

# Southwest Florida Regional Economic Indicators

## August 2009



**Regional Economic Research Institute**

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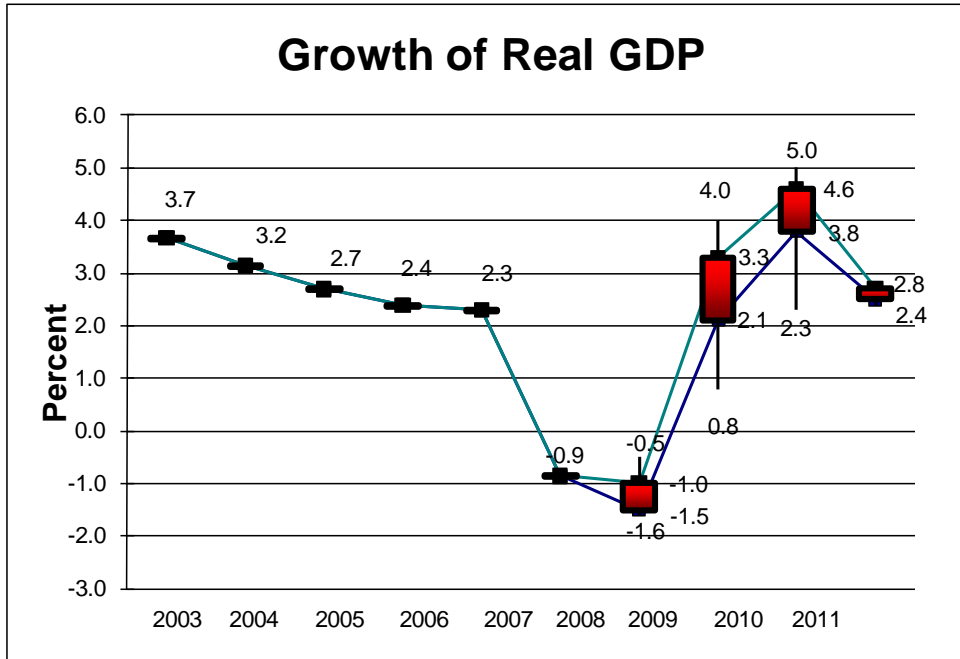
## Introduction

The Federal Reserve Open Market Committee provided an update on the national economy on August 12. The press release from the meeting stated that:

- Economic activity is leveling out;
- Conditions in the financial markets have improved further;
- Household spending shows signs of stabilizing but is constrained by ongoing job losses, sluggish income growth, lower housing wealth, and tight credit;
- Progress has been made in bringing inventory stocks into better alignment with sales; and
- The federal funds interest rate is expected to remain in the range of 0 to one-quarter percent for an extended period of time.

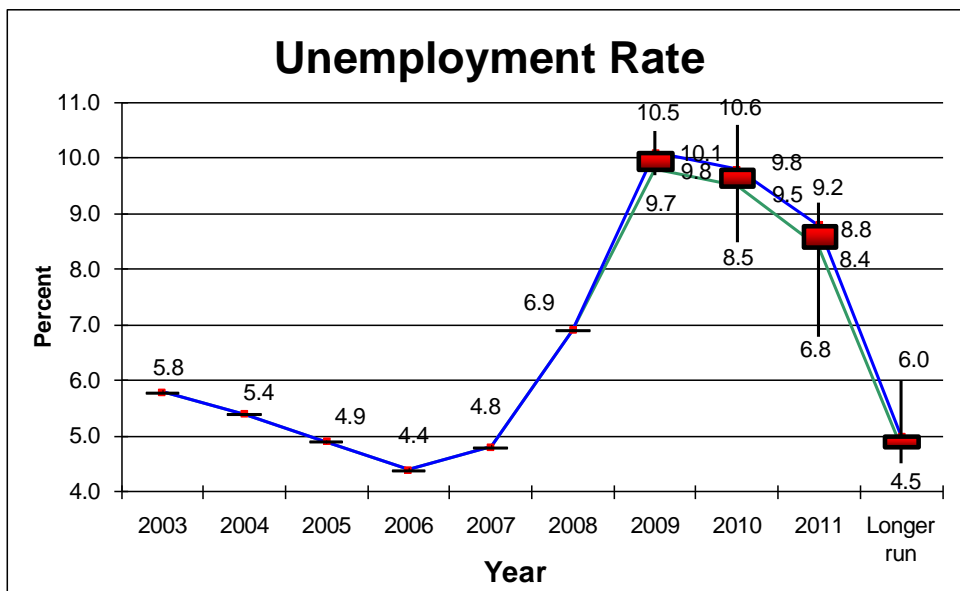
The next meeting of the Federal Reserve's Open Market Committee is planned for September 22nd and 23rd. A sluggish recovery in sales and production is expected to begin during the second half of 2009. The Federal Reserve's Open Market Committee's economic forecasts released in the June minutes are shown in the following "box and whiskers" charts. The red boxes are the central tendency forecast and the full range of uncertainty is reflected in the whiskers, or vertical lines.

Real GDP has declined in 2009 and the chart shows a recovery in 2010, but it will be several years before the economy returns to a more normal long-run trend. In 2010 and 2011, real GDP is forecast to have a fairly rapid recovery followed by more normal long-term economic growth of around two and one-half to three percent.



Source: Minutes of the Federal Open Market Committee, June 23-24, 2009.

The national unemployment rate is expected to rise in 2009 to between 9.7 and 10.5 percent. The July 2009 national unemployment rate was 9.4 percent, so unemployment during the latter part of 2009 is expected to rise. Unemployment in 2010 is expected to continue at a slightly lower but historically high rate of more than 9.5 percent. For 2011, the unemployment rate is expected to be approximately 8.5 percent before finally declining to a long-run rate of around five percent. The projections for unemployment are for the fourth quarter of each year.



Source: Minutes of the Federal Open Market Committee, June 23-24, 2009.

Our regional economic indicator charts continue to show the impact of the slowdown in the local economy in the form of low retail sales, high unemployment rates, low permitting levels, and low inflation rates. Unemployment in the region reached 12.8 percent in July, up from 12.5 percent in June. Passenger traffic at Regional Southwest Airport (RSW) saw a seasonal month-to-month decrease from May to June 2009, and a six percent decrease from June 2008. Tourism revenues were down throughout the region.

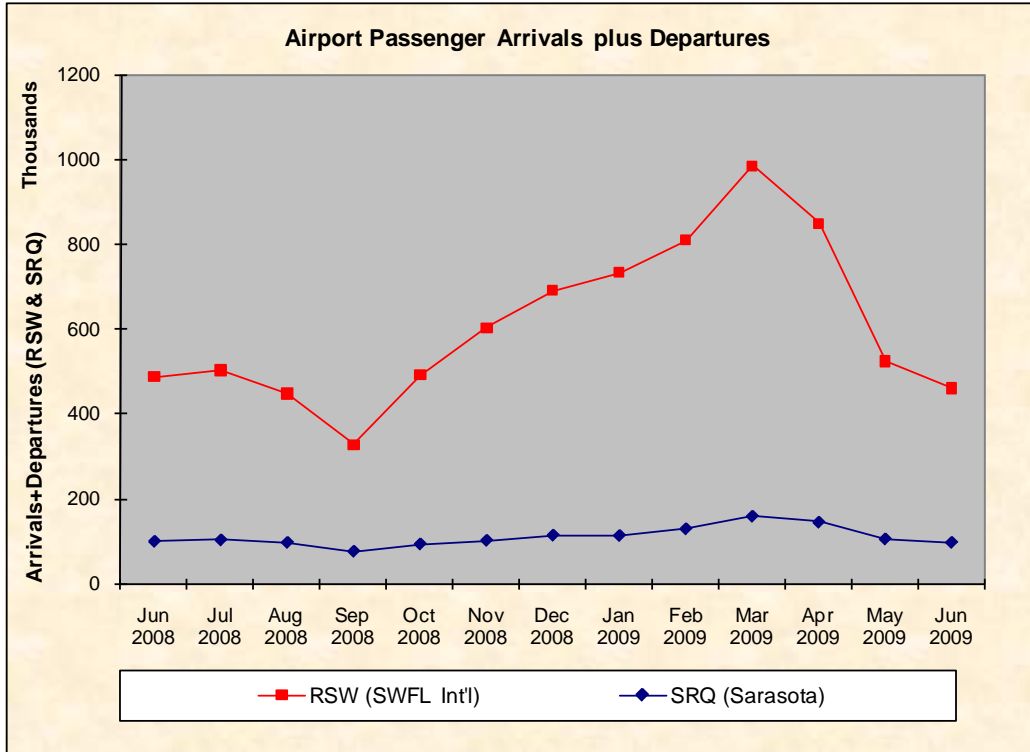
The Regional Economic Research Institute (RERI) is continuing to develop the regional economic database, and this report as a way to support its mission and assist the region. The Institute thanks its many partners for assistance in obtaining the data, including the Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council, the Economic Development Organizations of Charlotte, Collier, and Lee Counties, and the county and city permit offices.

## Airport Activity

Airport passenger activity is defined as the sum of arrivals and departures for Regional Southwest Florida and Sarasota airports and is shown in Chart 1. Peak seasonal activity occurs in February, March and April, with significantly lower activity in the summer months, especially the period of June to September. Charts 2 and 3 illustrate the monthly seasonality of airport passenger traffic and the changes from year to year.

