Sarasota County’s emergence as one of the South’s great communities accelerated at the turn of the 21st century. Long recognized as a charming tourist town with world-class arts and culture, Sarasota County today is on the national map as a great place to live and work.

Sarasota County anchors the middle of Florida’s south western coast, 60 miles south of Tampa Bay. Blessed with inspiring natural beauty and an appealing climate, this coastal paradise is one of the Southeast’s most dynamic business centers.

Sarasota County has many of the attributes necessary for success in the global economy: superior schools, significant research and education facilities, high educational attainment and a regional workforce of more than 350,000. A modern infrastructure and moderate taxes contribute to the low cost of doing business here. What’s more, the community is increasingly recognized as a leader in innovative environmental management and sustainable living.

A Rising Star Among America’s Great Metros

The Sarasota area has increasingly pinged the radar screens of American society’s forward observers. Sarasota and Bradenton were ranked among the Top 100 places to live in the U.S. by Relocate-America.com.
Where “Quality of Life” is No Accident

The economic, civic and cultural sophistication of Sarasota County is not happenstance. Continuous, grassroots processes develop and engage strategies for continued economic growth and global competitiveness. These public/private partnerships all commit to attain sustainability in Sarasota County’s economy and environment.

This community meets opportunity and challenge head-on, in open discussion and debate; where business leaders share a strong voice in the civic dialogue at the local, regional and state levels.
Regional Collaboration

Economic development, transportation, water supplies and workforce education are the focus of regional collaboration. Sarasota County is a member of the Tampa Bay Partnership, a regional economic development organization that also includes Hernando, Hillsborough, Manatee, Pasco, Pinellas and Polk counties. The partnership is part of the Florida High-tech Corridor, a 21-county alliance that focuses on technology research at Florida universities and major corporations. Sarasota county is uniquely positioned as part of two regions.

The southwest Florida region consists of Sarasota, Charlotte, Lee, Glades and Collier counties.

Your Design for Prosperity Begins Here

For executive officers charged with ensuring their organization’s growth, Sarasota County’s business-friendly attitude combined with the community’s resources allow new or relocating businesses to create their own experience.

Sarasota County’s Economic Development Experts

The Economic Development Corporation of Sarasota County – the community’s professional economic development entity – is a public-private partnership that works to assist expansion of existing companies, attract and retain quality jobs, solicit new businesses compatible with the assets and values of Sarasota County, promote the county’s business image and enhance Sarasota County’s overall quality of life. Contact us to start, expand or relocate your business in Sarasota County, Florida at 941.309.1200

www.edcsarasotacounty.com

An unlimited supply of sunshine, fresh air and places to play encourages healthier, more active lifestyles.
Paradise Found

Latitude 27.3º Longitude 82.5º
Midway on Florida’s Western Coast
Sarasota County anchors the middle of Florida’s western coast near the northern edge of the subtropics, 60 miles south of Tampa Bay.
Sarasota County enjoys Florida’s proximity to the Caribbean, Central and South American markets, and the Panama Canal gateway to the Pacific Rim. Four international airports and Florida’s fourth largest deepwater seaport are within a 90-minute drive.
Within Florida, Sarasota County’s location provides quick access to other major Central and South Florida business centers. For example, it’s a one-hour drive to St. Petersburg and Tampa. To Orlando and Naples, two hours. Miami, three.
One of Florida’s 67 counties, Sarasota County includes the municipalities of Longboat Key, North Port, Venice and Sarasota. Sarasota, often proclaimed the “arts capital” of Florida, is the county seat. Venice is an island city on the coast. The southern half of Longboat Key, a barrier island, lies in Sarasota County. North Port, which has the largest population in the county, dominates Sarasota County’s southern landscape. Incorporating five square miles, it is Florida’s third-largest city based on acreage.

The average commute time for Sarasota workers is 20 minutes compared with 26 minutes nationwide according to the Bureau of the Census.
Thousands of new residents move to Sarasota County each year. By 2008, the county’s population had grown to an estimated 372,000 full-time residents. A high quality of life and a strong economy has brought steady growth to the area. The county’s population is a mix of young families, retirees and a corps of experienced entrepreneurs, professionals and executives.

Planning for growth holds a linchpin role in many public and private sector policy decisions regarding infrastructure, land use, economic development and environmental protection in Sarasota County and Southwest Florida.

Beginning in November of each year, Sarasota County’s population grows substantially as winter residents move in. December through February, sun-seekers from the Northeast and Midwest join international tourists at the county’s beaches, golf courses and attractions.

**Fast Facts**

For detailed data on Sarasota County’s population, please refer to our Fast Facts center section.
Sarasota County’s full time population continues to offer an interesting mix of the young at heart, families and business owners, making for a rich and diverse community that provides excellent infrastructure, services and recreation for all.
Jobs in real estate development and tourism/recreation currently dominate the Sarasota County economy. Health care and retirement services also are major employment sectors. Manufacturing, technology, and financial service jobs continue to build strength into the local economy. Many Sarasota County jobs are in small- to mid-sized businesses.

For many years, Sarasota County enjoyed below average unemployment, but with the economic downturn and job losses primarily in the construction and manufacturing industry, the pool of unemployed has risen. However, despite that fact, Sarasota County has been successful in increasing the number of new companies and business acumen in key platforms. Industries capitalizing on products and services for the aging, marine and water resources, and creative and digital design will most likely have the greatest impact on the area’s job growth in the future.
## Sarasota County Major Employers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Employees</th>
<th>Primary Product/Service</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School Board of Sarasota County</td>
<td>5,297</td>
<td>Public Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarasota Memorial Health Care System</td>
<td>3,092</td>
<td>Health Care</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sarasota County Government</td>
<td>2,033</td>
<td>Municipality</td>
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<tr>
<td>Publix</td>
<td>1,602</td>
<td>Grocery Store Chain</td>
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<tr>
<td>PGT Industries</td>
<td>913</td>
<td>Window and Door Manufacturer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venice Regional Medical Center</td>
<td>830</td>
<td>Hospital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SunTrust Bank</td>
<td>819</td>
<td>Commercial Bank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Sarasota</td>
<td>740</td>
<td>Municipality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sun Hydraulics Corporation</td>
<td>640</td>
<td>Manufacturer - Hydraulic Cartridge Valves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comcast Cablevision</td>
<td>595</td>
<td>Cable Service Provider</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of North Port</td>
<td>549</td>
<td>Municipality</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sunset Automotive Group</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>Automobile Retailer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ritz-Carlton Sarasota</td>
<td>473</td>
<td>Hotel and Resort</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goodwill Industries</td>
<td>473</td>
<td>Not-for-Pro Retailer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Longboat Key Club &amp; Resort</td>
<td>417</td>
<td>Hotel and Resort</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctors Hospital of Sarasota</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>Hospital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FCCI Insurance Group</td>
<td>382</td>
<td>Insurance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Englewood Community Hospital</td>
<td>333</td>
<td>Hospital</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pines of Sarasota</td>
<td>311</td>
<td>Nursing &amp; Assisted Living</td>
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<tr>
<td>New College of Florida</td>
<td>285</td>
<td>Public Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarasota Herald-Tribune</td>
<td>281</td>
<td>Newspaper Publisher</td>
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<tr>
<td>City of Venice</td>
<td>281</td>
<td>Municipality</td>
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<tr>
<td>Village on the Isle</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>Retirement Center</td>
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<tr>
<td>Protocol Communications</td>
<td>279</td>
<td>Marketing Firm</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Zenith Insurance Company</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>Hospital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Physicians Group</td>
<td>252</td>
<td>Healthcare Providers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coastal Behavioral Healthcare, Inc.</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>Mental Health and Treatment Center</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tervis Tumbler</td>
<td>249</td>
<td>Insulated Plastic Tumbler Manufacturer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wilde Automotive</td>
<td>247</td>
<td>Automobile Retailer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ringling College of Art and Design</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>Art College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health South Rehabilitation</td>
<td>244</td>
<td>Hospital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ArtsisTree Landscape Maintenance &amp; Design</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>Landscape Contractors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L-3 Communications/L-3 Aviation Recorders</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>Manufacturer of Aviation Recorders</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Corporate Headquarters in Sarasota County

