

REGIONAL PERSPECTIVES

A Quarterly Publication of the North Central Florida Regional Planning Council
Fall 1999



FLORIDA COMMUNITIES TRUST FUNDS MADISON COUNTY BLUE SPRINGS ACQUISITION

A \$.2.2 million grant application by **Madison County** for the purchase of **Madison County Blue Springs** was recently funded by **Florida Communities Trust (FCT)**. The application, prepared by the **Steven Dopp, Senior Planner for the Council**, in conjunction with biologists

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Madison County Blue Springs.

GAINESVILLE'S BIKE TRAIL PATROL

The **Bike Trail Patrol** is a group of citizens who care about keeping the trail system safe and a pleasant experience for cyclists and other trail users. This group was formed in March, 1999, to patrol bicycle paths in and around Gainesville.

The mission of the **bike patrol** is to be of assistance to trail users and make them feel safe when using the trails. **Patrol** members wear a bright yellow vest emblazoned with the words, "**Citizens on Patrol.**" Members go out in pairs, carrying a cell phone and a basic first aid kit with them. While riding the trails, members note where there are dangerous conditions on the trails, such as glass or tree limbs, and report it to the appropriate agency. They are also there to give directions or assist someone in need.

If a member sees suspicious activity on the trail, he or she may report it to the police. The main mission, however, is to be visible; to let people riding the bike trails in Gainesville know that there are people looking out for them, and if they have a problem on the trail, somebody will be there to help them.

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COUNCIL PURCHASES OFFICE BUILDING

The **Planning Council** recently closed on the purchase of the office building it has been leasing for the past 5 ½ years, trading off the woes of renting for the joys of ownership—or is it the other way around? My guess is that we will know the answer to that one fairly quickly. The Council has been leasing office space at different Gainesville locations since its inception in 1969.

Although the **Council** was not looking to purchase, the opportunity presented itself when it was faced with the prospect of dealing with a different owner—one who presumably would be buying the property and improvements for his own needs and purposes. Due, in part, to a good relationship with the owner, the **Council** was given right of first refusal.

The price was right—and the location is good in that it is easily accessible to **Council** representatives, state and local agency personnel, and the general public residing in the 11-county region. Those of you visiting the office over the next few months will immediately notice several changes including a new (outside) paint job, and improved landscape maintenance.



Two members of the Bike Patrol get ready to go out on the trail.

Senior Planner Dwayne Mundy was an invited speaker at the National Governor's Association's Best Practices Conference for State Emergency Response Commissions (SERCs) held September 13-14 in Ogunquit, Maine. Mr. Mundy discussed impacts of hazardous materials planning on local communities, citing the many accomplishments of the Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) representing the north central Florida region. Mr. Mundy also reported on the activities of the U.S. EPA Subgroup on LEPC Issues of which he is the current Chairman.

(Bike Trail Continued from Page 1)

Members are not trained in first aid or police surveillance, and it is their goal to report rather than act. They are there to support trail users who may be in need of help.

The next training session for patrol members will be held on Saturday, October 30, 1999, from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m., at the Alachua Fire Rescue Headquarters, 913 SW 5 Street, Gainesville. If you are interested in getting information on **Gainesville's Bike Trail Patrol**, or to sign up for training, you may contact **Linda Crider, University of Florida, at 352/392-8192** or **Mike Kelly, Gainesville Fire Rescue, at 352/384-3107**.

WEB PAGES OF INTEREST

North Central Florida Regional Planning Council -
<http://ncfrpc.org>

The Original Florida - <http://originalflorida.org>

North Central Florida Economic Development Partnership -
<http://originalfloridabusines.org>

North Central Florida Local Emergency Planning Committee -
<http://www.afn.org/~lepc/>

North Central Florida Areawide Development Co., Inc. -
<http://adco.org>

ADCO NEWS

Interest in the **SBA 504 Loan Program** has increased in recent months, with five projects currently being processed. In addition, the **ADCO Board** has completed funding in connection with an 80-room motel in **Lake City**, and has approved two retail projects in the **Gainesville area**. Projects currently being considered are in **Alachua, Columbia, Dixie, Marion, and Taylor counties**.

The **504 Loan Program** provides financing for businesses to purchase, construct, and renovate (where needed) facilities for business expansion, as well as acquisition of machinery and equipment.

The objective of the **504 Program** is to stimulate employment in the region. Loans approved by **ADCO**

have generated or retained over 360 jobs, with over \$12.6 million in financing provided to small businesses. In addition, financial institutions have funded over \$17 million in first mortgage financing for those businesses. **ADCO** visits the borrowers during the first two

years after funding to confirm the employment commitments and to review financial compliance with the terms of the **SBA's** authorization.

The new **Florida Closing Pilot Program** has been successful in substantially reducing closing costs for the **SBA-Guaranteed Debentures**, which fund the projects being financed. The changes involve eliminating the issuance of duplicate title insurance policies and some taxes in connection with the funding of the Debentures.

Inquiries regarding Small business Administration financing may be directed to Jim Emerson at (352) 955-2199, Ext. 107.



Ray Bahde of Conimar Corporation in Ocala shows Jim Emerson some of their Corel designs used in the manufacture of their line of placemats that are widely available.

(Florida's Communities Trust Fund *Continued from Page 1*)

from the ***Suwannee River Water Management District***, was the fifth application prepared by him since 1992. To date, all of **Steve's** applications have been funded for a total of \$5.8 million. So far, he's batting 1,000!

The **FCT** program awards grants to local governments for the purchase of environmentally sensitive lands for conservation and resource-based recreation. The grant program is very competitive. Only 20 to 25 percent of the applications submitted each year to **FCT** are funded. Ninety-two local government applications were submitted to **FCT** for this year's funding cycle.

The **Council** prepares applications free of charge for member local governments; however, Steve notes that he can prepare only one application at a time due to his workload and the large amount of time and effort required to prepare a successful application (at least three months)—so if you wish help with an application, call early. ***Congratulations to Madison County and congratulations to Steve!***

**NCFRPC SERVICES
AVAILABLE TO LOCAL
GOVERNMENTS AND
BUSINESSES**

- .. local comprehensive plans
- .. land development regulations
- .. transportation plans
- .. transportation disadvantaged plans
- .. disaster mitigation and recovery plans
- .. emergency response plans
- .. hazardous waste verification
- .. CDBG grant applications
- .. CDBG grant administration
- .. FRDAP grant applications
- .. tourism development
- .. general economic development
- .. small business loans

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