

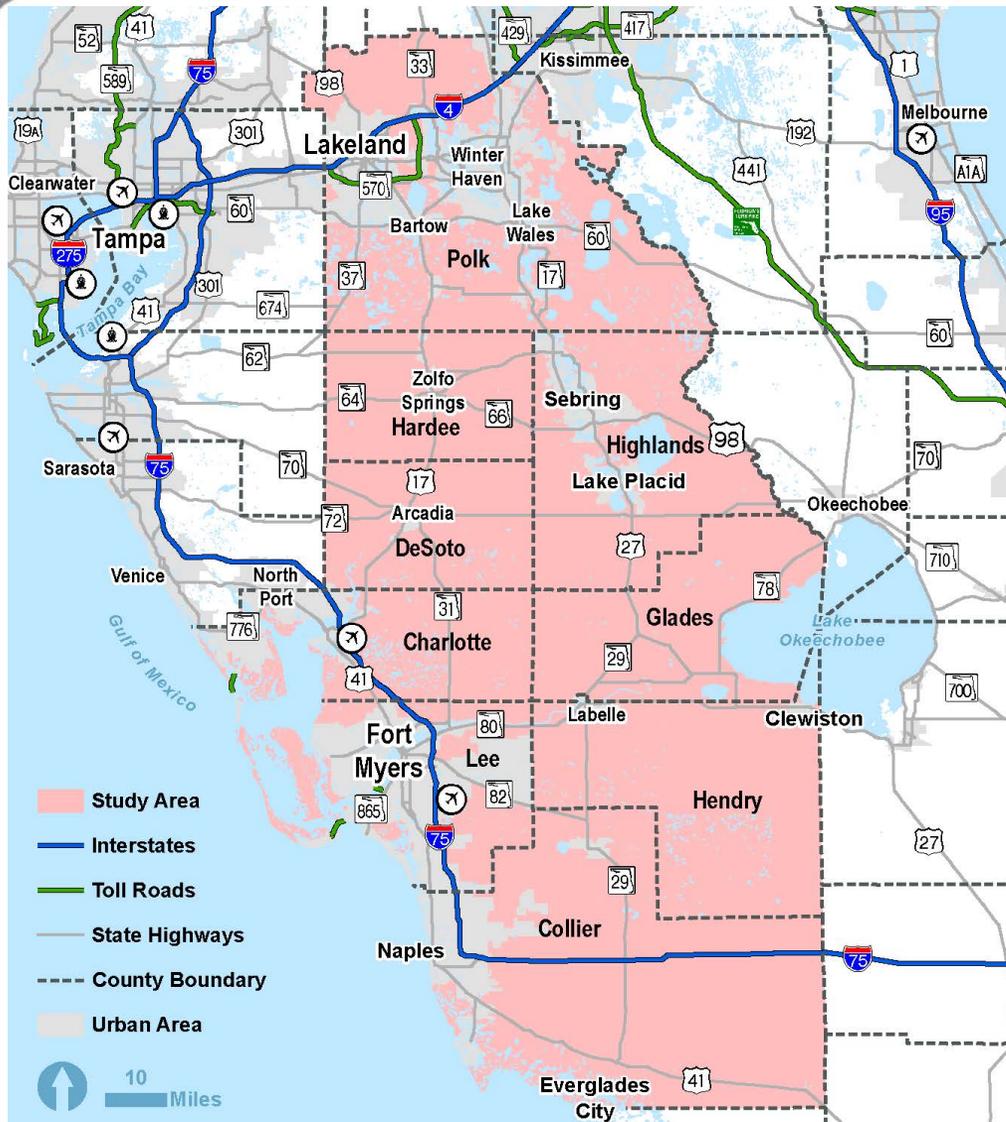


Southwest-Central Florida Connector

Study Area Overview



August 27, 2019



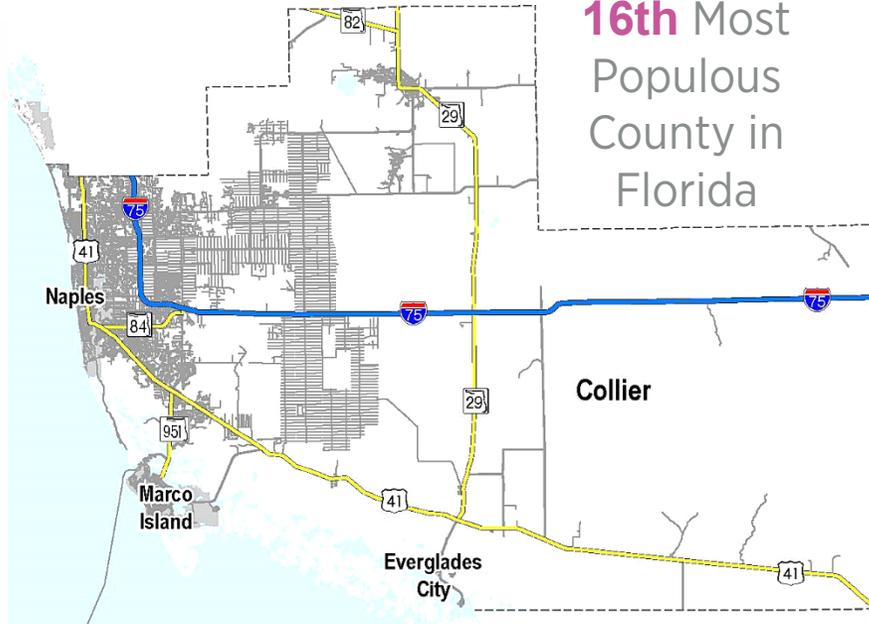
9 Counties, 36 Cities and Towns

- **Counties:** Polk, Hardee, DeSoto, Highlands, Charlotte, Glades, Lee, Hendry, & Collier

Land Area: 9,511 square miles

The inland area is known as “The Florida Heartland”

16th Most
Populous
County in
Florida



- Established in **1923**
- County Seat: **Naples**
- Known to the region as “**the Paradise Coast**”
- By 1880’s **Naples and Marco Island** already popular vacation spots
- This area has a wide diversity of natural habitats – estuaries, mangroves, cypress swamps, forests, and beaches

