



Performance Quarterly

Spring 2009

Alachua County, Florida

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Facing a Historic Challenge

Municipal governments have not previously faced the fiscal and economic challenges we see today. As we begin our FY 2010 budget planning process, we must adjust to our new reality related to tax relief legislation and the global recession. As I have referenced time and time again, we are all in the white water raft and we must continue to work together to paddle through these rapids and steep drops that are ahead of us.



We continue to evaluate the Alternative Futures proposals and need to proactively respond to what our future looks like by focusing on what kind of organization we want to create and maintain while continuing to focus on our customer's needs. By strategically managing our resources through these difficult times, we should focus on our core mission, educate our employees and the public, and embrace long term savings. Ultimately in these challenging times, we can no longer expect to maintain our current levels of service or ensure that all of our programs remain whole.

Alachua County is somewhat more fortunate than our coastal neighbors to be relatively isolated from the devastating revenue reductions. However, we are still faced with an estimated \$10 million reduction from the projected FY 2010 budget. These reductions were created in part by the legislative actions of the past couple of years, the economic recession, and increasing fixed costs such as fuel, inmate medical, and utilities.

Our organization has already started to mitigate this budgetary deficit by taking proactive actions such as placing a freeze on hiring and some discretionary spending, as well as beginning the discussion and planning earlier for these changes. We have also actively involved our whole organization in making Alternative Futures recommendations. As you read this newsletter, please be aware of the continued good work we provide.

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





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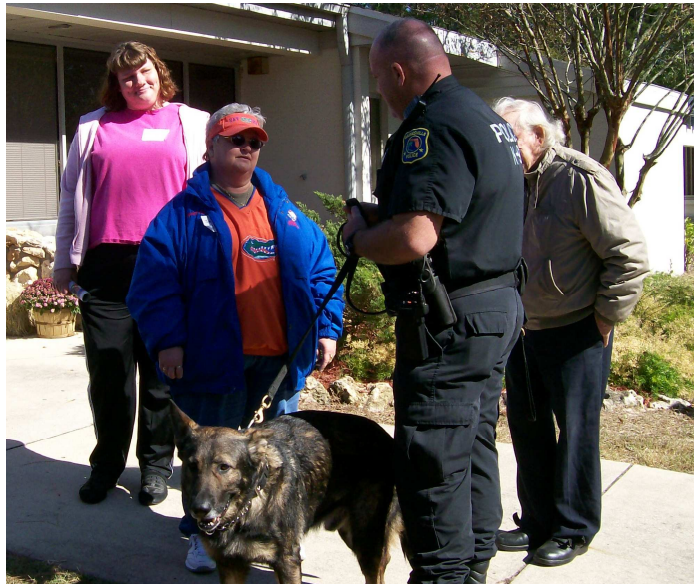
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Animal Services First Open House – Huge Success!

By Hilary Hines, Public Education Program and Megan Stout, OMB Intern

As 2008 came to a close, many animals were able to find new homes for the New Year. On November 22, 2008 Alachua County Animal Services held its first open house with hugely successful results. By the end of the day 12 dogs, 12 cats, and 1 rabbit were adopted.



Visit from Alachua County Sheriff's Office K-9 Deputy at the Animal Services Open House

To help ensure that the event ran smoothly, more than 50 volunteers came out to help with a variety of tasks. These volunteers covered everything from helping with the food to signing people in. Animal Services also had a crew of well known community dog trainers on hand to help new families work with adoptable dogs.

According to David Flagler, Animal Services Director, "during the fiscal year, (Animal Services) averaged about 16.5 adoptions per week." Comparing the open house statistically with the number of adoptions from a typical Saturday, "you could say that the open house provided more adoptions in one day than the shelter usually experiences in an entire week," noted Flagler. Furthermore, by breaking down the numbers, Animal Service averages 3.3 adoptions per day including Saturday, which generally is the busiest day. The open house produced seven times the number of adoptions on an average day and probably five times the number of adoptions on a typical Saturday.



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Hilary Hynes greets volunteers and visitors at the Alachua County Animal Services Open House

In addition to the open house, Animal Services also held another event in December: the "Inventory Reduction Sale." Although the event was done on a smaller scale, the sale was equally successful producing similar huge numbers. For the December event, people from as far as Tampa, Jacksonville, and even Georgia came to the shelter.

In order to develop and implement a lasting volunteer program at the shelter, Amy Page has been promoted from the field officer position to Program Coordinator. Page will also primarily be responsible for Adoption Outreach. The program will be beneficial for the two events that Animal Services has planned for this year so far. The first was "Come Fall in Love" that was held on February 14, 2009. The second will be another open house, "It is Raining Cats and Dogs!" which is set for April 11, 2009 and is currently in the planning stages.

