Beyond the shadow of the region’s theme parks exists a booming cultural infrastructure, ripe for an ever-growing population of hip millennials, reveling in all that Orlando has to offer. Central Florida is being embraced as a refreshing new home base for national trendsetters and civic-minded social entrepreneurs itching to make an impact on the place they’ve chosen to make their home.

With a median age of 37, compared to the statewide median of 41.8, Orlando is younger than most people think. In fact, Orlando was ranked the No.3 top millennial home buying hot spot by Realtor.com. The growth in residents between the ages of 20 and 29 from 2010 to 2013 was 8.1 percent based on U.S. Census data, placing Orlando as the third best magnet for millennials according to Forbes.

Adding to that are the roughly 500,000 students within a 100-mile radius of Orlando pursuing higher education at any given time of the year, making Orlando a prime location for companies to recruit strong talent. The region offers more than 35 colleges, universities, technical schools, and private institutions as well as continuing education programs, including the University of Central Florida (UCF), Full Sail University, Rollins College, Stetson University, Florida Institute of Technology, Florida Polytechnic University, Keiser University, Webber University, Beacon College, Valencia College, Seminole State College, and more. In recent years, record numbers of these students have been choosing to stay in Orlando after they graduate to pursue long-term employment and high-impact careers. In fact, 53% of UCF alumni stay to live, work, and play in the city’s core, creating an even more vibrant and thriving downtown.

“Orlando has been the best ‘living lab’ that any entrepreneur, starter or emerging professional could ever imagine,” says UCF graduate Chris Castro, the City of Orlando’s Director of Sustainability. “Just over the last five years, I’ve witnessed Orlando transform into a hub for innovators, change-agents and active citizens working to shape our city into one of the best in the world, and has empowered so many people to use their talents and expertise to make Orlando a world-class destination, not just for hospitality and entertainment, but for arts and culture, sustainability, tech, and entrepreneurship to name a few.”

Castro should know. He’s also a social entrepreneur, having launched environmental group IDEAS for US (Intellectual Decisions for Environmental Awareness Solutions) as well as a pedal-powered farming movement called Fleet Farming that is making international headlines.

Fleet Farming’s headquarters is East End Market, a food hall and business incubator located in a beautifully renovated church in one of the City’s official Main Street districts, Audubon Park. East End Market was founded by John Rife, a Furman graduate who returned to his hometown after

More than 4.3 million people live in the Orlando region with more than 1,000 new residents being added every week. Read the full story on 03
Millennials may think they run the town, and when you look at what has been happening lately in the region, you can’t really blame them. Forbes is right, Orlando isn’t just for old people or vacationing families anymore, it’s a veritable millennial boom town.

Purposeful organizations and pragmatic visionaries are dominating the business landscape. Stories abound about mindful business models centered on giving back, like that of Downtown Credo, a pay-what-you-can coffee shop launched in 2012 by proud Orlandoan Ben Hoyer, which now has four locations operating across the region, as well as a strong charity arm that is making palpable impacts in people’s lives. Clean the World, founded by Shawn Seipler in 2009, is a phenomenally successful C corporation with a strong business model based on recycled used hotel soap bars and donating them to impoverished people around the world. Seipler’s simple idea has saved the lives of hundreds of thousands of people by preventing hygiene-related deaths.

Orlando is also proving itself to be the ideal testing ground for a growing tech scene. The Church Street Exchange, a formerly vacant building in downtown’s historic Church Street district, is now a bustling base for three stories of startup tech companies and established businesses like Planned Source and Echo Interactive. The same building is also home to Orlando’s longest running co-working space, Canvs.

Explore more using the hashtag #ThisIsOrlando.
New Incentive Enhances Orlando’s Business Climate

The success of the Orlando region rests in its ability to generate new jobs for and meet the demands of its astonishing population growth. With 1,000 new residents every week, the seven county region is set to grow by at least 1.3 million by the year 2030, bringing the population to over 5.6 million.

