

Ocala/Marion County Economic Action Team Key Initiatives Status Update November 2009

At the October 29, 2008 Economic Growth Summit, which convened nearly 100 business executives, community leaders and elected officials, a twelve-point plan was activated to help stimulate growth in our economy. The Economic Action Team is aggressively implementing this plan and has attached a status update on their activities.

1. Expand Dislocated Worker Funding, Workforce Board Funding and Training Grants
2. Provide Training and Educational Resources for Dislocated Workers
3. Infrastructure Improvement, Creation of New Business Parks including Ocala International Airport
4. Impact Fee & Permit Mitigation Relief for Economic Development Projects
5. Define Specific Areas in the Community for Redevelopment for Business Improvement Zones and Pass State Legislation for an Enterprise Zone
6. Expedited Permitting by State and Local Governments
7. Competitive Rates and Policies for Ocala Utility Services
8. Intensify the EDC's Business Recruitment and Marketing Efforts
9. Strengthen Business Retention Programs
10. Support the Chamber's "Buy Local" Initiative
11. Improve Small Business Assistance Delivery System and Entrepreneurial Development Capability
12. Explore "Green" Industry Attraction as a Possible Target Industry

Initiative	Description	Lead Organization (s)	Status Updates
Expand Dislocated Worker Funding, Workforce Board Funding and Training Grants	Provide immediate safety net for dislocated workers and pursue avenues for training to help them secure new jobs/career paths	Workforce Connection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workforce Connection has expanded “safety net” services for dislocated workers in conjunction with the monthly job fairs to include many community resource organizations, partnering with the County and Dept. of Financial Services on an upcoming Housing Help event, and distributing health, mental health and public insurance resources to the community. • Workforce Connection has recently submitted five retraining grant applications for a total of \$5 million. These grants will be used to re-train and up skill our unemployed workforce and to provide much needed assistance with support services. • Marion County’s Participation in the Subsidized Employment program as developed in conjunction with Workforce Connection committed a minimum of \$500,000 in matching funds to meet the criteria for a 20% match as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Tax Act of 2009. <p>October Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workforce is in contact with the State on a grant and is working to create an RFP to use a staffing firm for assistance • Solicited Stearns’ support for s federal grant that has been submitted. • Subsidized employment program has been received well. County is providing \$95,000 for companies to receive reimbursement for up to six months for new job creation. The County has a list completed for Commissioners to review and will be contracting with Workforce on those positions. • CFCC working closely with Workforce on training for Green Jobs. BA degree application to be approved soon. (Continues)

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Expand Dislocated Worker Funding, Workforce Board Funding and Training Grants	Provide immediate safety net for dislocated workers and pursue avenues for training to help them secure new jobs/career paths	Workforce Connection	<p>November Update (Continued)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workforce Connection has received a \$359,000 grant for Healthcare initiative. • Marion County will finalize contract with Workforce Connection for approval at the BCC Dec. 1 hearing and anticipate employees to begin working Dec. 7. • Workforce Connection has one private sector company as a pilot for the subsidized employment program. • Workforce Connection has applied for a National Emergency Grant for \$1.6M in process with USDOL. • Workforce Connection has instituted a number of training options and will have obligated \$2.9M in funds by December 13.
Provide Training and Educational Resources for Dislocated Workers	Access and availability for training to pursue new career paths	Workforce Connection/CFCC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workforce Connection has enrolled 1,665 individuals in training for \$1.1 million and projects to award another \$1.8 million by December 2009. • CFCC has accommodated all students who have wanted to enroll, increasing its enrollment 20% this term and 40% since fall, 2006. Special financial provisions are available for dislocated workers and many are enrolled at the college. • CFCC is partnering with Workforce Connection on various short-term training programs and support for dislocated workers seeking new opportunities. • CFCC is seeking grant support to initiate several new degree programs for which there is a high job demand. <p>(Continues)</p>

