



2011 Legislative Priorities

Adopted December 6, 2010



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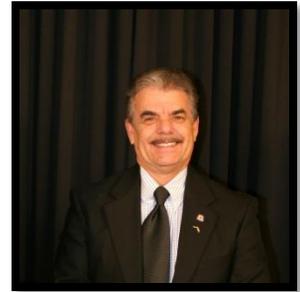
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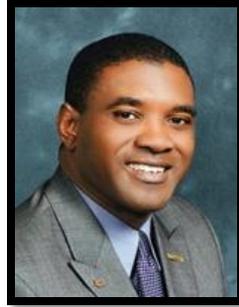
Vision

It is the year 2020 – a decade since creation of the Flagler County Strategic Plan – and a higher quality of life in our community has surpassed expectations. The economy is diversified and provides high-wage jobs and high levels of employment that increase the median income of Flagler citizens. Natural resources, include water and environmentally important land, are protected and conserved. Arts, culture and education are cherished and nurtured, as are Flagler's ecological, architectural, and historic resources. Local governments work collectively to provide enhanced services in the areas of law enforcement, transportation, and utilities and to plan effectively for the future. As a result, in large measures, residents express a high degree of satisfaction with their community and their local governments.

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*We are
counting
on you*



**Representative
Fredrick W. Costello**
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Legislative Session Schedule

- December 15, 2010 – Legislative Day - Flagler County
- March 8, 2011 - Regular Session convenes
- March 8, 2011 - 12:00 noon, deadline for filing bills for introduction
- April 26, 2011 - Last day for regularly scheduled committee meetings
- May 2, 2011 - All bills are immediately certified
- May 6, 2011 - 60th day—last day of Regular Session

FLAGLER COUNTY

2011 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES



The information contained within this document represents the Flagler County's legislative interests for the year 2011. Flagler County remains highly dependent on property taxes to finance local programs, many of which have statewide significance. The County would like the support of the entire delegation in the following areas.

1. **MAINTAIN TRANSPORTATION PRIORITIES** - Maintain funding from the State gas tax and other sources for all aspects of transportation, to include the FDOT 2.5% matching funds for FAA airport projects.
2. **TOURIST BED TAX COLLECTION FROM ON-LINE BOOKING AGENCIES-** Defeat any legislative attempt to pass an exemption from existing taxes for the on-line booking companies.
3. **AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROGRAM** - Support repeal of the cap on the Housing Trust Funds and urge the Governor and Legislature to adopt statutory changes during the 2011 Legislative Session to repeal the cap. Also, support the full appropriation of housing trust fund monies for housing in the Fiscal Year 2011-2012 budget.
4. **PROTECT REVENUE SHARING PROGRAMS AND EXISTING FUNDING FOR GRANTS PROGRAM** - Support revenue sharing and grant programs.
5. **ALTERNATIVE WATER SUPPLY-** Provide funding for alternative water supply projects.
6. **PAIN MANAGEMENT CLINICS** - Strengthen SB 2272 by addressing the negative impacts pill mills have on a community.

The following pages provide a detailed overview of each of the priorities.

FLAGLER COUNTY

2011 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES



1. MAINTAIN TRANSPORTATION PRIORITIES

Background: The Florida Department of Transportation remains a key element in keeping county and regional infrastructure safe and abreast of continued growth. Therefore, planning and oversight to coordinate the funding and the time schedule for projects is essential to ensure orderly growth.

Requested Action: Maintain funding from the State gas tax and other sources for all aspects of transportation, to include the FDOT 2.5% matching funds for FAA airport projects.

Effect: Transportation projects will ensure that long-term needs will be met during an affordable cost period and an economically critical period for employment in the region and the State.



