

January 27, 2011

Dear Elected Official:

In late December, the Board of Directors of the Flagler County Chamber of Commerce & Affiliates adopted a resolution in support of a countywide economic development effort. The resolution stressed the importance of collaboration between all Flagler County municipalities to identify a dedicated funding source for economic development.

Since that time, plans have been shared, strategies debated and funding sources argued. After our directors attended the Flagler Beach City Commission workshop on January 24, the Palm Coast City Council workshop on January 25 and reading media coverage on January 26, it became evident that some elected officials continue to view economic development in terms of what will benefit their municipality, not the county as a whole. At the same time, stories have been printed sharing how Volusia County is working collaboratively to reverse the very situation these elected officials are now creating, and positioning itself to become a desired location for employers.

Enough is enough! This short-sited approach and distrust will keep Flagler County poised on the brink of economic disaster. Flagler County residents and businesses have waited long enough for municipalities and elected officials to find a “white knight” that would solve our economic woes. This has not been successful to date, and now our community cannot afford to wait any longer. Our residents and businesses have suffered enough. Our unemployment rate and the number of children in our schools receiving free and reduced lunch clearly indicate why it is important that our elected officials act now. Without a collaborative approach and immediate action, our county is doomed.

Flagler County must come together and agree on a strong economic development plan that leverages the strengths of each municipality while complementing the others in a collective manner. Once that has occurred, then it will be critical to identify a dedicated funding source, and finally create a strong “win-win” interlocal agreement related to the disbursement of these dedicated funds. To keep on task with a strong sense of urgency, we also believe a third party facilitator is necessary to lead this process to develop a strategic plan that can be implemented as soon as possible.

On January 31, we have the opportunity to gather and agree on a single approach that will lift our county from economic despair. As effected officials and community leaders, we urge you to take this matter seriously, and to think and act for the greater good of our entire community while at the table. A coordinated effort between all local government bodies is critical for Flagler County, its residents and our long-term economic viability. Flagler County is running out of time. We hope you will make a difference.

Sincerely,

YOUR NAME