

# Progress Report 2008



## Chairman's Message



*As Polk Vision celebrates its fifth year as an organization, I'd like to take a moment to look back and thank each of you for your contributions. From those who participated in the many community meetings sharing your comments and concerns to our cadre of volunteers and Vision Partners who have had a part in our evolving to what we are today—thank you. I want to especially thank our Funding Partners for their financial support which enables us to continue our mission. All of us working together will provide for a healthy, improved Polk.*

This year's Progress Report contains expanded data on our community which provides us with a clear view of some of the areas where we've made progress as well as those where we still have work to do. We hope you will read, review and take personal pride in the achievements. We also need your involvement in the future so look over the report and find a place where you can make a difference. I encourage you to visit our new Web site to take an in-depth look at Polk Vision and share the news with others.

Please join me in thanking our Executive Committee, Steering Committee and staff for all of their work during the year in keeping Polk Vision headed in the right direction with input from you. We still have much work to accomplish!

*Cindy Price*

Cindy Price | Chairman | [caprice@tecoenergy.com](mailto:caprice@tecoenergy.com)

## Introduction

*As Polk's Vision is contained in vision statements, core values and strategies, its success is measured through benchmarks. These are the measurements designed to monitor progress toward change in our community. Over the course of the next decades, numerous key benchmarks will be used to determine how the Polk Vision foundation areas improve countywide.*

In addition to the key benchmarks, several key performance indicators supplement this overview. Most of them have been set by alliances as they work toward accomplishing specific changes in the foundation areas of Private Sector Leadership, Economic Development, Education, Infrastructure, Government, and Quality of Life.

Not all information used to measure key benchmarks is available yearly and some of it is published with a certain delay. Our benchmark team continues to collaborate with local agencies and other sources to add new information as needed. Expanding and communicating this type of information will be an important role for Polk Vision in the years to come.



Peter Usinger Chairman, Benchmark Task Force | [pusinger@polk.edu](mailto:pusinger@polk.edu)

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## Leadership Polk

Leadership Polk is a Polk Vision program started in 2007 that brings together current and emerging leaders from across the County to develop diverse networks of resourceful, informed and proactive leaders who will contribute to building a more vibrant county and region. Leadership Polk Class I graduated in May 2008 and Class II will graduate in May 2009.

The nine-month program immerses participants in an inspiring and enlightening curriculum that examines critical issues that impact Polk County. Leadership Polk is topically-relevant, ever-changing, and exposes participants to many community-minded perspectives and resources through an open forum.

Leadership Polk strives for diversity when making each class selection. Class members represent a cross-section of leaders from across Polk County reflecting multiple diversities (ie: ethnicity, sex and geography).

For additional information about Leadership Polk contact Traci Mason, Leadership Polk Program Coordinator, at [leadershippolk@polkvision.com](mailto:leadershippolk@polkvision.com).

### Leadership Polk Quick Facts

- *18% of our program participants to date represent a diverse group of different minority populations.*
- *39% of our program participants have been female.*
- *Leadership Polk has had class participation from individuals representing the following municipalities in Polk County: Auburndale, Bartow, Fort Meade, Haines City, Highland Park, Lakeland, Lake Wales, Mulberry, Polk City, and Winter Haven.*





## Job Growth

Polk Vision originally adopted a benchmark of creating 7,000 net new jobs per year. While that benchmark was exceeded in 2004 and 2005, the pace of job creation slowed significantly during the last two years and this measure is now considered by many experts as unsustainable. The job growth of 3,100 for 2007 that was published in our report last year has been further downward adjusted by Florida's Agency for Workforce Innovation to about 300. The countywide loss of jobs of 5,900 for 2008 might see a similar adjustment.

The fact that the local unemployment rate recently passed the 10% margin doesn't come as a surprise. Many areas of the local job market show stronger vulnerabilities as a result of the county's exposure to problems in the mortgage, realty, and construction industries. In addition, service and retail businesses continue to see the fallout of reduced consumer spending and the tightening of the credit markets. However, while many of these developments are just following the general economic downturn, we are challenged to answer them with initiatives that create a more competitive workforce to encourage business growth and the relocation of industries that project a more robust and sustainable outlook. Improving education and workforce retraining is a necessary ingredient of such endeavors.