Specific Flagler County Projects:

- Matanzas Woods / I-95 Interchange Design
- Palm Coast Parkway 6-Laning
- Protection of State Road A1A
- Flagler County Airport 5-Year Plan

2. TOURIST BED TAX COLLECTION FROM ON-LINE BOOKING AGENCIES

Background: Of the 67 counties in the State, 60 counties levy Tourist Development bed taxes. Of these, 22 counties have filed suit to compel on-line booking companies to pay the taxes owed for their rental income they obtain from visitors who book their rooms. The companies buy the rooms at wholesale from the hotels and then resell them but without paying the tourist tax on their markup. These are existing taxes and not new taxes. No basis for an exemption has been presented. The well known companies (Orbitz, Priceline, Hotels.com, etc.) are all based out-of-state. During the last session, the Legislature tried to pass a bill on behalf of the on-line booking companies but it failed due to a recommendation from Florida Tax Watch that the exemption was not justified. The companies intend to file another exemption bill this session.

Requested Action: Defeat any legislative attempt to pass an exemption from existing taxes for the on-line booking companies.

Effect: Support tourism by ensuring tourist bed taxes are paid to the proper governmental entity in the future.





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3. **AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROGRAM**

Background: The Housing Program's primary purpose is to improve housing opportunities for the benefit of low and moderate income families. The goal of the Housing Program is to create partnerships, maximize resources, and identify new strategies to develop and preserve affordable housing.

Requested Action: Support repeal of the cap on the Housing Trust Funds and urge the Governor and Legislature to adopt statutory changes during the 2011 Legislative Session to repeal the cap. Also, support the full appropriation of housing trust fund monies for housing in the Fiscal Year 2011-2012 budget.



Effect: Ensures continued funding of the Affordable Housing Program, which is extremely important given the current economy and number of homes in foreclosure.

4. **PROTECT REVENUE SHARING PROGRAMS AND EXISTING FUNDING FOR GRANTS PROGRAM**

Background: Revenue sharing programs and grant funds programs such as Public Safety, Libraries, Transportation, Housing, Rural Health Programs and other infrastructure projects. Budget problems, state funding for these programs has become more uncertain from year to year.



Requested Action: Support revenue sharing and grant programs.



Effect: Reducing or eliminating revenue sharing or grant programs places the County in the unenviable position of either cutting back on needed services or raising property taxes when the unemployment rate and the foreclose rate in the County are among the highest in the state.

Specific Flagler County Project: The County receives revenue sharing and grant funding for programs associated with Public Safety, Libraries, Transportation, Housing, Rural Health Programs and other infrastructure projects.



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5. ALTERNATIVE WATER SUPPLY

Background: Adequate supplies of drinking water protect public health and safety, support our quality of life and boost our economy. As Florida's population continues to grow, care must be taken to ensure a balance between drinking water supplies and the environment. Future groundwater withdrawals will be limited to protect the environment and ensure a sustainable resource. Because it can take up to 10 years or more to design, permit and construct large-scale regional alternative water supply projects, local utilities are now pursuing new alternative water supplies.

Requested Action: Provide funding for alternative water supply projects.

Effect: Alternative water supply projects will ensure a long-term sustainable water supply that will reduce reliance on groundwater and minimize the environmental impacts.

Specific Flagler County Project: Coquina Coast Seawater Desalination Project



6. PAIN MANAGEMENT CLINICS

Background: Senate Bill 2272, known as the "Pill Mill Bill" went into effect October 1, 2010. The bill requires registration at the state level and added requirements for pain management clinics. It is partially designed to weed out the criminal element. However, the bill does not adequately address the negative consequences on local communities.

Requested Action: Strengthen SB 2272 by addressing the negative impacts Pill Mills have on a community.

Effect: According to the Center of Disease Control, recent data reveals that there has been a tenfold increase in prescriptions for oxycodone and other opiod painkillers in the U.S. Friends, neighbors and even children are getting hooked on these powerful drugs. Unintentional overdoses have replaced motor vehicle incidents as the leading cause for accidental deaths.



Specific Flagler County Project: The Flagler County Sheriff's Office indicated that a pattern of illegal drug use and distribution has been linked in large part to certain pain management clinics operating in and around the County. From 2007 to 2009, twenty-six (26) deaths occurred in the county having some type of prescription drug present in their system.