- A1 Imaging: Aso Corporation
- Boar’s Head Provisions: Certified Collectibles Group
- Clockwork Home Services: Dental Care Alliance
- DooleyMack Constructors: FCCI Insurance Group
- Financial Insurance Management Corporation(FIMC): Flornan E.S.A. Corp.
- Focus Enterprises: GPS Industries
- International Union of Police Associations: Integra Click
- JCI Jones Chemicals, Inc.: LexJet Corporation
- Medical Education Technologies, Inc.: Ned Davis Research
- Nelson Publishing: Osprey Biotechnics
- Protocol Global Solutions: PGT Industries
- Roper Industries: Scott Paint Company
- Sun Hydraulics Corp.: Tervis Tumbler Company
- Vengroff Williams & Associates: World Precision Instruments, Inc.
- xG Technology

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**Fast Facts**

For a detailed profile of employment in Sarasota County, please refer to our Fast Facts center section.

Note: The Economic Development Corporation of Sarasota County has compiled this listing of the largest employers in Sarasota County based upon information supplied by each company or institution. Updated September 2009.
Sarasota County's educated and creative workforce is diverse enough to satisfy both new and expanding businesses. More than half of Sarasota County’s population is in the prime working age range of 18 to 64. Adding the labor pool from bordering Manatee and Charlotte counties expands the total to about 350,000. Young talent emerging from Sarasota County’s high schools, colleges and universities annually infuses the decades-long immigration of experienced corporate executives, managers, supervisors and technicians. More than half the adults in the workforce 25 and older have continued their education at the college level.

**Workforce Assistance**

Workforce development is a top priority in Sarasota County. Local and state governments understand the importance of providing help with worker recruitment, relocation and training. The EDC of Sarasota County has a workforce specialist dedicated to workforce assistance.

**Recruitment Assistance Program**

The program includes free job and resume databases that allow local employers to post job openings, and job seekers to post résumés online. Program specialists help businesses find training grants, promote job fairs, and work with local schools and colleges to find internships and entry level jobs at local businesses.

www.jobfocus.com
www.employflorida.com

**Quick Response Training Grants**

Grants for customized training for employees of new or expanding businesses are available to companies that meet certain criteria, including creating new, high-quality jobs and producing goods or services for markets outside of the state. The program has been structured to be flexible and to “respond quickly” to meet a business’ unique training objectives.
Rapid Pathogen Screening, Inc.

Rapid Pathogen Screening, Inc. (RPS) is a biotechnology company which is revolutionizing Point-of-Care diagnoses in the areas of ocular and systemic diseases and bio-chemical warfare. The company has grown exponentially over the past two years and today has 27 professionals with a vision to employ more than 250 employees within the next three years.

In early 2007, RPS designed and opened their state-of-the-art research laboratory in Sarasota County, which helped them launch their first product, the RPS Adeno Detector™, the first and only FDA approved Point-of-Care test for infectious conjunctivitis (commonly known as pink eye.) This device allows a clinician (or their staff) to administer the test in their office with laboratory quality results available in 10 minutes.

Thomas Orsini, President and CEO, explains the process. “With a single drop of blood, saliva, or tear sample, our devices will be able to determine if a patient has a certain disease or has been exposed to four types of chemical warfare nerve agents. Our mission is to provide the right diagnosis, the right treatment, right now.” The company has successfully taken their ideas through development, manufacturing, regulatory hurdles, and to market. A dedicated CPT code has been assigned to the RPS Adeno Detector™ enabling physicians to be reimbursed by Medicare and other insurers when using the device in their offices.

Robert Sambursky, M.D., Chief Medical Officer at RPS points out the many ways this type of immediate diagnosis can have a significant impact on the quality of health care in our nation. “Using our Adeno Detector™, clinicians can immediately determine if conjunctivitis (pink eye) is viral or bacterial, which will limit unnecessary treatments, stop the spread of disease because treatment is not delayed for lab results, and ultimately reduce development of superbugs due to antibiotic resistance. For patients, our Point-of-Care testing can reduce costs by eliminating unnecessary prescriptions, co-pays, and development of other complications with certain diseases.”

Orsini and Sambursky are excited about their company’s future in Sarasota County. Plans call for expansion of the RPS research and development laboratory by up to 3,000 square feet, and additional headcounts for their research, sales and marketing teams as well as executive leadership. They are in the process of establishing a direct sales team to call on Ophthalmologists, family practitioners, and pediatricians. A pilot study with Minute Clinic, an Atlanta based chain of urgent care facilities, is currently underway using the RPS Adeno Detector™ with a goal of establishing the device as a must-have in like facilities throughout the country. Today the RPS Adeno Detector™ is available in most of The Little Clinic facilities throughout Florida. The company’s unique patented technology is garnering wide-spread support and is the platform for additional products currently in various stages of development and on their way to commercialization.

With so much growth on the horizon, Sambursky is confident about the ability to attract and maintain the talent needed for the bio-technology firm’s success. “The beauty of Sarasota is it’s a very livable place and the ability to recruit is simple.” He also points out that in the early stages of the company’s development, much of the talent hired came from Florida. “We also have a transportation system here in Sarasota County and Tampa that makes air travel very convenient for our staff and potential recruits.”

As a young company, RPS has benefited from the business assistance provided by the Economic Development Corporation. “When we wanted to build out our facility, we were faced with a 90-day permitting process which the EDC was able to fast track for us and we were able to begin construction within 30 days instead,” says Orsini.

The EDC has also assisted through business seminars, human resource policies and procedures, identifying potential investors, and have provided guidance in seeking out economic stimulus funds.
The Sarasota County public school system is regarded as one of the best in Florida. Few school systems can match the quality of its teachers, facilities and instructional technology.

Sarasota County has excellent public schools and many outstanding privately funded primary and secondary schools with various religious and organizational affiliations, unique approaches to learning and special focuses on vocation.

Colleges and universities in the county enjoy national and international reputations, and play significant roles in workforce development and the transfer of new technologies and innovation to the private sector.

**Sampling of Private Schools**

**Bishop Nevins Academy** – The academy is home to St. Martha Catholic School and the Dreams Are Free Institute, an outreach program for children with special learning difficulties in grades one through eight.

