

NEFLRIC

Highlights

Monthly Report of the Northeast Florida Regional Council

July 2005

Magnolia Project receives additional federal funding to continue improving Jacksonville birth outcomes

The Magnolia Project, a special Healthy Start initiative that addresses the health of women before pregnancy, has been awarded an additional four years of funding from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS).

The funding, which totals \$925,000 annually, will enable the Magnolia Project to continue its efforts to improve birth outcomes among African-Americans in Jacksonville. The DHHS recently announced that 77 grants worth more than \$80.5 million would be distributed to improve health care for pregnant women and reduce higher-than-average infant mortality rates in targeted communities as part of the federal Healthy Start, Eliminating Disparities in Perinatal Health program.

The Magnolia Project addresses specific risk factors associated with poor pregnancy outcomes, including infections, pregnancy intervals, obesity and nutritional issues, and maternal health (diabetes and hypertension). It is unique in its approach because it begins the intervention *prior to pregnancy*. The Project provides targeted outreach, screening, case management and risk reduction, health education and well-woman care to about 700 women a year who reside in Northwest Jacksonville. The Magnolia Project is being implemented in an area that accounts for about 40% of the Black infant mortality in the city.

The Northeast Florida Healthy Start Coalition, Inc. is the project grantee. Project partners include the Duval County Health Department, Shands Hospital Jacksonville and other community agencies. The evaluator for the project is the University of North Florida Center for Community Initiatives. For more information, contact Project Director, Rhonda Baker Brown, at (904) 924-1570.

JCCI River Dance study assesses benefits to people and nature

On July 26, 2005, the Jacksonville Community Council, Inc. (JCCI) released a study entitled: "River Dance: Putting the River in River City." The purpose of this study was to determine how the Jacksonville community can interact with the St. Johns River and its tributaries for the maximum benefit of both people and nature.

A committee was formed to evaluate the growing concerns surrounding the St. Johns River and to make recommendations. The Committee members met together 26 times from November 2004 to June 2005 and received information from a variety of relevant resources. Council staff member, Mike Brown, served as a Resource Speaker for the study.

The recommendation to add Council Executive Director, or his appointed designee, on the Waterways Commission was made in the Study. Additionally, the Council was tasked through the Study's recommendations to be actively involved in securing more public access to the river and determine its economic impact on local communities through a series of actions.

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

Council

Council staff members are in the process of planning and implementing a series of exercises for Nassau County Emergency Response Leadership; the first of which was executed in the form of a tabletop exercise on July 11, 2005.

Following the Tabletop Exercise will be a Functional Exercise which will be held August 22 as part of the Nationwide "Dingo King Exercise" which is being coordinated by the Commander of Navy Region Southeast. These activities are funded through the Department of Homeland Security.

For more information, please contact Amanda Loach at (904) 279-0885 X 149.

Satellite telecast focuses on maintaining economic strength in America

The Council hosted a Satellite Telecast entitled Building A 21st Century World Class Workforce on July 27, 2005. Panelists on this telecast included David Bearden, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Commerce; Emily DeRocco, Assistant Secretary, Employment and Training Administration; The Honorable Haley Barbour, Governor of Mississippi; Dr. Anthony Zeiss, President of Central Piedmont Community College; and Robert Nardelli, Chairman/President/CEO of The Home Depot.

The telecast was an important informational session focusing on how to advance bold, new initiatives in the workforce development systems, what it takes to build a world-class workforce and where gaps currently exist. Colleagues from around the region attended the event to learn what is happening on the cutting-edge of workforce development.

This Telecast was made possible through a partnership between the National Association of Regional Councils, the Economic Development Administration, and the International Economic Development Council.

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

Hurricane Housing Recovery Program approved for Putnam County

The Florida Housing Finance Corporation approved the Hurricane Housing Assistance Plan (HHAP) as submitted for the Putnam County Hurricane Housing Recovery (HHR) Program, which is administered by Council staff. No changes or corrections to the HHAP were required upon submittal of the Plan and therefore processing was able to begin immediately.

The total funding for the residents of Putnam County is \$1,052,106 and the available assistance may be used for repairs, rehabilitation as well as home purchase. Putnam County was the only county in Northeast Florida to receive funding for the HHR Program.

For more information, please contact Debbie Balevre at (904) 279-0885 X 152.

Department of Health recognizes the Florida Association of Healthy Start Coalitions

On July 13, 2005, The Florida Department of Health celebrated the 10th anniversary of the Florida Association of Healthy Start Coalitions (FAHSC). Department of Health Secretary John O. Agwunobi, M.D., M.B.A., M.P.H., recognized the accomplishments of the FAHSC and its service to Florida's mothers and infants.

Created in 1995, the FAHSC unites all Healthy Start coalitions throughout the state. Healthy Start coalitions administer the Healthy Start program services in their communities. Presently, there are 31 Healthy Start coalitions covering 65 Florida counties. The community-based Healthy Start coalitions are comprised of volunteer community members who work to improve the maternal and child health in Florida.

The FAHSC has partnered with DOH for several projects such as implementing the MomCare Program; planning the Sharing Solutions conference; conducting fetal and infant mortality reviews; promoting the Shaken Baby Awareness, Abandoned Baby Law, and Women's Health Week campaigns; working to reduce racial disparities in birth outcomes; and developing policies and systems of care to improve the health of Florida's most vulnerable citizens.

For additional information about the Florida Association of Healthy Start Coalitions, visit the Web site at www.healthystartflorida.com or contact Carol Brady at (904) 279-0885 X 140.

Council staff facilitates at FEPA Conference

The Florida Emergency Preparedness Association (FEPA) is the principle organization that emergency responders belong to for general response within the state of Florida. On July 25, 2005, Council staff facilitated the first full day of activities for the Emergency Management Director's Meeting, which is the largest group within FEPA. In addition to facilitating the day's activities, staff also provided input on all FEPA projects.

The conference was the culmination of one year of strategic planning with the FEPA Executive Board which also developed a Three-year Strategic Plan. FEPA President, Linda Stoughton, regarded the event as a great success and commended Council staff on its involvement. For more information, please contact Jeff Alexander at (904) 279-0885 X 134.

Council staff participates in execution of training ordered by President

National Incident Management System (NIMS) Training is required for everyone who may be engaged in any portion of emergency response on the local, state and federal levels. The requirement comes directly from President George W. Bush and must be completed by September 30, 2005. This training is critical because all future federal funding for local governments will be contingent upon compliance with NIMS training requirements.

The Council is organizing and facilitating the training classes for Baker, Nassau, Putnam and St. Johns Counties. Those needing training can register for a class online at www.nimsclass.com. The classes are funded by the counties using Homeland Security grant dollars and are open to anyone who may need the training.

For more information, please contact Jeff Alexander at (904) 279-0885 X 134 or your local emergency management director.

Council mourns the passing of Board Member

The Honorable Ralph Carter was described as an activist, a gentleman, and a peacemaker. The Northeast Florida Regional Council considered him a friend and a valuable member of its Board of Directors.



Councilman Ralph Carter

The City of Palm Coast's first African-America councilman passed away on July 12, 2005, just four months short of finishing his four-year term. Councilman Carter was one of the first five council members elected after the city was incorporated in 1999, making him a founding father.

He was elected to serve on the Council's Board in June 2004 as a representative of Flagler County. Councilman Carter was a member of the Planning and Growth Management Policy Committee, the Florida Regional Councils Association, and the Northeast Florida Regional Leadership Academy Selection Committee during his tenure with the Council.

He is survived by his wife, Ann, two children and one granddaughter. For his contributions to the Council and the region he will be sorely missed.

