

Application Score Sheet

Proposed Project: Bay County Board of County Commissioners, Project Kilowatt (#365)

Proposed Project/Program County: Bay

Board of County Commission Support: Yes

Rural County:

Opportunity Zone:

Total Projected Project Cost: \$37,575,000

Match Provided: \$24,750,000

Triumph Funds Requested: \$12,825,000 (34%)

Triumph Funds Recommended by Staff:

Score: A

ROI: Increment to household incomes of the project is expected to be \$350,341,138 over 10-years

Economic Analysis, Score, and ROI

The Bay County Board of County Commissioners is requesting a Triumph grant of up to \$12,825,000 to support the recruitment of Project Kilowatt, an advanced marine manufacturing company specializing in carbon-fiber hulls and electric propulsion boats. The company will establish its international headquarters, research and development operations, and manufacturing facilities in Bay County with a total capital investment of approximately \$37,575,000. Triumph funds represent 34 percent of total project costs, while the company will invest \$24,750,000 in building upgrades, new construction, manufacturing equipment, and research and development equipment. Bay County will use Triumph funds to acquire the proposed 11.55-acre site with three existing marine facilities, will retain title to the property, and will enter into a long-term lease with the company.

Triumph grant funds will be designated to support the acquisition of an 11.55-acre waterfront property with three existing warehouse and manufacturing facilities and direct access to St. Andrews Bay. The site provides turn-key infrastructure that allows Project Kilowatt to launch operations quickly to meet surging demand in both defense and commercial marine markets. Bay County will maintain ownership of the land and facilities while entering into a long-term lease agreement with the company. The company will finance the remaining capital investment of \$24,750,000 utilizing its cash reserves and existing banking relationships for building renovations, construction of a new 100,000 square foot facility, and acquisition of manufacturing and research equipment.

Project Kilowatt represents a transformative opportunity for Bay County and Northwest Florida by strengthening the region's position in the global marine manufacturing industry. The project will create 285 high-wage jobs by 2030 with an average annual wage of \$77,000, which exceeds 115 percent of the Bay County average wage. The company specializes in advanced carbon-fiber

hulls and electric propulsion boats with environmentally friendly technology that produces no noise or emissions. Project Kilowatt will join a strong ecosystem of existing marine employers including Suzuki Motor Marine, Mercury Marine, Eastern Shipbuilding Group, and Mocama Marine. The project will diversify Bay County's economy beyond tourism and military sectors, strengthening long-term resilience against hurricanes, pandemics, and industry-specific downturns that have previously impacted the region. The company has already secured contracts with the U.S. Navy and Canadian Coast Guard, providing recurring revenue and financial sustainability. Project Kilowatt will partner with local educational institutions including Gulf Coast State College, Florida State University's InSPIRE program, University of West Florida's WAVE program, and Haney Technical School to create workforce development pathways for regional residents.

Staff recommends that the Board not award more than the average of two commercial appraisals to be provided for the property. For a job commitment of 285 positions and an award amount of \$12,825,000, the cost to Triumph Gulf Coast per direct job is \$45,000, and the return per dollar of Triumph spend in present money value (pmv) is \$27.3 over a ten-year window. At \$77,000 per job, the pmv of the increment to household incomes of the project is expected to be \$350,341,138. For these reasons, staff scores this project as an "A."

Project Summary (based on information provided by the applicant)

The Bay County Commission is requesting a \$12,825,000 Triumph grant to win the US operations of Project Kilowatt, a manufacturer of advanced carbon-fiber, electric-powered boats, primarily focused on the defense industry. The Triumph funds will be used to purchase an 11.5-acre site with three existing marine facilities. The facilities will serve as Project Kilowatt's headquarters and manufacturing center under a long term lease with the County. The company will create at least 285 high wage jobs, offering average annual salaries of \$77,000, with a \$24,750,000 capital investment including a fourth building on-site.

The marine manufacturing industry is a key target sector across the region. Project Kilowatt will join a strong ecosystem of existing marine employers in Bay County including Suzuki Motor Marine, Mercury Marine, Eastern Shipbuilding Group, and Mocama Marine.

The company specializes in advanced carbon-fiber hulls and electric propulsion boats, offering game-changing technology that is environmentally friendly, quiet, and free of emissions. The existing marine facilities with direct access to St. Andrews Bay and deep water, will allow the company to start its Bay County operations quickly to meet surging demand in both defense and commercial marine markets.

Project Kilowatt has already secured contracts with the U.S. Navy and the Canadian Coast Guard, providing a strong foundation of recurring revenue. It is actively expanding into the commercial and leisure markets, where demand for environmentally friendly, high-performance vessels is growing rapidly. This dual-market strategy ensures that the company is not reliant on a single sector and creates long-term revenue stability.

The decision to establish its international headquarters, research and development division, and manufacturing operations in Bay County is driven by the availability of existing marine manufacturing facilities with direct bay access, as well as a skilled labor pool supported by local technical schools, colleges, and universities.

The company will leverage the existing assets at all three higher education institutions within the county: Tom P. Haney Technical College, Gulf Coast State College, and Florida State University Panama City. Each of these institutions already provides curriculum that complements the company's business model.

Project Kilowatt is uniquely positioned to partner with Florida State University's InSPIRE program and the University of West Florida's WAVE program. By aligning its advanced design and production capabilities with InSPIRE's focus on innovation, research, and commercialization, the company can accelerate product development while accessing specialized expertise in material science and propulsion systems. At the same time, collaboration with UWF's WAVE program, which emphasizes workforce development and applied learning, will help cultivate a strong pipeline of engineers, technicians, and innovators trained in advanced composites, electric propulsion, and marine manufacturing.

