

NEFRC

July Monthly Personnel, Budget & Finance Policy Committee Meeting

July 3, 2008
9:30 a.m.

**Northeast Florida Regional Council
6850 Belfort Oaks Place
Jacksonville, Florida 32216**



Bringing Communities Together

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MEMORANDUM

Date: July 3, 2008
To: NEFRC Personnel, Budget, and Finance Policy Committee
From: Donna Starling^{DS}, Chief Financial Officer
Re: July 3, 2008, Committee Meeting

=====
The next meeting of the Personnel, Budget, and Finance Policy Committee will be held on **Thursday, August 7, 2008**, at **9:00 a.m.** at the **Northeast Florida Regional Council, 6850 Belfort Oaks Place, Jacksonville, Florida 32216.**

Northeast Florida Regional Council

PERSONNEL, BUDGET & FINANCE POLICY COMMITTEE

A G E N D A

Northeast Florida Regional Council
6850 Belfort Oaks Place
Jacksonville, Florida 32216

Thursday, July 3, 2008
9:30 a.m.

(ADDED OR MODIFIED ITEMS IN BOLD)
(*Denotes Action Required)

- TAB
1. Call to Order, Roll Call, Pledge of Allegiance, Introductions –Chair Sgroi
 - *2. Approval of June 5, 2008 Meeting's Minutes – Chair Sgroi1
 - *3. May 2008 Financial Report – Donna Starling
2
 4. **Council Workweek Update –Mario Taylor**3
 5. Paperless Procedures Update – Mario Taylor
 - *6. Next Meeting Date and Location: **Thursday, August 7, 2008**
Northeast Florida Regional Council
6850 Belfort Oaks Place
Jacksonville, Florida 32216
 7. Adjournment

*Denotes Action Item

Tab 1



NORTHEAST FLORIDA REGIONAL COUNCIL
Personnel, Budget, and Finance Policy Committee
June 7, 2007

MINUTES

A meeting of the NEFRC Personnel, Budget, and Finance Policy Committee was held on Thursday, **June 7, 2007**, at 9:00 a.m., at the Northeast Florida Regional Council, 6850 Belfort Oaks Place, Jacksonville, Florida, 32216. **Chair O'Connell** called the meeting to order with the following members present representing a quorum:

Jim O'Connell Chereese Stewart

Excused: Hugh Fish, Rea Fleckenstein

Others: Wes Larson

Staff: Brian Teeple, Mario Taylor and Angi Giles

*Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Stewart moved approval of the minutes of the May 3, 2007, meeting; seconded by Commissioner O'Connell; motion unanimously carried.

New Business

*April 2007, Financial Report

Mr. Teeple reported that the Council posted a Net Income of \$16,345 for the month of April and a Year to Date Net Income of \$118,196. The Business Development Corporation (BDC) posted a Net Income of \$15,892 for the month of April and a Year to Date Net Income of \$77,943. The Agency-wide totals were a Net Income of \$32,237 for the month and a Net Income of \$196,139 (includes BDC Net Income) Year to Date. The BDC payable to the Council is \$115,699 through April 2007. Mr. Teeple also reported the "Sweep" account accrued interest was \$3,156 for the month of April 2007 and \$19,725 Year to Date. Discussion followed. **Commissioner Stewart moved approval of the April 2007 Financial Report; seconded by Commissioner O'Connell; motion unanimously carried.**

*Proposed Amended Budget FY 06/07

Mr. Teeple informed the Committee that the Council is required by inter-local agreement to adopt its budget on or before July 1st of every year. The Council brings an amendment to the budget, once it has begun to operate, before the Board and Committee due to the fact that the budget is cast so early. **Commissioner O'Connell** asked if staff anticipated counties dropping out of the Council. Mr. Teeple responded that staff would work with the individual member counties regarding member dues; however, counties are required by state statute to be members of the Regional Council. The recast budget increases revenues \$3 million dollars, primarily in the area of emergency preparedness (due to a contract to prepare a statewide evacuation study), along with an increase in the Healthy Start budget. Salaries and expenses are expected to increase – to this point the Council has had a lapse in staff, which decreased salary and fringe benefit expenses. **Commissioner O'Connell** asked several questions about the Regional Visioning and emergency preparedness. Mr. Teeple responded, stating that the Council has received a grant from the Department of Community Affairs for \$75,000 and that the contract will bleed through to the next fiscal year, and that the emergency preparedness department was doing cultural sensitivity training for FDLE. **Commissioner Stewart moved approval of the proposed budget amendments for FY 2006/2007; seconded by**

Commissioner O'Connell; motion carried unanimously. Commissioner O'Connell stated that he approved of the mid-year adjustment/amendments to the budget as a business practice.

*Proposed Budget – Fiscal Year 2007/2008

Mr. Teeple stated that increased revenues are projected in planning and development, due in part to a contract from DCA for affordable housing; emergency preparedness revenue is up for infrastructure assessments. Staff is proposing that county dues remain at \$.41 per capita; the only differential will be the population projections. Healthy Start Coalition revenue will be down due to Medicaid dollars decrease; Business Development Corporation revenue will be up because of anticipated processing fees. Mr. Teeple pointed out that 2 of the Council's start up businesses are broken out – the North Florida Procurement Association and the Northeast Florida Regional Leadership Academy. Salaries and Fringe Benefits will go up due to vacant positions being filled; and 3% has been set aside for merit raises within the Council. In the past, the amount has been 4%, but due to impending budget cuts, the amount has been cut this year. Contract and Grant expenses are up. **Commissioner Stewart moved approval of the Fiscal Year 2007/2008 budget; seconded by Commissioner O'Connell; motion carried unanimously.**

*CEO's Proposed FY 2007/2008 Contract

Mr. Teeple informed the Committee that he operates on a year to year contract with the Council. Mr. Teeple stated that the contract is the same as last year, except for a 3% increase, which is the same as what was asked for the rest of the staff. Mr. Teeple provided a comparison sheet of the other Florida Regional Councils Directors' salaries and benefits. Commissioner O'Connell stated that Mr. Teeple's contract was more than comparable, and very much in line with the other Regional Councils. Mr. Teeple pointed out his self-evaluation. **Commissioner O'Connell** would like to see on future evaluations "management by objectives". **Commissioner Stewart moved approval of the CEO's 2007/2008 contract; seconded by Commissioner O'Connell; motion carried unanimously.**

*Building Refinance Proposals

Mr. Teeple stated that the Council went out to the market for proposals to refinance the Council building. The building is now on a month-to-month floating interest rate with the current lien holder. Mr. Teeple provided and explained the responses received by 4 lending institutions submissions. Staff recommendation is that the Committee give staff the ability to negotiate with Mercantile Bank on a final loan agreement; if those negotiations fail, to then negotiate with BB&T Bank. If negotiations fail with the first 2 banks, staff requests authorization to go back into the marketplace for new proposals. **Commissioner Stewart moved approval of Staff recommendation of the refinance proposal; Commissioner O'Connell seconded; motion carried unanimously.**

Old Business

None.

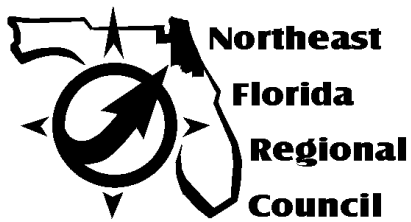
Next Meeting Date and Location

The next meeting is scheduled for **Thursday, July 12, 2007**, at the **Northeast Florida Regional Council, 6850 Belfort Oaks Place, Jacksonville, Florida 32216.**

Adjournment

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 9:45 a.m.

