

# FDOT Newsletter

April 2024  
Volume 96



## SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

- Estimating Training
  - Building Capacity
  - Mobilization Financing
  - Bonding Assistance
  - Marketing Plan Development
  - Creating a Business Plan
  - Website Building
- Plan Reading

## THE 2024 STCREC SYMPOSIUM April 23, 2024 - April 25, 2024



## Governor Ron DeSantis Announces Florida's Unemployment Rate Has Been Lower Than the National Rate For 40 Consecutive Months

**TALLAHASSEE, Fla.**—Today, Governor Ron DeSantis announced a milestone in Florida's continuing economic success: Florida's statewide unemployment rate has been lower than the national rate **for 40 consecutive months**. The national unemployment rate rose to 3.9 percent for February 2024; Florida's rate did not rise and outperforms the national rate by 0.8 percentage point. And while Florida's private sector job growth rate increased by 2.3 percent (+194,200 jobs) over the year in February 2024, the national rate grew by only 1.6 percent over the same period.

"Florida continues to outperform the nation," **said Governor Ron DeSantis**. "We have proven that bold, conservative leadership across the board produces booming economic results—more jobs, lower taxes, less regulation, and fiscal security."

"Under Governor DeSantis' leadership, Florida continues to provide an economy for our residents that is primed for opportunity and secure for future growth," **said J. Alex Kelly, Florida Secretary of Commerce**. "Florida's strong talent pipeline and skilled workforce are the building blocks of Florida's economic growth and stability. February's economic data is more absolute evidence that Florida is on the right path."

READ MORE ►

## Vision Kwest: Presenting ABC's 2024 Contractor of the Year

Kwest Group was always going to be a success. Ryan Odendahl is sure of that today—but even 20 years ago, it was always the plan. Odendahl had left a good position with a successful contractor to join his boss in running a new heavy contracting company in northwestern Ohio. He was 30 years old, a former Marine, and used to making a plan, executing on it and achieving commensurate results. “Our revenue goal this year is \$165 million,” Odendahl says. “In 2003, would I have said that? Probably not. But to get here, it’s just been the next step, and the next step, and the next step. So, I would not have said \$165 million at the time, but I would’ve said, ‘We’re going to make this something really great,’ because otherwise we wouldn’t have done it.” Done it they have—crowning two decades of high-performing growth by being named ABC’s 2024 Contractor of the Year at ABC Convention last month. “For little old Kwest Group, in the pool of contractors that is ABC, to get Contractor of the Year is humbling,” Odendahl says. “Like, a pinch-yourself humbling experience. We are really, really proud of the team.”

### RECESSION TO THE RESCUE

“Little old Kwest Group” isn’t actually all that little today, but it certainly was when Odendahl and Mark Murray started the business. Both were working at a large, family-owned heavy highway firm in northwestern Ohio—Odendahl as part of the environmental group, Murray as president of the holdings company. When Murray found an opportunity to acquire a small industrial contractor located in Port Clinton, Ohio, he organized a partnership to procure it and asked Odendahl to run the operations side. As managing partners, the two rebranded the company Kwest Group, named for Murray’s affinity for Key West. Including Odendahl, Murray and Murray’s wife, Kelly, who served as office manager, there were a total of eight employees, all operating out of a double-wide office trailer.

READ MORE ►

### About The FDOT

The goal of the DBE Supportive Services Program is to increase the number of DBEs participating on FDOT contracts and facilitate the opportunity for DBEs to obtain contracts. The services are designed to:

- Assist established construction firms to move them from bidding as a subcontractor to bidding as a Prime Contractor to produce sound bids.
- Provide access to training increases DBE expertise in handling of daily business operations.

### Linking Health, Safety & Sustainability With Libby Pitchard



**CEI DBE Supportive Services**  
**(800) 423-7058**

[www.fdotdbesupportservices.com](http://www.fdotdbesupportservices.com)