

NEERIC Highlights

Monthly Report of the Northeast Florida Regional Council

July 2004

Council presents information regarding children's issues in Northeast Florida at Candidate Connection

Council staff was involved in three separate presentations during the months of June and July 2004 that were part of a statewide effort to present children's issues to active legislators as well as those seeking election called iCandidate Connection.

Candidate Connection is a non-partisan information exchange available to all candidates for state elected office regardless of party affiliation. It is locally coordinated by the Jacksonville Kids Coalition and sanctioned by Children's Campaign, Inc.

The Council's Department of Data Management and Statistical Services, headed by Walter Bowman, gathered information regarding quality of life indicators of children in Northeast Florida and compiled them into a comprehensive analysis for use in these meetings.

These presentations enabled candidates to be exposed to the needs of children and parents locally and statewide, available services and programs, community strategies proven to be the most successful and local priorities for preserving the safety net for at-risk children and families.

Issues such as children's health, financial security, family environment, neighborhood environment and social problems were evaluated by measures including infant mortality, poverty, single parents, idle teens and child abuse.

Three senate districts and 12 house districts were involved in the presentations which aimed at raising awareness of these critical issues among Florida legislators. Additional topics of discussion during these presentations included demographics in individual districts and in the Duval County Delegation and the fiscal health of nonprofit organizations in Jacksonville.

Council staffer Carol Brady, Executive Director of the Northeast Florida Healthy Start Coalition, spoke on the topic "It's Never Too Early To Invest in Kids" which dealt with infant mortality in Northeast Florida.

After receiving the background information from local experts, the candidates were encouraged to discuss options and ask questions in a roundtable format.

For more information, please contact Carol Brady at (904) 279-0880 X 140.

Cornerstone Regional Partners Retreat

The Cornerstone Regional Partners asked Council Executive Director Brian Teeple to kick-off a two day retreat at White Oak Plantation on July 19.

Teeple provided the group an overview of growth, trends and conditions, and projections for our seven county Regional Community. At the request of the Partners an update on Developments of Regional Impact was provided and showed the following amount of approved DRI development: over 170,000 dwelling units, nearly 39 million square feet of commercial, nearly 87 million square feet of office, over 52 million square feet of industrial and nearly 10,000 hotel rooms.

For more information please contact Brian Teeple at (904) 279-0885 X 103.

Jacksonville Beach Community Height Study Committee

The Regional Council was asked by Jacksonville Beach to facilitate the activities of a 19-member committee appointed by the City Council to examine the issue of building heights and height restrictions in the community.

The committee met weekly during June and July and concluded its work on July 15 with a series of recommendations for consideration by the City Council.

For more information contact Brian Teeple at (904) 279-0885 X 103.

Magnolia Project participated in national convention

The Magnolia Project was featured at an invited symposium of the annual conference of the CDC National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities held recently in Washington DC. The session highlighted strategies for promoting the health of women prior to pregnancy. The national center is working on evidence-based guidelines for the provision of preconceptional care by physicians, clinics and HMOs.

The Magnolia Project, a special initiative of the Northeast Florida Healthy Start Coalition, uses a preconceptional approach to address disparities in infant mortality. Featured speakers included representatives of the American College of Obstetricians & Gynecologists (ACOG), the March of Dimes, and University of Maryland. The annual conference brings together more than 600 health professionals involved with research, prevention, public policy and health services.

For more info contact Carol Brady at (904) 279-0885 X 140.

Urban Land Institute Presentation

The Urban Land Institute's (ULI) Florida Committee for Regional Cooperation asked Regional Council Executive Director Brian Teeple to participate with a group of national experts on August 3 in Orlando.

Specifically, ULI was interested in measurement/accountability/demographics as they relate to regional cooperation. Upon conclusion of ULI's multi-year study it will make recommendations to state leaders about ways to improve regional cooperation in Florida.

For more information please contact Brian Teeple at (904) 279-0885 X 103.

Northeast Florida KidCare enrollment activities part of national campaign to insure children

Over 27,000 Northeast Florida children, birth through 18 years of age, do not have health insurance. Many of these children could be covered by programs including Medicaid and Florida KidCare which offer low cost or free insurance options to low income working families. During August, Florida KidCare in Northeast Florida will join the Covering Kids & Families national campaign to help ensure that all eligible children are enrolled in available programs.

Florida KidCare will be participating in iBack To School activities in Northeast Florida to remind eligible families that these programs are available.

Families will be encouraged to call 1-888-352-5437 to order an application or obtain information. Applications are also available at county health departments and additional information can be obtained by calling 1-800-290-0532.

Applications in Florida KidCare programs including Healthy Kids, MediKids and Children's Medical Services Network are only accepted during open enrollment periods. The month of January 2005 is the next scheduled opportunity to enroll in these three programs. Applications for Medicaid are accepted any time.

For applications and further information contact Florida KidCare at 1-888-352-5437 or at www.healthykids.org.

For more information, please contact Steve Gutos at (904) 279-0885 X 128.

