

LAKE COUNTY, FL

STATE LEGISLATIVE POSITIONS

2016

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LEGISLATIVE DELEGATION,

On behalf of the Lake County Commission, I would like to request your consideration and support of several initiatives in our County for this upcoming Legislative budget process.

Enclosed are details regarding 15 priorities in three key areas: Economic Development, Health and Human Services, and Public Infrastructure.

As you will see, our requests relate directly to the immediate and future needs of Lake County residents, with a focus on workforce training, housing and mental health assistance, water quality and care, transportation for the disadvantaged and major roadway projects, to name a few.

We would like to thank the Florida Legislature for its continued support, and respectfully ask our esteemed delegation for consideration of these matters which are essential to improving the quality of life for our citizens.

Sincerely,



Jimmy Conner, *Chairman*
Lake County Board of Commissioners



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



LAKE COUNTY CENTER FOR ADVANCED MANUFACTURING AT LAKE TECHNICAL COLLEGE

REQUEST

\$2.8
MILLION

for the construction of the Lake County Center for Advanced Manufacturing at Lake Technical College in the City of Eustis.

ANALYSIS SUMMARY:

- The project would support workforce needs in manufacturing. The total cost of the project is \$4.6 million, with previous contributions of \$1.8 million.
- This year's request would complete the project.

BACKGROUND:

Over the last two and half years, the Lake County Economic Development staff has visited well over 800 local businesses to determine their workforce needs. Lake County is in need of trained manufacturing skilled trade employees. Specific skills in extremely high demand are welders, computer-numeric-controlled (CNC) machinists, fabricators, shop workers, and quality control and production supervisors.

With the highest concentration of manufacturing employees in all of Central Florida, Lake County's economy is especially sensitive to the needs of the manufacturing sector, which currently accounts for almost six percent of Lake County's workforce; making it Lake County's second-largest industry sector. Unfortunately, there is a serious shortage of skilled workers/technicians in the manufacturing field which is inhibiting the growth potential in the sector.

Manufacturing, machining and welding are increasingly high-tech skills requiring the postsecondary training/certifications. Welders and machinists must be able to operate robots and other automated systems that use lasers, electronic beams, highly computerized machines and complex software programs that are vital to the successful operation of the processes. More and more companies are searching for workers who are skilled in these new systems as the technology continues to evolve and as the aging workforce enters retirement.

Lake County's proposed solution to the workforce issues facing Central Florida and the State of Florida is to develop a regionally serving manufacturing incubator and advanced manufacturing and IT training program within the county. This would enable Lake County to support local manufacturing and IT businesses, and attract new manufacturing employers to the region in a way that historically has been unachievable. Such a program could be further enhanced through a partnership with Lake County's Lake Technical College (Lake Tech), which would create a seamless strategy for providing workers with state-of-the-art training, and IT companies with the tools, training and infrastructure they need to create financially stable companies.

The goal will be job creation and business development, and the skilled workforce will be ready for employment. In addition, the training provided in the facility will also provide a skilled workforce for those manufacturing and IT companies that already are established in the region but who are searching for workers. The combination of classroom and workplace learning is the ideal instructional strategy in order to prepare the 21st-century middle skilled employee. The Center has acquired a 3-D virtual CNC machining software to start training students this fall. Lake Tech currently has a waiting list for welding and machining students without space to train them. To date, the state has allocated \$1.4 million this project. The requested funding will complete the renovation and expansion of the Center for Advanced Manufacturing at Lake Technical College.

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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

STATE AID TO LIBRARIES OPERATING GRANT

REQUEST

\$27.4
MILLION

Restore statewide funding levels to \$27.4 million (FY 2014), and work towards the 2001 funding levels of \$33.4 million.

ANALYSIS:

- This year's funding is \$22.3 million statewide.
- Lake County is estimated to receive \$200,000, a reduction of \$80,000 from FY 2014.

