



NEBA News

www.NEbusiness.org

March- April 2009

Commissioner Katz Addresses NEBA

by: **Jim Ashlock**

City Commissioner Allan Katz told a standing-room crowd at NEBA Jan. 13 that he favors a significant shift in the way the city does business if current economic challenges are to be overcome.

Katz, an avowed liberal Democrat who has worked at the national political level, cited the city-owned electrical service as a candidate for change. “We’re past the point where we can afford to provide electricity to the community at an acceptable price,” Katz said. “Our utility bills are too high now because of natural gas prices.”

Consideration can be given to selling Tallahassee’s electricity generating facilities and contracting a long-range agreement on acceptable rates with the buyer. “Say we could sell our facilities for \$1 billion,” he said. “Investing that at 5 percent would produce \$50 million a

year for many years, a sum that could even produce a surplus.” He said this would result in



Pictured from l to r: Allan Katz, Lisa Dollar Covert, Pace Allen

the city giving up control of the utility. Conversely, it would free the city from the high cost of staffing and maintaining the facilities, and also generate enough revenue to forestall any increase in property taxes which electric rates currently subsidize.

Katz expressed opposition to proposals to spend tax dollars, or increase hotel/motel taxes or sales taxes, to build a performing arts center. “I like the idea of having such a center,” he said, “But we’re talking \$200 million — \$90 million of that from tax dollars — to build it before any

funds to operate it.”

To Katz, this is a project the private sector should handle.

He noted that Madison, Wisconsin, has a beautiful \$200 million performing arts center. Significantly, a private donor wrote the check for that facility, he said.

Similarly, the much-touted Gaines Street corridor needs stronger private sector commitment if it is to materialize. He said there is little private sector interest in Gaines Street right now, but the city is prepared to offer low-

Please see “KATZ” on page 3

Inside this issue...

Energy Challenge.....page 2

Performing Arts Center Debate.....page 3

Calendar.....page 4

Spotlight on New Members.....page 4

North East Business Association

Officers

Ted Thomas-President
Thomas Mitchell Realty
Scott Hunt-President Elect
Hunt Insurance Group
Carolyn Pippenger-Secretary
Sign Printers
Mark Trafton-Treasurer
Armor Realty
Bill Moore--Past President
Tallahassee State Bank

Board Directors

Peggy Munroe
Mays-Munroe
Nancy Burns
Leon County Sheriff's Office
Jim Ashlock
Jerrell Lowery
State Farm Insurance
Maureen Thompson
Media Options, Inc.
Cora Ann Chapman
Ben Graybar
Tallahassee State Bank
Rich Blankenship- Past President
Richard E. Blankenship, CPA
Stephen Hogge-Attorney- Florida
House of Representatives
Bruce Screws
Bill's Signs
Tom Napier
Probank

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

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

The Tallahassee Neighborhood Energy Challenge

by: **Stephen Hogge,**
CONA President

The Council of Neighborhood Associations is challenging Leon County residents to see which neighborhood is the biggest loser...of excess energy consumption and greenhouse gases that is! We know that a collection of small actions taken by individual households to reduce energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions can make a significant impact.

Our goal is for the Tallahassee Neighborhood Energy Challenge to be a catalyst in combating climate change and promoting energy conservation. As side benefits, you'll reduce your energy bill and even get to know your neighbors a little better.

So, here's how it works. Neighborhoods will form teams and compete with one another for energy conservation bragging rights. We'll see which neighborhood can achieve the largest overall reduction and the largest average reduction in electricity usage. Winning neighborhoods will receive cool prizes and awards.

Our sponsors include Bank of America, the City of Tallahassee, Leon County, Talquin Electric, WCTV-TV, Cumulus Broadcasting, Sustainable Tallahassee,

Salter-Mitchell, Modern Digital Imaging, Fast Signs, Marpan Recycling, and Paragon New Media.

The competition begins April 15, 2009, and concludes October 15, 2009. Any neighborhood in the city or unincorporated area can participate.

Teams may be formed through a coordinated neighborhood effort or as individuals from a neighborhood signing up independently of one another. Team members must pledge to reduce their electricity consumption (a 10% reduction is encouraged) and select at least one specific action to achieve their goal, like turning down water heaters, unplugging appliances when not in use, or installing compact fluorescent lights. Simple actions, big returns!

While it won't affect scores, teams are also encouraged to conserve energy, combat climate change and promote a sustainable community in other ways such as recycling, waste reduction, neighborhood carpooling and neighborhood greening. The best will be recognized.

