

# STATE OF FLORIDA

## OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

### EXECUTIVE ORDER NUMBER 11-81

WHEREAS, although economic progress has been made in many rural areas, the growth and prosperity enjoyed by most communities in the State during the past 45 years did not extend into Florida's rural areas; and

WHEREAS, these communities are stewards of the vast majority of Florida's land and natural resources, upon which the State's growth and prosperity depend; and

WHEREAS, successful rural communities are essential to the overall success of the State's economy and quality of life; and

WHEREAS, certain rural communities are struggling to maintain, support or enhance job creating activity or to generate revenues for education and other critical government services such as infrastructure, transportation and safety; and

WHEREAS, the challenges faced by these rural communities threaten their well-being and viability; and

WHEREAS, section 288.0656 (7), Florida Statutes, authorizes the Rural Economic Development Initiative to recommend to the Governor up to three areas for designation as rural areas of critical economic concern; and

WHEREAS, a rural area of critical economic concern is a rural community, or a region composed of rural communities, designated by the Governor, that has been adversely affected by an extraordinary economic event, severe or chronic distress, or a natural disaster or that presents a unique economic development opportunity of regional impact; and

WHEREAS, the counties of DeSoto, Glades, Hardee, Hendry, Highlands, and Okeechobee and the cities of Belle Glade, Pahokee, and South Bay, and the area around Immokalee included within the Round II Federal Rural Enterprise Community located in northeast Collier County were designated on January 26, 2001, as a rural area of critical economic concern for a term of five years, by Executive Order 01-26, and the Rural

Economic Development Initiative was directed to review the designation and recommend whether the designation should be continued; and

WHEREAS, the Rural Economic Development Initiative met on January 17, 2006 and recommended to the Governor to continue the designation of the counties of DeSoto, Glades, Hardee, Hendry, Highlands, and Okeechobee and the cities of Belle Glade, Pahokee, and South Bay, and the area around Immokalee included within the Round II Federal Rural Enterprise Community located in northeast Collier County as a rural area of critical economic concern; and

WHEREAS, the counties of DeSoto, Glades, Hardee, Hendry, Highlands, and Okeechobee and the cities of Belle Glade, Pahokee, and South Bay, and the area around Immokalee included within the Round II Federal Rural Enterprise Community located in northeast Collier County were designated on February 16, 2006, as a rural area of critical economic concern for a period of five years, by Executive Order 06-34; and

WHEREAS, the designation expired on February 16, 2011 and the Rural Economic Development Initiative met on March 18, 2011 and agreed to recommend to the Governor to continue the designation of the counties of DeSoto, Glades, Hardee, Hendry, Highlands, and Okeechobee and the cities of Belle Glade, Pahokee, and South Bay, and the area around Immokalee included within the Round II Federal Rural Enterprise Community located in northeast Collier County as a rural area of critical economic concern.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RICK SCOTT, as Governor of Florida, by virtue of the authority vested in me by article IV, section 1(a), Florida Constitution, and section 288.0656 (7), Florida Statutes, do hereby promulgate the following Executive Order, effective immediately:

Section 1. The area within the boundaries of the counties of DeSoto, Glades, Hardee, Hendry, Highlands, and Okeechobee and the cities of Belle Glade, Pahokee, and South Bay, and the area around Immokalee included within the Round II Federal Rural Enterprise Community located in northeast Collier County is designated as a Rural Area of Critical Economic Concern.

Section 2. This area shall be a priority assignment for the Rural Economic Development Initiative.

Section 3. On a case-by-case basis, the criteria, requirements or provisions of economic development incentives may be waived. Such incentives include, but shall not be limited to, the Qualified Target Industry

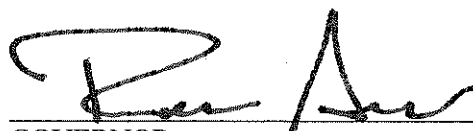
Tax Refund Program under section 288.106, the Quick Response Training Program under section 288.047, the Quick Response Training Program for participants in the welfare transition program under section 288.047(8), transportation projects under section 288.063, the brownfield redevelopment bonus refund under section 288.107, and the rural job tax credit program under sections 212.098 and 220.1895, Florida Statutes.

Section 4. Pursuant to section 288.0656(7), Florida Statutes, access to the assistance available under this Designation as a Rural Area of Critical Economic Concern shall be contingent upon the execution of memoranda of agreement between the Office of Tourism, Trade, and Economic Development, the governing bodies of the counties, and the governing bodies of the municipalities included within the area. Such memoranda of agreement shall specify the terms and conditions of the designation, including, but not limited to, the duties and responsibilities of the counties and municipalities to take actions designed to facilitate the retention and expansion of existing businesses in the area, as well as the recruitment of new businesses to the area.

Section 5. This designation shall be in effect for five years and will expire on April 22, 2016. The Rural Economic Development Initiative may recommend the designation be terminated or continued based on economic development progress from current base lines or upon performance under the memoranda of agreement.



IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of Florida to be affixed at Tallahassee, this 22nd day of April, 2011.

  
GOVERNOR

2011 APR 22 PM 3:42  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA

FILED

ATTEST:

  
SECRETARY OF STATE