Even more astounding than the population growth is Orlando’s job growth. We led the nation in job growth among the 30 largest metros in the U.S. two years in a row, according to the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. KPMG, a company that provides exceptional site selection services, named Orlando among the most competitive business locations in the country in its Competitive Alternatives study. The company even chose Orlando for its own capital investment project which happened to be KPMG’s largest: a $430 million global training and development center in Lake Nona. More than ever, companies are taking notice of Orlando’s growth and asking why so much development is taking place here.

There are many critical factors to Orlando’s growth, of course. Orlando is bursting with opportunity and people who “don’t know the half of it” are now discovering all the region has to offer. That phrase, the basis for our regional business branding campaign, invites you to learn more about our international airports that help facilitate the arrival of 68 million visitors a year, our world-class cultural venues including the nation’s newest performing arts center and major league soccer stadium, and a diverse, creative workforce that our competitors can only dream of.

Florid’s economic competitiveness is an added value. With the fourth-best tax climate in the nation, the state also boasts a new incentive program. The $85 million Florida Job Growth Grant Fund encourages businesses to locate or grow in Florida by improving public infrastructure and enhancing workforce training. This is the type of forward-thinking investment that will benefit the economy in the long-term by building assets and infrastructure as well as attracting talent.

Other benefits for companies include the new doubling of the Research and Development Tax Credit from $9 million to $16.5 million a year, a new sales and use tax exemption for property, equipment and electricity used in new, large-scale data centers and the reduction in the Business Rent Tax.

These measures will generate annual savings for businesses, provide valuable tools for company recruitment and expansions, help create new high-wage jobs and attract large capital investments. Existing state incentives programs like the performance-based Qualified Target Industry (QTI) and Quick Response Training (QRT) incentives remain in place and are fully funded.

These robust initiatives are made even stronger by the Orlando Economic Partnership’s efforts, not just in economic development but also community development. The Partnership, formed in 2017 as a result of the merger of the Central Florida Partnership and the Orlando Economic Development Commission, brings a unified approach towards further enhancing the region’s economic opportunities and business climate with a focus on expanding Orlando’s global reach and competitiveness; supporting and enhancing educational/skills preparedness in the labor pool; strengthening advocacy for improved infrastructure and community resources; and creating an enviable quality of life that is broad-based and sustainable.

I believe the best way to predict the future is to create it. And Orlando isn’t waiting until tomorrow to start taking action.

Find out more about new incentives on our website at Orlando.org.

Learn more at Orlando.org
New Age of Real-World Education Meets the Demands of the Future Workforce

In a middle school classroom, a group of 11-year-olds focus intensely on inputting complex patterns of symbols to form computer code. A few miles down the road, students in a high school class assemble smartboards to build a robot. At the same time, fourth graders in a nearby Spanish class prepare to connect live with students in Puerto Rico. On the other end of town, teenagers in a magnet program learn how to start a business and train at local companies.

Across the Orlando region, these stories represent a new age of learning for K-12 students that prepares them for successful careers while meeting the workforce demands of the future.

“Our schools are leading students to success with a sense of urgency. We deliver unique programs and experiences to prepare them for college and career,” says Dr. Barbara Jenkins, superintendent of Orange County Public Schools.

Across the Orlando region, these stories represent a new age of learning for K-12 students that prepares them for successful careers while meeting the workforce demands of the future.

“From our public, technical, and magnet to our Florida Virtual School, and all the way up to our state colleges and universities, there is a depth of real-world learning that we’re pioneering here in the Orlando region,” says Tim Giuliani, president and CEO of the Orlando Economic Partnership. “There is significant educational transformation taking place as we accelerate our efforts to get young people ready for careers in up-and-coming industries.”

Orange County Public Schools (OCPS), the 10th largest district in the nation with several of the country’s top-ranked schools, offers innovative school/business partnerships that give students a competitive advantage. Northrop Grumman, for example, created two educational initiatives, the Wekiva High School Laser Photonics Career Academy and the Laser Systems High School Involvement Partnership Program, to prepare students for careers in the advanced manufacturing industry. Lockheed Martin, a dedicated supporter of STEM programming in K-12 schools, provides significant funding, resources and volunteers to engage with students and directly impact their depth of knowledge in science and technology.

