



Economic Development Commission
of Florida's Space Coast

County Grant Report

September 27, 2019

Submitted to
Brevard County Commission

EDC Officers
FISCAL YEAR 18/19



Ms. Dana Kilborne
Chair



Mr. Joe T. Mayer
Chair Elect

Lockheed Martin Space
*Director, Government Relations -
Florida*



Ms. Julie Song
Treasurer

FL Business & Manufacturing
Solutions, Inc.
President



Mr. Bart Gaetjens
Secretary

Florida Power & Light Company
Area External Affairs Manager



Mr. Phil Hayes
Immediate Past Chair

Berman Hopkins Wright & Laham,
CPAs and Associates
Managing Partner

September 27, 2019

The Economic Development Commission of Florida's Space Coast (EDC) is a private, not-for-profit organization whose mission is to strengthen the region's business climate and secure Brevard County's economic future. The EDC's program of work is funded by a Brevard County grant, corporate investment, regional partnerships, program sponsorships and corporate grants. The result is a highly engaged and competitive economic development organization.

This report focuses on the primary results and contributions to Brevard County's economy resulting from the accomplishments of the EDC program of work as it relates to the Grant Agreement between the EDC and Brevard County.

Impacts of business location and expansion

The Space Coast's economy is thriving. Between 2015 and 2018, 23.3% of jobs created in Brevard County were in manufacturing, while Florida's manufacturing job creation and the nation's were at 8.5% and 2.9%, respectively. In 2018, 25,461 were employed in manufacturing in Brevard County with an average annual wage of \$89,536. These numbers were announced by Dr. Jerry D. Parrish, Chief Economist and Director of Research at the Florida Chamber Foundation.

Along with these impressive numbers, Dr. Parrish also announced that the Space Coast ranked as the #2 Most Industry Diversified economy in Florida. This reflects the EDC's business attraction efforts to diversify our industry base, providing additional avenues of employment for Brevard County. The continued strength and diversity of the Space Coast's economy bodes well for the future of the community and the long-term durability of Brevard's economy.

Since 2010, the EDC has announced 51 new projects for the Brevard County community, generating a total of 16,220 direct jobs with a capital investment of \$1.62B.

An example of some of the EDC's recent project announcements include the Walmart Distribution Center in Cocoa (460 new jobs), ERC in Melbourne (350 new jobs), and several aerospace supply chain companies such as OneWeb Satellites (250 new jobs), RUAG Space USA Inc. (10 new jobs), Red Canyon, Inc. (20 new jobs), and Astro Pak (17 new jobs and 12 retained jobs).

With this success, Brevard County is attracting and retaining corporate headquarter divisions of Fortune 500 companies. During this fiscal year, the EDC announced The Boeing Company will be relocating the headquarters of its Space and Launch division to Titusville.

In June the EDC and Lockheed Martin recognized the Fleet Ballistic Missile (FBM) headquarters relocation to Titusville, Florida. The EDC announced the relocation of the FBM headquarters in 2017. This move has already led to a commitment to invest nearly \$40 million into the Titusville campus and the transition of 350 jobs from Sunnyvale, California.

The FBM Headquarters opening comes nearly fifteen years after EDC efforts played an essential role in retaining the Naval Ordnance Test Unit (NOTU) in Cape Canaveral. In 2005, a federal base-closure commission reversed a Department of Defense recommendation to relocate NOTU to Kings Bay, Georgia retaining nearly 1,000 jobs locally. The presence of NOTU was one of the key factors in the decision to relocate the FBM Headquarters, as the FBM program supports NOTU and its submarine-launched Trident missiles.

In addition, the merger of L3 Technologies and Harris Corporation stems from the EDC's announcement in 2015 that Harris Corporation headquarters would remain on the Space Coast. [L3Harris is now the largest aerospace and defense company based in Florida, as well as Florida's eighth-largest company overall.](#)

The [EDC's business retention efforts](#) are focused on providing resources, technology and/or education-focused opportunities for our existing industry. Businesses throughout Brevard County have been positively impacted from EDC's programs including G.O. Contracts, Technology Docking, Manufacturing Training, and Talent Attraction. The EDC's G.O. Contracts Program alone has led to [102 contract wins with a value of over \\$66M for local companies](#), including a \$15 million contract win for Southeast Aerospace of Melbourne. While each of these programs are focused on a different aspect of the manufacturing and high-tech industry, together [they provide an abundance of resources for businesses to grow and thrive on the Space Coast.](#) A list of our programs and initiatives is included as [Overview of Programs](#) in the attachment section of this report.

During the fiscal year, the EDC provided in-depth overviews and guidance for the [Opportunity Zones Program](#), which was established through a provision in the 2017 tax bill called Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (H.R. 1) (TCJA). The Opportunity Zones program is national in scope and is designed to encourage new capital investment and job creation in low income census tracts. [The Space Coast has nine opportunity zones designed to create capital investment and job creation.](#) The EDC provides expert direction to communities and individuals in navigating this highly complex program.

Elevating the Space Coast on a national level

Brevard County's economic turnaround continues to garnish national attention. [This fiscal year, nationally syndicated Fox News and the Washington Post](#) highlighted Brevard County and the impact of the successful projects managed by the EDC. Other media outlets such as Florida Trend, The Orlando Sentinel, Orlando Business Journal, SpaceCoast Business Magazine and FLORIDA TODAY also continue to report on the economic success of Brevard County.

In addition, the March 2019 issue of Delta Sky magazine highlighted the Space Coast community, speaking to our tourism, businesses, economic vitality, lifestyle, entertainment, and culture. The magazine, [which reaches an audience of more than 6.3 million readers each month](#), was seen across the globe on Delta Airlines' 15,000 daily flights.

