

[EconSouth May–August 2014](#)

“Alexandria Fighting to Save Its Economic Base,” Grassroots column by Charles Davidson, a staff writer for *EconSouth*

Discussion questions

1. What impact does Fort Polk have on the central Louisiana economy? What future challenges does the region face regarding military jobs?
2. How does the Alexandria area’s unemployment rate compare to the U.S. rate? Has Louisiana’s labor force recovered from the recession?
3. How did Alexandria turn the closing of England Air Force Base into a positive for the economy?
4. Besides Fort Polk, what are four other economic drivers in the Alexandria region?
5. What makes the Alexandria economy different from the economies of other southern Louisiana cities? Was Alexandria affected by the housing bust?
6. What challenges does Alexandria face in attracting new industry and adding jobs in the region? How is the city addressing these challenges?

Related links

[Alexandria, Louisiana, Economy at a Glance](#), U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

[City of Alexandria](#)

[Central Louisiana Chamber of Commerce](#)

[Central Louisiana Economic Development Alliance](#)

[England Airpark and Community](#)

[“Study says Louisiana has happiest cities in the country,”](#) WAFB News, July 18, 2014

Who knew? Five of the happiest cities in the United States are in one state, with Alexandria among them.

[“With Fort Polk threatened to lose 6,500 soldiers, Louisiana officials rally residents for support,”](#) Paul Purpura, nola.com, July 2, 2014

Fort Polk struggles to survive in face of military downsizing.