

Area 9th largest tech employer in Florida

SPECIAL TO FLORIDA WEEKLY

A recent report by AeA, the nation's largest trade association representing all segments of the high-tech industry, shows that Lee County added 200 net jobs in 2005, the most current metropolitan data available, making it the state's 9th largest technology hub, with a total of 4,400 jobs.

The area's leading high-tech sectors are engineering services, telecommunications, and computer systems design and related services. Engineering added 200 net jobs and computer systems design and related services added 100 net jobs in 2005. However, the telecommunications sector experienced a net loss of 100 jobs in 2005.

Lee County tech industry workers are paid an average annual wage of \$51,300 - 48 percent more than the average private sector wage in the region. High-tech firms employ 24 of every 1,000 private sector workers in Cape Coral/Fort Myers.

"The people of Cape Coral and Fort Myers - not to mention people across the state - probably don't think of themselves as having a thriving high-tech industry," said Maryann Fiala, executive director of the AeA. "But they should. Our high-tech industry is modest but critical to the local economy. But we are competing not only with other states, but also with other countries for these high paying jobs. Local officials need to understand this and create competitive incentives that lure these companies and this talent to our region. The jobs, tax revenue, and innovations they produce benefit the entire region."

The Cape Coral/Fort Myers metropoli-

tan area includes all of Lee County.

Florida's statewide high-tech industry employment added 10,900 net jobs, up by four percent, for a tech industry total of 276,400 jobs in 2005, the most current state data available. This makes Florida the 4th ranked cyberstate by tech industry employment and the 2nd fastest growing cyberstate in 2005. Geographically, Florida's tech industry is diffused across the state. ■

High tech jobs in Lee County

- >> 4,400 high-tech workers (9th ranked Florida cybercity)
- >> 200 net job gain between 2004 and 2005
- >> High-tech firms employed 24 of every 1,000 private sector workers in 2005, ranked 8th statewide
- >> High-tech workers earned an average wage of \$51,300 (9th ranked), or 48 percent more than Cape Coral/Fort Myers' average private sector wage
- >> A high-tech payroll of \$226 million in 2005, ranked 9th statewide
- >> 400 high-tech establishments in 2005, ranked 8th statewide
- >> 1,600 jobs in the engineering services sector in 2005, a net gain of 200 from 2004 to 2005
- >> 1,400 jobs in the telecommunications services sector in 2005, a net loss of 100 from 2004 to 2005
- >> 500 computer systems design and related services jobs in 2005, a net gain of 100 from 2004 to 2005

Source: Florida Cybercities 2007

Local firm picks up international awards

Fort Myers ActionCOACH honored by peers

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The Fort Myers ActionCOACH franchise, which provides personalized mentoring, training and leadership development to help, announced that it took home four top international awards at the company's global conference in Dublin, Ireland. This was the most of awards granted to any ActionCOACH firm in the company's 14-year history.

"It is wonderful to be recognized for our contributions to the ActionCOACH franchise and for our success in helping businesses throughout the region succeed," said Dale Christie, co-owner of the Fort Myers franchise since 2005.

ActionCOACH honored Heather Christie, co-founder and president of the local ActionCOACH firm with the highly coveted 2007 Coaches Choice Award. The award, voted on by peers, is given annually to one coach out of more than 1,000 in 24 countries, for business coaching excellence. Christie was also chosen as one of the top three trainers from around the world and will appear in ActionCOACH's corporate professional training video. A leader in her field, Christie serves on the North American franchise advisory board for ActionCOACH.

John Lankford, certified business coach



COURTESY PHOTO

From the left are Paul Christie, Heather Christie, John Lankford and Dale Christie at the ActionCOACH global conference in Dublin, Ireland.

and vice president of leadership development, was named ActionCOACH's 2007 Rookie Coach of the Year. The prestigious award is given to a coach who has been with the company for less than one year and best exemplifies the qualities of an ActionCOACH business coach. He was recognized out of approximately 300 new coaches from across the world. Before joining ActionCOACH, Lankford's career included executive positions with three Fortune 500 companies, Ford Motor Company, Comcast University and Ascension Health, the second largest health system in the nation. ■



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