



# Hernando County, Florida

(Population: 172,778)

Hernando County offers a variety of venues and lifestyles, including theme parks, cultural activities, outdoor recreation, fine dining, and nightclubs. Residence choices range from gated communities, a home with waterfront access, or a 100-acre farm set among rolling hills. Hernando County is one hour north of the Tampa Bay Area, 90 minutes northwest of Orlando, and borders the Gulf of Mexico; you can enjoy Hernando County's "country living" without sacrificing the urban amenities.

For those who enjoy a quiet afternoon, downtown Brooksville offers quaint eateries and antique shops; however, the cozy, relaxing feel of Hernando County is only one facet of this beautiful place to work, play, and live. Outdoor recreation opportunities abound: you can watch an underwater "mermaid" performance at Weeki Wachee Springs State Park, or play at Buccaneer Bay, Florida's only spring-fed water park. You can glide down the crystal-clear

waters of the Weeki Wachee River on an endangered manatee tour, or scuba dive into a 140 ft. underwater cave at Hospital Hole. The Withlacoochee State Forest was declared as one of the "10 Coolest Places in North America" by the World Wildlife Fund, and has numerous outdoor recreational opportunities available, including camping, hiking, trail running, and biking. If your adventure includes power and speed, then ride an ATV at Croom Motorcycle area. Nestled in the Withlacoochee State Forest, this 2,600-acre riding area features a campground, two day-use parking areas and enough variety of terrain for all skill levels. Other outdoor activities include excursions through the Chassahowitzka National Wildlife Refuge, and Chinsegut Nature Center, which show off Hernando's eco-friendly attitude and abundance of natural attractions.

For those with families, the schools are excellent and the environment for raising children could not be

better. Like many areas of Florida, housing prices have declined and real estate bargains are available. Most important, the people of Hernando County care, and have a strong tradition of volunteering. They value their small town feel and are friendly and welcoming.

## History

Although the Spanish Conquistador Hernando DeSoto (from whom the County derives its name) led an expedition through the area in 1539, little in the way of settlement occurred for the next 300 hundred years. By 1843, when the County of Hernando was officially formed, less than 1,000 people lived within its boundaries.

In 1855, the county seat was moved from Bayport (a main port of entry for the county) to Melendez. In 1856, Melendez was renamed Brooksville in honor of Representative Preston Brooks. During the 1880's a bill was passed to divide Hernando County into three counties, thus creating the counties of Citrus to the north and Pasco to the south.