Top Industries: Retail Trade, Health Care & Social Assistance, Accommodation & Food Services, Real Estate, Construction



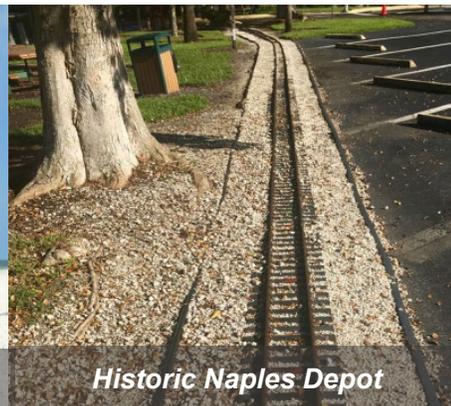
Freedom Park



Boutique Shopping



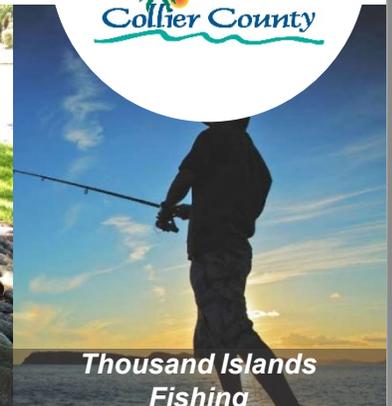
Beaches



Historic Naples Depot



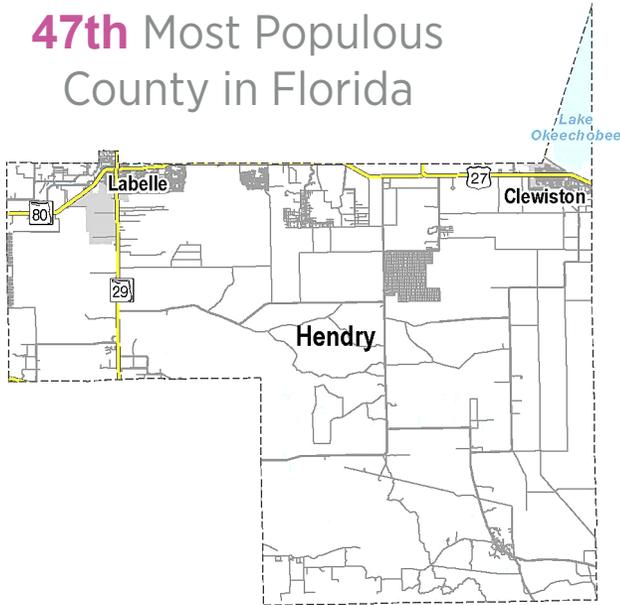
Banyan Trees



Thousand Islands
Fishing



47th Most Populous
County in Florida



- Established in **1923** and named after Captain Francis Hendry “Cattle King of South Florida”
- County Seat: **LaBelle**
- **72% of the land** in Hendry County used for agriculture
- Lake Okeechobee is the **#1 place for Bass Fishing** in the state

