early 1970s, when company president Lee Deshler worked with the manned space flight programs at NASA's Kennedy Space Center, calibrating audiometers for use by the space agency. E3 Tele-Acoustics employs approximately 7 people. Information on the company, including a list of products offered, can be found at [www.Tele-Acoustics.com](http://www.Tele-Acoustics.com).

***Engineered Bonding Solutions, LLC***, a chemical processing manufacturer of structural adhesives, announced plans in July 2020 to purchase a 6-acre lot in the Spaceport Commerce Park in Titusville for the construction of a new 20,000 sq. ft. manufacturing facility. The project, including new capital equipment installation and a state-of-the-art mixing and packaging system, is expected to cost approximately \$1.5 million. Engineered Bonding is best known for its product, *ACRA Lock*, which is designed to chemically adhere to most surfaces, including steel, aluminum, engineered plastics, and high-performance composites; it's primarily used as an adhesive in the marine industry, but also has applications in aerospace and aviation. The company, which currently employs 19 people, anticipates the creation of 15 new jobs, once the facility is fully operational. For more information on the company, visit [www.acralock.com](http://www.acralock.com).

***JMW Consolidated***, a Jacksonville-based firm that designs, fabricates, and assembles fire suppression systems, purchased a 5-acre lot in the Spaceport Commerce Park in May 2020. Through its operating units, including MJW Engineering, the company performs work for numerous industrial and commercial enterprises, like Blue Origin and Praxair, along with government and institutional leaders, such as the U.S. Department of Defense and NASA. The new 15,000 sq. ft. facility, which will include a pipe fabrication operation, is expected to cost approximately \$2 million and employ more than 15 people. To learn more about the company, click on [www.mjwood.com](http://www.mjwood.com).

**Dozier Crane**, a Savannah, Georgia-based distributor and leasing firm for cranes used in construction and manufacturing projects, took possession of a 10,000 sq. ft. facility on State Road 405 in early 2020, to serve as its Central Florida servicing center for equipment rentals and repairs. The operation is expected to employ a number of technicians and sales professionals. The company, which began business in 1974, is an authorized dealer of Terex, Manitowoc, Kobelco, Shuttlelift, and other international and domestic brands; it services customers throughout the continental United States, and in more than 49 foreign companies. Additional information on the business can be found at [www.doziercrane.com](http://www.doziercrane.com).

Dozier Crane is one of several industrial and service-sector firms located on or near State Road 405, a roadway in Titusville known as South Street. The “*South Street Business District*” is an area that includes a diverse array of businesses – from boat builders Gheen Manufacturing (makers of the *Ghenoe* water craft) to the wood products firm, Truss Wood.

**LeNginer**, a small federal contracting and engineering firm started in Titusville by local entrepreneur Tuan Le in 2014, purchased a dilapidated structure on U.S. Highway 1 south of Cheney Highway in early 2020 for the location for a new venture, **LeNnovation**. The 8,000 sq. ft. building, which has been vacant since 2015, is expected to be renovated into office and light industrial use for work on drone technology. The company is currently designing an Unmanned Aerial System (UAS) for rapid deployment and use in the military, construction, and service-sector industries; integrated with Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR) technology, the drones produced by LeNnovation will be able to gather data on specific sites, whether a military target or a building construction lot. Through its parent, LeNginer, work has already been completed for the U.S. Navy Fleet Ballistic Missile (FBM) program. The LeNnovation project is expected to cost approximately \$2 million over the next three years, and employ more than 25 people. For more information about the company, visit [www.LeNginer.com](http://www.LeNginer.com).

Work was recently completed on a 10,000 sq. ft. addition to **Aero Electronics**, a manufacturer of military and aerospace cables, harnesses, and electronic assemblies. Founded in 2005 by Joanne Griffin, who serves as the firm’s CEO and president, the company currently employs more than 20 people; it has been located in a U.S. Small Business Administration HUB Zone for over ten years. To learn more, follow this link [www.aeroelectronics.net](http://www.aeroelectronics.net).

**Brevard Constructors**, a general contractor and metal industrial building supplier and erector, acquired and began renovation work in 2020 on an abandoned industrial complex in Mims, near State Road 46. The property consists of more than 100,000 sq. ft. under roof, and is situated on a five-acre parcel that adjoins the state’s new Coast-to-Coast Bike Trail. According to vice-president Russell Gordon, the firm will re-clad building exteriors, install new roofing systems, and provide interior finishes to accommodate two-to-three business tenants. The company expects to spend more than \$1.2 million in improvements to the complex over the next year; a financial inducement for the redevelopment project was provided by the North Brevard Economic Development Zone.

Brevard Constructors, an authorized Nucor Building Systems builder, began operations in 1981; it primarily focuses on metal building construction in the southeastern U.S. To learn more, visit: [www.BrevardConstructors.com](http://www.BrevardConstructors.com).

**Launch Federal Credit Union**, a leading central Florida financial institution, has finished renovation work on a 15,000 sq. ft. building on State Road 405 in mid-2020, converting the structure into office space for its support services operations, which the company expects to staff with approximately 40 administrative and data processing specialists. The site of a former Elks lodge, the building was purchased by the financial institution in 2019 for \$1.1 million. Launch was established in 1963 as Kennedy Space Center Federal Credit Union, primarily serving as a lender and savings depository for NASA employees and contractors. Today, the financial institution serves customers in Brevard, Volusia, Flagler, Seminole, Orange, and Osceola counties; it reported total deposits of \$759.1 million in the second quarter of this year. To learn more, visit [www.launchcu.com](http://www.launchcu.com).

**Gold Tone Music Group**, a maker of banjos, mandolins, and steel guitars, finished work in 2020 on an upgrade to its production facility on Hopkins Street in Titusville. The project involved the refurbishment and expansion of its offices and showroom area, along with exterior renovations to its 14,000 sq. ft. production facility. Founded in Titusville in 1978 by folk musicians Wayne and Robyn Rogers, Gold Tone's products are shipped worldwide, and now include every type of fretted-string instrument, many of which have been used by such popular musical acts as Mumford & Sons, Brooks & Dunn (Corey Morse), and Sugarland (Thad Beaty). For more information on the company, go to [www.goldtonemusicgroup.com](http://www.goldtonemusicgroup.com).

**Brevard Health Alliance (BHA)**, a provider of primary health care and preventive medical services within the county and headquartered in Port St. John, announced plans in July 2020 to expand its clinic operations in north Brevard County with a move into a larger facility on North Singleton Avenue in Titusville. The expanded 7,200 sq. ft. operation will be staffed by 28 employees, and provide health care access to more than 7,800 patients in the county and surrounding areas. BHA works to improve the health of all county residents, including individuals in medically-underserved populations. Established in 2005, the practice provides a variety of services, including primary health care, behavioral health services, diagnostic services, resource management services, medication assistance, and specialty referrals. For more information on the health care organization, go to [www.bhachc.org](http://www.bhachc.org).

