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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Polk Unemployment Rate Experiences Slight Increase

Bartow, Florida, March 10, 2011- The State of Florida released preliminary unemployment figures. The unemployment rate in Polk County was 12.7 percent in January 2011. This was an increase of 0.2 percentage point from the rate the region posted in the same month last year. In January 2011, Polk County's unemployment rate was 0.9 percentage point higher than the state rate of 11.8 percent and 2.9 percentage points above the national rate of 9.8 percent. Out of a labor force of 275,748, there were 35,052 unemployed Polk county residents.

“Although unemployment may be discouraging at times, Polk Works is dedicated to helping build a sustainable workforce in Polk County by providing services to both employers and job seekers”, said Polk Works President & CEO, Stacy Campbell-Domineck. In an effort to educate local youth on the importance of education and career goals, Polk Works is hosting the What If Expo on Tuesday, March 15 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Lake Mirror Center. This college and career fair is open to youth ages 14 to 21 and will feature educational institutes, trade schools as well as employers. Students will have the opportunity to conduct mock interviews and receive resume assistance from a Polk Works professional. Because so many of our youth have dreams of stardom, this expo will focus on the “what if” plans and guide students through other available and more realistic alternatives. The purpose of this expo is to empower youth with a broader view of the working world and the opportunities available to them. For more information on this event or any of the Polk Works services, please call (863) 508-1100 or visit www.polkworks.org.

Polk Works is a private, non-profit administrator of workforce funds. Our mission is to be the innovative leader to ensure and sustain a quality workforce for today and the future. For more information, go to www.polkworks.org. *Polk Works* offers equal opportunity programs, auxiliary aids and services that are available upon request to individuals with disabilities Member: Employ Florida.