Our marketing efforts enabled the EDC to secure [over \\$545 thousand in earned media](#) between October 1, 2018 and June 30, 2019. In addition, Brevard County's recognition through EDC social media channels has been seeing a dramatic upswing in reach and presence. Through June 30, 2019 our [Facebook page had a total reach of 510,900 individuals](#), while our [Twitter page reached an additional 1,878,115 viewers](#). These numbers include out of area reach, resulting in [greater visibility for the Space Coast message](#). In addition, a new Instagram page currently has 282 followers and continues to grow.

This community continues to show its strength and ranks at the top of multiple lists related to business strength, and economic success. Some examples are:

- [Change in manufacturing GDP](#) - while the nation and Florida's manufacturing GDP has increased about 50% since 2001, [the Space Coast's manufacturing GDP has climbed over 200%](#) in the same time period- reflecting the EDC's goal in making the Space Coast a manufacturing hub not only in Florida, but in the global economy.
- [#2 Most Industry Diversified economy in Florida](#) – The Palm Bay, Melbourne, Titusville MSA ranked #2 overall in the state for most diversified economy in a study by Florida Gulf Coast University's Regional Economic Research Institute. This reflects the EDC's business attraction efforts to diversify our industry base, providing additional avenues of employment for Brevard County.

- 
- [Brevard's Manufacturing Sector's Average Wage continues to rise](#) – The Florida Department of Economic Opportunity reports Brevard's 2018 Manufacturing sector average annual wage is \$89,536, compared to just over \$86,564 in 2017.
 - [#1 – Most concentrated high-tech economy in Florida, and #10 in the U.S.](#), Milken Institute, 2019
 - [#1 – Highest share of high-tech/STEM jobs in Florida, and #12 in the U.S.](#), 24/7 Wall Street, 2019
 - [Turnaround of the Year, 2018](#) – The SpaceNews editorial panel selected the Space Coast as the *Turnaround of the Year* during its Awards for Excellence & Innovation. This award truly reflects the hard work of the Space Coast community in turning the end of the shuttle program into a new beginning for the region.

Expanding resources through community partnerships

The EDC works with elected officials and community partners to develop and enhance a competitive business environment in Brevard County. In FY18/19, the EDC partnered with multiple community organizations and non-profits to enhance our impact throughout the county. Examples of these partnerships include:

[Brevard County Emergency Operations Center \(EOC\)](#) - The EDC was awarded with a Defense Infrastructure Grant for \$366,666. This is the second consecutive year that the EDC identified and was awarded funds which will support the Brevard County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) Civil Site Preparation project, bringing the grant award total to nearly [\\$867,000](#). Brevard County's EOC serves as a critical component to managing local activity during emergency situations. This grant will enable the EOC to move forward with the site preparation for a new facility.

In order to better prepare the Space Coast's business community, on May 15, 2019 the EDC hosted a meeting focused on disaster preparedness for a business. A keynote presentation from [Florida Power & Light \(FPL\) Company](#) highlighted best practices for business preparation and connectivity in the event of a disaster or business disruption. In addition, presentations from [CareerSource Brevard](#) and the [Brevard County Emergency Management department](#) highlighted local resources for businesses.

[Space Florida](#) - Throughout the year, the EDC collaborated with Space Florida advocating for the permanent basing of U.S. Space Command in Brevard County. The EDC lead an effort with its Space Coast Defense Alliance and the four local Chambers of Commerce communicating local support to Senators Marco Rubio and Rick Scott, and Representative Bill Posey.

[NASA](#) – The EDC continues to introduce local companies into a collaboration with NASA subject matter experts through the EDC's Technology Docking Program. The Program helps stimulate job creation and economic growth in the Space Coast region, and since its inauguration in 2015, [95 companies have had direct interface with NASA representatives to help solve a defined commercial technology challenge](#).

[County and municipalities](#) - The EDC launched its newest campaign "Space Coast Salutes" – a military appreciation effort which encourages the community to support and thank our local military. "Space Coast Salutes" will showcase Brevard County as a location where military installations, military personnel, military families, veterans, etc. can thrive. [During the fiscal year, 13 of Brevard's municipalities and the Brevard County Commission adopted a resolution in support of this campaign](#).

[Groundswell Startups, Inc.](#) - The EDC and Groundswell Startups, Inc., a regional innovation incubator, continue a strategic partnership to increase access and exposure to resources for local manufacturers and entrepreneurs. The partnership is focused on [a series of seminars and workshops, aimed at innovators who are building next generation products](#). This program serves as a catalyst for product development and business growth. One seminar, "Hack the IRL", was a 36-hour marathon event in which teams engaged in workshops and intensive product development, all aimed at [developing technology to help restore the Indian River Lagoon \(IRL\)](#).



In addition, during the fiscal year the EDC worked alongside Groundswell Startups to bring [AOL co-founder Steve Case](#) and his Rise of the Rest tour to Brevard County. Rise of the Rest is a nationwide effort powered by Revolution to invest in, and work closely with, entrepreneurs in emerging startup ecosystems. The tour invests catalytic capital, often alongside regional investors, to the most promising early stage cities across America, shining a spotlight on the community of entrepreneurs and investors in cities outside of Silicon Valley. [This tour brought national attention to the Space Coast, including mention on CBS's 60 Minutes.](#)

Economic data resources

The EDC marketing department provides resources for gathering business intelligence for economic data, combining areas such as industry, workforce, wages, income, social demographics and more.

The EDC's website offers an [extensive interactive data center](#) located at [SpaceCoastEDC.org/DataCenter](#), providing [real time data which can be customized and exported for use in reports and presentations](#). Customized data supporting local businesses and organizations is also provided by the Research and Multimedia Manager and Business Development team.



ATTACHMENTS

The following documents and publications are provided as a reference to programs discussed within this report.

