

NEFRC

Highlights

Monthly Report of the Northeast Florida Regional Council

July 2013

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

The Northeast Florida Strategic Regional Policy Plan Update

Proposed "Strategic Directions" under review by the Executive Office of the Governor

Northeast Florida's proposed update to the Strategic Regional Policy Plan was delivered to the Executive Office of the Governor, along with 21 local government resolutions of support, on July 26, 2013. At the same time, it was posted to the NEFRC website, and sent to regional reviewing agencies, all local governments in the Region, and to Regional libraries. The Executive Office of the Governor has sixty days to provide a Findings and Recommendations report, based on input received from reviewing agencies and their comments. All entities receiving the plan or with an interest in it can also comment directly to NEFRC staff. The comments received are anticipated to be considered at an October 3, 2013 NEFRC Board of Directors meeting, and the plan may be finalized in preparation for rulemaking at that time. Completion of rulemaking must be accomplished within 90 days of the Findings and Recommendations report. For more information, contact Margo Moehring at mmoehring@nefrc.org.

St. Johns County "Beyond the Basics" Disaster Preparedness Workshop and Exercise

Staff from NEFRC and St. Johns County Emergency Management conducted a workshop and exercise on July 31, 2013 at the St. Johns County Emergency Operations Center (EOC). This workshop and exercise was called 'Beyond the Basics'. The premise of this event was to build upon last year's 'Back to Basics' workshop and exercise. While the Back to Basics workshop provided participants the opportunity to attend workshop sessions on standard disaster preparedness and response, the Beyond the Basics workshop and exercise capitalized and built upon last year's curriculum.



Over 150 participants had the opportunity to attend sessions on the county's Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan, FEMA Public Assistance, Resource Ordering, and gathering information for Situation Reports. This advanced program allowed participants to review current local plans and to practice with some of the resources they will have at their fingertips during a real disaster. The exercise then required people to implement the skills learned during the morning workshops. The end result was a group of participants that partook in active workshops followed by practical application of the skills learned during the exercise.

In addition to the workshops and exercise, the program had several prominent speakers. From the local area, Bill English from the FAA Traffic Control Center in Hilliard, Jeff Prevatt (800 MHz Radio) from St. Johns County Fire/Rescue, and Scott Cordero, the new Meteorologist-in-Charge at the Jacksonville office of the NWS. And first, Dr. Phil Klotzbach from Colorado State University was Skyped into the workshop to provide an overview of the current tropical season. For more information, contact Eric Anderson at eanderson@nefrc.org.



The Northeast Florida Regional Council is on Facebook



Bringing Communities Together to Advance the Regional Agenda

Vulnerable Populations

The NEFRC Staff was contracted by the Florida Department of Health to provide nine participating counties a "Local Vulnerable Population Assessment". The participating counties are Baker, Bradford, Clay, Duval, Flagler, Nassau, Putnam, St. Johns and Union. The purpose of the Assessment is to develop a standardized, comprehensive, county and regional approach for planning for those that are vulnerable during disasters. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention defines vulnerable population groups as those whose needs are not fully addressed by traditional service providers or who feel they cannot comfortably and safely access and use the standard resources offered in emergency preparedness, relief, and recovery. The Assessment included a list of Florida Statutes related to Special Needs and the responsible entities to provide assistance and ensure continuity of service and care when needed.

The documentation provides current vulnerable populations and estimated 2015 analysis and statistics. It allows Health Departments and County Emergency Preparedness offices another tool in planning for the future. The Assessment includes two major elements. The first is documentation outlining the results of the vulnerable population variables and the second was a series of thematic maps that visually displayed the vulnerable populations for more informed planning decisions. The thematic maps answer the question of where are the areas of relative higher risk within a county. For more information, contact Ameera Sayeed at asayeed@nefrc.org

Inaugural PIO Meeting

At the request of our local governments, the Northeast Florida Regional Council hosted an inaugural meeting of local government Public Information Officers (PIO) from throughout the Region on July 1, 2013. The purpose of bringing the PIOs together includes providing opportunities for peer exchange, training, sharing of best practices, and enhancing Regional coordination and cooperation. Initial items discussed at the meeting included social media in a local government environment, local government messaging, mutual aid and cross jurisdictional support, and training. The PIOs decided to meet quarterly and the next meeting will focus on communications in time of crisis. For more information, contact Brian Teeple at bteeple@nefrc.org.

RLA Class of 2013 Holds Final Class

The Regional Leadership Academy's (RLA) Class of 2013 held their seventh and final program day on July 10th in Yulee at the Betty Cook Campus of Florida State College at Jacksonville. After a brief overview of Nassau County planning issues presented by 2013 Class member Peter King, a fellow 2013 Class member, Perry Bechtle, D.O., provided an informative presentation on the inadequacies of the health care system in the United States. The class then broke into separate small groups of two for the final class project. The final class project gave the members of the class a chance to apply the concepts to the issues they had learned over the previous six months. Each group selected a different scenario for Northeast Florida at random and was required to develop policies to address the scenario and present them to a panel of "elected officials". Finally the groups were brought together into one bigger group at the end to allow for discussion on one major issue that should be considered as a topic of study for the Regional Community Institute. The group discussed a number of issues, and recommended further study be done on regional transportation issues and the need for an effective multi-modal transportation system in Northeast Florida. For more information, contact Ed Lehman at elehman@nefrc.org.



NEFRC Completes Plan Amendment for Welaka

The Town of Welaka is located in Putnam County and claims to have some of the best large-mouth bass fishing in the world known locally as the Bass Capital of the World. It is also home to the Welaka National Fish Hatchery and Aquarium and the Welaka State Forest. In recent months the NEFRC staff has been assisting the Town of Welaka with two Comprehensive Plan amendments. One amendment involved changing land use from Low Density Residential to Agriculture while the other was an update to the Town's Capital Improvements Element.

As the Town works through the new Expedited State Review process, the NEFRC continues to provide technical support to the Town in all planning aspects. The Town of Welaka, much like the other 27 municipalities in the Region, has access to the NEFRC staff for assistance with technical issues and guidance on planning and associated issues. Recently, the Town has been progressive in requesting NEFRC staff to update their Future Land Use Map with the 2013 Putnam County Property Appraiser parcel data. The Town last updated the Future Land Use Map in 2005. For more information, contact Ameera Sayeed at asayeed@nefrc.org.

Did you know

Over the past ten years, regional planning councils in Florida have conducted 420 regional economic impact analyses and studies, often in support of local economic development organizations, helping them complete nationally and globally for investment and skilled jobs