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Governor Scott: Florida Families First Budget Invests in Business Development and Job Growth

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. – Governor Rick Scott today highlighted the state budget’s investments in economic development efforts focused on creating jobs and opportunities for Florida families.

Governor Rick Scott said, “The priorities outlined in this budget will continue to make Florida the perfect climate for business. Florida’s unemployment rate dropped faster than anywhere else in the country except one state and we’ve created more than 330,000 private sector jobs in the past two years. Our unemployment rate continues to decline and we learned last week that Florida is once again below the national average at 7.2 percent. But, our work is not done until every Floridian who wants a job gets one.

“In the last three years, the economic benefit for completed incentive contracts was 86 percent higher than projected. It’s obviously working. In the last two years, Enterprise Florida announced over 300 new projects that will result in 74 percent more jobs. This is great news for Florida families.”

The Florida Families First budget supports Governor Scott’s commitment to continued economic and job growth.

- **Quick Response Training:** The budget provides \$12 million for skills training offered to companies that are creating and training new high-skill/high-wage jobs in the state either by expanding their current workforce or relocating their company to the state.
- **Economic Development Incentives:** The Florida Families First budget provides \$45.5 million for economic development tools and incentives to promote job creation in Florida. Additionally, uncommitted funds from current year appropriations will be deployed to increase funding for this area.
- **Enterprise Florida:** The Florida Families First budget provides \$18.05 million for Enterprise Florida. This total includes \$350,000 for export marketing and diversification and \$1 million for the Florida Sports Foundation.

- **VISIT Florida:** On the heels of back-to-back record years of tourism (the state's number one industry), VISIT Florida will be funded at \$63.5 million -- \$9.5 million above the current funding level.

Secretary of Commerce and President & CEO of Enterprise Florida Gray Swoope said, "Having the right tools in the economic development tool box, helps Florida compete on both a national and global level. We have hundreds of competitive projects currently being pursued by the business development team at Enterprise Florida. Some will be game-changers while others will create smaller numbers of jobs, but every one of them is important to our state and we will work hard to win them all."

DEO Executive Director Jesse Panuccio said, "I would like to thank Governor Scott for signing a budget that will continue to help Florida's economy grow and get Florida families back to work. Our economy has made tremendous gains over the last two years and this budget will help continue that trend."

Workforce Florida President/CEO Chris Hart IV said, "The Quick Response Training Program is a highly-valued resource for businesses and employees that boosts productivity, competitiveness and wages. This performance-based program is consistently upheld by site selection consultants and economic developers as an important tool for job growth. Workforce Florida applauds Governor Scott and the legislature for increasing the funding for Quick Response Training from \$6 million to \$12 million so that we may help more employers build a globally competitive talent supply."

Will Seccombe, President and CEO of VISIT FLORIDA said, "With the substantial increase in VISIT FLORIDA funding, Florida tourism is extremely well positioned to build on two consecutive years of record visitation and job creation. I would like to thank Governor Scott and the Florida Legislature for their visionary leadership and for their extraordinary support of VISIT FLORIDA and the state's tourism industry."

Carol Dover, President and CEO of the Florida Restaurant & Lodging Association and Member of the VISIT FLORIDA Board of Directors said, "It's simple math. Every 85 visitors to the state support one Florida job. I applaud Governor Scott and the Legislature for their commitment to increased funding for VISIT FLORIDA's marketing efforts which will strengthen the Florida economy and create jobs by encouraging more tourism in our great state."

Kelly Smallridge, President & CEO of the Business Development Board of Palm Beach County said, "It's evident that the Governor is committed to job growth in the State of Florida. The state budget's investments in economic development priorities provide valuable tools for economic development organizations across the state and will go a long way to help attract new business investment and job growth."

Larry Sassano, President, Florida's Great Northwest said, "Governor Rick Scott's budget investment plan for business growth and job creation has been recognized recently by many of the national site selectors that Florida's Great Northwest has called

on in the New York, New Jersey, Atlanta and Dallas markets. Florida is also capturing the interest of national business leaders seeking a strong state business climate as they evaluate our Northwest Florida Region for new growth opportunities.”

Stuart Rogel, President & CEO of the Tampa Bay Partnership said, “The Tampa Bay Partnership, its partners and investors and the Tampa Bay community, as a whole, are pleased with Governor Rick Scott’s continued economic support of our region. Tampa Bay’s eight counties remain steadfast in our commitment to working together for the economic development and prosperity of our region, so we are grateful for Governor Scott’s dedication to the statewide programs and incentives that will help to create jobs in our area. We know that change will not happen overnight, but together we move forward to a more robust economy for Tampa Bay and the entire state of Florida.”

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