

NEFRC Highlights

Monthly Report of the Northeast Florida Regional Council

March 2010

NEFRC Wins Approval of Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

In January 2009, the Northeast Florida Regional Council, under the leadership of NEFRC member and Flagler County Commissioner Milissa Holland, brought together economic development practitioners, business owners, not-for-profit and other non-governmental organization leaders, union leaders, elected officials, and other stakeholders for the purpose of developing a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS).

After nine months of hard work, their collaborative efforts resulted in an economic roadmap for the Region. Adopted by the Northeast Florida Regional Council on September 3, 2009, the CEDS was submitted to the Economic Development Administration (EDA), an arm of the United States

Department of Commerce. We are proud to say that on March 19, 2010, EDA accepted the CEDS as submitted. This is an important accomplishment that, in the words of EDA, "is the first step in working toward the effective and efficient use of taxpayer dollars to create jobs and bring private sector investment to the Region."

As EDA stated, this is a first step in what will be an ongoing effort to promote economic development throughout Northeast Florida. The next step is to complete the task of becoming a Certified Economic Development District. This designation will open the door to EDA infrastructure dollars for the region.

For more information on Northeast Florida's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, please contact Guy Parola at (904) 279-0885 x135, or go to http://www.regi.biz/About_CEDS.html.

NEFRC Staff Participate in LEPC Exercise

On March 4, 2010, the Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) conducted its biennial full-scale exercise in Green Cove Springs. The LEPC partnered with Clay County Fire Rescue and Response Technologies to create a realistic scenario which included a large cross section of nearly 60 Hazardous Materials Technicians from around the Region, including Clay County Fire Rescue, Jacksonville Fire Rescue Department, and St. Johns County Fire Rescue. The exercise was designed to test a wide variety of techniques, including rescue entry, decontamination, reconnaissance, substance identification and air monitoring. The participants were able to use a range of tools to accomplish the assigned tasks to examine how firefighters' prior training and education could be put to use within the context of a safe learning environment. A full after-action report will be written to identify the strengths of the HazMat teams,

as well as to identify areas for improvement and to assess training or equipment needs.

In addition, a Type III Incident Management Team (IMT) was brought in for training to coordinate all of the simulated response efforts of the three-county HazMat teams, as well as to manage the staging of on-site resources, coordinate the request and acquisition of simulated resources, and to serve as the main planning and communications hub for the entire incident. The exercise was regional in scope with participants from around the LEPC District in attendance, and reflected what a potential incident requiring a cooperative, multi-jurisdictional response would be like. Several LEPC Board Members, volunteers, and Staff have been involved throughout the planning, development, and execution stages of this exercise. For more information on this exercise or the LEPC, please contact Jason Taylor at (904)287-0885 x136, or jtaylor@nefrc.org.



2nd Annual North Florida Procurement Association Expo

The North Florida Procurement Association (NFPA) held their 2nd Annual Procurement & Contracting Expo at the University of North Florida, University Center, on March 25, 2010. This Expo was planned to coincide with the observance of National Purchasing Month in March. Participants included: more than 100 vendors; 21 Exhibitors; 7 Supporter/Sponsors; and 44 procurement agents representing 18 agencies. For more information about the North Florida Procurement Association, please contact Joyce Rhodes at (904) 279-0885 x148, or jrhodes@nefrc.org.



Exhibitors and attendees at the 2nd Annual North Florida Procurement Association Expo



NEFRC CEO Teeple Attends Amtrak/FEC Corridor Coalition Meeting in City of Cocoa

NEFRC CEO Brian Teeple attended the kick-off meeting for the Amtrak/FEC Corridor Coalition on March 26, 2010, at the Cocoa City Hall. More than 100 people were in attendance at the meeting, which was led by Martin County Commissioner Doug Smith, who, along with the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council, has spearheaded the effort to return passenger rail service to Florida's East Coast. The Northeast Florida Regional Council has joined with over 130 other organizations and local governments in passing resolutions of support. The meeting included presentations from FDOT Secretary Stephanie Kopelousos and Todd Stennis of Amtrak. Communities slated to host new stations for the line also gave an update on their activities. The line, which would originate in Jacksonville, would run along Florida's east coast, where it would meet up with existing Amtrak service in West Palm Beach and continue on to Miami. In our Region, the City of St. Augustine is proposed to have a station in the initial service. During public comment, representatives from Bunnell, Flagler County and Palm Coast spoke in favor of a Flagler County stop. Florida will apply for upcoming Federal funds to initiate this service later this year. For more information on the Amtrak/FEC Corridor Coalition, please contact Brian Teeple at 279-0880, or bteeple@nefrc.org.

Regional Leadership Series Talks Recreation & Mobility

The third installment of the 2010 Regional Leadership Series was held on March 10th at the NEFRC. This class featured panel discussions on Recreation and Mobility in the Region.

The Recreation panel included Wil Smith, Assistant Director of Parks and Recreation for St. Johns County, Bonnie Barnes of the North Florida Land Trust, Mark Middlebrook of the St. Johns River Alliance, and Andrea Goldman from the Trust for Public Land. Panelists discussed opportunities and challenges in the Region for recreation and preservation of land, provided an overview of their organizations' respective roles, and discussed acquisition and maintenance of parkland in the current economic environment.

The afternoon was focused on transportation issues. Ed Lehman of the Northeast Florida Regional Council provided a broad overview of transportation in the Region. Additional speakers for the transportation portion of the session included James Boyle of JTA, who discussed regional transit; Brad Thoburn of FDOT, who discussed transportation from the state's perspective; and Mike Miller of JTA, who discussed the Regional Transportation Authority study. The afternoon concluded with a "Let's get real" discussion facilitated by Brian Teeple in which panelists and class members discussed how to pay for needed improvements to the transportation system. For more information on the Regional Leadership Series, please contact Jennifer Hewett-Apperson at 279-0885 x104, or jhewettapperson@nefrc.org.

NEFRC Employee News

- The NEFRC welcomes two new employees: Eric Anderson and Traci Hochhalter. Both have been with the Council for several months and are now joining us as regular full-time employees. Welcome!
- Congratulations to Regional Planner Beth Payne on the arrival of her new son, Graham Ashby Payne! Graham was born on March 11th, weighing 8 lbs 11oz. Welcome Graham!