For anyone interested in helping out, please feel free to contact:

Hilary Hynes, Public Education Program Coordinator
352-264-6881 or 352-213-1241 heh@alachuacounty.us

OR

Amy Page, Program Coordinator
352-258-4864 apage@alachuacounty.us



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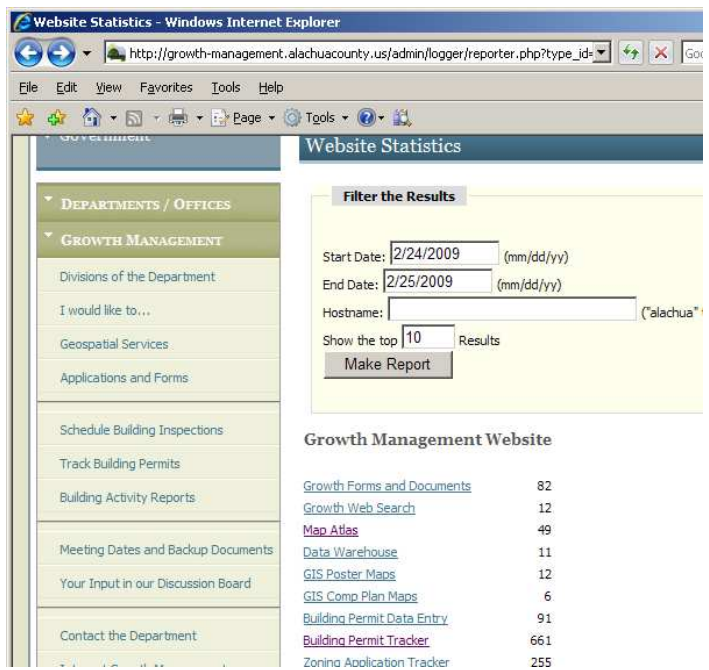
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Measuring the Impact of our GeoWEB Services on the Local Community

By Juna Papajorgji, GIS Manager

Over the years, the Department of Growth Management has built several web-based GIS Software Applications. These Software Applications are tightly woven into the daily work flows of the department's divisions, such as Comprehensive Planning, Development Services, Building Permits and Inspections, Zoning, Code Enforcement, and GIS Division.

On a typical day, these Geo-Web Software Applications serve an average of 400-500 users with 900-1,000 transactions. A transaction could be a user scheduling from home a building inspection for the following day, a rezoning applicant running a buffer from home to create a map and a mailing list for property owners surrounding the land to be rezoned, a user reporting a code violation from home and uploading photos, a developer making a preliminary estimate of Impact Fees, or staff registering a Green Building into the building's GIS database. The users include employees at the Department of Growth Management and in several other Departments of the County, but the majority of them are from the general public. The general public includes individual citizens, nonprofit organizations, the private sector, other governmental organizations, neighborhood groups, educational institutions, etc.



A random day's statistics from a few GeoWeb services.

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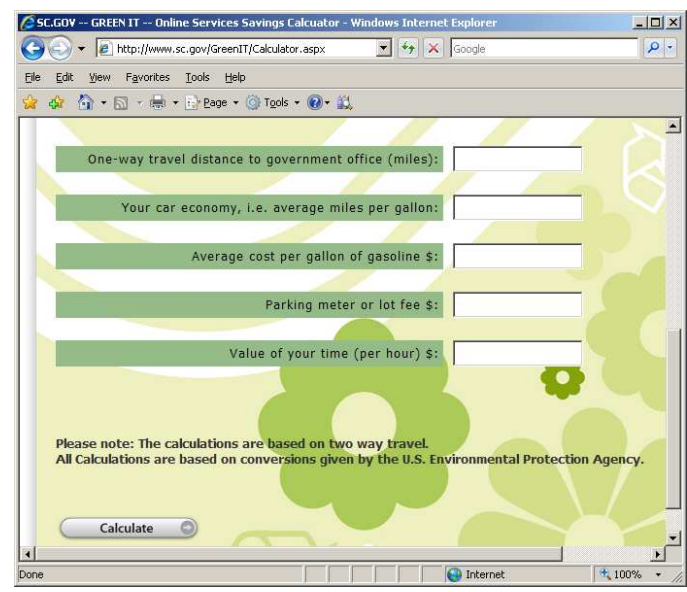
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These users, silently and on their own, conduct business online, 24 hours per day, 7 days per week without use of dedicated staff time. This translates into huge operational savings. A simple example is the free and direct access to our GIS Library of 150+ layers with no need for an account or a password. Had this service not been established, the equivalent staff time needed to accommodate the current average for this service of 200-300 transactions per day would have amounted to at least an additional 1.7 full time positions.

While measures such as this example assess the efficiency by which we use our organizational resources (amount of services delivered per tax payers' money), they do not capture the impact on the sustainability of our local community.