“One of our schools is leading students to success with a sense of urgency. We deliver unique programs and experiences to prepare them for college and career,” says OCPS Superintendent Barbara Jenkins. “The results of our efforts are evident in the extraordinary number of students enrolled in Advanced Placement and dual enrollment classes, our historically high graduation rates and the growing number of students accepted into the top colleges and universities nationwide.”

Industry-specific magnet programs can be found not only in public education but in private institutions as well. Orlando is also home to some first-of-its-kind schools in the country. The School District of Osceola County, for example, opened the first-ever engineering and mathematics intermediate school in the U.S. At Discovery Intermediate, fifth grade students enroll in relevant college and career preparatory curriculum with courses in design and modeling, automation and robotics, energy and the environment, and flight and space.

Recently opened in Osceola County, BRIDG, a state-of-the-art manufacturing research facility for smart sensors, imagers and advanced devices, will engage students, researchers and scientists in work to generate breakthroughs in sensor technologies. In fact, BRIDG is already hosting students in a pilot program that introduces them to engineers and other tech professionals.

“The work that goes on in Orlando will help revolutionize life as we know it,” said BRIDG CEO Chester Kennedy. “And those involved in our hands-on work will be creating the industry’s advances for smart phones, vehicles, buildings, medical equipment and much more.”

By Teresa Burney and Jackie Kelvington

Photo credit: Montverde Academy
“Those involved in our hands-on work will be creating the industry’s advances for smart phones, vehicles, buildings, medical equipment and much more,” said Chester Kennedy, CEO of BRIDG.

The internationally renowned Montverde Academy, for example, focuses on engineering and robotics. The school’s two state-of-the-art science labs attract students from 70 different nations.

The sheer level of collaboration that education institutions have with private industry in Orlando sets it apart from other regions. In a unique partnership between the private Montverde Academy, Lake County Public Schools, Lake-Sumter State College, the University of Central Florida, and South Lake Hospital, high school students can enroll in a new Health Sciences Collegiate Academy where an evolving curriculum leads upper classmen to college courses that include internships at the hospital. Seminole County Public Schools is also committed to nurturing career-focused students, partnering with more than 900 businesses to provide students with special, designated curriculum in areas such as information technology, engineering, advanced manufacturing, bioscience, cybersecurity and much more.

Keeping the momentum of career-focused learning and preparation from secondary to post-secondary is essential, and nowhere is that more evident than at UCF. In partnership with industry-leading companies like EA Sports and Siemens Energy, UCF established the Florida Interactive Entertainment Academy (FIEA) for careers in emerging digital media and the Siemens Energy Center to conduct industry-related research.

Seminole State College and Valencia College are also committed to nurturing career-focused students, partnering with more than 900 businesses to provide students with special, designated curriculum in areas such as information technology, engineering, advanced manufacturing, bioscience, cybersecurity and much more.

The colleges were instrumental in recent economic development successes that attracted Verizon and Deloitte, who collectively created almost 3,000 new jobs in the region.

“We are constantly evolving our educational programs to best prepare students for the future,” said Dr. E. Ann McGee, president of Seminole State College. “We provide critical training that enhances economic development and industry growth through education that is based in real-world, immersive, experience-based learning. Through our partnership with Seminole County Public Schools and UCF, we are educating the future leaders and innovators of our society.”

It’s this commitment to an exceptional educational experience that keeps the Orlando region at the top when it comes to preparing students for a bright future.
Did You Know?

ORLANDO IS KNOWN AS THE MODELING, SIMULATION AND TRAINING CAPITAL OF THE WORLD

OVER 2,500 STUDENTS IN THE ORLANDO REGION GRADUATE WITH DEGREES IN AIR TRANSPORTATION-RELATED FIELDS EACH YEAR

UCF WAS NAMED THE NO. 1 SUPPLIER OF ENGINEERS TO THE AEROSPACE AND DEFENSE INDUSTRIES BY AVIATION WEEK

The Orlando region is home to top-notch flight safety and pilot training programs with direct connections to Central Florida’s renowned simulation industry. An attractive home for aviation training centers, Orlando is primed to meet the demands of the fast-growing aviation industry with its high-quality talent pipeline, advanced simulation and training cluster, aviation training infrastructure and regional assets including two world-class international airports.

