



2018 Legislative Recommendations

Economic Development

- **Continue to support Enterprise Florida to locate new companies that will provide job growth for our citizens.**

Last session, an \$85 million Florida Job Growth Grant Fund was initiated to target economic development investments, and provide base operation funding necessary for Enterprise Florida, Inc. to continue their work creating jobs and diversifying our economy. However, there is stiff competition from Georgia, South Carolina, Tennessee and Alabama for these same jobs. It is important to note that our Volusia economic development agencies work closely with EFI in bringing new business, resulting in new jobs to our area.

Construction

- **Support funding for Dept of Business & Professional Regulation to curb unlicensed contracting in Florida.**

Unlicensed contractors have been known to work for less than licensed contractors because they avoid worker's compensation and liability insurance requirements. Unlicensed contractors cannot get permits, so their work is not inspected and may not be up to local code; the owner's property insurance will not cover an unlicensed contractor's work.

Tourism

- **Continue to support Visit Florida to promote the State as a convention and tourist destination.**

Florida's overall economic vitality relies heavily on tourism and the ability of VISIT FLORIDA to attract the millions of visitors who generate billions of dollars in spending. In 2016, the Sunshine State welcomed more than 113 million out of state and international visitors. This equates to successful hotels, restaurants and attractions which contribute to a stronger state economy and creates more opportunities for Florida's families. The Office of Economic & Demographic Research reports that for every \$1 the state invests in VISIT FLORIDA, the state sees a \$3.20 return.

- **Support legislation that will require vacation rental properties to register to collect sales taxes and disclose their Florida sales tax number in all advertising.**

This effort will collect more sales tax for Florida and educate owners of rental properties who report that when they create online listings they assume that the online listing company takes care of all tax and licensing requirements. Volusia County now has more than 400 Airbnb units. There is also the question of local authority regarding code enforcement.

K-12 Education

- **Support legislation to eliminate the State's District Cost Differential (education) funding formula.**

Beginning in 2004, the State's District Cost Differential (DCD) funding formula has led to 55 of 67 counties contributing more than they receive in school funding while 12 districts receive more than they contribute. Volusia is one of the biggest donor schools, receiving 96.28 percent of its contribution back. The other four percent contributes to Palm Beach, Miami, Duval, Hillsborough and other districts.

- **Increase the state's investment in K-12 education.**

The FY 2017-18 Pre-K-12 budget was \$14.8 billion. While this was approximately a \$300 million increase but with more incoming students expected, the base per-student allocation actually decreased which leads to a negative impact on Volusia.

Higher Education

- **Daytona State College – For FY 2017-18, DSC requests \$12.8 million to construct and equip a state-of-the-art Deltona campus building for in-demand workforce programs.**

DSC's Deltona campus has added 14 portables to meet expanding space needs since 2004. City of Deltona is working to attract more business/industry and has added a Manufacturing Career Academy at Pine Ridge HS. There are nearly 400 manufacturing firms in Volusia County seeking qualified workers and technicians. In FY 2016-17, DSC received \$1.2 million for planning/design purposes.

- **Stetson University - Support allocating \$700,000 for a new filtration technology system that uses reclaimed water, rather than aquifer water, for evaporation.**

This conversion to reclaimed water would reduce the demand on the Floridian aquifer by conserving 8,000,000 gallons of water each year (or 200,000,000 gallons of water in the next 25 years - the equipment's estimated useful life). In addition, integrating this technology at Stetson would establish a water conservation model for other colleges, universities and school systems – thus showcasing how this new filtering technology can reduce potable water consumption.

- **Bethune Cookman University – Select Bethune Cookman University founder, educator and civil rights pioneer Mary McLeod Bethune for Florida's statue in the National Statuary Hall at the US Capitol.**

In 2015, the Legislature voted to replace the General Edmund Kirby Smith statue with a new Florida dignitary in the US Capitol. Dr. Bethune received the highest amount of votes, via an online poll to gather data reflecting the top choices of public input. Of the three final nominees, Dr. Bethune was the only to receive a unanimous vote from the Great Floridians Committee. Dr. Bethune was not only an educator and civil rights activist, but also an advisor to four sitting American Presidents. At the present, Florida has an opportunity to make history by selecting the tenth woman commissioned by a state and the first African American

Employment Issues

- **Support the pre-emption legislation giving the State the exclusive rights to regulate business and labor on employment issues thus no city/county labor and employment laws that may differ from state and federal employment laws.**

This would avoid a patchwork of state and local laws that would make compliance different in various geographic areas.

- **Support legislation to curb the recent 14.5 percent increase in Workers' Compensation rates.**

A 2015 Supreme Court ruling resulted in a 14.5 percent increase in workers' comp rates. The crux of the ruling was attorneys' fees. Last session, the House and Senate addressed the issue but couldn't agree upon a set amount for attorneys' fees.

