



# NEBA News

November- December 2006

## NEBA Helps Win Reduction In County Property Taxes

by: **Jim Ashlock**

On Sept. 12, NEBA was in the forefront of over 250 citizens who crammed the County Commission chambers, lobby and adjoining rooms to support a reduction in property assessment rates that zoomed to record levels because of soaring real estate prices. As a result, county commissioners reduced the rate to \$8.49 from \$9.16 per \$1,000 taxable value, which will put \$1.8 million of anticipated tax collections back into the pockets of property owners.

NEBA teamed with Citizens for Property Tax Relief to rally the citizen outcry. CPTR was formed by **Stephen Hogge**, a legislative staff attorney, who saw the impact of the bloated tax collections and declared some of the windfall should be returned to taxpayers. NEBA's board voted to contribute \$500 to CPTR to help promote the call for action. The huge turnout at

the commission meeting was the result. **Jerrell Lowery** of the NEBA board spoke for our association at a rally of protestors on the courthouse grounds before the commission meeting.

The tax reduction was the latest in a series of NEBA successes over time including blocking an ordinance to reduce campaign contributions from outside Leon County; abolition of impact fees that hindered business development and onerous restrictions on business signage.

At the time of this writing, NEBA had declared its opposition to the proposed half-cent sales tax increase to finance indigent health care. Objection was based not on denying uninsured citizens of treatment, but on the method of financing it. The measure, which was on the November 7 election ballot, would generate \$18 million and give Leon County the highest sales tax rate in Florida at 8 percent. This would cap us out on legislatively controlled sales taxes, meaning no more such taxes could be levied in the

future for infrastructure, environmental or other essentials benefitting the entire community. Further, the proposed increase was concocted so rapidly, and the organization to implement it so convoluted, that no one can guarantee it would produce intended results.

The county took \$150,000 of our tax dollars for an intense program to promote passage of this tax increase. Unfortunately, opponents like NEBA had no such resources. Isn't it a testimony to government ethics when a county commission can rip off taxpayers two ways – yank money from their wallets to finance tax increases?

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## North East Business Association

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Leon County Sheriff's Office

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### NEBA News

#### Editors:

**Maureen Thompson**- Media Options

**Nancy Burns**- Leon Co. Sheriff's Office

The North East Business Association publishes NEBA News bi-monthly. Articles of interest are welcome.

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Send articles, letters, photos or suggestions to: NEBA News at the following

email addresses:

burnsn@leoncountyfl.gov or

maureen@mediaoptionsinc.com.

or FAX-850-893-4097

For additional information phone Maureen Thompson at 850-668-0948 or Nancy Burns at 850-922-3331

## Farewell Message From The President

All I can say is "Wow" what a year this has been. Once again, your North East Business Association has been involved with everything from politicians to indigent health care and from merging of law enforcement to eminent domain.

This has been a busy year. You can always count on provocative speakers and plenty of audience participation! At these meetings our group has had the opportunity to learn about issues that affect our community, businesses and families.

Just as a review, here were some of our topics this last year. We had Sheriff Campbell discussing the merger of the Leon County Sheriff's Office and Tallahassee Police Department. Patrick Dorsey, publisher of the Democrat and Bob McClure from the James Madison Institute discussed Eminent Domain. Then came the politics. We featured a discussion with Mayor John Marks and Commission Chair Bill Proctor. Forumed the candidates running for City and County Commission seats. Rallied to support a reduction in property assessment rates which resulted in county commissioners reducing the rate to put \$1.8 million of anticipated tax collections back into the pockets of property owners. Lastly, was the indigent health care sales tax issue.

I do not believe anyone can say that NEBA did not do it's part in the opposition of this sales tax. Our emphasis from the beginning was to inform our members as well as others what this health care issue was about, the lack of a plan on the County's part and to explain the facts as we knew them. Everyone on the NEBA board was supportive of this and worked tirelessly to get this message out to everyone.