In the fight against the spread of COVID-19, local firm **Pharmco Labs** – a maker of skin and beauty products – shifted its production capabilities to begin mass-producing hand sanitizing lotions and ointments for distribution throughout central Florida and beyond. The move has led the company to acquire an additional 55,000 sq. ft. manufacturing facility in Titusville to handle its increased production needs. Established more than 40 years ago in Titusville by a group of four chemists, the firm now operates from a 12,000 sq. ft. manufacturing facility on South Street. Currently employing 70 people, the company expects to add more positions in the near future, largely in response to production needs during the ongoing pandemic. Pharmco Labs is a registered manufacturer with the federal Food & Drug Administration (FDA), and is routinely inspected for quality control and compliance with FDA standards. For more information on the company and its COVID-19 prevention efforts, visit the firm's website at [www.pharmcolabs.com](http://www.pharmcolabs.com).

In the aerospace sector:

**Lockheed Martin**, a leading supplier to the defense and aerospace industry, officially marked the relocation of its Fleet Ballistic Missile (FBM) headquarters to Titusville in July 2020 with a ceremony attended by local officials and dignitaries. The FBM program supports the company's Naval Ordnance Test Unit at Cape Canaveral. Lockheed has developed, built, and sustained six generations of submarine-launched ballistic missiles under the FBM program. The current generation of missiles (Trident II D5) are carried on the U.S. Navy's Ohio-class submarines, and form the sea-based leg of the U.S.'s nuclear triad.

The move to relocate the FBM headquarters division to Titusville is expected to result in a capital investment of more than \$40 million, and the transition of 350 jobs from Sunnyvale, California to Florida's Space Coast. The State of Florida, through its Enterprise Florida agency, along with support from the Economic Development Commission of Florida's Space Coast and assistance from the North Brevard Economic Development Zone, helped induce the relocation.

Lockheed Martin plans to add more elements to its burgeoning Titusville campus

[Lockheed Plans New Titusville Factory](#)

Lockheed Martin is one of the world's leading companies in aviation, aeronautics, defense, security, and advanced technologies. Headquartered in Bethesda, Maryland, the company employs more than 116,000 people worldwide, and is considered one of the world's largest defense contractors, based upon revenues for fiscal year 2018. Within Florida, the company has a workforce of approximately 12,000 people. To learn more about the company, visit [www.lockheedmartin.com](http://www.lockheedmartin.com).

**The Boeing Company**, the world's leading aviation firm, has announced plans in early 2020 to move its Space and Launch headquarters division from Arlington, Virginia, to Titusville, a decision that is expected to result in approximately 30 jobs transitioning to Florida's Space Coast over the next few years. Boeing already has a significant presence in the Titusville area, both at NASA's Kennedy Space Center and in the city's Riverfront Center business park, where Boeing occupies a four-story office building.

Boeing's defense and space divisions generate more than \$45 billion globally, using a total workforce of more than 58,000 employees worldwide. Visit [www.boeing.com](http://www.boeing.com) for more information.

**Blue Origin**, which in 2017 completed construction of a 700,000 sq. ft. rocket manufacturing center and administrative office building in Space Florida' Exploration Park development in North Brevard, began site work in 2020 on a 90-acre expansion to its Titusville complex, on a parcel located to the south of its existing complex. According to a report in the [Orlando Sentinel](#), the project will involve a new testing and refurbishment facility.

Blue Origin, the aerospace firm founded by Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos in 2000, is expected to create hundreds of new jobs in the local Titusville market over the next few years, with an average annual wage in excess of the county's mean annual wage of \$51,000. It intends to launch and retrieve its rocket hardware from the historic Launch Complex 36 at nearby Cape Canaveral Air Force Station. To learn more about the company, visit [www.blueorigin.com](http://www.blueorigin.com).

**Firefly Aerospace**, a developer of space launch vehicles and spacecraft, has announced plans in late 2019 to establish manufacturing operations in north Brevard's Exploration Park, near NASA's Kennedy Space Center on Merritt Island. According to [Florida Today](http://www.floridatoday.com), the company will build a new 150,000 sq. ft. facility for the production of rockets to carry small payloads and cube satellites; the manufacturing facility is expected to cost approximately \$52 million and create approximately 200 new jobs. Firefly is the latest aerospace firm to announce a manufacturing location in north Brevard, joining **Blue Origin** and **Airbus/OneWeb Satellites** in the Merritt Island business park. Firefly anticipates using two rocket systems, named Alpha and Beta, to lift small payloads into space for private sector customers. The company will also utilize Space Launch Complex 20 inside the Cape Canaveral Air Force Station. That launch complex was used decades ago in the Titan program - expendable rockets deployed between 1959 and 2005. Titan rockets were used in the historic Gemini manned-flights of the 1960s.

For more information on the company's announcement, visit [www.floridatoday.com](http://www.floridatoday.com). To learn more about the company, go to [www.firefly.com](http://www.firefly.com).

**Craig Technologies**, a Brevard County-based firm with facilities located on the grounds at NASA's Kennedy Space Center, was awarded a subcontract in 2020 by Dynetics, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Leidos, to work on NASA's Human Landing System (HLS) contract. [Leidos is a leading defense, aviation, information technology, and biomedical research company headquartered in Virginia ([www.Leidos.com](http://www.Leidos.com)).] The lander is one component in NASA's broader plans to land astronauts on the Moon – including the first woman – by the year 2024. The Dynetics' lunar lander, for which Craig Technologies will assist in building, will feature ascent and descent capabilities, with multiple propellant vehicles pre-positioned to fuel the engines at different point in the mission. The crew cabin of the lander will sit low to the surface, enabling a much shorter climb for astronauts exiting and returning to the vehicle than the approximately six-foot ladder on the famed Lunar Module (LEM) of the Apollo days. For more information on Craig Technologies, visit [www.CraigTechInc.com](http://www.CraigTechInc.com).

The Dynetics HLS Integrated Lander is expected to be transported to an orbit around the Moon by NASA's Orion capsule, a project being led by aerospace giant Lockheed Martin. For more on the Orion project and its Moon mission, visit:

<https://www.nasa.gov/exploration/systems/orion/index.html>.

**All Points Logistics**, a technical services and technology firm that works primarily in the space exploration and defense industry fields, leased approximately 16,000 sq. ft. of office space on State Road 405 (NASA Causeway) in Titusville in 2020; the company anticipates the placement of 20-to-30 personnel at the Titusville office in the coming months. The Merritt Island-based firm, which began operations in Titusville in 1997, currently maintains office locations in Alabama

(Huntsville), Texas (Houston), and Virginia (Reston). The company recently won a contract with Dynetics, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Leidos, involving work on the Human Landing System (HLS) as part of NASA's Artemis program – the return of humans to the surface of the moon by 2024. With Dynetics as the prime contractor, All Points will be part of a team of small to mid-sized businesses and NASA partners arrayed across 17 states, including locally-owned **Craig Technologies**, as featured in last quarter's issue of the *North Brevard Business Review*. The company is also supporting the HLS National Team of Blue Origin, Lockheed Martin, and Draper. To view a video of the team's concept for the HLS, click [HERE](#).