- FY17/18 Management Metrics (October 1, 2018 – June 30, 2019)
- EDC Programs Overview
- Space Coast Salutes Campaign
- The Washington Post, *Companies in the cosmos, the comeback coast*
- Fox News, *Cape Canaveral area set for major economic boost as America ramps up space program*

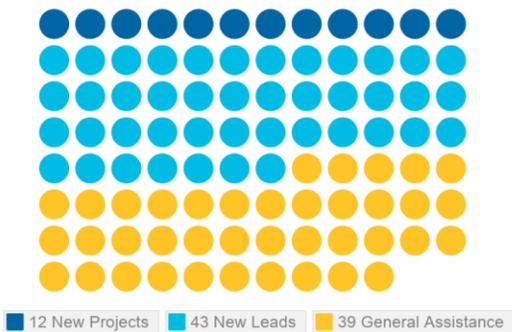
PROJECT ACTIVITY

Project Announcement Statistics

	Total
New Jobs Announced	40
Retained Jobs	0
Capital Investment	\$0

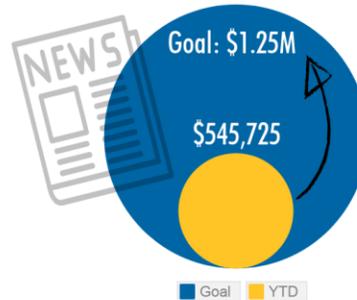
Goal: 500 New Jobs Announced

Client Activity

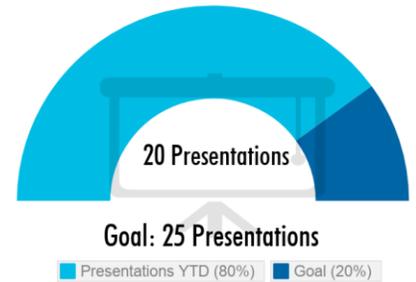


INTERNAL & EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

Earned Media



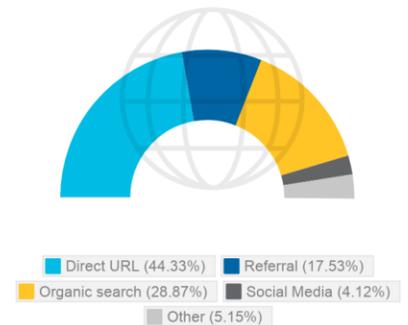
Presentations



Website Visits

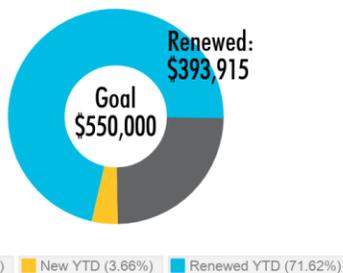


Website Visitors Acquisition



INVESTOR ACTIVITY

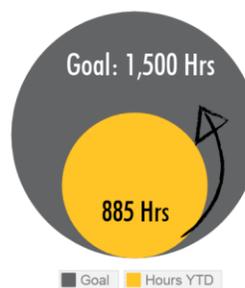
Total Private Investment



New Investment



Volunteer Hours



SPECIAL PROGRAMS

GO CONTRACTS
GOVERNMENT OPPORTUNITIES ONLINE
A SERVICE OF EDC OF FLORIDA'S SPACE COAST

Since Program Inception in 2013

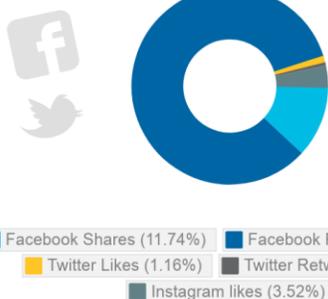
Value of Contracts Awarded: **\$66,858,663**

of Contracts Awarded: **102**

Active Licenses Goal 70%:
55 / 25 / 69%

SOCIAL MEDIA

Interactions



Posts:

Facebook: 352
Twitter: 103
Instagram: 39

Interactions per Post:

Facebook: 45.5
Twitter: 2.6
Instagram: 15.2

Social Media Posts Goal: 500

95%

Followers Goal: 2,750

97%

People Reached Goal: 400,000

127.7%

Facebook

Followers Goal: 1,000

103%

Twitter

People Reached Goal: 150,000

1,252.1%

Instagram

Followers Goal: 150

123%

CPT Program



Since July 2016

Students Enrolled: **283**

Career Exposure Tours: **51**

Completion Rate: **87%**

Student Type

New to manufacturing: **55%**

Incumbent Workers: **45%**

PROJECT ANNOUNCEMENTS

FY 2010-2019

51

Projects

8,883

New Jobs Announced*

7,337

Retained Jobs

\$1.62B

Capital Investment*

**Projections reported by company over three-year timeframe from commencement of operations*

COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGES

Palm Bay-Melbourne-Titusville MSA Rankings – 2017 to Present

WORKFORCE

#1 – Highest share of high-tech/STEM jobs in Florida, and #12 in the U.S., *24/7 Wall Street, 2019*

#2 – Highest median annual wage for STEM workers out of the 100 most populated MSAs in the U.S., *WalletHub 2018*

EDUCATION

#1 – Keiser University named best performing private, non-profit college in Florida, *Florida Trend, 2019*

#5 – Westshore Junior/Senior High School among top high schools in Florida, *U.S. News & World Report Best High Schools Rankings, 2018*

#8 – Edgewood Jr/Sr High School among top high schools in Florida, *U.S. News & World Report Best High Schools Rankings, 2018*

#11 – Brevard Schools ranked among top districts in Florida and received an A grade, *Florida Department of Education, 2017*

QUALITY OF LIFE

#1 – Melbourne named best place to live near the beach in the U.S., *U.S. News & World Report, 2019*

#1 – Melbourne named most affordable downtown city to live in in the U.S., *GOBankingRates, 2019*

#1 – Satellite Beach ranks safest community in Florida, *National Council for Home Safety and Security 2018*

#5 – Best places to live in Florida, and #49 in the U.S., *U.S. News & World Report 2018*

#5 – Best quality of life out of the 100 most populated MSAs in the U.S., *WalletHub 2018*

#5 – Brevard's purchasing power ranked among the best in Florida, *SmartAsset, 2017*

#11 – Highest percentage change in jobs among U.S. metro areas, #2 in Florida, *The Brookings Institution, 2017*

ECONOMIC VITALITY

#1 – Most concentrated high-tech economy in Florida, and #10 in the U.S., *Milken Institute, 2019*

#1 – Highest industry diversity index in Florida, *Florida Gulf Coast University, 2018*

#5 – Best performing growth index among U.S. metro areas, #1 in Florida, *The Brookings Institution, 2017*

#8 – Highest percentage change in GDP among U.S. metro areas, #2 in Florida, *The Brookings Institution, 2017*

With a focus on the manufacturing and high-tech industries, the EDC advances growth in corporate investment, job creation and business sustainability through targeted programs and campaigns. The following programs support our local industry and attract new business to our region.