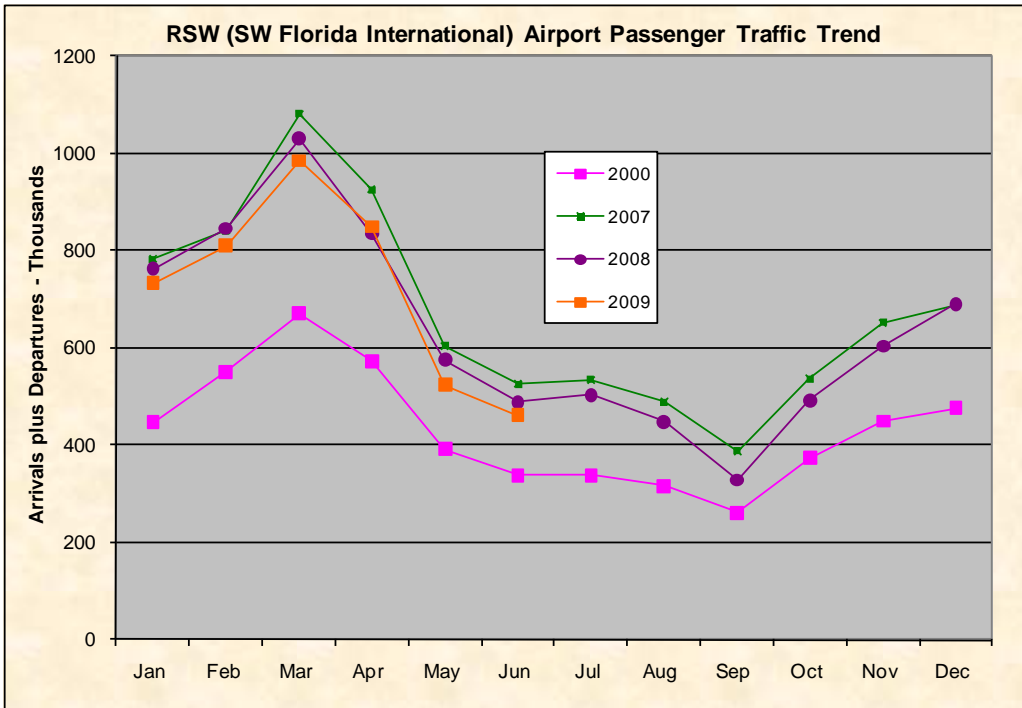
Regional Southwest Florida (RSW) airport located in Lee County is ranked as one of the fifty busiest airports in the nation. Chart 1 shows Regional Southwest Florida (RSW) airport passenger activity of 461,295 in June 2009, which is 6 percent lower than the June 2008 level and 12 percent below May 2009 following the seasonal pattern. Sarasota (SRQ) passenger activity was 97,820 in June 2009, just 2 percent below the June 2008 prior year figure, and 8 percent lower than May 2009, as shown in Chart 3. Charlotte County has added commercial passenger service and recorded May and June passenger activity of 7,759 and 9,521, respectively.

**Chart 1: Regional Airport Arrivals and Departures**



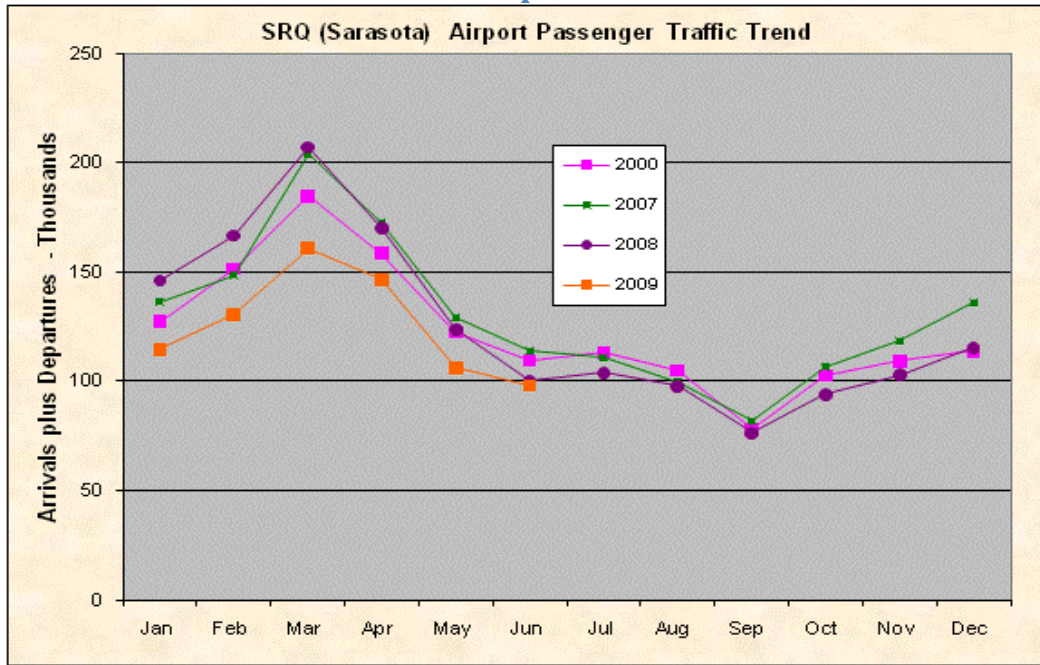
Source: Local Airport Authorities

**Chart 2: RSW Traffic Trend**



Source: Local Airport Authorities

**Chart 3: Sarasota Airport Traffic Trend**

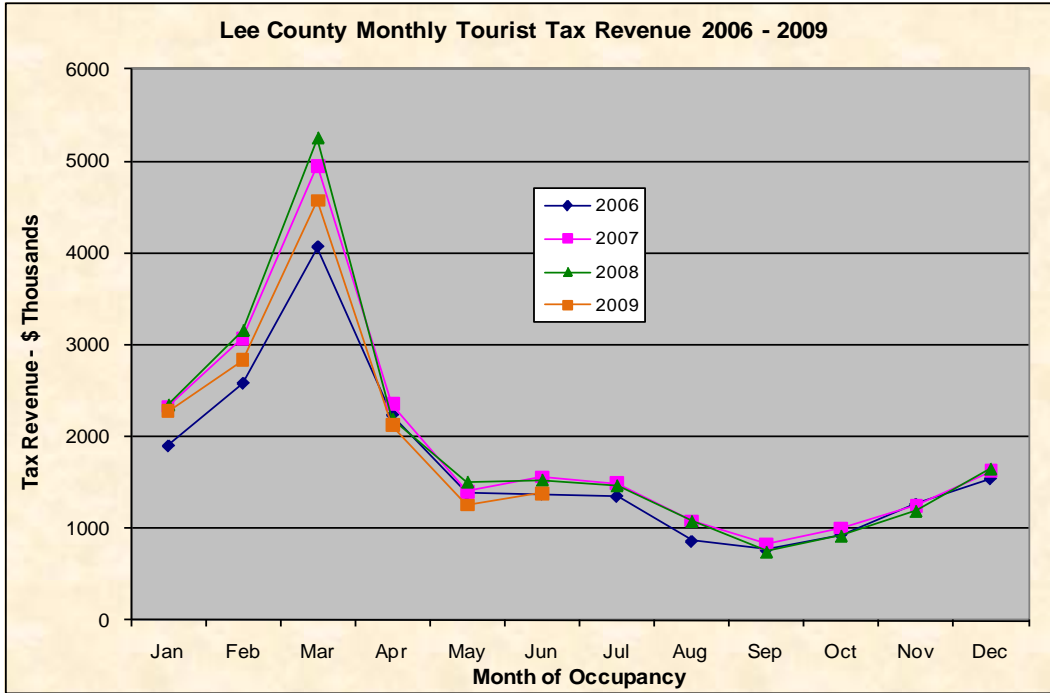


Source: Local Airport Authorities

### Tourism Tax Revenues

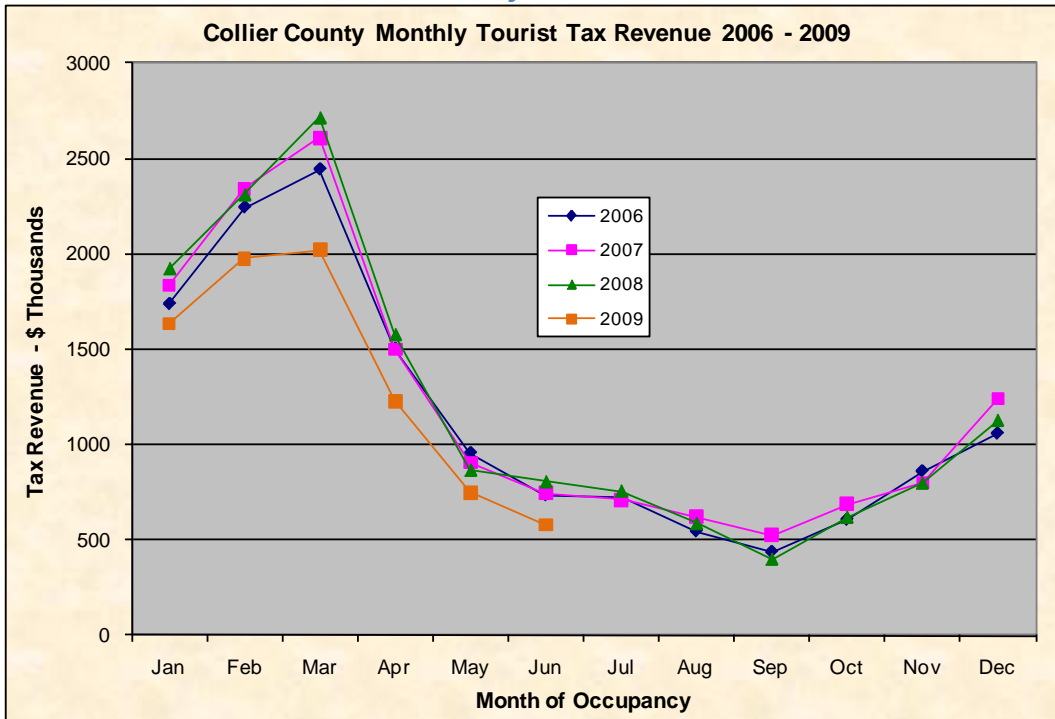
Tourism tax revenues for the region are shown in Charts 4, 5, and 6, and are based on month of occupancy. The charts show that June tourism tax revenues declined 10 percent for Lee, 28 percent for Collier, and 1 percent for Charlotte County, compared to June 2008. Total tax revenues for the three counties declined 15 percent from June 2008. Lee and Charlotte County tourism taxes increased by 10 percent and 24 percent, respectively, from the prior month of May 2009. In contrast, Collier County tourism tax revenues declined by 23 percent from May 2009. For all three counties, there was a decline of 1 percent from May 2009.