In addition to the HLS contract, All Points supports the work of a number of NASA initiatives, including the Orion program, the agency's Space Launch System (SLS), Commercial Crew, and International Space Station programs. For more information on the company, visit [www.AllPointsLLC.com](http://www.AllPointsLLC.com).

Given the activity level that North Brevard has seen in the aerospace sector over the last few years, a leading industry magazine – **Space News** – recognized the county and its coalition of state and local economic development partners in late 2018 with the magazine's "Award for Excellence and Innovation" for the *Best Turnaround* story of the year. Following a period of economic decline in the aftermath of curtailed NASA missions at Kennedy Space Center (KSC), the area has rebounded with new economic life in the form of SpaceX, Blue Origin, OneWeb, and other commercial aerospace firms. Thanks to incentive provisions and technical assistance offered by economic development agencies like Space Florida, the Economic Development Commission of Florida's Space Coast, the North Brevard Economic Development Zone, the State of Florida and its Department of Economic Opportunity – along with the leadership provided by KSC – employment opportunities have increased, and capital investment in the local market has grown by more than \$300 million. To read about the area's recent honor, visit [www.SpaceNews.com/awards](http://www.SpaceNews.com/awards).

#### In the retail sector:

Noted Cocoa Beach retailer, **Beachwave**, began work in 2020 on a new 16,800 sq. ft. multi-tenant commercial building on a vacant parcel in downtown Titusville by the Indian River Lagoon. The project, which will feature space for two or three retail stores, a restaurant, and a roof top observation deck and bar for viewing launches at nearby Kennedy Space Center, is expected to cost more than \$4 million, and create approximately 30 full-time jobs, and 15 part-time jobs. Beachwave anticipates capturing a portion of the tourism trade in north Brevard County generated by space launches and visitors to Canaveral National Seashore, which last year posted attendance of more than 1.5 million people. The company currently operates several retail stores in Brevard County, representing a total capital investment of more than \$20 million. According to company president Oshri Gal, Beachwave manufactures locally approximately sixty percent of the beach apparel it sells. For more information on the company, visit [www.Beachwear4Less.com](http://www.Beachwear4Less.com).

**DLP Capital Partners**, a multi-faceted real estate investment and development firm with offices in Jacksonville, purchased the former Bay Towers apartment property in Titusville in 2019 for \$12 million, with plans to convert the space into mixed-use commercial, residential, and business

coworking space; it has tentative plans to convert one of the apartment towers into a boutique hotel. DLP has a history of acquiring distressed properties and improving those assets, largely for residential use. As of 2017, the company had generated more than \$60 million in capital investments and acquired more than 2,500 apartments for over \$150 million. DLP anticipates the former Bay Tower development in Titusville to be completed by 2020.

To learn more about the company, visit [dlpcapitalpartners.com](http://dlpcapitalpartners.com).

#### In the distribution sector:

According to the [Orlando Business Journal](#), Amazon-preferred developer **Seefried** is planning to build a new 200,000 sq. ft. warehouse facility that will likely be used in “last-mile” delivery of products shipped by the online retailer. The 28-site, located on the southern border of the North Brevard Economic Development Zone, is expected to create more than 200 new jobs for the area, and result in a capital investment approximating \$13 million. For more information on the project, click [HERE](#).

**Ralph’s Transfer Company**, a distribution and warehousing company based in West Palm Beach, has leased approximately 60,000 sq. ft. of space in Port Canaveral’s Titusville Logistics Center, to serve as a central warehousing location for home appliances, such as microwaves, dishwashers, and refrigerators. The Titusville operation is expected to create approximately 10 new jobs. The company provides shipping and installation of select appliance products for major retailers, such as Home Depot and Costco. Ralph’s Transfer operates six warehouses in Florida, from Tampa and Ft. Myers to Titusville. Additional information on the firm can be found on its LinkedIn page, at [www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com).

Construction was completed in 2018 on the new, state-of-the-art 640,000 sq. ft. **Walmart** distribution center and refrigerated warehouse at Exit No. 202 of Interstate 95 in nearby Cocoa, a project that is expected to cost more than \$133 million, as reported in the national economic development publication, [Area Development](#). The company also expects to install approximately \$15 million in new capital equipment. Once fully operational, the facility will employ close to 450 people. The property for the project was purchased in 2014 by Port Canaveral, which envisioned the creation at the site of a light industrial and distribution business park to support its commercial cargo activities. With this project, the North Brevard area increases its stake in the central Florida distribution and warehousing sector, positioning itself as an alternative to existing distribution facilities in Orlando and Volusia County, and advancing the feasibility of North Brevard as a site for other distribution operations. That, in turn, should help the region’s overall economic diversification strategy, as it attempts to become less dependent upon the aerospace industry as a sole source of jobs and capital investment.

The Walmart project has already produced spinoffs for the area: soon after the public announcement of the project, work on a new **Flying J Travel Center** (expected to create 130 part-time and full-time positions) began at the exit, to serve the freight haulers that the distribution park will attract.

For more information on this project, visit [www.areadevelopment.com](http://www.areadevelopment.com).

In the Mims area, construction started in 2020 on a new truck stop/refueling center by **Love's**, which is expected to be complete in mid-2021. The project, which is expected to create more than 40 jobs, is estimated to cost more than \$3.5 million.

In addition – as mentioned in previous Economic Assessment reports published by the NBEDZ – that **NASA's Kennedy Space Center** remains the largest employer in the area, with a workforce of over 8,500 (including federal employees and independent contractors working at the cape). Although the complex did witness reductions in employment following the last Space Shuttle launch in 2011, KSC has remained the anchor employer in the region, and a key determinant in the growth of the local aerospace industry. The last few years (2017-2020) has continued to see an active government and commercial launch schedule, as KSC assisted in the deployment of government and commercial satellites, culminating in the successful launch and first stage return by private sector operator **Space X** in May of 2020 of the first astronauts to leave American soil since 2011, and the first to travel to space in a commercially-built spacecraft.

Commercial Company SpaceX Launches Astronauts from North Brevard

[SpaceX Launches Two Astronauts](#)

Additional information on business announcements and news affecting the market area can be found in the quarterly newsletters of the NBEDZ, the North Brevard Business Review. The latest issue can be viewed at its web site: [www.NBEDZ.org](http://www.NBEDZ.org).

