



76 North Sixth Street  
Defuniak Springs, FL 32433  
Phone (850) 892-4859

Success from any point of view.

**May 22, 2019**

**To: Triumph Gulf Coast, Inc.**



**Fr: Bill Imfeld, Executive Director  
Walton County Economic Development Alliance**

**Re: Additional Project Information - Project #190  
US 331 Infrastructure**

Walton County is a fast growing county in terms of both population and economic development. A series of news articles (attached) present a variety of statistics demonstrating this growth, and the additional growth expected over the next several years in conjunction with additional military presence transferring into Eglin Air Force Base ( part of which will involve Site C-6 in Walton County).

A substantial part of the growth is attributed to those areas where infrastructure (water, sewer, and electricity) were in place to make parcels shovel-ready for development (specifically note Mossy Head Industrial Park).

The proposed Project #190 would provide water and sewer capacity along US 331 south from I-10 to just north of Eglin Range Road (which leads to Site C-6).

Currently, from a bird's eye view, when you travel south from I-10, once you get past the Best Western Motel, the four mile stretch is essentially an "economic desert." The lack of water and sewer capacity is the principal detriment to bringing in new business to this area.

In order to economically diversify the DeFuniak Springs region and to start growth along the US 331 corridor, successful implementation of the water and

sewer project would enable the attraction of high paying professional jobs, not only to service Eglin and Site C-6, but to enable already existing businesses the opportunity to expand and grow in areas of Distribution/Logistics (the proximity to I-10) and Manufacturing (to grow new manufacturing businesses with potential for products to be exported from the State of Florida).

This project will be a “game changer” for this part of Walton County. The jobs, quality of life, and availability of “shovel ready” parcels will serve to address the continued pressure to grow now, but also in the future. There would be a shift away from tourism related jobs and an opportunity for more technology related growth. As this 4 mile stretch would develop, additional areas along 331 would also be ripe for development, ultimately along the entire US 331 corridor from I-10 to Choctawhatchee Bay.

A map of the proposed 4 mile corridor is also attached.

## Walton County remains among fastest growing counties in the U.S.

By **TOM McLAUGHLIN**

Posted Apr 1, 2018 at 1:00 PM

Walton County continues to lure more than visitors, as recently released census figures show it to be the sixth fastest growing county in the entire United States.



From the Newsroom: Northwest Florida



**LISTEN: Walton County sixth fastest growing county in the entire United States**

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The county's population leapt from 65,440 to 68,376 between 2016 and 2017, according to figures released March 22 by the U.S. Census Bureau. That 4.5 percent jump of 2,936 new citizens puts Walton behind only a Virginia county, a county in Utah and three counties in Texas.

Last year's growth spurt wasn't an anomaly. Walton County ranked as the nation's 21st fastest growing county in 2015-16 by adding 2,430 residents for a 3.8 percent population expansion.

Northwest Florida Daily News records show Walton was also the state's third fastest growing county between 2013 and 2014. That year its population grew by 2,127 people to exceed 60,000 for the first time by reaching 61,530.

Not only is the high rate of growth not new, it's likely to continue, according to Bill Imfeld, the executive director of the Walton County Economic Development Alliance.



"We met with an economist who told us over the next decade the two fastest growing counties on the Gulf Coast were going to be Baldwin County, Alabama and Walton County, Florida," Imfeld said.

One reason Walton County can expect more growth is an expected expansion of the military's hypersonic weapon systems testing program, Imfeld said. County officials in both Walton and neighboring Okaloosa County have been warned to anticipate an influx of both military officials and contractors as the Gulf of Mexico area set aside for weapons testing – by far the nation's largest -- is greater utilized for this growing mission.

"We've been made aware to get ready," Imfeld said.

As it stands now, the Walton County is seeing booming growth in its southeastern quadrant, its midsection and near DeFuniak Springs. Mossy Head in northwest Walton County continues its steady growth and there have even been signs of budding new life in quiet rural Paxton.

Seven new South Walton developments, including four residential and one mixed-use development, were recently approved for construction by the Walton County Commission.