**Chart 4: Lee County Tourism Tax Revenues**



Source: Local County Tourism, Tax, and Economic Development Reports

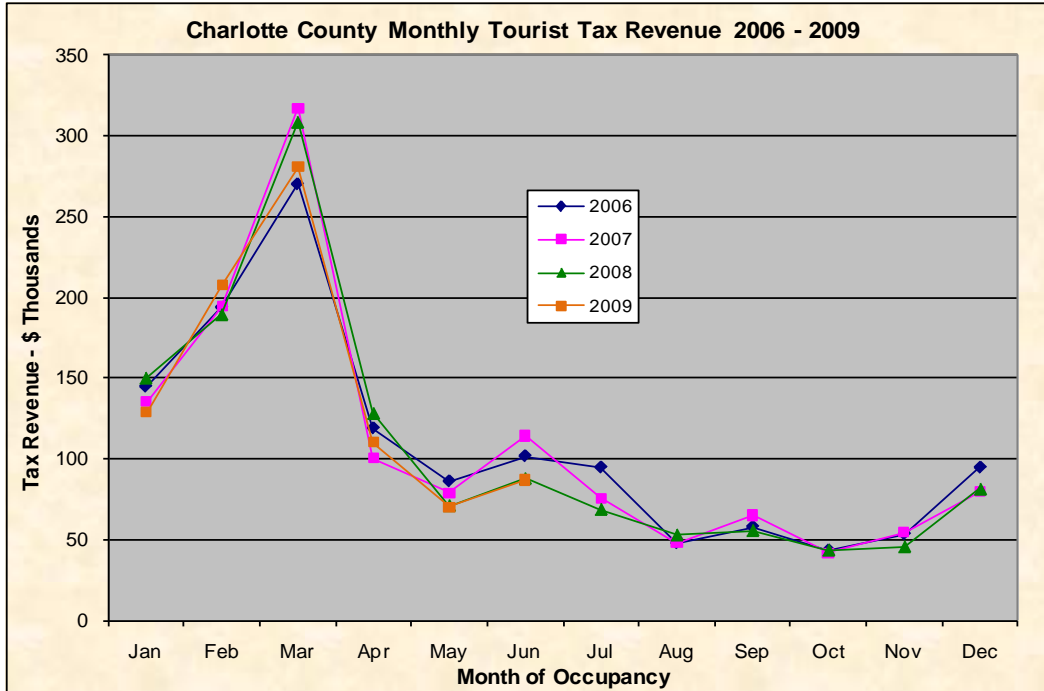
**Chart 5: Collier County Tourism Tax Revenues**



Source: Local County Tourism, Tax, and Economic Development Reports



**Chart 6: Charlotte County Tourism Tax Revenues**

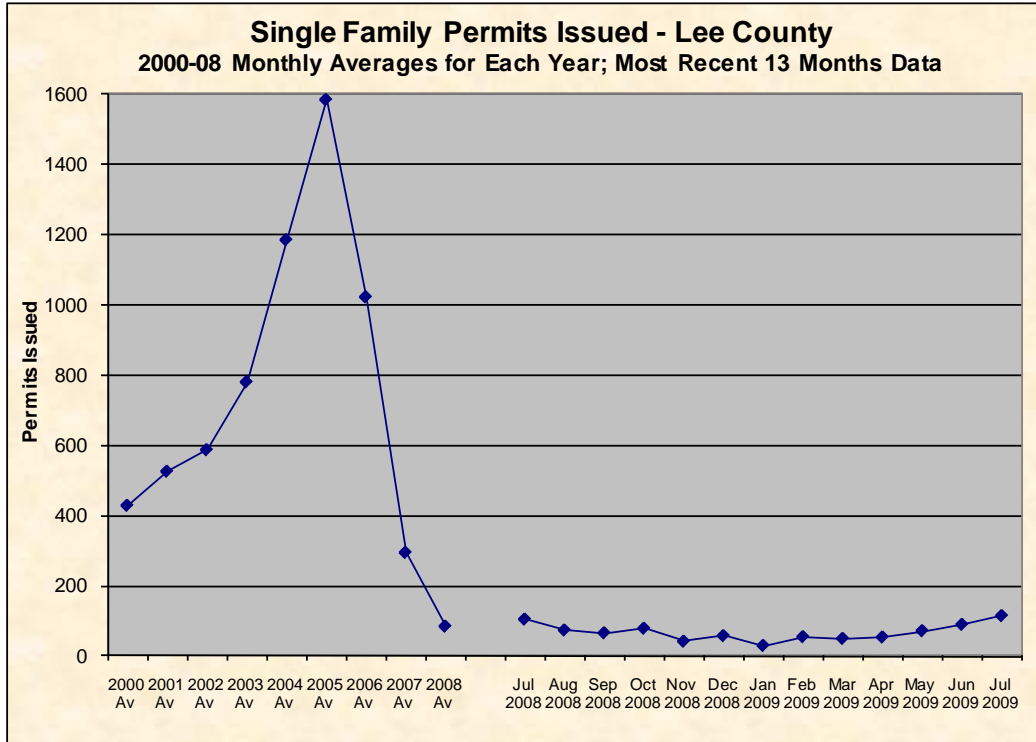


Source: Local County Tourism, Tax, and Economic Development Reports

## Single-Family Building Permits

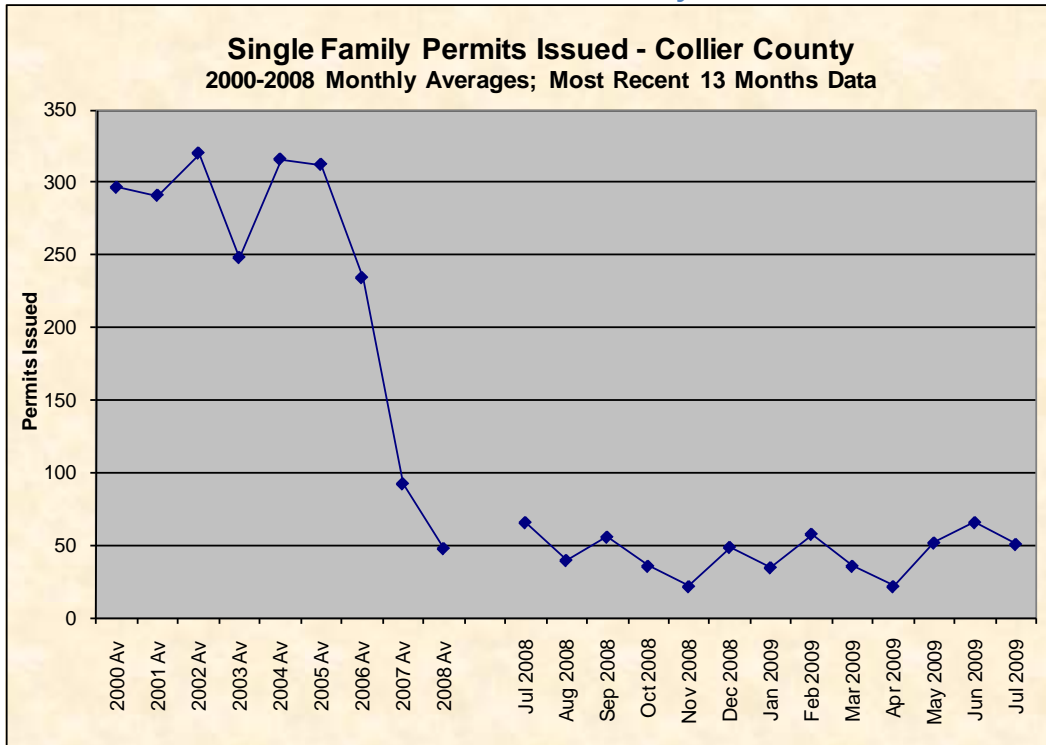
Single-family home permits issued were steady in July, but remained historically low for the region as the economy's recession and a large inventory of lower-priced existing homes are selling below replacement costs. The July single-family permitting in Lee County increased to 115 from 90 in June, as shown in Chart 7; one year ago, the figure was 105 and the monthly average for all of 2008 was 85. Single-family permits for Collier County decreased from 66 in June to 51 in July, as shown in Chart 8. This was below the July 2008 permit level of 66, but slightly above the monthly average of 48 for all of 2008. July data for Charlotte County was unavailable at the time of publication, but data through June is shown in Chart 9.

**Chart 7: Lee County**



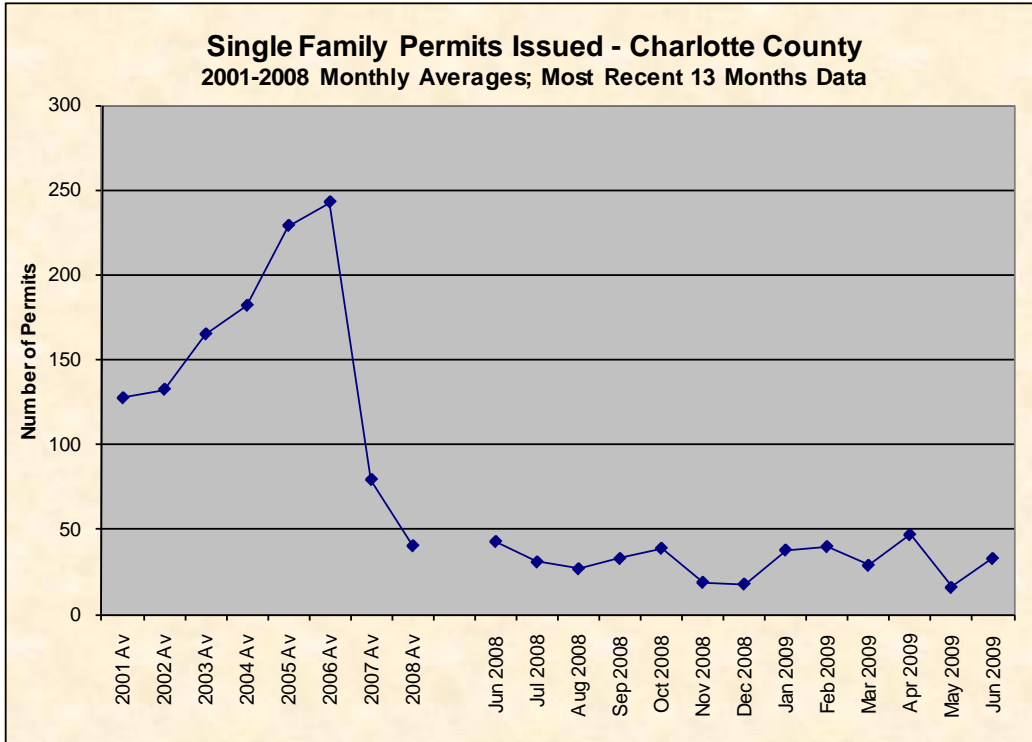
Source: Local Building and Zoning Departments, including Fort Myers, Cape Coral, and Unincorporated Lee County, Bonita Springs and Fort Myers Beach permits.