**Cardinal Mooney High School** – A four-year co-educational institution reflecting the high academic standards and performance levels of Catholic schools nationwide.

**Goldie Feldman Academy** – This academy at Temple Beth Sholom is a Jewish private school. It provides a full-time secular education program incorporating Jewish education from kindergarten through eighth grade.

**Julie Rohr Academy** – More than 25 years old, this co-educational school for pre-school through eighth grade places an emphasis on the arts.

**New Gate School** – This independent not-for-profit institution for pre-school through ninth grade students was selected by the Montessori Foundation to be a national laboratory school.

**The Out-of-Door Academy** – ODA has two campuses – one on Siesta Key serving pre-school through sixth grade students and another in Lakewood Ranch serving middle and high school students.

**Prew Academy** – This academy offers an individual course of study and competitive sports for grades 6 through 12, with a 8-to-1 student-teacher ratio.

**Sarasota Christian School** – This interdenominational school for grades K-12 offers a complete academic and athletic program.
Higher Education

Argosy University – A private institution that provides professional educational programs at doctoral, master’s, bachelor’s and associate’s degree levels, as well as continuing education for professionals. It emphasizes programs in the behavioral sciences, business, education and the health care professions.
www.argosyu.edu

Eckerd College – Offering bachelor’s degrees for adults in an accelerated format in Sarasota. More than 15 majors are available, including several related to business management, leadership and organization. Credit may be awarded for prior learning.
www.eckerd.edu/pel

Florida State University - Regional Medical School Campus – The Sarasota regional campus of Florida State University College of Medicine provides medical students third- and fourth-year clinical training with local physicians, ambulatory care facilities and hospitals.
http://med.fsu.edu/education/Regional/Sarasota

Florida State University Asolo Conservatory for Actor Training – A three-year training program for graduate students preparing for professional acting careers.
http://asolo.org

Keiser University – Keiser University, regionally accredited since 1991, provides master’s, bachelor’s and associate’s degrees in high-demand, career-focused fields. Keiser University, a leader in workforce education, offers courses in allied health, business, computer technology, criminal justice, culinary arts, education, hospitality and legal disciplines.
www.keisercuniversity.edu/sarasota.htm

New College of Florida – The honors college of Florida, where students earn bachelor’s degrees in the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences, plus individually arranged multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary and special topic majors.
www.ncf.edu

Ringling College of Art and Design – Offering bachelor’s degrees in 12 disciplines including computer animation, digital film, sculpture, fine arts, illustration, interior design, and photography & digital imaging. It is consistently ranked among the country’s top visual art and design schools.
www.ringling.edu

University of South Florida-Sarasota/Manatee – This upper-division regional campus provides junior, senior and graduate-level coursework, offering bachelor and graduate degrees, as well as certificate programs. It offers the prestige of a national research university, with the convenience of a hometown campus – including classes in south Sarasota County at SCF Venice.
www.sarasota.usf.edu

Webster University – Offering master’s degree programs in counseling, human resources, management and leadership, and business administration for students who hold a bachelor’s degree from a regionally accredited college or university.
www.webster.edu/sarasota

Career and Vocational Education

Sarasota County Technical Institute – Offering technical training and continuing education to people who need to upgrade or learn new skills for today’s workplace. SCIT strives to meet the demands of the local workforce through active participation with business, industry and health employers.
www.sarasotatech.org
Office Space
Class A, B, and C office space is available throughout Sarasota County. Downtown Sarasota has space in high-rise towers, as well as street-level storefronts. Work downstairs-live upstairs properties with a European flair have emerged. The downtown Venice office market is dominated by Mediterranean-style single-level and low-rise office space. North Port is the area’s fastest growing community and has opportunities for all types of businesses.

Business Parks
Sarasota County’s campus-style business parks offer several million square feet of existing leasable user space with a low vacancy rate. Most offer combinations of office, warehouse, distribution, light manufacturing space and flex space. Several technology-capable commerce parks have attracted top employers to the area. Verizon Smart Parks in Sarasota County include Cattleridge Business Center, Gateway to Sarasota, Kane Plaza, Lakewood Ranch Corporate Park, North Port Park of Commerce, Palmer Park of Commerce, and Sarasota City Center.

Warehousing
With close proximity to major transportation routes, Sarasota County’s commercial and industrial warehouse space remains popular.
Site and Building Database
The EDC works with individual companies to help them locate available sites and buildings for their expansion or relocation needs. With the cooperation of the Sarasota Association of Realtors, Commercial and Investment Division, the EDC has a comprehensive and updated database of available properties. The database is available online at www.edcsarasotacounty.com.

Rapid Permitting
Rapid response permitting is available to companies expanding or relocating in Sarasota County by expediting site, development and construction permits to approval in 25 working days once all information has been submitted. Sarasota County also works with the state expedited permitting process on projects of significant economic impact. Expedited rezones, special exceptions, and sector plan amendments may be approved for qualified applicants.

Enterprise Zone
The Enterprise Zone is slightly more than two square miles and is located approximately one-and-one-half miles north of downtown Sarasota. Businesses located within the designated zone may qualify for certain financial incentives, including job tax credits for employing residents of the zone, sales tax refunds on business equipment, sales tax refunds on building materials, property tax credits and the potential for sales tax exemptions on electrical energy.

www.edcsarasotacounty.com
Sarasota County business, economic development and government leaders have crafted several programs to help owners site and finance their relocations and expansions, advise them on how to grow their business, help them train their employees, and resolve issues with government regulation.

**LINK**
The EDC of Sarasota County’s LINK system is a business assistance hotline established to aid local businesses with any issue that may hinder or prevent their growth and prosperity. Businesses requiring assistance can call LINK at 941.309.1200, Ext. 123 and receive help within 24 hours during the workweek.

**Enterprise Bonds**
Enterprise bond financing enables manufacturers to access attractive interest rate financing. Financing for individual borrowers is grouped into a larger, pooled bond issue.

**Impact Fee Mitigation Program**
In some cases, this program could eliminate road impact fees for specific businesses relocating or expanding within the county. A business in this program has been designated by the county as a significant benefit to the local economy.

**Industrial Revenue Bonds**
IRBs provide low interest, market rate-driven capital for business expansion, new building construction and business equipment needs.

**Small Business Administration 504 Loan Program**
The 504 Program provides growing businesses with long-term, fixed-rate financing for major fixed assets, such as land and buildings.

**High Impact Performance Incentive Grant**
The High Impact Performance Incentive is a negotiated grant used to attract and grow major facilities in high-impact sectors designated by the Governor’s Office of Tourism, Trade and Economic Development – biomedical technology, financial services, silicon technology and transportation equipment manufacturing.

**Targeted Industry Incentives**

**Qualified Target Industry Tax Refund**
The Qualified Target Industry Tax Refund incentive is available for companies that create high wage jobs in targeted high value-added industries. This incentive includes refunds on corporate income, sales, ad valorem, intangible personal property, insurance premium and certain other taxes.

**Qualified Defense Contractor Tax Refund**
The Qualified Defense Contractor Tax Refund may provide up to $5,000 per job created or saved in Florida through the conversion of defense jobs to civilian production, the acquisition of a new defense contract, or the consolidation of a defense contract that results in at least a 25 percent increase in Florida employment or a minimum of 80 jobs.