Growth is also happening in and around the Hammock Bay subdivision in Freeport, Imfeld said.

A highly anticipated Veteran's Lodging project will provide homes for 80 veterans in DeFuniak Springs, Imfeld said. Other north county projects include one development of 350 to 400 single family homes, he said.

As the Mossy Head Industrial Park continues to grow, having now developed 350 acres of the 425 acre complex, residential opportunities are expanding and new ones are being considered, Imfeld said.

Paxton recently added its first new business in a decade, Imfeld said, when a Dollar General opened.

"In Paxton, that constitutes economic development," he said.

Still to come is expected commercial growth along the U.S. Highway 331 corridor, which forms the north-south spine of Walton County. On Friday, another section of highway running north out of Freeport was opened as part of an extensive four-laning project between DeFuniak Springs and U.S. Highway 98 in South Walton.

"We do need to be forward thinking, we know the growth is coming from both individuals and business. We've got to be looking forward ... so both the housing and business needs can be met and we can stay in front of the curve instead of waiting for everybody to get here and then saying 'what do we do next?' Imfeld said. "It's been a very positive attitude for both Okaloosa and Walton to say 'we know they're coming, let's do what they can to make it a safe and sound environment for everyone to live in happily.' "

## Truck wash to bring 10-20 new jobs to Mossy Head

By Nathan Cobb | 315-4432 | @WaltonSunNate | nathan@waltonsun.com

Posted Sep 8, 2018 at 11:16 AM

Updated Sep 8, 2018 at 11:16 AM

MOSSY HEAD — A new business is in the works for Mossy Head Industrial Park.

Yelco Logistics was recently approved by the Walton County Commission to purchase 4.95 acres in the industrial park. Yelco plans to provide 10 to 20 new jobs with the addition of its multi-functioning company that will include a truck wash, rental company and coffee shop.

Bill Imfeld, executive director of the Walton County Economic Development Alliance, said the jobs will range from entry-level to upper-management and pay a wage higher than the county average.

Imfeld also said that the board's approval was unanimous and that he doesn't expect any challenges with the project's progression.

Louis Svehla, the county's public information manager, said for rural areas to continue to grow, the installation of water, sewer and broadband services is essential. He said the county is working to establish these services down U.S. Highway 331 from DeFuniak Springs to the north shore of the Choctawhatchee Bay.

"These types of projects will be integral for the growth of Walton County in the future," Svehla said.

Imfeld said construction on the truck wash/coffee shop should begin before the end of this year and take about eight months. That time frame could vary, depending on when insurance and building permits are issued by the county's planning department.



## **YEAR IN REVIEW: Walton experienced big economic expansion**

**By Nathan Cobb | 315-4432 | @WaltonSunNate | nathan@waltonsun.com**

Posted Jan 5, 2019 at 12:28 PM

Updated Jan 5, 2019 at 12:31 PM

Walton County saw economic development expansions across the county in 2018, including in the more rural north end.

Bill Imfeld, executive director of the Walton County Economic Development Alliance, said he plans for 2019's pace to be on the same track.

"The city of Freeport is having an economic upsurge," said Imfeld, who added that every EDA-owned parcel in the Freeport Industrial Park sold out during what he called "an extremely successful year."

He said the EDA is working to gain more "shovel-ready" parcels to develop into business opportunities within the year.

The Mossy Head Industrial Park could also add more than 200 "good-paying" jobs to the area. However, Imfeld said the EDA is competing with other communities for the jobs, and that he hopes to have a definite answer by the end of January.

Recent expansions extend into DeFuniak Springs, where Imfeld said there was an increase in food venues in 2108 and more housing opportunities planned for the near future.

"The county's completion of the connector road between U.S. 331 and County Road 280A will enable commercial and housing development, as well as facilitate the undertaking of the Veterans' Lodge project, which will help veterans in need of education, training and other services obtain successful employment," he said.