**Chart 8: Collier County**



Source: Local Building and Zoning Departments, includes unincorporated Collier County permits only.

**Chart 9: Charlotte County**



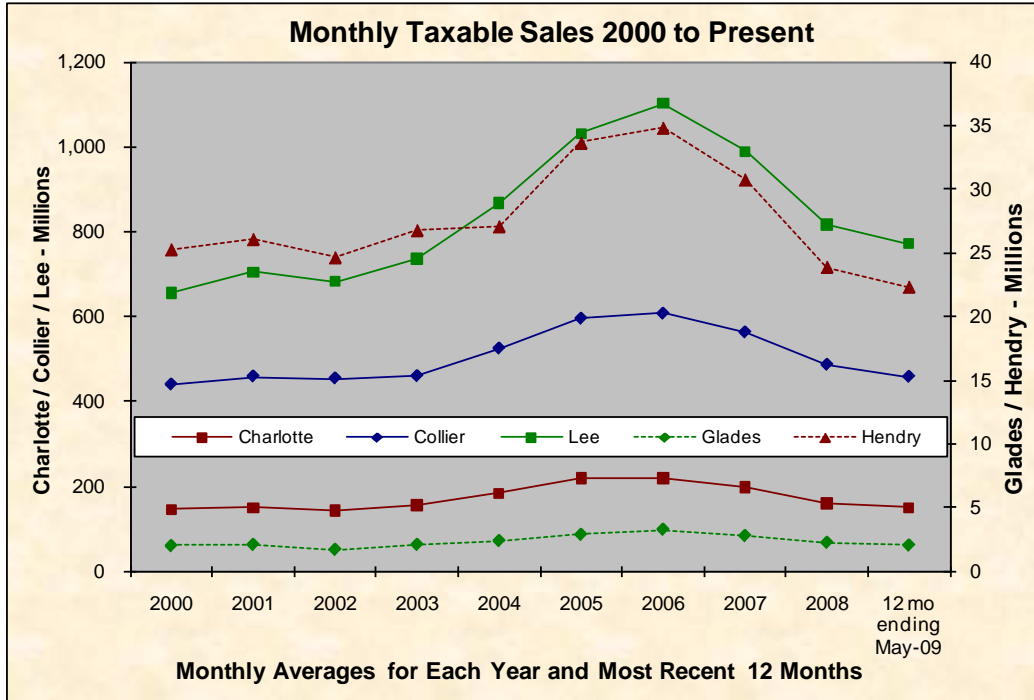
Source: Local Building and Zoning Departments, includes unincorporated Charlotte County permits only.

## Taxable Sales

The taxable sales charts show month of collection by the merchant rather than the reporting month issued by the Florida Department of Revenue. This makes May the latest collection month plotted on the following charts. The taxable sales figures are used to track consumer spending, an important component of the regional economy. Chart 10 provides a historical range of average monthly taxable sales from 2000 to 2008 and the latest 12-month average through May 2009.

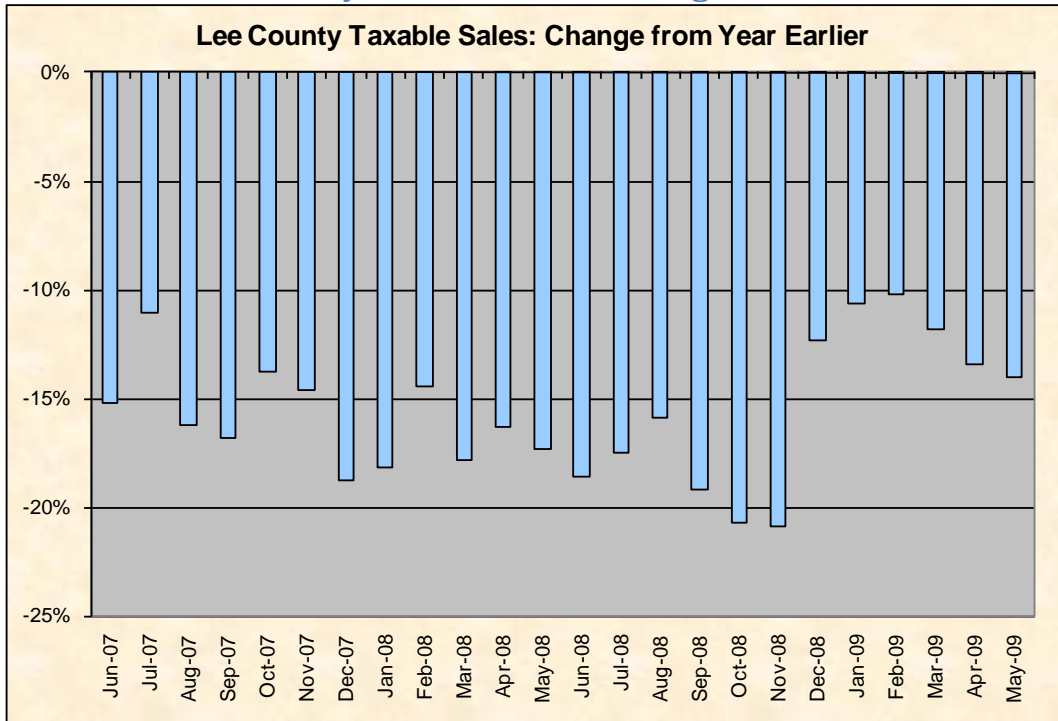
The local impact of the current recession continues to be visible in the year-to-year percentage decreases in taxable sales. Lee County saw May 2009 taxable sales collections 14 percent below year-earlier levels, as shown in Chart 11. Collier and Charlotte Counties experienced year-to-year reductions of 12 and 9 percent, respectively, as shown in Charts 12 and 13. The rate of decrease in Charlotte County is declining. Hendry County’s May taxable sales (not charted) were off by 6 percent from a year earlier, while Glades (not charted) were down by 23 percent. Taxable sales for the five-county region declined by \$185 million, or 13 percent, from May 2008 to May 2009.

**Chart 10: Taxable Sales by County**



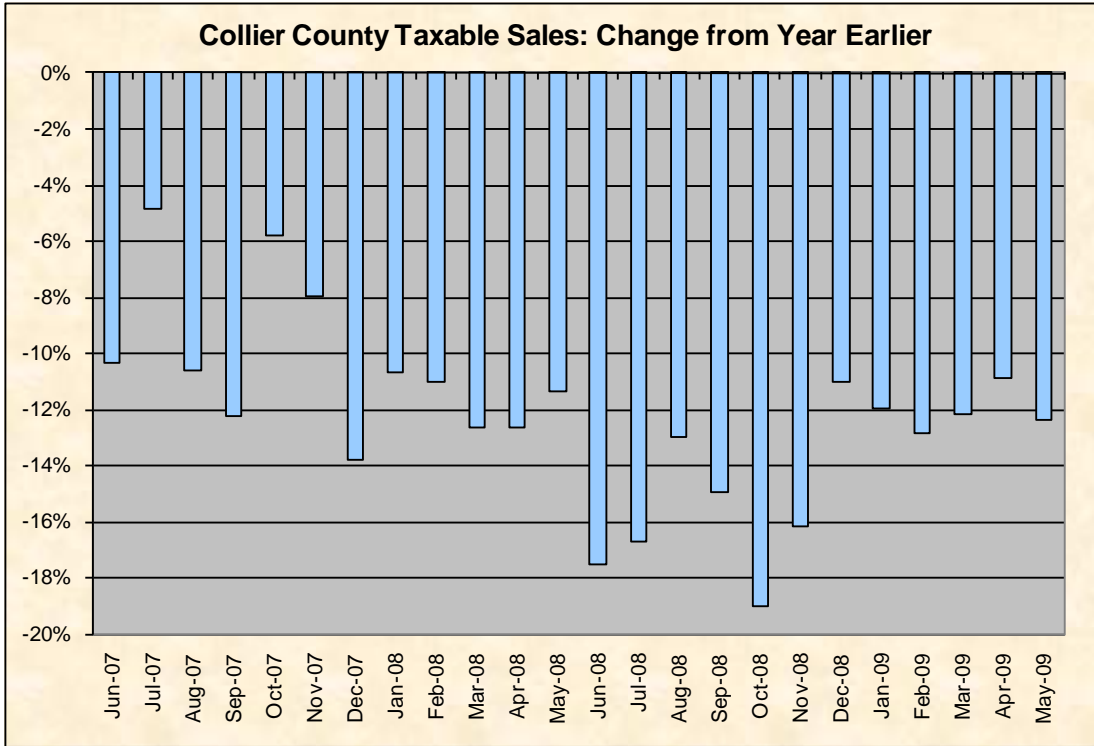
Source: Florida Department of Tax Research

