

NEFRC Highlights

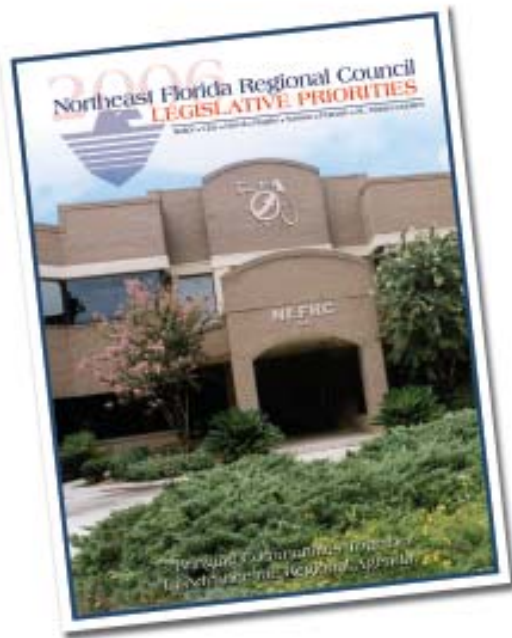
Monthly Report of the Northeast Florida Regional Council

March 2006

Council releases its 2006 Legislative Priorities spotlighting most critical concerns of the region

In March 2006, the Legislative Committee of the Northeast Florida Regional Council (NEFRC) released its publication detailing the 2006 Legislative Priorities which represent the Council and its seven member counties.

The Committee was created to address critical concerns within the member counties which comprise the region. It is composed of one delegate from each county (Baker, Clay, Duval, Flagler, Nassau, Putnam and St. Johns) as well as the President of the NEFRC Board of Directors who serves as an Ex-Officio member.



This Committee is guided by the Home Rule Philosophy to develop and implement community-based solutions.

The legislative priorities of each county within the Northeast Florida Regional Council's membership were collected. From a cumulative list of 69 priorities submitted by the counties involved, each stakeholder was required to determine the top three priorities which most significantly represented the critical needs and concerns of their communities and constituents. Through the gathering and analysis of all priorities submitted by each county individually, the Legislative Committee collectively determined the top five "regional priorities" which represented the most critical concerns of the Northeast Florida region. All priorities were reviewed to include background, requested action and effect.

Putnam County Commissioner Linda Myers serves as Chair of the Committee which claims at its purpose to "work collectively and promote regionally." St. Johns County Commissioner Bruce Maguire serves as Vice Chair. Other members and their respective counties include: Commissioner Gordon Crews, Baker County; Commissioner Harold Rutledge, Clay County; Councilwoman Elaine Brown, Duval County; Commissioner Blair Kanbar, Flagler County; Commissioner Anslee Acree, Nassau County; and Council President, Commissioner Karen Stern serving as an Ex-Officio Member.

The Top Five Legislative Priorities for the Northeast Florida Regional Council as determined by the Committee are: Affordable/Workforce Housing, Emergency Preparedness & Recovery, Transportation Funding, Medicaid Funding and KidCare Funding.

Committee members traveled to Tallahassee for the recent legislative session to for an audience with legislators, to lobby for the issues which are most critical to the Council and the Northeast Florida region.

Additional information regarding all legislative priorities for the counties is available upon request. For more information about these initiatives, please contact Brian Teeple at (904) 279-0885 X 103, or visit our Web site at www.nefrc.org for on-line copies of the publication.

Council CEO addresses Urban Land Institute

The Urban Land Institute (ULI) held a special meeting on March 7, 2006 featuring special guest Senior Resident Fellow Ed McMahon. McMahon discussed "Our Rivers, Beaches, and Natural Resources: Public Access, Private Property Rights, and Other Challenges."

Susan Grandin of Trust for Public Land Spoke as well as Council CEO Brian Teeple.

Teeple gave a presentation on "Northeast Florida Regional Beach and Boat Ramp Access." He shared preliminary conclusions from the Council's Beach Access Study that addressed issues such as site availability, acquisition, permitting and other opportunities for regional cooperation.

The ULI is a nonprofit education and research institute that is supported by its members. Its mission is to provide responsible leadership in the use of land in order to enhance the total environment.

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

KidCare aggressively seeks increased awareness

Florida KidCare, the state's health insurance program for uninsured children under age 19, now has *year round open enrollment*. Through this program, most qualified families can receive health insurance for their children for either \$15 or \$20 per month per family.

Families who earn up to 200% of the poverty level can qualify for Florida KidCare. For example, a family of four who earns \$40,000 could qualify for Florida KidCare.

The Council recently assisted in the launch of both audio and video public service announcements about Florida KidCare. This outstanding service is grossly underutilized, due in large part to lack of funding to market the materials locally and promote this benefit.

For more information, please contact Katie Wehr at (904) 279-0885 X 129 or visit the Florida KidCare Web site at www.floridakidcare.org.

Council hosts delegation from African Regional Project

The Council partnered with the International Visitor Corps of Jacksonville to host a delegation from the Africa Regional Project.

Guests included: Mr. Boubacar Ba, Deputy Mayor, City Hall of Pikine Senegal; Mr. Ngrabe Rodou Ndoh, Civil Administrator, Ministry of Territorial Administration Chad; Mr. Thierno Amadou Bah, Inspector, Ministry of Economy and Finance, Guinea; Mr. Sikoro Keita, Economist, The General Auditor's Office, Mali; Mr. Melchiade Nzopfabarushe, Special Advisor at the Ministry of Good Governance and State Inspection, Burundi; Mr. Bruno Rakotoarishon, Dental Surgeon - Befelatanana Hospital, Madagascar; and Dr. Ahmed Youra Ould Haye, Coordinator, National Program for Good Governance, Mauritania.

The delegation met with Mr. Jim Rinaman, attorney, and Council CEO, Brian Teeple, to discuss the consolidation of Jacksonville and the modern day effects of this action which took place in 1966. For more information, please contact Brian Teeple at (904) 279-0885 X 103.