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Provide Training and Educational Resources for Dislocated Workers	Access and availability for training to pursue new career paths	Workforce Connection/CFCC	<p>(Continued)</p> <p>October Update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workforce Connection assisted with DCF Call Center that has created 75 jobs. There have been strong candidates who meet the requirements of: 500% of the poverty level, a child in the household 18 or younger. <p>November Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workforce Connection placed 76 employees at the DCF Call Center. CFCC conducted a six-hour open resume' lab for dislocated workers. CFCC conducted a Retooling and Refueling three-day program for dislocated veterans. CFCC has 20 dislocated workers in the NCCER Certified Green Construction Professional. CFCC has 12 dislocated workers in Certified Nursing Assistant training. Thirty-five individuals graduated from CFCC from the West Ocala Green Pilot Project, a 40-hour green jobs training program.

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<p>Infrastructure Improvement, Creation of New Business Parks Including Ocala International Airport</p>	<p>Become more competitive with other communities by creating “shovel-ready” sites</p>	<p>City of Ocala/Marion County</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moving forward with positioning the Magna project to a shovel-ready condition. The City and County held a joint workshop on September 22nd to provide input on the next steps as identified by staff. City and County adopted a joint Resolution supporting partnership on moving Magna forward The City of Ocala is working to establish new business parks at the Ocala International Airport and the Magna property (NE section of I-75 and US 27) which will provide “shovel ready” sites for new prospect companies leading to significant short and long term job creation. Also, the City has received a grant from the Economic Development Administration to construct a portion of NW 44th Avenue that will allow several businesses to expand creating over 70 new jobs. <p>October Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The City and County have approved a joint resolution to become engaged partners on infrastructure planning for the Magna property
<p>Impact Fee & Permit Mitigation Relief for Economic Development Projects</p>	<p>Remove barriers that impede the process for companies that would create jobs in our community</p>	<p>City of Ocala/Marion County</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The City of Ocala through its “Economic Investment Program” creates economic growth within the Ocala city limits and utility service areas through both the attraction of new business and encouragement of existing business to grow. The City may, on a case-by-case basis, provide financial assistance to or on behalf of a company where a positive return on investment to the City and/or the community can be determined. Marion County is revising the EDFIG program to include provisions for payment of Impact Fees and Utility connection Fees and Capital Improvement charges on behalf of qualified applicants. <p>October Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marion County is drafting a proposed revision to the EDFIG program which would create the option for projects to apply for some or all of their impact fees to be paid on their behalf for projects of economic significance. (Continues)

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			<p>(Continued)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The City of Ocala will be considering impact fee mitigation for water and sewer for infill and environmental projects. The 44th St. project is still on tract. <p>November Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marion County is working with the Utilities Department to draft a utilities Connection Fee/Capital charges payment program ordinance to allow the payment of fees over time to reduce the start up costs for new and expanding businesses.
<p>Define Specific Areas in the Community for Redevelopment for Business Improvement Zones and Pass State Legislation for an Enterprise Zone</p>	<p>Generate incentives to entice companies to expand/locate to Ocala</p>	<p>City of Ocala/ Marion County</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Governor Crist signed Enterprise Zone legislation at Lockheed Martin in May Adoption of the Recovery Zone designation. This gives the County the opportunity to qualify for additional bonding opportunities under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Tax Act of 2009. These opportunities include tax-exempt private activity Recovery Zone Facility Bonds and Recovery Zone Economic Development Bonds which provide a 45% tax credit of interest for public issuance. Seeking expansion of the zone to include the airport development The City of Ocala is working with the Office of Tourism, Trade and Economic Development to designate an Enterprise Zone in West Ocala through which a variety of special state incentives are available to businesses created new jobs <p>October Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The City is satisfied with response from the Governor's office regarding assistance with the Governor's Closing Fund. The City is pursuing avenues to include the Airport development within the Enterprise Zone.