## Earnings

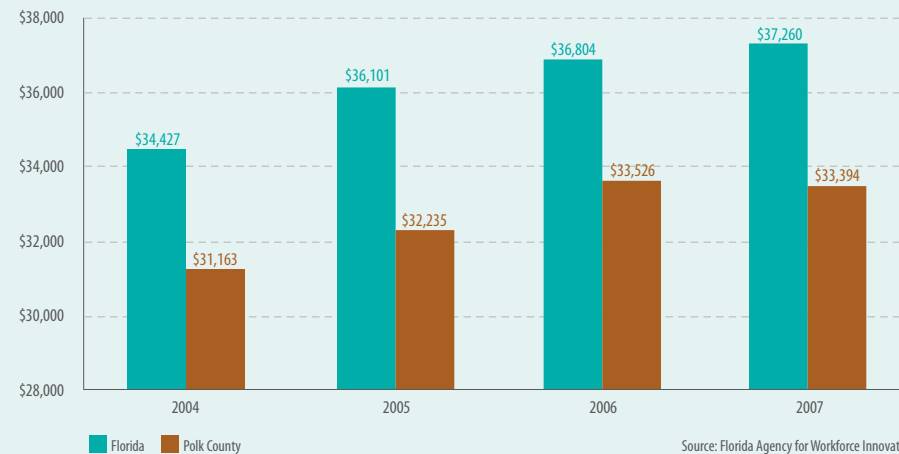
The benchmark for the average wage would increase Polk County's average earnings per job at an annual rate that is 0.5% larger than the rate for the state of Florida. In 2007, the average wage in Polk County declined by almost half of a percent point compared to a 1.2% increase for the state. As a result, the differential between wages in Florida and Polk County has widened, and local earnings lagged state earnings by over 10% in 2007. This marks a consistent shortfall compared to the desired benchmark values and continues to underline the increasing need for high-skill/high-wage job growth.

## Polk County Population & Employment Changes 2004-2008

	Population (BEBR)	Labor Force	Jobs on Payroll	Annual Job Growth	Unemployed	Unemployment Rate
2004	528,389	249,276	198,400	10,400	12,185	4.9%
2005	541,840	259,783	210,900	12,500	10,426	4.0%
2006	565,049	262,970	215,400	4,500	9,757	3.7%
2007	581,058	269,074	215,700	300	12,017	4.5%
2008	585,733	271,026	209,800	-5,900	18,046	6.7%
<b>2004-08 Change</b>	<b>10.9%</b>	<b>8.7%</b>	<b>5.7%</b>		<b>48.1%</b>	

Source: Florida Agency for Workforce Innovation

## Average Annual Wages Compared



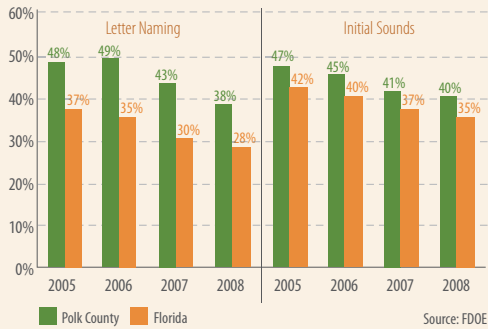
Source: Florida Agency for Workforce Innovation





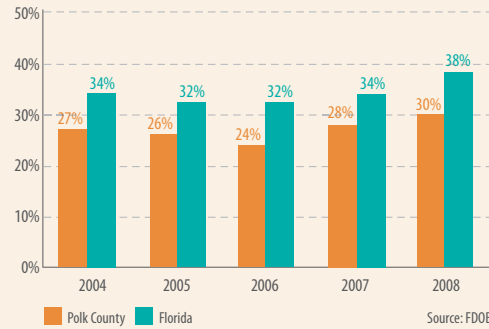
*There are three original Key Benchmarks in education for pre-kindergarten through 12th grade that are annually monitored by Polk Vision: Kindergarten Readiness, Reading Proficiency at 10th Grade, and High School Graduation Rate. In addition, a few key performance indicators have been added to provide a more comprehensive picture.*

