

NEFRC

Highlights

Monthly Report of the Northeast Florida Regional Council

September 2010

First Coast Region Well Represented at APA Florida's Annual Conference

Northeast Florida was well represented at the APA Florida Conference in Tampa that was held from September 14-17. Brian Teeple was elected President-Elect of the 3,000+ member APA Florida Chapter, while Margo Moehring, Director of Policy, joined with two planners from different parts of the State to teach a class on meeting the ethical obligation that AICP-certified planners have to engage all affected persons in long range planning. The class was well attended and included a lively discussion.

Two Northeast Florida communities received awards at the Conference. Mark Knight, Director of Planning for the City of St. Augustine accepted the Award of Merit for the St. Augustine Historic Area Strategic Plan. The plan, which was authored by Reynolds, Smith and Hills, includes an innovative approach that blends multiple layers of historic periods and themes into St. Augustine's "Layers of History". The Student Project Award recognized the Town of Marineland Unified Development Code. The Code was written by students from the University of Florida and was recognized for being a progressive model in sustainability that was tailored to meet the unique needs of Marineland. For more information on the awards or the ethics class, please contact Margo Moehring at mmoehring@nefrc.org, or (904) 279-0885 x161.



Margo Moehring, Bob Cambric and Kendell Keith teaching a class at the APA Florida Conference.

NEFRC Participates in 2010 St. Johns River Summit

The 2010 St. Johns River Summit was held September 15-16 at Prime Osborn Convention Center in Jacksonville. The goals for the 2010 St. Johns River Summit included the following: provide updates on the challenges that the St. Johns River faces; create a plan for locally resourceful tourism for a sustainable river economy; assess the research needs of the river; create a successful state, local and federal partnership to bring annual sustainable funding to the river; and assess the future of the American Heritage Rivers Initiative.

The Northeast Florida Regional Council was a supporter of the summit and participated on a number of fronts. Staff maintained a booth with information on First Coast Vision and surveyed summit participants on their preferred future growth pattern. NEFRC Deputy CEO Mario Taylor facilitated a panel discussion on Federal Funding Opportunities and Issues during the Thursday afternoon session. This panel included Jim Giattina from U.S. Environmental Protection Agency - Region 4, David S. Hobbie of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers - Jacksonville District, and JEA CEO Jim Dickenson. The focus of this panel was potential new federal funding sources dedicated to river restoration, supporting the St. Johns River American Heritage River Initiative and new federal mandates. For more information on NEFRC's participation in the River Summit, please contact Jennifer Hewett-Apperson at (904) 279-0885 x104, or jhewettapperson@nefrc.org.



NEFRC Deputy CEO Mario Taylor (right) facilitates a panel discussion featuring JEA CEO Jim Dickinson (left) at the 2010 St. Johns River Summit

First Coast Consortium

The First Coast Consortium was created to support the application for HUD's Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant, which could fund and greatly enhance First Coast Vision. The Consortium had its first meeting on September 22 to introduce members and to discuss ways that the group can work together, even if First Coast Vision is not funded. The Consortium agreed that members could share data and program information to improve collaboration in the Region, and agreed they would review and comment on the draft goals and objectives for First Coast Vision, to share their unique perspectives. For more information on the First Coast Consortium, please contact Margo Moehring at (904) 279-0885 x161, or mmoehring@nefrc.org.

Outreach Continues on First Coast Vision

NEFRC staff continues to speak to the Region's community organizations about First Coast Vision. At the request of Rick Leary, Putnam County Administrator, Margo Moehring, Director of Policy, presented information on First Coast Vision to the Rotary Club of Palatka on September 21. The presentation discussed choices we have as a Region regarding the pattern future growth could take. Participants were surveyed about preferred growth patterns in order to collect data to help frame First Coast Vision. Over 70 people attended and Margo collected more than 50 surveys. Presentations to civic groups are a great opportunity to get the word out and get public input at the same time. To schedule a presentation on First Coast Vision with your civic organization, please contact Margo Moehring at 904 279 0885 X161, or mmoehring@nefrc.org.

Housing Program Update

NEFRC staff members Eric Anderson and Guy Parola recently participated in the 23rd Annual Statewide Affordable Housing Conference. The primary topics of this annual meeting were the future of the State Housing Initiatives Program (SHIP) and a new statewide housing program slated to begin in early 2011 called the Hardest Hit Fund (HHF).

The State Housing Initiative Program (SHIP) went unfunded this year. As a result, housing programs in each county have seen a reduction in available funds at a time when the need for affordable housing has significantly increased. NEFRC provides staff for the Putnam County SHIP program, which provides assistance using an assortment of housing strategies ranging from down payment assistance to new construction partnerships with Habitat for Humanity. For fiscal years 07/08 and 08/09, 53 Putnam County families benefited from the SHIP program. This assistance translates into \$1.7 million in SHIP funds directly infused into the local economy. Without funding, residents of Putnam County will lose a resource for owning their first home or bringing their home up to meet local codes/regulations.

The State of Florida received approximately \$650 million in Hardest Hit Funds to be implemented for Florida housing. The Hardest Hit Fund (HHF) is a new housing strategy that has begun on a trial basis in Lee County. The hope is that this program will be rolled out statewide in early 2011. The HHF is designed to provide mortgage payment assistance to homeowners who are struggling to make payments due, primarily, to a loss of employment and therefore help prevent foreclosure. The initial goal is to provide households with up to \$30,000 of mortgage assistance or up to 18 months of assistance, whichever threshold is met first. The Florida Housing Coalition has set an initial goal of helping 20,000 Florida households this year.

For more information on SHIP and other housing programs, please contact Eric Anderson at eanderson@nefrc.org, or (904) 279-0885 x178, or Guy Parola at gparola@nefrc.org, or (904) 279-0885 x135.

NEFRC Staff Participates in 2010 Northeast Florida Mobility Summit

Staff participated in the 2010 Northeast Florida Mobility Summit on September 8 at the St. Johns County Council on Aging. Ed Lehman discussed the status of regional coordination in Northeast Florida. He shared some of the numerous accomplishments already achieved in this area through leadership and coordination. Mr. Lehman reiterated that in extremely difficult financial times such as these, collective purchasing power and shared resources is one way to do more with less. For more information on the Mobility Summit and Transportation Disadvantaged Programs, please contact Ed Lehman at (904) 279-0880, or elehman@nefrc.org.



NEFRC Director of Planning and Growth Management Ed Lehman presents at the 2010 Northeast Florida Mobility Summit