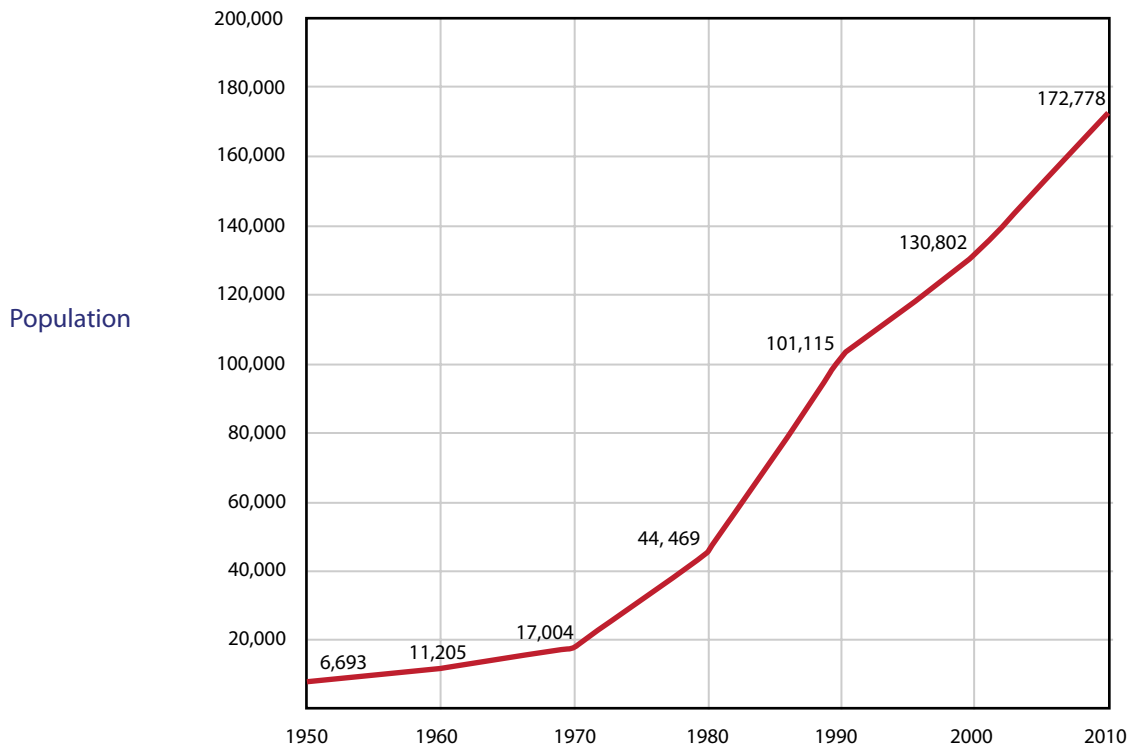
In the following decades the lumber industry flourished, the citrus boom hit central Florida, the phosphate industry stabilized, and limestone mining was established. Even so, development was slow. As can be seen from Table I, the population growth increased dramatically with the completion of Interstate 75 in the late 1960s. It made it possible to live in Hernando County and work in Tampa. At the same time, many retirees also discovered the area and moved to the County. ( See Table I on page 3 for Hernando County Population Growth. )

## Demographics

According to the 2010 Census, the age distribution is as follows: 26% are under 25 years of age, 21% are between 25 and 45 years old, 28% are between 45 and 65, and the remaining 25% are over 65. The median age is 47. The population is 90% Caucasian, 5% African American and the remainder is composed of "other". Hispanics of all races make up 10% of the population. 86% of the population over 25 years of age has a high school degree;



Table I: Hernando County Population Growth



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

16% have bachelor’s degrees. 93% of the county’s populations were born in the United States; 27% were born in Florida. The median annual household income is \$42,111: 9% of all families live below the poverty line.

### Geography and Climate

The climate in Hernando County has a humid subtropical climate with a definite rainy season (June through September). The remainder of the year is relatively dry. Tropical storms occasionally affect the area, for example, no hurricanes of note have struck the

area in the past 50 years. ( See Table II for temperatures and precipitation. )

### Commerce

The local economy is varied and includes a Walmart Distribution Center, assorted retail establishments, healthcare, rock mining, accommodations, and dining. Based on U.S. Census data for 2005 – 2009, Hernando County’s economy is reasonably well diversified with the principal sectors of employment being: (1) Educational services, healthcare and social assistance

Table II: Temperatures and Precipitation in Nearby Pinellas County

Source: Weatherbase

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Year
Normal High °F	72	73	77	83	89	90	92	92	90	85	79	74	81
Normal Low °F	54	56	60	65	72	76	77	77	75	70	65	56	67
Precipitation in Inches	2.3	2.8	3.4	1.6	2.6	5.7	7.0	7.8	6.1	2.5	1.9	2.2	54.2



Table III: Employment by Sector

Field	Number of Employees	Percent of Total
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	641	1.0 %
Construction	5,902	9.6 %
Manufacturing	3,162	5.1 %
Wholesale trade	1,303	2.1%
Retail trade	10,647	17.3 %
Transportation and Warehousing, and Utilities	3,406	5.5 %
Information	1,003	1.6 %
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	3,948	6.4 %
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	5,777	9.4 %
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	14,039	22.8 %
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	5,062	9.1 %
Other services, except public administration	3,002	4.9 %
Public administration	3,138	5.1 %

(22.8% of the workforce) and (2) retail (17.3%). Although the data reported 9.6% of the workforce was involved in construction, we believe that figure has declined considerably since the data was compiled. (See Table III.)

