

NEFLRIC

Highlights

Monthly Report of the Northeast Florida Regional Council

April 2009

Council Staff goes Green

Staff from the Northeast Florida Regional Council participated in the Jacksonville Green Expo, held on April 25 and 26, 2009, at the Prime Osborn Convention Centre. The Council shared a booth with the Jacksonville Electric Authority (JEA) featuring information about the upcoming Reality Check First Coast regional visioning exercise and were one of 151 exhibitors.



Jacksonville Green Expo promotes sustainable living through efficient, renewable energy, and the conservation of water and land resources. It's an exciting educational event for individuals, communities, businesses, and policy makers. It is organized by Global GreenUp, LLC.

For more information contact Guy Parola at (904) 279-0885 x 135.

Reality Check First Coast: Dress [Rehearsal] for Success!



Reality Check First Coast participants and volunteers go through a simulation of "Game Day" at the recent dress rehearsal.

On Friday, April 17, 2009 Regional Council staff gathered along with numerous other volunteers and our partners from the North Florida District of the Urban Land Institute at the St. Johns County Convention Center at the World Golf Village in St. Augustine, to hold a Dress Rehearsal for the upcoming Regional visioning exercise Reality Check First Coast.

The purpose of the rehearsal was to execute the event just as though it were Game Day. Presenters, scribes, facilitators and participants went through modified versions of all event activities from

the discussing the Rules of the Game to placement of LEGO® bricks to developing Guiding Principles, placing future growth and determining such topics as over-arching themes, barrier and solutions; to discussion of the exercise in a mock "Results and Analysis" session.

The dress rehearsal was debriefed thoroughly in numerous meetings afterwards and proved extremely valuable in determining the areas needing greater concentration to ensure a smooth and effective exercise on May 21, 2009.

For more information on Reality Check First Coast, please visit www.RealityCheckFirstCoast.com or contact Margo Moehring at (904) 279-0885 x 161.

A Vision for the future of Interlachen

On Tuesday, April 28, 2009, Regional Council planners designed and moderated a visioning exercise in the Town of Interlachen. The visioning exercise was held for the purpose of engaging the public to identify their local major issues for the Evaluation and Appraisal Report of their Comprehensive Plan. Additionally, the visioning exercise and accompanying survey will help them articulate how and where they want to grow over the next few decades.

The exercise was well attended, and the participants were very engaged. The event was divided into two sessions: the first part of the exercise was a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis of Interlachen. For the second part of the exercise, participants were provided an aerial photograph of the Town on which they drew potential corridors, marked areas for future conservation, and identified problem and asset areas.

In order to obtain information from citizens that were not able to attend the exercise, Council staff designed a survey, which was approved by the Town Council, and will be provided to citizens when they pay their water bill. The next step will be to combine the information from the exercise and the surveys into a draft list of local major issues. Additionally, a future conditions map will be created using the aerial map mark-ups from the exercise. Both items will be presented to the citizens, elected and appointed officials for additional vetting.

For more information, please contact Guy Parola at (904) 279-0885 x 135.

Get Moving! Transportation is the topic of recent Leadership Series Program

The Northeast Florida Regional Leadership Series (RLS) is well underway and close to graduating the fourth class of the Northeast Florida Regional Leadership Academy (RLA). So far, the program year has addressed topics such as equity and diversity, land use and quality of life, emergency preparedness, housing, and healthcare.

On Wednesday, April 15, 2009, participants were educated on the topic of Transportation. Guest speakers included Denise Bunnewith, North Florida Transportation Planning Organization; James Boyle, Jacksonville Transportation Authority; James Bennett, Florida Department of Transportation; and Regional Council staff. Topics of the day included a variety of issues ranging from mobility options to transportation funding.

The topic for the May session is Environment and Water Resources. The Program will be held at the Northeast Florida Regional Council. The RLS is for leaders representing business (large and small), education, nonprofits, agriculture, government, healthcare, elected officials, and media. In short, the Regional Leadership Series is for anyone who understands the importance of Regionalism and is committed to Regional visioning and growth for the betterment of our communities.