G.O. Contracts - Government Contracting Opportunities Online, was introduced in September 2013. This EDC service, found at www.SpaceCoastEDC.org/GO, provides registered users in targeted sectors with one-stop access to a comprehensive government procurement database system which contains over 700,000 government contractors and pulls information from multiple sources. G.O. Contracts is a service which goes beyond providing access to the site. The EDC has also arranged for training and assistance to help participating companies better understand the process and therefore maximize their opportunities to succeed. G.O. Contracts has produced **85 contracts wins valued at more than \$49.9 million** since its inception.



Made In Brevard - Made in Brevard is a program designed to promote and celebrate the companies that create products right here on the Space Coast. Manufacturing is the backbone of any community and this program tells the story of Brevard County's manufacturing industry through multiple outreach efforts and a dedicated website: ManufacturingInBrevard.org. Additionally, the program provides expanded market exposure for registered companies through events, presentations and advertisements. This program fosters a sense of pride for the manufacturing community, further supporting the retention of existing industry.



Manufacturing Workforce - The demand for skilled workers in manufacturing is on the rise nationally, and within Brevard County. New re-shoring efforts, and an aging workforce, are leading to this increased need. However, the supply of talent entering the manufacturing sectors is decreasing, as interest in a manufacturing career is on the decline. The EDC is leading an effort to address critical issues and shore up the demand from the manufacturing sectors on the Space Coast through a program of work focused on developing:

- Industry Education & Engagement to promote stackable industry certifications and career opportunities
- Image and Attraction Campaign to drive interest in manufacturing career paths
- Training & Assessment Programs to build skills applicable to all manufacturing sectors

Visit: www.ManufacturingInBrevard.org/CPT to learn more.



Talent Attraction Campaign - The EDC has developed a talent attraction campaign to raise awareness of Brevard County, Florida as a location of choice to build a career. This effort focuses on connecting with skilled workers in high-demand fields to promote career opportunities in the region. This campaign is designed to recruit the more highly trained/educated workers to Brevard County by showcasing the reasons to live, work, and play in Brevard County. Visit www.LiveBigSpaceCoast.com to learn more.



Technology Docking - This strategic alliance powered by NASA and the EDC, seeks to join commercial technology challenges with NASA expertise and capabilities to provide solutions to manufacturers and technology-based companies across all industries. The program is part of NASA's national pilot program for Regional Economic Development (RED). Technology Docking will link regional industry to NASA's subject matter experts, advanced technologies and capabilities agency wide.



Policy Development - The EDC's policy development program centers on the identification of barriers to business start-up and growth, advocating for policies and development of programs to drive industry forward. Programs resulting from this strategic focus include:

S.N.A.P. (Simplified Nimble Accelerated Permitting) - S.N.A.P., developed by the EDC Development Council, encourages, educates and recognizes municipalities that demonstrate excellence and a significant effort to adopt the permitting best practices model. S.N.A.P. gives us a great opportunity to recognize the work that's been done, and more importantly, use it as a tool to promote our pro-business environment.



Public Public Private Partnership (P4) - A direct outcome of the EDC Annual Community Leaders Washington, D.C. visit, we initiated and led the communications between community and military in the establishment of a formal public, public, private partnership; known as P4. The EDC, local municipalities and our partners in the Air Force meet to identify opportunities for joint cost savings.



**ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT
COMMISSION**
FLORIDA'S SPACE COAST



**SPACE COAST
SALUTES
OUR MILITARY**

SpaceCoastEDC.org/salutes



SPACE COAST **SALUTES**

OUR MILITARY



CELEBRATING OUR MILITARY WITH THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

SpaceCoastEDC.org/salutes



Photos by Associated Press and Jonathan Newton/The Washington Post

COMPANIES IN THE COSMOS

The comeback coast

The birthplace of America's Space Age fell into decay once the shuttle retired. Now it's bouncing back, fueled by private industry.

By **Christian Davenport** Photos by **Jonathan Newton**
Video by **Whitney Shefte** and **Whitney Leaming** May 16, 2019



CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. — The crowds were packed along that same stretch of beach, cameras ready. Their eyes trained on the site that sent men to the moon 50 years ago but had now been reborn as the perch for another powerful rocket ready to fly.

The scene here last month was at once familiar and nostalgic, the past revived. But it was also altogether different. The rocket on the pad, the Falcon Heavy, was developed not by NASA but by a private company, SpaceX.

Many in the crowd weren't born when Walter Cronkite narrated the lunar landing for millions and this stretch of coastline held a sacrosanct spot in the national consciousness. Instead, in the years since the Apollo era, the Cape had become a symbol of the abandoned dreams and diminished ambitions that ultimately led to the retirement of the space shuttle eight years ago and the end of human spaceflight from U.S. soil.

C O M P A N I E S I N T H E C O S M O S

NASA lost its ability to launch humans from U.S. soil when the space shuttle retired. Now, companies and billionaire entrepreneurs are defining a new space age.

