



NEBA News

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July-August 2008

NEBA Opposes Hometown Democracy Amendment

The so-called "Hometown Democracy" amendment, a statewide "Vote on Everything" initiative, is a grave threat to Florida's future. The proposed amendment to the Florida Constitution would imperil Florida's prosperity and quality of life.

The amendment-requiring that all comprehensive land use plan changes meet voter approval-subverts a well-established, open, accessible and democratic planning process. With the "Vote on Everything" amendment, citizens, not the representative they elected, are forced to regularly decide thousands of intricate land-use planning issues. This poses a unique threat to Florida's business and non-profit

sectors, which will be forced to wage expensive political campaigns in order to make any changes to the local comprehensive plan, no matter how small or technical.

Much is at stake for all businesses and families in the state of Florida:

** The disruption to local communities and the daily lives of Floridians will be extraordinary. Cities and counties will be required to hold elections for each proposed comprehensive plan change-not just major projects, but even minor technical details. It will not be unusual for the voters to have to decide on 200 to 300 comprehensive plan changes every year. In the last four years alone, this amendment would have*

required an average of over 10,599 additional local referendas per year in Florida. In fact, in 2007 alone in Carrabelle, a small town in Franklin County, voters would have decided 840 separate ballot questions.

**The cost will be astronomical: Every city and county in Florida will be burdened with the time and cost of holding additional elections to vote on proposed changes to comprehensive land use plans. Each of these elections will be costly and local taxpayers will have to pay the bills.*

Your Board of Directors voted to oppose this proposed constitutional amendment.

Source:Floridians for Smarter Growth

Forums Are Always Interesting

NEBA continued its round of candidate forums in June with a full house hearing candidates for sheriff and county commission at-large.

Incumbent Sheriff Larry Campbell appeared with his single challenger, Democrat Tommy L. Mills. Campbell emphasized his long tenure in the job and the accomplishments of

his administration. He repeated the need for a consolidated emergency response facility to eliminate duplication between the Sheriff and City of Tallahassee Police Department operations.

Mills, a former member of the Sheriff's Department, said he felt further economies could be achieved without sacrificing efficiency.

C. E. "Ed" Depuy, Jr., running

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NEBA News

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

Publication of submitted materials is subject to review and space available. Article deadline is the 1st day of the month of publication.

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How Do I Create an Office Evacuation Plan?

It takes relatively little time and money to devise an office evacuation plan that can protect you and your employees against natural disasters. Begin by recognizing the full spectrum of disasters and by deciding which ones your office should prepare for, based on the likelihood of such an event in your area of the country. Next, write a basic evacuation plan that takes into account an evacuation route and location to meet after

the evacuation. Assign responsibilities, including an evacuation coordinator, head checker, and first aid administrator. Gather needed resources such as fire extinguishers, blankets, flashlights, and first aid kits, and, finally, practice, practice, practice. Training your staff with periodic drills can be the key to ensuring your evacuation plan is effective when it actually matters.

“FORUM” from front page

for re-election to his county commission seat, was flanked by challengers S. Akin Akinyemi and Alma Gonzalez. Deputy reminded the audience of his success in streamlining county operations, particularly in the area of development permitting. He, too, supports emergency response consolidation.

Both Deputy and Campbell strongly endorsed overall city-county consolidation to eliminate wasteful duplication and achieve economies to relieve pressure for tax increases. Gonzalez ex-

pressed reservations on this point, saying she felt there were other areas of improvement she could foster as a county commissioner.

Akinyemi, of Nigerian heritage, outlined how he had, through education and experience, developed special administrative skills that would benefit taxpayers.

NEBA will round out its candidate forum series July 8 with candidates for the school board – District 4-Jon Conley, Jose Blas Lorenzo, Jr., Rosa Freeman Lovett, Deedee Rasmussen and Floyd D. Self. District 2- Dee Crumpler and Diane Williams-Cox.

Straw Poll

The straw poll results from the June 10th meeting which featured a forum of candidates running for Sheriff and for County Commissioner at large, showed Larry Campbell and Ed Deputy as the

front runners for those positions.

We schedule these informative meetings in an effort to help you make informed decisions. You owe it to yourself and our community to attend these meetings!