Don't know where to start? Come to one of the educational forums we're hosting in March and April. You'll get great energy saving tips and advice.

NEBA Hears Debate On Performing Arts Center

by: **Jim Ashlock**

Pro and con positions on public financing for a proposed performing arts center were presented to an overflow NEBA luncheon crowd February 10 by Pace Allen, attorney, and Kim Williams of Marpan Supply.

Allen said it was a bad time for any proposal to finance the arts center through tax increases, such as raising the local hotel/motel bed tax to 5%. He accused the county of trying repeatedly to gain “back door access” to the bed tax for purposes other than tourism promotion.

He said that at a time when the county commission was complaining of insufficient funds to meet essential needs, it still gave \$300,000 to Goodwood Plantation to build meeting facilities in competi-

tion with private properties. He also criticized the county’s



Pictured from l to r: Denise Allen, Pace Allen, Kim Williams, Jean S. Frey

proposal to use bed tax money as incentive for more airline service.

Questions also exist about the community’s ability to support a performing arts center even if it is constructed. And it was stressed that voters had already rejected the idea of such a tax-supported facility in a 1993 referendum.

Williams, long involved with

the Greater Tallahassee Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development Council, defended the application of tax dollars to free-enterprise projects. Subsidies to airline service produced major fare savings to local travelers, he contended, and enhanced economic development initiatives.

He admitted the projected 2,200-seat performing arts center would cost about \$80 million, and that it would sustain an operating

loss. But he insisted the bed tax would cover the losses at no expense to local taxpayers. He says the art center, located on downtown’s southern perimeter, would enhance renovation of Gaines Street.

Williams also said the current poor economic atmosphere should not discourage efforts to move ahead with the arts center.

“KATZ” from front page

cost availability of land it owns in the area.

He defended the city’s pattern of buying property, even though it reduces tax income. The main reason he cited is to lock in right-of-way access for future transportation or infrastructure needs.

He reiterated his traditional opposition to anything that he

feels adds particulate matter to the atmosphere, a basis for his earlier opposition to a coal-fired generating plant near Perry. In his estimation, emphasis must remain on alternative energy, such as the biomass plant proposed for FSU’s Innovation Park.

Lastly, Katz called for more public input into city commission deliberations on all issues affecting Tallahassee. With the city budget

under strain, he feels the city must re-evaluate the amenities it provides. He would like to see more ideas on how to cope with the situation.

“And with that, we’ll have to accept it when the ideas we promote aren’t accepted,” he said. “In turn, the city would have to be responsive to ideas that are good.”

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

March 10- Robert Weissert, Florida Tax Watch- will update us on taxes and the legislature

April 14- Congressman Allen Boyd- will give us a legislative update

May 12- Leon County Commission Chairman- Brian Desloge

Spotlight on New Members

NEBA would like to welcome these new members to our organization. Thank you for joining us.

- *Ann Cleare Real Estate-Ann Cleare- 644-0109
- *Barkley Consulting Engineers-Jo Wall-297-0440 or 297-0697
- *C.U.B.I.C.-Marvin Johnson- 212-2588
- *Chandler Hospitality Sales-Bill Chandler-422-1200 or 766-2642
- *Hancock Bank-Hugh Davis- 425-6122 or 656-2131
- *Joan H. Raley Realtor-Joan Raley-545-9390 or (888) 798-1950
- *New York Life Ins-Sтивен Meredith-893-4906
- *Paden Properties-Denise Allen-510-0804
- *Pittman Law Group-Sean Pittman-216-1002 or 224-7477
- *Prudential Fezler & Russell Real Estate-Georgia Turner- 510-4286 or 385-6643
- *Sanders, Sanders & Holloway PA-Mark Ryan- 222-1608 or 222-2982
- *Tallahassee Land Co- Lewis Buford- 385-6363 or 385-6337
- *Tastebuds Catering-Judy Langston- 309-7348
- *Top Flite Club-Theophas McBride-575-7365 or 504-0977

Newsletter compliments of:

Tallahassee Technology Group Inc

Xerox Authorized Sales Agent

Richard Maus, President

Copiers * Engineering Systems * Printers * Fax
1949 Raymond Diehl Road, Suite B
Tallahassee, Florida 32308
850-385-1772 Phone
850-385-0087 FAX
850-524-3323 Mobile
rich@tlhtech.com



Website Content Updates By:

CURTECH Computer Services, LLC

www.at-home-computer-support.com

850.980.2571

Curt@CURTECHIT.com



North East Business Association
c/o 2791 Capital Circle N.E.
Tallahassee, Fl. 32308