

NEFRC

Highlights

Monthly Report of the Northeast Florida Regional Council

August 2008

Tropical Storm Fay provides Council staff opportunity to refine skills for disaster relief assistance

As the 2008 Hurricane Season is well underway, Northeast Florida continues to be impacted by the natural occurrences related to the season. Staff of the Northeast Florida Regional Council (NEFRC) was most recently engaged in efforts to manage circumstances related to Tropical Storm Fay.



Emergency Preparedness Programs (EPP) personnel helped support the Region by activating the Regional Coordinating function at the Duval County EOC and maintained that function for three days during the worst part of Tropical Storm Fay. Fortunately, the storm didn't escalate to a life-threatening proportion. Nonetheless, the same precautions, care and reinforcements must be taken in the event that it turns quickly and citizens in the area need special assistance. EPP staff stood ready to coordinate evacuations should they have occurred. In addition, they assisted with other tasks, filling in gaps, and providing public information from outlying counties to the media.

Included in the additional duties was the development of a Water Born Debris Removal Plan (WBDRP) for Duval County. The WBDRP is a document that identifies the various agencies responsible to remove debris within waterways. Also within this plan, staff was tasked with the initial defining of the waterways as well as identifying contact information from different agencies and determining financial responsibilities. Through staff's ability to concisely tailor a new plan, it fit well into the existing plan for Duval County and expedited the approval process.

After the storm, at the request of the Putnam County Commission, staff facilitated the Putnam County After-Action Review. The discussion, which took over three hours, was held at the new Putnam County Emergency

Operations Center (EOC) and reviewed not only how the county performed but how the new EOC itself performed. This frank discussion was considered a success and was expected to provide guidance in the county's future plans and impacts the way the EOC will be run in the future.

Congressman John Mica attended the after-action review at the Putnam County EOC to thank the county responders and to acknowledge and recognize how valuable the review process was. Similarly, Nassau County has requested that NEFRC staff conduct an after-action conference and compose a report for their county.

The EPP staff for the Council continues to have opportunities to support the Region in these efforts in large part due to the exercises that have been conducted in the past. The NEFRC staff is certified in developing After-Action Reports through the Homeland Security Exercise Evaluation Procedure (HSEEP). This is a program that the Regional Planning Councils around the state provide training for. HSEEP is a required program for any federal dollars expended. After-Action Reports have to be compliant with that program. In fact, the NEFRC planners and others were the first certified instructors for HSEEP and the Council heads up the statewide training effort for HSEEP.

It's not over yet...September promises to be the busiest month of the Hurricane Season. The predictions that this will be a very active season is true. We are already on the 8th named storm of the season and it's not the "busy month yet." September 2004 was the month the Northeast Florida Region felt the impact of five storms.

For more information, please contact Jeff Alexander at (904) 279-0885 X 134.

Council Board Member, Stern, concludes her term as FRCA President

Longtime Regional Council Board Member, Ms. Karen Stern was elected President of the Florida Regional Councils

Association (FRCA) Policy Board in August 2007 and concluded her term in August 2008.



Under Ms. Stern's leadership, the FRCA Policy Board has solicited continued and increased funding for regional councils, has coordinated with the Florida League of Cities, The Florida Association of Counties, The Small County Coalition, Enterprise

Florida, various other Florida agencies, as well as the appropriate state agencies on growth management issues, and the Association has been represented on several state-wide councils, consortiums and commissions. Her involvement in this leadership position has positively impacted the NEFRC and we applaud her continuing efforts to promote Regionalism within Northeast Florida.

The Northeast Florida Regional Council

Welcomes Our Newest Board Members

Councilman Bob Page
City of Green Cove Springs

Councilman Paul Parsons
City of Atlantic Beach

Mayor Catherine Robinson
City of Bunnell

Study supports TD program

Florida has always been a national leader in the coordination of transportation disadvantaged (TD) services. A recent study by the Marketing Institute of Florida State University College of Business concluded that investment in the TD program paid off in benefits that far surpassed the financial investment of public funds.



The study showed that the State invested \$372.2 million in the transportation disadvantaged program that provided 51.5 million trips in 2007. The funds generated benefits of nearly \$3.2 billion, which was a payback of \$8.35 for every dollar invested in the program.

Florida's coordinated system provides access to essential services and improves quality of life for the State's most needy riders in the most efficient and effective way possible. The five basic types of trips are medical, employment, education, nutrition, and life sustaining/other. In the seven counties in Northeast Florida, 974,869 transportation disadvantaged trips were provided during 2007.

For more information, or a copy of the study, please see Jeanie Palmer at (904) 279-0885 x 146.

Regional Council staff helps Green Cove Springs examine ways to preserve history and vision for the future

The Planning and Development staff of the Northeast Florida Regional Council (NEFRC) has been working closely with the City of Green Cove Springs on its commitment to preserving community history and visioning for the future.

Earlier this year, NEFRC staff conducted a neighborhood visioning workshop to solicit public input. Many of the participants were long time residents from the neighborhood. The main purpose of the meeting was to develop a vision for the Augusta Savage Community Center's Arts Center and Thomas Hogan's Memorial Gymnasium which is a valuable community assets for all residents of Green Cove Springs.

The meeting promoted the development of a vision, discussion of future uses of the auditorium, resource center and arts building. The NEFRC staff continues to work with the City of Green Cove Springs to determine the best approach for "next steps" which may also include obtaining a 501(c)3 designation for the project which will enable it to do more for the community.



For more information, please contact Valerie Evans at (904) 279-0885 X 122.