



The Corridor *by the* Numbers

A look at the country's top regions for innovative industry reveals that Florida's High Tech Corridor is holding its own.

In just 15 short years, the Florida High Tech Corridor has not only become recognized for its efforts to support high tech industry but, in fact, has achieved success in developing tech clusters as demonstrated in a recent comparison to several of the nation's widely known technology regions.

Looking at Tech America Foundation's Cybercities Report, the Florida High Tech Corridor ranks favorably alongside well-known tech capitals in California, Texas, and North Carolina, with robust activity across a variety of sectors.

There are currently more than 11,000 companies active in 10 high tech sectors in the Corridor. That is four times greater than what was reported when the Florida High

Tech Corridor Council was created just 15 years ago. Right now, the region is estimated to be home to 70 percent of the state's high tech employment.

While it covers a larger geographical area, from a population perspective, the Corridor—with 8.2 million residents—is comparable to: California's Silicon Valley, which includes San Jose, San Francisco and Oakland; the Austin, Houston, San Antonio region in Texas; and North Carolina, where Raleigh, Durham and Chapel Hill make up the Research Triangle. And with the exception of Silicon Valley, which leads all areas in terms of high tech companies, the Corridor is closely matched with the other two areas in that category.

Three out of Florida's four Cybercities highlighted in the report—Orlando, Tampa-St. Petersburg and Palm Bay-Melbourne—are located in the Florida High Tech Corridor's 23-county region. The fourth is the Fort Lauderdale-Miami market in South Florida.

The Corridor's unique mix of industries includes agritechology, aviation and aerospace, digital media and interactive entertainment, financial services, information technology, life sciences and medical technology, microelectronics and nanotechnology, modeling, simulation and training, optics and photonics, and sustainable energy.

The Corridor region boasts three of the nation's largest



research universities: the University of Central Florida (UCF) in Orlando, the University of South Florida (USF) in Tampa and the University of Florida (UF) in Gainesville. UCF is the nation's second-largest university, while UF is ranked sixth and USF is eighth, representing a combined student body of more than 150,000. Each year, the schools receive hundreds of millions of dollars in research funding.

The Research Triangle, anchored by North Carolina State University, Duke University and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, respectively, is known for aerospace, aviation and defense, biotechnology, pharmaceuticals, life sciences, energy and information and communications technology. The high concentra-

tion of life sciences companies in the area includes GlaxoSmithKline, Merck & Co. and Wyeth.

While "The Triangle" had a head start, the Corridor is catching up in the life sciences with the recent relocation of a research giant, the Sanford-Burnham Medical Research Institute, to Orlando's new "Medical City." Additionally, Draper Laboratory now has locations in Tampa and St. Petersburg.

Key high tech industries in Silicon Valley are electronics, telecommunications, bioscience and environmental technology, but the area is best known for computer science, with local businesses including companies such as Apple, Cisco, Google and HP. The Corridor is home to big industry players like Harris Semiconductor and



Jacque Brund, UCF

The Corridor's emerging life sciences cluster is breathing new life into the region's historic agricultural industry. Here UCF researcher Henry Daniell is utilizing genetically modified plants to grow life-saving vaccines.

Jabil Circuit, as well as significant divisions of L-3 Communications and DRS Technologies.

Silicon Valley's roots can be traced to a post-World War II decision by the leadership at Stanford University to lease some land for an office park geared toward high tech companies. While that model has been followed around the country, some of the most recent successes can be found in the Corridor with the high tech incubation areas adjacent to UCF, USF and UF.

Texas is home to a high concentration of businesses in support of aerospace, defense, biotech, life sciences, information and computer technology, petroleum refining and chemical products and energy. The University of Texas campuses in Austin and San Antonio are the biggest contributors to the research efforts in the region, and Shell Oil, Marathon, Schlumberger, Halliburton and alternative energy companies, such as Horizon Wind Energy in Houston, contribute to the state's active energy sector.

While Shell and others are looking for sustainable energy alternatives, there are several companies in the Corridor such as WattNext of Eustis that are leading the way in solar research, while energy storage is the focus at Orlando's Planar Energy and Solicore Inc. in Lakeland, which develop battery technologies.

The Cybercities Report shows that one of the greatest concentrations of high tech employment in the country can be found in a portion of the Corridor. The Palm



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Bay-Melbourne area ranks fifth among all U.S. cities, with a full 15 percent of the private sector workforce comprised of high-tech workers. It was one of only seven Cybercities to add jobs in 2009.

The report also indicated that Tampa-St. Petersburg recorded the fastest high tech wage growth in the entire country in 2009, with a jump of 6 percent over the previous year. Orlando ranked 11th among U.S. Cybercities in the total number of consumer electronics manufacturing jobs, while Palm Bay-Melbourne was sixth in electronics components and accessories manufacturing, and Tampa-St. Petersburg was 15th. Tampa-St. Petersburg was 16th among U.S. cities in both electro-medical equipment manufacturing

and photonics manufacturing, and Palm Bay-Melbourne was ninth in terms of space and defense systems manufacturing jobs.

The report mentions eight states, including Florida, that have multiple technology hubs within their borders. According to the report, "These states contain factors that are attractive to the tech industry, such as strong research universities, a skilled workforce, an attractive quality of life, and a tech-savvy population."

There is no doubt that those four qualities can be found in abundance in Florida. Those, along with a favorable business climate—and help from the Florida High Tech Corridor Council—are reasons to expect continued growth in all tech sectors in the Corridor over the next 15 years. ●

U.S. Technology Capitals

High Tech Region	California Silicon Valley	Texas Austin Region	North Carolina Research Triangle	Florida Florida High Tech Corridor
High Tech Companies	23,376	16,631	11,800	11,588
Population	8,250,000	8,105,000	8,340,000	8,290,000
Cybercities	Oakland San Francisco San Jose	Austin Houston San Antonio	Charlotte Raleigh Durham	Orlando Palm Bay Tampa
Major Research	Univ. of California, Berkley Stanford University San José State University	Univ. of Texas Univ. of Houston Rice University	University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Duke University North Carolina State Univ.	Univ. of Central Florida University of South Florida University of Florida Florida Institute of Tech.