[Read more in this series.](#)

Now, though, the Space Coast is coming back. A host of companies have laid claim to the old government launchpads. Buildings left vacant have been torn down or rebuilt. And the Cape is once again on the verge of sending humans back to space for the first time since 2011, the crescendo of a new, reinvigorated space age that many hope will restore the flag-waving pride of a bygone era.

As new life is being breathed back into this venerable coastline, the resurrection is coming in fits and starts, and in an entirely new form that is far more unstable and unpredictable than the one infused by government cash in the 1960s. Today, the new space age is built on the fortunes of private enterprise, subject to the whims of the economy. And like the next chapter of America's grand adventure in space, the future of the Space Coast is far from guaranteed.



With private companies going to space, the area around Kennedy Space Center is thriving again after years of an economic slump. (Whitney Shefte and Whitney Leaming/The Washington Post)

Having seen the devastation that can come when a town reliant on a single industry buckles, local leaders have gone to great lengths to try to diversify their economy. They've put in special taxing districts and offered incentives to woo all sorts of businesses to create a better sense of stability.

But this is a place where kids go to Astronaut High School, where the area code, 321, is designed to mimic the launch countdown and reminders of the Space Age are everywhere, including monuments to astronauts and streets named Apollo Road and Tranquility Boulevard.

This is where the Space Age was born, with heroes named John Glenn, Neil Armstrong and Sally Ride. This is where the crowds crammed the beaches before launch, counting down in unison, and captured the world's imagination.

And then it didn't.

The question now is: Can it again?



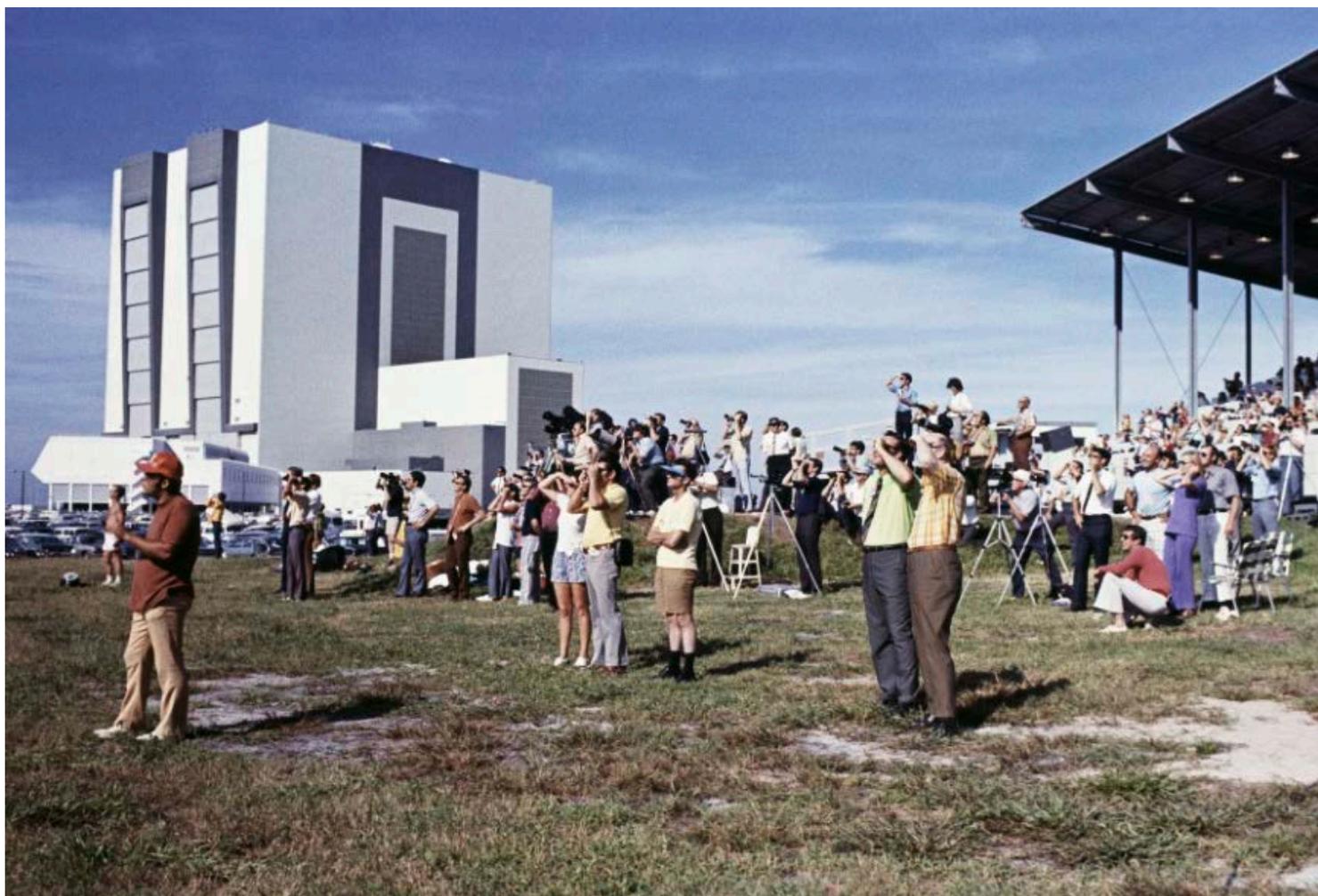
Hundreds stand on a dock on the Indian River in Titusville, Fla., to watch the final launch of the space shuttle Discovery in 2011. NASA has not launched an astronaut from U.S. soil since then. (Jonathan Newton/The Washington Post)

Big rockets, big dreams

At the dawn of the Space Age, this swampy stretch of coastline quickly became a thriving boomtown. Fueled by the Cold War to beat the Soviet Union to the moon, the population soared with engineers and rocket scientists. Astronauts with the “right stuff” trained by running on the beach during the day and partied at night on the Cocoa Beach strip full of jazz clubs and restaurants.

