

Martin County's "Distressed Economy" (or not!)

Are we the nation's most distressed economy? The Chamber of Commerce has spent \$20,000 to produce a report that says that Martin County's economy ranks near the bottom nationally.

First of all, the "ranking" was done by the Chamber's paid lobbyist, Bill Fruth. In Fruth's "Policon Report" ratings, the slower you grow, the worse you are.

More important, he wasn't even using statistics about Martin County. He was referring to the Pt. St. Lucie Metropolitan Statistical Area(MSA). Martin County is only 34% of the PSL MSA.

Fruth's diatribe on the distressed economy is an indictment of Port St. Lucie's growth management policies, not ours.

Fruths Policon claim:

"Community leaders have grave concern regarding the future of the Martin County economy.

Martin County along with St. Lucie County, comprise the Port St. Lucie Metropolitan Area. There are 366 Metropolitan Statistical Areas in the United States. Annually POLICOM ranks the MSA's for economic strength. In 2011 the Port St. Lucie MSA ranked 224th while in 2006 the MSA ranked 141st."

FACT: on every economic measure, Martin County is way ahead of St. Lucie County

2010 U.S Census Fact Finder

Martin vs. St. Lucie County

POPULATION

Martin County: 146,393 population	66,962 labor force	57,783 employed (39.5% of population)
St. Lucie County: 278,689 population	125,899 labor force	110,919 employed (39.8% of population)
PSL MSA: 425,082		

Median PER CAPITA INCOME

Martin \$32,253
St. Lucie \$21,875

MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME

Martin \$48,311
St. Lucie \$38,671

MEDIAN EARNINGS FOR FULLTIME WORKERS

Martin Male \$46,016 Female \$38,736
St. Lucie Male \$35,907 Female \$31,616

EDUCATION LEVEL (pop. 25-64 yrs)

High school or less (pop over 25):	Martin 38.4%	St. Lucie 51%
Some college or more (pop over 25):	Martin 61.6%	St. Lucie 49%

POPULATION OVER BELOW POVERTY LEVEL

Martin Total pop: 10% Pop under 18: 10.5%
St. Lucie Total pop: 18% pop under 18 : 28.8%

Sources 2010 US Census Fact Finder:

CP03 Economic Statistics
Educational Attainments

CLAIMS: Martin County's "Low Wages"

*There are mistakes and misunderstandings. There are lies and damn lies.
When consultants and their supporters make brash assertions about the pitiful state of Martin County's economy that JUST AREN'T TRUE, they need to be called to account.*

The Palm City Chamber of Commerce quoted Bill Fruth's Policon report at a recent candidate forum to prove that pro-growth candidates had to be elected to save Martin County from economic disaster.

According to Fruth (p10)

"While the county's population grew in relative size, the average wage declined. The actual wage in Martin County ranked 197th in 1989 but only 298th in 2009, dropping 101 places. The average worker wage in Martin County is presently one of the lowest in the nation among metropolitan areas. In fact, the average wage in Martin County is lower than the metropolitan areas of Rocky Mount, NC, Owensboro, KY, and Sumter, SC. Each of these areas is ranked below 330 (366 areas) for economic strength and is a very distressed economy."

Are Martin County wages among the lowest in the country in relation to the national list of Metropolitan Statistical Areas in 1999?

Look at the Bureau of Labor Statistics website :
http://www.bls.gov/news.release/history/anpay2_11282000.txt

It's NOT true.

Martin County wages are in the top half of MSAs nationwide.

Are Martin County wages worse than three of the poorest MSAs in the country?

Look at the same BLS site.

It's NOT true.

Martin County wages in 1999 were much higher than wages in those three MSAs.

1999 average annual wage Bureau of Labor Statistics

Martin County	29,809
Rocky Mt., NC	26,798
Sumter Cty, SC	22,758
Owensboro, Ky.	25,077

Maybe they meant 2009?

Look at the BLS website with ave wage data for 2009.

**Martin County is in the top half of MSAs nationwide.
It does NOT rank 298. It ranks 145 out of 344 MSAs.**

Are MC wages lower than three of the most economically distressed areas in the country in 2009?

No. They are still much higher than those three MSAs.

2009 average annual wage Bureau of Labor Statistics

**Martin County 39,055
Rocky Mt., NC 33,530
Sumter Cty, SC 33,180
Owensboro, Ky. 34,480**

Martin County is in the top half of wages nationally.

Martin County was ranked 110 compared to the 313 MSAs listed in 1999.

Martin County wages were significantly higher than the referenced counties in 1999:

**Martin County 29,809
Rocky Mt., NC 26,798
Sumter Cty, SC 22,758
Owensboro, Ky. 25,077**

Maybe the pro-growth boosters that support dismantling our comp plan to approve Hobe Groves and Harmony

should look at the real numbers. Then they might help us celebrate the 30th Anniversary of a Plan that has made Martin County better

off than its neighbors in our neighborhoods, our schools, our environment and our economy.

Martin County's "High Unemployment"

Bill Fruth's report to the Martin County Chamber of Commerce says that Martin County has the worst economy on the Treasure Coast. He blames our comprehensive plan.

He backs that up with the assertion that: "The persistently high unemployment is an indication the overall economy has been very weak for a very long time."

The data prove he's just plain wrong.

Unemployment data for 2005 through 2012 shows that where unemployment is concerned, Martin County is the best, not the worst.

Martin County unemployment rate has been consistently lower than St. Lucie, Okeechobee, and Indian River County :

	Martin	St. Lucie	Okeechobee	Ind. River
2005	4.6	5.4	5.1	5.7
2006	3.4	3.7	3.7	3.5
2007	3.7	4.6	4.2	4.5

2008	5.5	6.7	5.9	6.2
2009	9.4	11.5	10.5	10.2
2010	12.5	14.0	12.8	13.4
2011	11.4	13.4	12.6	12.8
2012	9.6	11.9	10.3	10.8

The Federal Reserve has graphs showing unemployment rates for the five county area from 1990 to 2012.

Martin County's unemployment rate is almost exactly the same as Palm Beach County's rate in every year.

Martin County is lower than St. Lucie, Okeechobee and Indian River in every year.

The five counties have very different comprehensive plans and very different attitudes toward the kind of rapid unrestricted growth favored by Fruth and the Chamber of Commerce. Martin County's attitude of slow careful growth comes out ahead economically.

Sources: January 2005-2012 4 counties: www.wrksolutions.com

Graphs: 1990-2012 5 counties

<http://research.stlouisfed.org/fred2/series/FLPALM2URN>

Martin County Population Growth

Good population projections are the basis for good growth management. If you plan for growth that isn't going to happen, you have to build and maintain expensive public facilities that aren't needed. Current residents pay the price. If you encourage development that doesn't match population projections, you get a housing bubble and a crash that leaves vacant housing and foreclosures.

The Fruth Report to the Martin County Chamber of Commerce is about encouraging growth. Fruth's definition of a healthy local economy is one that grows faster. He asserts that Martin County is dying economically, but insists that Martin County will grow faster than anyone thinks it will. His high growth projections are "proof" we will need to expand our urban boundary and approve land use changes for thousands of acres of more intense commercial and industrial development.

Fruth asserts that the growth rate will greatly exceed the rate predicted by Florida's Bureau of Economic and Business Research (BEBR). He ridicules the BEBR medium projections as ridiculous. He predicts that the five year period from 2010 to 2015 will