**Capital Investment Tax Credit**
The Capital Investment Tax Credit is an annual credit, provided for up to 20 years against the corporate income tax. Eligible projects are in the following sectors: biomedical technology, financial services, information technology, silicon technology and transportation equipment manufacturing.
Sarasota County’s low property tax millage rate – one of the lowest in the state – amplifies the significant personal and corporate tax advantages provided by Florida.

- No state personal income tax
- No annual franchise tax on stock or equity
- No tax on inventory or goods-in-transit
- No state level ad valorem tax
- 5.5 percent corporate income tax rate, with $5,000 exemption
- S corporations exempt from Florida corporate income tax
- No sales and use tax on labor component of qualified research and development
- Limited sales and use tax on industrial machinery investments in an expanding manufacturing facility, after $50,000 threshold of paid sales tax
- Utility Sales Tax Credit for electricity charges used in manufacturing
- Up to $50,000 residential homestead exemption

**Local Taxes**

**Ad Valorem**

Of the 13.0861 mill property tax levied in Sarasota County for the 2009 tax year, 3,1052 mills or about 24 percent is applied to general county government operations. The majority of the balance is earmarked for school operations.

Cities within Sarasota County, as well as the Town of Longboat Key, levy additional millage as follows:

**Millage Rates**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Millage Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>City of Sarasota</td>
<td>3.1523</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Venice</td>
<td>3.0040</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Longboat Key/Inland</td>
<td>1.7090</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Longboat Key/Beach</td>
<td>2.1700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of North Port</td>
<td>3.3400</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Non-Ad Valorem**

Rates for non-ad valorem taxes differ depending on a variety of factors related to the property, including its location.

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Atlantic Teleconnect, Inc.

When Atlantic Teleconnect Inc. designs and manufactures a product for one of its clients, accuracy is a must. “Most of the time continued performance, extended life is required, and lives can literally be at stake,” says CEO Ric Galberaith. The company, headquartered in North Port, specializes in Class 3 or critical equipment. Whether creating wiring harness solutions for military, marine or aviation control panels, or critical medical equipment, Galberaith says every individual product is designed and built in stages with successive verification. “Every person that touches the product as it moves through production verifies the work done by the person previous. Documentation and quality control are the most important job our employees have. There’s a mile high wall at the end of the line before any product gets out of the door.”

ATI is a world class leader in manufacturing custom cable assemblies and wiring harness solutions for networking, original equipment manufacturers, and communications businesses. Their leading-edge products are manufactured in an ISO 9001:2000 state of the art facility that supports a cross-trained workforce with expertise in electrical, electro-mechanical, and process engineering. Custom cable assemblies and wiring harnesses are built to exact industry and customer specifications. With clients focused on products serving the military, homeland security, medical equipment manufacturers, and marine and aviation systems, ATI's accuracy in design and production is a hallmark of their business reputation. While ATI serves clients nationwide, nearly one-third are based in Sarasota and Galberaith says they are a great source of growth for the company today. "We don’t advertise or have a sales force," he points out. "Our business growth is based on word of mouth. We have a business to business approach. Clients bring us their problems and needs and we help them by developing the solution."

While the company was initially founded in 1995, Galberaith says it’s not the same company it was then. With a downturn in the fiber optics and communications industries in 2001, the company repositioned itself to focus more toward the Class 3 products and have experienced tremendous growth in the last four years. Each product requires careful process engineering before manufacturing begins, aimed at achieving the desired result for the client. With over 88,000 different product identities, samples of their work can be found in satellite systems, patient monitors, simulation systems, and voice and data transmission devices. ATI’s superior quality, workmanship ensuring power isolation and message integrity, and exceptional reliability of advanced wiring harness and cabling solutions have catapulted the company into a growth mode that Galberaith says will result in a significant number of new jobs for the area in the near future.

Galberaith says ATI’s home base of North Port in southern Sarasota County was all about the continuation of a former quality of life decision made by the original Senior Vice President who founded its predecessor company in the late 80’s. “Like many business owners who come to this area, he wanted to be able to put his boat in the local waters.” Galberaith believes the quality of life and business opportunities combined are a significant source of economic growth in the county and region.

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“Quality of life and business opportunities combined are a significant source of economic growth in the county and region”
Ric Galberaith, CEO
Atlantic Teleconnect
Implementing a Strategic Plan

The Economic Development Corporation is charting the course for the community utilizing three diversification platforms that leverage key strengths and unique assets, give our county a competitive edge, and position the area for quality economic growth. The new strategic plan centers around the concepts of capitalizing on the positives of our aging population, re-focusing businesses to use “design thinking” to drive growth, and furthering sustainability efforts that create and nationally promote a truly “green” community centered around water and marine resources.

Aging Platform
With nearly 32% of Sarasota County’s population over the age of 65, and a significant percentage in the 50 to 65 year-old range, the EDC identified this target market as a valuable economic engine for business growth. Becoming a national leader in research and businesses that serve the growing needs of this sector offers significant economic opportunities, through job creation and business expansion. Current community assets that support further development of this platform include the vast array of medical and educational institutions already involved in research and clinical trials with potential for greater focus on wellness and preventive medicine. Great weather, an existing tourism infrastructure and our appeal as a travel destination, enhance opportunities for medical tourism for elective or specialized treatments. Products, technologies, and services that allow for “aging in place” and help people live independently are key diversification opportunities for architectural, construction, design, and manufacturing businesses.

With these assets in mind, the concept of the Institute for the Ages evolved as a focal point for developing business strategies targeted specifically for this market. In addition to managing local and national forums on aging issues, the SAI will connect businesses, researchers, and consumers for product and service development efforts aimed at this valuable sector. Helping businesses cater to the specific needs of seniors will boost business. By embracing getting older, Sarasota County can become younger by creating new jobs through business expansion and providing more local opportunities for the existing workforce.

Design Platform
As home to Ringling College of Art & Design, Sarasota County is already recognized as a leader in creative and digital design technologies. While the community enjoys a significant reputation for arts, culture, and creative talent, the EDC identified a greater need to instill design thinking into existing businesses making them more innovative by using design technologies to enhance efficiency, product development, and consumer marketing. Using design thinking to make existing businesses more competitive, while expanding the services of local design companies, are just two benefits of this strategy. Building on this platform also offers tremendous opportunities for diversification in the areas of creative services, software and IT development and applications, and performing arts.

In order to fully develop a design thinking community, resources must be in place to build on the expertise in the application of this growing trend. Creating a center or consortium for design thinking will provide business leaders with access to education and training necessary to implement this type of strategy within their companies. Existing creative and design firms can benefit by broadening their services beyond the growing demand for digital content and web-based marketing to assisting other industries in utilizing design thinking in research and product development.

