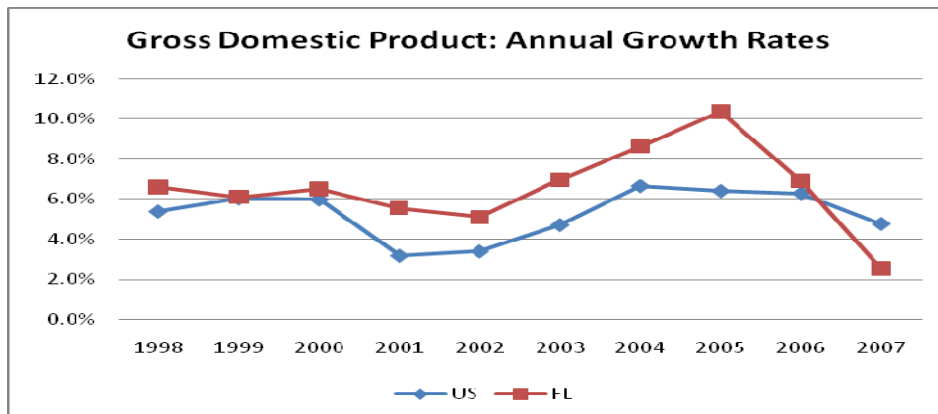
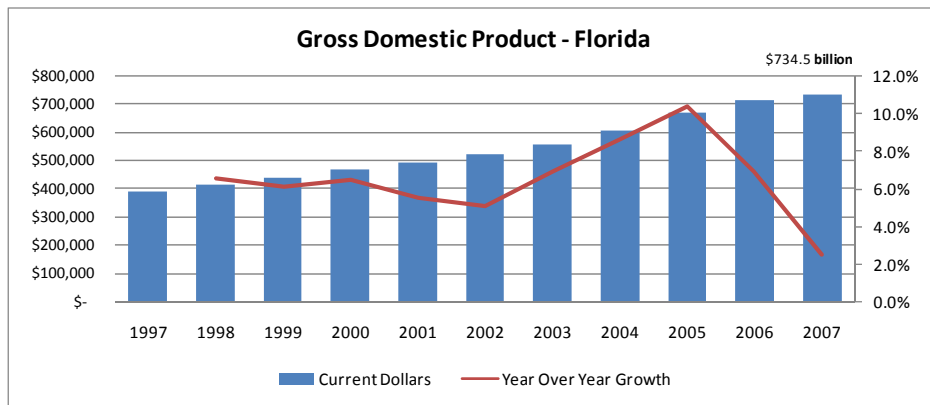


# ***FLORIDA ECONOMIC OUTLOOK***

*The Florida Economic Estimating Conference met in July of 2008 to revise the forecast for the state's economy. As further updated by the Legislative Office of Economic and Demographic Research, the latest forecast reveals an economy burdened in the short run by national and state fiscal shocks, but still showing underlying resilience in the longer-term. Population growth – while slowing – continues to be the state's primary engine of economic growth, fueling both future employment and income growth. All of the comments below are directed to the immediate planning horizon extending through Fiscal Year 2011-12.*

## **RECAP ~ Fiscal Year 2007-08 History**

Change in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has been increasingly used to compare states. While Florida has outperformed the nation as a whole in nine of the past ten years, two of these years (2004 and 2005) were greatly influenced by the activity sparked by the 2004 and 2005 storms (primarily through insurance payments). In 2006, Florida returned to the national growth level before dropping below it in 2007 (4.7% US versus 2.5% FL).



Other factors are used to gauge the health of an *individual state*. Typically, the two principal economic measures are income and employment growth. Compared to the estimate made in July 2007, these measures showed that Florida grew at a generally slower pace in Fiscal Year 2007-08 than originally anticipated. Personal income growth, previously estimated at 5.6%, ultimately reached only 4.8% for Fiscal Year 2007-08. Similarly, employment was down over the prior year by -0.4%, when growth of 0.9% had been expected for 2007-08.

Within the employment data, many sectors found negative territory in Fiscal Year 2007-08. Hardest hit, construction employment experienced a loss of 11.8% over of the prior year. This sector was joined by additional employment losses in Manufacturing (-5.0%), Natural Resources & Mining (-0.8%), Financial Activities (-1.2%), and Information Services (-0.7%). Other areas were also affected by the weaker jobs picture: Wages & Salaries had been estimated to grow 3.9% in the July 2007 forecast, but had only achieved 2.4% at the end of the year, and the annual unemployment rate went from an anticipated 3.71% to an actual 4.67%.