BACKGROUND:

The State Aid to Libraries Operating Grant program is a continuing state grant program, authorized under Chapter 257, Florida Statutes. The State Aid Grants provide financial encouragement for all 67 counties to provide freely accessible public library services to those taxed for the service. It fosters the growth and innovation of new ideas to provide library and information services to the residents of Florida based on local service plans. The law authorizes a match of up to 25 cents on each dollar of local expenditure for library services. The state match reached a high of 11 cents on the dollar in FY 98/99 and has declined since then. After an increase to \$27,409,823 in FY 14/15, this year the appropriation for the entire state was reduced to \$22,298,834. This will result in a reduction in the allocation to Lake County from \$274,233 for FY 14/15 to an estimated \$195,419 for FY 15/16.

In Lake County the State Aid Grants are used to support system-wide technology infrastructure including public access computers, subscriptions to online reference databases for public use, and county-wide literacy programs. At the same time that citizens are in greater need of government services, public libraries are increasingly the "go to" places when Floridians need to access the internet and government services. This funding also supports education and reading, as libraries are a critical support for school-age children and a resource for life success for learners of all

ages. Public libraries also use State Aid Grants to help the local economy by providing economic development resources to small businesses and job seekers, and by implementing new technology and innovative solutions. Since the allocation for Lake County will be an estimated \$78,814 less than last year, this may mean a reduction in the amount of computers we are able to replace, reduced database access, or a reduction in some of the countywide services offered through libraries.

Additionally, an appropriation at the current level makes it possible for the state to receive approximately \$8 million in federal Library Services and Technology Act grants. This money funds many statewide services that directly affect local citizens, such as the Florida Electronic Library reference website and the 24/7 chat reference service.

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HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES





HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

RE-ENTRY PILOT PROGRAM

REQUEST

\$456,000 total (\$228,000 each year for the next two years).

\$456,000

ANALYSIS:

- A re-entry program will provide coordination between governmental and non-governmental agencies to reduce the recidivism of persons released from incarceration.
- Will reduce the cost of incarceration by providing resources to help ensure persons released become productive members of society.

BACKGROUND:

This project has been proposed by the Lake County Public Safety Coordinating Council and was presented to the Lake County Legislative Delegation in January 2015. The project proposes the creation of an offender re-entry program that would coordinate services for individuals re-entering our community from incarceration by providing coordination of support services such as job training, transportation, employment, clothing, healthcare and other services provided by nongovernmental and governmental agencies. The program is expected to reduce the cost of incarceration of re-offenders by providing needed services.

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HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

STATE HOMELESS GRANT FUNDING

REQUEST

Increase and/or fully fund the Challenge Grant and reinstate the Housing Homeless Recovery (HHR) Grant.

FULLY FUND PROGRAM

ANALYSIS:

- **The state's Challenge Grant funds have been reduced, and the HHR grant has been eliminated. This combination results in a \$850,000 funding reduction impact annually in housing assistance for homeless families in Lake County.**

BACKGROUND:

During the past year, the number of homeless families has increased dramatically due to a lack of jobs, increased rents, and diminishing safety nets that were provided at a local level for low-income working families. Lake County needs an increase in funding to assist in providing safe, decent housing and adequate support services for our homeless families. During the previous funding year, the Challenge Grant was partially funded and the Housing Homeless Recovery (HHR) grants were eliminated. The reduction in the Challenge Grant and elimination of the HHR grant funds to Lake County has had an impact of up to \$850,000 annually. If fully funded, 250 families could receive housing assistance and support services with these grant dollars.

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HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

AFFORDABLE HOUSING SHIP FUNDING

REQUEST

\$2.8 million to fully restore the State Housing Initiative Program (SHIP) funds for affordable housing.

FULLY FUND PROGRAM

ANALYSIS:

- SHIP was designed to use doc stamp fees to provide local governments a funding source to address affordable housing.
- Lake County has been allocated \$1.5 million for FY 2015/16, which is only 53 percent of the calculated formula.
- In recent years, the remaining funds were redirected to help balance the state's budget.