Tab 2



Bringing Communities Together

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MEMORANDUM

DATE: June 25, 2008
TO: Northeast Florida Regional Council
THRU: Hugh D. Fish, Secretary/Treasurer
FROM: Donna Starling, Chief Financial Officer
RE: May 2008 Financial Report

Northeast Florida Regional Council posted a Net Income of \$9,345 for the month of May and a Year to Date Net Income of \$40,286. The Business Development Corporation posted a Net Income of \$38,134* for the month of May and a Year to Date Net Income of \$95,047. The Agency-wide totals were a Net Income of \$47,479 for the month and a Net Income of \$135,333 (includes BDC Net Income) Year to Date.

Regional Council - Agencywide	Adopted Amended Budget 07/08	May, 2008	YTD	Represents 67% of Fiscal Year	Budget Variance
Revenues					
Planning and Development	\$ 1,019,522	75,043	621,149	61%	-6%
Emergency Preparedness	\$ 4,471,553	115,687	1,706,356	38%	-29%
County	\$ 606,025	50,502	404,017	67%	0%
Business Development Corporation	\$ 536,326	62,621	307,647	57%	-10%
Regional Data Center	\$ 166,023	11,587	70,877	43%	-24%
AME Ministerial Alliance	\$ 57,384	68	64,919	113%	46%
North Florida Procurement Association	\$ 32,000	4,220	25,737	80%	13%
Regional Leadership Academy	\$ 30,500	6,027	22,408	73%	6%
Regional Visioning	\$ 75,000	14,939	63,662	85%	18%
Tenant Revenue	\$ 100,000	6,718	62,634	63%	-4%
Anticipated Revenue/Other	\$ 60,000	1,741	30,058	50%	-17%

TOTAL REVENUES	\$ 7,154,334	\$ 349,152	\$ 3,379,464
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Expenses					
Salaries and Fringe	\$ 2,698,814	190,850	1,502,140	56%	-11%
Contract/Grant Direct Expenses	\$ 3,701,113	55,293	1,356,728	37%	-30%
Common/Indirect - Allocated Expenses*	\$ 424,277	37,624	308,058	73%	6%
General Fund Expense*	\$ 330,130	17,906	77,205	23%	-44%

TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 7,154,334	\$ 301,673	\$ 3,244,131
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Net Income (loss)	\$ -	47,479	\$ 135,333
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*Excludes Salaries & Fringe

Emergency Preparedness	Adopted Amended Budget 07/08	May, 2008	YTD	Represents 67% of Fiscal Year	Budget Variance
Revenues					
Emergency Preparedness Local TA	\$ 248,383	13,991	147,709	59%	-8%
Hurricane Study	\$ 2,186,000	23,160	954,679	44%	-23%
DCA LEPC	\$ 40,909	5,575	22,682	55%	-12%
HMEP	\$ 30,639	3,344	17,779	58%	-9%
Terrorism Statewide Coordination	\$ 590,000	9,625	114,273	19%	-48%
SQG	\$ 20,000	-	2,648	13%	-54%
SHSGP Terrorism	\$ 75,000	5,039	31,474	42%	-25%
DEM TA	\$ 300,000	39,837	228,115	76%	9%
EOC IMT	\$ 35,000	-	-	0%	0%
EOC Enhancement	\$ 64,010	775	40,453	63%	-4%
Region 3 Workshop	\$ 25,000	-	-	0%	0%
Infrastructure Assessments	\$ 300,000	8,689	106,627	36%	-31%
USAI Program	\$ 500,000	2,847	17,515	4%	-63%
Other Revenue	\$ 56,612	2,806	22,403	40%	-27%
TOTAL REVENUES	\$ 4,471,553	\$ 115,687	\$ 1,706,356	38%	
Expenses					
Salaries/Fringe	\$ 583,393	49,232	315,323	54%	-13%
Direct	\$ 3,507,500	38,711	1,188,387	34%	-33%
Common/Indirect	\$ 380,660	27,894	203,023	53%	-14%
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 4,471,553	\$ 115,837	\$ 1,706,733	38%	
Net Profit (Loss)	\$ -	\$ (150)	\$ (377)		

Planning and Development	Adopted Amended Budget 07/08 May, 2008		YTD	Represents 67% of Fiscal Year	Budget Variance
Revenues					
Local Gov't T.A./DCA	\$ 519,000	34,344	344,112	66%	-1%
DRI	\$ 155,000	23,402	122,507	79%	12%
TD	\$ 112,000	8,432	71,121	64%	-3%
SHIP/Weatherization	\$ 130,111	6,110	65,127	50%	-17%
Affordable Housing	\$ 50,000	2,755	13,544	27%	-40%
Special Projects	\$ 53,411	-	4,738	9%	-58%
TOTAL REVENUES	\$ 1,019,522	\$ 75,043	\$ 621,149	61%	
Expenses					
Salaries/Fringe	\$ 589,358	47,122	359,562	61%	-6%
Direct	\$ 59,990	5,523	64,508	108%	41%
Common/Indirect	\$ 370,174	22,561	199,131	54%	-13%
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 1,019,522	\$ 75,206	\$ 623,201	61%	
Net Profit (Loss)	\$ -	\$ (163)	\$ (2,052)		

BDC	Adopted Amended Budget 07/08	May, 2008	YTD	Represents 67% of Fiscal Year	Budget Variance
Revenues					
Processing	\$ 166,000	-	22,410	14%	-54%
Interest	\$ 50,000	36,430	67,030	134%	67%
Servicing	\$ 267,000	26,091	215,460	81%	14%
Other	\$ 53,326	100	2,746	5%	-62%
TOTAL REVENUES	\$ 536,326	\$ 62,621	\$ 307,647		
Expenses					
Salaries/Fringe	\$ 363,079	16,765	145,258	40%	-27%
Direct Expenses	\$ 43,000	1,843	18,072	42%	-25%
Common/Indirect	\$ 130,246	5,879	49,270	38%	-29%
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 536,326	\$ 24,487	\$ 212,600		
Net Profit (Loss)	\$ -	\$ 38,134	\$ 95,047		

Northeast Florida Regional Council
Balance Sheet
May 2008

	FY 06/07 May 2007	FY 07/08 May 2008
ASSETS		
Regional Council Cash	2,077,162	1,382,622
Healthy Start Cash	165,090	-
BDC Cash	-	137,864
Regional Council Accounts Receivable	764,775	729,342
BDC Accounts Receivable	96,648	41,330
Healthy Start Accounts Receivable	176,373	-
Due from other funds - BDC	90,269	-
Closing Cost	18,023	16,766
Total Current Assets	3,388,340	2,307,923
Property and Equipment:		
Office furniture and equipment	745,219	726,657
Software	115,200	115,200
Land	271,910	271,910
Building	1,928,090	1,928,090
Building improvements	467,166	467,166
Less accumulated depreciation	988,266	1,064,645
Total Property and Equipment, net	2,539,318	2,444,378
Total Assets	5,927,658	4,752,301
LIABILITIES		
Accounts payable	35,538	16,238
Due to other funds	90,269	50,310
Loan deposits	100,768	41,330
Accrued salaries and leave	193,334	94,480
Regional Council Deferred Revenue	1,715,025	667,460
Healthy Start Deferred Revenue	174,260	-
Tenant deposits	10,104	8,232
Notes payable	1,567,985	1,488,215
Total Liabilities	3,887,284	2,366,265
EQUITY		
Equity and Other Credits:		
Retained earnings	2,040,374	2,386,036
Total Equity and Other Credits	2,040,374	2,386,036
Total Liabilities, Equity and Other Credits	5,927,658	4,752,301