The County’s principal employers reflect a similar breakdown. The following chart reflects the top non-governmental, non-retail employers in the County. (The principal employers for 2011 in Hernando County in listed in table IV on page 5.)

Commercial fishing remains important to the area and the state - accounting for \$3 million annually in revenue. 25% of the bait shrimp caught in Florida are brought ashore in Hernando County.

The most recently reported unemployment rate for the County was 13.1% (November 2011 – U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics).

### The Government

The County government is a general law county operating under Section 125 of the Florida Statutes. It is governed by an elected five-member Board of County Commissioners (BCC) and has the usual complement of other constitutional officers – Clerk of the Circuit Court, Property Appraiser, Sheriff, Supervisor of Elections, and Tax Collector. Each Commissioner serves a four-year term and the terms are staggered with elections in November of even numbered years. Two the five current Commissioners are serving their second term while the other three are in their first term. Three of the five

commission seats are up for election in November of this year. Commissioners are not term limited. Overall, although the Commissioners can have strong opinions, by and large they seem to get along well and respect one another and the staff. All are fiscally conservative.

The Board appoints a County Administrator who is responsible for the day-to-day operations of county government. 658 of the 1,297 County's total employees work under the direction of the Board of County Commissioners. The Sheriff oversees 522 employees, while the remaining 87 are distributed to departments under the following: Circuit Court, Property Appraiser, Tax Collector, and Supervisor of Elections.

The general fund budget for the Hernando County Government for FY 2011-12 is \$99,525,437 and the total budget is \$420,268,927. The County also provides all basic services for residents: economic

development, fire/rescue, police, code enforcement, planning (including building and zoning), roads, lighting, environment, health and human services, parks, judicial, airport operations (for its general aviation airport), animal services, indigent care, lighting, mosquito control, drainage, solid waste collection and disposal, and utilities (water and sewer).

Most of the County's employees are unionized. The general employees are represented by the Teamsters, while the firefighters have three unions (one for the firefighters, one for the District Chiefs, and one for the Spring Hill special district firefighters who were recently integrated into the County's operation).

### The Issues

The most pressing issues for Hernando County are listed here: financial, relationship between elected officials and staff, the media's coverage of political events, succession planning, and property value. The

Table IV: Principal Employers, Hernando County, 2011

Employer	Type of Operation	Number of Employees
Walmart Distribution Center	Distribution	1,200
Regional Health Care	Health Care	1,032
Oak Hill Hospital	Health Care	947
Cemex (formerly Rinker Materials)	Manufacturer	264
Accuform Signs Inc.	Manufacturer	245
Sparton Electronics	Manufacturer	225
HPH Hospice	Health Care	207
Evergreen Woods	Health Care	160
Sun Trust Bank	Service	135
HealthSouth	Health Care	125
Withlacoochee River Electric Coop	Utility	100

Source: Hernando County 2011 CAFR

next Administrator will need to win the trust of the Commissioners, the staff, and the public. Addressing these issues will build that trust.

The first challenge is balancing the budget. The total budget and number of employees have been reduced by about one-third since the recession began; further reductions may be needed unless enough improvements can be made in operations.

Second, the relationship between the employees of the BCC and the constitutional officers could be improved. While tension is not prevalent, more cohesion and teamwork would be helpful. 2013 will present an ideal time to forge new relationships and to build strong partnerships as four of the five incumbent constitutional officers are retiring in January.

Third, the media tends to focus on the BCC, the staff, and are not particularly positive. The stories that have been published have not helped build a positive image for the County, and have also diminished morale. The challenge will be to build a strong, positive image for the County.