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Expedited Permitting by State and Local Governments	Remove barriers that would impede the process for companies that would create jobs in our community	City of Ocala/Marion County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revising Marion County's EDFIG program to include provisions for payment of Impact Fees and Utility connection Fees and Capital Improvement charges on behalf of qualified applicants. <p>October Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marion County is working on a plan to create and expedited permitting structure for economically significant projects in Marion County. Presentation of an Ordinance to the BCC is anticipated by the end of the year. <p>November Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marion County continues to support and encourage business expansion and relocation with the EDFIG program.
Federal Legislative Support	Determine availability of Federal programs to assist with local recovery efforts	Congressman Cliff Stearns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assisting Marion County, City of Ocala, CFCC, Workforce Connection and others to receive timely federal funding including several recent successful grants related to our economy. • Cutting the red tape - with the Federal Aviation Administration to get quicker siting and funding to complete the City of Ocala's Air Traffic Control Tower and with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to have the Heart of Florida Medical Center designated a Federally Qualified Health Center. • Realtors led to the co-sponsoring of H.R. 3044 enacting an 18-month moratorium on the Home Valuation Code of Conduct (i.e.: appraisal rule) -- If passed, this would immediately improve home valuations and help boost the local housing market. • Helping the people of Marion County by sponsoring and organizing Homeownership Workshops, assisting <p>(Continues)</p>

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Federal Legislative Support	Determine availability of Federal programs to assist with local recovery efforts	Congressman Cliff Stearns	<p>homeowners facing foreclosure, holding outreach sessions to assist citizens with federal agencies such as VA, Medicare, IRS, Social Security and assisting anyone with any problems anytime in our "open-door" Ocala office 352-351-8777.</p> <p>October Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marion County federal funding requests submitted including: Marion County road and other construction, Florida Institute for Human and Machine Cognition, CFCC, Devereux Kids. • Federal grant work with Marion County community including: Ft. King and the National Park Service, Well Florida Council - HRSA, Builders Association of North Central Florida - Dept. of Labor, CLM Workforce - Dept. of Labor. Federal grants recently awarded: City of Ocala and CFCC. • Working to bring the Department of Commerce International Trade Specialist to assist the Marion County Chamber of Commerce and our businesses break into the export market. • As Ranking Member of the U.S. House of Representatives Communications, Technology & the Internet Subcommittee working to keep the Internet free of government mandates -- including those that would harm small business, consumers, competition and our local economy -- by opposing the Federal Communications Commission's "net neutrality" plan. • Working with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs on funding the ongoing construction (current jobs) and eventually staffing (new jobs) of The Villages Outpatient Clinic -- Marion County's largest current construction project slated for completion late spring of 2010. <p>November Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Congressman Stearns worked with President Obama to bring \$200M to Florida for the Smart Grid Investment Grant Program. <p>(Continues)</p>

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Federal Legislative Support	Determine availability of Federal programs to assist with local recovery efforts	Congressman Cliff Stearns	(Continued) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Congressman Stearns helped Intellon Corp. win a \$5M grant. • Congressman Stearns and Sheriff Dean are working together to prevent cargo theft. With I-75 running directly through Marion County – the Stearns/Dean effort would be insurance to cargo carriers and businesses shipping along this route and would help our local businesses who ship cargo too.
State Financial Services	Determine availability of State finance programs and initiative for local displaced workers	CFO Alex Sink For updates on recovery efforts through CFO Sink	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CFO Sink has made herself available to the economic response team and has made staff available to the team as well. • On Wednesday, September 2, DFS partnered with Workforce Connection to hold an Access to Health Care Workshop for the Unemployed and the Uninsured. • On Tuesday, September 15, DFS took part in a Workforce Connection’s Job and Community Resource Fair to discuss insurance and retirement issues with consumers. • On Saturday, October 10, DFS will hold a Florida Housing Help workshop to allow consumers to meet directly with lenders and HUD counselors to discuss options for avoiding foreclosure. <p>November Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More than forty homeowners facing foreclosure were assisted during a Florida Housing Help workshop on October 10th. • We expect continued demand for these events based on unemployment trends. • A local resident was able to keep her home as a result of our workshop by meeting with her lender and reducing her house payment from \$1,700 to a more manageable \$800. • The Department of Financial Services is currently working with Workforce Central to schedule another workshop in Jan.