A Dollar General is also being built in Paxton, which he said will bring the city its first new business in more than 10 years. He said it will give residents a convenient shopping alternative and has ignited the interest of other businesses to set up shop in the north end.

According to Imfeld, the EDA has high hopes for 2019 and is looking forward to helping DeFuniak Springs, Freeport and Paxton expand.

“For 2019, growth in these areas appears to be unabated, and the diverse job opportunities bodes well not only for local residents, but also arrivals to the area,” he said.



[https://www.watchdog.org/florida/by-the-numbers-walton-county-has-fastest-growing-local-economy/article\\_5047d3a6-50ad-11e9-b98c-a36de9067006.html](https://www.watchdog.org/florida/by-the-numbers-walton-county-has-fastest-growing-local-economy/article_5047d3a6-50ad-11e9-b98c-a36de9067006.html)

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## By the numbers: Walton County has fastest growing local economy in Florida

Watchdog News Mar 30, 2019

Walton County was ranked the top-performing local economy in Florida in a Wall St. 24/7 analysis of counties' gross domestic product growth from 2012 to 2015.

Walton County recorded a 53 percent GDP growth rate over that three-year period, according to the study, which pegged the size of the county's GDP at \$2.5 billion. Its fastest growing industry was professional, scientific and management, the report found.

The GDP doubled in several counties on the Wall St. 24/7 ranking. The only state with no counties that grew faster than the national 7.3 percent GDP increase from 2012 to 2015 was Connecticut.



Most of the fast-growing counties in the analysis also reported median household income growth and unemployment declines.

### Fastest Growing Local Economies by State

State	County With Highest GDP Growth	% Growth	County GDP Amount	Fastest Growing Industry
Alabama	Lee	28.1%	\$6 billion	Arts, entertainment and recreation
Alaska	Aleutians East Borough	48.0%	\$164.3 million	Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting
Arizona	Yavapai	12.7%	\$5.4 billion	Professional, scientific and management
Arkansas	Van Buren	100.6%	\$768.3 million	Construction
California	Santa Clara	30.4%	\$254.9 billion	Information
Colorado	Dolores	80.0%	\$65.8 million	Arts, entertainment and recreation
Connecticut	Hartford	0.2%	\$74.9 billion	Professional, scientific and management
Delaware	Sussex	43.8%	\$13.9 billion	Educational services and health care and social assistance
Florida	Walton	53.0%	\$2.5 billion	Professional, scientific and management
Georgia	Telfair	54.1%	\$351.4 million	Transportation and warehousing and utilities
Hawaii	Kauai	9.9%	\$3.7 billion	Arts, entertainment and recreation
Idaho	Payette	31.0%	\$788 million	Educational services and health care and social assistance



Illinois	Hamilton	47.5%	\$220.6 million	Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting
Indiana	Lawrence	36.6%	\$1.3 billion	Retail trade
Iowa	Lyon	46.7%	\$926 million	Educational services and health care and social assistance
Kansas	Meade	28.2%	\$236.4 million	Construction
Kentucky	Livingston	51.9%	\$385.5 million	Retail trade
Louisiana	Cameron Parish	110.6%	\$1 billion	Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting
Maine	Piscataquis	9.7%	\$426.7 million	Educational services and health care and social assistance
Maryland	Washington	26.8%	\$7.3 billion	Transportation and warehousing and utilities
Massachusetts	Nantucket	35.9%	\$1.1 billion	Educational services and health care and social assistance
Michigan	Mackinac	87.7%	\$629 million	Arts, entertainment and recreation
Minnesota	Carver	18.5%	\$4.8 billion	Arts, entertainment and recreation
Mississippi	Kemper	47.8%	\$421 million	Manufacturing
Missouri	Putnam	52.7%	\$273.6 million	Professional, scientific and management
Montana	Golden Valley	82.0%	\$41.5 million	Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting
Nebraska	McPherson	48.8%	\$22.3 million	Arts, entertainment and recreation
Nevada	Clark	12.7%	\$97.2 billion	Arts, entertainment and recreation
New Hampshire	Rockingham	8.8%	\$18.4 billion	Educational services and health care and social assistance
New Jersey	Somerset	29.6%	\$37.4 billion	Professional, scientific and management
New Mexico	Eddy	52.7%	\$6.7 billion	Retail trade
New York	Steuben	24.0%	\$4.4 billion	Professional, scientific and management
North Carolina	Alleghany	92.1%	\$411.5 million	Retail trade
North Dakota	McKenzie	47.7%	\$2 billion	Transportation and warehousing and utilities
Ohio	Harrison	129.5%	\$732.2 million	Manufacturing
Oklahoma	Washington	106.3%	\$5.5 billion	Educational services and health care and social assistance
Oregon	Wheeler	67.7%	\$38.8 million	Educational services and health care and social assistance
Pennsylvania	Warren	42.3%	\$2 billion	Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting
Rhode Island	Washington	12.2%	\$5.7 billion	Arts, entertainment and recreation
South Carolina	Laurens	142.8%	\$3.4 billion	Arts, entertainment and recreation



