

NEFRC Highlights

Monthly Report of the Northeast Florida Regional Council

December 2005

Council members and staff attend JTA Regional Transportation Summit

Several members of the NEFRC Board of Directors (including: Councilwoman Elaine Brown, and County Commissioners Blair Kanbar, Bruce Maguire, Linda Myers, and Harold Rutledge) and its Staff attended a regional transportation summit held by the Jacksonville Transportation Authority (JTA) on December 15 at the Hyatt Regency Jacksonville Riverfront. The first-ever gathering which showcased the JTA's recent 50th Anniversary celebration, was a collaborative effort by the JTA, the Jacksonville Regional Chamber of Commerce and the First Coast Metropolitan Planning Organization.

The summit included speeches by futurist Glen Hiemstra, the creator of futurist.com; Atlanta-based economist Jay Garner; and Dr. Hal Worrall, author of *A System at Risk – the Economics of Transportation*. Mr. Garner and Dr. Worrall spoke about the transportation and economic dilemma facing the United States and shared their insights as to methods that the region can utilize to best address both current and future mobility issues.

The summit also included a roundtable discussion by various local elected officials from across the region (which included the Council's own Commissioners Maguire and Myers), as well as State Representatives Jennifer Carroll, Stan Jordan, Dick Kravitz and Don Davis, and U.S. Representatives Corrine Brown and John Mica. The panel discussed the lack of interconnectivity between transit systems in the region and the need for greater regional cooperation and communication as each county creates a vision of how they would like their area to develop in the future.

The summit's luncheon featured Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) Secretary Denver Stutler. Secretary Stutler used the occasion to announce the Department's financial commitment to funding a planned Rapid Transit System (RTS) in Duval County. The JTA's Rapid Transit System project was highlighted during the event and a prototype vehicle for the RTS was displayed for the attendees outside the hotel.

For more information on the summit, contact Brian Teeple at (904) 279-0880 X 103.

Council study presented at national conference assists in refocus of program

The 11th Annual Maternal and Child Health Epidemiology Conference recently brought together public health professionals and practitioners from across the United States. The purpose of the conference was to develop participants' analytical skills and knowledge to promote program effectiveness. Walter Bowman, the Council's Manager of Information Services and Data Analysis, made a presentation at the conference that was sponsored by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The study which prompted the presentation addressed "Risk Factors Associated with Low-Birth-Weights in Northeast Florida". The research utilized various analysis to statistically estimate the most important risk factors associated with low-birth-weights in the region. The analysis identified hypertension, smoking, previous low-birth-weight or premature baby, previous infant death, and other identifiers as key risk factors.

These factors were associated with low-birth-weights regardless of race. African-American low-weight births were also associated with teen pregnancies. Low-birth-weights among other races were linked to father's involvement and low educational attainment. Since race was identified as the most significant risk factor, separate models were developed for African-Americans and other races. Low-birth-weight is a principal factor affecting infant mortality.

Information from the study, conducted as part of the three-year update of the Healthy Start Service Delivery Plan, was used to develop targeted case management services in Duval County. The Duval County Health Department and Shands Hospital - Jacksonville will focus intensive Healthy Start services on pregnant women with key risk factors identified in the study.

The study also enhanced the Council's capacity to perform similar or related studies, using logistic regression analysis, for external clients.

For more information, please contact Walter Bowman at (904) 279-0885 X 168.

Council participates in delivery of Incident Management Team training

The NEFRC is currently being contracted by the City of Jacksonville's Emergency Preparedness Division to coordinate the delivery of an All-Hazards Incident Management Team course. This course is for specified Type 3 Regional Incident Management Teams (IMT) as a part of the All-Hazards IMT Technical Assistance program of the United States Fire Administration.

Type 3 Incident Management Teams are composed of a standing team of trained personnel from different departments, agencies and jurisdictions within a region that are capable of responding to disaster incidents throughout the state or out-of-state. Incident Management Teams from Northeast Florida were active in the response to Hurricanes Katrina and Wilma.

Jeffrey Alexander, Director of Emergency Preparedness, participated in an IMT from Northeast Florida that was responding to Hurricane Katrina. There are approximately 106 Type 3 IMTs across the country.

This training will be held from January 30 - February 5, 2006 at the Prime Osborn Convention Center in Jacksonville.

For more information, please contact Heather Golightly, at (904) 279-0885 X 113.

Council staff serves as team leader for regional emergency management assessment

The Council's Emergency Preparedness Administrator, Ed Preston, has been selected to serve as an Assessment Team Leader for a first of its kind pilot project regional emergency management assessment for the National Capital Region (Washington DC and surrounding counties and municipalities).

He will lead a team of assessors from California, New Jersey and the City of Seattle in assessing the emergency management programs of Arlington County Virginia, the City of Alexandria Virginia and Prince Georges County Maryland during two weeks in January. Documents from those jurisdictions will be reviewed for compliance with 58 national standards developed by the Emergency Management Accreditation Program (EMAP).

This pilot project is designed to establish a baseline of preparedness for regional emergency management and will serve as a model for other regions across the United States.

For more information, please contact Ed Preston at (904) 279-0885 X 155.

Council affiliates receive recognition at recent annual meeting promoting public health

The Northeast Florida Healthy Start Coalition continues to play a key role as the centerpiece of the Council's human services division, focusing on maternal and child healthcare throughout the region. Two Coalition projects were featured at the annual meeting of the American Public Health Association (APHA) held recently in Philadelphia.

The Magnolia Project was part of a panel presentation on Preconceptional Care that was organized by the U.S. Center for Disease Control & Prevention. The Jacksonville Friendly Access Initiative was highlighted in a roundtable session on consumer-oriented strategies to improve access to health care. APHA is the nation's largest organization of public health professionals.

The 2005 meeting was attended by more than 8,000 members.

For more information, please contact Carol Brady at (904) 279-0885 X 140.