The fourth issue is staff and succession planning. Two of the seven key director's positions are occupied by individuals who are serving on an interim basis. These positions need to be filled on a permanent basis, with plans on how to replace a number of key people who will be retiring over the next three to five years.

Finally, one of the contributing factors to the County's revenue issues is decreased property taxes. Whenever a home or building is related to a sinkhole, its assessed value is reduced by 50%. Additionally, after the insurance company has paid for the damage, some property owners do not repair the damage, thus leaving their assessed value at 50%. If these situations were few in number, the impact would be small. Unfortunately, the issue has become a significant drain on property tax revenues.

The next Administrator will need to address these issues. This will be time consuming, but all the County's key elements – staff, elected officials, and the public – want the next County Administrator to succeed and to lead the County for a long period of time.

## The Ideal Candidate

Hernando County is seeking a strong, energetic, dedicated, proactive, achievement-oriented, and steady leader with strong values, a sense of humor and the skin of an alligator. While the individual will make things happen, he/she will also be patient and recognize that lasting change does not always occur quickly.

The next Administrator will work with the Commissioners, as well as other constitutional officers, staff, media, and the public to build a strong and positive image for the County. He/she will have outstanding communications skills and be a keen listener who values the opinions of others and integrates them. The individual will also serve as an advisor to the Commissioners but realize that he/she works for the Commission to carry out their instructions. He/she will provide the Commission with realistic assessments. Additionally, the Administrator will convey information about the staff's needs and concerns to the elected body.

The next County Administrator will question processes and be analytical. He/she will be comfortable with change and understand how to implement change in a positive way. The ideal candidate will have high standards and expectations, and hold people accountable. The Administrator will be strong and not afraid to make decisions.

In terms of experience, the ideal candidate will be fiscally conservative and have ten or more years of managerial experience in the public or private sectors. Experience in governmental finance and budgets, economic development, media relations,



and intergovernmental relations are important. Private sector candidates should have demonstrated experience managing multiple, different functional areas simultaneously, worked for a board, shown more than a passing interest in government, and dealt regularly with the media. Private sector candidates should understand that the level of scrutiny a public sector manager receives is far beyond anything they have seen in the private sector. Experience in Florida is a plus.

Finally, the County has had eight County Administrators since 1990. It is ready to find someone who will stay at least five years, hopefully ten. This job will be challenging, time consuming and, at times, frustrating, so candidates who are looking for a soft place before retirement should look elsewhere. For the right person, it will also be very, very rewarding. The County has tremendous potential and needs the right leadership to help take it forward.

### The Last County Administrator

The contract for the most recent County Administrator was terminated in November 2011. The interim administrator is not interested in the permanent position.

### Compensation

The starting salary range is \$120,000 to \$150,000, although the County Commission expects to fill the position at the lower end of the range. It does, however, realize that highly qualified administrators should be compensated commensurate to their credentials.

### Residency

Under Section 125.73 (2) of the Florida Statutes, the County Administrator is required to live within the County's boundaries while employed as County Administrator.



## Confidentiality

Under Florida's public records act, once an application is submitted it is deemed a public record. As a practical matter, we generally are not asked to divulge applicant names until after the closing date. We do expect some media coverage as the search progresses.

## How to Apply

E-mail your resume to [RecruitNine@cb-asso.com](mailto:RecruitNine@cb-asso.com) by February 24, 2012. Submissions by regular mail or facsimile will not be considered. Questions should be directed to Colin Baenziger of Colin Baenziger & Associates at (561) 707-3537.

## The Process

Applications will be screened between February 25th and March 19th. Finalists will be selected on March 27th and interviews will be held on April 5th and 6th with a selection shortly thereafter. As part of the interview process, the County will hold a reception for the finalists with the public invited to attend.

## Other Important Information

Hernando County is an Equal Opportunity Employer and encourages minorities and women to apply. The County values its small town and country feel and is committed to serving its residents, visitors, and businesses. A veteran's preference will be awarded as applicable under the Florida Statute