## Future Trends and Developments

### *(Anticipated Developments in the Region)*

In the coming years, the North Brevard Economic Development Zone (NBEDZ) will be monitoring several key developments that have the potential to greatly influence the local economy:

#### **Port Activity**

The current pandemic has adversely impacted operations at **Port Canaveral**, but officials expect it to recover most of its pre-pandemic tourist activity, once cruise vessels are allowed to return to sea. As in past years, the port anticipates that 60% of its revenue will come from passenger cruise activity. [The port is currently home to six cruise lines.] Approximately 22% of revenues are expected from its commercial cargo business, of which roughly 43% of that total will come from petroleum and related bottled products. Port Canaveral stores and supplies the aviation fuel for Central Florida's busiest airports, including Orlando International Airport.

Despite the pandemic, the Port did complete in 2020 a new cruise terminal (Terminal 3), at a cost of \$163 million. To read the most recent Annual Report on the Port (for FY 19/20), click [HERE](#).

In other Port news, it recently sold its **Titusville Logistics Center**, a 248,000 sq. ft. distribution center it purchased from Flagler Global Logistics in 2016; the sales price was \$17.5 million. The facility, located on U.S. Highway 1 in Titusville, currently houses RUAG Aerospace, Ralph's Transfer, and Pharmco Labs. In addition to housing the RUAG aerospace firm, the center is expected in the near future to contain third-party logistics firms that will act as the intermediary of cargo shipments received by the port and bound for distribution in Central Florida.

Port Canaveral commissioners agree to sale of Logistics Center in Titusville

[Port to Sell Logistics Center](#)

For more information on the port, visit: [www.portcanaveral.org](http://www.portcanaveral.org).

Given the area's proximity to Orlando (35 miles to the west), Miami (195 miles to the south), and Jacksonville (140 miles to the north), the placement of the logistics center on the **Flagler East Coast Railroad**, near the Space Coast Regional Airport and an existing intermodal facility operated by **Norfolk Southern Railroad**, is considered by logistic experts to be an ideal location.

Local development officials estimate that the impact of the logistics facility, over time, could create approximately 500 direct jobs and represent a capital investment (with off-loading facilities) of more than \$50 million.

## Retail Activity

Like most of the nation, traditional “brick & mortar” retail has suffered during the pandemic; retailers (both national and local independents) that had an active online component to their business model, or added that feature in the wake of the pandemic, have managed to survive. But several business enterprises, particularly local brand restaurants, have closed or changed ownership.

Nonetheless, retail activity in downtown Titusville and at concentrated retail hubs in the north Brevard area, such as Exit #215 of I-95 location, has been brisk. [The Exit #215 is the location of home improvement stores Lowe’s and Home Depot, and national retailers Wal-Mart and Target.] Early reports on sales tax collections saw only a small decline in retail sales posted by these retailers over totals recorded a year ago.

The recently constructed **Titus Landing**, a joint development of Tampa retail developer **AG Development Group** and Columbus, Ohio’s **EXXCEL Project Management.**, saw all of its anchor stores remain in operation throughout the pandemic (Beall’s, Tuesday Morning, Hobby Lobby, Ulta), but management has reported difficulty in leasing smaller retail units in the development, those spaces measuring less than 3,000 sq. ft.

Still, the 300,000 sq. ft. retail shopping plaza – built on the site of the former Miracle City Mall on U.S. Highway 1 in Titusville – is expected to be an employment center for approximately 300 persons, and help bolster the retail trade status of the northern part of the county, which lost retail trade activity to neighboring counties and communities in the wake of the Great Recession (2009-2011). The Titus Landing development is also expected to generate significant revenue for both the city and county, with an estimated ad valorem tax impact of \$1.4 million, and new sales tax collections exceeding \$1.8 million.

In the wake of the Beachwave store development (cited earlier in this report), new retail developments have been proposed for parcels along Garden Street (the gateway into downtown), and on the former Rose’s Department Store site, which could see a mixed-use development by a south Florida developer.

## Energy Sector

**Florida Power & Light (FPL)** continues operation of its new, state-of-the-art power generation facility in Port St. John, a plant operated with natural gas. The utility company built the plant in 2014, at an estimated cost of \$900 million. Over time, the company anticipates upgrades to turbines and equipment at the plant, which could result in additional capital investment of more than \$100 million.

Plans for a proposed liquified natural gas plant, originally announced in 2015 for a site near Port St. John, have been idled indefinitely.

## Tourism

2020 has proven to be a difficult year for the hospitality sector in Florida, and for Brevard County. The initial months of the pandemic saw the temporary closing of hotels and motels in the county, during a time when peak visitation typically occurs (March – May). By the fall of 2020, most hotels had reopened, but to light visitation.

In North Brevard, however, **Delaware North**, a global leader in hospitality and food service management, started construction on a new five-story hotel in Titusville’s Riverfront Center, a mixed-use business park located on State Road 405. The new hotel, which will operate under the lodging flag of **Courtyard by Marriott**, will be the second hotel in the business park; in 2018, New York-based **BBL Hospitality** broke ground on a new five-story **Hyatt Place**, on acreage fronting U.S. Highway 1. Delaware North, which manages NASA’s Kennedy Space Center (KSC) Visitor’s Center, believes that additional lodging opportunities in north Brevard will induce multiple-night stays for tourists visiting both KSC and nearby attractions, such as the Canaveral National Seashore. The new hotel, which is expected to represent a capital investment of more than \$10 million, will feature 118 rooms and a 5<sup>th</sup> floor viewing area for launches. [Last year (2019), the KSC Visitor’s Center recorded visitation by over 1.7 million guests, making it one of Central Florida’s largest tourist attractions.]

Delaware North operates 35 hotels and lodging facilities across the U.S.; the new Titusville hotel will be the Buffalo, New York-based firm’s first hotel in Florida. For more information on the company, visit [www.delawarenorth.com](http://www.delawarenorth.com).

The concept of an indoor sports arena remains a possibility (as reported on in earlier economic assessment reports), though it has shifted from a public-sector driven project to a private-sector one. In 2017, the county’s **Tourism Development Council (TDC)** approved a \$7 million grant for the construction of an indoor sports arena in the Titusville market, to complement a growing youth sports industry in the county. Following the introduction of **United States Sports Specialty Association (USSSA)** in nearby Viera – a project involving a private capital investment of more than \$15 million to transform a minor league ballpark into a multi-field facility to host youth and adult outdoor sports tournaments – it has been the focus of the TDC to work with local jurisdictions to build upon assets necessary for cultivating the youth sports industry, an industry that represents a \$10 billion a year market in the U.S. At the time, the proposed Titusville facility was expected to consist of a 75,000 sq. ft. playing surface, locker rooms, and conference rooms; the facility would be designed to accommodate basketball, volleyball, gymnastics, and other indoor sporting competitions.

