

# NEFLRIC Highlights

## Monthly Report of the Northeast Florida Regional Council

November 2007

### Regional Leadership Academy examines various aspects of emergency preparedness during recent program day



The Northeast Florida Regional Leadership Academy, now in its third year, continues to examine relevant issues affecting all of the communities within the region.

On November 14, 2007, members of the Class of 2008 were treated to a full day of information related to a variety of emergency preparedness issues. Topics ranged from understanding the different regional response systems to awareness of local response requirements and evacuation issues as they relate to the preparedness of the region.

Al Sandrik, Lead Meteorologist of the National Weather Service gave a detailed presentation on the Meteorology of a Hurricane; a comparison and contrast of the 2004-05 and 2006-07 season and provided some entertaining information regarding the “Myths and Legends About Hurricanes.”

Nancy Freeman, Nassau County Emergency Management Director and Jeffrey Alexander, Director of Emergency Preparedness Programs for the Regional Council also participated in portions of the day’s presentations.

The Program Day was held at the new state-of-the-art Flagler County Emergency Operations Center amidst computer screens, buzzing scanners and the latest technology and equipment. The atmosphere was very conducive to the topic. Class members presented a “Best Practices” review at the conclusion of the day which culminated in a small-scale tabletop exercise which really hit home the importance of emergency preparedness in the region.

The Leadership Academy is composed of members from all seven counties within Northeast Florida. The next program day which will focus on education and affordable housing will be held in Nassau County on January 9, 2008.

For more information, contact Mike Hadden at (904) 279-0885 X 104.

### Council staff attends St. Johns River Alliance meeting

On November 16, 2007, Council staff attended a meeting of the St. Johns River Alliance held at the University of North Florida’s University Center. The St. Johns River Water Alliance is a nonprofit organization that strives to preserve, protect and promote; restore and celebrate the St. Johns River as an America Heritage River.

Andy McLeod, of Trust for Public Lands, presented on the Florida Forever Reauthorization and Kirby Green of the St. Johns River Water Management District, addressed the Surface Water Withdrawals of the St. Johns River.

For more information, please contact Mario Taylor at (904) 279-0885 X 170.



## Council promotes Users Group to better communication of geographic information systems

The Northeast Florida Geographic Information Systems Users Group (NEFGIS) was first created by the Northeast Florida Regional Council in 1998. At that time the Council had just completed a cutting-edge hurricane study and was becoming increasingly aware of the need to create a consortium of GIS users within the region. In this vein, the Group serves several purposes, including but not limited to collaboration, professional development, data sharing, and over all “Advancing the Regional Agenda.”

The core mission and purpose of the Group continues to develop further to provide a cooperative environment for GIS professionals and data users, to promote communication and data sharing, and as a unified group, raise the status and level of effectiveness of GIS in the our communities. The NEFGIS region aligns itself with that of the Council and includes Baker, Clay, Duval, Flagler, Nassau, Putnam and St. Johns Counties.

On November 9, 2007, the NEFGIS met at the Council for the first of several meetings slated to increase the scope and purpose of the Group. Among its many objectives, the Group offers support and communication of technically sound standards, practices, and procedures for sharing geographic information among participating governmental agencies and the private sector. It shares and disseminates information about mapping, spatial data technologies, and other matters related to Geographic Information Systems.

The Users Group is just one of the value-added services that the Council facilitates throughout the region. For more information, please contact Jonathan Goyings at (904) 279-0885 X 163.

## Council assists in establishment of First-Time Homebuyers Bond Financing for Putnam County

The Northeast Florida Regional Council staff worked with the Putnam Board of County Commissioners and the Escambia County Housing Finance Authority (ECHFA) to make below-market rate financing available to qualified first-time homebuyers in Putnam County. Under the agreement approved on November 27, 2007, by Putnam County the ECHFA will make \$4 million of a recent bond sale available for Putnam County residents.

The ECHFA is working with 25 other counties in Florida, in addition to Putnam County, and is solely responsible for program administration and the associated risks. Loans will be made by cooperating lending institutions who sign-up to participate in the program.

For more information contact Brian Teeple at (904) 279-0885 X 103.

## Council forms committees targeting staff satisfaction and safety

In an effort to promote workplace satisfaction and ensure the needs of Council staffers are being adequately met; two new committees have been formed. The **Employee Satisfaction Committee** will focus on recognizing achievement-related productivity among staff and respond to feedback on employee issues through a newly developed Intranet. The **Employee Safety Committee** will likewise analyze all safety-related concerns and ensure a safe and non-threatening work environment.

For more information, contact Mavis Youngblood at (904) 279-0880.

