



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
JOHN PEYTON
MAYOR

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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City and Chamber Partner to Increase Per Capita Income in Jacksonville

JACKSONVILLE, Fla., April 5, 2005— Jacksonville Mayor John Peyton and Jacksonville Regional Chamber of Commerce Chairman Bob Helms today kicked off a partnership between the city and the Chamber to create a blueprint for raising per capita income across the board in the City of Jacksonville. WorkSource, the regional workforce development board, will also be a partner in this process.

The official *Blueprint for Prosperity* Kick Off took place at 5 p.m. at the Ritz Theatre. The event outlined the *Blueprint for Prosperity* strategic planning process and solicited the involvement of residents and other business and civic stakeholders in the creation of the plan.

Blueprint for Prosperity will build upon the momentum created by Super Bowl XXXIX, involving representatives from all sectors of the city. Focus groups and discussions will be held with everyone from elected officials and opinion leaders to educators and parents. Ten thousand volunteers from neighborhoods, faith and community-based organizations and educational institutions will participate, in addition to corporate executives and small business owners.

“My main goal as mayor is growing jobs and increasing economic prosperity in Duval County,” said Peyton, “and this project is right in line with that priority. Putting together our first Super Bowl showed us once again that the people of Jacksonville can accomplish anything they set out to do if they work together – and there’s no better use for our collective energy than creating jobs and setting our economy on a growth curve for the future.”

“In any endeavor, whether it’s business or government, it is easy to caught up in the day-to-day challenges and forget about taking the long view,” Peyton continued. “Yet it’s the long view – our vision for the future – that really moves things forward. We all agree that raising per capita income in Jacksonville is part of our vision of a successful future, but what’s the best way to get there? I think *Blueprint for Prosperity* is going to help us answer that question.”

“The Chamber is honored that Mayor Peyton invited us to partner with the city on this important community initiative,” said Helms. “Raising the per capita income aligns with the Chamber’s vision of increasing the standard of living and quality of life for everyone in Jacksonville.”

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Mayor Peyton will chair the Steering Committee for *Blueprint for Prosperity*, together with four vice chairs: Eleanor Gay; Bob Helms, of the Chamber and Wachovia Bank; Bill Scheu, Rogers Towers Law Firm, and Ron Townsend.

The Chamber hired Jarik Conrad to oversee the process. Prior to joining the Chamber, Conrad served in a number of leadership capacities within the human resource teams of a variety of Fortune 500 companies in the United States and abroad, including locally with CSX Technology and Citibank. Conrad's professional and community activities include involvement with the Jacksonville chapter of the Society for Human Resources Management, National Conference for Community Justice, Community Connections of Jacksonville and 100 Black Men of America Incorporated (Jacksonville Chapter). Conrad is also a member of the Leadership Jacksonville Class of 2005.

Phase I of *Blueprint for Prosperity* will produce a strategic plan for the city that identifies the best method of raising per capita income for all residents. Through a multi-level process, community members will produce benchmarks and determine priorities for at least six factors, including economic development, education, quality of life, government, infrastructure and private sector leadership. Consultants and staff will conduct extensive focus group interviews and hold community meetings and other events that offer opportunities for public involvement.

Phase II will begin in 2006, and will focus on implementation of the plan over the following five years. Accountability for results will be assured through the annual measurement of benchmarks.

Henry Luke, principal of Luke Planning, Inc., has been retained by the Chamber to facilitate the Blueprint process in collaboration with all participants. Luke has facilitated similar efforts in 56 other communities.

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