However, that 2017 commitment from the TDC expired at the end of 2019, leaving the project to be picked up by the development group that owns the **Titusville Mall**, a 25-acre commercial site along U.S. Highway 1. The pandemic, however, has idled those plans until 2021, at the earliest.

## Healthcare

Construction was completed in 2019 on the 25,000 sq. ft. **Palm Point Behavioral Health Center**, a new health facility near Parrish Medical Center. The 80-bed facility was estimated to cost approximately \$10 million, and expected to employ more than 100 medical technicians and support staff once fully operational. The facility operates under the auspices of Universal Health Services, Inc. ([www.uhsinc.com](http://www.uhsinc.com)), which manages approximately 350 similar facilities across the United States and Great Britain, employing more than 83,000 people. For more information on Palm Point, visit the agency's website at: [www.PalmPointBehavioral.com](http://www.PalmPointBehavioral.com).

Titusville-based **Parrish Medical Center (PMC)** has continued to increase its capabilities in 2020, while providing medical care and support for patients with COVID-19. In 2018, the hospital opened its new 55,000 sq. ft. medical office facility at Titus Landing retail center, in a partnership with the **Mayo Clinic**. The estimated job creation realized from that portion of the redevelopment project was expected to be 220 positions, generating a total annual payroll of approximately \$12.4 million. In concert with the medical office building at Titus Landing, the hospital's board of directors has also indicated its willingness to develop a 25-acre parcel across the street from its main facility on U.S. Highway 1 into a new medical park, to include an assisted living facility and wellness center.

In addition to these developments, PMC still has plans for the second phase of its **Health Village** complex, a project involving the construction of a new medical building, measuring 28,000 sq. ft., in addition to a fitness trail and community park. The Health Village East building will be the location for PMC's geriatrician, senior support services, and a 300-person conference center overlooking the Chain-of-Lakes county park, connecting to the existing Health Village West area – a series of historic structures rehabilitated by the hospital several years ago and currently used for administrative and group meeting functions.

## Commercial Aerospace

With continuing announcements and expansions from **Blue Origin, Moon Express, Orbital ATK, Boeing, Lockheed, Northrop Grumman, United Launch Alliance, and SpaceX**, the commercial aerospace sector is expected to continue growing locally for the next few years, despite the pandemic. Many of these companies are utilizing re-purposed buildings and launch pads at Kennedy Space Center and nearby Cape Canaveral Air Force Station. While some firms – such as Blue Origin and Boeing – employ more than one hundred people locally, others have a smaller, local employment footprint. Collectively, however, these firms, along with existing NASA missions at KSC, now account for approximately 30% to 35% of the local workforce in **North Brevard MA**.

Among those NASA missions is the agency's Orion program, which anticipates another test of its Space Launch System (SLS) in 2022 from the cape. That project, which is being developed with help from **Boeing** and **Lockheed Martin**, continues to pursue a deep space mission that could ultimately lead to a manned mission to Mars by 2030.

In addition, work continues on NASA's "commercial crew" program, the agency's initiative to return astronauts from KSC and North Brevard to the International Space Station (ISS). SpaceX achieved its goal of delivering astronauts to the ISS in May of 2020, and Boeing is on pace to do the same in 2021.

NASA Touts Success of Commercial Crew Program

[NASA, SpaceX Thrilled with Crew-1 Launch Success](#)

In addition to these local developments, there are several *regional* developments that are likely to impact the northern portion of the county, namely:

- Work continued in 2020 on the construction of a high-speed rail line connecting Miami to Orlando, with a targeted opening date of 2020. A portion of the line runs along SR 528, the southern part of the **North Brevard MA**. Although no stop in Brevard County is currently planned, talks between the rail operator and Port Canaveral have suggested that a future "leg" could be developed to take cruise passengers by rail to the port.
- Despite the pandemic, **Florida Institute of Technology** in Melbourne (30 miles to the south), continues to maintain a strong enrollment. FIT has experienced a 100% faculty and funded research growth rate throughout most of this century.
- Efforts by the county and several environmental groups to access funding from the state and Federal government to improve the health of the Indian River Lagoon, which has an estimated impact of more than \$2 billion annually for the Titusville/Melbourne/Palm Bay MSA. The county's half-cent sales tax, enacted in 2018, is forecast to generate more than \$55 million over the life of the tax.

These developments have the potential to further impact the local economy, and provide evidence that the area is weathering the pandemic and current economic crisis.

## Community Attributes

### *(The Region's "Quality of Life" Factors)*

There are a number of characteristics that define the northern part of the county, most notably the Kennedy Space Center complex and the recreational amenities afforded by county, state, and Federal-maintained parks, beaches, and wildlife refuges. The area's climate (Brevard County is located where the temperate zone meets the tropical zone) offers mild winters and balmy summers, which encourages year-round tourism activity. [The average winter temperature in the market area is 71°, and the average summer temperature is 85°.]

Visitation activity at the **Canaveral National Seashore** has remained strong during the pandemic, according to the U.S. National Parks Service, with more than 1 million tourists visiting the park annually. Visitation at other outdoor venues was equally strong, with more than 800,000 visitors at nearby Merritt Island Refuge (also home to the Kennedy Space Center's Visitor's Complex) and more than 200,000 at the St. John's National Wildlife Refuge.

One promising development in 2020: preliminary construction work has begun on a new visitor's center for the wildlife refuge, a facility that is expected to cost \$3 million. The facility is expected to open by early 2022.

In the face of the pandemic, visitors ready to travel back to Canaveral National Seashore

[Canaveral National Seashore Partially Reopens to Visitors](#)

The northern part of the county is marketed by the Space Coast Office of Tourism, which reported hotel occupancy at approximately 68% in 2019, a strong statistic when compared to the national average of 63% (Smith Travel Research). As stated previously, the COVID-19 crisis has impacted lodging numbers in 2020, but early data from the fall of 2020 does indicate that occupancy levels have risen above 55%.

One trend noted in recent years is the renovation of several older "motels" (consisting of fewer than 100 units per entity), most the project of a local entrepreneur, who has restored several downtown lodging properties, complete with vintage signage and renovated rooms. Although the activity has only slightly increased the number of available rooms in the area, it has aided in the redevelopment and elimination of blight that existed from vacant, dilapidated structures along the area's main commercial corridor, U.S. Highway 1.

In downtown Titusville, works continues by the firm **Red Canyon Software** to restore a former hotel/apartment building into lofts that can be leased for short-term occupancy. The company, which expects its renovation efforts to be completed in 2019, anticipates spending \$5 million on the project.

Also downtown, the

**BBL Hospitality**, a national corporate leader in the hotel construction and management industry, opened its new \$15 million Hyatt Place hotel in 2020 in the Riverfront Center business park in Titusville; the project represented the first new construction project in the business park in more than fifteen years. The company, which operates twelve hotels and thirteen restaurants along the Eastern seaboard, has also prepared a site pad for a future office building.