### Moderate-High Risk Status in Kindergarten Readiness Test (DIBELS)



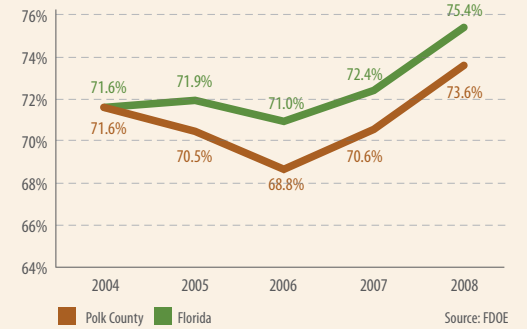
Since the overall measure for Kindergarten Readiness has changed, we will compare only the results of the DIBELS subtests, which indicate if a child's early literacy skills are at risk. The chart above shows that in 2008, 38% of children in Polk County produced scores that fall into the Moderate and High Risk category when it comes to letter naming fluency (compared to 28% for Florida), and 40% in initial sounds fluency (compared to 35% for Florida).

### 10th Grade Reading Proficiency



Reading proficiency in 10th grade is benchmarked to increase by 3% per year. In 2008 the rate of 30% shows an increase of 2% compared to the previous year. However, we still gained only 3% since 2004 and are lagging the state average now by 8%.

### Polk County High School Graduation Rates



In 2008, our benchmark of increasing the high school graduation rate by 3% per year, was met for the first time since 2004. However, while the upward trend experienced since 2006 persists, we continue to lag the state average by 1.8%.





### Educational Attainment Comparison

	2000			2006			2007		
	Polk County	Florida	U.S.	Polk County	Florida	U.S.	Polk County	Florida	U.S.
<i>High School Graduate or Higher</i>	74.8%	79.9%	80.4%	80.7%	84.5%	84.1%	81.9%	84.9%	84.5%
<i>Bachelor's Degree or Higher</i>	14.9%	22.3%	24.4%	17.3%	25.3%	27.0%	17.7%	25.8%	27.5%

Source: Polk Community College and USF Polytechnic Offices of Institutional Research, Effectiveness & Planning

As the table to the left shows, the proportion of the county's population with a bachelor's or higher degree continued to grow in 2007 (2008 data is not yet available). Still, the 8% gap compared to Florida and the 10% gap compared to the rest of the USA remain pretty stable. On the upside, the county has closed the gap with respect to the proportion of citizens with at least a high school diploma.

### Public Postsecondary Education in Polk County

*Student Enrollment Per Academic Year*

	2003 - 2004	2004 - 2005	2005 - 2006	2006 - 2007	2007 - 2008
<i>PCC</i>	10,342	10,088	10,044	10,134	11,377
<i>USF Polytechnic</i>	3,998	3,531	2,916	2,582	3,448
<i>Total</i>	<b>14,340</b>	<b>13,619</b>	<b>12,960</b>	<b>12,716</b>	<b>14,825</b>

*Number of Degrees Awarded*

	2003 - 2004	2004 - 2005	2005 - 2006	2006 - 2007	2007 - 2008
<i>Certificate/Diploma (PCC)</i>	252	201	199	151	399
<i>AA, AS, AAS (PCC)</i>	681	731	783	857	948
<i>Bachelor (USFP)</i>	135	160	205	222	229
<i>Masters (USFP)</i>	64	113	46	80	66
<i>Total</i>	<b>1,132</b>	<b>1,205</b>	<b>1,233</b>	<b>1,310</b>	<b>1,624</b>

Source: Polk Community College and USF Polytechnic Offices of Institutional Research, Effectiveness and Planning