It was “a glamorous honky-tonk town with young girls twisting in bars, gamblers playing poker upstairs, lots of noise,” as Gay Talese wrote in the New York Times in 1965.

“It was total excitement,” said Roy Tharpe, 78, who grew up in the area and started working for NASA in 1963. “It seemed like we were launching rockets every three or four days — and they would explode all the time.”



All eyes and cameras at the Kennedy Space Center press site follow the Apollo 15 liftoff from Launch Complex 39A on July 26, 1971. Later, 39A was used for space shuttle launches. (Associated Press)

If the Cape had a cathedral, it was Launch Complex 39A. Built for the Apollo missions, its spire stood more than 500 feet tall and launched the Apollo astronauts to the moon in July 1969 on a Saturn V rocket so powerful it felt like an earthquake.

After Apollo, 39A was reborn as the host for space shuttle launches. But when the shuttle program was shuttered after a 30-year run, the venerable launch site started rusting away in the salt air, joining the many other abandoned pads that dot the Cape like the ruins of a once-great civilization.

At the peak of the recession, the unemployment rate in Brevard County, where the Space Coast is largely based, spiked to 12 percent. The real estate market plunged. The median price for single-family homes fell from nearly \$250,000 in 2007 to less than \$100,000 by 2011.

“What we didn’t anticipate was that [the shuttle retirement] would coincide with the recession — the deepest, longest recession,” said Lynda Weatherman, the president and CEO of the Space Coast Economic Development Commission. “I saw the numbers, and it was bad. And Florida was a bad place, and Brevard was particularly bad, especially for the housing markets. So we got clobbered.”

By 2013, maintenance on pad 39A was costing NASA \$100,000 a month and even a spokesman admitted at the time that the launchpad had “not been kept up.” Since the facility is on the National Register of Historic Places, it could not be torn down. NASA was desperate to find someone to use it — even a start-up company that improbably was leading the commercialization of space.

SpaceX, the California venture founded by Elon Musk, was looking for a new launchpad and won the rights to take over the site. The company had secured contracts from NASA to carry cargo to the International Space Station and was winning back the commercial

launch contracts that had gone overseas. With a growing manifest, and perhaps a quixotic faith in the future, SpaceX was looking to expand.

□ Areas with private manufacturing ○ Launchpads leased to private companies





Others soon followed.

Blue Origin, founded by Jeff Bezos, had made a last-minute bid to lay claim to 39A, touching off a feud with Musk's SpaceX. But without a rocket capable of flying from the site, Blue Origin was rebuffed. (Bezos owns The Washington Post.)

Instead, it set its sights on another fading relic, launchpad 36, just down the road. Home to 145 launches, including the Mariner missions, which sent probes deep into the solar system, it, too, was wasting away. In 2015, Blue Origin reached a deal to take it over for the new rocket it was developing, called New Glenn.

"The pad had stood silent for more than 10 years — too long," Bezos said at the time. "We can't wait to fix that."

Blue Origin has also built a massive rocket manufacturing facility nearby with plans to expand. Across the street, OneWeb, a satellite company that wants to create a worldwide Internet system delivered from space, also has a new plant.

Boeing has taken over an old space shuttle processing facility where it is building a spacecraft designed to fly NASA astronauts to space from another nearby launchpad.

And NASA is developing a massive rocket, the Space Launch System, that it hopes will help get astronauts to the moon within five years. NASA is scrambling to get its first launch, with the Orion crew capsule, built by Lockheed Martin, off the ground next year.



People arrive to tour the Kennedy Space Center Visitor Complex in Titusville, which draws nearly 2 million visitors a year to the Space Coast. (Jonathan Newton/The Washington Post)

A second act

The future of the Space Coast is also being written by the smaller start-ups beginning to emerge in an industry once dominated by big government programs and military industrial complex contractors.

A Los Angeles-based company called Relativity, founded by former employees from Blue Origin and SpaceX, is working on a rocket that's built entirely by 3-D printing. The goal is to be able to launch small satellites quickly and affordably. Recently, the company signed an agreement to take over the Cape's launchpad 16.

Next door, at launchpad 20, another start-up, Firefly, intends to launch the rockets it plans to build at a nearby facility.

Taken as a whole, the activity is helping NASA fulfill its goals of turning the Kennedy Space Center from a government-dominated facility to one with multiple tenants that showcases a new space economy.

“When you consider that in all of human history, only three nations have sent humans to space: the United States, Russia and China,” said Robert Cabana, the director of NASA’s Kennedy Space Center. “Today, there are several U.S. companies building space vehicles to take humans to space.”

Outside the gates of the Kennedy Space Center, developers are building residential communities up and down the coastline. The unemployment rate dropped to below 4 percent earlier this year. The tax base has bloomed with monthly taxable sales rebounding from a low of nearly \$450 million in 2010 to over \$850 million last year. And housing prices are back where they were before the recession.

The coast was known first and foremost “as a launch site,” said Weatherman, the head of the local economic development commission. “But we knew we could do more than that.”

The city of Titusville put out [a video recently highlighting](#) all the development going on across the town: an 18,000-square-foot day-care center, a 170-unit subdivision, a new Hyatt and a new Marriott.



The Sand Bar in Cocoa Beach is a popular spot for locals and tourists along the Space Coast in Florida. The Space Coast's economy has been picking up after taking a hit from the recession and the loss of the shuttle program. (Jonathan Newton/The Washington Post)

The Miracle City Mall, torn down after the recession, has been rebuilt as a new shopping center, with a new Harley Davidson dealership. Nearby, there's a trendy new brewpub that serves oxtail mac and cheese and fancy cocktails like the "creamsicle fizz."

"We got our very own Starbucks," said Jim Hale, who works as a volunteer with the Air Force Space and Missile Museum here. "That was big. . . . Now everything is new again."