**Chart 11: Lee County Taxable Sales - Change from a Year Earlier**



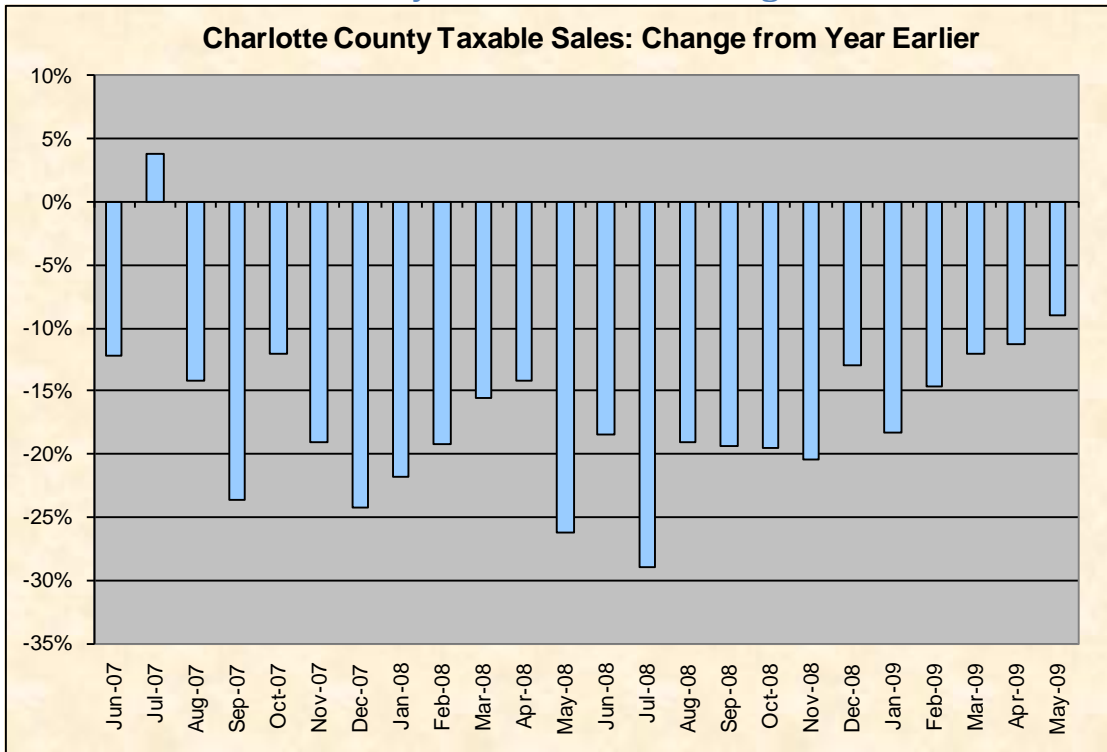
Source: Florida Department of Tax Research

**Chart 12: Collier County Taxable Sales - Change from a Year Earlier**



Source: Florida Department of Tax Research

**Chart 13: Charlotte County Taxable Sales - Change from a Year Earlier**



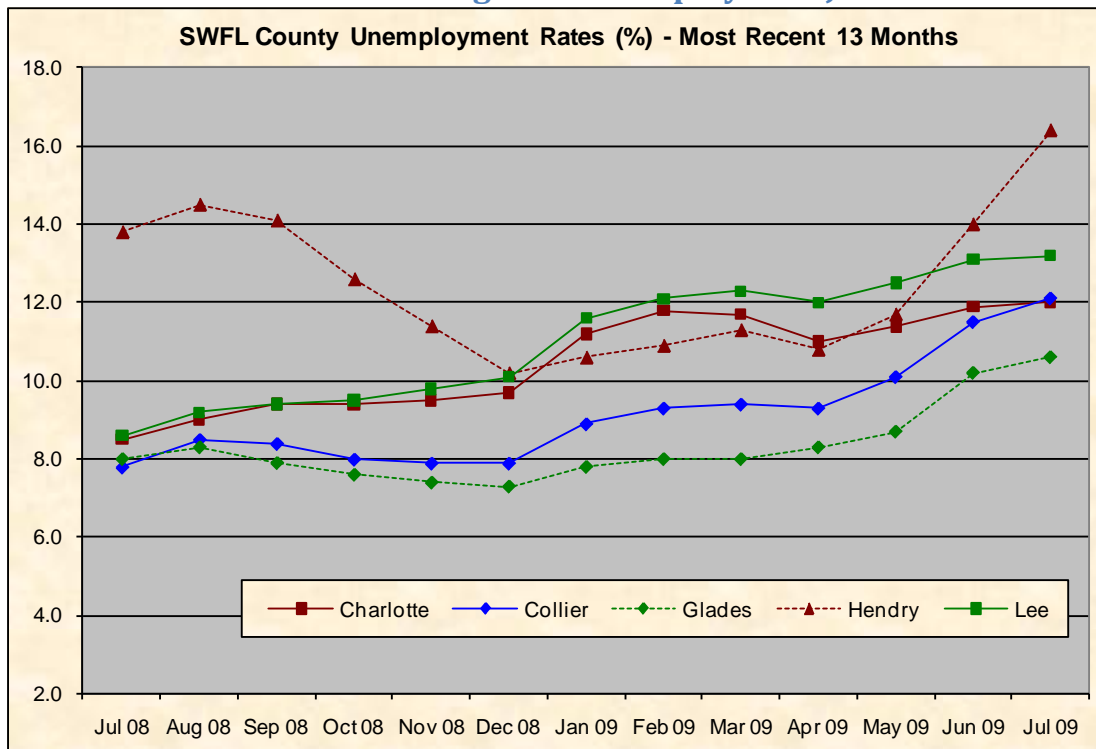
Source: Florida Department of Tax Research

## Workforce – Unemployment

All Southwest Florida counties reported increased unemployment in July (Chart 14), compared to June. The unemployment rates tracked in this report are not seasonally adjusted. Lee County's unemployment rate edged up from 13.1 percent in June to 13.2 percent in July 2009. Collier County's unemployment rate increased from 11.5 percent to 12.1 percent, and Charlotte County's figures increased from 11.9 percent to 12.0 percent. Hendry County unemployment increased from 14.0 percent in June to 16.4 percent in July 2009, while Glades County's unemployment increased from 10.2 percent in June 2009 to 10.6 percent in July. Florida's unemployment rate climbed to 11.0 percent in July 2009, and the national unemployment rate was 9.4 percent (not seasonally adjusted).

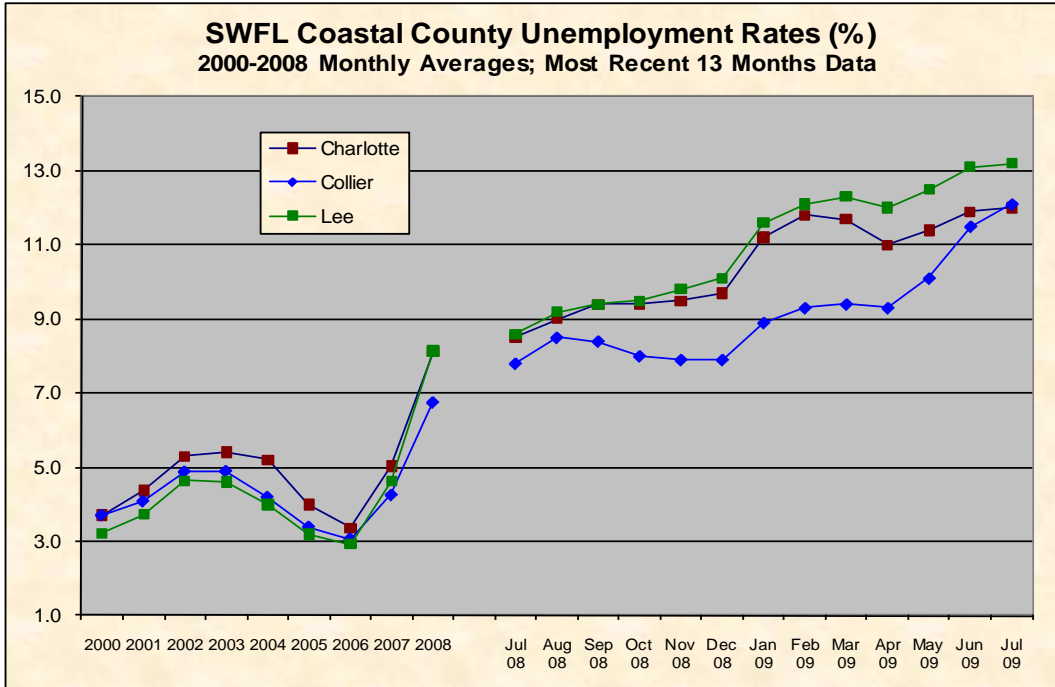
Charts 15 (coastal counties) and 16 (inland counties) provide a longer term historical perspective of unemployment rates for our region from 2000 to 2008 and the latest 13 months. Unemployment rates above 5.0 percent reflect cyclical unemployment and a slowdown of the economy from long-run trends. Our region has been hit particularly hard due to its dependence on housing and construction in general.