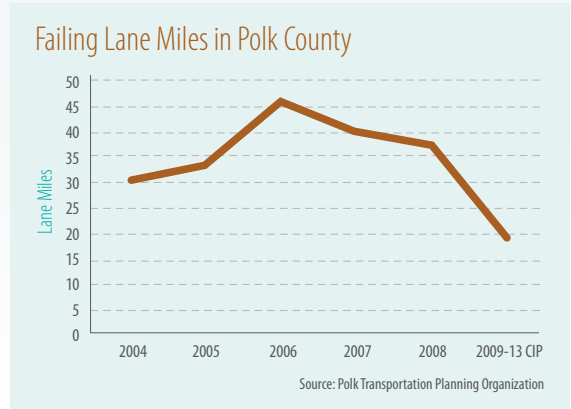
Somewhat more promising are the trends in postsecondary enrollment and the local production of college degrees. The Public Postsecondary Education in Polk County shows the gains in student enrollment, clearly making up the hurricane induced losses following the summer of 2004. Even more impressive is the 45% increase in degree output between 2004 and 2008. Together, the planned expansions of USF Polytechnic and PCC are a promising pre-cursor for improved educational attainment in our community in the near future.



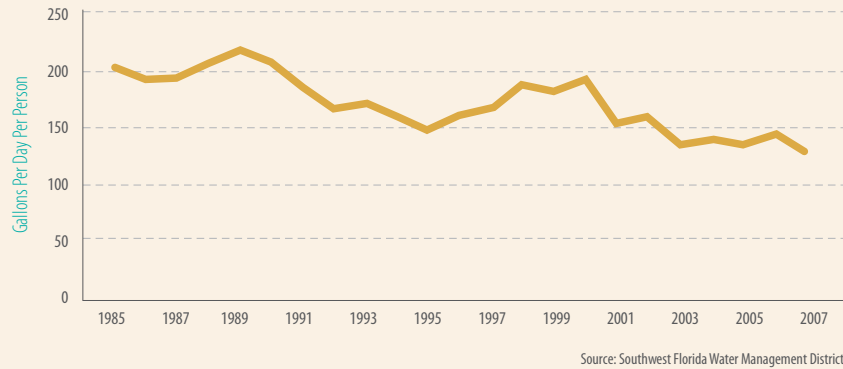
## Roads

Since the efficient movement of people and goods is important to a strong economy, maintaining a safe roadway infrastructure with acceptable travel conditions plays a crucial role for sustainable community planning efforts. Road capacity is the maximum traffic volume for a road under acceptable operating conditions. It is constantly adjusted using actual traffic volumes and growth related demands. Roads are considered to be "failing" when they are operating below a defined service level.

As the graph to the right demonstrates, Polk County is closing the infrastructure gap for roads. During the 2004-2006 period of rapid growth, the amount of "Failing Lane Miles" on the County's major road network increased severely. Since then, many road improvement projects (mainly funded by the 1-mill tax for roads and road impact fees) were able to reverse this trend. With the implementation of the 2009-2013 Transportation Community Investment Program (CIP), the amount of failing lane miles on the County's major road network will be reduced significantly.



## Polk County Water Supply Plan (Unadjusted Gross Per Capita)

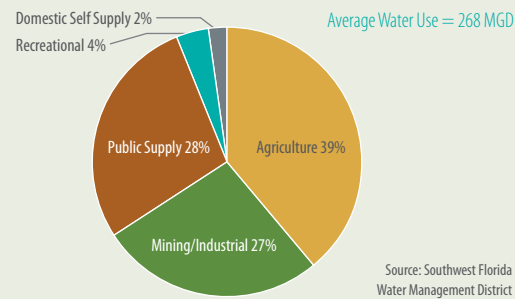


## Water Supply

One of the greatest challenges for Polk County is supplying current and future water for drinking, processing and growing. Water supply is the essential need of all people, animals, agriculture and economies. It is also the most limited of all the infrastructure to support growth in Polk County.

All 17 municipalities, private water suppliers and Polk County are working together to find countywide solutions to provide potable water for all residents of the county, both today and into the future. From 2001 to 2007 per capita (person) water usage has decreased from almost 200 gallons per day to near 140 gallons per day. Through conservation measures of residents, industry and agriculture, this trend should continue in order to meet future water supply demands.

## Current Polk County Water Use



Current Polk County water users include agriculture 39%, mining and industrial 27%, public supply 28%, recreational 4% and private residential wells 2%.



For more information on Polk Vision's Infrastructure strategies or to get involved, please contact Pat Steed at [psteed@cfrpc.org](mailto:psteed@cfrpc.org).