Insurance

- **Support legislation to reign in Assignment of Benefit (AOB) abuse and protect consumers.**

Assignment of Benefits (AOB) abuse. More consumers statewide are signing an AOB form to process claims for emergency repair work whereby a third party assumes complete control over a homeowner's insurance benefits and often inflate repair costs and file unnecessary lawsuits. AOB abuse is driving up the cost of insurance for Floridians. Since 2000, the number of AOB-related lawsuits has increased significantly. Fraudulent claims and legal fees are a factor in determining premiums, which affects everyone in Florida with homeowners insurance. Florida already has the highest property insurance rates nationwide because of its high risk of natural disasters.

Health Care

- **Support proposals that would increase healthcare coverage for Florida's low-income, working individuals and families.**

In Florida, 67 percent of jobs pay less than \$20 per hour, with three-quarters of those paying less than \$15 per hour. Out-of-pocket health care costs for these individuals increased from 2007 to 2015 was 48 percent; increase including ACA penalty was 74

percent. Approximately 42 % of Volusia's citizens are classified to be in the United Way's Asset Limited Income Constrained Employed (ALICE) category.

Local Capitol Projects

County of Volusia

- **High Tech Economic Development Infrastructure - \$10,000,000 request**

The county is pursuing \$10 million in funding to design, engineer and construct needed infrastructure so that the property can be made "shovel ready" for consideration by one or more large regional employers. The project will help create opportunities to bring high paying, high-tech jobs thereby retaining the talent graduating from the area's universities; diversity the local tourist-based economy and raise the standard of living in the region; compliment the research park at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University

- **Indian River/Mosquito Lagoon Water Quality Project - \$200,000 request**

The eventual construction of the proposed collections system will provide an efficient and cost effective means for significant nutrient reductions critical for improved water quality and the protection of the lagoon ecosystem by eliminating up to 300 onsite septic systems. The project will reduce the loading of nitrogen between 7-9 tons/year and phosphorus between 2-3 tons/year; improve the lagoon's water quality and sea grass beds; help preserve the ecosystem and natural habitat within the lagoon. The County will provide the additional \$200,000 needed for the project.

- **Transportation Economic Development/Williamson Blvd 4-Laning Project - \$8,000,000 - request**

This project will widen a 1 mile section of Williamson Blvd from 2 lanes to 4 lanes in Ormond Beach. All engineering, surveying and environmental permitting is complete. Most right-of- way is acquired. The requested \$8 million is for right of way and construction including construction, engineering, and inspection (CEI). Local contribution consists of \$925,000 expended for engineering, survey & permitting and \$1,354,000 expended for right of way. Total estimated project cost is \$10,279,000. This project will enhance office/commercial/retail development opportunities including new jobs in development area; Potential development is likely to increase assessed value for tax purposes approximately \$70 million and could result in the creation of more than 500 jobs.

City of Daytona Beach

- **Support \$1.5 million for First Step Homeless Shelter**

First Step Homeless Shelter is now under construction and will serve the homeless population throughout Volusia County when it opens in 2018. Initial construction plans call for a minimal facility to accommodate 125 single men and women. The City of

Daytona Beach on behalf of First Step is requesting \$1.5 million capital funding (for phase 2 construction). This would provide needed facility improvements - adding to flex space, a permanent emergency generator, food and health services area and enhanced security features. Support \$200,000 to fund operations and programming. As a match for these two requests, local community investment for First Step construction includes \$2.5 million from Volusia County, a 5-acre site provided by City of Daytona Beach and professional services provided by city staff. Funding commitments have been received to cover the \$1 million annual operating costs for the first five years. Both the city and county have pledged \$2 million over five years. To date, financial commitments have been received from Daytona Beach Shores, Holly Hill, Ormond Beach, Port Orange, and South Daytona. Individual and private corporations have also made start up donations.

- **Support \$1.5 million for Army Corps of Engineers flooding research**

This would include capital funding of regional projects to mitigate flooding and draining issues. The regional plan for flooding includes construction of improvements to Nova Canal. \$1.5 million is requested for local cost share requirement for Army Corps of Engineers flood mitigation study of Nova Canal. This examination is a prerequisite for receiving federal funds for construction phases. To date, the City of Daytona Beach has invested over \$7 million in engineering research and design modeling and construction mitigation projects related to the master plan.

City of Ormond Beach

- **Support north peninsula septic to sewer conversion.**

The City of Ormond Beach has a plan to convert septic systems along North Peninsula to a more environmentally sensitive centralized sewer system. The City is seeking assistance from the State to convert residential housing unit septic systems to the city's sewer system.

City of Port Orange

- **Support funds for the City of Port Orange's Monroe St and Virginia Ave Drainage project to alleviate flooding and improve storm water quality before it enters the Halifax River.**

The Virginia Ave and Monroe St corridor has been flooded during past storms. The City of Port Orange received part of the funds for this project in the 2017 Session. For 2018, the City is seeking additional funds - \$750,000 - to complete the Virginia Avenue and Monroe Street Drainage Project. The goal is to improve existing storm water drainage facilities with the possibility of installing new facilities as well.