Commercial airlines JetBlue and Allegiant Airlines both have large training centers in Orlando. JetBlue University, located at Orlando International Airport, has nearly every one of the company’s 1,500 new hires annually for a two-day orientation JetBlue “U” also features state-of-the-art, full-motion aircraft simulators in which pilots are trained and tested on the aircraft’s systems, procedures, maneuvers and leadership abilities. Across town, Allegiant Airlines is building a $25 million, 45,000-square-foot training center located at Orlando Sanford International Airport. This facility, including a full-range flight simulator, will instruct 150 pilots, 500 flight attendants and 100 mechanics annually.

Aviation Training Takes Off in Orlando

Training & Simulation Fuel a Growing Aviation Industry

by Amanda Roche

“The Orlando region is a great story in terms of how they mobilized resources to build the industry and really reinvent that area. This industry cluster has really just begun. Counties and cities in the region are working to fast-forward industry growth by having FAA-certified waterways and planning more multi-purpose, amphibious docks and airport-based seaplane ramps. Thanks to the region’s already strong assets and infrastructure, as well as recent industry locations and expansions here and around the state, Florida is ranked as having one of the most takeoffs and landings for seaplanes in the U.S.

The Orlando region is especially in need oftrained pilots, and Orlando is uniquely situated to meet these industry demands. In a recent study, Canadian Aviation Electronics (CAE) found that the global commercial fleet will need 440,000 active pilots by 2027. The report also projects that the industry will need 255,000 new airline pilots in 10 years to offset the effect of retirement as well as industry growth.

Institutions in the Orlando region training to meet this commercial pilot shortage include L-3 Airline Academy, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, and Polk State College. L-3 Airline Academy, located at Orlando Sanford International Airport, is increasing its classes of trained commercial pilots by 40 percent and will soon be training 600 pilots every year. Other pilot training establishments include Aerosvit Training Services, FlightSafety Orlando, Pan Am International Flight Academy and SimCom Aviation Training. In addition to pilot-specific training, Florida Institute of Technology and the University of Central Florida (UCF) are providing unrivaled numbers of qualified aviation and simulation graduates. In fact, UCF was named the No. 1 supplier of engineers to the aerospace and defense industries by Aviation Week.

Orlando is a preferred aviation training location due to its year-round flying weather, attractive cost of doing business, talented workforce and hyper-connected air access with five public-use airports in the region.

Learn more about why aviation companies are choosing Orlando at www.orlando.org.

“Did you know...”

Seaplane Manufacturing Takes a Splash in Central Florida

by Jackie Kelvington

While seaplane excursions have been a popular tourist option across the state for decades, more recently the region has become a serious spot for the manufacturing of these amphibious aircrafts. Experts say this niche sector (part of the aviation manufacturing industry) was bound to make a splash in Central Florida, especially as “America’s Seaplane City” lies within its borders.

“This industry cluster we have now didn’t exist a few years ago,” said Robert Chandler, economic growth director for Lake County. “The City of Tavares is a great story in terms of how they mobilized resources to build the industry and really reinvent that area. Now, throughout the county, a lot is happening to build up the industry. We’re going to ensure we maintain a leading location for seaplane manufacturers.”

Chandler believes the growth of this industry cluster has only just begun. Counties and cities in the region are working to fast-forward industry growth by having FAA-certified waterways and planning more multi-purpose, amphibious docks and airport-based seaplane ramps. Thanks to the region’s already strong assets and infrastructure, as well as recent industry locations and expansions here and around the state, Florida is ranked as having one of the most takeoffs and landings for seaplanes in the U.S.

