



Performance Quarterly

October 2008

Alachua County, Florida

Alachua Excels

Ensuring Fiscal Stability How You Can Make a Difference

We are entering the fall/winter season anticipating a Thanksgiving feast with friends/family and are looking forward to the colder weather and upcoming holidays and new year. This year, however, we are entering the holiday season with financial caution, both on a personal level and professional level.



As a fiscally responsible local government agency, we are continuously watching the financial markets. We regularly hear about the ' \$700 billion government rescue plan ' focused on shoring up businesses and freeing available credit, bond rating agencies facing difficult times, and a general reduction in 'cheap' money to be loaned. This has an impact on our organization by reducing our ability to obtain funding through bonds and obtaining short term loans for medium and large scale projects.

Alachua County is centered in a more stable part of the state and has maintained a conservative approach to budgeting and financing. We built strong fiscal policies and financial reserves. However, we still need your help to paddle the white water raft through these troubled times. Looking into the future, there are a number of projects and programs that we would like to undertake, but, with decreasing property tax revenue and decreasing sales tax revenue, we must look at alternative ways to fund our projects.

Programs such as Alternative Futures, Aligning for Success, and PRISM all help to ensure that the direction we are heading is the correct path to follow to ensure organizational alignment and fiscal responsibility. Please visit page 7 of this issue of the *Performance Quarterly* to learn more about each of these programs and feel free to discuss any ideas you have with your supervisor or manager.

In Public Service,
Randall H. Reid, Alachua County Manager





Performance Quarterly

October 2008

Alachua County, Florida

Alachua Excels

Economic Trends Impacting on Code Enforcement

By Rick Wolf, Assistant Director of Growth Management

Several observations have been made about current economic trends relating to the impact on Building and Code Enforcement operations within the Department of Growth Management. Particularly of interest are the weak real estate market and the reduction of new housing starts within Alachua County this past year. So how has this affected the Building and Code Enforcement Divisions of the Growth Management Department?

A close examination of annual statistics over the past five years provides valuable information on assessing the impact. New Single Family Home building permits (350 permits issued in FY07/08) have declined considerably this year and were only at 45% of the average for the past five years (784 permits average FY03/04 thru FY07/08). However, new Commercial Building Permits issued in FY07/08 (38 permits) were equal to the past five year average for new commercial permits, and the Commercial Remodel Permits issued (177 in FY 07/08) exceeded the past five year average (105 permits) by 169%.



New Construction Site

Overall, the FY07/08 total permits issue (4,172 permits) was 87% of the past five year average (4,790 permits). While single family building permits issued and the inspections required to process them have declined, other permit categories have remained relatively constant over the past five years including commercial activity in unincorporated Alachua County.



>>Continued on page 3>>



Performance Quarterly

October 2008

Alachua County, Florida

Alachua Excels

Economic Trends Impacting on Code Enforcement

>>Continued from page 2>>

Although the new single family starts may be down, building permits continue for commercial properties and residential remodeling, additions, and home repairs at a consistent level.

Another observation impacting Code Enforcement that is directly attributed to the economy is related to types of code violations now occurring. For the first

An Illegal Dumping Site



time the highest number of violations in FY07/08 was for improvement of property without a building permit. Typically unserviceable vehicles or accumulation of junk (trash and debris) has been the categories with the highest number of violations in unincorporated Alachua County in past years. Also we have observed a slight increase in illegal dumping

activities on vacant properties where people are trying to avoid the tipping fees for proper disposal.

These trends indicate that applications for building permits for new starts are proportional to the real estate market and ability to obtain loans, but code enforcement activity is at times indirectly related to economic conditions showing an increase in certain types of violations.

The Building and Codes Enforcement Divisions of Growth Management remained busy in FY07/08 with commercial building, remodels, additions, home repairs, illegal dumping issues and compliance inspections.





