

# Southwest Florida Industry Target Study



Client

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Facts

Period

2002

Project Country

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### **Rural Areas of Critical Concern for Economic Development**

Rural counties have traditionally found that their skills, resources and capabilities are different from those of urban areas, and that their economic development opportunities and limitations can also differ. Recognizing the need for a new perspective to pursue economic development, the Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council (SWFRPC) initiated development of a target industry study together with a strategic plan for economic development.

The firm of Economic Development Research Group was selected to lead this process. The study area covered rural Glades and Hendry Counties as well as Immokalee in rural Collier County -- areas which are listed among Florida's Rural Areas of Critical Concern, as they share resource limitations and challenges that differ from the more urbanized coastal areas of southwest Florida and elsewhere in the state. The study team worked closely with local agencies and organizations, using an in-depth series of surveys, interviews and group meetings. In addition, Mount Auburn Associates assisted in assessing workforce development needs.

The report recommends specific industrial infrastructure, housing development, work skill training and transportation access improvements to further industry growth and attract new industry. The recommendations were based on:

- SWOT analysis -- examining strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, through EDR Group's Local Economic Assessment Package (LEAP);
- Workforce development assessment -- covering size, skills, wages, educational attainment, and training needs;
- Development of short-, medium- and longer-term phasing for regional development strategies;
- Marketing targets -- for attracting new business, expanding and retaining existing businesses.

A marketing plan was subsequently developed by DCI International based on this study's industry targets.

### **Contact Persons**