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Coastal Cloud lured by Flagler County's beach



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Quality of life is what drew Tim and Sara Hale to open IT firm Coastal Cloud LLC in Flagler County.

Offering Cloud computing services to small and medium sized businesses. [In February, the company said](#) it could provide 100 jobs in three years and would build a new \$3.1 million office complex.

"Flagler has this great combination of high quality of life and low cost of living," [Tim Hale](#) said. "You can literally live on the beach or a golf course or a salt water canal. We bought a home here for what a condo would cost us in Washington, D.C."

Coastal Cloud is one of five companies in 15 months to announce an expansion in Flagler, a sign the county —which during the recession had posted some of the state's worst unemployment rates — may finally be on the rebound.

Coastal Cloud implements and maintains software as a solution services. One of its most popular products is Salesforce.com.

"The salesforce is growing tremendously, especially in the Southeast," Hale said. "Even though we can work from anywhere - that's the nature of the Internet - we love the fact that from Flagler we have easy access to the region. I can fly to Atlanta or Charlotte in less than an hour. I can drive to Orlando or Miami quickly. Flagler County gives us great access to that market, but we can still be on the beach."

Both Tim and Sara Hale previously worked in Washington, D.C., for Accenture, a global technology consulting firm. The commute was three hours a day. The Hales retired to spend more time with their young children.

They built a vacation home in Flagler, then decided to stay permanently. Five years ago they incorporated an IT company called Graphene and then formed Coastal Cloud as a subsidiary. Flagler wasn't an immediate shoo-in for a location, though.

"We considered doing this in northern Virginia at first. There's a lot of IT talent there," Hale said. "But frankly, it's very expensive and there's a lot of competition for employees.

"The infrastructure in Flagler is new and everything works. We need a lot of Internet bandwidth, and it's reliable here and available at an affordable price."

Learn more about Flagler County's economic development streak and the new county department behind it in this week's edition of the Business Journal.

Carole covers logistics and transportation, technology and manufacturing