NEBA will continue to be a voice for small business when it comes to issues affecting us. This is why we strive to provide informative and interesting programs at our meetings. Thanks to Ted Thomas for bringing us our guest speakers and to all of you for making our speakers feel welcome (or sometimes on the edge of their seats!)

Lastly, I would like to thank my fellow Officers and Board of Directors for their dedication and hard work this year. They have made my job easier and have kept NEBA in the spotlight as a progressive informative association. I ask for your continued support of next year's President, Rich Blankenship. Your support of me this year is well appreciated and I can't thank you enough. I enjoy meeting and talking with many of you each month. I certainly will look forward to seeing you at future monthly meetings this coming year.

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# Come Join Us At The NEBA Holiday Party



NEBA President Nancy Burns would like to invite all NEBA members to the NEBA holiday party on December 12, from 6 P.M. - 8 P.M. It will be held in lieu of our monthly meeting at Lucy Ho's, and will be held at Another Broken Egg Restaurant 3500 Kinhega Dr.

There is no charge except for a new unwrapped toy for the Toys for Tots program. The value is your decision. NEBA supports the Toys for Tots program and we look forward to seeing you at the party.

## ABOUT TOYS FOR TOTS

Toys for Tots is the Marine Corps' premier community action program, one of the nation's flagship charitable endeavors, an American tradition and a national treasure. For 51 years, Marines have been the unchallenged leaders in looking after needy children at Christmas. The Toys for Tots message of hope for the future has motivated youngsters to grow into responsible, productive, patriotic citizens and com-

munity leaders. Toys for Tots has earned the distinction as a program which plays an important role in helping youngsters emerge from a background of poverty to adulthood as assets to society. Toys for Tots not only benefits children, but also has a positive impact on communities, on businesses - large and small, on the Marine Corps and on the nation. Toys for Tots is one vehicle for addressing the issue of poverty among children.

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## Workplace Identity Theft

### Is your Company Exposing You to an Identity Thief?

Below are a few questions business owners should consider:

\*Does your company conduct a criminal or civil background check before hiring employees who will have access to personal identifying information and screens cleaning services, temp services and contractors?

\*Does your company provide

cross-cut paper shredders at each workstation or cash register area for the disposal of credit card slips, sensitive data or prescription forms?

\*Does your company "wipe" electronic files, destroy computer diskettes and CD-ROMs and properly remove any data from computers before disposal?

\*Does your company use an alternate number instead of a Social Security Number for employee, client, customer ID numbers?

\*Does your company have a policy of never selling or sharing data about employees or customer?

\*Does your company keep all personal data about employees and customers in locked cabinets?

\*Does your company place photos on employee identification badges for better identification and security?

For more information on Workplace Identity Theft visit [www.privacyrights.org](http://www.privacyrights.org)

Source: Privacy Rights Clearinghouse

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## Farewell President Nancy Burns

With the start of 2007, we will be welcoming a new President to NEBA. We wish to thank the outgoing President, Nancy Burns for her many contributions to

NEBA this year. She has succeeded in maintaining a top notch association and a membership of over 100 businesses.

We wish you the best in your

endeavors and look forward to working with you on the board next year.

*From the 2006 Officers and Board of Directors*

# 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**

**November 14-** Fairwell to Commissioner Tony Grippa.

**December 12-** Holiday Party- Another Broken Egg Restaurant- 3500 Kinhega Dr.- 6pm- 8pm- admission- one toy

**January 9-** Robin Safley- co-host of "The Usual Suspects" talk show

## Officers and Directors

Don't miss the January 9th, 2007 meeting, when NEBA members will vote on the following proposed slate:

### Officers:

President- Rich Blankenship  
President Elect- Bill Moore  
Secretary- Carolyn Pippenger  
Treasurer- Mark Trafton

### Directors:

Scott Hunt	Ted Thomas
Peggy Munroe	Jim Ashlock
Jerrell Lowery	Maureen Thompson
Stephen Hogge	Cora Ann Chapman
Ben Graybar	Past President- Nancy Burns

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