Sustainable Systems
Sarasota County’s greatest natural resources lie in the pristine waters surrounding
Sarasota County’s location, easy access to the region’s international airports and deep-water ports, and participation in regional and state export development programs give Sarasota County companies a competitive advantage in the global marketplace. Florida is the gateway to Caribbean and South American markets. Ports in neighboring Manatee County, Miami and Tampa provide ready access to the southern hemisphere, Europe, Africa and the Panama Canal. International airports in Sarasota, Fort Myers, Tampa, Miami and Orlando provide global freight and passenger connections. Enterprise Florida, the state’s economic development organization, provides access to export financing programs, export promotion, trade missions and catalog shows. Its International Trade Export Services provides marketing consulting. The Florida Trade Database helps companies identify specific trade leads or product sources. Florida Export Finance Assistance provides technical, financial and consulting assistance. Team Florida, an Enterprise Florida group usually led by Florida’s governor, travels abroad to open new markets for Florida exports. Sarasota County is also represented in international marketing initiatives through its relationship with the Tampa Bay Partnership, a regional economic development organization. A U.S. Department of Commerce liaison based in Clearwater, serves Sarasota County exporters through the Active Export Assistance Center and the United States and Foreign Commercial Service Network. While state and federal agencies offer impressive resources, local initiatives often create more personal trade connections. Sarasota County’s strong “sister cities” program continues to expand cultural, educational and economic exchanges with communities in Europe, South America and Asia.

us. While communities throughout the country are focused on building alternative energy sources, few are as well positioned as this region to act on the growing environmental concern regarding water resources. With internationally renowned Mote Marine Laboratory situated in the heart of the county, our area is poised to grow its state-wide reputation for being a green community through additional development in aquaculture technologies and products, marine sciences educational programs, and promotion of businesses producing green products and services. Through development of this third platform, expansion and diversification opportunities abound for water quality management professionals, architectural and construction firms focused on low impact developments, environmental services and product development companies, and research and educational institutions. The goals within each of these platforms are achievable and specific strategies are outlined in the five year plan. Creating partnerships, leveraging our many positive assets, and identifying capital resources for business creation and expansion are all key components the EDC has incorporated in this plan for future economic growth and diversification. All of these platforms are centered on an overarching goal of creating a more vibrant, competitive business community. For more information about the community’s strategic plan, please visit www.edcsarasotacounty.com.
Fiber-optic, Cable and Wireless Broadband

Industry’s need for speed has Sarasota County voice, data and video service providers retooling their distribution systems with next-generation broadband technologies. Comcast of West Florida is a telecommunications operator, offering integrated two-way products and features from a single connection. Digital video recorders, high definition television and video on demand are broadly deployed on Comcast’s digital cable service. Comcast high-speed Internet service offers a basic speed tier of 12 Mbps downstream, and 2 Mbps upstream and a premium tier that delivers 50 Mbps downstream and 10 Mbps upstream. Using Comcast’s privately managed broadband network, Comcast offers Comcast Digital Voice Service, providing customers digital-quality phone service with unlimited direct-dial local and long distance calling, Web access to voicemail, E911 and 12 of the most popular calling features.

Verizon extends fiber-optic and digital optic capabilities to all industrial and commercial zones in Sarasota County. It maintains SONET (Synchronous Optical Network) rings; central office-based PBX; T1 (1.544 Mbps) to D3 (45 Mbps) circuits; frame relay; Integrated Services Digital Network (ISDN); ATM and GigE networking; and video conferencing. Since 2005, Verizon has also deployed over 6.2 million feet of fiber-optic cable directly in front of customer homes and businesses – with more fiber added daily. Verizon’s FiOS (Fiber-Optic Services) provides the bandwidth and speed for next-generation Internet access, voice and digital-high definition video applications. Separate pulses of light carried on the fiber network provide consumers with Internet download speeds up to 50 Mbps and upload speeds up to 15 Mbps (currently); and to accommodate multiple high-definition television sets. Verizon discounts bundles of Internet, television, and unlimited telephone services for residents and bundles of Internet and unlimited voice services for businesses.
**Utilities**

**Reliable, Advanced Infrastructure**

**Electrical Power**

Florida Power & Light (FPL), one of the largest and fastest growing utilities in the nation, provides electrical power to approximately half of Florida’s population along the east and west coasts, including Sarasota County homes, businesses and industries.

FPL’s generating plants use a diverse fuel mix to help ensure reliable service and reasonable rates. In recent years, FPL and Sarasota County partnered in development of the largest photovoltaic solar array in the Southeast, now in operation in the County’s Rothenbach Park.

FPL expects to add up to 100,000 more customer accounts system-wide annually. To respond to this growth, FPL is building new power plants, purchasing power from others and encouraging voluntary customer conservation.

FPL conservation and load management programs for business and industry offer significant cost-saving incentives.

**Natural Gas**

Peoples Gas is Florida’s leading provider of natural gas with more than 320,000 customers statewide. A subsidiary of Teco Energy, an energy giant, headquartered in Tampa, Peoples Gas has served residential, commercial and industrial customers in Sarasota County for more than 30 years.

The Gulfstream Natural Gas Pipeline opened in 2002, boosting the reliability of supply chain and increasing natural gas transmission capacity into Florida by 50 percent. The pipeline runs along the bottom of the Gulf of Mexico from Alabama to just south of Tampa.

Teco and Peoples Gas promote incentive-based conservation and operational efficiency programs.

**Water**

Sarasota County has invested in ample water supplies to accommodate growth to 2020 and identified sources to provide potable water supply to 2050. Sarasota County Utilities supplies water to about 76,000 customers and wastewater services to about 58,500 customers. Sarasota County draws water from several sources, including its own wellfields and supplies purchased from Manatee County and the Peace River/Manasota Regional Water Supply Authority.

The Water Planning Alliance meets regularly to plan future water needs. It includes Sarasota, Manatee, Charlotte and DeSoto counties, all of their municipalities, and the Englewood Water District. Sarasota County also works closely with the Southwest Florida Water Management District, which has oversight responsibility for a 16-county area and permits all water usage, including agriculture and industry.
Port Manatee
The unique location of Port Manatee, the fourth largest of Florida’s 14 deepwater seaports, creates economical shipping access to North and South American markets and suppliers. As the closest U.S. deepwater seaport to the Panama Canal, Port Manatee offers the quickest East coast access to the Pacific Rim.

One of Florida’s deepest seaports, Port Manatee has six deepwater berths and more than 1 million square feet of office and warehouse space, including chill and frozen warehousing. Port Manatee is designated Foreign Trade Zone No. 169, and warehouse space can be set aside for secure and duty-free storage of cargo. It is U.S. Customs Port of Entry No. 1821, and employs a full-time U.S. Customs and Border Protection port director.

Port Manatee is three miles from Interstate 75 and Interstate 275. The port’s eight-mile, Class III railroad links CSX, opening Port Manatee to all of North America.

Port Manatee is 14 miles north of Sarasota Bradenton International Airport, at the Manatee-Hillsborough county line.

Airports
More than 1.6 million business and leisure passengers annually make national and international connections through Sarasota Bradenton International Airport’s more than 10 airlines.

Sarasota Bradenton International is a convenient and comfortable portal to hundreds of domestic and international destinations through the connecting hubs of AirTran Airways, Air Canada, Delta Air Lines, Jet Blue and US Airways. In addition, daily non-stop service is available to a myriad of cities.

To meet the increasing demand in the corporate jet market and fractional ownership fleets at SRQ, the airport added a third fixed-base operator (FBO) with the existing two FBO’s undergoing significant general aviation expansions in recent years.

