The Census Bureau posted Thursday discouraging numbers about South Florida continuing to lag behind the rest of the country in recovering from the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression.

Indeed, median household income plummeted 12 percent from 2007 to 2010 in Broward and Palm Beach counties, even when the country supposedly was beginning to pull itself out of the Great Recession in 2009.

The Census stats also showed poverty and the numbers of the uninsured were up throughout South Florida.

But Florida Atlantic economist William B. Stronge suggests that the Census is a snapshot of the past and there is proof that brighter days are ahead for South Florida.

A key sign is that the job market has recently been improving -- even with this summer's recent national slowdown that has fanned fears of a second U.S. recession, said Stronge who is a professor emeritus of economics at FAU.

Florida added nearly 10,000 jobs in August, while unemployment fell in Broward and Palm Beach counties. Broward's unemployment rate dropped from 9.6 percent to 9.5 in August; Palm Beach's declined from 11.2 to 11 percent.

"At least we turned the corner and are creating jobs," Stronge said.

South Florida has also expanded its business opportunities. For example, Miami-Dade now has a strong summer tourist season in addition to snowbirds flocking here during winter, Stronge said.

Other business sectors have grown and added to their workforce, he added.

"The economy is coming back -- not at the peak," Stronge said. "But things are much better."

Meanwhile, personal income in Florida continues to grow, although at a slower pace from April to June just as the national economy as a whole lost steam.
Florida's income growth rate in the second quarter was still higher than the U.S. average, according to estimates released Thursday by the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis.

The Sunshine State's personal income growth grew 1.3 percent while the U.S. state average managed only a 1.1 percent increase in the second quarter of 2011, according to estimates the Bureau of Economic Analysis reported.