



**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**  
OF FLORIDA'S SPACE COAST

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Merritt Island Boat Works to Create 380 New Jobs**

*Manufacturer to invest more than \$16 million in Brevard County*

**Brevard County, Fla.** – Today, Governor Rick Scott announced that Merritt Island Boat Works will open a new manufacturing facility in Merritt Island, which will create at least 380 new jobs and a capital investment of more than \$16 million in Brevard County.

Governor Scott said, “Florida is on a mission to become the global destination for jobs and it great news for the families in Brevard County that 380 new jobs will be added to the community. While Merritt Island Boat Works considered other states for their new facility, they chose Florida as the best place to create jobs. This year, we are proposing to permanently eliminate the sales tax on manufacturing equipment so more manufacturers like Merritt Island Boat Works will choose Florida to grow and expand their business.”

Last year Governor Scott eliminated the tax that manufacturing businesses pay for the purchase of machinery and equipment in the manufacturing process until 2017. This year’s proposed 2015-2016 “KEEP FLORIDA WORKING” budget permanently eliminates that tax, which is estimated to reduce the tax liability of Florida’s manufacturing businesses by \$142.5 million annually beginning in 2017.

Florida’s manufacturing sector ranks among the top 10 nationwide with more than 18,200 companies employing some 317,000 people statewide. The state is home to leaders in advanced manufacturing, including aerospace and defense products, electronic components, medical equipment and much more. Florida is the leading state for sales of new powerboats, motors and accessories with \$1.96 billion in 2013, according to the National Marine Manufacturers Association.

Merritt Island Boat Works considered locations in North and South Carolina but chose Brevard County for its available workforce and access to U.S. and international markets.

Secretary of Commerce and EFI president and CEO Gray Swoope said, “Merritt Island Boat Works’ new facility in Brevard County will add great value to Florida’s growing manufacturing industry. Removing the sales tax on manufacturing equipment was a tremendous boost for the state and Florida has become more competitive as a result. Companies are taking an increased interest in our skilled workforce and infrastructure as a result of our improved business tax climate.”

This competitive economic development project was won with the help of close partnerships between Enterprise Florida, the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, and the Economic Development Commission of Florida's Space Coast.

Florida Department of Economic Opportunity Executive Director Jesse Panuccio said, "The addition of 380 new manufacturing jobs in Brevard County over the next four years is further proof that sound, pro-business policies are working in Florida. Merritt Island Boat Works will join Florida's strong business community and move the state closer to achieving our goal of making sure everyone who wants a job can get one."

Lynda Weatherman, president and chief executive officer, Economic Development Commission of Florida's Space Coast said, "Facilities are often one of the most critical factors in relocation decisions. Part of what positioned our community at the top of the list was a move-in ready facility in a prime location. That, coupled with an area that understands the luxury boat manufacturing market, and an aggressive recruitment process, were crucial factors in the selection of Brevard County for Merritt Island Boat Works. They are a welcome addition to a growing industry across the Space Coast."

### **About the Economic Development Commission of Florida's Space Coast (EDC)**

The Economic Development Commission of Florida's Space Coast is dedicated to attracting new business and investment and expanding existing industry throughout the Space Coast, influencing change on government laws and regulations affecting economic development, promoting the Space Coast to encourage new investment, supporting efforts of Space Coast military installations, and relaying new programs and procedures to assist manufacturing and high tech companies. The EDC is a private, not-for-profit coalition whose stakeholders are business leaders committed to the economic growth and stability of Florida's Space Coast. Visit [www.SpaceCoastEDC.org](http://www.SpaceCoastEDC.org).

### **About Enterprise Florida, Inc. (EFI)**

EFI is a partnership between Florida's businesses and government leaders and is the principal economic development organization for the state of Florida. EFI facilitates job growth for Florida businesses through recruitment and retention, international trade and exporting, promotion of sporting events, and capital funding programs to assist small and minority businesses.

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