Venice Municipal Airport, in the heart of that island city, serves general aviation and offers charter and air taxi.

Tampa International Airport, St. Petersburg-Clearwater International Airport and Southwest Florida International Airport in Fort Myers – all reached in a 90-minute drive – are major U.S. and international air portals.

Fast Facts
For more about Sarasota Bradenton International Airport, please refer to our Fast Facts center section.
Rail Lines
An intermodal terminal and rail spur link CSX Transportation and Seminole Gulfcoast Railway to Port Manatee. The CSX also connects to the Port of Tampa, as Florida’s largest port, Tampa handles approximately 50 million tons of cargo per year. It operates a major rail yard and TDSI auto distribution, bulk transfer and intermodal terminals. CSX’s 21,000-mile rail network links commercial markets in 23 Eastern states, the District of Columbia, and two Canadian provinces. Its rail, intermodal and rail-to-truck transload services connect 70 ocean, river and lake ports, as well as 230 short line and regional railroads. Seminole Gulf Railway, a short-line railroad, moves freight and excursion trains within Southwest Florida on two lines. The lines have interchange points with CSX at Oneco and Arcadia, respectively.

Osprey Biotechnics
Founded in 1990 as a spinoff of Microlife Technics, a producer of beneficial cultures for a variety of foods, Sarasota-based Osprey Biotechnics is a worldwide leader in the development and production of beneficial bacteria for wastewater treatment, crop protection, animal, plant and human health applications, in addition to environmental restoration and pollution prevention. Recognized by the Environmental Protection Agency’s Design for the Environment program, Osprey’s products have received the seal of recognition for providing environmentally safer products.

CEO Vince Scuilla points out that “everything we do is to replace chemicals that can harm the environment.” Scuilla says the most important aspect of Osprey is its research and development efforts resulting in products that meet the needs of the customers. “As we launched this business we were in a position of developing a product then taking it to market. Our goal was to form strategic alliances with major corporations, license the technology to them, and let them market the product. Fifteen years ago we would identify an end user and work with them to create a problem solving agent. Today those partners come to us with requests for development of products they’ve identified as a need.”

Under the label Munox, Osprey manufactures and distributes products comprised of patented strains of lyophilized (freeze-dried) Pseudomonas cultures. The bacterial strains in these products are naturally occurring and free of pathogens, and they leave only natural byproduct that are safe for the environment.

Lauren Danielson, Executive Vice President, says the quality control and customer service efforts of Osprey are key to their success.

Osprey manufactures products for boat bilge maintenance, bioremediation, drain maintenance, grease trap/lift station maintenance, holding tank treatment/deodorizer, septic system treatment, vehicle/parts washer additive, wastewater inoculants and agriculture. Osprey’s highly skilled staff are experts in isolating, identifying, growing, stabilizing, and packaging unique and beneficial microorganisms to meet a wide range of consumer and industrial needs.

As a research and development company, Osprey Biotechnics requires from their staff high level performance in complex areas. Employing 35 individuals in their Sarasota office, expertise in science, engineering, research and development, and quality control are critical. “We’ve had great success in recruiting key staff to our facility,” says Danielson. “There is an excellent talent pool in this community and most of our employees have been found locally.” Citing a recent worldwide search for a PhD, Danielson says the best applicant was found in Sarasota. She also points out that Florida has made tremendous strides to enhance and foster growth in the biotechnology industry.

But when attracting new hires to the community is required, it’s an easy sell says Scuilla. “The quality of life here is excellent. My entire executive team is here because they love it!” From culture to schools, beaches to business development, Scuilla feels the Sarasota area is prime for businesses who want quality in and outside of the workplace.

“There is an excellent talent pool in this community and most of our employees have been found locally.”

Vince Scuilla, CEO
Osprey Biotechnics
Sarasota County Bankers – the Best and Brightest

As one of Florida’s leading business centers, Sarasota County is home to more than 900 financial services firms. The area has attracted the nation’s leading banks and spawned several state-chartered community banks. Sarasota County bankers are active in bridge and permanent construction loans for real estate development, business expansion lending, financing retail inventories and funding small business start-ups. With a high concentration of wealthy residents in the county, financial institutions also maintain extensive private banking and asset management operations.

Angel and Venture Capital

The Economic Development Corporation of Sarasota County, local financial institutions and existing local and regional angel investor networks have developed a structure to access the full range of capital including angel and venture capital, as well as asset and debt-based capital for more traditional industries. An EDC capital formation strategy focuses on tapping the existing wealth in the community to increase start-up funding for new businesses and the availability of expansion funds for value-added industries. The Gulfcoast Venture Forum established a chapter in Sarasota County bringing opportunities to local businesses.
Residents and visitors are well served by the network of hospitals and health care providers in Sarasota County. Several medical centers have garnered national reputations for their specialty care. And because of the expertise of their clinicians, advanced medical technology and organizational strength, several medical centers conduct clinical research and medical student education.

**All Children’s Specialty Care of Sarasota**
All Children’s Specialty Care of Sarasota is an 18,000-square-foot outpatient center that provides quality pediatric medical and therapeutic services. Pediatric subspecialty care in a variety of medical disciplines is available to children who are referred by their community physicians.

[www.allkids.org/sarasota](http://www.allkids.org/sarasota)

**Doctors Hospital of Sarasota**
Doctor's Hospital of Sarasota is a 168-bed acute and general care, primarily private room facility serving Sarasota and Manatee counties. It offers a wide range of medical and specialty services, as well as emergency care, outpatient services, and diagnostic and rehabilitation services. The staff and more than 550 physicians are dedicated to providing quality patient care in a compassionate environment.

[www.doctorsofsarasota.com](http://www.doctorsofsarasota.com)

**Englewood Community Hospital**
Englewood Community Hospital is a 100-bed, general acute-care hospital offering a full range of inpatient and outpatient services in the Englewood area for 20 years. It is the only hospital in Sarasota and Charlotte counties accredited as a Chest Pain Center by the Society of Chest Pain Centers and Providers. Englewood Community Hospital has also achieved a five star rating for heart attack, heart failure and stroke, placing the facility in the top 15 percent of all health care providers nationwide for clinical quality.

[www.engagewoodcommhospital.com](http://www.engagewoodcommhospital.com)

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HealthSouth

HealthSouth is the largest provider of inpatient rehabilitation in the United States, with more than 1,000 locations across the nation. In Sarasota County, HealthSouth has a 76-bed, freestanding inpatient rehabilitation hospital and outpatient and surgery centers. The Sarasota facility is ranked within the top 10 HealthSouth facilities nationwide in regard to patient satisfaction.

www.healthsouth.com

Sarasota Memorial Health Care System

Sarasota Memorial Health Care System, an 806-bed regional medical center, is the second-largest acute care public hospital in Florida. It offers specialized expertise in heart, cancer and neuroscience services and a Level III Neonatal Intensive Care Unit. The system also includes home health care, outpatient rehabilitation, sports medicine and long term nursing care. It is the sole provider of obstetrical services in Sarasota County. Sarasota Memorial operates a state-of-the-art health care center in the City of North Port. The facility serves North Port and south Sarasota County with advanced emergency medical care and key outpatient services.

www.smh.com

Venice Regional Medical Center

Venice Regional Medical Center is a 312-bed hospital offering a wide range of inpatient and outpatient services including a five star rated joint replacement program, a Top 100 Cardiovascular program provided through Venice Regional Heart Center, and general and vascular surgery. Other services include a certified stroke center, comprehensive cardiology program, emergency care, outpatient testing, outpatient surgery, radiology, a sleep lab, a wound care center, outpatient rehab, critical care, laboratory services and home health services. The acute care facility is owned and operated by Health Management Associates, Inc.

www.veniceregional.com
Jim Abrams, C.E.O. and co-founder of Clockwork Home Services, Inc., sees a bright future ahead for his business. As one of the fastest growing private companies in the United States, Abrams says the business climate in Florida and particularly Sarasota County is ripe for additional expansion of his home services franchises and consulting services.