**Chart 14: Regional Unemployment**



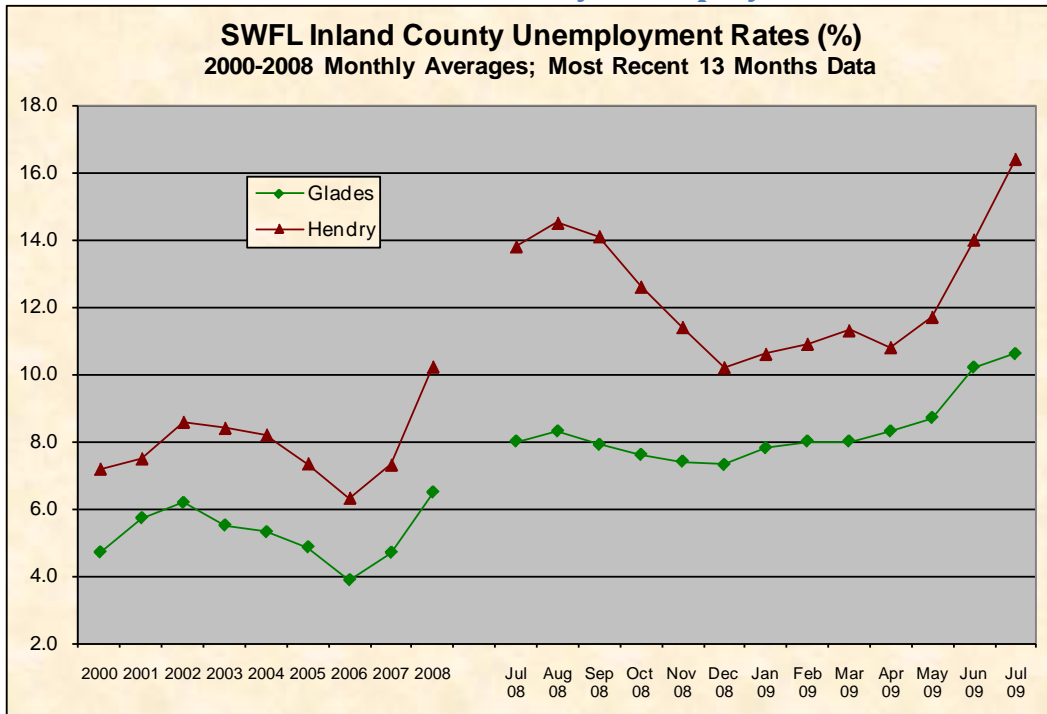
Source: AWI

**Chart 15: Coastal County Unemployment**



Source AWI

**Chart 16: Inland County Unemployment**

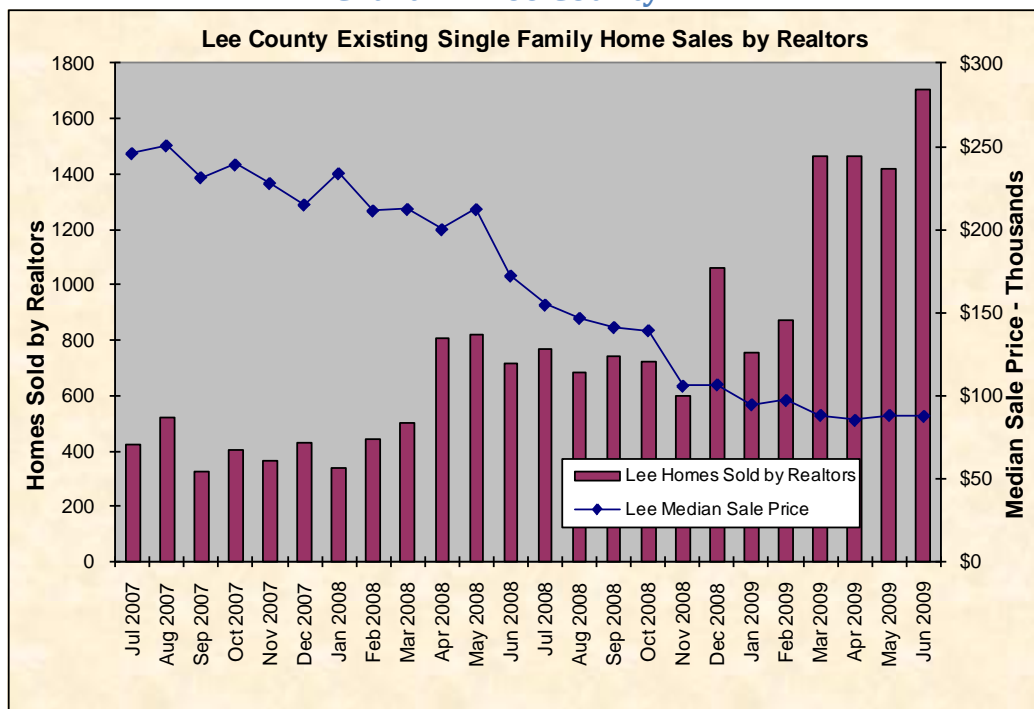


Source AWI

## Sales of Single-Family Existing Homes and Median Sales Price

The number of existing single-family homes sold by Realtors in June 2009 showed decreases from the prior month in Collier and Charlotte Counties, while Lee County sales increased from 1,417 to 1,705 homes (Chart 17). For all three counties, total sales increased to 2,285 homes, a nine percent increase over May 2009, and a 92 percent increase over the June 2008 total. The median sales price for Lee County decreased slightly from \$88,500 to \$87,900. Collier County sales decreased from 383 to 364 with the median price increasing to \$180,000 from the prior month figure of \$174,000, as shown in Chart 18. Charlotte County sales decreased from 305 in May to 216 in June 2009, but the median sales price increased substantially from \$97,200 to \$145,600, as shown in Chart 19. However, overall median sale prices continue to show significant decreases from the prior year, in large measure due to foreclosure sales activity.

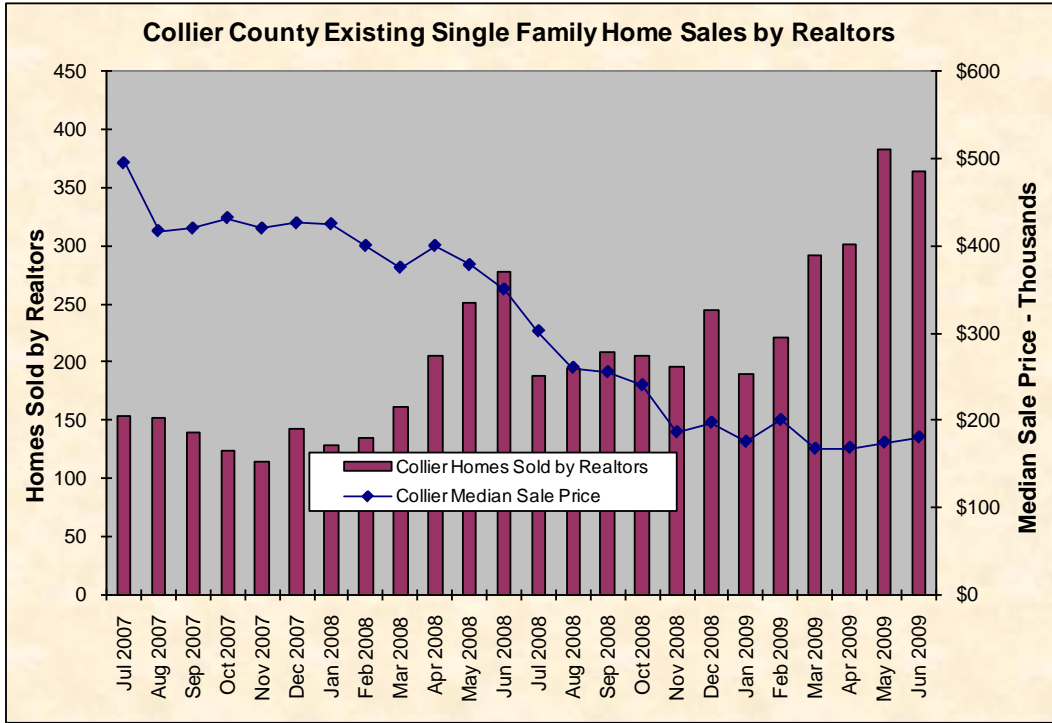
Chart 17: Lee County



Source: Florida Association of Realtors® Fort Myers – Cape Coral MSA <http://media.living.net/statistics/statisticsfull.html>

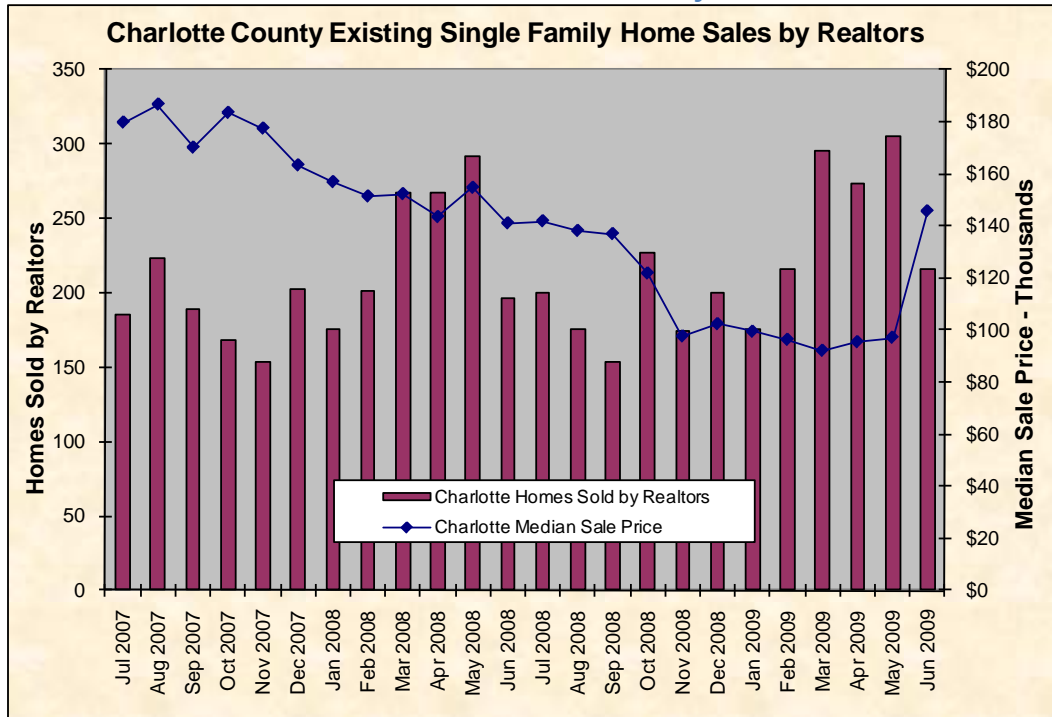


**Chart 18: Collier County**



Source: Naples Area Board of Realtors® (NABOR) [www.naplesarea.com](http://www.naplesarea.com)