New York-based BBL anticipates that the project will create more than 40 new jobs over the next few years, in addition to approximately 90 construction-period jobs. While acknowledging increased tourism attendance at the nearby Kennedy Space Center Visitors' Complex (which recently reported annual attendance exceeding 1.6 million guests in 2019), the hotel will primarily cater to business travelers connected to the burgeoning commercial aerospace and aviation industry in north Brevard. For more information on the company and its holdings, visit [www.BBLhospitality.com](http://www.BBLhospitality.com).

Tourism due to the presence of the Kennedy Space Center and Cape Canaveral Air Force Station (which plans more than 40 commercial and military launches planned in 2021) continues to have an impact on the area each year. While the peak visitation numbers were reached during the Space Shuttle era (between the years 1981-2011), launch activity at the several sites at both installations continue to bring in several thousand visitors each year. As previously mentioned, last summer's launch of astronauts from the Space Coast brought in record numbers of tourists, despite COVID restrictions.

Beyond the tourism impact of the space center, however, are a number of nature-related venues and events that bring in visitors annually – from surfing competitions at nearby Cocoa Beach to art festivals in Titusville. One such example is the annual birding festival that is held each January in Titusville, an event that attracts visitors from around the country and internationally.

Consider that, during the 2020 bird-watching event:

- Approximately 4,300 people attended the seminars, workshops, and field trips sponsored by the Brevard Nature Alliance, the group that serves as event host;
- The estimated economic impact of the four-day event was forecast at \$1.2 million; and,
- The event was responsible for more than 2,500 hotel room “nights.”<sup>28</sup>

The area, like much all of coastal Florida, continues to enjoy popularity among the nation's retirees as a place to relocate to – either on a full-time basis or as an “escape” during the winter months. Often-cited residential attributes include a wide variety of affordable and high-end housing and condominium developments (particularly along the Indian River Lagoon), recreational amenities at more than forty parks in the northern part of the county, in addition to the beach access afforded by Canaveral National Seashore.

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<sup>28</sup> According to the Brevard Nature Alliance; news coverage of the emerging pandemic may have impacted the number of room nights for the January 2020 event.

For younger families, the area has been attractive due to the reputation of one of the state's top public school systems, the **Brevard County School System**. View statistical information on the county's school system, along with its Career Tech and STEM programs (involving vocational training), at [www.brevardschools.org](http://www.brevardschools.org).

The county's fiscal position remains strong (maintaining an Aa3 bond rating from Moody's Ratings, as reported in 2018),<sup>29</sup> with FY 2019/20 budget revenues essentially remaining at levels posted for recent years. The City of Titusville continues to enjoy top bond ratings as well, recently refinancing water and sewer bonds with an A+ credit rating.<sup>30</sup>

The creation of the **North Brevard Economic Development Zone (NBEDZ)** as a tax increment financing district has provided a financial resource for leveraging private capital investment in the region. Funded by increases in commercial property valuations, the NBEDZ has worked to leverage millions of private capital through the use of NBEDZ dollars to improve the infrastructure for economic development activities, on project such as **Blue Origin** and **Pharmco Laboratories**.

**Eastern Florida State College** continues to impact the area through education and re-training programs. The college, which offers nearly 100 degrees and programs (associate degrees, workforce degrees, and a program in Applied Technology), operates four campuses throughout Brevard County, including one in Titusville. That northern campus is situated on a 30-acre site on U.S. Highway 1 adjacent to Parrish Medical Center, where it serves approximately 1,500 students, although, since the pandemic, most of its campus classes have transitioned to an on-line format. Additional information on the college is available at [www.easternflorida.edu](http://www.easternflorida.edu).

Regional educational attributes include several area colleges, such as **Rollins College** in Winter Park, **Florida Institute of Technology (Florida Tech)** in Melbourne, and **Full Sail University, Florida Technical College**, and **Valencia State College**, all of which are located in Orlando. North Brevard is also in close proximity – less than 20 miles – to the **University of Central Florida (UCF)**, one of the nation's largest university, at approximately 60,000 students. UCF has also been instrumental in creating the **Lake Nona Medical Park**, a medical research park situated on approximately 1,000 acres and home to **Nemours Childrens Hospital**, among other medical complexes. The Lake Nona development is less than 45 minutes by car from North Brevard.

The area also features a number of amenities, from a theatre playhouse, to golf courses, to boating and kayaking expeditions. The **North Brevard MA** is also known for its many and varied public parks and recreation areas, which – beyond the public beaches along the Atlantic – includes Chain of Lakes Park, a 200-acre county-maintained open space that features ball fields, tennis courts, and walking trails alongside the Indian River Lagoon.

Among intangibles, the county (along with the City of Titusville) has instituted a streamlined permitting process known as *Simplified, Nimble, and Accelerated Permitting* (SNAP) which has been lauded by the county's Economic Development Commission and numerous businesses.

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<sup>29</sup> See: <https://www.moody.com/research - Brevard County>

<sup>30</sup> <http://www.titusville.com/Page.asp?NavID=1410>

The county also operates under a **Comprehensive Plan** comprised of fifteen elements that address the physical development of the county. [A copy of the plan is available at [www.brevardFL.gov](http://www.brevardFL.gov).] Adherence to such a plan can aid the NBEDZ and other business groups by keeping the public informed about the importance and necessity of economic development activities, while permitting the public to submit comments and input on said activities.

## Development Capacity

### *(Analysis of the Region's Ability to Accommodate Growth)*

There are a number of local public and private resources and institutions that augment the ability of the county, the City of Titusville, and the NBEDZ to provide development assistance to area businesses.

The **Space Coast Regional Airport (also referred to as the Titusville-Cocoa, or TICO, Airport)** is situated on approximately 750 acres on SR 405, the road that connects Kennedy Space Center with Interstate 95. The airport features two runways, one of 7,300 linear feet and another of 5,000 linear feet. TICO is governed by the Titusville-Cocoa Airport Authority, a body which also administers two smaller airstrips (Arthur Dunn Airpark in Titusville and Merritt Island Airport on Merritt Island). With the addition of new hangars, a new administrative services building in 2013, and a new fire station/emergency personnel building at TICO (finished in 2016), the authority has made an investment of more than \$30 million into the complex. Additional information on TICO's operations can be found at [www.flairport.com](http://www.flairport.com).

In the area of site availability, there remains approximately 100 undeveloped acres in the **Spaceport Commerce Business Park** located within one mile of Interstate 95 at Exit No. 210, where the new Embraer facility is being constructed. The park is currently home to several firms, such as **AstroTech**, **Genesis VII**, and **Precision Shapes**. As the authorized agent for this county-owned industrial park, the NBEDZ is currently considering a plan to undertake preliminary site clearing and grading of available lots, with a goal of having one lot cleared and graded by the end of 2021. The NBEDZ is also considering a possible private-sector partnership for the construction of an approximately 50,000 sq. ft. industrial building constructed on a speculative basis, for use in attracting a new manufacturing entity to the region.