Top Industries: Forestry & Fishing, Government, Retail Trade, Accommodation & Food Services, Health Care & Social Assistance



Wildlife Habitat



Clewiston Inn



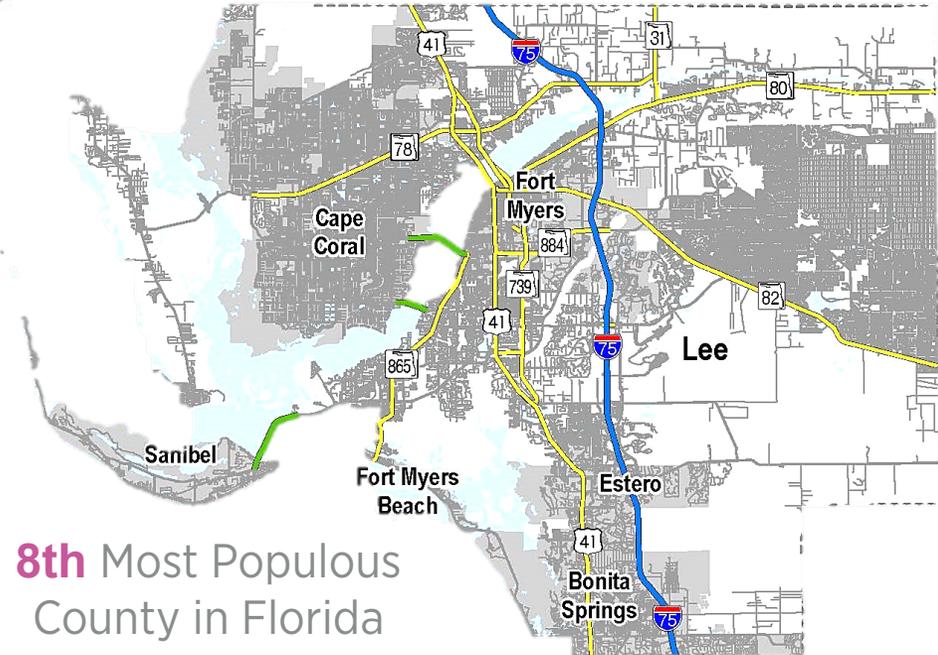
Birding



Rodeo

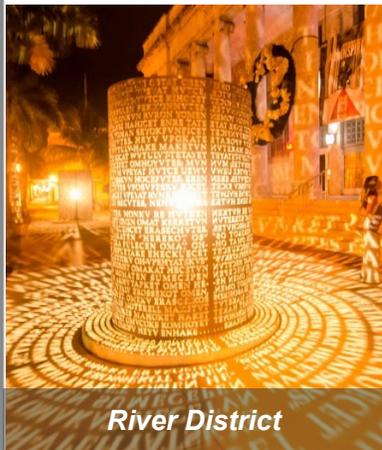


Veterans Memorial Park



- **Ponce De Leon** explored the area between 1513 & 1521
- County Seat: **Fort Myers**
- Established in **1887** from Monroe County
- Downtown Fort Myers is known regionally as **“the City of Palms”**

Top Industries: Retail Trade, Government, Accommodation & Food Services, Construction, Health Care & Social Assistance



Charlotte County Highlights

29th Most Populous
County in Florida



- Charlotte Harbor was initially platted in **1860's**, but Charlotte County was **established in 1921**
- County Seat: **Punta Gorda**
- Charlotte Harbor includes one of the world's **largest marine estuaries** at 270 sq. miles

Top Industries: Retail Trade, Health Care & Social Assistance, Accommodation & Food Services, Government, Real Estate