In the end, the double blow of the loss of the shuttle program and the recession was devastating, leaving streets filled with empty buildings. But it was not as bad as it could have been. "We were preparing for a Category 5 hurricane," said Robin Fisher, a former county commissioner. "We got a Category 3."



The economic hits left streets filled with empty buildings, including along Highway 1 just south of the Titusville city limit. At the peak of the recession, the unemployment rate in Brevard County, where the Space Coast is largely based, spiked to 12 percent.

(Jonathan Newton/The Washington Post)

But in other parts of the area, the economy has rebounded. Earlier this year, the unemployment rate dropped to below 4 percent. The tax base has bloomed with monthly taxable sales rebounding from a low of nearly \$450 million in 2010 to over \$850 million last year.

(Jonathan Newton/The Washington Post)

Despite how bad the economic hits were, they could've been worse, some say. To help promote development, the county offered special taxing districts, and new businesses, like a Harley Davidson dealership, have started coming in.

(Jonathan Newton/The Washington Post)

By the time the shuttle program was ending, a new commercial space industry was starting to take form. It was unclear what its future was or how successful it would be. But there was an enthusiasm surrounding it, and local officials embraced it.

“That was the second act for space in our county,” Weatherman said.

Still, space is a risky business. While many new entrants are trying to make their mark on the Cape, not all of them will survive. And for all of the success stories here, there have been missteps. SpaceX has had two rockets explode, one destroying a pad at Cape Canaveral Air Force Station. Then, just recently, one of its spacecraft blew up during an engine test, sending a huge plume of smoke over the Cape.

NASA has turned over a few facilities to private companies that showed promise but ultimately faltered.

“Not everything worked,” Cabana, the director of the Kennedy Space Center, said. Some “lost contracts they thought they were going to get, and the bottom line was they were unsuccessful.”

There is a lot of excitement and enthusiasm for the commercial space industry. The investment money is pouring in. New companies seem to pop up every day. But some

may be reminded of the old maxim: The quickest way to become a millionaire in space is to start out as a billionaire.



The sun rises over Cape Canaveral and the Indian River at the Rotary Riverfront Park along Highway 1 in Titusville. There is a lot of excitement and enthusiasm for the commercial space industry in the area. (Jonathan Newton/The Washington Post)

A new arrival

They had packed the beaches once again. This time for the launch of the Falcon Heavy, the most powerful rocket in the world currently in operation.

At liftoff, it christened pad 39A on a warm Thursday evening in April, thundering away on a towering pillow of smoke.

On the beaches, the crowds came not just for the launch, but a bit of rocket artistry unimaginable a generation ago.

Instead of ditching its rocket boosters into the ocean after flight, SpaceX flies them back so they can be reused — a bit of aerial acrobatics the company says helps lower the cost of spaceflight.

On this day, both side boosters flew back to one of the newest structures on the Cape: a pair of landing pads. The crowds craned their necks skyward to watch the boosters touching down in unison, twin sonic booms announcing their arrival.

Hale, the Air Force museum volunteer, watched from a nearby park with his wife, awestruck, as this new chapter evoked a memory of the old — and a question: “Where is Walter Cronkite when you need him?”

[\[Get notified about The Post’s new podcast about the history of the space race, launching this summer\]](#)



FLORIDA · Published March 11

Cape Canaveral area set for major economic boost as America ramps up space program



By Allie Raffa | Fox News



Economic revival on Florida Space Coast fuels new space race

The future of the Space Coast looked bleak when NASA's Space Shuttle program ended in 2011, but times are changing. Driven by newly-found commercial opportunities in space, dozens of private launch companies and startups have sprung up along Cape Canaveral, bringing new life to the area and the space industry as a whole.

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. -- In 2004, when then-President George W. Bush announced that [NASA](#) would end space exploration at the end of the decade, the region that for 50 years was a major hub for travel to outer space became anxious about its future.

Florida's Space Coast, as it has long been known, had already been battered by the longest recession in U.S. history. The decision to end government space travel meant 30,000 jobs were lost in Brevard County. The unemployment rate, which was about 3 percent in 2006, rose to 12 percent in 2010.

But as the community prepared for the end of an era with [Atlantis' final launch](#) on July 8, 2011, a plan was already in the works to boost the area's economic future.

The community began courting private companies to capitalize on the dilapidated facilities that had once been the launching pads for the Apollo missions.

“When we knew that the shuttle was going to retire...we had a few years to go after and capture those new opportunities for us,” said Lynda Weatherman, president and CEO of the [Space Coast Economic Development Commission](#).

Space Florida, a state-funded agency, and its partners saw a unique opportunity to keep the space industry alive by securing funding and infrastructure upgrades to give commercial companies that wanted to get into human space flight a customer.

EVIDENCE FOR MYSTERIOUS PLANET NINE CONTINUES TO MOUNT, COULD BE 'SOLAR SYSTEM'S MISSING LINK'

NASA was faced with a harsh reality after the shuttle retired -- if the U.S. wanted to send humans back into space, it would have to pay Russia over \$75 million per seat on one of their spacecraft. To bypass this, the state recruited private companies for partnerships to ferry NASA's astronauts to the International Space Station.

In 2014, Tesla founder Elon Musk's SpaceX and Boeing received government contracts for \$2.6 billion and \$4.2 billion, respectively, to develop so-called space taxis.

Suffering major funding cuts, NASA repositioned itself from just a launch site to a place where spacecraft and satellites could be assembled and built, welcoming a whole supply chain of manufacturers to the region's economy.

"We took a hard look at where we were going to be in the future and determined that really our best path to success was to diversify to include commercial space along with the government space activities that we are planning here," said Tom Engler, Planning and development director for NASA's John F. Kennedy Space Center. "We went out and started seeking partnerships with commercial space companies...which is a big change from the way we did business here."

As of 2018, 21 firms have signed deals to bring up to 3,000 high-paying jobs to the area, according to [Space Florida](#). In exchange, the state has offered subsidies to build up infrastructure and make Florida the place for space.

