



# Highlights

## *Monthly Report of the Northeast Florida Regional Planning Council*

For October 1999

### **Region celebrates GIS Day**

The Council is celebrating the first worldwide GIS (Geographic Information System) Day on Nov. 19 during National Geography Awareness Week with two events.

In the morning, GIS staff will host a student group from Allen D. Nease High School to showcase how the Council uses GIS. In the afternoon, staff will hold the first meeting of a Northeast Florida GIS Users Group at 1 p.m. The Council hopes to establish a regional GIS users group, open to all interested planners and GIS specialists in the region. For info, call Lindsay Haga or Walter Fitzwater (904) 363-6350.

### **Council attends Forestry Initiative**

Staff attended the Northeast Florida Forestry Initiative sponsored by Jacksonville Mayor John Delaney's Oversight Commission for The Preservation Project on Oct. 19.

The initiative aims to preserve greenbelts and other lands within the region. The Preservation Project is Jacksonville plan to preserve the city's rich natural heritage by saving undeveloped environmental lands from development through acquisition. The group discussed ways to promote preservation of lands—with special emphasis on private timberlands—in Northeast Florida, and the new shift towards purchasing development rights also known as "conservation easements" as a more economical alternative to outright fee simple purchase.

Jacksonville presented maps identifying a proposed greenbelt along the west side and southeastern portions of Duval County, areas which it is interested in preserving as part of its Preservation Project. For info, call Bruce Ford (904) 363-6375 X155.

### **Firewise seeks to protect**

Staff attended a Firewise Community Workshop in Deerfield Beach Oct. 6-8. Firewise is a new program developed by the National Fire Protection Association to educate state and local governments about the dangers of wildland fires.

The program has been adopted by Florida, and FIREWISE FLORIDA workshops will be held around the state in coming months. The goal is to take the Firewise message to local

communities so they can develop strategies to protect their homes and communities from wildland fires.

Staff will help bring this information to local governments. For info, call Jeffrey Alexander (904) 363-6375 X134.

### **JCCI study gets underway**

The Jacksonville Community Council Inc. has begun its study on regional cooperation. The Council has been invited to participate in a panel discussion on "Defining the Northeast Florida Region" at the study group's November 9 meeting. Also the Council has been asked to present the activities of the Council at the November 23 meeting. For info, call Brian Teeple (904) 363-6375 X103.

### **Bike Maps are here**

Northeast Florida Bikeways maps are printed and ready for distribution. The free maps, developed with a Florida Department of Transportation grant, show biking facilities and other features of interest. The series contains four maps: Duval; Baker, Nassau and Duval; Clay and St. Johns; Flagler and Putnam. For info, call Lindsay Haga (904) 363-6375 X151.

### **FIMR looks at multiple births**

The number of twins, triplets and other multiples born is increasing in Northeast Florida and the state, according to a special state study presented Oct. 21 at the annual meeting of Project Impact, the region's fetal and infant mortality review project.

(Project Impact is a special initiative of the Northeast Florida Healthy Start Coalition.)

The study concluded that multiples alone do not explain the rise in poor birth outcomes, particularly among African-American women.

Deaths from Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) fell in 1998 to their lowest level in four years. Project Impact's Community Action Group undertook a major public awareness and professional education effort during the last 18 months targeting SIDS risk factors. Among those efforts was a SIDS booth at

the October Southern Women's Show. Healthy Start joined with the Florida SIDS Alliance and Duval County Healthy Department to sponsor the booth to increase awareness about the importance of infant sleep position in reducing the risk of SIDS. For info, call Carol Brady (904) 363-6352.

## Labor migration report for Nassau

Council staff provided an analysis to the Nassau County Economic Development Board estimating the daily out-migration of Nassau County's labor force into Duval County.

According to the 1990 census, the figure was approximately 34 percent. The Council analysis estimates the 1998 figure to be approximately 43 percent, indicating a labor force that is growing faster than job opportunities in Nassau County.

This information will be used for EAR-based (Evaluation and Appraisal Report) amendments looking at land use opportunities for increased growth in the commercial, office and industrial sectors. For info, call Brian Teeple (904) 363-6375 X103.

## Healthy Start assists smoking study

Prepaid phone cards provided by Healthy Start are being used as incentives in the Make Yours a Fresh Start Family, a smoking pilot study being conducted in parts of Duval, Baker, and Clay counties and at NAS Jacksonville. The cards feature tips to pregnant women on having a healthy baby. The Make Yours a Fresh Start Family is a program of the American Cancer Society. For info, call Dawn Clarke (904) 363-6375 X156.

## SHIP news

**In Putnam County**, the Board of County Commissioners have agreed to commit \$110,000 a year over the next three years for a proposed elderly housing project in Palatka. The money would come from the State Housing Initiative Partnership (SHIP).

Project developers have begun the application process through the State Apartment Incentive Loan program for the proposed 100-unit apartment complex. The apartments would be built next to the Kay Larkin Apartments currently under construction on Kay Larkin Dr. by the same developers. Kay Larkin is also being supported with SHIP funds.

**In Nassau County**, the Council will staff a SHIP booth at a Community Housing Fair Nov. 9 from 6-8 p.m. at the Peck Center in Fernandina Beach.

The Council administers the Putnam and Nassau SHIP. For info, call Richard Sapp or Barbara Barsh (904) 363-6350.

## Council briefs . . .

• **LMS project.** As facilitator for the LMS (Local Mitigation Strategy) project in *Baker, Clay, St. Johns, and Putnam* counties, the Council is now developing the final draft LMS documents that aim to reduce risks from man-made hazards.

• **Healthy Families Jacksonville.** Staff hosted a national credential visit in October from Prevent Child Abuse America. Final action on accreditation is expected in the spring.

• **Speeches.** Executive Director Brian Teeple spoke to the *Ponte Vedra Chamber of Commerce* Oct. 13 on regional economic development, stressing the need for participation in regional economic development activities, especially Cornerstone Partnership; an inventory of county economic assets; a community vision; and special attention to small/existing business growth and expansion needs. Director of Growth Management Ed Lehman spoke to the *St. Johns County Board of Commissioners* on gas revenues Oct. 19.

• **In the News.** Healthy Start's Jacksonville initiative addressing the disparity between death rates of white and black infants was a front-page feature in several Times-Union community news editions. Florida New Channel and TV 12 covered Healthy Start's FIMR meeting, and a TU story on Northeast Florida growth quoted the Council's executive director.



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