Babcock Ranch



Adventures



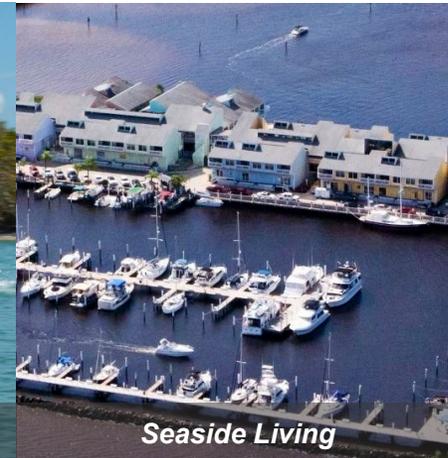
Arts & Culture



Gasparilla Island State
Park



Watersports



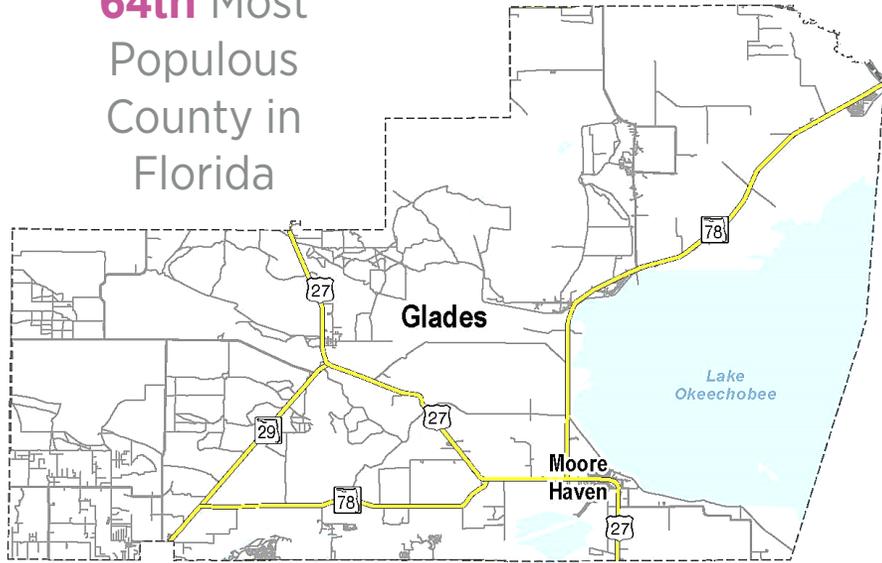
Seaside Living



Charlotte Performing
Arts Center

Glades County Highlights

64th Most
Populous
County in
Florida



- Established from DeSoto County in **1921**
- County Seat: **Moore Haven**
- Glades County fronts more than 30 miles of **Lake Okeechobee**
- Lakeport is locally known as “**Fish Capital of Florida**”

Top Industries: Government, Manufacturing, Construction, Transportation & Warehousing



Sugarcane Harvesting



Nicodemus Slough



Commerce



Caloosahatchee River

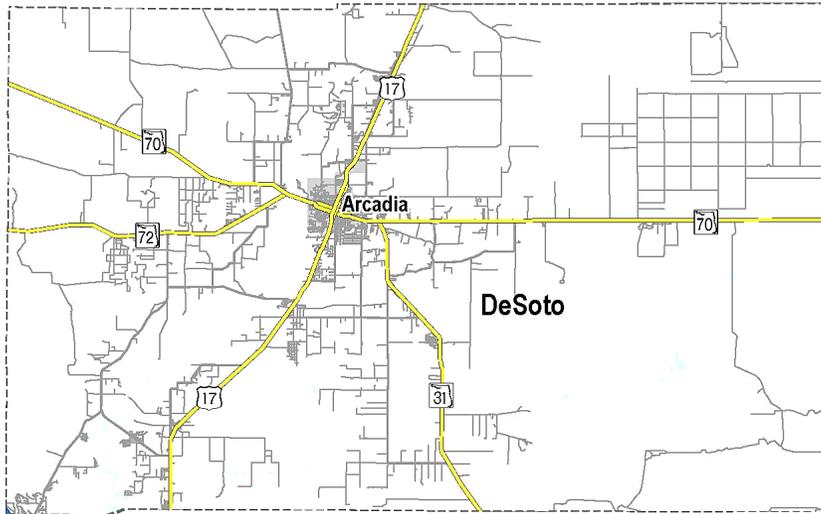


Logistics



Canoeing

48th Most Populous County in Florida



- Established in **1887** and named after **Spanish explorer Hernando de Soto**
- County Seat: **Arcadia**
- City of Arcadia is known for its antique district of **more than 25 antique stores**
- DeSoto is **one of Florida's leading producers** of watermelon, blueberries, peaches, olives and tomatoes