Performance Quarterly

October 2008

Alachua County, Florida

Alachua Excels

Public Safety—Wildfire Mitigation uses High Tech Tools to Measure Success:

By Jeff Bielling, Wildfire Mitigation Officer and Megan Stout, OMB Intern

Within recent memory, we can remember wildfire seasons where we were sitting on the edge of our seats wondering if the fire would get worse, threaten houses, or come near our neighborhood. The Wildfire Mitigation & Strategic Planning section within the Department of Public Safety was created several years back to lessen the risk of wildfire to existing and new developments.

The Wildfire Mitigation Program is established in the Conservation and Open Space Element of the adopted Alachua County Comprehensive Plan. The Program relies upon development review, direct fuel management activities, and public education to mitigate the severity of the wildfire hazard in Alachua County.

The development review process is used to assure that new development at risk from wildland fire will employ design and construction features and ongoing wildland fuel management activities to provide passive protection of improved properties from exposure to wildland fire. Wildfire Mitigation Program personnel are part of the County's Development Review Committee staff and review all of the proposals for new development projects in the County and develop wildfire mitigation plans for these projects as needed.



Recent Prescribed Fire at Alachua County Forever Sweetwater Preserve



>>Continued on page 5>>



Performance Quarterly

October 2008

Alachua County, Florida

Alachua Excels

Public Safety – Wildfire Mitigation uses High Tech Tools to Measure Success:

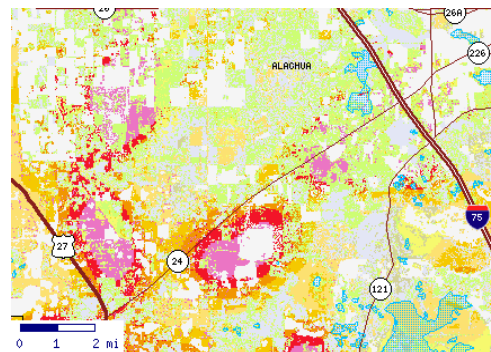
>>Continued from page 4>>

Presently the Wildfire Mitigation Program is capable of providing mechanical treatment [heavy mowing] and prescribed fire to manage wildland fuel levels. With this in mind, the Mitigation Team’s principal short-term goal is to work with other County Departments such as the Alachua County Forever Program in the Environmental Protection Department, and the Public Works Department, to restore and manage county-owned lands. However, in the long run, the Mitigation Program hopes to tackle fuel management on at-risk privately-owned lands in the wildland-urban interface.

As Jeff Bielling, of the Wildfire Mitigation & Strategic Planning Section explains, prescribed fire is the preferred fuel management tool as it is cost effective, provides the most complete consumption of wildland fuels, and is ecologically sound. To effectively and safely use prescribed fire it is important to



GIS Map of Alachua County Forever Mill Creek Property Burn Unit



Fire Risk Assessment System Wildfire Susceptibility Index GIS Map

be proactive by identifying land that contains high amounts of fuel, prepare the land in the proper manner for burning, and conduct the prescribed burn when conditions are right to assure that a burn can be conducted safely and achieve the desired results.



>>Continued on page 6>>



Performance Quarterly

October 2008

Alachua County, Florida

Alachua Excels

Public Safety – Wildfire Mitigation uses High Tech Tools to Measure Success:

>>Continued from page 5>>

Accurate assessment of an area to be burned is a very important aspect of performing a controlled burn safely. Specifically, they have to evaluate the land to be burned for a number of factors such as the type of wildland fuel and how much fuel is present on a site and evaluate the weather conditions under which a particular site should be burned to accomplish the desired outcome. The Wildfire Mitigation staff use GPS (Global Positioning Systems) to develop the boundaries of areas to be burned and to help assess the effectiveness of recent prescribed burns. Other technology that is utilized by the Wildfire Mitigation Program includes a geographic information system (GIS) and wildfire hazard mitigation mapping.