For more information, please visit the Web site at www.nefrla.com or contact Mike Hadden at (904) 279-0885 x 104.

March for Babies demonstrates how Council staff was "Touched by [an] Angel"

On Saturday, April 25, 2009, NEFRC staff members joined forces to participate in the Annual March of Dimes March for Babies.

It was a four and a half mile walk through downtown Jacksonville which served a special purpose for the already worthwhile organization, because staff organized a team called "Touch by Angel" and dedicated the activity to the memory of the baby of one of our own staff members who was recently a victim of Sleeping Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). Staff raised over \$1,100 towards the cause.

This is an example of making an impact on the communities in which we live and work, which is more than just a motto at the Regional Council; it's a way of life.

For more information please contact Angi Giles at (904) 279-0885 x 191.



Council staff gather prior to participation in the March of Dimes March for Babies.

Welcome New Board Members

The Northeast Florida Regional Council is pleased to welcome its newest additions to the Board of Directors.

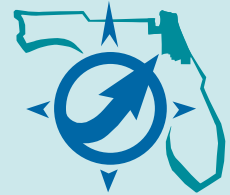
Governor Charlie Crist recently announced the following appointment to the Board of Directors of the Northeast Florida Regional Council:

- Charles "Wes" Larson, of Melrose, President of the Putnam County Chamber of Commerce, succeeding Thomas Williams, appointed for a term beginning April 17, 2009, and ending October 1, 2009.

The Baker County Board of County Commissioners recently announced the following appointment as a County Representative to the Regional Council Board of Directors:

- Craig Thompson, of Macclenny, Chairman of the Baker County Local Planning Agency and employed by Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida, succeeding Daryl Register who was named as a Gubernatorial Appointee to the Regional Council Board of Directors in March 2009.

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



St. Johns County Emergency Operation Center celebrates its Dedication and Grand Opening with Council Board Members and staff on hand

On Wednesday, April 29, 2009, St. Johns County held the dedication ceremony and grand opening of its new Emergency Operations Center (EOC), located near the intersection of Interstate 95 and State Road 16. The Dedication Ceremony was held just outside the building and a host of speakers including County Commission Chair and Regional Council Board Member, Commissioner Cyndi Stevenson, County Administrator Michael Wanchick, and Emergency Management Director Ray Ashton. Each spoke of the importance of disaster preparedness and the added benefits of such a fine, new building would provide.

Previously, the Emergency Management had been located in a flood prone, storm-surge zone, and the County decided that it would be best to relocate the EOC in an elevated area. Approximately seven acres of land was kindly donated by the Anastasia Mosquito Control District, and is now located at "100 EOC Drive." With a total cost of just over \$6 million, House Bill 7121 provided more than \$1.16 million in funds with an additional \$500,000 made available through federal grant dollars, significantly decreasing the expense to the County.

The new EOC is located outside of any storm-surge zone, with an interior of 22,000 square-feet. The roof is designed to withstand even the most severe storms, up to a 200 mph wind load, which will keep emergency management in the County completely functional during an incident. The walls have no windows and are made up of nine-inch thick, rebar reinforced concrete, with the ability to withstand winds of 200 miles per hour. Every entrance to the EOC is equipped with steel roll-down shutters with a wind load rating of 220 mph in the event of any storm.

After the customary ribbon cutting, the keynote speakers, Dr. Forrest Masters of the University of Florida and General Douglas Burnett, addressed the audience inside. Following the keynote speakers, all of the visitors were able to tour the facility and observe each room in detail. The Northeast Florida Regional Council prepared an audio/visual presentation for each room of the EOC to help explain some of the nuances of the room and introduce visitors to their new facility. St. Johns County Emergency Management will be able to use this presentation to help acquaint visitors and new volunteers to the EOC in the future as well.

For more information, please contact Jeff Alexander at (904) 279-0885 x 104.