**Chart 19: Charlotte County**

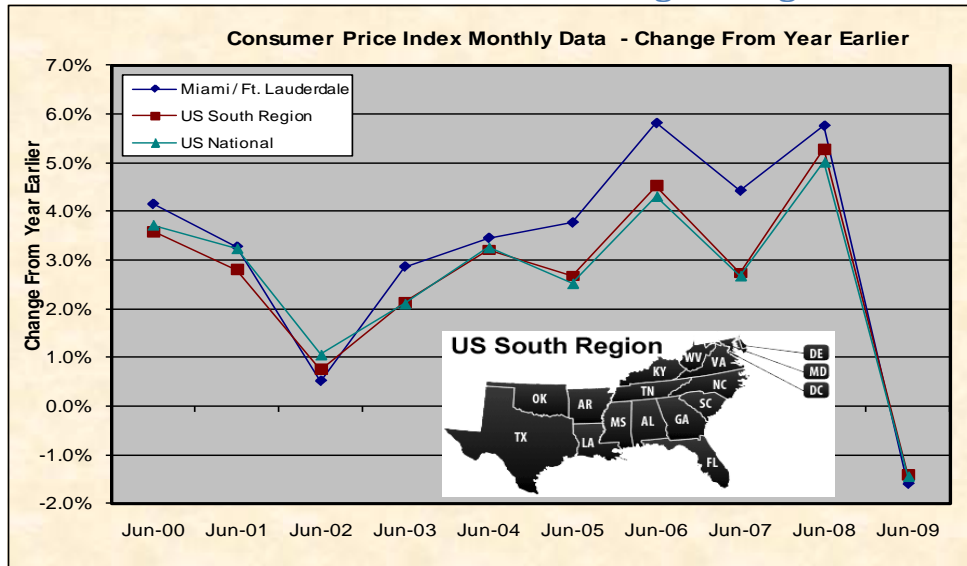


Source: Florida Association of Realtors® Punta Gorda, Florida MSA <http://media.living.net/statistics/statisticsfull.html>

## Consumer Price Index

The consumer price index (CPI) is reported for the nation, region, and the Miami-Fort Lauderdale area. The Miami-Fort Lauderdale area CPI is collected every two months and is the closest reporting location to Southwest Florida. The June 2009 CPI was down 1.6 percent from June 2008, as shown in Chart 20.

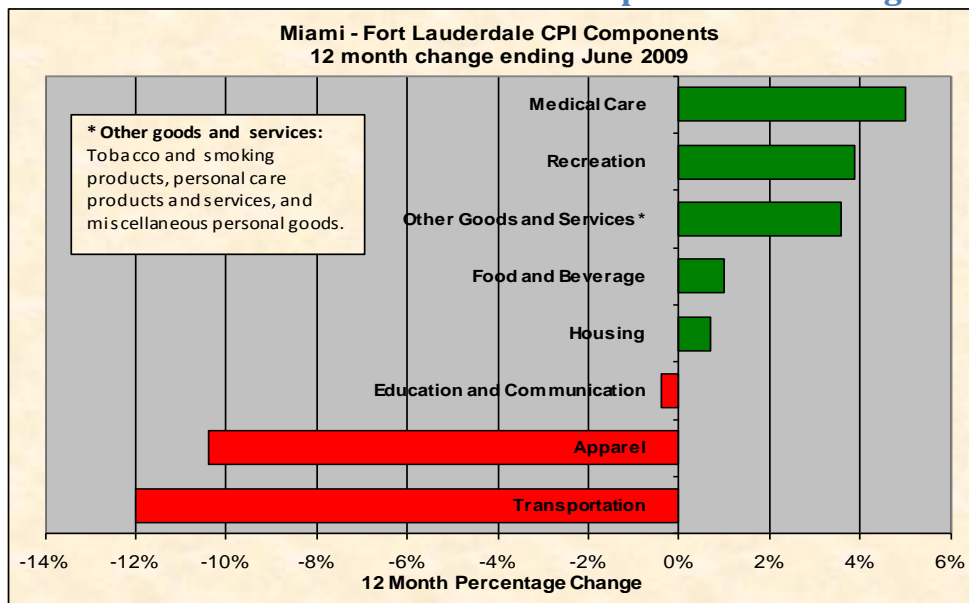
### Chart 20: CPI Annual Percentage Change



Source: BLS

The overall Miami-Fort Lauderdale CPI index for the 12 months ending June 2009 can be broken down into the components contributing to the price changes, as shown in Chart 21.

### Chart 21: Miami-Fort Lauderdale CPI Component Percentage Change



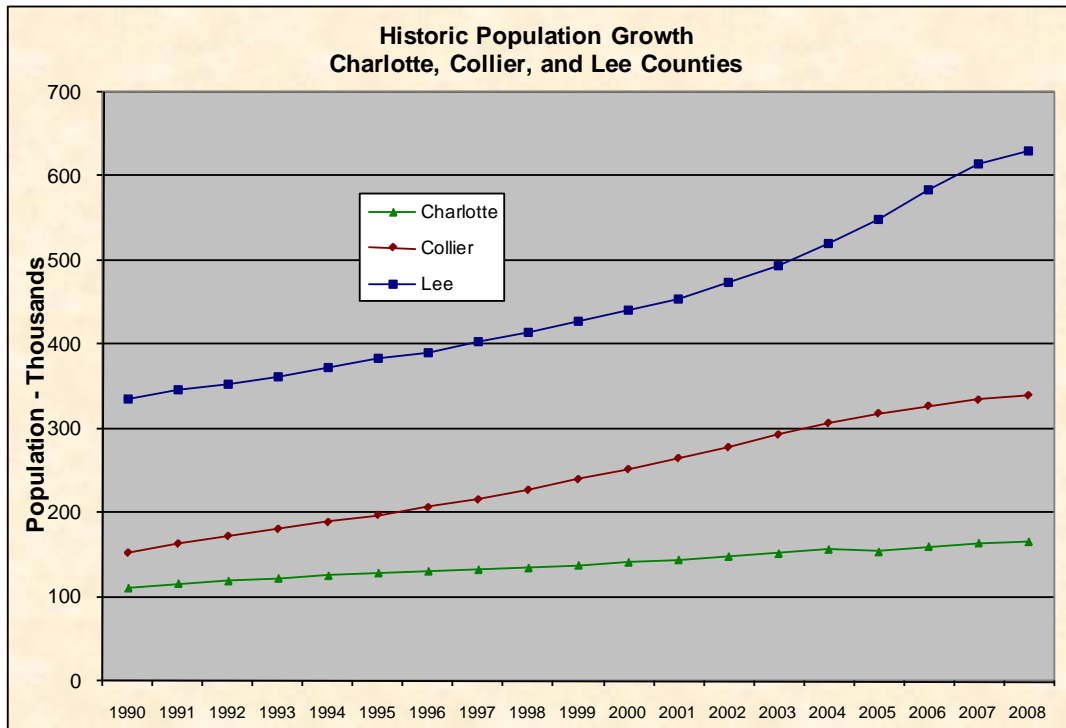
Source: BLS

The costs of medical care, recreation, and other goods and services have shown the largest increases over the last year.

## Population

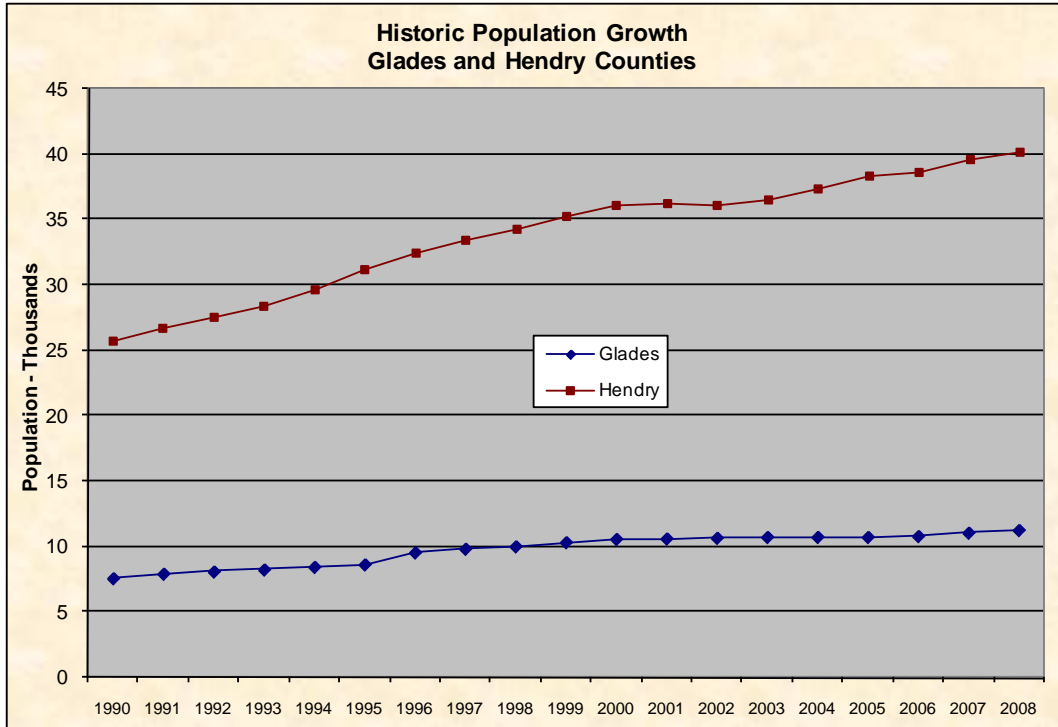
The length and severity of the current global recession is expected to slow regional and state population growth for the next few years. A Florida Demographic Estimating Conference was held in July 2008 and their forecasts are included in this report. Charts 22 and 23 show the historic population growth from 1990 to 2008. Collier County grew at an average annual growth rate of 4.6 percent from 1990 to 2008. Lee County almost doubled its population from 1990 to 2008 growing at an annual rate of 3.6 percent. As indicated in Chart 23, Charlotte, Glades, and Hendry Counties had average annual rates of population growth between 2.2 and 2.5 percent per year. Table 1 shows projected population increases for 2008 to 2030 and Chart 24 provides a chart of the population projections for 2008 through 2030. Charts 25 through 27 provide the percentages of regional population by County for the years 1990, 2008, and 2030.

**Chart 22: Coastal Counties Growth 1990 to 2008**



Source: Florida EDR: July 2008.