Both the Spaceport Commerce Park and property contained within the perimeter of Space Coast Regional Airport TICO Airport are included in boundaries for **Foreign Trade Zone (FTZ) #136**, which is managed by nearby Port Canaveral. The FTZ designation permits qualified firms to defer (or, in some cases, eliminate) certain tariffs and duties on goods used in the production of goods. Additional information on the Foreign Trade Zone (FTZ) program is available from the International Economic Development Council (IEDC) at [IEDC - About Foreign Trade Zones](#).

Additional light industrial acreage is available in the **Mims Industrial District** (approximately 60 acres, scattered among various parcels), which lies alongside U.S. Highway 1 in Mims, to the north of Titusville. Most of these parcels, however, have little infrastructure and minimal site preparation. Remaining industrial property in the area is scattered throughout the region, with one cluster of lots near the **Arthur Dunn Airpark in Titusville airport**, near Garden Street.

**Truss Wood** is one of several industrial companies located on or near State Road 405, in an area known as the **South Street Business District**. The district includes a diverse array of business, from pump distributors to boat builders. For more information on this business district and available properties located in the area, schedule a meeting with NBEDZ staff via [www.NBEDZ.org](http://www.NBEDZ.org).

In terms of business development programs, there exists a Small Business Administration (SBA) **HUB Zone** within a 10-block rectangle of downtown Titusville, east of Hopkins Street and the East Florida Railroad. The HUB Zone program (Historically Underutilized Business Zones) is structured to help small businesses in urban and rural communities gain preferential access to Federal procurement opportunities. These preferences are earmarked for businesses that obtain HUB Zone certification in large part due to the employment of staff living within a designated HUB Zone.

The findings of the 2020 U.S. Census – which are expected to be released in 2021 – will determine whether HUB Zone status for this area of North Brevard will continue for the next few years. The current zone in downtown Titusville falls within Census Tract # 060700 (2010 Census).

There also exists a **Community Redevelopment Authority** that operates within the historic downtown area of Titusville. The city, through this authority, provides modest grant assistance to firms seeking to improve the physical appearance of downtown property. For information on this special district, visit the City of Titusville’s website, at [www.titusville.com](http://www.titusville.com).

North Brevard currently has two federally-designated “Opportunity Zones,” an economic development tool established under the U.S. Treasury Department in 2017. These zones permit investors and development groups to defer capital gains taxes through investments into these targeted geographical areas, as a means of encouraging long-term investment and the creation of new jobs for an impacted community. More information on this program, including mapping of the North Brevard zones, can be found at <https://www.irs.gov>, and at [www.FloridaJobs.org](http://www.FloridaJobs.org).

The potential for additional retail development in the northern part of the county was first examined in 2013 by the NBEDZ, which prepared a retail study on the current retail climate for an area it termed the “Titusville Trade Area.” This report, labeled The Potential Economic Impact of Redeveloping the Miracle City Mall Property, was undertaken as part of a larger determination on whether the use of public monies injected into the proposed mall redevelopment would be justified. A copy of this report is available for viewing at the offices of the NBEDZ. The report exposed trade gaps in the northern part of the county’s retail landscape, and is being used by NBEDZ to target data to prospective retailers and retail developers.

In recent years, **Career Source Brevard** initiated programs aimed at entrepreneurial assistance, such as **Biz Launch** and **Energy Launch**, which seek applicants who are considering the start of new business ventures. These programs continue to this day.

In late 2020, the NBEDZ began working with **WeVenture**, a non-profit business enterprise assistance organization, on expanding its counseling programs into North Brevard, particularly for economically-disadvantaged groups. WeVenture is based at the Florida Institute of Technology.

In Titusville specifically, a Meetup.com group created in 2014 by the NBEDZ continues to meet periodically; it now has over 100 members. With the pandemic, the group has not been meeting regularly, but hopes to resume Meetups in 2021. Previous monthly meetings have consisted of presentations by local entrepreneurs and guest speakers, and a “mastermind” series for entrepreneurs to pitch business models for feedback. More information on meetings and

activities for TECh is available at [TECh Meetup - Titusville Entrepreneurs Clubhouse \(TECh\) \(Titusville, FL\) - Meetup](#).

The TECh group was also instrumental in helping the NBEDZ and GTR advance a coworking project in downtown Titusville, a project called **COLaunch**., which closed at the start of the pandemic in 2020. That concept utilized approximately 2,500 sq. ft. in an office building near the new Titus Landing retail center, and offered three levels of membership in an open floor configuration. In March of 2020, the COLaunch operation morphed into a private-sector venture known as **Office Members Only**, utilizing the same 2,500 sq. ft. space. [Information of this coworking space is available at [www.OfficeMembersOnly.com](http://www.OfficeMembersOnly.com).] In addition to the Office Members Only space, two more coworking spaces are planned for 2021, including one hosted by **LeNovation**, and one by **Red Canyon Software** in downtown Titusville.

In terms of incentives to induce business development, the North Brevard Economic Development Zone (NBEDZ) has the capacity to incentivize economic development projects monetarily, and can help leverage other financial assistance programs. For some projects involving substantial job creation and capital investment, the county and the City of Titusville have adopted an **Ad Valorem Tax Exemption** program, which provides a partial abatement of real and/or tangible property tax levied on new capital investment.

Beyond local incentive programs, the State of Florida (through the Department of Economic Opportunity) offers a variety of business assistance programs designed to facilitate business location, expansion, and start-up, such as:

- **Urban Job Tax Credits** – credit ranging from \$500 to \$2,000 per qualified employee that can be applied against a firm’s state income tax or state sales/use tax;
- **Capital Investment Tax Credit (CITC)** – an annual credit against the state’s corporate income tax for up to 20 years in an amount equal to 5% of the eligible capital costs generated by a qualified project (including such activities as acquisition, construction, and equipment purchases);
- **Quick Response Training (QRT)** – an employer-driven training program designed to assist new value-added businesses and provide existing Florida-based businesses the labor force training required for business expansion. Companies may be eligible for a reimbursement of certain costs associated with training;
- **Incumbent Worker Training Program (IWT)** – a program that provides training to currently employed workers to keep Florida’s workforce competitive in a global economy and retain existing workers. Priority given to companies in HUBZones and Brownfield areas.

**NOTE:** In 2020, the State of Florida idled an economic development incentive program known as “**Qualified Target Industry Tax Refund Program**”, which provided a corporate tax refund to encourage the creation of high-skills jobs. Economic development organizations across the state

continue to monitor proposed legislation in the state capitol, to determine whether the state legislature will consider adopting a replacement program in 2021.