The state of South Carolina has recently developed an Online Calculator which estimates the financial and environmental cost of driving to the nearest government office, translating it in savings obtained when using services online as opposed to in person. The users input various factors such as travel distance, fuel economy, gasoline price, parking costs, and their hourly rate. The calculator returns how much a user would save by conducting business online.



Green IT Calculator from the State of North Carolina

To broadly assess the impact of our GeoWeb services on our local community, we used this Online Calculator. We assumed that 100 out of the 900-1,000 daily transactions were conducted by Alachua County



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residents and for each transaction we used the following averages:

- user lives 7 miles away from downtown (*downtown to Gainesville City limits is 5-6miles*)
- user makes \$12 per hour
- user pays \$2 per gas gallon
- user's car gets 20 miles per gallon
- user does not pay for parking the car downtown

We obtained the following results:

By conducting business online, each user is saving \$5.6 per transaction. If the 100 users had driven to our office, their vehicles would have collectively burned 4 barrels of oil or 70 gallons of gasoline, and they would have collectively released 1,360 pounds of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. If we multiplied these 1,360 pounds by 365 days, we would find out that in a year we have saved 496,400 pounds of greenhouse gases from being released into the atmosphere or 1,460 barrels of oil from being used.

These calculations and these measurements are broad and general. Other indicators and more rigorous parameters could refine this assessment. But nevertheless, these findings reveal very valuable information to be used in budget allocation decisions. For back up information on this report please see links below. For questions, please contact GIS Manager, Juna Papajorgji at 352.384.3180.

- Use the Green IT calculator developed by the state of North Carolina at:
 - <http://www.sc.gov/GreenIT/Calculator.aspx>
- View a list of GIS Services developed by Growth Management at:
 - http://growth-management.alachuacounty.us/gis/gis_index.php
- View a list of eServices developed by Growth Management at:
 - <http://growth-management.alachua.fl.us/eservices.php>
- Enter the portal of the GeoWeb Building Permit Tracker at:
 - <http://growth-management.alachuacounty.us/permits/>



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Alternative Futures Program Inspires Citizen Suggestions

By Zeria Folston, County Manager's Intern and
Megan Stout, OMB Intern

With the realization in mind that Albert Einstein was correct when he said "we cannot solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them," Alachua County, at the direction of County Manager Randall Reid, developed the Alternative Futures initiative to assess current County service delivery.

The goal of Alternative Futures is to enhance revenues and reduce costs while still maintaining and/or expanding the level of service provided by the County. Ultimately, the program intends to help the County brace for expected tough economic times in the upcoming fiscal year. Each county department was asked to draft proposals with their suggestions on what their specific department can contribute to the cause.

In addition to the efforts on behalf of the employees of each department, the citizens of Alachua County were also asked to participate in the program by offering their own Alternative Futures suggestions. More than 100 people sent in their idea or multiple ideas. When all was said and done, there were 335 total proposed options.

Examples of the more general proposals submitted included recommendations of strategies that could improve the County's service delivery to citizens. Others put forward suggestions concerning the ability of the County to determine what the needs of our community are and how to prioritize those needs. Some of the ideas offered went even further in depth. However, no matter the depth and specificity of each individual submission, all of the proposed ideas help the County to forge a bridge to a new culture of doing business on behalf of the citizens of Alachua County.



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Citizens Dedicate a Night to their Future

By Megan Stout, OMB Intern

On February 23, 2009 and March 2, 2009 citizens of Alachua County were invited for the chance to step into the County Commissioners' shoes. On the invite list were Alachua County Citizens who were A.C.C.E.S.S. graduates, are serving on County Advisory Boards, submitted Alternative Futures suggestions, or otherwise are being recognized for their active participation in County affairs.

Attendees heard opening remarks from Commissioner Lee Pinkoson at the first event and Commissioner Paula DeLaney at the second. In addition, they were welcomed by County Manager, Randall Reid. Suzanne Gable, Director of the Office of Management and Budget then gave an overview of the budgeting process, as well as discussed the current economic climate and its affect on the fiscal year. Afterwards, County Manager Randall Reid asked the citizens to break into small groups to discuss their views on various aspects the County and the government.

Following the first group activity, those attending were then split up into groups of five in order to participate in a simulated budgeting activity. The groups were give a packet of supplies, including budget score sheets and a set of "Alachua County Bucks" to cut \$5,000 dollars from their given \$50,000 budget. To add to the challenge, various "zingers" were thrown in, such as having to cut another \$1,000 from their budget. Furthermore, some costumed visitors spoke to each group and lobbied to save their top priority line items from receiving cuts.

Both nights were successful, with over 50 participants coming out to either Lof-ten High School or Kanapaha Middle School. Many citizens offered up appreciative remarks at the end of the night. Due to the positive response received from these events, planning has now begun to hold 2-3 more events that will be open to the general public. Please look for future press releases with the details.

Donna Bradbrook

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