The company, founded in 1998 in St. Louis, Missouri, establishes and builds nationally branded franchises for home services contractors. Franchise opportunities with Clockwork include Benjamin Franklin the Punctual Plumber, One Hour Heating & Air Conditioning, and Mister Sparky, an electrical services business. Franchise owners benefit from the strength of a national brand and Clockwork’s expertise in customer service and technical training, as well as business management tools. Franchise owners also have access to private label equipment at affordable prices through the company’s wholesale distributor BuyMax.

For companies wishing to maintain an individual identity, Clockwork offers consulting services through an Affinity Group membership in the areas of electrical, plumbing, air conditioning and heating, and roofing. While Clockwork continues to have operations in St. Louis and franchises in 592 territories throughout the nation, Sarasota became home-base in 2001 when Abrams relocated to Sarasota permanently. “My family enjoyed a second home in Sarasota for years, but as my children began moving here, my wife and I decided to make this our primary home as well,” says Abrams.

With Clockwork’s corporate headquarters, franchise division, BuyMax division, and retail division, the Sarasota location employs over 90 individuals with an eye on significant growth in the future. “We’re working with Florida and the Economic Development Corporation of Sarasota County on some growth initiatives now that will significantly increase our workforce when they come to fruition,” says Abrams. “This would bring a lot of new career opportunities to the community.”

Clockwork’s operations in Florida benefit from many advantages over the Missouri plant. With no state income tax for companies or workers, the financial benefit is huge. Abrams points out. “Recently my wife and I realized we could identify 42 families who have moved here and purchased homes, as a result of Clockwork’s recruitment efforts.”

But Clockwork doesn’t rely solely on out-of-state recruitment to fill positions. “We’re seeing a generational change with people moving ‘back home’ after college. They want to settle closer to family and are looking for opportunities with great pay and benefits,” he says. “We have a talented pool of young prospective employees here in the Sarasota area that is well-educated and ambitious.”

Abrams says that in addition to the business friendly climate in Florida, organizations such as the Sarasota County EDC have been very welcoming and assist with valuable business exposure. “I was invited to meet with Governor Crist during an EDC meeting and had the opportunity to share with him my business’s specific needs in order to be more successful,” says Abrams. “Having a platform for business professionals to provide input to key governmental leaders is a big bonus for doing business in the greater Sarasota area.”
Few Southern communities can match the cultural assets of Sarasota County. Its rich tapestry of the arts reflects the legacy of generations of artists, writers and art lovers who lived and worked here. *Southern Living* magazine called Sarasota County “the nation’s per capita arts capital” after exploring its treasures.

Sarasota County is home to the Sarasota Orchestra, the Sarasota Ballet of Florida and the Sarasota Opera. Choral societies and pops and jazz bands thrive. Annual music festivals range from international chamber music to the blues. The Sarasota Jazz Festival, The Sarasota Film Festival and Comedy Festival draw thousands every year. Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall presents world-class dance, music, comedy, traveling Broadway shows, and popular national and international artists. The Asolo Repertory, the professional company at the Florida State University Center for the Performing Arts in Sarasota, and more than a dozen Equity and community theaters delight audiences with classic and innovative productions.

The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art anchors three spectacular attractions. Internationally recognized, the Museum of Art features significant holdings in European, American, and non-Western art, with masterpieces from the 17th-century Baroque period. Cà d’Zan is the Ringlings’ magnificent, 32-room Venetian-Gothic mansion on beautiful Sarasota Bay. The Circus Museum displays memorabilia and artifacts from the rich history of the American Circus and The Ringling Bros. family enterprise.

For more information on the arts in Sarasota County, visit the Sarasota County Arts Council at [www.sarasota-arts.org](http://www.sarasota-arts.org).
At Large, Inc.

When Anand Pallegar launched Internet marketing firm atLarge, Inc. in 2004, he knew Sarasota was the place to kick-off the venture. “Sarasota offered a creative economy and a talented workforce. It was, and still is, a great place to live, work and play.”

So what does atLarge, Inc. do? The short answer: they build business online. How? The firm uses their expertise to engineer custom Web sites, online advertising campaigns, mobile campaigns and more. “We leverage strategy, creative and technology to develop online marketing campaigns that produce results – whether that’s raising brand awareness, lifting sales, or increasing search engine result rankings,” explains Pallegar. Those results are benchmarked against site analytics and overall Web and marketing performance.

The Sarasota Film Festival (SFF) is just one example of atLarge, Inc.’s ability to impact brand success. With the festival struggling to reach new audiences, SFF commissioned the company in 2006 to reinvigorate the annual event. In the first year managing the festival’s online marketing, atLarge, Inc. delivered a 250 percent increase in online ticket sales. “By capturing data about how users were interacting with the site, we had a more holistic view of the audience,” said Pallegar. “That information was used to build a customer-driven site. It engaged visitors and encouraged them to create a “my SFF account” so they could receive the latest festival updates and build a custom schedule of their favorite movies and events.” Today, the event ranks as one of the top 10 festivals in the nation and continues to grow with the expertise of both the SFF and atLarge, Inc. teams.

What is it like to be part of the atLarge, Inc. team? It’s challenging but fun. Team members bring their dogs to work, take brainstorming off-site whether that’s at a local pub, park or beach. What really stands out here is that the best idea always wins, regardless of whom came up with it. Each employee is encouraged to explore and develop new ideas. “We’re a flat company,” points out team member Amanda Eyer. “We don’t have titles. If employees have an idea, they share it.” Weekly production meetings are creative discussions where the genius in each employee can flow freely.

It was at one of these meetings that team member Melissa Hembree presented the concept of Be Green, an initiative to go beyond traditional recycling to a commitment of practicing sustainability each day in every possible way; with the products and equipment used, landscaping, carpooling, even unplugging equipment before leaving the office each night. Their Be Green initiative has earned them the EPA WasteWise, Sustainable Florida and Sarasota County Green Business Partnership certifications.

Working with atLarge, Inc. also means working with the community. Twenty percent of their revenues are reinvested into the community each year. That does not include donations from the company’s DreamLarge initiative. Each year, one non-profit is selected to receive a year’s worth of free online marketing services (web development, web analytics, viral marketing, and online branding strategy) under DreamLarge. Girls Inc. of Sarasota is the first DreamLarge recipient. Their new website allows girls to learn about online media in a safe environment and offers avenues for online donations and program registrations.