## Government Grants

Polk County government, as well as various Polk County municipalities, has a history of applying for and receiving Federal and State grants. Why apply for grants? Grants either fully fund or subsidize the existing funding of different programs/projects which may go undone if grant money was not available. Grant levels may change annually based on various needs; for example, FEMA grants were received after the 2004 hurricanes to help in defraying the County's cost of debris removal and to mitigate other hurricane related damages. Finally, grant levels may increase or decrease based on availability of funding from various grantor agencies.

The County has received both capital and operating grants - road construction (capital) to home delivery services for the elderly (operating). Among all grants received, other examples include voter education grants, substance abuse treatment grants, fire training and equipment grants, community development block grants, transportation grants, small business development grants, county-wide library grants, and other various capital and operating grants.

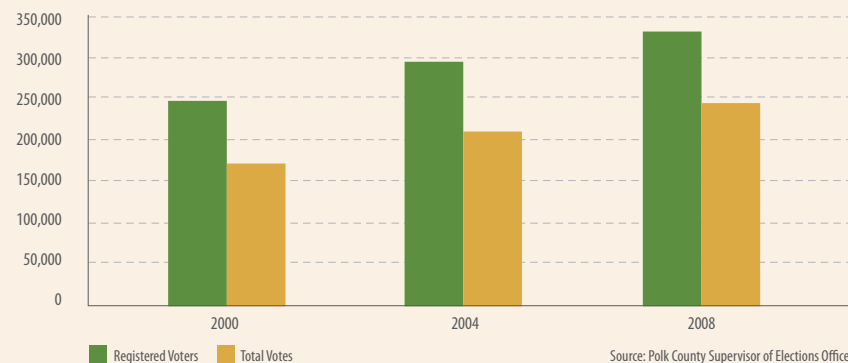
Efforts to obtain grants will certainly continue to be a priority of Polk County in assuring its "fair share" in order to achieve its objectives in meeting Polk County citizen's needs as related to general government, public safety, physical environment, transportation, economic environment, human services, and culture and recreation activities.

### Grants Received by Polk County and Local Municipalities

	2004	2005	2006	2007
<b>County</b>	\$ 45,771,767	\$ 62,987,580	\$ 44,884,038	\$ 51,805,358
<b>Municipalities</b>	\$ 38,103,256	\$ 21,246,314	\$ 30,615,260	\$ 35,671,759
<b>Total Grants Received</b>	<b>\$ 83,875,023</b>	<b>\$ 84,233,894</b>	<b>\$ 75,499,298</b>	<b>\$ 87,477,117</b>

Source: Polk County Clerk of Courts

### Polk County Residents Participating in Presidential Elections



## Voting Records

Candidates and issues are the driving force behind voter turnout but an initiative by the Polk Vision Government Foundation to help recruit election workers and to broadcast timely election information gave Polk County's Supervisor of Elections an additional resource during an extremely busy election year.

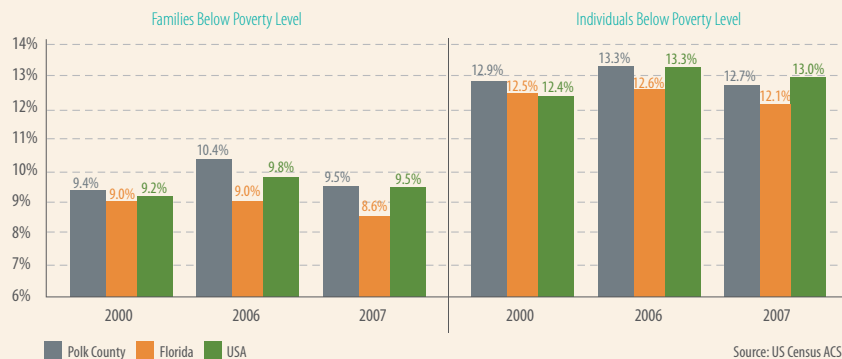
The Presidential Election in November 2008 continued Polk County's trend towards greater turnout, which has increased in each of the Presidential Elections since November 2000.

The big news in Polk County voting trends is the increase in voters choosing the convenience of early voting. More voters than ever before used one of six convenient locations provided by the Elections Office. Twenty-four percent of Polk County's voters were served at these sites that were open for fourteen days before the election. In addition, twenty-two percent of the voters cast their ballots by mail, resulting in a record forty-six percent of the voters voting before Election Day.





