



"Raising the per capita income in Duval County"

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**Mayor launches next phase of Blueprint for Prosperity
Joint effort aimed at raising Jacksonville's per capita income
entering critical public input stage**

JACKSONVILLE, FLA (July 11, 2005) -- Jacksonville Mayor John Peyton announced the next stage of the Blueprint for Prosperity initiative at a news conference today. Beginning July 18, a series of community meetings will be held throughout Duval County to generate input from citizens on issues affecting our community.

Blueprint for Prosperity is a partnership between the City of Jacksonville, the Jacksonville Regional Chamber of Commerce and WorkSource designed to raise per capita income for Jacksonville residents through a strategic planning process focused on at least six community foundation areas: economic development, education, racial opportunity and harmony, infrastructure, leadership and quality of life.

Duval County is at 96 percent of the national average for per capita income, while cities like Birmingham, Raleigh, Atlanta, Memphis and Charlotte are well above the national average. Per capita income is calculated by dividing the total income of county residents by the total population. The definition includes earnings from work, wealth earnings from dividends, interest and rent, and transfer payments from government such as welfare and social security.

Blueprint for Prosperity has been gaining momentum since its launch in April. The first stage of the project is nearing completion. More than 350 citizens have participated in a series of 29 focus groups to help identify factors that are contributing to Duval County's lag in per capita income.

The next stage involves a series of community meetings that have been scheduled in each of the 14 City Council districts between July 18 and August 30, 2005. Residents of Duval County are being invited to become architects for Jacksonville's future by participating in one of these meetings.

"We are asking residents to help us design the future they want to see in Jacksonville," said Mayor John Peyton. "This is the most important public phase of the Blueprint process. Involvement from the community is critical to success."

Community Meetings are being held during the week, from 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. Registration will begin at 6 pm. and snacks will be provided. RSVPs are encouraged, but not required. See the attached schedule of meetings for dates, locations and RSVP information or log on to www.blueprintforprosperity.com.

At each community meeting, discussion will center on a series of 12 "scenarios" that present data regarding factors that are contributing to our lag in per capita income. Each of these scenarios describes alternative choices for Duval County's future.

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“The purpose of these scenarios is to encourage people to provide input that will help shape the development of the blueprint plan,” said Jarik Conrad, executive director for Blueprint for Prosperity. “It is essential that we have representation from all of our diverse communities to make this plan one that works for everyone.”

With citizen input, the Blueprint process will identify ways to increase productivity and earnings per job, retain and attract high income workers to live in Duval County, decrease the race/ethnic income gap, reduce the number of citizens in poverty, reduce the murder rate, attract high income private sector jobs, retain and attract educated workers with high paying jobs, make our families more stable, improve graduation and reading rates for all students and attract more companies to add to the business property tax base.

“Blueprint for Prosperity is a comprehensive, holistic approach to improving our community,” said City Council President Kevin Hyde. “My colleagues on City Council and I are excited to share our support for this initiative by hosting community meetings in our districts.”

The information discussed at the community meetings will be used to produce benchmarks and determine priorities for the community. A draft of the blueprint will be released in November 2005. Another round of community meetings to review the draft blueprint will then be held.

“Blueprint for Prosperity is not a study or a survey. It is a comprehensive plan for Jacksonville’s future,” said Ron Townsend, a member of the Blueprint for Prosperity executive committee. “We want to create a blueprint that increases the wealth of Duval County citizens.”

Henry Luke, principal of Luke Planning, Inc., is facilitating the Blueprint process. Luke has facilitated similar efforts in 55 cities, both large and small, over the last 20 years.

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