

# NEFLRIC

## Highlights

Monthly Report of the Northeast Florida Regional Council

August 2006

### Affordable Housing Crisis is Focus of Regional Cooperation Summit Hosted by the Regional Council

Affordable housing...it started out as a mere inconvenience that has now escalated to a crisis in Northeast Florida. And it was the focus of the 9th Annual Regional Cooperation Summit hosted by the Northeast Florida Regional Council and St. Johns County, **“Affordable Workforce Housing...and the roads that lead us home.”**

The event, which was held in the St. Augustine Ballroom in the St. Johns County Convention Center at the World Golf Village, St. Augustine, on August 9, 2006 from 9:00 am – 4:00 pm, gathered together a multitude of leading authorities in the field of affordable housing. Over 400 people were in attendance and were privy to presentations and commentaries from more than 25 speakers on the issue that included defining the problem in the Northeast Florida region, sharing success stories, and providing best practices.

The Summit was moderated by Don Upton of Fairfield Index, Inc., and established among its objectives, to define the problem for the Northeast Florida region

and to raise awareness of the issue of affordable workforce housing; to share success stories which encouraged participants to engage in dialogue and set the stage for continued involvement and action; to provide best



practices that serve as a springboard for the Northeast Florida Regional Council Affordable Workforce Housing Task Force; and ultimately implement regional approaches and regional responses to solve the issue.

Florida’s Lieutenant Governor, the Honorable Toni Jennings, was the Keynote Speaker. Other speakers included representatives from across the region and state ranging from such organizations and agencies as the City of Jacksonville Housing and Neighborhoods Department, Florida Housing Coalition, St. Johns County Housing and Community Services Department, Housing Partnership of Northeast Florida as well as various Chambers of Commerce, educational and business entities.

**“The ultimate goal of the Summit: to implement regional approaches and regional responses to solve the issue.”**



Lieutenant Governor, the Honorable Toni Jennings, delivered the keynote speech.

The Summit explored the compelling aspects of the crisis by analyzing such topics as the real scope of the problem and ramifications for the Northeast Florida region; what has been done about the crisis; and our State’s activity in this regard.

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The topic of transportation as a vital component to the issue was also woven into the discussion. Experts ranging from economists to economic development professionals to leaders in the state and local housing authorities brought unique and diverse pieces of the puzzle to solve the problem that is affecting all of the communities throughout Northeast Florida.

The Northeast Florida Regional Council established an Affordable Workforce Housing Task Force months ago which also played an integral part of the Summit. Meeting frequently throughout the day to serve as a caucus, the Task Force analyzed data provided through the latest polling technologies which engaged the audience in real-time, hands-on participation during the summit. At the conclusion of the event, the Task Force discussed its next steps.

The Summit was not the culmination of months of preparation but rather the springboard for the Council's Affordable Workforce Housing Task Force which will ultimately implement regional approaches — and regional responses to solve the issue.



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The Task Force will convene again in October 2006 for further action. But the subject of affordable workforce housing remains in the forefront of Council priorities even before that, as evidenced by the Council President and CEO serving as speakers at the upcoming "Florida Summit on Affordable Living" to be held in Tampa, September 15, 2006.

For more information, please contact Mario Taylor at 904-279-0880 or visit the Summit Web site at [www.neflaffordablehousing.com](http://www.neflaffordablehousing.com).



Don Upton (pictured above) of the Fairfield Index, Inc., served as the moderator of the face-paced, interactive, working Summit.



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Picture above: (1) Harold Perry and Bob Spaeth, members of the NEFRC Affordable Housing Task Force, participate in one of the frequent meetings held by the caucus throughout the Summit; (2) Kerri Stewart, John Schneiger and Tom Crawford serve as subject matter experts on a housing panel; (3) Councilwoman Elaine Brown reviews material provided to participants with Gregory Owens on a break; and (4) NEFRC President Karen Stern sums up the results of the Task Force participation and projects action for future involvement.

