



Bioscience Technology Circle of South Georgia Economic and Workforce Profile Executive Summary

Executive Briefing

Highlights of population and labor force trends, labor force quality, target industry and occupation trends are excerpted below, followed by a detailed analysis of the region's workforce supply and demand.

Population Trends

- Having grown at a 1.0 percent annual rate between 2000 and 2008, the region's population was 276,033 in 2008.
- Over the next eight years, the region is projected to grow at 0.5 percent per year.
- Projected to grow at 1.1 percent annually between 2008 and 2018, Echols County is projected to grow the fastest over that time period.
- Despite an increase in the labor force, the unemployment rate of the region has increased from 5.0 percent in February 2008 to 9.5 percent in February 2009, as 6,207 more workers were unemployed in February 2009 than one year prior.
- In 2007, 21,256 people migrated to the region and 21,358 people emigrated from the region, creating a net out-migration of 102 people.
- The region has become more diverse as the Hispanic population grew by 4.9 percent annually between 2000 and 2007 and is projected to grow by 3.3 percent annually between 2007 and 2014.

Labor Force Trends

- Between 2000 and 2008, the labor force in the region grew at a slightly faster rate than in the state as a whole. Within the target industries, this growth is driven by increased employment in the agriculture and food manufacturing industries, which grew at 2.8 percent and 11.1 percent, respectively, between 2000 and 2008.
- The labor turnover rate in three of the region's target industries— agriculture, food processing, and scientific research and development services—was lower than the labor turnover rate in these industries on a state level. However, these target industries still experienced labor turnover rates that were higher than the overall state labor turnover rate.
- The region has a higher proportion of workers aged 19-24 years old than the state as a whole. The food processing industry is the target industry with the highest percentage of workers in this age range with 19.1 percent.
- Chemical manufacturing and agriculture industries are more male-dominated, while medical and diagnostic laboratory workers are mostly female.

Labor Force Quality

- In 2006, the average income in the Bioscience Technology Circle of South Georgia was \$27,738 per year—a figure approximately 30 percent lower than the state average of in the \$39,969.
- Self-employed proprietors account for 18.7 percent of jobs in the region, up from 15.4 percent a decade ago.
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- Approximately one in four (24.2 percent) residents aged 25 and above has not completed high school compared with 16.7 percent for Georgia and 14.9 percent for the U.S.

Industry and Occupation Trends

- The food processing industry grew by over 60 percent between 2003 and 2008, growing from 1,492 jobs in 2003 to 2,409 jobs in 2008.
- Chemical manufacturing, agriculture, scientific research and development services, and medical and diagnostic laboratories, have not added significant employment over the last five years and are not projected to add new jobs between 2008 and 2018.
- The agricultural industry is predicted to lose 587 jobs between 2008 and 2018.
- The average earnings for all workers in the region are \$31,088; average earnings in the different target industries, however, vary widely, from \$83,988 per year for those working in scientific research and development services industry to \$21,814 per year for those working in agriculture.
- Accounting for replacement as well as new jobs during the coming years, the region's five targeted industries will demand a ready workforce in several occupations, including laborers, heavy and tractor-trailer truck drivers, farmworkers, farmers, industrial truck and tractor operators, helpers--production workers, and slaughterers and meat packers.
- Heavy and tractor-trailer truck drivers have a projected demand of 39 new and replacement workers each year.
- Valdosta Technical College and Moultrie Technical College each offer certificates in operations management and commercial vehicle operation.
- Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College offers degrees in crop production and animal sciences.
- No programs in the region exist to help meet the demand for medical and clinical laboratory technologists.