**Chart 23: Inland County Growth 1990 to 2008**



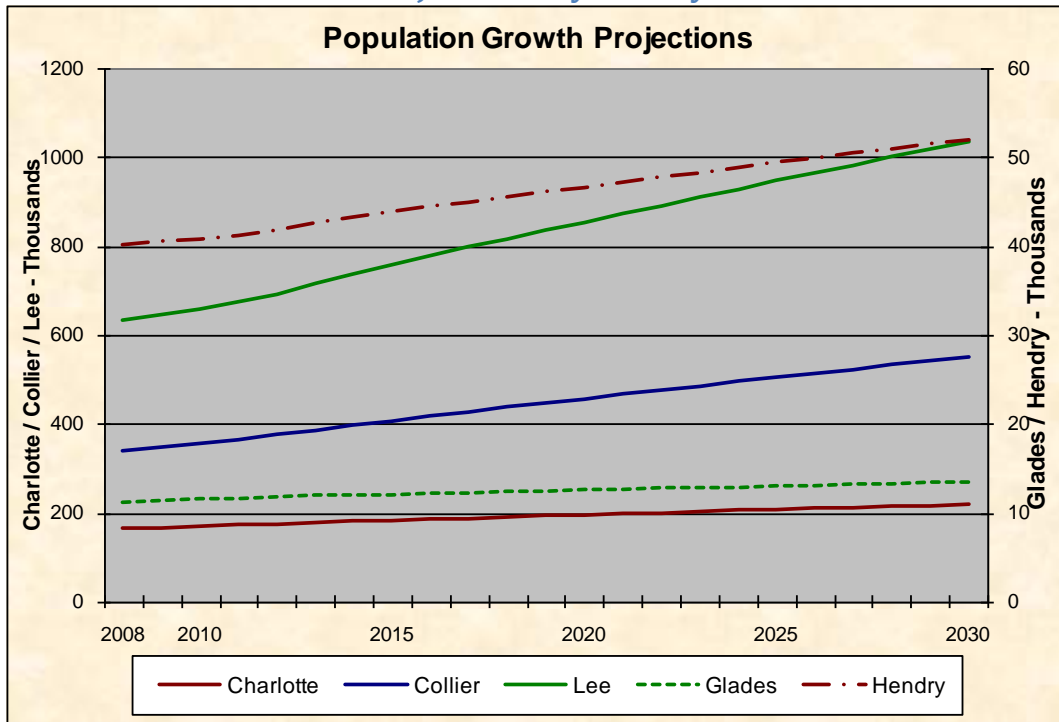
Source: Florida EDR: July 2008.

**Table 1: Projections by County**  
**EDR Demographic Estimating Conference**  
**Population Estimates and Projections by County**

Year	Charlotte	Collier	Lee	Hendry	Glades
<b>2008</b>	166,112	339,128	631,733	40,208	11,256
<b>2010</b>	169,694	353,878	654,599	40,828	11,597
<b>2020</b>	195,899	455,288	852,005	46,678	12,556
<b>2030</b>	219,266	548,872	1,033,510	51,969	13,422

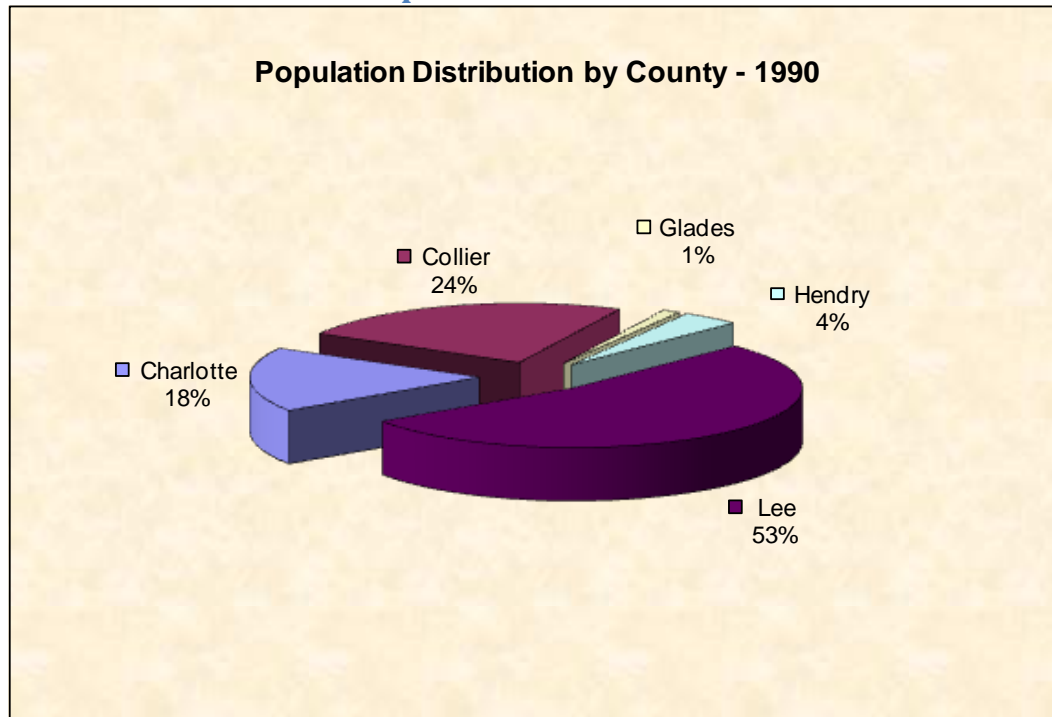
Source: Florida EDR: July 2008.

**Chart 24: Projections by County**



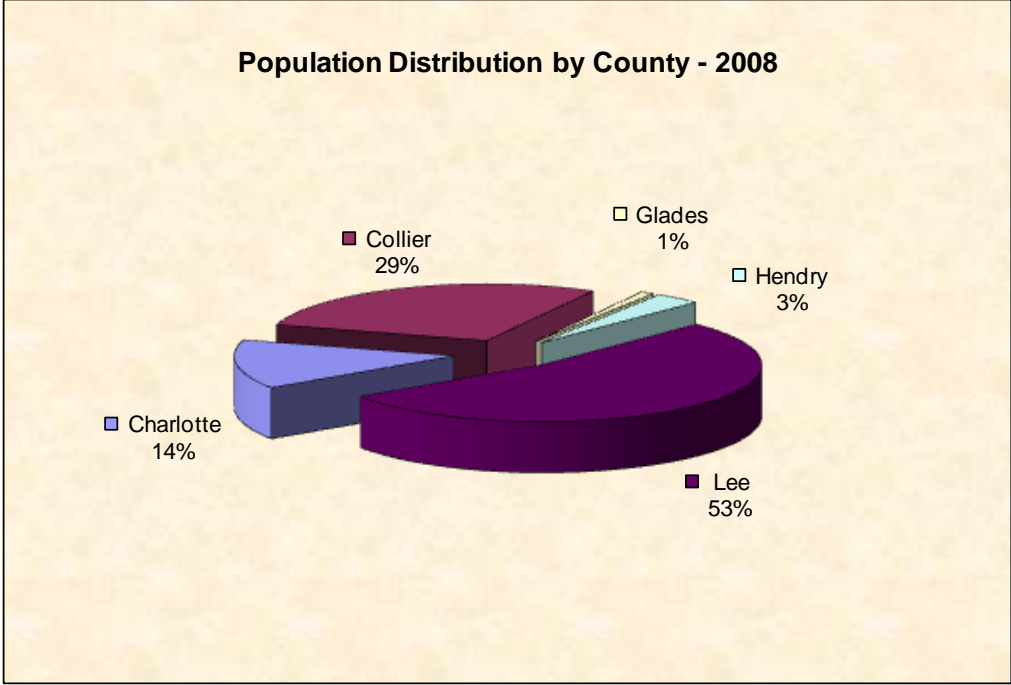
Source: Florida EDR: July 2008.

**Chart 25: Population Distribution 1990**



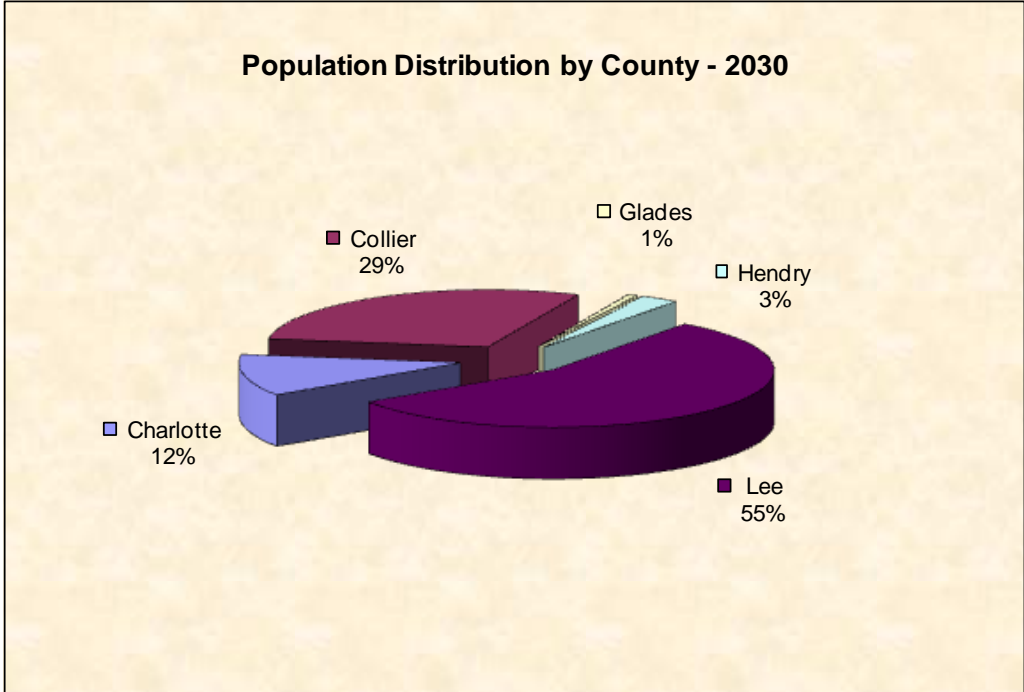
Source: Florida EDR: July 2008.

**Chart 26: Population Distribution 2008**



Source: Florida EDR: July 2008.

**Chart 27: Population Distribution 2030**



Source: Florida EDR: July 2008.