

NEFRC

Highlights

Monthly Report of the Northeast Florida Regional Council

May 2011

North Florida ULI and APA-FL First Coast Chapters Host Legislative Breakfast

On May 18th, the local chapters of the Urban Land Institute and American Planning Association, Florida Chapter (APA-FL), hosted a Legislative wrap-up breakfast at the University of North Florida. The featured speakers for this event were Florida Department of Community Affairs (DCA) Secretary Billy Buzzett and APA-FL Director of Legislative Affairs Lester Abbingler. Secretary Buzzett provided an overview of DCA's new direction and how community planning would fit into a larger statewide economic development strategy, while Mr. Abbingler provided a summary of legislative changes to growth management laws during the 2011 Legislative Session. For additional information on this event or the recent changes at the state level, please contact Brian Teeple at bteeple@nefrc.org, or (904) 279-0880.



Photos: (upper) DCA Secretary Billy Buzzett and (lower) APA-FL Director of Legislative Affairs address North Florida ULI and APA-FL First Coast Legislative Breakfast attendees

NEFRC Staff Contributes Expertise to 25th Annual Governor's Hurricane Conference

This year marked the 25th year of the Governor's Hurricane Conference. This year's theme was "25 Years: Learning from the Past, Preparing for the Future". The conference was originally established in 1987 to focus on the challenges caused by hurricanes unique to Florida. Now, 25 years later, it is an innovative forum that provides the nation's first responders and those in the emergency management field the lifesaving skills and information necessary to manage a disaster response.

The conference provided three days of training with over 50 classes offered, both in basic and advanced levels. There were over 60 workshops presented across 8 topic tracks. NEFRC staff members Jeff Alexander, Danny Hinson and Elizabeth Payne of the Emergency Preparedness Program attended and were speakers for 6 workshops on various topics. The Statewide Regional Evacuation Study Program (SRESP), which the Northeast Florida Regional Council coordinated across the State, was the subject of numerous workshops, from roundtable regional discussions of its implementation to the implications of the new methodologies and data it presented. A 2 1/2 day training class was held on Transportation Interface for Modeling Evacuations (TIME), a new tool that was developed to model evacuation scenarios as a part of the Study.

It was a successful conference, with more than 1,740 people from 59 Florida counties, 28 states and three foreign nations. Over 150 vendors set up in a massive Exhibit Hall to showcase the latest tools and innovations for disaster preparedness, response and recovery efforts. The highlights from the Conference's general session included addresses from former Governor Bob Martinez, current Governor Rick Scott, Bill Read, Director of the National Hurricane Center and Lieutenant General Guy C. Swan III, the Commanding General of the United States Army North.

For more information on the 25th Annual Governor's Hurricane Conference, please contact Jeff Alexander at jalexander@nefrc.org, or (904) 279-0885 x134.

Bringing Communities Together to Advance the Regional Agenda

Education and Economic Development Discussed at Regional Leadership Series

Education and Economic Development were the topics of discussion at the May 11th session of the NEFRC Regional Leadership Series. Featured speakers included Jon Heymann of Communities in Schools-Jacksonville, Don Hughes from FSCJ-Nassau Center, Cathy Chambers of Cornerstone Regional Economic Development, and Danita Andrews from the Clay County Chamber of Commerce. The next session of the Regional Leadership Series is scheduled for June 8, 2011, and will feature a panel discussion on the electoral process featuring current and former elected officials, as well as recent candidates for elected office. For more information on the Regional Leadership Series, please contact Jennifer Hewett-Apperson at jhewettapperson@nefrc.org, or (904) 279-0885 x104.

NEFRC Staff Participates in 2011 State Hurricane Exercise



*Photos Above and Below:
Emergency responders are tested by
"Hurricane Griffin" at the State
Hurricane Exercise*



During the week of May 23 – 26, 2011, NEFRC staff participated in the 2011 State Hurricane Exercise. The scenario included the relocation of the State Emergency Operations Center and its staff from Tallahassee to an alternate location at Camp Blanding. This is the first time that the new facility has been utilized for this purpose. The exercise was designed to test the ability of the State Emergency Response Team to continue response operations for a simulated storm, "Hurricane Griffin," a major hurricane that hit Florida's east coast, moved across the peninsula and into the Gulf of Mexico, and took a northern turn towards the Panhandle area. The realistic scenario was designed to simulate the conditions of a large-scale natural disaster and to also determine the capability of the State's response team to relocate to another operations center.

NEFRC staff members were on site to assist with the Exercise Evaluation. The evaluation will help to determine the successes and challenges for the Continuity of Operation of the State Emergency Response Team. This included the relocation to the alternate facility, in addition to the response actions that were simulated in real-time. From these evaluations, an After Action Report will be written to identify the strengths and areas for improvement, as well as recommendations to address any other gaps or accomplishments that occurred.

Counties from all around the State participated remotely and at various levels of involvement in the 2011 State Hurricane Exercise. County Emergency Management agencies were able to test various components of their own response plans in the context of the "Hurricane Griffin" exercise scenario. Duval County Emergency Management participated by traveling to Camp Blanding with their Mobile Command Vehicle, which housed the Recovery

Section and provided other exercise participants with additional meeting space. This exercise allowed Duval County Emergency Management to demonstrate the capabilities of the vehicle itself, in that it can run for three operational periods without refueling. The unit also houses an array of communication devices, including phone and data lines, satellite, internet, and television.

Overall, the exercise was a success as the entire relocation team was able to safely and efficiently set up their emergency operations center at the alternate facility at Camp Blanding. Exercise participants included the Governor and selected staff, and included the majority of the State agencies tasked with emergency response. While some challenges existed, members of the response team were able to work as they usually do to solve the problems that are created by the impacts of a hurricane.

For more information on the State Hurricane Exercise, please contact Jeff Alexander at jalexander@nefrc.org, or (904) 279-0885 x134.



*NEFRC Staff and other Exercise Evaluators at the 2011
State Hurricane Exercise*