The addition of Project Kilowatt will be a major win for Bay County and Northwest Florida. The project will diversify the pillars of the regional economy, create significant new job opportunities for local residents, provide career pathways for graduates of regional educational institutions, and deliver innovative marine products for both the defense and leisure markets. Its impacts will be both immediate and long-term, strengthening economic stability and resilience across disproportionately affected counties.

In Northwest Florida and across the Gulf South, advanced manufacturing is a prime target for economic development and economic diversification. Northwest Florida has already begun to establish itself as an emerging leader in this sector, supported by its unique combination of military assets, deepwater port access, and strong educational partners. Given that advanced manufacturing and clean energy technologies are central to the future of the U.S. economy, Bay County and the surrounding region must make strategic investments today to ensure they remain competitive in the years ahead.

Community and economic development leaders have long held a vision to position Bay County as a hub for advanced manufacturing. Project Kilowatt is transformational because it directly advances this vision. It will attract private-sector investment, accelerate innovation, and demonstrate Bay County's ability to support high-wage, technology-driven manufacturing. Equally important, it will diversify the regional economy beyond the dominant pillars of tourism and the military, strengthening long-term resilience in the face of unforeseen disasters such as hurricanes, pandemics, or industry-specific downturns.

Currently, the Panama City Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) has a workforce that is heavily concentrated in hospitality and retail trade, with employment in those sectors averaging 6% and 5% higher than national levels respectively. At the same time, manufacturing employment is 4% below the U.S. average. Project Kilowatt will help rebalance this equation by introducing 285

new high-wage jobs in advanced marine manufacturing. Each new win of this kind moves Northwest Florida closer to the goal of economic diversification.

If investments are not made now, the region risks losing valuable talent, including transitioning military personnel with advanced technical skills, young professionals eager to pursue manufacturing careers, and skilled technicians who would otherwise relocate to regions with more robust manufacturing clusters. Project Kilowatt provides a solution by creating 285 high-wage jobs, offering average annual salaries of \$77,000, and investing \$37.5 million into local facilities and equipment. The company's focus on advanced carbon-fiber and electric propulsion systems not only strengthens Bay County's industrial base, but also aligns with national priorities for clean energy and sustainable manufacturing.

Beyond higher education, Northwest Florida's six major military installations produce approximately 5,200 transitioning service members annually, many of whom possess the technical expertise and leadership skills that align with Project Kilowatt's workforce needs. This project will create promising career opportunities not only for exiting military personnel but also for residents currently in the field and those seeking to advance into high wage, high skill positions. By building on these existing assets, Project Kilowatt will strengthen the regional talent pipeline and help position Bay County as a hub for advanced marine manufacturing.

To support the growth of advanced manufacturing in Northwest Florida, Bay County leadership, educational institutions, Bay EDA, and private sector partners are working collaboratively to create sustainable career opportunities for residents. Local leaders are pursuing advanced manufacturing projects aggressively, recognizing that true economic diversification is essential for long-term stability. As demonstrated in the aftermath of Hurricane Michael in 2018 and the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, a strong industrial base enables the regional economy to recover more quickly from major disruptions.

To ensure the success of Project Kilowatt, both the State of Florida and Bay County are providing targeted support through tax reductions, workforce training, and startup assistance. The State of Florida will contribute approximately \$630,000 in sales tax exemptions for equipment purchases. Bay County and the City of Panama City will provide additional support by offering 100 percent real and personal property tax rate reduction, valued at approximately \$3,264,932 over a 10-year period. These partnerships demonstrate the commitment of state and local governments to secure Project Kilowatt's investment, while also advancing regional economic diversification and resilience.

Through this project, Bay County and the region will strengthen its ability to retain and attract top talent, build on its existing marine and defense industry assets, and establish a foundation for long-term economic resilience, ensuring the maximum return on investment for both Triumph and the disproportionately affected counties

Budget and Funding

See attached

Exhibit A

Project #, name	Project # 365	Kilowatt
Budget	\$37,575,000	
Estimated construction start date if applicable	Q 3 2026	
Estimated education component start date if applicable	N/A	

	Building Purchase	Renovations & Construction	Equipment	Category #4	Total
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Please change year # to actual year

Project Total

2025	-	-	-	-	-
2026	12,825,000.00	1,250,000.00	1,950,000.00	-	16,025,000.00
2027	-	1,250,000.00	1,950,000.00	-	3,200,000.00
2028	-	6,250,000.00	1,950,000.00	-	8,200,000.00
2029	-	6,250,000.00	1,950,000.00	-	8,200,000.00
2030	-	-	1,950,000.00	-	1,950,000.00
2031	-	-	-	-	-
2032	-	-	-	-	-
2033	-	-	-	-	-
2034	-	-	-	-	-
2035	-	-	-	-	-
Project Total	12,825,000.00	15,000,000.00	9,750,000.00	-	37,575,000.00

Triumph

2025					-
2026	12,825,000.00				12,825,000.00
2027					-
2028					-
2029					-
2030					-
2031					-
2032					-
2033					-
2034					-
2035					-
Triumph Total	12,825,000.00	-	-	-	12,825,000.00

Company

2025					-
2026		1,250,000.00	1,950,000.00		3,200,000.00
2027		1,250,000.00	1,950,000.00		3,200,000.00
2028		6,250,000.00	1,950,000.00		8,200,000.00
2029		6,250,000.00	1,950,000.00		8,200,000.00
2030			1,950,000.00		1,950,000.00
2031					-
2032					-
2033					-
2034					-
2035					-
Match Source 1 Total	-	15,000,000.00	9,750,000.00	-	24,750,000.00