YTD Comparison

06/07

07/08

AGENCYWIDE

October	\$	19,119*	\$	19,696*
November	\$	70,889*	\$	99,821*
December	\$	99,805*	\$	70,833*
January	\$	108,838*	\$	82,606*
February	\$	131,824*	\$	84,498*
March	\$	163,602*	\$	85,213*
April	\$	196,138*	\$	87,855*
May	\$	241,354*	\$	135,333*
June	\$	255,024*		
July	\$	286,401*		
August	\$	323,295*		
September	\$	319,143*		

BDC

October	\$	4,000	\$	11,818
November	\$	43,538	\$	49,496
December	\$	44,135	\$	35,533
January	\$	42,115	\$	43,981
February	\$	56,579	\$	47,337
March	\$	62,051	\$	53,900
April	\$	77,943	\$	56,913
May	\$	103,372	\$	95,047
June	\$	107,149		
July	\$	116,666		
August	\$	129,105		
September	\$	143,660		

* Includes BDC Year to Date totals.

MEMORANDUM

DATE: June 25, 2008
TO: Northeast Florida Regional Council
FROM: Donna Starling, Chief Financial Officer
RE: May Investment Report

Sweep Account Interest

	FY 06/07	FY 07/08
May Interest	\$ 3,076	\$ 1,728
Year to Date Interest	\$22,801	\$22,716

Florida Local Government Investment Trust

Current Balance	\$14,051	\$14,705
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Tab 3

REGIONAL EXAMPLES

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Green Cove Springs offices go to 4-day work week

GREEN COVE SPRINGS, FL - Beginning today, the Green Cove Springs city offices will be open only four days a week. Following the lead of many municipalities and government offices in an effort to save energy costs, the City Council agreed to the summer change at their meeting on June 17.

City Manager Don Bowles noted this will give the staff an opportunity to track expenses to see if the change is cost effective. He pointed out that the Clay County School Board has routinely converted to a four-day week during the summer for several years.

City Hall will be open 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Thursday. The City does not do utility cutoffs on Friday at present and under the new system would not do them on Thursday.

City Hall, Public Works, Electric and Police Administration will be affected by the change.

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Poll

The State of Florida is preparing to resume executions July 1, 2008. How do you feel about the death penalty?

I am in favor of it

I am against it

I am not sure

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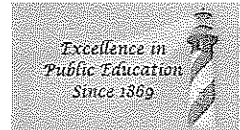
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Media Releases: March 17, 2008

Four-Day Summer Schedule

As a cost-saving strategy during the current budget crisis, the St. Johns County School District will observe a four-day workweek during the summer of 2008.

Beginning Monday, June 16, all schools and district offices will be open a minimum of ten hours daily Monday through Thursday.

"This is one of many cost-saving measures that the district is considering to deal with the anticipated budget crunch," said Superintendent Dr. Joseph Joyner.

The new schedule will be in effect until Monday, August 11, at which time the school district will revert back to its regular five-day schedule. During the week of July Fourth, the district will resume a regular eight-hour day schedule Monday through Thursday.

"We are hopeful that closing down our facilities for three consecutive days will result in significant energy savings," explained Dr. Joyner. "Every dollar saved from utility costs during the summer is a dollar that can be applied to operational costs in 2008-2009."

Customer service during the summer will remain a high priority. Schools and district offices will be open before and after normal 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. business hours while the four-day work week is in effect.

Preregistration

The St. Johns County School District (SJCSJ) will hold pre-registration for kindergartners and new students to the county and/or the public school system from 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Wednesday, March 26. Parents may also pre-register their children on April 30 or May 14.

To be eligible for public kindergarten, children must be five years old on or before September 1 and must reside in St. Johns County. To register for first grade, children must be six years old on or before September 1 and have successfully completed kindergarten. The child's certified birth certificate is required at the time of registration. Only the legal name is acceptable on student records.

"Parents must register children at the school where they have been zoned for the 2008-2009 school year," according to Sallyanne Smith, Director for Student Services. "They should bring one of the following proofs of residency: a mortgage statement, lease or rent agreement. An additional proof of residency is required, preferably an electric bill."

In addition to the child's certified birth certificate, Florida law requires any student entering a Florida school for the first time to show proof of certain immunizations and a physical examination. Parents are also encouraged to bring proof of the child's social security number.

A child's immunization record should be taken to the St. Johns County Health Department, 1955 U.S. 1 South, or to a private physician. If all required immunizations have been received, the health department or private physician will issue HRS Form 680, which will permit the child to enter school in Florida. In addition to other required immunizations, children must have received two measles immunizations (preferably MMR), a varicella (chicken pox) vaccine and at least the first Hepatitis B Shot before starting public or private kindergarten.

A physical examination that has been performed within one year prior to enrollment in school will be accepted. Physical examinations can be obtained from either a private physician or from the county health department.

Students can be registered at any time throughout the spring or during the school year. The purpose of the selected days is to help reduce the number of students that need to be enrolled at the beginning of school. Additional information on registration and school attendance zones may be obtained from the Student Services Office at 819-7593 or 819-7598.

Last Modified: Mar 17, 2008

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FLORIDA EXAMPLES



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Who Wants a Four Day Work Week?

Posted: 11:29 PM Jun 18, 2008

Last Updated: 11:29 PM Jun 18, 2008

Reporter: Blaine Tolison

Email Address: blaine.tolison@wctv.tv

LEON COUNTY PRESS RELEASE

[A](#) | [A](#) | [A](#)

Leon County Considers Four-Day Work Week County Releases Employee Survey Results

Due to recent statewide property tax reform efforts, Florida's local governments are facing the toughest budget challenges in memory, and Leon County is more committed than ever to improving the efficiency of County operations. The County has also launched an aggressive program for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, leading the way for other governments to "grow green." □

At the same time, gas prices are rising, budgets are getting tighter, and many County employees are looking for ways to cut down on our fuel costs. One possible solution for both the County and employees is an alternative work schedule where County offices would be closed for one day during the regular work week. This would assist employees with the rising cost of fuel, help reduce greenhouse gas emissions, decrease gasoline consumption and save on the County's energy and maintenance costs.

County Administrator Parwez Alam has been meeting with department and division directors and Constitutional Officers who share buildings maintained by the Board of County Commissioners to discuss the feasibility of closing County facilities one day per week.

"The idea has been very well received so far," said Alam. "Our citizens will benefit from the extended office hours, traffic congestion will be reduced during peak commuting hours, and employees will save money on gas and have more time to spend with their families. If we can make this work, it would be a win-win situation for everyone."

Last Wednesday, the Human Resources Division distributed a survey to Board employees in order to gauge interest in a four-day work week. Approximately sixty-four percent of the 817 Board employees responded. A summary of the survey results are outlined as follows:

87 percent of the employees responding to the survey were either strongly supportive, supportive or somewhat supportive of the County converting to a 10- hour day, four-day work week. Only 8 percent were not supportive.

81 percent of respondents indicated that a four-day, 40-hour work week would benefit them, and 82 percent felt that it would assist them in reducing travel to and from work and the amount of fuel used in their personal vehicles weekly.

88 percent of respondents indicated that they would be able to work a schedule of 10 hours per day, four days per week, and 7 percent could not.

77 percent of respondents would prefer to work 10 hours per day, four days per week and 17 percent of respondents would prefer to maintain their current work schedule.

