

NEFRC Highlights

Monthly Report of the Northeast Florida Regional Council

February 2012

St. Johns River Water Supply Impact Study

The St. Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD), at their February 14th Governing Board meeting, unveiled the results of the St. Johns River Water Supply Impact Study. Quoting from information on the SJRWMD's website, "The study confirms the findings of earlier investigations indicating that the St. Johns River can be used as an alternative water supply source without causing significant harm to the environment. The study does not authorize river water withdrawals." More information can be found on the SJRWMD's website, www.floridaswater.com. For more information, contact Brian Teeple at 904-279-0880.

APA Florida Public Policy Workshop

On February 8th the Florida Chapter of the American Planning Association held its annual Public Policy Workshop at the University Centre at Doak Campbell Stadium on the campus of Florida State University. NEFRC CEO Brian Teeple spoke to the attendees about the status of regional visioning throughout Florida. In addition, David Hallman, Nassau County Attorney and Thad Crowe, City of Palatka Planning Director made presentations at the workshop. For more information, contact Brian Teeple at 904-279-0880.

Mayor Brown's Business Builder

Margo Moehring, NEFRC Director of Policy attended Jacksonville Mayor Brown's Business Builder meeting on February 7th. It was aimed at providing encouragement and resources to small business. Small Business Administrator Karen Mills spoke, as did the district secretaries of 5 federal agencies (SBA, GSA, EPA, HHS, HUD), either about funding programs or vendor opportunities. Ms. Mills said this was the first time that a Mayor had requested this level of federal support. She and the Mayor signed an MOU and she also said that the Mayor had told her that the thing needed most was micro-financing. NEFRC has been convening a working group around micro-financing, so these efforts will be coordinated. There was also information provided about existing programs and financing strategies. The meeting was well attended and effective. There will be another Business Builder meeting on May 17th and 18th. For more information, contact Margo Moehring at 904-279-0885 x161.



National Conference of Regions

NEFRC DCEO Mario Taylor attended the National Association of Regional Councils (NARC) – 2012 National Conference of Regions in Washington DC. Multiple conference sessions were attended to obtain the latest information on Federal initiatives that impact NEFRC and other Florida RPCs. Those sessions included Transportation, Economic and Community Development, Homeland Security, and Environment. The conference provided some great information-gathering opportunities as well as presentations from the White House Deputy Director for the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs and The President's Cabinet Heads from HUD, Labor, FDOT, and EPA as well as members of Congress. For more information, contact Mario Taylor at 904-279-0880.

The National Evacuation Conference



The National Evacuation Conference was held in New Orleans, Louisiana from February 7th – 9th. The conference brought together the fields of transportation and emergency management to discuss evacuation planning to accommodate the needs of all people before, during and after a major disaster. NEFRC staff members Jeffrey Alexander and Beth Payne attended the conference to present a session on Florida's Statewide Regional Evacuation Study Program. The conference drew an audience from across the country and as it focused on all types of evacuation, sessions included information on nuclear evacuation events, specifically the Fukushima Daiichi experience in Japan; car less and transit oriented evacuation; modeling human behavior in evacuation; sheltering needs for all people; re-entry planning, etc. Many past experiences were highlighted, including the experiences that some northern states experience in 2011 with Hurricane Irene, the lessons learned from Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans and tsunami risks along the Pacific coast. For more information, contact Beth Payne at 904-279-0885 x133.

Florida Emergency Preparedness Association Award

At their 2012 Annual Meeting and Work Session, held in Daytona Beach, the Florida Emergency Preparedness Association (FEPA) presented NEFRC Director of Emergency Preparedness Programs, Jeffrey Alexander, with the Gary Arnold award for his dedicated, unselfish and enthusiastic service to improving the Emergency Management Community. Jeff was given this award because of his work with the Statewide Regional Evacuation Study Program. He was instrumental in the fundamental creation and execution of the Study. Jeff worked tirelessly to ensure the efforts spent utilized the most current and effective technology available to create the Evacuation Study. For more information, contact Jeffrey Alexander at 904-279-0880.



LEPC Meeting

Members of the Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) met for their quarterly meeting on February 8th at the NEFRC. Council staff provided a thorough update about hazardous materials releases/incidents that occurred within our Region. No major releases and a couple of minor spills were reported in the last quarter, none of which had a significant environmental impact.

The LEPC is also required to conduct a biennial exercise related to hazardous materials. With the consent of the LEPC, staff will be conducting and participating in a hazardous materials scenario as part of a larger exercise taking place at Camp Blanding on March 19th. This scenario will require responders from different jurisdictions to communicate and deal with a contaminated site. An "after action report" will be submitted to the State regarding the results of this exercise. The report will highlight the actions taken in response to the hazardous materials incident. For more information, contact Eric Anderson at 904-279-0885 x178.

St Johns County Mass Casualty Exercise

On February 16th, 2012 NEFRC staff facilitated a tabletop exercise at the St. Johns County Emergency Operations Center (EOC). This tabletop exercise had the narrow focus of a mass casualty event. Specific agencies within the County were invited to exercise their role in this type of occurrence. The scenario depicted two incidents, including an unknown illness sickening and ultimately killing residents of the County as well as a deadly tornado ripping through downtown St. Augustine. These events tested the County Fire Department's Search and Rescue plans and procedures as well as coordination elements between the County Health Department, County Mortuary Services and Flagler Hospital. Over thirty people attended and participated in this very successful exercise. For more information, contact Beth Payne at 904-279-0885 x133.

NEFRC Staff Guest Lectures at UF Class

Margo Moehring, NEFRC Director of Policy, was asked to present to a graduate environmental planning studio class at the University of Florida in Gainesville on February 10th. The class was interested in the process and outcomes of regional visioning in our area. The lecture began with the role of Regional Councils, and then reviewed the visioning process starting with Reality Check First Coast, covered the work of the Regional Community Institute and public input, and ended with First Coast Vision and anticipated updates to the Strategic Regional Policy Plan. Both Margo and the class enjoyed the opportunity to roll out the regional map and Legos® once more! For more information, contact Margo Moehring at 904-279-0885 x161.