BACKGROUND:

The State Housing Initiative Program (SHIP) is a state funded affordable housing trust fund designed to provide support to local jurisdictions in an overall effort to create and sustain affordable housing through the collection of doc stamp fees. During the past six years, the funds have been redirected in an effort to balance the state's budget. During this funding year, the state provided SHIP funds at 53 percent allocation of the calculated formula. Lake County requests full restoration of the SHIP funds to provide adequately for its families in need. If the

SHIP program was fully funded, Lake County could provide assistance for up to 200 families annually, as well as provide an economic boost to hundreds of contractors and laborers that have suffered in the downturn of the housing market.

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HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

MEDICAID-WAIVER PROGRAM FOR TRANSPORT OF THE DISABLED

REQUEST

FULLY FUND PROGRAM

Fully fund the Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD), so that it can pay the actual costs of providing transportation disadvantaged services pursuant to Florida Statute 427.0135.

ANALYSIS:

- Lake County works with Sunrise Arc to provide trips under the Medicaid-Waiver program for the APD. The County is being reimbursed at a rate far lower than actual cost.
- Should trip volume remain constant for the year, the County's reimbursement will fall short by \$127,000 of actual costs.

BACKGROUND:

Currently Lake County provides trips under the Medicaid-Waiver Program for the Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD) at tiered rate structure, based upon mileage. Trips 0-6 miles are paid at \$8.15 per trip; trips 7-16 miles are paid \$10.19 per trip; and trips 17 plus miles and greater are paid at \$15.28 per trip. Lake County is being reimbursed at a rate far lower than its actual trip costs. Based upon our rate model it currently costs the County \$25.57 for each trip provided.

Florida Statute Chapter 427.0135 (2) states that "Purchasing Agencies are required to pay the rates established in the service plan or negotiated statewide contract, unless the purchasing agency has completed the procedure for using an alternative provider and demonstrated that a proposed alternative provider can provide a more cost-effective transportation service of comparable quality and standards or unless the agency has satisfied the requirements of Subsection 3."

(3) Not procure transportation disadvantaged services without initially negotiating with the commission, as provided in s. 287.057(5)(f)13, or unless otherwise authorized by statute. If the purchasing agency, after consultation with the commission, determines that it cannot reach mutually acceptable contract terms with the commission, the purchasing agency may contract for the same transportation services provided in a more cost-effective manner and of comparable or higher quality and standards. The Medicaid agency shall implement this subsection in a manner consistent with s. 409.908(18) and as otherwise limited or directed by the General Appropriations Act.

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Lake County Community Services Department

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HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

TRANSPORTATION DISADVANTAGED PROGRAM

REQUEST

Lake County is requesting to keep the funding for this program intact at \$671,713.

\$671,713

ANALYSIS:

- With this requested state funding from the Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged, and a local match of \$74,635, a total of 40,000 trips can be provided.

BACKGROUND:

The Transportation Disadvantaged Program was established by the Legislature in 1979 and enhanced in 1989 with the creation of the independent Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged, and the establishment of the Transportation Disadvantaged Trust Fund.

The Transportation Disadvantaged Trust Fund is administered by the Commission for Transportation Disadvantaged, pursuant to Section 427.0159, Florida Statutes. The purpose of the Transportation Disadvantaged Trust Fund is to provide a dedicated funding source for the operational and planning expenses of the Commission in carrying out its legislative responsibilities, and to provide transportation opportunities for non-sponsored transportation disadvantaged citizens.

The Transportation Disadvantaged Program provides for the availability of efficient, cost-effective, and quality transportation services for transportation disadvantaged individuals. Through coordination of multiple funding sources at the local level, the funds are maximized to provide transportation disadvantaged individuals with the vital transportation services they need.

Florida's seniors, the disabled, low income, and children at risk who have no other forms of transportation depend on the Transportation Disadvantaged Trust Fund to assist them with daily transportation needs.