75 percent of respondents would not have any family or personal issues which would prevent them from working 10 hours per day, four days per week; however, 12 percent would experience problems with child pick up and drop off.

60 percent of respondents, if given a choice, would prefer that County offices are closed on Friday, and 35 percent would prefer Monday.

“We want to make sure we are doing what’s best for our citizens, our community and our employees,” said Alam. “Now that we’ve heard from our employees, we’ll bring the option of a four-day work week before the Board during the July budget workshops.”

Find this article at:

<http://www.wctv.tv/community/headlines/20552249.html>



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• YOUR 3 CENTS

4 Day Work Week: Would you prefer a four day work-week with ten hour days?

89.65% Yes
6.89% No

Comment: i dont mind working 4 days 10 hour shifts as long as it was daylight shift. i work as a housekeeping at nas pensacola building 3910 e. i work 5 days a week 730am to 4pm. and work weekends. so i would mind having every friday saturday sunday off. from Pensacola by Heather

Comment: Imagine what you could do with an extra 52 days off each year. With a four-day workweek: Companies closed an extra day each week would save on janitorial services, energy bills and increasing security and gas costs. As stress falls, so might disability claims. There would be less absentee time, as employees could schedule doctor and personal appointments on their extra day off. Morale would improve, which always benefits productivity from milton, fl by Shelton

Comment: Should work great, saves gas money and gives you more time for recreation. from Pensacola/FL by Charles

Comment: I know everyone is concerned with gas prices but a four day work week makes sense for reducing emissions as well. A healthy ecosystem will allow sustainable crop production, breathable air, and reduce prices in the long run. from Pensacola, FL by Roselyn

Comment: always was in favor of this.... what's new? from Navarre/FL by gene

Comment: Yes! It would actually benefit those of us that are also on a M-F, 5 day, 8-5 work week. We would not need to leave our job to get to some places before they close at 5pm. from Pace, Fl by Just

Comment: hell yes from pensacola fl by bryon

Comment: Yes, it has been done in several places in the past. You stagger the work week. Half work Monday thru Thursday and half work Tuesday thru Friday. Every day is covered you actually have more hours to serve the people. If the schools went to that system, the districts would save a bundle on operating expenses. That is one way to trim the budget without cutting positions. from Fort Walton Beach, FL by Mary Beth

Comment: i really don't see it working too well...too many people would ask monday or friday off...if one is working for a public agency...they'll be alot of peevd people not being able to get anyone on those "critical" days... from p'cola by h

Comment: Bring it on! If one was to stop and think about it, most people that work today (a normal day job) find themselves spending at least ten hours a day away from home adding in transit times to and fro, and the "unscheduled" overtime you find yourself working. Of course, realistically, my job could not survive very well on a ten hour day because of the added manpower it would take to get it done. We work 24-7 anyway, and taking standard eight hour shifts and creating ten hour shifts is just not very feasible. Honestly though, I would jump at the chance to work four days a week. Between all the extended hours I worked in my first career, and in my current career, I would like to see a ten-hour workday four days a week. from Mary Esther, Fl. by Tom

Comment: This is a great idea. I would think it saves gas and would give people time to get personal things done. from Pensacola by Jan

Comment: What could it hurt to give it a try? Just like Ohio...if it doesn't work change it back!!! from Pensacola/FL by Laura

Comment: Western europe has been on a 4 day work week for many years. They call thier weekend a Holiday and thats exactly what it is, not an end but a 3 day holiday. It would help with gas prices the way they are but I think more so it would help with the general morale of the population and even boost the economy a bit because people aren't going to sit at home for 3 days, they'll be more likely to go out on the town. from pensacola/ fl by curtis

Comment: They need to stop school kids from driving to school and burning fuel. Put more school busses on the road and start charging them to pay for the fuel. You do the math and see how much fuel is used by the school kids every day. from Pensacola Fl by Moris

Comment: i work for the county and feel that all county employees should have the same work schedule. i am all for the 4 10 hour days. it does save gas and does make less call ins because we gat an extra day off. from milton/florida by brandi

• PREVIOUS QUESTIONS

Do you support drilling for more oil off United States' coastlines and within the U.S.?

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Tanker Contract: Do you agree with the decision to re-examine the Air Force's tanker contract?

Oil Drilling: Do you support or oppose drilling for gas and oil closer to the Florida coast?

4 Day Work Week: Would you prefer a four day work-week with ten hour days?

Pensacola Beach toll: Do you support or oppose increasing the toll to Pensacola Beach to two dollars?

Justin Gatlin suspension: Do you think the four year suspension of world class sprinter Justin Gatlin is fair?

General Election: Who is your pick for president in the general election in November: John McCain, Barack Obama, or someone else?

Same sex marriages: Do you favor or oppose allowing gay and lesbian couples to enter into legal agreements with each other that would give them many of the same rights as married couples?

School bus seat belts: Should Florida law require all students on all school buses to wear seat belts?

Hurricane preps: Have you already prepared for hurricane season?

New Money: Do you believe it's necessary to print money that is easily distinguishable to visually impaired people?

Ice cream truck drivers: Do you think background checks should be performed on ice cream truck drivers?

Accident Fees: Do you support or oppose the idea of charging out of town drivers for the accidents they cause?

The Democratic Race: Do you think it's time for Senator Hillary Clinton to concede the democratic race to Sen. Barack

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Comment: I am a great proponent of this plan. I have seen it work successfully. It is no substitution for carpooling but can certainly help employees cut their gas expense. from Pensacola, Florida by Scott


Comment: Not only would employees save fuel money, but the employers that have business owned vehicles would save money if the business was not open at all one day per week. A majority of the time, business owned vehicles cover the same ground day after day - e.g. to and from the same work site. Why not just stay on the job site longer and not take that vehicle out one day per week. I feel that most people would not be absent from work as much due to the fact they could spend time with family, schedule doctor's appointments, run errands, buy groceries, pay bills, etc. on the day their employers' business would actually be closed. from Cantonment, Florida by Joyce

Comment: It sounds nice just to work 4 days, however there are some business's that can't do it. Example, Timeshare Condo's, Hotel's etc.. These companies would have to hire more employee's to maintain customer service... from Mary Esther, FL by Alan

Comment: I would love a 4-day work week. It would be so much better to put in 2 extra hours each day, and then have 3 days off! 2 days fly by!! from Pensacola, FL by Holly

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Obama?

Gas Tax for ECAT?: Do you support a 3-cent gas tax to fund the 'ECAT' bus system?

A state divided: Would you support or oppose a plan to divide Florida into two separate states?

Gas tax holiday: Do you support a gas tax holiday for the summer traveling season?

School start times: Do you think a three-tiered school start time is a good idea?

Recession?: Do you believe the country is in a recession?

Teenager Repellent: Do you think a device that 'repels' only teenagers is a good idea?

Gas Prices: Do you believe the federal government is doing enough to keep gas prices down?

Tobacco Lawsuits: Do you believe sick smokers should be awarded damages from tobacco companies?

Guns on Campus: Do you believe college students and faculty should be allowed to carry concealed weapons on campus?

Taxpayer Bill of Rights: Do you support or oppose a Taxpayer Bill of Rights to cap taxing and spending by local governments?

Federal Housing Help: Should the federal government help bailout homeowners who face foreclosure?

Troop Withdrawal: Should a timetable be established for withdrawing U.S. troops from Iraq?

Divorce/custody cases: Do you believe the Family Court system favors women in divorce and custody cases?