"Before, everything was built and designed elsewhere and then came here for launch," said Dale Ketchum, Space Florida's vice president of governmental and external affairs. "We're no longer reliant on the federal government as the only customer."

The space industry shifted as well. Space no longer revolves around government programs. It is now a commercial industry and new technology, like reusable rockets and small satellites, are driving a large part of that.

"The space race that drove our earlier success is coming back, but in a different format," said Ketchum.

He calls the shift a "renaissance" driven by commercial enterprise, allowing for lower costs, resulting in more launches and jobs—a far more sustainable plan, he said.

NASA ACCURATELY CALCULATES MILKY WAY'S WEIGHT

Today, deep-pocketed investors have built up dozens of private launch companies along Cape Canaveral, the area on Florida's coastline east of Orlando that includes Kennedy Space Center and Cape Canaveral Air Force Station.

Texas-based [Firefly Aerospace](#) was the latest company to [announce a move](#), one of nine companies selected by NASA last year to vie for a chunk of \$2.6 billion to develop lunar exploration robots with a \$52 million development project that will include more than 200 jobs.



Today, deep-pocketed investors have built up dozens of private launch companies along Cape Canaveral, Fla. (Fox News)

Firefly joins a long list of high-profile neighbors such as SpaceX, Blue Origin, OneWeb, a communications company building a satellite manufacturing facility, United Launch Alliance and supplier RUAG Space USA, among others.

"I think people are recognizing that there's genuinely a commercial opportunity in space. You can actually make money in space," said Firefly Aerospace Founder and Director Mark Watt. "This isn't just about national pride. This isn't just 'we're going to go to the moon because it's hard,' but we can go to the moon because we can make money."

Twenty launches took off from the area last year, and companies are aiming to launch more than two dozen more by 2020. In comparison, the shuttle program launched 135 missions in its 30-year history.

[CLICK HERE TO GET THE FOX NEWS APP](#)

“The industry as a whole is in a very exciting time. We’re seeing a much more expanded industrial base for lift and a greater commercialization of space,” said Tory Bruno, president and CEO of [United Launch Alliance](#), a private company that builds and launches military, commercial and NASA payloads.

Watt said there are many reasons companies are choosing Florida over other U.S. spaceports in California, Alaska and Virginia.



Vandenberg Air Force Base in California, Wallops Flight Facility in Virginia, The Pacific Spaceport Complex in Alaska and NASA's Kennedy Space Center round out the top spaceports across the United States. (Fox News)

“Florida is geographically blessed with its location and its coastline and that is a perfect trajectory to fly to space from,” he said.

The Sunshine State is also the only state in the nation capable of human launch activity and Watt said its available workforce, preexisting infrastructure, facilities and a competitive financial package from the state made the choice a no-brainer.

Central Florida’s colleges and universities also feed the Space Coast’s appetite for a specialized workforce.

"The University of Central Florida provides more engineering students to the aerospace industry than any other university in the country," said Ketchum.

As the industry continues undergoing drastic changes, experts say Florida is in a better position now than ever to become a world leader in the space race.

"There are things that NASA does very well, but there are things that they do as a federal government that the private sector can do faster, cheaper and better," Ketchum said. "Florida is in a pretty good position to be driving this train, at least for this country, if not for the world."

In 2018, President Trump proposed a [Space Force](#) to be the sixth branch of the military, which Florida's Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis asked to headquarter in the Sunshine State. That could be another potential boost to the space industry.

But it will be up to Congress to approve the initiative.

NASA, along with their commercial partners, plans to launch the [first American-made and manned spacecraft since 2011](#) within the next year. The launch is estimated to be around the time that the U.S. celebrates the 50th anniversary of the Apollo lunar landing.

Allie Raffa joined Fox News in 2016 and currently serves a multimedia reporter based in Tampa, Florida.

AMERICAN JUSTICE

Stream America's Most Infamous Crimes

New Shows all month long!

FOX NATION

Start Your Free Trial ▶

Scott Peterson
The Fuhrman Diaries Season 3

Susan Smith
The Big Story: The Shocking Story of Susan Smith

Richard Ramirez
Beware the Nightstalker

The promotional banner features three mugshot-style portraits of individuals against a height chart background. The names and associated titles are displayed in black boxes below each portrait. The Fox Nation logo and a 'Start Your Free Trial' button are on the right side.

U.S.

Crime
Military
Education
Terror
Immigration
Economy
Personal Freedoms
Fox News Investigates

Opinion

Entertainment

Celebrity News
Movies
TV News
Music News
Style News
Entertainment Video

World

U.N.
Conflicts
Terrorism
Disasters
Global Economy
Environment
Religion
Scandals

Politics

Executive
Senate
House
Judiciary
Foreign policy
Polls
Elections

Business

Markets
Politics
Technology
Features
Business Leaders

Lifestyle

Food + Drink
Cars + Trucks
Travel + Outdoors
House + Home
Fitness + Well-being
Style + Beauty
Family

Tech

Security
Innovation
Drones
Computers
Video Games
Military Tech

TV

Shows
Personalities
Watch Live
Full Episodes
Show Clips
News Clips

Other

Fox Nation
Fox News Shop
Fox News Go
Fox News Radio
Newsletters
Alerts
Podcasts
Apps & Products

Science

Archaeology
Air & Space
Planet Earth
Wild Nature
Natural Science
Dinosaurs

Health

Healthy Living
Medical Research
Mental Health
Cancer
Heart Health
Children's Health

About

Contact Us
Careers
Fox Around the World
Advertise With Us
Ad Choices
Media Relations
Compliance



[Terms of Use](#) | [Updated Privacy Policy\(What's Changed\)](#) | [Closed Captioning Policy](#) | [Help](#) | [Contact Us](#)

This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed. ©2019 FOX News Network, LLC. All rights reserved. All market data delayed 20 minutes.