Top Industries: Forestry & Fishing, Government, Transportation & Warehousing



Peace River Valley



Historic District



Farmer's Markets



Car Shows



Historic Train Depot

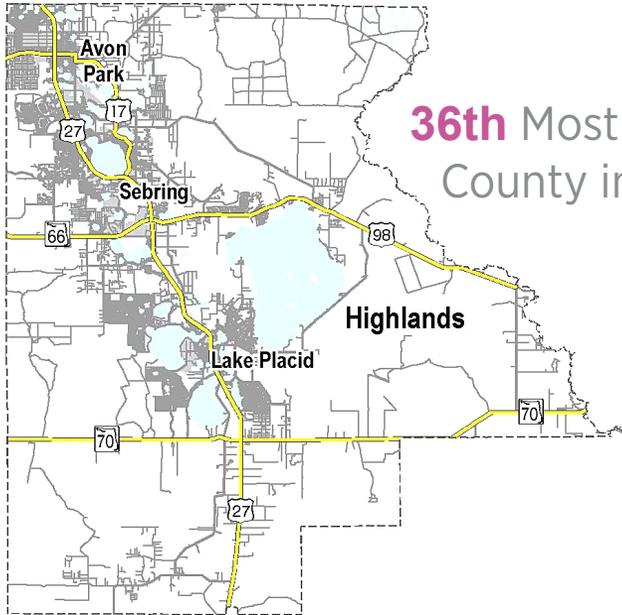


CSX Peace River Trestle



Courthouse

Highlands County Highlights



36th Most Populous
County in Florida

- Highlands County was established in **1921**
- County Seat: **Sebring**
- Sebring is known to the region as “**the Circle on the Circle**” due to the circular plan of the community
- Sebring started annual international sports car racing during the 1950s, creating the “**12 Hours of Sebring**”

Top Industries: Health Care & Social Assistance, Retail Trade, Administrative & Support, Government, Accommodation & Food Services