Lake County relies on these funds to provided transportation services for medical appointments, food shopping and other nutritional activities, employment, job training, and educational purposes.

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PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE





PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE

SORRENTO AVENUE – “COMPLETE STREETS” PROJECT

REQUEST

\$5.0
MILLION

\$5 million for the design, right-of-way, and construction of the Sorrento Avenue Complete Streets Project.

ANALYSIS:

- When the Wekiva Parkway is completed in 2019 in Lake County, the existing State Road 46 (Sorrento Avenue) in the Sorrento and Mount Plymouth areas will be transferred to Lake County to own and maintain.
- The Lake County Board of County Commissioners, working with the Sorrento and Mount Plymouth communities, is developing a master street corridor plan which includes Complete Street Concepts.
- The plan will provide the most efficient and safe corridor to accommodate vehicle traffic, bicycles, pedestrians, public transit and parking; and will improve the ability for the expansion of retail, commercial, recreational, and other economic drivers in the community.

BACKGROUND:

The Wekiva Parkway in Lake County is scheduled to begin construction in 2016, with all segments completed by 2019. When the Parkway is completed in Lake County, the existing State Road 46 in the Sorrento and Mount Plymouth areas will be transferred to Lake County to own and maintain. The FDOT and Lake County have an executed agreement which also states that State Road 46, or Sorrento Avenue, as it is known, will be resurfaced prior to the transfer.

The Lake County Board of County Commissioners, working with the Sorrento and Mount Plymouth communities, is developing a master street corridor plan for Sorrento Ave which includes Complete Street Concepts for the roadway. Complete Streets is an FDOT initiated term to explain how vehicle traffic, bicycles, pedestrian, transit, and parking work in context to provide the most efficient and safe corridor for all users. Complete Streets concepts also improve the ability for the expansion of retail, commercial, recreational, and other economic drivers in the community.

This project will also be coordinated with the realignment of County Road 437, funded for a PD&E study this year, and also with the Lake Wekiva multi-use trail which is currently undergoing a PD&E study. The FDOT also completed a Roadway Network Management Plan and study for this area in 2013 which incorporated impacts from the Wekiva Parkway on area roads. The Following link provides the overall concept plan layout:

ftp://ftp.lakecountyfl.gov/Public_Works/Engineering/SorrentoAvenueCompleteStreetsPlan/SorrentoAvenueCompleteStreetsProject.pdf

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PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE

CITRUS GROVE ROAD

REQUEST

\$14.6
MILLION

\$14.6 million for construction of Phase I and Phase II of Citrus Grove Road.

ANALYSIS:

- Citrus Grove Road will provide a major east west connection to the Florida Turnpike Interchange, with scheduled completion set for 2017.
- The project is currently funded for both engineering and right-of-way expenses.

BACKGROUND:

The Citrus Grove Road proposed improvement project is within the City of Minneola and unincorporated Lake County. The roadway improvement will provide a major east west connection to the Florida Turnpike Interchange which has been awarded a design/build contract and is scheduled to be completed in mid-year 2017. Citrus Grove Road is an existing two lane substandard roadway, which will be improved to a four lane urban designed arterial road. The project length is approximately 2.3 miles.

This project will improve traffic circulation for this area of Lake County, and will support a regionally significant employment center in south Lake County. This project will connect U.S. Highway 27 to the soon-to-be-constructed Florida Turnpike Minneola Interchange. There are no other viable east/west alternatives for U.S. Highway 27 traffic to connect to the Florida Turnpike. The Minneola Interchange project is a vital economic development project for Lake County and the Central Florida region. The future development adjacent to this interchange has the potential to create of 7,400 direct and indirect jobs and over \$1 billion of economic impact for the region at its completion.

The project is currently funded for both engineering and right-of-way expenses. The remaining needs of the project are phase I construction funding in the amount of \$4.7 million, and phase II construction funding in the amount of \$9.9 million.

