

NEFRC

Highlights

Monthly Report of the Northeast Florida Regional Council

September 2007

Regional Council Announces Slate of Officers for 2007-2008

The Northeast Florida Regional Council (NEFRC) has elected new officers for 2007-2008. The new slate of officers which head the 35-member Board of Directors were voted into office on September 6, 2007, and will be officially inducted at the October 4, 2007, Board Meeting of the NEFRC. They are as follows:

President – **The Honorable Harold Rutledge**, Clay County Commissioner; 1st Vice President - **Commissioner Mike Boyle**, representing Nassau County; 2nd Vice President - **Commissioner Michael Griffis**, representing Baker County; Secretary/Treasurer - **Municipal Representative Hugh D. Fish Jr.**, representing Baker County.

The new officers were voted into office at the September 6, 2007, Full Board Meeting and assume their new positions with the



“passing of the gavel” at the October 4, 2007, Board Meeting which is to be held in Clay County at the Thrasher-Horne Center of Performing Arts. Commissioner Rutledge follows The Honorable Chip Laibl as President of the Council and is the thirtieth president of the Policy Body which governs the Council. The NEFRC was founded in 1977 as an association of seven county governments (Baker, Clay, Duval, Flagler, Nassau, Putnam, St. Johns) and their 27 municipalities. It embraces as its mission to provide visionary leadership and coordination between counties and governmental agencies to preserve and enhance the quality of Northeast Florida’s natural, man-made, economic, and social environment.

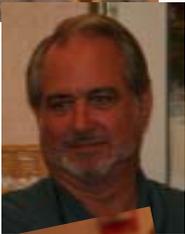
For more information, please contact Brian Teeple at (904) 279-0885 X 103.

Regional Leadership Academy kicks off new Class with Opening Retreat

On September 17 - 18, 2007, the Class of 2008 of the Northeast Florida Regional Leadership Academy held its Opening Retreat to kick off the third year of the Program. The Academy continues to build momentum since its inception in 2005 and strives to embody the best qualities of leadership represented throughout the region. The class is composed of a mix of leaders representing business (large and small), education, nonprofits, agriculture, government, healthcare, and elected officials. All participants are established leaders in their communities. The class includes participants from each of the seven Northeast Florida counties: Baker, Clay, Duval, Flagler, Nassau, Putnam and St. Johns.

The Opening Retreat covered a great deal of information related to regional cooperation and featured guest speakers such as Dr. Lance deHaven-Smith, Professor, Reubin Askew School of Public Policy, FSU, who presented the “History and Demographic Trends of Northeast Florida”; and “A Case for Cooperating Regionally” presented by Philip Laurien, Executive Director East Central Florida Regional Planning Council. Former Regional Council members, Elaine Brown, Commissioner Brad Purcell and Linda Myers also contributed to the Program.

The Academy continues to embrace its mission to build a strong, diverse, regional network of leaders with a shared commitment to collaboration and to connecting our communities to make Northeast Florida a better place to live and work. The next Program Day will focus on a regional look at Human Services and will be held at the new state-of-the-art St. Johns County Utilities building on Wednesday, October 17, 2007. For more information please contact Michael Hadden at (904) 279-0885 X 104.



Bringing Communities Together to Advance the Regional Agenda

Regional Council and Healthy Start Coalition Announce Separation of Entities

The Northeast Florida Regional Council and the Northeast Florida Healthy Start Coalition recently announced the separation of their entities after fifteen years of meaningful work within the Northeast Florida region.

The Coalition's Executive and Financial Committee voted, on August 9, 2007, to separate from the Council in an effort to become more focused on maternal and child health-related issues. This vote was ratified today, August 16, 2007, by the Coalition's Board of Directors.

The agreement was reached mutually and amicably and will benefit both organizations going forward. While the separation will allow the Northeast Florida Healthy Start Coalition an opportunity to gain greater independence and possibly join with another allied healthy agency in the area, it will likewise give the Northeast Florida Regional Council the latitude to focus more on its core mission of planning, growth management, emergency preparedness and economic development within the seven-county region.

The many years of collaboration between the two organizations have resulted in meaningful work within our region. And while they will not exist under the "same roof" any longer nor will they share budgetary, structural or operational ties the goodwill between the two entities remains strong as they both continue to make an impact on the quality of life within the region.

The Healthy Start Coalition moved operations from their offices located at 6850 Belfort Oaks Place by September 30, 2007, to ensure an easier transition in fiscal year reporting for both organizations.

Please visit their respective Web sites at: www.nefrc.org and www.nefhealthystart.org for additional information about both organizations.

Council Emergency Preparedness staff continues to support innovative ways to address hurricane evacuation and planning

As a response to the 2004 and 2005 hurricane seasons, state legislators passed House Bill 1721 and House Bill 1359, which identified enhanced statewide hurricane evacuation planning and a redefinition of the coastal high hazard area as state priorities. In accordance with this legislative direction, the State of Florida Division of Emergency Management obtained grant money through the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program to conduct regional evacuation studies across the State.

The Division of Emergency Management contracted with Florida's Regional Planning Councils to carry out these studies in close collaboration with county emergency management agencies. The Regional Planning Councils as part of the State Regional Evacuation Study Project (SRESP) continue to facilitate consistent and integrated mapping and analysis of all-hazards evacuation across Northeast Florida and beyond.

The Northeast Florida Regional Council Emergency Preparedness staff are contributing members to this Project and are actively involved in ways to ensure cooperation and data sharing will be a vital part of the success of this regional research study. One such effort was the recent premier edition of its monthly Advisory/Update newsletter in September 2007. The colorful and fact-filled newsletter is designed to be a platform for communicating pertinent announcements, developments, news articles, and other items of interest to the SRESP Team.

The document is intended to serve as a key to study activities, with links to full-text documents on the FTP (shared data) site. Once initial publication procedures are determined, the Team will post the Advisory on the Florida Division of Emergency Management's GROOVE statewide emergency management system.

Also in September, the 2nd Quarterly SRESP Report was submitted. Using a data-oriented format with project benchmarks sections provided for each Regional Planning Council to complete, this document demonstrated much more detail and progress than the first report, submitted in June. Phase I Deliverables Schedule is well underway throughout the state.

For additional information, please contact Steven McMikle at (904) 279-0885 X 149.

Video Teleconferencing will be available to the Division of Emergency Management

The Northeast Florida Regional Council recently assisted in the purchase of Video Teleconferencing televisions for the Division of Emergency Management as a part of an Emergency Operations Center Enhancement contract. The televisions were purchased for Alachua, Bradford, Gilchrist, Levy, Marion and Union counties and the final delivery of all televisions is scheduled for October 4, 2007.

The purchase of the televisions compliments the previous purchase of Video Teleconferencing equipment for the entire Jacksonville Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) which encompasses Alachua, Baker, Bradford, Clay, Duval, Flagler, Gilchrist, Levy, Marion, Nassau, Putnam, St. Johns and Union Counties. The Video Teleconferencing capability will increase regional collaboration and communication in daily operation, as well as in an emergency. The UASI hopes to conduct an exercise in the first quarter of next year to test the functionality of the Video Teleconferencing systems throughout the region.

For more information, please contact Pamela Kirchner at 904.279.0885 x.131

SAVE THE DATE:
Thursday, October 11, 2007
2007
ELECTED OFFICIALS RECEPTION
Regional Leadership Awards
7:00 p.m.
St. Johns County Convention Center at World Golf Village