## Poverty Trends 2000-2006



## Poverty

Since the 2000 Census, poverty levels in Polk County have grown significantly. In 2007, they dropped slightly compared to 2006 levels, but considering the state of the economy, it is expected that 2008 and 2009 values will wipe out those gains. In 2007, the proportion of families that live below the poverty threshold declined from 10.4% to 9.5%, while the ratio for individuals living below the poverty line declined by 0.6% to 12.7%. In both measures Polk County fared, for the first time since the 2000 Census, equal or better than the rest of the country but continues to lag Florida by significant margins.

As mentioned before, current economic indicators and jobless claims point more to a worsening of the situation than providing a source for a more optimistic outlook concerning this benchmark.

## Polk County Health Care Indicators

	2002		2007	
	Polk County	Florida	Polk County	Florida
<b>Adults Without Health Insurance</b>	17.7%	18.7%	19.1%	18.6%
<b>Adults Rating Their Health Status as Fair or Poor</b>	21.7%	16.7%	18.9%	16.6%
<b>Adults Who are Obese</b>	27.0%	22.3%	33.2%	24.1%
<b>Adults w/ Diagnosed Diabetes</b>	7.3%	8.2%	9.3%	8.7%

Source: Florida CHARTS

## Health Care Indicators

The selected healthcare indicators provide a “snapshot” of the health of Polk County citizens. The Polk Health Care Alliance is developing a comprehensive assessment of healthcare indicators which will, when complete, provide a more complete overview of the County’s health and healthcare system.

## Polk County Birth Statistics

	Total Births	Birth to Unwed Mothers	% Birth to Unwed Mothers	Birth to Unwed Mothers Under Age 18	% Birth to Unwed Mothers Under Age 18
	Polk County	Polk County	Florida	Polk County	Florida
<b>2004</b>	7,245	3,481	48.0%	351	4.84%
<b>2005</b>	7,768	3,792	48.8%	377	4.85%
<b>2006</b>	8,290	4,186	50.5%	396	4.78%
<b>2007</b>	8,543	4,279	50.1%	358	4.19%

Source: Florida Dept. of Health

## Stable Marriages & Families

Births to teenage mothers and births to unwed mothers reflect many issues confronting families in our community. For Polk County, the percent of births to unwed mothers increased since 2004 from 45.6% to 50.5% in 2006 and dropped only a marginal 0.4% to 50.1% in 2007. On the upside, births to unwed mothers under the age of 18 showed the first strong decline of this benchmark since 2004: 4.19% in 2007 compared to 4.78% in 2006. However, this still means that at least one out of 25 children born in Polk County during 2007 was born to a teenager. Polk County remains significantly above state averages in both measures.

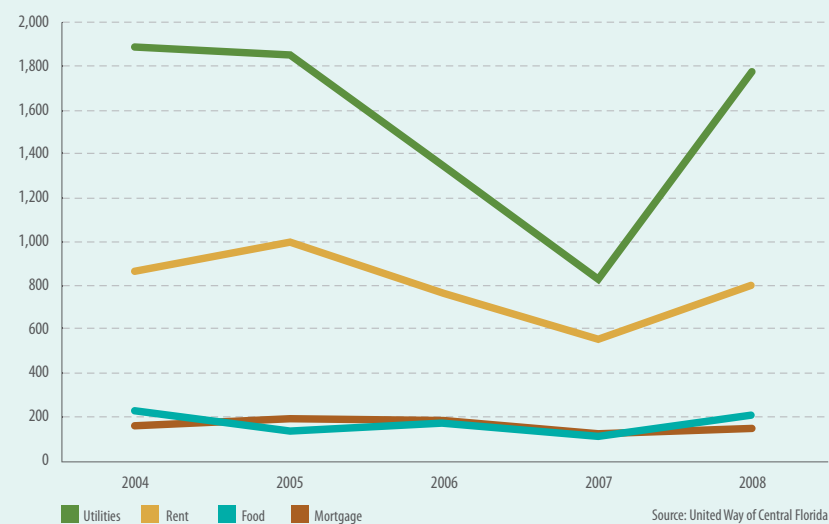




## Social Services

United Way of Central Florida's 2-1-1 is to Social Services what 9-1-1 is to Emergency Services. It is a universal number that connects people with trained and supportive professionals 24/7, who help identify needs, problem solve with callers to identify solutions and guide families through the confusing maze of public and private health and human services. The total calls received annually reflect broad non-specific community needs.