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PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE

COUNTY ROAD 466A – PHASE III

REQUEST

\$10.5
MILLION

\$10.5 million needed for construction of Phase III of County Road 466A.

ANALYSIS:

- Phase III will complete this four-lane project from U.S. Highway 27 west to U.S. Highway 301.
- Phase I of the project is programmed for construction bid in December 2015. Phase II is in construction phase, with completion set for May 2016. Phase III is currently funded for Engineering and Right-of-Way acquisition.

BACKGROUND:

County Road 466A is within the City of Fruitland Park and unincorporated Lake County, and provides regional traffic connectivity from U.S. Highway 301 in Sumter County to U.S. Highway 27/441 in Lake County.

The proposed improvement completes the construction of four-lanes of this important roadway link. This project will improve traffic flow and will support regionally significant employment centers in The Villages of Fruitland Park, the City of Fruitland Park, Town of Lady Lake, and Sumter County.

Phases I and II of the project are currently funded and programmed for right-of-way acquisition and construction. Phase I of the project is programmed for construction bid in December 2015. Phase II of the project is in construction phase by The Villages and is to be completed in May 2016. Phase III of the project is approximately 1.9 miles and is currently funded for engineering and right-of-way acquisition.

The phase III segment is in need of construction funding in the amount of \$10.5 million. The detailed project length is to begin 700 feet from The Villages entrance to 300 feet east of Century Avenue. The project will complete a four-lane roadway from U.S. Highway 27 west to U.S. Highway 301 in Sumter County.

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PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE

EAST LAKE COMMUNITY PARK CENTRAL SEWER CONNECTION

REQUEST

\$1.0
MILLION

\$1 million to support the connection of the 34-acre East Lake Community Park in Sorrento, to the municipal wastewater system provided by the City of Eustis.

ANALYSIS:

- The East Lake Community Park is located within the Wekiva River Basin Watershed.
- This is a shovel ready project and would be a one-time capital expense.

BACKGROUND:

The East Lake Community Park is located in Sorrento and is within the Wekiva River Basin Watershed. The park provides active recreation venues for the East Lake County area. The project, intended to protect water quality within the Wekiva River Basin Watershed, would include engineering, testing, and installation of a lift station to connect to the City of Eustis Central Wastewater System with a new four-inch force main. Preliminary estimates have been completed. This is a shovel-ready project and would be a one-time capital expense.

CONTACT:

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Lake County Public Resources Department

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PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE

MOUNT PLYMOUTH/ SORRENTO CENTRAL WATER & WASTEWATER FEASIBILITY STUDY

REQUEST

\$300,000

\$300,000 for a feasibility study to examine the viability and cost to implement a community-wide central water and wastewater system.

ANALYSIS:

- The community is currently served by septic systems with a few subdivisions being serviced by individual wastewater treatment plants.
- To encourage economic development in this community, a central water and wastewater system is necessary.

BACKGROUND:

The Mount Plymouth-Sorrento community, located on State Road 46 in East Lake County, is located in the Wekiva River Basin. Lake County recently approved the creation of a Community Redevelopment Area for this designated special community. The community is currently served by septic systems with a few subdivisions being serviced by individual wastewater treatment plants.

This project proposes a feasibility study to examine the viability and cost to implement a community-wide central wastewater system.

CONTACT:

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Lake County Community Services Department

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PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE

FERNDALE PRESERVE

REQUEST

\$1.5
MILLION

\$1.5 million to design and construct a one-mile trail at Ferndale Preserve to connect the park entrance to park amenities on the western shore of Lake Apopka.

ANALYSIS:

- **Planned lakefront capital improvements include an observation tower, fishing pier, and canoe/kayak launch, but there is no connection from the park entrance/parking area (currently only accessible from the lake).**

BACKGROUND:

Ferndale Preserve is a 196-acre conservation and restoration property on the western shore of Lake Apopka. Lake County has included \$397,000 in the FY 2015/2016 budget for lakefront capital improvements, including an observation tower, fishing pier, and canoe/kayak launch. However, until a multipurpose trail can be constructed to connect the park entrance and the lakefront, the amenities will only be accessible from Lake Apopka. Funding in the amount of \$1.5 million is needed to provide access to the lake from the entrance parking area.