The Orlando region is a great story in terms of how they mobilized resources to build the industry and really reinvent that area.
Welcome in Orlando

By Brendan O’Connor

As one of the world’s top tourism destinations, Orlando is no stranger to people of all different backgrounds, ethnicities, and gender identities. Orlando is a community built on inclusion; by welcoming so many visitors from so many different places, the city has grown into the diverse melting pot that it is today. The numbers speak for themselves. Between 2010 and 2015, Orlando experienced a 21.5 percent growth rate in its minority population, placing Orlando fifth in minority growth in the U.S. ahead of more populous cities like Miami, New York and Portland. Orlando also has the second fastest-growing Spanish-speaking population in the country. Orlando’s growth in multi-ethnicity also translates to its school systems, which cater to diverse student bodies. Orange County Public School students come from 200 countries and speak 167 different languages and dialects. And for businesses, there are diverse chambers of commerce including the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of Metro Orlando; Prospera (formerly the Hispanic Business Initiative Fund of Florida); the African-American Chamber of Commerce of Central Florida; BBIF Florida; the Asian American Chamber of Commerce of Central Florida; and MBA Orlando, the LGBT Chamber of Commerce. Each supports the work of business owners and leaders by providing insight, resources and connections that support the economic development of the community. “Every day we celebrate the rich diversity and culture that serves as the fabric of our community,” said Teresa Jacobs, Orange County Mayor.

Learn more at Orlando.org
Extracurricular Entertainment

By Jaclyn Rhoads

Orlando is well known around the globe because of its world-class amusement parks. So if you live there, you go to the parks all the time, right? Not exactly.

One of the benefits of living among the creative engine that feeds the region’s largest industry is the rich arts and culture scene, one that is both family-friendly and affordable. “I love that I can take my daughter to local events like the annual Kids Fringe Fest or venues like the Orlando Repertory Theatre for an experience that inspires her imagination and allows us to spend quality time together,” said Winter Park resident Carrie Proudfit.

There’s also the Dr. Phillips Center for the Performing Arts which offers a fantastic evening whether you’re up for a Broadway performance, a live stage show like PAW Patrol, or a concert. Festivals like the Fiesta in the Park to celebrate Hispanic culture or the Fireworks at the Fountain on the Fourth of July come around every year.

Speaking of fireworks — you’ll see them fly at high-energy sporting events where competition is as fierce as the fun. Kids can get a taste of the NBA with the Orlando Junior Magic program and camps or experience what it feels like to kick the winning goal with the Orlando City Youth League. The brand new United States Tennis Association National Campus features 100 courts, including the Nemours Family Zone, a place for children, parents and grandparents to learn and develop their tennis skills.

A healthy body is just as important as a healthy mind and Orlando’s specialized healthcare and dedicated children’s hospitals like Nemours Children’s Hospital, Florida Hospital for Children, and Orlando Health’s Winnie Palmer Hospital for Women & Babies and Arnold Palmer Hospital for Children offer world-renowned programs in areas like pediatric cardiology and other specialty fields.

“While more than 80 parks in Orlando alone, we can explore so many areas where my son can burn off some energy at the playground or toss a baseball and never get bored. We’ve even taken him on a最終 rides and stellar shows.”

Children and teens will have a hard time narrowing down their extracurricular activities. Kids as young as three years old can enroll in STEM-inspired camps at the Orlando Science Center or professional dance classes at the Orlando Ballet. When school is out, unique offerings such as the KidFest Youth Filmmakers camp, Full Sail Labs and art camps at the Orlando Museum of Art make the summer in Orlando anything but ordinary.

A healthy body is just as important as a healthy mind and Orlando’s specialized healthcare and dedicated children’s hospitals like Nemours Children’s Hospital, Florida Hospital for Children, and Orlando Health’s Winnie Palmer Hospital for Women & Babies and Arnold Palmer Hospital for Children offer world-renowned programs in areas like pediatric cardiology and other specialty fields.

“From a more laidback day, we typically go to one of Orlando’s scenic parks with lakes and miles of trails where we can go canoeing, kayaking, hiking or just enjoy a quiet, relaxing picnic,” said Tim Trudell, who moved to Orlando from Virginia. “With more than 80 parks in Orlando alone, we can explore so many areas where my son can burn off some energy at the playground or toss a baseball and never get bored. We’ve even taken him on a最終 rides and stellar shows.”

Each park offers yearly special events like the Epcot International Food & Wine Festival or Mickey’s Very Merry Christmas Party as well as A Celebration of Harry Potter or Mardi Gras at Universal Orlando Resort, and Halloween Speakeasy and the Seven Seas Food Festival at SeaWorld Orlando.

It’s enough to make you wish you had more than 52 weekends a year to see and do it all!