

## **Recreation Programs**

The Tallahassee Parks and Recreation Department was recognized in 2004 as the "Best in America" by the National Parks and Recreation Association. This honor was, in part, due to the outstanding job the Department does in meeting the needs of the entire community. The City operates seven multi-purpose recreation centers; six of which are located in minority or predominantly minority communities. These centers offer support that might not otherwise be available to children, including after school enrichment programs, teen mentoring initiatives, and many more activities that are tailored to fit the particular needs of the communities they serve. The City partnered with the local cable provider, Comcast, to bring internet access into these centers, with the City providing the computers so that technology is accessible to all of our citizens.

## **Special Events**

Sponsoring special events is another way to bring the community together, and the city sponsors many events that are geared towards encouraging a better understanding of the various cultures in our area. Unity in the Community, the Caribbean Carnival and the Asian Festival all provide a day of festivities that unite the diverse populations in our City. One local event that has captured international attention is the Red Hills Horse Trials, which is recognized as one of the premier equestrian events in the world. Red Hills provides funding to introduce inner-city youth and teens to horseback riding, camping and other outdoor recreation.

## **Neighborhood and Community Services**

This City of Tallahassee is committed to the revitalization of its urban core communities and supports the replacement of inner-city blight with mixed income affordable housing, economic development opportunities, commercial corridor revitalization and the preservation of historically significant businesses and institutions.

### **Carolina Oaks Mixed Income Affordable Housing**

Carolina Oaks is a 24-unit single-family mixed income affordable housing development. The development consists of 12 units for families at specified levels of income. The City leveraged its Community and Development Block Grant funds to obtain State of Florida Housing Assistance Grants, as well as Federal EDA grants for new sidewalks and utility under grounding.

### **The Frenchtown Renaissance Office Building**

The Frenchtown Renaissance Office complex is the result of a \$12 million public-private partnership between the City, a non-profit community development corporation and a private sector developer. This major undertaking was established to bridge the gap and enhance the economic viability of the commercial corridor of the Tallahassee's African American community

### **Preserving the History and the Legacy of the African American Community**

Modern Cleaners, a Tallahassee landmark in the historic Frenchtown community, was recently moved to preserve its historic significance.

The building was constructed in 1947 as Modern Cleaners, an African-American owned business that served the Tallahassee community well into the 1970's.

The property was recently acquired by the Frenchtown Community Development Corporation as part of a mixed-use development site. Through a partnership between the City of Tallahassee, the FCDC, and the NAACP, this structure is being preserved and restored as the administrative office for the local chapter of the NAACP and will also house the NAACP's Tallahassee Civil Rights Museum.

### **The Lincoln Room Museum**

After 100 years of providing public education to the African-American community in Tallahassee, Lincoln High School closed its doors in 1969. The City of Tallahassee later acquired this property and converted the facility into the Lincoln Neighborhood Center, which provides rental space to numerous social service agencies in addition to maintaining programs geared toward the community.

To acknowledge the historic significance of this facility, the City created a museum, the Lincoln Room, with funding from the State of Florida. Community residents that attended the school organize and maintain the museum.

### **Community Human Service Partnership**

For the past eleven years the City of Tallahassee, Leon County, and the United Way of the Big Bend have joined together in a unique partnership to provide funding to local human service organizations.

In its most recent fiscal year of operation, the CHSP successfully provided funding to over 70 organizations and 120 different programs providing services to the areas most needed citizens.

In fiscal year 2004/05, the partnership granted approximately 4.4 million dollars in funding to local human service organization programs; as a result, over 200,000 residents of the county received services that ranged from childcare to specialty medical care.

### **Specific example of a CHSP Program: Frenchtown Outreach Center**

The Frenchtown Outreach Center is one of the many beneficiaries of funding through the CHSP process. Located in historic Frenchtown, the program is geared to empower individuals and families to overcome the issues related to substance abuse and addiction. These objectives are achieved through daily support groups, individual and family counseling, community outreach and education. CHSP funding is utilized to support the program's staffing needs, as well as other programmatic costs relative to service provision.

### **Energy Services**

#### **Programmable Thermostat Program**

As a utility regulator for 30 years, the programmable thermostat pilot program is a special initiative that I am excited to see come to fruition. Under this plan the city offers Energy Star programmable thermostats to residential and small commercial utility customers. Programmable thermostats encourage conservation by automatically adjusting settings for optimum use. For example, the thermostat can lower the heat at night, while residents are sleeping, and bring the heat back up before the resident awakens.

