



NEBA News

March-April 2006

Great Speakers Are What The NEBA Meetings Are All About

FEBRUARY MEETING

Patrick Dorsey, the new publisher for the Tallahassee Democrat, was the featured speaker at the February 14, 2006, North East Business Association luncheon meeting. Mr. Dorsey took over as publisher for the Democrat in August of 2005. "Making an impact on our Tallahassee community" was the refrain of his 30 minute speech. Time, money and enthusiasm were underscored as he directed his comments about the quality of production, improved morale, advances in technology and the enhanced on-line, Tallahassee.com.

The Tallahassee Democrat, formerly under the international conglomerate of Knight-Ridder Corporation is now owned by the Gannet Corporation. The Gannet Corp. (a mid-sized company in comparison to Knight-Ridder) sees that its market product is local news that affects the communities in which the paper operates. Mr. Dorsey states emphatically "That even though a greater emphasis is placed in the local market, it will

not curtail its State and National news coverage."

Citizen's committees have and will continue to interface with the staff of the Democrat. "The editorial board will be more reflective of the community while not compromising journalistic independence", said Mr. Dorsey. The mesmerized NEBA audience was delighted to hear that Gannet Corp & Dorsey were conservatives when it came to the affairs of local businesses. His well prepared speech ended with a "Q & A" session.

MARCH MEETING

The guest speaker for the Northeast Business Association March 14, 2006, meeting was Leon County Sheriff, Larry Cambell. His topic was the need for a merger of the Tallahassee Police Department and the Leon County Sheriff's Office Communications Sections. The Sheriff stated emphatically that "If something isn't done, Leon County would be vulnerable to the same problems that faced New Orleans

if a major catastrophe hits the county." Mr. Campbell alarmed the meeting with the revelation that a breakdown of communications coupled with a power struggle at the administrative level could have dire consequences in such an event. "Such problems occur every day" he proclaimed. The budget discrepancies between police and sheriffs have created a situation where the Sheriff's Office carries more of the burdens of law enforcement than the Tallahassee Police Department while receiving proportionately a smaller share of the budgeted revenues.

Sheriff Campbell was careful

Please see "*SHERIFF*" on page 2

Inside this issue...

*Taking Inventory.....
page 3*

Calendar.....page 4

BusinessTips.....page 4

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NEBA News

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“SHERIFF” from front page

not to impugn the rank and file of either law enforcement agency for the failures but stated that “Our problem is with the jurisdictional and political side of the equation.” The Sheriff was quick to point out that the Sheriff’s own studies indicate that one million dollars of savings would occur if the ‘consolidation of communications’ alone were implemented.

In 1980, the Tallahassee Police Department was responsible for 21.8 square miles and now in 2006, 101.9 square miles. With ‘consolidation’ and the lessons learned from other jurisdictions, a better and leaner law enforcement agency would serve Leon County. Mr. Cambell stated that “consolidation is occurring de facto through aggressive annexation without the voters having their voices heard.” The voters need to understand that the city is annexing so much of the county that the voter will not have a say as to who is going to run law enforcement in the community. This annexation process shows no signs of slowing.

Lastly, he stressed that this is not about the Sheriff or the Chief; this is about Public Safety and the need for one coordinated effort. NEBA members and guests were greatly troubled after hearing from Sheriff Larry Cambell.

Note: Since this meeting, the Sheriff has gone before the Leon County Board of Commissioners

to ask them to allow our voters to decide whether to merge law enforcement and under whose leadership.

He also discussed that the right to vote is the real issue. When its a topic that creates this much communication and discussion, we must serve our citizens by giving them the opportunity to make the decision. He stated he is not afraid of the answer we will receive from the citizens if they vote on this issue.

His last statement to the Commission was “Put it to the people... let them make the decision on a merger of the Tallahassee Police Department and the Leon County Sheriff’s Office. The citizens were informed and educated when they made the decisions to elect each of us, they are also informed and educated and apparently from what they tell me, they want to make the decision to vote on this issue of great importance.

The request to put this on the ballot passed 5 to 2 vote by the commission to go ahead and they would present it to the City Commission for their vote and decision on this issue.

As everyone can see, this is going to be a hot topic for the next few months. County Chair William Proctor and Mayor John Marks should be prepared for the April 13, 2006 general luncheon meeting. It could prove to be very informative! The “consolidation question” is sure to be queried - How do they stand?

OPINION:

Taking Inventory

Brian Rowland
Publisher -
Tallahassee Magazine

This is a portion of an article taken from "Tallahassee Magazine". Mr. Rowland is speaking about the Tallahassee and surrounding market areas. He is referring to all or our markets in the panhandle region.

All of our market have common denominators: They are areas of dynamic growth, inhabited by a core of entrepreneurial visionaries who are grasping the many opportunities that come with a developing marketplace.

What can I say about Tallahassee? Look around folks-- the town is exploding. There is very little land available inside Capital Circle. Downtown finally is on the way to reaching its goal of becoming an 18-hour economy.

We have cultural opportunities and an incredible array of recreational facilities. Some of the world's best beaches are within two hours. Eco-tourism will be a destination business

for the market with so much state and federally protected land along the rivers and estuaries. We have great schools, colleges and universities and lots of interesting things to do and see.

I see Rick Kearney making big and innovative things happen at Summit East. I see Lucas Hewett and his international GVAAdvantis team courting and bringing in big, clean business to Tallahassee. And I see Robert Parrish continue to build and create the space for the corporate and retail infrastructure.

But what's missing? A growing foundation of big business to employ people and to become contributors to our social, cultural and economic infrastructure.

I have a keen understanding of the "sales" process in which the foundation is based on supply and demand. Northwest Florida has a strong list of supply assets as mentioned above- and when you add land inventory, the weather and absence of state income tax, it creates a package for relocating firms. My concern is that we don't "give the farm away" in an anxious moment to close

the deal.

I applaud our city leaders for demanding to know exactly what the return on investment would be for the Canadian company that was going to bring a mere 150 jobs to town- and asking for the moon to do so. I hope the local Economic Development Council negotiates a good "sale" and becomes a producer for our economic base.

How about the players in the community doing some big things? We might consider offering them some tax breaks- or streamlining their expansion plans and the permitting process. Growing from within most certainly is a good show of faith to individuals who have been paying taxes, employing our residents, supporting our charities and youth teams and just plain being good corporate citizens.

So welcome to 2006. Let's think positively about the opportunities we have and the challenges we can overcome. Change is here and those who embrace it and adapt can flourish. Those who don't will be left behind.

Calendar

NEBA meetings are held on the second Tuesday of each month at Lucy Ho's- 1700 Halstead Blvd. from 1:00 p.m.- 2:00 p.m. Cost is \$9.00 per person

April 13- Mayor John Marks and County Chair Bill Proctor

May 9- Bob McClure/James Madison Institute- Emminent Domain

June/July/ August- Candidate forums- TBA

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