A Refreshing Shift In Attitude

by: Jim Ashlock

Based on recent comments in the *Tallahassee Democrat*, a refreshing breeze of common sense seems to be wafting across our community.

Hopefully, this reflects a shift in Tallahassee's perceived anti-business attitude and our city/county's traditional reliance on tax dollars for everything from real estate speculation to investment in questionable corporate ventures.

In "Green energy or dollars" (My View April 28) Devoe Moore takes elected officials to task for wasteful spending and raising fees to cover deficits. "We read about budget cuts and less revenue, while the city and county keep spending tax dollars that we don't have," Moore wrote. He suggests it is perhaps time to form a "Concerned Citizens Group for Spending Our Tax Dollars." Might not be a bad idea.

County Commissioner Bob Rackleff showed special courage with "Let's be Smart About Economic Incentives" (My View April 14). Rackleff explained why he voted against spending \$90,000 as the county's share to build a laboratory to attract a dietary research firm here.

The targeted firm decided not to come here. But by his action, Rackleff sparked new thought on a common local practice – the offering of lucrative incentives to lure questionably viable enterprises to Tallahassee, with minimal regard

for whether any benefit accrues to taxpayers who are footing the bill.

Robert Douglas (My View May 2) also decried the proposal to build a facility to lure the company from California.

"We remain fair game for corporations trolling for communities to give them free money to help them bolster their bottom line," he said.

Could there be a better way to promote economic development without risking taxpayer money for speculative ventures in which the "investors," the taxpayers, have no say?

For example, what if our county and city governments were to adopt a "business friendly" policy? What if they were to revamp their growth management departments to expedite rather than prolong permitting processes? There are many banks in Leon County. What if they were to entertain applications for assistance from businesses thinking of relocating here, rather than the city and county always being asked to put up the money, interest free, from the public treasury? Isn't that the way free enterprise is supposed to work?

Tallahassee has much to offer prospective businesses. Our schools and public services are very good. We have good water in abundance. We have fine neighborhoods. Recreational/cultural attractions abound. Why, then, don't more businesses gravitate to us regardless of financial incentives?

Communities across North

Florida and South Georgia are quick to advise any business contemplating relocation to "stay away from Tallahassee." That's because we make it difficult, and expensive, to set up shop here. How many solid, self-sufficient outfits might come here if they were welcomed with rapid permitting, quick provision of a convenient location with good roads, utilities and services?

Some of the problem may be rooted in Tallahassee's origins. It became a territorial capital in 1824 and the state capital in 1845. From inception, it relied upon tax dollars for its sustenance. It continues to do so today, functioning as a bureaucracy seemingly dedicated more to preserving itself than on promotion of a privately developed service/industrial center.

Hopefully, the shift toward more constructive thinking may even be spreading to another critical issue. David L. Batt (My View May 14) clearly stated why the time has come to reverse the state's ban on offshore drilling. The current surge in gasoline prices, coupled with Tallahassee's rising gas-fired electrical generating rates, has more people questioning our refusal to tap available energy sources.

Jim Minter (My View June 11) said it very plainly regarding the energy problem.

"There is no planning and little preparation for the times we are

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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

July 8 - Political Forum- Leon County School Board District 2 and 4

August 12- Clyde Diao- Chief Economist, Executive Office of the Governor - Economic projections for the State of Florida

September 9- Randy Miller- Executive Vice President- Florida Retail Federation

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entering," he wrote. "It's too late to do many of the things we should have started years ago. The Great American Joyride has been motoring toward this reckoning for decades, but we don't want to hear it."

In a June 28 column, the *Democrat's* business editor, Dave Hodges, cited a survey of Florida citizens showing over 60 percent in favor of offshore drilling.

"No amount of conservation will solve the problem," he wrote. "With our economy continuing to demand conventional fuels, and foreign producers showing no inclination to boost their oil production, it's time to produce more of our own."

Hopefully, Minter is wrong when he writes that it is too late to do things we should have started years ago regarding our petroleum problem. And can Tallahassee, after 184 years, alter its attitude toward economic development? Clearly, more citizens are speaking out on such issues. Elected officials and others in position of influence should pay attention to this refreshing shift in the wind of public opinion.

Newsletter compliments of:

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