

SOUTH LAKE COUNTY DEVELOPMENT BRIEF (SUMMER 2026)

What Business Owners and Developers Should Be Watching in Clermont, Minneola, and Davenport Areas.

For years, South Lake County was viewed primarily as Orlando's western bedroom community. That description no longer tells the whole story.

Today, Clermont and Minneola are evolving into one of Central Florida's most significant secondary growth markets. Population growth continues, healthcare investment is accelerating, transportation infrastructure is improving, and municipalities are increasingly focused on creating employment centers rather than simply approving new subdivisions. For business owners and real estate developers, the opportunity is shifting from residential construction alone to building the commercial services, industrial space, and mixed-use environments that support a permanent regional economy.

Clermont: Maturing Beyond Residential Growth

Clermont remains the economic anchor of South Lake County. Over the past two decades, its population has expanded rapidly as development spread west from Orlando, creating one of Central Florida's fastest-growing municipalities. Today, the city's economy extends well beyond housing, supported by healthcare, retail, hospitality, recreation, and professional services.

The city's strategic location at the intersection of US 27 and State Road 50 continues to attract investment. National retailers have largely established a presence, but significant opportunities remain for higher-quality office space, flex industrial buildings, medical services, specialty construction firms, and business-to-business suppliers.

Clermont's identity as the "Choice of Champions" also continues to generate economic activity through sports tourism and athletic training, bringing year-round visitors who support hotels, restaurants, and local businesses.

For developers, the remaining opportunities are increasingly focused on redevelopment, infill projects, and commercial properties that serve an expanding permanent population rather than speculative residential expansion.

Minneola: The County's Next Commercial Growth Engine

If Clermont represents today's market, Minneola represents tomorrow's.

The city has intentionally positioned itself for substantial commercial expansion, particularly around the Florida Turnpike interchange. Public investment and long-range planning have laid the groundwork for a true employment center rather than another commuter suburb.

One of the most significant catalysts has been the opening of AdventHealth Minneola, a \$270+ million hospital campus that began serving patients in late 2025. The project brings hundreds of healthcare jobs and is expected to stimulate additional medical offices, supporting retail, hospitality, and professional services nearby. An adjacent medical office building is scheduled to open during 2026.

Beyond healthcare, Minneola continues planning large-scale mixed-use development around its future city center and Turnpike corridor. While individual projects will evolve over time, the city's direction is increasingly clear: attract employers, expand commercial tax base, and reduce dependence on commuting into Orlando.

For developers, this creates opportunities in:

- » Medical office
- » Flex industrial
- » Commercial warehouse
- » Hospitality
- » Neighborhood retail
- » Professional office
- » Restaurants serving daytime employment

As employment grows, demand for these property types typically follows.

Davenport: Growth Driven by Scale

South of Lake County, Davenport continues expanding at an exceptional pace.

Unlike Clermont and Minneola, where municipalities are emphasizing balanced commercial growth, Davenport's expansion has been fueled primarily by large residential communities serving both Orlando and the tourism corridor. The resulting population growth has generated significant demand for logistics, distribution, healthcare, schools, and everyday retail. While the markets differ, developers operating in South Lake should view Davenport as part of the broader western Orlando growth corridor rather than a separate market. Population

movement between Polk and Lake Counties increasingly blurs those boundaries.

Infrastructure Is Becoming the Competitive Advantage

Road capacity remains one of the region's greatest challenges, but transportation improvements continue to reshape development patterns.

The Florida Turnpike has become the defining transportation asset for Minneola, while US 27 remains the spine connecting Clermont, Four Corners, and Davenport. Commercial projects located near these corridors continue attracting the greatest investor interest because accessibility increasingly determines long-term property value.

At the same time, quality-of-life investments—including parks, trails, waterfront improvements, and recreation facilities—continue making South Lake attractive to higher-income households and employers seeking locations outside Orlando's urban core.

What This Means for Business Owners

The biggest opportunity is no longer selling to new homeowners.

It's serving the businesses that serve those homeowners.

Healthcare providers, contractors, commercial construction firms, logistics companies, engineering consultants, hospitality operators, educational services, and business suppliers are all expanding to support the region's permanent economy.

Businesses that establish relationships early with developers, municipalities, architects, and general contractors are likely to benefit as projects move from planning into construction over the next several years.

Bottom Line

South Lake County has entered a new phase.

Clermont is becoming a mature regional commercial center.

Minneola is positioning itself as the county's next major employment hub.

Davenport continues adding population at a pace that reinforces demand across the western Orlando corridor.

For investors and business owners, the window is shifting. The highest upside may no longer be found in residential construction alone, but in the commercial infrastructure that growing communities inevitably require. The companies that build those spaces—and the businesses that equip, brand, and service them—stand to benefit as South Lake's next chapter takes shape.