



# NEBANews

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Spring 2017 Edition

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## President's Message

So far we have had a very busy 2017. We have been able to host some great meetings and I want to thank all the speakers and presenters for making this possible. Most importantly I want to thank you the members for supporting the organization and attending the meetings. We still have some great meetings planned for the rest of the year and if you have not made it to a meeting in a while, please mark your calendars and come see us.

Other than focusing on good programs I also made a commitment to grow the membership. So far our numbers are up and we have plans to keep growing. Our membership committee has done a great job this first quarter and I cannot wait to see the end of the year results. So, thank you to all the members that have brought guests and thank you to the Board Members who have done the recruiting.

I am looking forward to the next few

meetings and hope you are too. The April meeting we will be focusing on Crime in the area and hearing what the Police Chief and Sheriff have planned to combat this growing concern. Then in May we will be hearing from Mark O'Bryant from Tallahassee Memorial Hospital about any recent changes and plans for the future.

As always thank you for your time and support as NEBA President. My first few months have been very exciting and I cannot wait to see what the rest of the year has planned. See you at the next meeting!



Will Croley, NEBA  
President

## Economic Development Officials Outline Objectives

By **Jim Ashlock**

Jobs was the topic at NEBA's Jan. 24 monthly meeting where a panel of economic development officials explained their objectives and fielded questions.

On the panel were: Sue Dick, president of the Tallahassee Chamber of Commerce; Jay Revell, vice president of the Chamber; Ben Pingree, director of PLACE, the joint city/county office

of planning, land management and community enhancement; and Al Latimer, director of the city/county Office of Economic Vitality, which replaces the former Economic Development Council at the Chamber.

Each panelist gave power point presentations on their mission and goals for creating jobs and spurring the city/county

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# Challenges of Permitting Process Discussed at February Meeting

By Emily Fritz

The February 28 meeting was a panel discussion of three businessmen who have experienced the city and county permitting processes: Jeremy Matlow, owner of Gaines Street, Midtown, and Northside Pies; Roger Osborne, developer of Midtown Centre; and Rick Moore of Moore-Bass Consulting.

Matlow's first and biggest challenge was the Gaines Street location, which took 13 months to permit. He received unclear instructions from city staff and was ping-ponged back and forth between departments. He rarely got to speak to the same person twice. The lengthy holdup was over his request to install a pizza oven and sink in a location that had previously been a liquor store. Unable to hire costly consultants, he presented a plan he created on Photoshop. The city wanted a more sophisticated plan and rejected his proposal twice. The experience was so frustrating that he selected properties that already had ovens and sinks for his next two locations.

Osborne expected to encounter frustrations with the Midtown Centre, based upon previous experiences with other projects. In an effort to curtail this, he met



L-R: Jeremy Matlow, owner of Gaines Street Pies, Midtown Pies, and Northside Pies; Roger Osborne, developer of Midtown Centre; and Rick Moore of Moore-Bass Consulting, and Will Croley, President of NEBA

with every department in advance. However, two months after he had approval on what he could do, the city imposed changes. Originally he was told no sidewalk was needed, but the city made him change the plans to include one after he had already begun his work. He also dealt with frustrations of dealing with two governments, as one of the project's border streets was a city road and the other was a county road. Osborne said Tallahassee has a reputation across the country for being a difficult place to build.

As a consultant to businesses that deal with the permitting process, Moore's experiences have been different from those of Matlow and Osborne. Because his firm has been

in the business for 26 years, he knows who to call. He agreed with Matlow and Osborne that problems exist, but he said that much improvement has occurred over the years.

All three panelists agreed that business owners should be provided a checklist and given the name of a person at the city or county as the primary point of contact.

City Commissioner Gil Ziffer was in attendance and defended the city's processes. He acknowledged problems have occurred in the past, but the city is working to improve them. He said he and city leaders who were also in attendance would take the suggestions from the panelists back to city staffers. 

## Rocky Hanna, Jimbo Jackson Outline Goals and Spending Priorities

By Emily Fritz

Leon County School Superintendent Rocky Hanna and County Commissioner Jimbo Jackson spoke at the March

28 meeting.

Hanna explained his priorities of cutting district spending by

\$750,000, providing more autonomy for teachers, and improving technical education programs for students who do not plan to attend

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economy. Dick cited studies that show Tallahassee will need 21,558 new jobs by 2020, meaning growth of 120 new jobs per month. Both she and Revell said emphasis will be on growing existing businesses and promoting entrepreneurship as much as on attracting new enterprises. They said the Chamber's strategic plan also calls for improvement in Tallahassee's overall

business environment.

All the panelists noted strategic planning as central to their activities. Pingree said Blueprint 2000 was the driving force in his department's mission, providing the funding for attracting new business and improving the overall community. He cited Cascade Park as the Crown Jewel example of what can be done

to bolster Tallahassee's quality of life. He said emphasis will be on the community's urban core to balance suburban expansion.

Revell said the Chamber was targeting health care, hospitality and 20th century technology manufacturing as business recruitment targets. In manufacturing he sees opportunities in the automotive, software and research areas with a need for skilled workforce development. Dick said the Chamber pursues public/private partnerships, its members serving on numerous committees in both government and private sectors.

For support of small business, Dick noted that the Chamber conducted 70 ribbon cuttings on new businesses in 2016. She said Chamber representatives are meeting regularly with small businesses to determine how to assist them to grow and create jobs. 



L-R: Nancy Miller, City of Tallahassee Commissioner; Jay Revell and Sue Dick of the Tallahassee Chamber of Commerce; and Will Croley, President of NEBA

**...Hanna and Jackson continued from page 2**

college. He wants to revitalize Lively's underutilized campus or dispose of it. He also wants to renovate Rickards, Fairview, and Woodville.

When asked when and where a new high school would be built, he made no prediction of a time frame, since the Department of Education requires that empty seats be filled prior to approving new schools. He projected it will be located somewhere between Chiles and Lincoln, since that is where the county's growth occurs.

The new state law that allows students to cross county lines to attend school prompted several

questions. Hanna explained that Leon County students have top priority, but the law requires him to accept approximately 300 students from Gadsden and Jefferson Counties in the Leon County district for the next school year.

Commissioner Jackson believes Blueprint money should be spent for quality of life projects that will last for the long term. Safety is a high priority for him, and he wants more sidewalks and signage in District Two. He believes business in Leon County is on the rebound, and he's looking for more opportunities for development.

Both Hanna and Jackson



L-R: Rocky Hanna, Superintendent of Leon County Schools and Jimbo Jackson, Leon County Commissioner

acknowledged that because they are relatively new to their positions, they are still on their learning curves. They thanked the audience for giving them the opportunity to serve and for the invitation to speak to NEBA. 



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### Upcoming Meetings

**May 23:**

**Tallahassee Memorial HealthCare President and CEO Mark O'Bryant**

**June 27:**

TBA

**July 25:**

TBA

Meetings are held at Capital City Country Club. Buffets open at 11:30. Meetings start promptly at 12 PM and end at 1 PM.

Members pay \$20; non-members pay \$25.