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State Legislative Support	Support local initiatives for economic recovery	Representative Kurt Kelly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the members of the economic action team with all legislative and state matters in working with the Governor's office and OTTED. • Expand state agencies to bring outsourced work to Marion County citizens. • Continue to show leadership, encourage citizen support and provide resources to all levels of government. • Work to find regional jobs for Marion County citizens.
Competitive Rates and Policies for Ocala Utility Services	Remove barriers that impede the process for companies seeking to create jobs in our community	City of Ocala	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The city remains diligent in offering competitive utility services at competitive rates. For example, the city recently passed an ordinance extending the period of time before an account is considered late and allowing security deposit extensions. The city is currently performing separate electric and water-sewer rate studies which will consider revisions to how impact fees are charged and whether reductions, waivers, or suspensions should be offered. Also, the city is in the process of hiring a consultant to perform an efficiency study of the electric utility. In addition, the city has established a volunteer Electric Oversight Committee comprised of local business representatives serving in an advisory capacity to the utility and City Council.
Intensify the EDC's Business Recruitment & Marketing Efforts	Recruit solid companies to expand and/or move to the community, creating quality jobs	EDC/Workforce Connection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In an unprecedented collaboration with Dept. of Children and Families, City of Ocala and Marion County. The EDC & Workforce Connection was successful in locating a new DCF call center in Ocala with 75 new subsidized jobs in the County. Workforce will also be the first in Florida to roll out a subsidized work project in Citrus, Levy and Marion Counties offering hundreds of temporary jobs. This process is slated to be replicated throughout the State. <p>(Continues)</p>

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Intensify the EDC's Business Recruitment & Marketing Efforts	Recruit solid companies to expand and/or move to the community, creating quality jobs	EDC/Workforce Connection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The EDC is working closely with Enterprise Florida, SLC's and other business influencers to develop more prospect lead generation. • The EDC Prospect Development Program utilizes marketing research to identify and contact business prospects and encourage them to consider Ocala/Marion County as a business destination for expansion or relocation. • The EDC developed new community branding to communicate our strengths/assets. • The EDC is coordinating community participation in industry trade shows to scout potential business prospects and get Ocala/Marion County on their radar. <p>October Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The EDC is currently working 18 projects for companies with the City and County for new job creation • The EDC is pursuing options for designated improvement zones layered with the Enterprise zones to assist companies that are willing to create jobs within certain areas. • Recent site location consultants event was successful. • The EDC and the City will be unveiling the new Airport development with a press conference and booth presence at the 2009 trade show of the National Business Aviation Association. <p>November Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The EDC will present five to six projects to City and County in the next 30-60 days for grant funding consideration. • Pete Tesch met with executives of nine aviation/aerospace companies at the NBAA show.