Number of Financial Assistance Requests by Category



## Crime Rates

In general, Polk County's crime rate (the percentage reflects the number of crimes per 100 citizens) remains relatively stable and shows only minor fluctuations since 2004. Despite facing higher poverty rates than the rest of the state, Polk County's rate of non-violent crimes has dropped below the state average for two consecutive years, while the rate for violent crimes is more than 25% lower than the state average. Considering the typical correlation between poverty and crime, this is good news indeed and can hopefully be retained through the economically tough times that lie ahead.

## Calls For Help (211)

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
<b>Total Calls Received</b>	26,804	38,185	34,016	31,879	41,455
<b>Case Managed Calls*</b>	7,183	7,637	6,346	3,740**	5,952
<b>Financial Assistance Request</b>	3,318	3,806	2,806	1,820	4,401
<b>% of Case Managed Calls Requesting Financial Assistance</b>	46.2%	49.8%	44.2%	48.7%	73.9%

\* Callers whose situations required a specialist to seek additional or unusual resources; to advocate for a client; or to perform a level of care requiring more than just a phone number.  
 \*\* Case managed calls reduced due to change in staffing.

## Polk County Crime Rates Comparison

		2004	2005	2006	2007
<b>Non-Violent Crimes</b>	Polk County	21,073	21,747	20,879	22,251
	Florida	726,793	712,238	720,425	745,200
<b>Non-Violent Crime Rate*</b>	Polk County	3.99%	4.01%	3.70%	3.83%
	Florida	4.15%	3.97%	3.93%	3.99%
<b>Violent Crimes</b>	Polk County	2,482	2,618	3,064	3,020
	Florida	123,697	125,825	129,501	131,781
<b>Violent Crime Rate*</b>	Polk County	0.47%	0.48%	0.54%	0.52%
	Florida	0.71%	0.70%	0.71%	0.71%
<b>Total Crime Rate*</b>	Polk County	4.46%	4.50%	4.24%	4.35%
	Florida	4.86%	4.68%	4.63%	4.69%

\* (Number of Crimes/Population)  
 Sources: BEBR/FDLE (Population Data); FDLE / PCSO (Crime Numbers)

## 2008 Executive Committee Members

**CHAIRMAN:** Cindy Price ..... Tampa Electric Co.  
**CHAIRMAN ELECT:** Charles McPherson ..... Retired, SunTrust  
**IMMEDIATE PAST CHAIRMAN:** Ron Clark ... Clark, Campbell, Mawhinney & Lancaster, PA.  
**TREASURER:** David Touchton ..... The NCT Group, CPA's  
**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:** Colleen Burton ..... Polk Vision

Marsha Faux ..... Polk County Property Appraiser  
Dr. Marshall Goodman ..... USF Polytechnic  
Dr. Eileen Holden ..... Polk Community College  
Greg Littleton ..... Citizens Bank & Trust  
Linda Pilkington ..... Heart of Florida Regional Medical Center  
Paul Senft ..... Haines City Economic Development Council  
Pat Steed ..... Central Florida Regional Planning Council  
Jeff Tebo ..... Polk County Property Appraiser's Office  
Lea Ann Thomas ..... Polk County Board of County Commissioners  
Peter Usinger ..... Polk Community College  
Gaye Williams ..... Central Florida Health Care, Inc.  
Terry Worthington ..... United Way of Central Florida



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To learn more about Polk Vision and discover how you can become involved in "creating our future," visit our Web site at PolkVision.com. The recently redesigned site contains information on all aspects of Polk Vision from our history to current initiatives as well as links to numerous partner Web sites. If you have any questions, please contact Colleen Burton, Polk Vision Executive Director, at (863) 646-0439 or colleenburton@polkvision.com.