Prayer vs. Medicine: Should a Wisconsin couple be prosecuted for the death of their daughter, after they refused to bring her to a doctor, and relied on prayer instead?

Double dipping: Should the law that allows some state employees to collect retirement benefits, and a full salary at the same time, be removed?

Road Rage Bill: Do you support the so-called "Road Rage Bill", that would ticket drivers who block traffic in the left lane on highways?

Curbside Recycling: Would you pay extra for curbside recycling?

Florida cigarette taxes: Do you support higher cigarette taxes in Florida?

Air Force Tanker: Do you agree with the Air Force's decision to buy a plane largely built by a French based company for the new KC-45 tanker?

Felons' Civil Rights: Should former felons have their civil rights automatically restored once they've served their sentences?

Confederate Heritage

Does a four-day week give us our money's worth?

DeVoe Moore, My View, Tallahassee Democrat, 6/30

Leon County Commissioner Bill Proctor says the five-day workweek should not be written in stone, yet I must call his attention to an important work ethic. Moses did not stop walking on the fifth day. He did rest on the Sabbath, but come Monday he stayed on course for 40 years until he got the job done.

Mr. Proctor is one of my favorite commissioners. I am sure the county would get new applicants seeking employment if it adopts a four-day workweek. If the county gives the level of service the private sector needs, however, it will be necessary to add new employees. This will be at a greater cost to the taxpayer. So where do we save money?

Flex time for 6 or 7 in the morning will be breakfast time, and who is going to work after 5? We talk about our society deserving benefits from labor, stress and demands. Getting up early, getting children ready for nursery and school, then preparing for children to be picked up at 6 or 7 in the evening would definitely be stressful. Will the nursery schools be open at 6:30 in the morning and until 7 at night? We are not making a better society. It will only get worse, causing Mom and Dad to have stress at the end of a long workday.

We, the customers, are paying for services in the private sector and we are taxed for public services on the local level. With businesses open six and seven days a week, a four-day week will not give us services we are paying for.

We pay taxes for services and deserve five days a week to keep the tax-paying businesses open.

We look for public service, not convenience for the employees. The millage rate, fees and associated costs we pay should produce, or provide, a higher level of service, not less.

How will the taxpayer save money — or will we get a 20-percent credit with a four-day workweek?

Will government tell the employees to stay home on the fifth day to save gas? Children still need transportation to school, and personal errands will still be run. Or will the schools go to a four-day week, too?

Almost 40 percent of our work force is in the public sector. How much waste are we creating for the taxpayer? Are we headed in the direction of France, with a 32-hour workweek, because 10-hour days created stress for the French?

If we go to a four-day workweek, perhaps we do not need all of the employees on the payroll. How will our elected commissioners guarantee we will receive the services that we pay for? Does customer service matter as much as employee lifestyle?

School board explores four-day week

Donna Vavala | Florida Freedom Newspapers

June 5, 2008 - 7:09AM

PANAMA CITY - The School Board is exploring a four-day week for students and staff that officials said would save the district \$2.8 million in transportation, janitorial and utility costs.

School Board members examined the positives and negatives of such a move at Wednesday's budget workshop.

"All 67 districts in Florida are considering it, but no one has implemented it," said Superintendent James McCalister, adding that the state requires 180 school days a year. "We should look at it for the next school term (2009-2010) and start telling parents."

Because a change of this magnitude has a lot of unknowns, with inadequate time before the school year begins in August to do necessary planning, McCalister said he removed the proposal from the recommended cut list he gave the board. The district is looking to cut \$16.4 million from its budget.

"We would have to renegotiate union contracts" with Bay Educational Support Personnel Association and Association of Bay County Educators, McCalister said. "If we start negotiations and build a budget on it and we hit a snag, we're in trouble."

On a sheet prepared by finance officer Jim Loyed, along with the savings of such a plan was a list of some potential negatives of a four-day week. In addition to union contract renegotiations, parents would have to find day care for the students' day off, and some teachers might feel the extension of the days would adversely affect the educational process. That is, a student's attention span might be reached quicker by a longer school day, especially younger students. Another negative was not having another district's plan to study.

Board Chairwoman Donna Allen said she researched the subject online and found four-day school weeks have been the norm for about 15 years in some Midwestern farming towns.

"The energy crunch was the cause for it," Allen said. "Academics did not suffer. I do think it's worth exploring."

Several principals and teachers offered their opinions in the public response portion of the workshop.

"This has been discussed at our school," said Shirley Ramsay, Millville Elementary principal, who is moving to Beach Elementary this year. "I think the savings is important. One of our teachers researched it and said 13 states are doing it out West. We may need to think out of the box."

Ramsay encouraged the board to look ahead because the state budget isn't going to recuperate for a couple of years, and more cuts may come again next year. As for not trying the four-day school week just because no other school in Florida has done it, Ramsay said, "Everyone is afraid to be the first. I was born and raised in Bay County, and I'm not afraid to be first."

School-teacher and support-worker union representatives said their organizations have not taken a formal stance on the four-day week.

Allen polled the other board members to gauge support of exploring the four-day week. No one objected, so Allen recommended forming a committee to study the idea and appointed board member Ginger Littleton as its representative. A number of teachers volunteered to serve on the committee.

Other issues

Other topics of discussion Wednesday night included an apology from Allen to the Junior Museum. She stated at Tuesday's budget meeting the museum was not sending the board quarterly reports as they were asked. Apparently, the museum had been submitting the reports, just not to Allen.

Eliminating athletic trainers' contracts was re-examined, as well. The district has been spending \$115,000 in giving high schools a supplement to pay contracted trainers when it could be using trainers who already are district employees. A local sports medicine physician, Dr. Michael Noble, pointed out that, without certified professionals on the scene when a student sustained a sports injury, the student automatically would be transported to an emergency room. This would drive up the district's liability and insurance costs, he predicted.

The School Board also is looking into travel expenses. McFatter requested a list of all trips out of the county that are planned for this summer. He would like to know which expenses are grant funded and which are district funded.

The board also discussed the ramifications of backing out of a contract with the construction company that has begun work on Deerpoint Elementary.

Marilyn Fenimore, head of the Bay Education Foundation, appealed to the crowd to join the foundation so their \$15 dues can help pay for things, such as the Junior Museum contract, that may be cut from the budget.

More discussion on Deerpoint is scheduled for the next budget workshop, at 5:30 p.m. Monday in the School Board Meeting Room in the Nelson Building. It will be part of a discussion regarding closing/repurposing schools. In addition, the superintendent is holding a public forum Thursday (June 5) at 6 p.m. at Jinks Middle School, located at 11th Street and Florida Avenue.

NATIONAL EXAMPLES

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States shorten work week to curb gas costs

USC looks into 10-hour day to help employees with price of commute

By: Cassity Brewer

Posted: 6/25/08

With gas prices on a steep incline across the country, a number of businesses have switched to four-day work weeks to lessen the strain of commuting for employees and USC is considering the possibility.

Jeff Cargile, director of Human Resources Programs and Services at USC, said he was aware the proposal had been in discussion.

Jane Jameson, the vice president of Human Resources at USC, said the university hasn't decided whether to implement four-day work weeks here.

"We have discussed the possibility. It is still under discussion," Jameson said. "We have not reached a resolution on that yet concerning the four-day work week."

The South Carolina Transportation Department switched to 10-hour workdays on June 16 and will continue the program through Aug. 29.

With over 2,100 administrative and engineering employees, this will affect a number of South Carolina residents. Other government agencies across the state are also considering the four-day week.