Lake Apopka is becoming a prime location for ecotourism. Lake County held a Lake Apopka Summit in February 2013 to discuss the importance of the St. Johns River Water Management District's Lake Apopka North Shore Restoration property to the surrounding area, highlighting ecotourism opportunities. Concurrently, the City of Apopka began a planning process which culminated in the completion of the "2014 Lake Apopka Ecotourism Concept Plan." The process included participation from more than a dozen state and local agencies, non-profit organizations and other stakeholders.

The result was an outpouring of support for ecotourism planning in and around the North Shore Restoration Area and the recent formation of the Coalition for Lake Apopka Ecotourism. The Coalition has identified Ferndale Preserve improvements as a priority for funding and completion.

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PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE

HELENA RUN PRESERVE

REQUEST

\$600,000 to purchase 20 acres adjacent to the existing 18.6-acre Helena Run Preserve.

\$600,000

ANALYSIS:

- The lake on the existing 18.6 acres is not easily accessible to the public.
- The adjacent 20-acre upland parcel would allow for an entrance, parking and recreational activities.

BACKGROUND:

The Helen Run Preserve is approximately 18.6 acres. The county-owned conservation property is located south of Leesburg on U.S. Highway 27 in west Lake County, and consists almost exclusively of forested wetlands. The preserve forms the northeast shoreline of Helena Run, a meandering stream and designated Blueway that begins at Lake Denham and empties into Lake Harris. The site is also important to Florida's Native American history and Lake County's pioneer history when steamboats were a vital mode of transportation.

Due to the location and geology of the property it is not easily accessible to the public for passive recreation and educational purposes. An adjacent 20-acre upland parcel is for sale, which would be conducive for an entrance, parking and recreational activities such as fishing, canoeing/kayaking, picnics and outdoor educational projects for local citizens as well as tourists. Site improvements and amenities including an entry road, parking lot, floating platform, boardwalk and trail system,

canoe/kayak launch, fencing, and restrooms are estimated at \$800,000 and will be made as local funds become available.

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REGIONAL

The bottom portion of the image features a complex geometric pattern composed of various-sized triangles. The color palette is muted, consisting of several shades of teal, from light mint to dark forest green, and various tones of grey, from light to dark charcoal. The triangles are arranged in a way that creates a sense of depth and movement, with some pointing upwards and others downwards, creating a jagged, mountain-like silhouette against the dark grey background.



REGIONAL

FLORIDA ADVANCED MANUFACTURING RESEARCH CENTER

REQUEST

\$150
MILLION

Support University of Central Florida's and Osceola County's request for funding of a regional advanced manufacturing hub in Central Florida.

Their request is for \$150 million, which includes \$25 million to complete construction and \$125 million for operating costs for the first five years.

ANALYSIS:

- Phase I funding (\$120 million) has been secured to begin construction.
- Initial construction will include a 100,000 square-foot, state-of-the-art facility located in Osceola County.
- Will focus on next-generation advanced manufacturing technology.

BACKGROUND:

This project will benefit the region by developing a presence for advanced manufacturing in Central Florida, and will attract the kinds of private investment and clusters of activity that have made SEMATECH's existing two laboratory hubs what they are today: Austin, a recognized tech powerhouse; and, Albany, the materials science and nanotechnology epicenter.

As future technology development moves into the next era of manufacturing, the hub would have the potential to surpass current fabrication centers, making Florida the national model for advanced manufacturing research partnerships. In addition, the Central Florida region would

benefit long-term from thousands of high wage jobs, with earnings \$380 million higher than in the baseline scenario and total earnings \$1.1 billion higher, and generate greatly expanded state and local tax revenues.

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