South Dakota	Aurora	41.2%	\$148.7 million	Educational services and health care and social assistance
Tennessee	Lake	79.6%	\$200.5 million	Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting
Texas	Roberts	219.6%	\$69 million	Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting
Utah	Beaver	39.7%	\$423.5 million	Retail trade
Vermont	Lamoille	16.1%	\$1.2 billion	Retail trade
Virginia	Warren	51.8%	\$1.6 billion	Educational services and health care and social assistance
Washington	Whatcom	35.7%	\$11.9 billion	Educational services and health care and social assistance
West Virginia	Doddridge	134.8%	\$262.3 million	Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting
Wisconsin	Forest	20.9%	\$346.9 million	Educational services and health care and social assistance
Wyoming	Lincoln	24.5%	\$1 billion	Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting

Source: Wall St. 24/7

Watchdog News

## Report: Walton County top-performing local economy in Florida



**By GateHouse Media Florida staff report**

Posted Apr 5, 2019 at 3:39 PM

Updated Apr 5, 2019 at 3:39 PM

Walton County has been named the top performing local economy in Florida, according to a report from watchdog.org.

Walton, according to a Wall Street 24/7 analysis of Florida counties' gross domestic product growth from 2012 to 2015, recorded a 53 percent GDP growth rate over the three-year period.

The study, which pegged the size of the county's GDP at \$2.5 billion, said its fastest growing industry was professional, scientific and management.

Bill Imfeld, executive director of the Walton County Economic Development Alliance, said the study shows there is a need for continued growth in infrastructure and housing in the area.

“If we do that, we will continue to be successful,” Imfeld said. “We were blessed to be in the Panhandle, where we share with other counties a place for people to come and enjoy this area and work and live here. It’s not just Walton County, it’s the entire Panhandle that’s successful.”

The GDP doubled in several counties on the Wall St. 24/7 ranking, according to the report. The only state with no counties that grew faster than the national 7.3 percent GDP increase from 2012 to 2015 was Connecticut.

Most of the fast-growing counties in the analysis also reported median household income growth and unemployment declines.



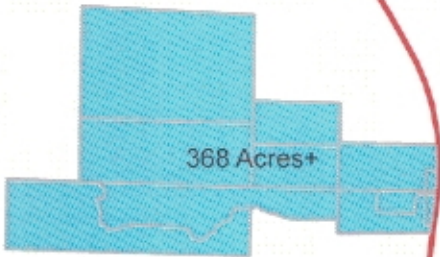


4 Lane Highway



4 miles from I-10

331



368 Acres+

SHERWOOD RD

Leads to US 98

FORREST OAK RD

EGLIN RANGE RD

Eglin Reservation

WALTON COUNTY  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ALLIANCE  
  
76 N 6TH ST.  
DEFUNIAK SPRINGS, FL 32433



FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:  
Bill Imfeld, Executive Director, EDA  
bill@wcedafl.com  
850-892-4859  
or  
Larry Sassano  
larrysassano@gmail.com  
850-428-3355