Keith Musil, fourth-year finance and accounting student, said he believes implementing the four-day week would be a good idea.

"Not only would it help save gas, but it would also give individuals an extra day to spend how they choose." Musil said.

This idea is following the lead of several other states' adoption of the four-day week, including: Florida, Kentucky, Oklahoma and Alabama. The city of Birmingham, Ala. will begin using a four-day week starting July 1.

Kentucky Secretary of State Trey Grayson will also allow interested employees to take advantage of the four-day week due to high gas prices.

At least five counties are implementing a four-day week, mostly for road and maintenance departments, according to the South Carolina Association of Counties.

As the toll of gas prices becomes more of a factor, other institutions are taking the four-day week into consideration.

At the University of Virginia, the biggest employer in the town of Charlottesville, Va., the work week has been condensed to four days to aid employees. In addition to the four-day week, university employees ride free on the Charlottesville Transit buses and are also encouraged to carpool, according to their news station WVIR-TV.

Emily Steele, third-year public relations student, said she thinks a four-day week could provide some benefits.

"It would be helpful with current gas prices and would allow a three day weekend. However, I actually drive more on the weekends, so it may not help me save gas," Steele said.

Other universities have also jumped on the gas-conservation band wagon. Kent State University in Ohio offered a four-day week to its custodial staff to much appreciation.

"We offered it to 94 employees and 78 have taken us up on it," said university spokesperson Scott Rainone.

Other colleges and universities are implementing the program in certain departments including Hampton University, Georgetown University and LeTourneau University.

And with national gas prices averaging around \$4.07 a gallon, the change could reduce a single car's gas expenses by 20 percent.

Legislator Wayne Hornsley from Suffolk County in Long Island, N.Y. has proposed Operation Sunshine. This 120 day project, which would switch from five eight-hour days to four 10-hour days, would save 461 barrels of crude oil, Hornsley said.

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Alabama City Workers Told to Take Extra Day Off to Soften Blow of High Fuel Costs

Friday , June 06, 2008

FOX NEWS

As more people across the nation are switching to alternative forms of transportation to beat the rising cost of fuel, one city is simply telling people to stay home.

A new plan in Birmingham, Ala., will roll back work schedules for city employees to four days a week, an initiative expected to save the city's 4,000 commuters tens of thousands of dollars a year.

The program, introduced by Mayor Larry Langford, will go into effect July 1 and intends to soften the blow of high gas prices without hurting productivity.

"We've done this before when I was with the county, and it worked," Langford said, referring to his tenure as county commission president in Jefferson County, Ala.

"America needs to go on a four-day, 10-hour [per day] workweek," he added.

Employees are welcoming the plan, and the savings.

"I drive 60 miles round-trip every day, so I'm looking forward to seeing that adjustment," said Ashley Grigg, an employee at the Birmingham Chamber of Commerce.

Courtney Simmons, a magazine ad executive, said she's happiest about the extra time she will get to spend with her family. "I'm so excited about Fridays and spending more time with my daughter and having playdates with her little friends," she said.

While staffers will be working one day fewer, all city departments and offices will remain open and functional five days a week. In order to make this work, staffers will be alternating off days; they also will stay on-call if needed. Work days will be extended to 10 hours and will pinpoint city employees who drive on the job, such as police officers.

"All of the employees will still be working their same amount of hours that they work every week," Grigg said, adding, "We're not closing down for one day."

And it's not just Birmingham that is scaling back workweeks. In a bid to cut costs, agencies and school districts across the country are considering operating on the new schedule.

The Jefferson County school system in Alabama already has made the shift to the 10-hour-a-day schedule for the summer. In the Hoover school system in Hoover, Ala., some 11,000 students also will go to the four-day-a-week schedule in July.

School officials are encouraging parents to tend to business during the new summer hours.

Officials say the savings are considerable. Some districts can slash \$100,000 a year from their fuel bill just by running buses four days a week.

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FOX News correspondent Marianne Silber and Ahmad Shuja contributed to this report.

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Posted on Sat, Jun. 14, 2008

Gas costs prompt 4-day work week

Some in S.C. are considering the change to save employees money

By KATRINA A. GOGGINS

The Associated Press

With gas prices averaging around \$4 a gallon, some South Carolina governments are taking cues from a growing number of workplaces around the country by offering shorter work weeks.

The state Department of Transportation rolled out a pilot program this week that offers four-day work weeks this summer in exchange for longer work days.

"Secretary Limehouse felt that this was a very important thing to do for employees because we have a number of employees that commute," said Mary Gail Monsts-Chamblee, director of human resources. "With the rising gas prices, he just felt that it was important to do something for employees to let them save a little bit of money in fuel costs."

The four-day work week will begin Monday. The agency will remain open five days a week, officials said.

At least five counties in South Carolina offer four-day work weeks for some workers — mostly road and maintenance departments, according to the South Carolina Association of Counties. The plan is being considered by other county governments and implemented in a few cities and towns.

"Some cities can do it easier than others," said Reba Campbell, spokeswoman for the Municipal Association of South Carolina. "Big cities usually have more complex operations than the smaller cities do."

In Ware Shoals, several departments are working four 10-hour shifts to help cut fuel costs and power costs, town clerk Heather H. Fields said.

Oconee County planning director Art Holbrooks said road crews have been placed on a four-day work week. The county previously tried a shorter week for workers in 2005 as gas prices began to rise, but has not yet approved another round for all workers.

The notion of a four-day work week is picking up speed across the country.

In Florida, several state agencies already have implemented the shorter schedule. It not only helps workers save gas, it could save the state a little money as well because it reduces energy use at the office, officials there said.

The Kentucky secretary of state, Trey Grayson, is offering employees a four-day week because of high gas prices.

Oklahoma House Rep. Mike Shelton is encouraging state agencies to adopt a compressed work week to spare employees some pain at the pump. On New York's Long Island, Suffolk County Legislator Wayne Horsley is making a similar proposal.

Condensed work weeks are the most popular program for employers trying to reduce workers' commuting costs, according to a recent survey by Challenger, Gray & Christmas, a job placement consulting group.

Workers in South Carolina who will get a chance at a shorter work week welcomed the idea.

Donna Price used to spend \$60 to \$80 a week in gas traveling from Newberry to her job at the Department of Transportation in Columbia. News of a shorter work week could not have come at a better time — a recent move to the city of Laurens makes her commute to work 30 miles longer.

"It will save more money not only in gas, but fewer oil changes, tires and breaks," she said. "I had been hoping that this was going to happen and had been anxiously awaiting the answer, so it was like a celebration for me."

Department of Transportation worker Latasha Crumpton said she drives a sport utility vehicle and that the four-day work week will help save money on gas. She'll spend the extra day with her children and her husband, who is preparing for a second deployment to Iraq.

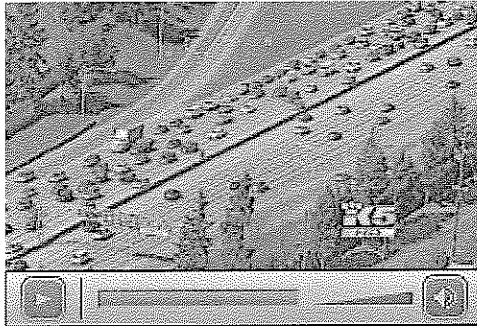
"I was ecstatic — very happy," Crumpton said. "Just having that extra time will make a longer work day worth it."