Largely, these changes were related to Florida's troubled housing market and the worsening national outlook. The growing inventory of unsold houses coupled with the spreading credit crisis dampened residential construction activity throughout the entire year. Last July, the Florida Economic Estimating Conference (FEEC) had expected just over 122,000 private housing starts for the year – only 45% of the level achieved in the 2005-06 banner year. In fact, new activity plummeted to 29% of the 2005-06 level (78,800 private housing starts). Much of this loss was attributable to single family starts which fell 48.7% from the prior year to a level of 45,000 units. Similarly, multi-family starts fell 55.9% over the prior year. In yet another manifestation of the large housing market adjustment still facing Florida, existing single family home sales ended the 2007 calendar year 29% down in volume from the prior year, but the median home price fell only -5%.

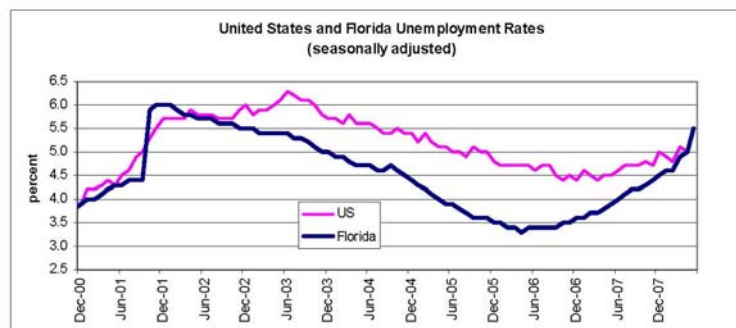
Florida's economy has essentially moved through three waves of responses to financial shocks. First, as explained above, the end of the housing boom brought lower activity and employment in the construction and financial fields, as well as spillover consumption effects in closely related industries: appliances, carpeting, and other durable goods used to equip houses. This began in the summer of 2005 when sales volume started to decline in response to extraordinarily high prices and increasing mortgage rates. By the summer of 2006, home prices began to fall as well, and owners started to experience negative wealth effects from the deceleration and losses in property value. Because owners perceived themselves as less wealthy, they began to curtail expenditures on discretionary items, largely big-ticket in nature. By the late summer of 2007, Florida's homegrown problems with the housing market were giving way to several national phenomena: a slow slide towards recession and a burgeoning credit crisis.

### ***FORECAST ~ Fiscal Years 2008-09 (base) through 2011-12***

By the end of May 2008, median prices for existing single family home sales had fallen 15% on a year-over-year basis, and the national credit market problems were causing a detectable drain on the economy. As the subprime mortgage difficulties continued to spread to the larger financial market, it became clear that any past projections of a relatively quick adjustment in the housing market were overly optimistic. Forecasts were dampened through the end of the fiscal year, and then again as the excess inventory of unsold homes was further swelled by foreclosures and slowing population growth arising from the national economic contraction. Further straining Florida households and businesses, oil prices have now hovered around \$140 a barrel for the last several months, food prices have risen, and the credit crisis has spread well beyond the subprime market to affect the broader financial sector's ability to lend money. The latest forecast anticipates that normal economic growth will not return to Florida until the latter half of Fiscal Year 2009-10, and virtually all of the risks remain to the downside.

***Lower Income Growth Dampens Consumer Spending...***Nominal personal income is projected to grow a modest 2.5% in Fiscal Year 2008-09, well below the 3.6% projection in the national forecast. However, Florida's income growth is expected to begin recovery next year (4.2%) and then return to normal levels in Fiscal Year 2010-11, ending the forecast period with 6.7% growth. Per capita income as adjusted for inflation exhibits the same pattern—in real terms, income is expected to decline 2.7% this year, but end the planning period with a more respectable 3.3% growth rate. Much of the future strength in personal income can be attributed to the expected recovery from recessionary conditions with wages and salaries following the return to growth in real economic activity.

***Weaker Employment Conditions in the Short-run...***According to the latest nationwide data, Florida was losing jobs (a job growth rate of -0.9% in May) while the nation as a whole stayed weakly positive (+0.2%). Florida's rate represents a loss of 74,700 jobs with the state's negative over-the-year growth rate actually beginning in September 2007. Fifty-four percent of the state's job losses are directly due to the construction downturn. Overall employment is projected to further decline -0.1% in Fiscal Year 2008-09 and then increase by 1.7% in Fiscal Year 2009-10, 2.5% in Fiscal Year 2010-11, and 2.6% in 2011-12. Lagging slightly behind, the unemployment rate is expected to hit an annual high of 6.03% in Fiscal Year 2009-10 before slowly returning to more normal levels.