For the various incentives listed above, staff at the NBEDZ and the city's economic development department are available to assist businesses in applying for participation in these programs.

This 2020 Economic Assessment on North Brevard prepared by:

**Troy Post, CEcD, CBE**

Executive Director



### **North Brevard Economic Development Zone (NBEDZ)**

Follow our page on **LinkedIn**, by clicking [HERE](#)

400 South Street, Suite 1A  
Titusville, Florida 32780

321-264-5205 (PH)  
321-960-1458 (MB)

For information on the Zone: [www.NBEDZ.org](http://www.NBEDZ.org)

For statistical/community data on the area, visit: [www.NorthBrevard.biz](http://www.NorthBrevard.biz)

## Economic Development Contacts Brevard County, Florida

Updated: 2020

Information compiled by the NBEDZ

### **City of Cape Canaveral**

David Dickey, Economic Development Manager

105 Polk Avenue

Cape Canaveral, FL 32920

321-868-1220

[communitydevelopment@cityofcapecanaveral.org](mailto:communitydevelopment@cityofcapecanaveral.org)

### **City of Cocoa**

Samantha Senger, Economic Development Specialist

65 Stone Street

Cocoa, FL 32922

321-433-8577

[ssingleton@cocoafl.org](mailto:ssingleton@cocoafl.org)

### **City of Cocoa Beach**

Kenne Wells, Main Street Executive Director

163 Minutemen Causeway

Cocoa Beach, FL 32931

321-613-0072

[cocoabeachmainstreet@gmail.com](mailto:cocoabeachmainstreet@gmail.com)

### **City of Indian Harbour Beach**

Kim McLaughlin, Deputy City Clerk

2055 South Patrick Drive

Indian Harbour Beach, FL 32937

321-733-3181

[kmclaughlin@indianharbour.org](mailto:kmclaughlin@indianharbour.org)

### **City of Melbourne**

Doug Dombroski, Economic Development Manager

900 East Strawbridge Avenue

Melbourne, FL 32901

321-608-7510

[douglas.dombroski@mlbfl.org](mailto:douglas.dombroski@mlbfl.org)

**City of Palm Bay**

Joan Junkala, Community & Economic Development Director  
5240 Babcock Street NE, Suite 300  
Palm Bay, FL 32905  
321-409-7187  
[joan.junkala@palmbayflorida.org](mailto:joan.junkala@palmbayflorida.org)

**City of Rockledge**

BJ Haveman, CRA Director  
1600 Huntington Lane  
Rockledge, FL 32955  
321-221-7540  
[bjhaveman@cityofrockledge.org](mailto:bjhaveman@cityofrockledge.org)

**City of Satellite Beach**

Courtney Barker, CRA Director  
565 Cassia Boulevard  
Satellite Beach, FL 32937  
321-773-4409  
[cbarker@satellitebeach.org](mailto:cbarker@satellitebeach.org)

**City of Titusville**

Lisa Nicholas, Economic Development Director  
555 South Washington Avenue  
Titusville, FL 32780  
321-567-3774  
[lisa.nicholas@titusville.com](mailto:lisa.nicholas@titusville.com)

**City of West Melbourne**

Christy Fischer, Planning Director  
2240 Minton Road  
West Melbourne, FL 32904  
321-837-7778  
<mailto:cfischer@westmelbourne.org>

**Merritt Island Redevelopment Agency (MIRA)**

Larry Lallo, CECD  
Executive Director  
2575 North Courtenay Parkway, Suite 207  
Merritt Island, FL 32924  
321-454-6610  
[larry.lallo@brevardfl.gov](mailto:larry.lallo@brevardfl.gov)

**Space Coast Economic Development Commission** (Titusville's SEDC)

Marcia Gaedcke, Coordinator  
c/o Titusville Chamber of Commerce  
2000 South Washington Avenue  
Titusville, FL 32780  
321-267-3036  
[gaedcke@titusville.org](mailto:gaedcke@titusville.org)

**Regional Entities****NASA/Kennedy Space Center**

Nancy Potts (Economic Development Manager)  
Mail Code: AD-A  
Kennedy Space Center, FL 32899  
321-867-4646  
[nancy.a.potts@nasa.gov](mailto:nancy.a.potts@nasa.gov)

**Economic Development Commission (EDC) of Florida's Space Coast**

6525 Third Street, Suite 304  
Rockledge, FL 32955  
321-638-2000

Lynda Weatherman, President and CEO  
[lweatherman@spacecoastedc.org](mailto:lweatherman@spacecoastedc.org)

Edgar Campa-Palafox, CEcD  
Senior Business Development Manager  
[edgarCP@spacecoastedc.org](mailto:edgarCP@spacecoastedc.org)

Cammie Goode, Economic Development Project Manager  
[cgoode@spacecoastedc.org](mailto:cgoode@spacecoastedc.org)

**North Brevard Economic Development Zone (NBEDZ)**

Troy Post, CEcD, CBE  
Executive Director  
400 South Street, Suite 1A  
Titusville, FL 32780  
321-264-5205  
[troy.post@brevardfl.gov](mailto:troy.post@brevardfl.gov)

APPENDIX*City of Titusville**Current projected housing units, as of October 5, 2020*

Community Development

Economic Development

Project	Units	Total Projected Units	Type	Status
Country Club Estates	74		Single-family	Under construction
Forest Trace Sisson Rd, south of San Mateo	133		Single-family	Under construction
Park Preserve SE corner, Knox McRae & Park Ave	39		Single-family	Under construction
South Carpenter Estates West of I-95, north of Fox Lake Rd	70		Single-family	Under construction
Red Canyon S Washington Ave (downtown)	20		Apartments /commercial	Interior building construction
Fox Lake Hammock East of South St, north of Fox Lake	62		Single-family	Site plan in review
Brookshire NW corner, Garden & I-95	175		Single-family	Site plan approved
Antigua Bay East of US 1, north of SR 405	100	2,404	Single & multi-family/commercial	Phase 1 site plan approved
Willow Creek West of Grissom, south of Shepard	70	1,277	Single-family	Site permit issued
River Palms 1805 Riverside Dr	100	125	Condominiums	Site permit issued
Brooks Landing North of Jay Jay Rd	143		Single-family	With Planning Dept.
Horizon Sandpoint 22 N. Washington Ave.	194	384	Multi-family apartments	Phase 1 site plan in review
Huntington Park	86		Single-family	Sketch plat in review
Hope Hammock NW corner, Palmetto & Brown	9		Multi-family	Site plan in review
Falcon's Roost	28		Single-family	Sketch plat in review
Wendy Lee Condos	6		Multi-family	Site plan in review

Riverwalk	213		Apartments	Site plan in review
<b>Total active (current)</b>	<b>1,522</b>			
<b>Total projected (phased)</b>	<b>3,726</b>			
<b>Total units (current + phased)</b>	<b>5,248</b>			