High gas prices prompt call for 4-day work week

11:46 AM PDT on Monday, April 28, 2008

By ERIC WILKINSON / KING 5 News

SEATTLE - Mike Cummings believes that for more and more of us, our sentence is "commuting."



Working four days instead of five would mean 20 percent fewer trips to and from work, reducing oil consumption by an estimated 40 percent.

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"When I came here I looked at the traffic on I-5 and thought to myself, 'Everybody who does that is out of their mind' and then I ended up being one of them," he said.

So now Mike, a sheet metal contractor, has enlisted in a growing movement to change the way America does business.

Whenever possible he and his men work four-day weeks - 10 hour shifts - as a way to cut costs, reduce pollution and congestion.

"It would be astronomical what states, the federal government and the nation and the world could save on energy consumption, pollution traffic congestion and everything else," he said.



KING

Whenever possible, Mike Cummings and his men work four-

day weeks as a way to cut costs, reduce pollution and congestion.

The idea isn't new one. The oil crisis of the 1970s prompted some employers to switch to a four-day work week, but the idea never took hold nationally.

These days, though, energy and congestion issues may give the concept more traction. Several petition drives for a shortened work week are now circulating on the Internet.

A handful of cities in Nevada, California and Arizona are experimenting with the idea.

The state of West Virginia is considering a four-day week for government workers there.

Working four days instead of five would mean 20 percent fewer trips to and from work, reducing gasoline consumption by an estimated 65 million gallons per day, not to mention more time with family, and for Mike Cummings, a bit more hope for the future.

"I think this would help with a lot of the planet's problems, I think it would help with our oil problems and give them a little better life," he said.

Marion County Florida recently switched to a four-day work week for county workers. They expect to save \$250,000 in energy costs this year alone.



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By Larry Copeland, USA TODAY

Utah this summer will become what experts say is the first state to institute a mandatory four-day work week for most state employees, joining local governments across the nation that are altering schedules to save money, energy and resources.

Gov. Jon Huntsman, a first-term Republican, says he's making the change to reduce the state's carbon footprint, increase energy efficiency, improve customer service and provide workers more flexibility.

RELATED STORY: Gas prices spurring switch to 4-day week

"The reaction (from the public) has been very much a willingness to give this a go," he says.

The change will apply to about 17,000 employees, roughly 80% of the state workforce, Huntsman says. Public universities, the state court system, prisons and other critical services will be exempt. Residents still will have sufficient access to state offices, many staying open from 7 a.m.- 6 p.m., and more than 800 state services are available online, he says.

Leslie Scott, executive director of the National Association of State Personnel Directors, says Huntsman's action is a first. "Most states have a four-day work week option for their employees, but Utah is the first to go to a mandatory four-day work week," she says. "A good number of the states are encouraging their agencies and managers to offer a four-day work week whenever possible."

The four-day work week is fairly common among city and county governments. Rex Facer, an assistant professor at Brigham Young University whose research team is studying the four-day work week concept, estimates that about one-sixth of U.S. cities with populations above 25,000 offer employees a four-day work week. His projection is based on the team's continuing survey of 150 city human resource directors.

Facer expects more cities to begin shuttering offices on Fridays. "The increasing pressures the American is facing around gas prices is certainly a significant factor, and the overall fiscal pressures governments are facing in general," he says.

Jacqueline Byers, director of research at the National Association of Counties, says the four-day work week is gaining in popularity among county governments. Marion County, Fla., has a mandatory four-day work week for employees; Oconee County, S.C., and Walworth County, Wis., have it for road work crews, while Will County, Ill., has it for the auditor's office. Oakland County, Mich., is seeking volunteers for a four-day work week, and Miami-Dade County, Fla., and Suffolk County, N.Y., are moving toward it, she says.

"They like it for a couple of reasons," says Byers. "They're not able to give raises, so this is like a bonus, to cut off one day's commute. Also, if they can close a whole department (for a day), they save money for the county."

It takes some adjusting. "One thing that has to be changed is the level of expectation from taxpayers, because they've always wanted five-day access," Byers says. "They have to adjust to offices that are open longer on weekdays, but closed on Fridays."

Cities offering employees condensed work weeks include Coconut Creek, Fla., Birmingham, Ala., and Avondale, Ariz., according to the National League of Cities.

In Utah, the new schedule starts Aug. 4. In the meantime, Huntsman says, the state is moving to iron out problems for employees

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with child-care concerns and those using public transportation that currently would not accommodate a longer workday.

Huntsman says the change will help Utah reach its goal of reducing energy use 20% by 2015.

Beyond the energy and financial implications, the four-day work week is a quality-of-life issue for many. Huntsman says it is especially popular among younger employees and that his action will make Utah more competitive in luring talent.

Facer agrees that an improved "work-life balance" often results from a shorter work week.

"More and more young workers are entering the work force," Facer says. "They're looking for ways to enhance their work-life balance. Alternative work schedules offer more of this work-life balance than do traditional work schedules."

What are the pros and cons of a four-day work week? Would you switch to a four-day week if you could? Would you rather have government offices open five days a week or open longer hours for four days a week?

Find this article at:

http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2008-06-30-four-day_N.htm?se=yahoorefer

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W.Va. government considering 4-day work week

Apr 12, 2008 @ 06:47 AM
By The Associated Press
The Associated Press

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CHARLESTON -- Some state lawmakers think four-day work weeks for government employees might be a good way to help conserve gasoline.

Delegate Doug Stalnaker, D-Lewis, and Delegate Stan Shaver, D-Preston, have sponsored a resolution calling for a study of the idea.

They say government workers would make fewer trips to work and the public would have a few extra hours after work those four days to conduct business with the government.

Diane Holley, spokeswoman for the state Department of Administration, said state agency directors have had the option of adopting a shortened work week for years.

Several state agencies already operate on four-day schedules.

Public Works, a consulting company for the state, told state officials in a report earlier this year that a four-day work week could lead to greater job satisfaction, less turnover and less stress. It also could help the state's recruiting efforts.

Gov. Joe Manchin's spokeswoman, Lara Ramsburg, said Friday that the governor is open to looking at creating a four-day work week for state employees, but government services are required all-week long. "Our dilemma is we have services we must provide," she said.

It makes sense to give agencies flexibility if a change doesn't affect efficiency, she said.

"Unfortunately, this gas crisis has been going on for some time," she said. "While it's gotten worse, it's been a problem for over a year. We are encouraging people to travel less."

Stalnaker said the possible downsides include short staffs on some days and extra costs to heat and cool offices for two extra hours a day.

The Joint Committee on Government Organization could launch such a study later this year.

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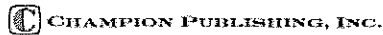
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Four-day workweek eases

Many don't believe the price spike in gasoline is temporary.

By **JOSEE VALCOURT**
and **JUSTIN SCHECK**
The Wall Street Journal

A handful of small towns and community colleges are switching to four-day workweeks in an effort to help employees cope with the rising gasoline prices, and could soon be joined by some larger local governments.

Michigan's Oakland County and New York's Suffolk County are both considering putting public employees on four-day workweeks. In Oklahoma, a resolution has been introduced in the state house of representatives recommending all state and local public employers move to a shortened week for relief from the cost of commuting.

"The things I've been reading say this is not a temporary hike in gas as we've seen in the months of the past," said L. Brooks Patterson, county executive for Oakland County, a wealthy area north of Detroit. "I don't think it stops at \$4.20. I think it can easily be \$5 or \$6 a gallon."