This program bridges the gap by allowing customers to control their utility usage through the provision of a discounted electronic programmable thermostat. This program is available to all citizens including renters, regardless of income level, and is a big part of our effort to help utility customers conserve energy and hopefully reduce energy costs. The city also has plans to implement a state of the art advanced metering program which should result in additional savings and may help defer construction of new utility facilities.

### **CFL giveaway partnership with FAMU**

This program provided 2,500 energy-efficient light bulbs to residents of Southside neighborhoods in conjunction with the efforts by FAMU's Green Coalition. These light bulbs known as compact fluorescent light bulbs or CFLs, use 75 percent less energy than traditional incandescent light bulbs. This results in a cost savings of \$75 or more on energy bills over the course of the light bulb's lifetime. The estimated savings to residents receiving the free CFL bulbs during the giveaway is more than \$185,000.

### **Low-income energy programs**

All across the country we have continued to feel the crunch of high energy prices, at the gas pump, in commercial transportation and in our monthly utility bills. Because it is likely that these prices will not go down and could even continue to rise, the City Commission authorized new programs, expanded existing programs to include renters and mobile homes, and expanded the range of income that qualifies for programs.

These programs include free energy audits, grants to upgrade insulation in residents' homes, loans for energy efficient equipment, natural gas rebates and grants to weatherize a citizen's home from the elements.

The low-interest loan program provides qualifying applicants with a 60-month loan for use in increasing the affordability of energy efficient home improvements, such as AC upgrades, window replacement, and insulation. This program is another great way for people to reduce their energy bill without the high initial cost to make the purchase.

## **Change for Change**

The City teamed with local homeless advocates and the faith based community to create a program that allows City utility customers to support services for the homeless. In Tallahassee helping the homeless is as simple as telling the City how much you would like to contribute each month and it will be automatically added to your bill. Projections suggest that the program generates between \$25,000 and \$50,000 to fund homeless initiatives each year.

Money generated through the program goes directly to the agencies that provide services and resources to the homeless population. These funds are used to provide shelter, education, and training; assist with move-in expenses; provide financial assistance toward emergency housing payments; matching dollars for permanent housing projects; and for other services supporting the homeless.

## **Transportation**

Tallahassee is home to three institutions of higher learning, including the 2006 Historically Black College and University of the year, Florida A&M University. Through a partnership with these institutions and the city of Tallahassee, StarMetro the city's bus system, provides free transportation services for students that attend Florida Agriculture & Mechanical University, Florida State University and Tallahassee

Community College. Having transportation provided allows our students to focus their attention where it ought to be - on pursuing academic success and their futures.

StarMetro has also implemented several bus pass programs to help foster mobility and independence. One program provides bus passes for homeless, low-income, disabled and transportation disadvantaged individuals. This program was implemented to establish equal access to transportation for important life activities, such as job training, shopping, and medical appointments.

## **Fire Services**

The Tallahassee Fire Department is involved in many community outreach projects, one of which is the Meals on Wheels program that delivers nutritious meals to citizens in need. Since January 2006 firefighters have delivered almost 400 meals to individuals who are physically unable to leave their homes. During these visits, smoke detectors are also installed or checked and batteries replaced if needed.

The newest outreach program implemented by the Fire Department has is the Firefighter Minimum Standards offered through Tallahassee Community College and the Pat Thomas Law Enforcement Academy. This program uses the Department's training facilities as well as many of its personnel as instructors to encourage diversification in the applicant pool for the Department. Classes are offered on nights and Saturdays, thus allowing individuals who are currently employed but looking to make a career switch an opportunity to enter the program. This program will help diversify the applicant pool of the Fire Department and provide new career opportunities to all individuals in our community.

## **Mayor's Summit on Race, Culture and Human Relations**

The City of Tallahassee has been proud to host the Mayor's Summit on Race, Culture and Human Relations since the year 2000. The Summit has become a centerpiece for diversity dialogue with the program's content focusing on the importance that race, culture and human relations have in our everyday world. Some questions explored at the Summit include, what does it mean to deliver health care services if they are not delivered equitably; how is our economic vibrancy diminished if we do not prepare all young people with the skills needed to be self-sufficient and competitive? The community has come to look at the summit as a diversity-training forum that promotes cultural understanding and tolerance. In Tallahassee we are bridging the gap, and this message is reaching our entire population through year round programming on the government access channel.

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As you can see, the city of Tallahassee is committed to crafting innovative solutions to address the pervasive question of how to bridge the gap between the haves and the have nots. In areas as fundamental to everyday life such as human services, public safety, transportation, energy services, and recreation Tallahassee is producing creative programming that combines cutting-edge technology and community outreach to provide essential services to *all* of our citizens.