The program has been very resourceful in gathering and adapting existing information as needed rather than producing the same information. A primary example of this is the Program’s use of the Fire Risk Assessment System, a GIS-based mapping system developed by the Florida Division of Forestry to identify areas that are susceptible to negative impacts from wildfire.



Public Information Display at Fire Prevention Week 2008 Event

In addition to the use of technology to lessen the risk of wildfire, the Wildfire Mitigation Program is also reaching out to educate the community about wildfire mitigation concepts. The goal is to form more of a partnership between the government and the community, where residents assume more responsibility for the safety of their own homes by appropriately managing the wildland fuels around their homes and businesses.

If you have any questions about the Wildfire Mitigation Program, please contact Jeff Bielling at 362-264-6584 or jbielling@alachuacounty.us.





Performance Quarterly

October 2008

Alachua County, Florida

Alachua Excels

Initiatives to Promote Alignment and Fiscal Accountability

Alternative Futures—A program to help focus our organization on well thought out and documented proposals that will fundamentally change our business plan by enhancing revenues or reducing costs while maintaining or expanding our level of service. Contact: Richelle Sucara at RMS@alachuacounty.us.

Aligning for Success - Promotes alignment of the Board's mission, vision, values and strategic plans to our day-to-day workflow by ensuring that the outcomes of our work support identified strategies and goals, and that we are accountable for our efforts. Contact Donna Bradbrook at dbradbrook@alachuacounty.us.

PRISM (Process Review and Improvement for Sustainability Model) - A tool that can be used to document qualitative and quantifiable results of process improvement activities. Contact Donna Bradbrook at dbradbrook@alachuacounty.us.

Municipal Government Awards Season

As we approach the end of this calendar year, it's time to reflect on the accomplishments of the past year. Programs implemented, reductions in costs, increased effectiveness or efficiency, or increased customer service are all worthy of recognition. If your department did something outstanding and you wish to share that info with others, please consider submitting an application for one of the national awards programs through ICMA or NACo or one that specializes in your functional area.

If you have ideas or suggestions for award submissions, please contact Megan Stout, OMB Intern at mstout@alachuacounty.us.





Performance Quarterly

October 2008

Alachua County, Florida

Alachua Excels

Sampling of Measures in GovMax that hit the Target

General Government

Fiscal YTD 2008

- Public Information – Meetings broadcast w/o tech difficulty96.91
- OMB – Employees trained on performance management.....365
- Tourist Development – Unique visitors to visitgainesville.com.....35,333

Community Support Services

- Medicaid – Dollars Saved on Monthly Medicaid Bill.....1,355,999
- Ag Extension – Youth enrolled in 4-H.....8,100
- Crisis Center – Hours of service offered by unpaid counselors.....39,250
- Social Services – Number of citizens provided assistance.....1,010

Court Services

- Day Reporting – Community service hours completed..... 5,285.50
- Community Services– Hours by Work Crew.....73,090

Environmental Protection

- Water Quality – Code violations identified and corrected87
- Hazardous Materials – Code complaint violations corrected..... 94%
- Hazardous Waste – Pounds of reuse products provided252,829

Growth Management

- Codes Enforcement- Building inspections performed.....15,630

Information & Telecommunications Services

- Information Services – Customer satisfaction level: software.....98%
- Information Services - Customer satisfaction level: hardware.....98%
- Information Services – Customer satisfaction: project completion.....100%

Public Safety

- Public Safety Administration – Public Education Events.....221
- Rescue Medical Services – Emergency response time (in seconds)..... 54.50
- Fire Protection Services- Emergency response time (in seconds).....51.50

Public Works

- Fleet Management – Costumers satisfied with service.....97.70%
- Solid Waste – Business waste audits conducted388

Donna Bradbrook

Strategic Performance Manager

Alachua County Management and Budget

ph: 352-264-7066, fax: 352-338-7362

e-mail: dbradbrook@alachuacounty.us