Patterson is seeking approval from the county's commissioners to install a four-day, 10-hour workweek for "the foreseeable" future. As many as 1,500 of the county's 4,000 employees could end up working four 10-hour days a week instead of five eight-hour days.

Assuming gas stays at \$4 a gallon and workers use two gallons for each round trip to work, Patterson estimated the savings from having 800 workers commuting only four days a week could save them a total of about \$300,000 in a year.

On New York's Long Island, Suffolk County executive Steve

Levy said he's also pushing for a shorter workweek, although public offices will remain open five days a week. "We won't be shutting down buildings because we still have to provide services," he said. "But this would provide our employees a lot of flexibility."

Gasoline prices are pushing Americans to consider significant changes to the way they live and work. In the past few years, as gasoline prices rose past \$2 and then \$3 a gallon, many have switched to smaller cars and cut down on driving.

The rise to \$4 a gallon is prompting further steps. In March, Americans drove 11 billion fewer miles than in March 2007, according to the Federal Highway Administration. It was the first time March travel on public roads declined since 1979, and was the sharpest monthly drop the agency has recorded.

Some corporations are try-

commuting costs

ing to help employees keep fuel costs down. Hewlett-Packard Co. is quadrupling its videoconferencing room by next year, hoping to eliminate about 20,000 employee plane trips annually, said Vyomesh Joshi, who heads the Palo Alto, Calif., tech giant's printing division. In recent weeks, the company has also sent newsletters to employees reminding them that company shuttles, car pools and bicycles are good ways to save gas money.

Google Inc. said it has seen an uptick in the number of employees using its van service, which travels as far as 60 miles to ferry commuters, says spokeswoman Sunny Gettinger. The company runs more than 150 shuttles a day for about 1,200 riders.

But it's public employers who are moving to four-day weeks. At LeTourneau University in Longview, Texas, some 400 professional employees such as

librarians and those handling information technology can opt to reduce their commuting time starting Monday. Dale Lunsford, university president, said controlling the costs of food and other economic factors are out of his hand. "But I think we can do something to help the price of gas," Lunsford said.

Meridian Community College in Meridian, Miss., will cut its summer class schedule from five to four days. Starting next week, many daytime students will attend classes either on Mondays and Wednesdays or Tuesdays and Thursday, said Scott Elliott, the college's president.

Last month, Seven Fields, Pa., a town of about 2,000 just north of Pittsburgh, approved a resolution to change the summer workweek for the public-works department, which employs four full-time workers, to a four-day, 10-hour schedule.

Bosses cutting workers' commute

To save on gas, they're trying four-day weeks and telecommuting.

By **MICHAEL HILL**
Associated Press

Brent Cranfield can thank his boss for saving him money at the pump.

With gas prices so high, Georgia House Speaker Glenn Richardson is letting staffers telecommute one day a week this summer. For Cranfield, who works in the communications office, that means one less trip each week in his Ford Explorer from suburban Marietta to downtown Atlanta and back — saving more than \$25 a month on his 16- to 17-mile commute.

Cranfield plans to use the savings to help buy a more fuel-efficient car.

Some employers are reconsidering the traditional five-days-in-the-office pattern as the national average price for a gallon of gas hovers around \$4. The idea is to whittle down commuting costs for workers by allowing them to work from home or switch to four days of 10 hours each.

Telecommuting has gained traction year by year with advances in video conferencing, instant messaging and other communications technologies. Employers typically adopt it as a way to save money, boost morale and retain workers.

A sense of urgency

But Chuck Wilsker of The Telework Coalition said it has grown faster since the post-Hurricane Katrina gas price spike of 2005. And he believes prices have climbed so high now that managers — who must grant workers permission to telecommute — are feeling the pinch, too.

"It's affecting people's disposable income," Wilsker said. "And all of the sudden they're saying 'I've got to do something about this!'"

The coalition estimates that more than 26 million Americans now telecommute at least some days, which would be about 18 percent of people employed nationwide. Though he did not have figures related to the gas spike, Wilsker said anecdotal reports indicate it's gaining traction.

Longtime participants — which include Fortune 500 companies like Sun Microsystems Inc. and IBM Corp. — usually adopt the practice to lower operating costs and keep employees satisfied. But IBM's Laurie Friedman said gas prices are making it much more

COMMUTE continues on C-7

Commute

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popular among employees.

Andrea Ayers, president for customer management at call-center and billing services company Convergys, said veteran employees are showing more interest in working at home to save commuting time and costs.

Then there are more recent gas spike-inspired experimenters — many of them public employers — like at the Georgia Capitol.

"With gas prices exceeding \$3.50 a gallon and no end in sight to the increases, I want to try and do something to help you with that burden," Richardson wrote in an April staff memo.

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Congress weighs in

This week, the U.S. House of Representatives approved legislation requiring the head of each federal agency to set policies allowing qualified workers to work from home or another convenient location. Giving relief from high gas prices was one factor cited by the sponsor, Rep. Danny Davis, D-Ill.

Savings can add up fast. Santa Clara, Calif.-based Sun estimates that its more than 18,000 employees who can choose to work at home or the nearest office avoid buying 135 gallons of gas a year, which at \$4 a gallon would save \$540 each.

Deborah Bryan, a program manager for IBM in Boulder, Colo., who switched to telecommuting in April, said she now spends \$88 to fill up her Ford Expedition every third week, instead of weekly.

Millions of American workers cannot telecommute because they build houses, serve food, mow lawns, treat patients or perform other jobs tied to specific locations. Some companies have responded with programs ranging from van-pooling to bike-sharing.

Another alternative is compressing the five-day work week into four, 10-hour days. Condensed work weeks are the most popular program for employers trying to reduce workers' commuting costs, according to a recent survey by Challenger, Gray & Christmas, a job placement consulting group.

Other governments react

The Kentucky secretary of state, Trey Grayson, is offering employees a four-day week in light of high gas prices.

Oklahoma House Rep. Mike Shelton is encouraging state agencies to adopt a compressed work week to spare employees some pain at the pump. On New York's Long Island, Suffolk County Legislator Wayne Horsley is making a similar proposal.

In West Virginia, Doug Stalnaker of the House of Delegates said an interim study is being conducted to see if a four-day week makes sense for state employees — especially rural workers with long commutes.

West Virginia foresters already are testing a four-day schedule, though fuel costs were a secondary consideration after creating more efficient work schedules.

Officials in College Township, Pa., are looking into expanding employees' workday to 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. with either Monday or Friday off as a way to save electricity and fuel costs.

Township Manager Adam Brumbaugh said he came up with the idea after watching pump prices rise twice in one day last month.

But employers have traditionally been leery of changes that could leave the office empty on Friday, which is why the Georgia House employees must stagger their telecommuting days. Another fear is employees slacking off — either because they're at home or working long stretches.

The National Recreation and Park Association, an advocacy group, had "mixed success" last summer with a gas price-inspired program that allowed employees to telecommute a day a week or go to four 10-hour days, said spokesman John Crosby. He said there were nagging problems, like telecommuters failing to forward their calls to home phones or work left just shy of done on Thurs-

day afternoons.
"They'd say 'Well, my day's over and I'll get to it on Monday,' and that became problematic," Crosby said.

Other employers report success.

Workers at Green River Cabins in Campobello, S.C., have been working Monday through Thursday for a few years after workers voiced concerns about high gas prices. Building wooden cabins is demanding work, but owner Dean Garritson said there are no signs his carpenters are lagging at the end of the day.

"A three-day weekend is a wonderful incentive," Garritson said.

Ann Bamesberger, a vice president with Sun, said the company believes the program increases productivity.

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