Source: Florida Agency for Workforce Innovation, Labor Market Statistics Center, Local Area Unemployment Statistics program.

Florida's latest unemployment rate (5.5% in May) matched the national unemployment rate. This is the highest rate in Florida since January 2003. The estimate anticipates that the elevated levels persist in the near-term – annual rates of 5.85%, 6.03%, and 5.49%; they either match or exceed the national projections throughout the planning horizon.

Currently, the fastest growing industry in Florida is Education and Health Services, with most of the growth attributable to gains in Health Services. Beginning in Fiscal Year 2009-10 and continuing throughout the forecast period, the growth industry will shift to the professional and business services sector. This employment sector is expected to add over 45% of the new jobs forecast for Fiscal Year 2009-10. After gaining only 1.7% this year, it is projected to expand 3.9% in Fiscal Year 2009-10 and 6.3% in 2010-11 before decelerating to 5.1% in 2011-12. Slightly over half of the growth in this industry is concentrated in employment agencies, temporary help and leasing services, janitorial and cleaning services, exterminating and pest control services, and landscaping. In this respect, Florida is part of a national trend. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, the employment services sector is expected to be among those that provide the most new jobs. However, Florida differs from the nation in that our single fastest growing industry does **not** continue to be education and health services. In part, this is a data collection problem. Many companies providing temporary help and leasing services are actually benefiting the other sectors.

Eight of twelve industry sectors are expected to shed jobs this year: natural resources & mining, construction, manufacturing, wholesale & retail trade, transportation & utilities, information, financial activities, and government services. Altogether, 72,700 jobs will be adversely affected, with 64% of them coming from the construction sector. After three years of phenomenal growth during the boom, this is consistent with the persistently weak housing market forecast. Strength will not return to this industry during the forecast period, although more typical growth returns in Fiscal Year 2010-11.

<b>Florida Industry</b>	<b>Percent of Total Average Annual Employment, 2007<sup>P</sup></b>	<b>Average Annual Wage, 2007<sup>P</sup></b>
Total		\$39,762
Natural Resources and Mining	1.2%	\$24,198
Construction	7.5%	\$41,644
Manufacturing	4.9%	\$47,490
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	20.2%	\$35,942
Information	2.0%	\$56,894
Financial Activities	6.8%	\$56,551
Professional and Business Services	16.7%	\$43,807
Education and Health Services	12.3%	\$41,147
Leisure and Hospitality	11.7%	\$20,822
Other Services	3.2%	\$27,895
Government	13.6%	\$44,956

<sup>P</sup> = Preliminary

***Construction Continues to Drag...***Vigorous home price appreciation that outstripped gains in income and the use of speculative financing arrangements made Floridians particularly vulnerable to the decelerating housing market and interest rate risks. In 2006, almost 47% of all mortgages in the state were considered “innovative” (interest only and pay option ARM). With the 30-year fixed mortgage rate holding above 6.0%, the meltdown in the subprime mortgage market and the subsequent credit crunch, housing starts are well into a significant decline that continues through the first half of Fiscal Year 2009-10 before beginning a significant rebound. Single-family starts are the primary driver. Total construction expenditures follow a similar pattern, never returning to the 2005-06 level during the forecast period. As the availability of financing for commercial real estate tightens, growth in private nonresidential construction is projected to fall nearly 13.0% this year from growth of 12.6% in Fiscal Year 2007-08, and stay in negative territory for another year before returning to growth in the out-years. Meanwhile, after posting a 19.1% gain last year, public construction activity is projected to drop 14.9% this fiscal year and then slowly grow 3.6% next year and 4.9% in the following year.

***Population Growth Slower But Steady...***Population growth has hovered between 2.0% and 2.6% since the mid 1990’s; however, the population growth rate is expected to slow during the immediate forecast period, reaching a high of only 1.64% in Fiscal Year 2011-12. Some of the slower growth is attributable to the impact the national economic downturn is having on domestic migration decisions. Most of Florida’s growth is from net migration: 87.5 percent between April 1, 2000 and April 1, 2007. Even so -- Florida is still on track to break the 20 million mark during 2013, and sometime before then will become the third most populous state – surpassing New York. And in 2007, the state’s age mix shifted for the first time to produce a higher percentage of persons aged 45-64 than persons aged 25-44, a phenomenon arising from the aging baby boom population.