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Strengthen Business Retention Programs	Effectively communicate available programs that could assist local companies with growth and job creation	EDC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilize existing industry program and EDC communication tools to educate local companies on EDC support services. • EDC staff is currently reviewing 12-13 projects “in the works” to accelerate their commitments to relocate or expand in Marion County. <p>October Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City/County supplemental funding should help some local businesses on the fence about whether or not to expand. <p>November Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By the end of EDC’s 2008/2009 fiscal year, 102 existing industry visits were completed.
Support the Chamber’s “Buy Local” Initiative	Keep money spent by local businesses and individuals in the community	ALL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Ocala/Marion County Chamber of Commerce launched a <i>Buy Local</i> campaign that spans both private (retail sales and business to business sales) as well as the public sector procurement effort by encouraging consumers, local businesses and municipal government to adopt a meaningful <i>buy local</i> strategy as a means to contribute to a strengthening our local economy. <p>October Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chamber is working with City/County on new policies and streamlining the bid process for buy local campaign and hoping the school board and large companies will follow suit.
Improve Small Business Assistance Delivery System and Entrepreneurial Development Capability	Effectively communicate available programs that could assist local small businesses and/or entrepreneurs with growth and job creation	Chamber/ Small Business Development Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and stage Small Business Recovery series: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Selling to The Government (with City, County, School Board) 2. Curriculum for Small Business 3. Recovery including workshops on cash flow, contract renegotiation, sales training and marketing (with CFCC) 4. “Finding Financing” Workshops (with SBDC) <p>(Continues)</p>

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Improve Small Business Assistance Delivery System and Entrepreneurial Development Capability	Effectively communicate available programs that could assist local small businesses and/or entrepreneurs with growth and job creation	Chamber/ Small Business Development Council	<p>(Continued)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use Principals of Economic Gardening to identify businesses within Enterprise Zone to expand business resulting in job expansion and increase profitability. (With City of Ocala) • Provide education and opportunities for small businesses to identify global opportunities for their products, goods and services. Continue Buy Local Messaging and Advocacy for retail and for Government Procurement to save jobs <p>October Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Chamber is coordinating an Export Best Practices Workshop in November to help companies expand business and grow jobs through international trade. • The Chamber is adding a VP position to assist with Economic Gardening program. <p>November Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support Chamber educational and networking programs focused on existing small businesses. • Expand Chamber outreach efforts to communicate existing marketing and development opportunities to small and medium-sized businesses.
Explore “Green” Industry Attraction as a Possible Target Industry	Research to determine our competitiveness and possible strategies to attract companies in this industry	EDC/Chamber	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The EDC commissioned market research to determine our competitiveness and possible opportunities in this area. <p>November Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The EDC will be participating in a Solar Opportunities Webinar through Enterprise Florida Nov. 12. • The Chamber will utilize survey findings of the Chamber's "Green and Sustainable Development Committee." • The Chamber will implement recommendations of Chamber's "Green and Sustainable Development Committee" including educational, recognition and incentive programs.

Organization Contacts for Media/Public Information				
Organization	Contact	Title	E-mail	Phone
City of Ocala	Marc Mondell	Dir. Long Term Planning/Sustainability	mmondell@Ocalafl.org	352-629-8312
CFCC	Dr. Joe Wallace	Dir. Marketing/PR	wallacej@cf.edu	352-873-5845
Chamber of Commerce	Jaye Baillie	President/CEO	jaye@ocalacc.com	352-629-8051
Speaker Larry Cretul	Thomazine Mcneil	Legislative Aide	Thomazine.mcneil@myfloridahouse.gov	352-873-6564
Senator Charlie Dean	Chase Daniels		Daniels.chase.S03@flsenate.gov	
EDC	Ann Spang	VP Corporate Relations	ann@ocalaedc.org	352-291-4416
Representative Kurt Kelly	Jennifer McDougald		Jennifer.mcdougald@myfloridahouse.com	352-732-1313
Senator Evelyn Lynn	Connie Mullis		Mullis.Connie.S07@flsenate.gov	352-694-0160
Marion County	Heather Danenhowe	Mgr. Pub. Information	Heather.Danenhowe@marioncountyfl.org	352-438-2310
CFO Alex Sink	Tammy Teston		Tammy.teston@myfloridacfo.com	
	Misty Cash		Misty.cash@myfloridacfo.com	
	Randall Brown		Randell.Brown@myfloridacfo.com	(386) 323-0914
Congressman Cliff Stearns	John Konkus	District Director	john.konkus@mail.house.gov	352-351-8777
Workforce Connection	Margaret Spontak	VP Business Development	mspontak@clmworkforce.com	352-873-7939