

NEFRC

Highlights

Monthly Report of the Northeast Florida Regional Council

March 2011

NEFRC Welcomes New Board Members

The Northeast Florida Regional Council welcomed three new members to the Board of Directors in March 2011. The Honorable Jimmy Anderson of the Baker County Commission replaces Craig "CJ" Thompson as one of the Baker County representatives on the NEFRC Board. Additionally, The Honorable Vernon Myers, Mayor of the City of Palatka, replaces longtime Council Board Member Vice Mayor Mary Lawson-Brown as the Putnam County municipal representative. Finally, The Honorable Steve Howard of the Orange Park Town Council replaces Green Cove Springs Mayor Bob Page as the Clay County municipal representative. Welcome!



The Honorable Jimmy Anderson, Baker County Commission



Mayor Vernon Myers, City of Palatka



The Honorable Steve Howard, Orange Park Town Council

NEFRC and Cornerstone Awarded \$200,000 EDA Grant To Study Future Jobs And Industries

In an effort to identify and promote Northeast Florida's economic strengths and future workforce, the Northeast Florida Regional Council (NEFRC) and the Cornerstone Regional Development Partnership, the economic development arm of the Jacksonville Regional Chamber of Commerce, were recently awarded a \$200,000 grant by the Economic Development Administration (EDA) to administer a targeted industry sub-cluster study and implementation plan.

The study will assist economic development organizations in identifying the Region's growth industries and developing the action steps needed for sustainable job creation. Community leaders believe the study will provide a deeper understanding of the highly competitive sub-cluster specialties that currently exist within the Northeast Florida Region and identify their unique competitive advantages.

"Upon completion of this study, we will have a better understanding of distinctive regional assets and the ability to direct resources more successfully by targeting unique regional advantages," said Elaine Brown, president of the Northeast Florida Regional Council.

The study will also provide a plan of action for economic development practitioners, local governments and workforce development agencies within Baker, Clay, Duval, Flagler, Nassau, Putnam and St. Johns counties to focus on the growth industries in Northeast Florida and pursue the continued success of the Region's economic future.

"Industry clusters leverage a region's competitive strengths for job creation and increase our nation's global competitiveness," said John R. Fernandez, U.S. Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Economic Development. "This investment will provide local leaders with a plan to more effectively direct resources and target distinctive regional assets to support and expand economic activity and create jobs in Northeast Florida."

The process to select a firm to conduct the study is underway. Completion of the study will take one year. For more information on the EDA grant, please contact Guy Parola at gparola@nefrc.org, or (904) 279-0885 x135.

Regional Leadership Academy Discusses Planning and Mobility

The second session of the 2011 Regional Leadership Academy (RLA) convened on March 9th to discuss the issues of Planning and Mobility. Speakers included several local planning directors and transportation planners. The next RLA session will be held on April 13th and will address Sustainability. For more information on the Regional Leadership Academy, please contact Jennifer Hewett-Apperson at jhewettapperson@nefrc.org, or (904) 279-0885 x104.

Regional Community Institute (RCI) Holds Quarterly Meeting

At its quarterly meeting in late March, the RCI Board reviewed the public input for First Coast Vision that was gathered at each of the town hall meetings held in the Region's seven counties. The Board also agreed to release a Design Challenge to create the image for First Coast Vision and to release a first draft of the Vision to the First Coast Consortium for review. The First Coast Consortium is the group that has convened as a regional "think tank", and agreed to provide input into the Vision from a wide variety of perspectives, including academic, technical, cultural and community advocacy. The RCI remains on target with a work plan that will result in a final First Coast Vision in late September 2011. For more info contact Margo Moehring at mmoehring@nefrc.org or (904) 279-0885 x161.

NEFRC Staff Participates in NOAA Operational Storm Surge Inundation Mapping Workshop

NEFRC Emergency Preparedness Programs Director Jeff Alexander participated in the Operational Storm Surge Inundation Mapping Workshop conducted by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration on March 15, 2011. This workshop assembled federal, state, and local representatives to discuss best practices in communicating potential storm surge risk, flooding probabilities, and evacuation routes to emergency managers and the public.

This workshop was sponsored by the Northern Gulf Institute (NGI), along with the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Coastal Services Center, Coast Survey Development Laboratory, and the National Hurricane Center to discuss and catalogue best practices for coastal inundation mapping. Participants included representatives from these organizations, as well as regional NOAA Weather Forecast Offices, NOAA River Forecast Centers, state and local emergency managers, other interested NOAA and state parties, the Federal Emergency Management Administration, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Navy and the Weather Channel.

For more information on this workshop, please contact Jeff Alexander at jalexander@nefrc.org, or (904) 279-0885 x134.

NEFRC 2010 Annual Report Now Available Online

The Northeast Florida Regional Council's 2010 Annual Report is now available online at www.nefrc.org. This report highlights the Council's many programs and accomplishments over the past year in support of our motto of "Bringing Communities Together to Advance the Regional Agenda." These accomplishments reflect the many ways that we have worked together under the strong leadership of our Board of Directors. 2010 was a busy year at the Council and included such milestones as completion of the Statewide Regional Evacuation Study Program, as well as continued technical assistance to our local governments and work toward creation of a regional vision. For more information on the 2010 Annual Report, please contact Jennifer Hewett-Apperson at jhewettapperson@nefrc.org, or (904) 279-0885 x104.



NEFRC Wishes Longtime Staff Member Shirley Orberg a Happy Retirement



On March 31, 2011, the Northeast Florida Regional Council bid adieu to longtime staff member Shirley Orberg as she entered retirement.

Hired in 1997 in the position of Council Clerk, Mrs. Orberg rose through the ranks of the administrative staff, holding the additional positions of Council Notary, Purchasing Agent, Administrative Assistant, Building Superintendent, Records Management Liaison Officer, Executive Assistant and Personnel Services Coordinator. In addition to her assigned duties, Mrs. Orberg was also a founding member of the Employee Satisfaction Committee and ensured that the Council lobby was festively adorned during the holiday season. One of her most critical responsibilities was to ensure that the Council remained in compliance with state public records management requirements. Shirley has developed an expertise in this area that has both served the Council as well as several of its member communities, most notably, the Town of Pomona Park.

The Northeast Florida Regional Council commends Shirley for her many contributions during her tenure, expresses its sincere appreciation for her services and wishes her well in her retirement.