

Northeast Florida CEDS Committee Annual Meeting Summary
October 27, 2017, 9:30 am
NEFRC Offices, 100 Festival Park Avenue, Jacksonville

Attending: Chair Perry Bechtle, Laura Pavlus, Katrina Austin, Cheryl Lynch, Adam Greenspan, Brian Teeple, Margo Moehring, and Ed Preston.

Welcome and introductions: Mr. Teeple welcomed the group, and each introduced themselves.

Annual Overview: Report from the Chair and County Updates: Chair Bechtle did a presentation with a One Region focus. He noted the importance of energy, water, environment, climate change, culture, economics and opportunity disparity. He reminded the group of the opportunity presented by technology in all these areas. He observed that the current CEDS has an insufficient approach to job growth. He referred to the “Innovate” planning currently underway and expressed the need to integrate CEDS into that planning so that there is essentially one economic plan for the region. He also highlighted some of the growth and innovation taking place at Mayo Clinic.

Ms. Pavlus provided an update on Clay County. She noted industrial growth south of Green Cove Springs. First Coast Expressway is anticipated to bring exponential growth over the next 12-20 years. She also notes that the Comprehensive Plan was being updated, and that the County had recently completed a Health Assessment.

Ms. Austin provided an overview of activity in Flagler County. The airport is expanding, in part to accommodate a water runway and the National Guard. A spec. building is currently under construction which indicates a change in market conditions. The County is still dealing with the impacts of Hurricanes Matthew and Irma. Work is being done with the schools on workforce development, and a partnership is being developed with a nursing school.

Ms Lynch provided an update on developments in Putnam County. Georgia Pacific is expanding. FPL is expanding their solar farm. Seminole Electric I converting a coal power plan to natural gas. The County is somewhat constrained as to reserves. There is a successful program for young entrepreneurs underway. Ms. Laura DiBella provided a video update on activity in Nassau County as she was unable to attend, highlighting a great deal of growth in that County. Mr. Teeple provided an overview of projects being considered and/or constructed in Baker County. He noted that St. Johns County has the lowest unemployment in the region, and has recently completed negotiations to relocate the PGA headquarters, which impacts 300 jobs. He provided the 2017 Economic Development Partner Impact report, which focuses Duval as well as providing highlights of the JaxUSA Partnership, which addresses all of Northeast Florida.

CEDS Project Update and Innovate Northeast Florida: After a brief project update, Mr. Teeple provided the RFP for the “Innovate” update and reiterated the Chair’s remarks that it is crucial that Innovate and CEDS align. He urged all who care about CEDS to engage with Innovate.

Changes or Additions to the Project List: Mr. Greenspan provided an overview of JHealth, a project to provide a healthcare innovation center somewhere in the region. Partners are currently being sought. Ms. Moehring outlined “Water Beyond Borders”, the regional action plan on water. The group agreed to add both to the CEDS project list.