Wine Tasting



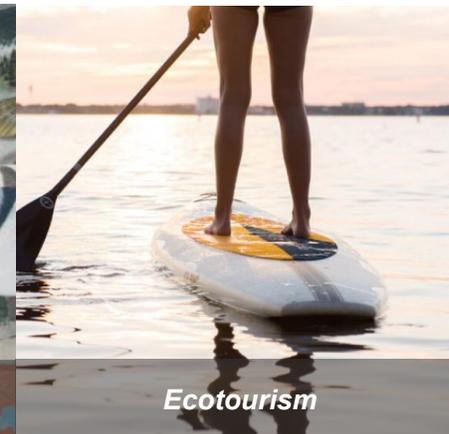
Small Town Charm



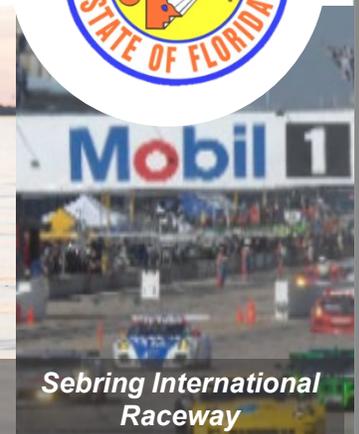
Highlands County
Asphalt Plant



Town Murals



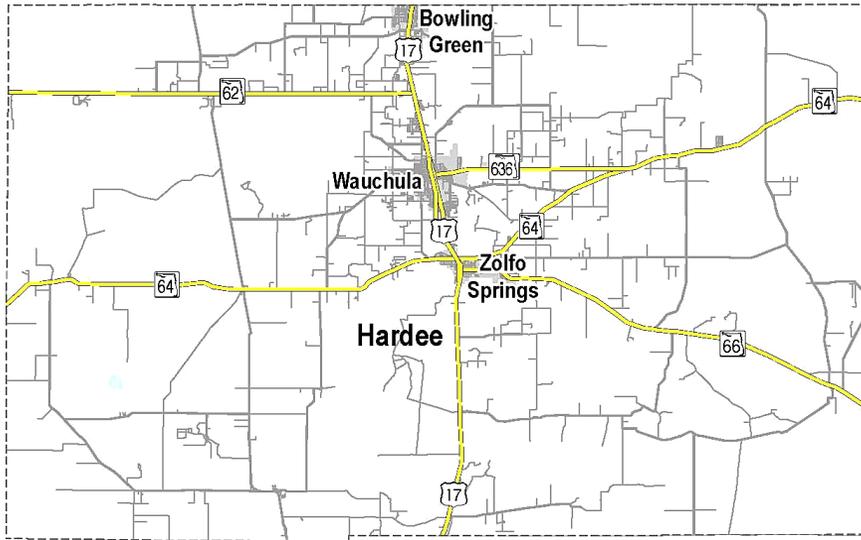
Ecotourism



Sebring International
Raceway

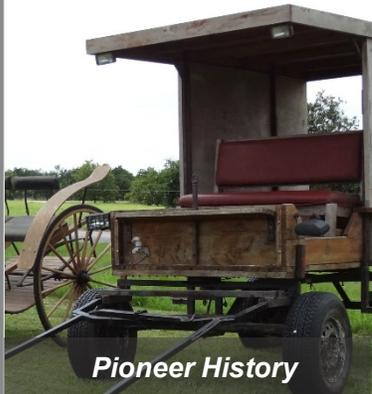
Hardee County Highlights

52nd Most Populous County in Florida



- Established out of DeSoto County and named after Governor Hardee in **1921**
- County Seat: **Wauchula**
- To locals, **Hardee and Wauchula are interchangeable**
- Known regionally as the “**Cucumber Capitol of the World**”

Top Industries: Government, Retail Trade, Accommodation & Food Services, Construction



Pioneer History



Main Streets



Paddle Boarding



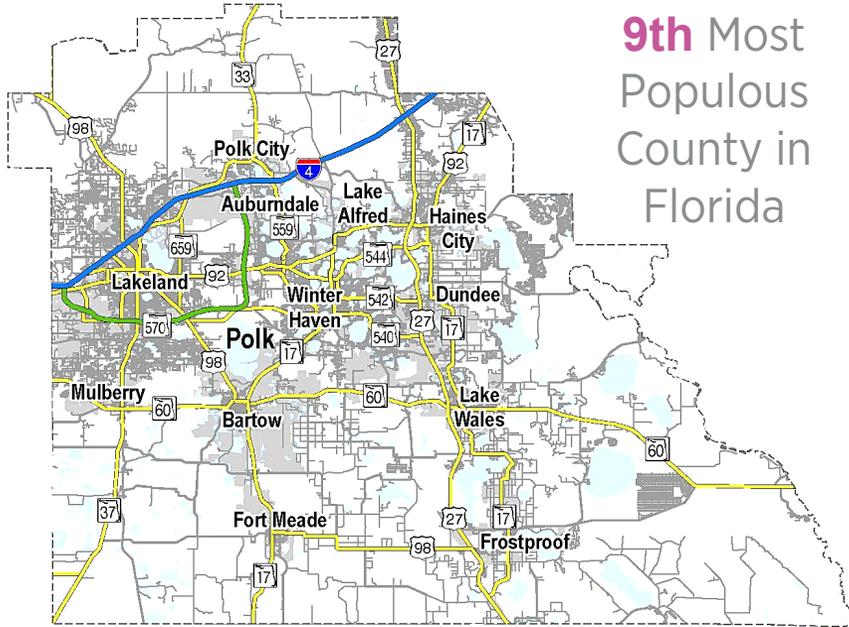
Wildlife Protection



Peace River



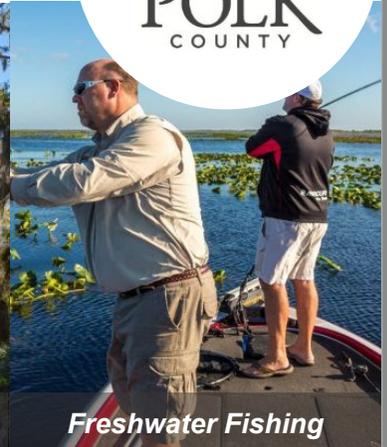
Florida Cracker Museum



9th Most
Populous
County in
Florida

- Established from Eastern Hillsborough and Western Brevard counties in **1861**
- County Seat: **Bartow**
- Florida's first theme park, **Cypress Gardens**, was created in 1930s
- Famous architect **Frank Lloyd Wright designed 13-structure collection** in Lakeland at Florida Southern College

Top Industries: Retail Trade, Health Care & Social Assistance, Government



Task Force Engagement

- Task Force Meetings
- Community Open Houses
- Community Workshops
- Briefings
- Website

Project Development Engagement

- Public Information Meetings
- Public Workshops
- Press Releases
- Public Hearings
- Website



Public Engagement, Engagement, Engagement...

