

CITRUS COUNTY COUNCIL

PO BOX 925 Lecanto, FL 34460

www.citruscountycouncil.org

"Working together to preserve quality of life in Citrus County"

PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT - 2009

COUNCIL CHANGES: The Council's Executive Board had several new elected officers: Gail Jannarone 1st VP, Al Grubman 2nd VP, Carl Simpson Treasurer, Bob Burke Secretary, and remains committed to being vigilant and proactive regarding county government but also hopeful that there would be opportunities to work with county government when we are in agreement on issues and/or strategy. Unfortunately, there were not many of the latter. The CCC updated and upgraded its website through the efforts of a talented new webmaster, Karen Aillen. Her services are paid for through a gift from one of the Council's organizational members, the Nature Coast Group of the Sierra Club. Watch the Council's new website for news on Hot Topics, committee activity and events of interest to our citizens and our area. www.citruscountycouncil.org

COMMITTEE WORK: Compliments to the Committee Chairs, Tom Mize (Governance and Fiscal Watch), and Gus Krayner (Environment and Natural Resources), as well as the members and delegates who come to monthly committee meetings and work hard on the various projects. Special thanks to Dee Atkins who was a big contributor in 2008, and worked intensely during the beginning of 2009 in that position. Unfortunately for the Council, she had to retire from Council responsibilities before this year was up. Her chair as head of the Education Committee remains vacant although Bob Dougherty diligently continues to represent the Council at monthly school board meetings.

Education Committee: As chair pro tempore of the Education Committee, this president, at the direction of the Council, launched an appeal to keep the Marine Science Station open. Letters were sent to School Board members urging them to find the funds, a relatively small amount at \$200,000 considering the district's budget of \$216 million, to keep the facility open. (See Education Committee Annual Report for more details.) Greg Schmukal, delegate from Too Far, Inc., also appeared at a School Board meeting offering many reasons for the Science Station to remain funded and open. The school board relented and used stimulus funds to keep the Marine Science Station open.

Joint Environment & Natural Resources Committee and Governance Committee Workgroup: This ad hoc group was formed to monitor and oppose the county's Comp Plan amendments that would allow an expansion of the River Lodge Resort RV Park to something in excess of 2200 RV slots in the northwest corner of the county. Also being opposed by the Council are efforts to create a Port District in that same area which, among many deleterious effects, would change land designated as Conservation to the Port District land use retaining vested mining and lime rock processing rights within the Port District, despite the obvious incompatibility with other proposed Port District uses such as restaurants, hotel, shops and residences. Representatives from the Council met with state Department of Community Affairs planners and presented extensive documentation supporting the inappropriateness of the proposed changes. DCA subsequently reported a significant number of objections in its ORC (objections, Recommendations and Comments Report). The workgroup appeared at the county's Planning and Development Review Board outlining its objections, resulting in the PDRB not approving 2 of the 3 CPAs before it and the withdrawal of 2 others by the applicant. The county has, nonetheless, approved the subject Comprehensive Plan amendments. However, the workgroup will continue to monitor and oppose the action.

Environment & Natural Resources Committee: Please see separate Committee Report.

Governance Committee: Please see separate Committee Report.

SPECIAL EVENT: Most months, the Council invites special guests to address the delegates, members and visitors from the community as part of its public education mission. May's guest speaker was Eric Zamora, a conservation photojournalist (www.ericzamora.com), whose work appears in magazines and newspapers across the country, including USA Today, Miami Herald, and National Geographic (online). The 2009 "Florida Forever" Calendar features one of Mr. Zamora's works on its cover. He was working on staff at the Florida Museum of Natural History, Gainesville. Mr. Zamora's presentation was his collection, "Life On The Edge," a conservation photography initiative. The intent was to use the power of photography to remind all of the irreplaceable beauty of our home, here, on the Nature Coast. The meeting was attend by a significant array of the county's notables, including the entire editorial board of the Chronicle, mayor of Citrus Springs, city manager of Inverness, a Commissioner, interim county administrator, and a variety of county department heads.

"SEAT AT THE TABLE": As the County has formed new citizen advisory groups, the Council has been specifically invited to "have a seat at the table." The two new citizen advisory groups are the Local Mitigation Strategy Workgroup (LMS), which deals with emergency preparedness issues, and the Stakeholders Advisory Group (SAG) which reviews and advises on administrative regulations, impact fees, and other issues as raised. The Council has had three representatives on the LMS: past president, Tom Mize; current president, Theodora Rusnak; treasurer, Carvell Simpson, serving consecutively. This president currently represents the Council on the SAG.

COMINGS AND GOINGS: Although the Council lost a long-time organizational member, Kings Bay Association due to its dissolution, it welcomed two new and one returning organizational members, Save the Manatee, Withlacoochee Area Residents, and GFWC Women's Club of Beverly Hills respectively. Additionally, three new Associate Members joined this year: Patricia Cowen, Christopher Lloyd, and Patricia Wade. On behalf of the Council, Welcome!

CHALLENGES AHEAD: The Council will continue to monitor and investigate the county's efforts at possible privatization of water/wastewater resources. Long Range Transportation Planning, TBARTA, and the Progress Energy Levy nuclear plant continue to be major issues facing the citizens of Citrus County as examples of increased taxes with little-to-no benefit, in our opinion. The Hollinswood Harbor/Port District and the River Lodge Resort RV Park also represent, in our opinion, changes to the county for an elite few without benefit to the majority of citizens. Destruction and pollution of our natural resources hardly seem to be policies worth supporting. This president and the Council will continue to attend any and all meetings raising issues of benefit vs. cost and fairness of burden. For extensive details on this issue, please go to our website www.citruscountycouncil.org and read all about it.

Thank you to all the officers, committee chairs and members who make things happen for the better around here. A special thank you to this year's 1st VP, Gail Jannarone, who, due to other commitments, is not standing for re-election. She has been a stalwart and sensible sounding board, and I thank her for that as one of many contributions. When I served as Secretary, I used to sign off with "It's not a meeting if you're not there." My successor, Bob "Breeze" Burke, did me one better: "It's a better meeting if you are there!" A big "thank you" to Breeze, a unique contributor this past year! Couldn't have done it without any of you, and it was a better year because you all were there!

Respectfully Submitted,

Theodora C. Rusnak
President, 2009