The atLarge, Inc. team is thriving in Sarasota. Pallegar says the area has some of the greatest minds in the industry. With an educational system that features institutions like New College of Florida, Ringling College of Art and Design, USF Sarasota-Manatee the community produces a diverse base of talented young professionals for the creative industry. “There’s a misperception that this area is just for retirement but that’s not the case,” says Pallegar. “There is a young population here that appreciates culture and overall quality of life Sarasota has to offer.”
Work hard, play hard. But, don’t forget the sunscreen. Fun in Sarasota County often starts outdoors on land or on the water. Golf in America began here. (We can prove it!) More than 60 courses dot the area. You might see a Wimbledon champion at a local tennis club. The ponies run at the polo club on Sunday and the powerboats race in the summer.

Eco-tourism activities abound in county and state parks, which offer room to roam for biking and hiking. Thousands compete in road runs, triathlons and marathons. Organized youth sports leagues throughout the county teach the fundamentals of football, soccer, baseball, volleyball, rowing, swimming and basketball.

The waters of the Gulf, wild and scenic Myakka River and other Sarasota County waterways, are paradise for those who travel by sailboat, kayak, canoe or powerboat. Attractions like G. WIZ, the Hands-on Science Museum, Marie Selby Botanical Gardens, Mote Marine Laboratory and Aquarium and Sarasota Jungle Gardens draw families like magnets.

Enjoy spring training games in Sarasota. Home games of the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, Tampa Bay Lightning and the American League’s Tampa Bay Rays are a one-hour drive away.

Sarasota County is the headquarters for the U.S. Masters Swimming Association

To Learn more about recreation in Sarasota County, visit www.sarasotafl.org
Our Backyard is Fun. Some parts covered in sand.

So does Circus Sarasota, a one-ring, international troupe that reflects Sarasota County’s prominent historical connection with the American circus. Historic Spanish Point shows how early settlers prospered in the Sarasota County wilderness in the mid-19th century.

Whatever activities are scheduled, the day or weekend can always be capped off by witnessing breathtaking sunsets from pristine beaches along Sarasota County’s 35 miles of Gulf of Mexico coastline. Sarasota County beaches are consistently ranked among the best in the world! Sarasota County’s Siesta Beach is ranked #2 of America’s top 10 beaches according to Dr. Beach’s 2009 America’s Best Beaches survey.
From sugar-sand beaches to primordial tropical forests, from gritty urban hard-scapes, working ranches and backcountry fish camps to palatial residential enclaves and world-class resorts, Sarasota County’s 570 square miles offer film and new media producers a diverse array of engaging locations to stage their artistic vision.

Designated a “camera ready” community by the state of Florida, Sarasota County also is rich with the talent and logistical assets required of film, television, entertainment and multimedia production companies. The Sarasota County Film & Entertainment Office (SCFEO), a division of the Economic Development Corporation and the official film commission for Sarasota County, not only incubates and serves its homegrown industry, but aggressively pursues production in Hollywood, New York and other creative capitals around the world. The SCFEO attracts and facilitates:

• Feature films
• Television series and specials
• Commercials and infomercials
• Public service and not-for-profit media
• Music videos
• Documentaries and travelogues
• Corporate and industrial productions
• Reality television

A one-stop production resource, the SCFEO provides free assistance as the central point of production coordination, reduces paperwork and expedites the production process. As a full-service film commission and a member of the Association of Film Commissioners International (AFCI), the SCFEO assists productions through:

• Scouting assistance
• Permitting guidance
• Location photography
• Intergovernmental liaison
• Research and reference materials
• Resource directory of crew, vendors, services and equipment contacts
• Community relations
• Problem solving and information gathering

Sarasota County is film-friendly, picture perfect and ready for its close-up. Visit www.filmsarasota.com to learn more about film and new media production in Sarasota County.

“Filming and media production of all kinds generate substantial revenue, create high-wage jobs, diversify our economy and drive tourism all while attracting new and retaining existing businesses and residents.”

– Jeanne Corcoran, Director of the Film & Entertainment Office
Great Dining In Our DNA
In addition to the arts and beaches, Sarasota County has long been envied for its outstanding restaurants. From sand-in-your-toes, beachfront barbeques and romantic outdoor bistros to elegant Zagat-rated gourmet haunts, the community simmers with great dining. The cuisines include “Floribbean,” Asian, Amish, Middle Eastern, Cuban, Mexican, French, Italian, German and South American. Or take a bite from Old Florida with conch fritters, grouper sandwiches and Key Lime pie.

Shopping That’s Never Out of Style
Sarasota County has solidified its position as the preeminent shopping destination of Florida’s Gulf Coast. With an international reputation, toney St. Armands Circle attracts foreign visitors, as well as locals. Upscale malls anchored by retail heavyweights such as Saks Fifth Avenue and Macy’s are available throughout the county and factory outlet malls are positioned nearby as well. Both downtowns in Venice and Sarasota are crowded with antique shops, boutiques, and art galleries.
The American Dream, Sarasota Style

**Make Yourself at Home, Affordably**

Generations of homebuilders have blended art with science to create special places to live in Sarasota County. Choices range from gracious multi-acre country estates to restored Old Florida homes in revitalized downtown neighborhoods, from high-rise condominiums with water views to country club homes in master-planned, gated communities. Entire enclaves are dedicated to tennis, golf, flying, horses or boating.

Towards the end of 2009, the median price of a single-family home in Sarasota County was $165,000.

Sarasota County’s millage rate is among the lowest in Florida. The state’s homestead law exempts permanent residents from paying taxes on up to the first $50,000 of the appraised value of their homes. Another state tax law caps annual property assessed value increases at three percent.
You Have Questions, We Have Answers

The Economic Development Corporation of Sarasota County is a successful public-private partnership focused on its mission to grow and diversify the economy of Sarasota County, while enhancing the county’s unique natural and cultural environments. It is the catalyst for creating a vibrant economy that is sustainable and globally competitive. The EDC is a rich resource for entrepreneurs considering sites for new enterprise and existing business operators exploring relocation or expansion.

For more information about starting, expanding or relocating your business in Sarasota County, Florida, don’t hesitate to contact the Economic Development Corporation of Sarasota County at 941.309.1200.

www.edcsarasotacounty.com

Partner With EDC, Invest In Prosperity

Committed to building a sustainable economy and improving the quality of life in Sarasota County, many county businesses join in the Economic Development Corporation of Sarasota County as investors. The economic development program of the EDC is funded in part by the county’s local business tax and a per-capita investment from the county and municipalities.

Private-sector investment is required to match public dollars and expand important workforce development, business climate, business recruitment and expansion programs.

The EDC addresses crucial business climate issues by working with the business community, municipalities, chambers of commerce, and other organizations, which serve as EDC Partners. Businesses show their commitment to EDC’s mission of creating high-wage jobs and a diversified, sustainable economy as investors in the organization.

They receive a variety of benefits, including listings in the EDC Investor Directory, invitations to special events and the ability to serve on EDC committees.

For more information about becoming an EDC Investor, visit us on the web at www.edcsarasotacounty.com and click on “Partner With EDC.”