

JCCI *Forward*

2001 Issue Forums Final Report

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***Forward* is the exciting new branch of JCCI designed to provide emerging leaders (age 25-45) with the information, tools, and venue they need to create positive change in the Northeast Florida community. *Forward's* core business is policy-level discussion wherein leadership development occurs. *Forward* empowers and spurs individuals to take action.**

Forward's core program is comprised of two components. **Issue-Forum Discussion Groups** offer participants a venue to interact with respected community leaders and resource experts on issues of concern to Northeast Florida's citizens. Participants explore issues critical to the community's growth, seek understanding of related problems, and come to consensus on proposed action plans that can be implemented locally. **Educational seminars** offer a foundation for leadership development, an understanding of community trusteeship, and an appreciation for Jacksonville's history and governmental structure.

During the 2001 program year, issue-forum groups met with key individuals and devised group action plans consistent with their respective forum topics. Over 105 individuals participated in the issue-forum process, which lasted approximately five months. Additionally, over 40 individuals attended the half-day interactive, educational seminar on Leadership Development at FCCJ's Martin Center.

Issue Forums Summary

Business Climate and Economic Trends

This forum group explored the 2005 Super Bowl and how the city and community can maximize the benefits of the big game.

Key findings:

- The Super Bowl should happen with the community, not to the community. Citizen participation and involvement in the thousands of volunteer opportunities, defined by the Host Committee are an important way to keep Jacksonville's citizens in "the game."
- Jacksonville must be showcased to capitalize on economic development and corporate relocation opportunities. Taking advantage of the media's focus and garnering favorable world impressions for tourism and winning future Super Bowl dates are part of the game plan.
- Transportation is a major challenge, wherein planning and coordination are key. This will be an important factor for which the city will be rated.
- The economic impact to Northeast Florida will range from \$100 to \$300 million derived from the 100,000 to 150,000 visitors expected to visit. Small businesses, the largest component of Jacksonville's economy, are advised to become involved through Jacksonville's Chamber and business advocacy organizations early to maximize their opportunities.

Action plan:

- The committee's primary course of action is to produce a document which showcases their research and recommendations. In addition, the committee will devise a concise PowerPoint presentation to accompany the paper.
- The committee will perform a presentation for the Super Bowl Host Committee by September (when fully staffed), Ch.A.S.E. (Jacksonville Chamber of Commerce's small business task force), and per request (of businesses and citizens). Members of the Forward Committee will be provided with the report and have been encouraged to present to organizations at their pleasure.
- The committee will also provide copies of the paper to the Jacksonville Chamber of Commerce and JCCI to be disbursed accordingly and respectively to civic organizations, the media, and general public per request. The committee will link the report to the JCCI website.

Community Growth and Development

This forum group sought a better understanding of issues pertaining to living downtown. They posed the question: What does downtown Jacksonville need to become a thriving neighborhood?

Key findings:

- Downtown lacks historic designation.
- Citizens and businesses alike require a better grasp of the government regulations related to downtown.
- There is insufficient information available to the community on the status of the DMP (Downtown Master Plan).
- There is no mechanism in place to require existing buildings, not undergoing renovations, to adhere to the DMP.
- The city lacks a "process map," which is critical for community involvement.

Action plan:

- The committee will devise a report, consisting of committee findings, gaps, and recommendations.
- The committee intends to inform and publicize the committee's work by sending the report to key government officials and organizations, businesses, media organizations, and resource speakers. To provide greater access to the report for citizens and businesses, the Committee intends to utilize JCCI by placing the report on the Forward website and having copies available at JCCI.
- The committee has made a commitment to personal education by pledging to stay updated and involved in the progress of downtown living by attending Design Review Committee meetings as well as other meetings pertaining to downtown refurbishment. Individual committee members intend to lobby to get report recommendations implemented and foster accountability.

Enriching the Community

Members of this forum group explored the future of professional and community theatre in Jacksonville.

Key findings:

- There is a lack of funding for emerging theatre companies.
- Theatre in Northeast Florida lacks media support.
- There is insufficient communication among producing organizations.

Action plan:

- The committee has devised a summary report on their findings and recommendations, entitled The State of Professional and Community Theatre in Jacksonville.
- The committee will call a meeting of all the players involved with theatre in Northeast Florida. This will include area schools, area colleges, independent acting groups, community theatres, professional

theatres, and Improv houses. It is tentatively scheduled for Monday, September 10, 2001 at 6:30 p.m. At the meeting, the committee will release its report.

Human Needs

Members of the Human Needs forum studied the truancy issue in Duval County. They devised ways in which the community can assist in solving the truancy problem in Duval County Public Schools.

Key findings:

- Truancy programs are under-funded and seeking increased funding compounds the problem.
- Students cannot be forced to participate in programs that alleviate truancy.
- Transportation is a problem due to the 1.9 mile bus rule.
- School reporting of absences is not always consistent.

Action plan:

- The committee will create and participate in an ad hoc committee to develop truancy stickers for businesses and promote awareness of truancy.
- The committee is in the process of devising a report which details its findings and recommendations.
- The committee will send the report to the Alliance for World Class Education, Jacksonville United Against Truancy (JUAT), superintendents, regional superintendents, area principals, The Duval County School Board, the Chamber of Commerce, the Mayor of Jacksonville, and various media outlets.
- Committee members pledge to personally involve themselves in the fight against truancy. They plan to do so by attending School Board meetings, JUAT meetings, and speak on the report's findings and recommendations, per request.

Political Leadership and Citizen Participation

The primary focus of this forum group was to determine what elected officials and local voters can and should do to address voting irregularities in Duval County.

Key findings:

- The issues pertaining to voting irregularities in Duval County are often politicized and obscured by rhetoric. This further inhibits the citizens' ability to uncover and understand correctable flaws in the voting process.
- Vast improvements are needed in voter education, both in terms of the process (registration, poll locations, voting mechanics) and the issues (unbiased candidate and issue information).
- New technology such as laptop computers and optical scan voting machines will require poll workers to have a wider variety of skills. Enhanced poll worker training will be necessary, but may not be sufficient. Broader civic participation is required, especially by more technologically savvy citizens.

Action plan:

- The committee will devise a report consisting of their findings and recommendations.
- The committee intends to encourage poll workers...
 - by example – committee members have pledged to volunteer as poll workers,
 - through outreach to college students,
 - and by creating form letters including information about becoming poll workers, and distributing those letters in various locales.
- Also, some committee members intend to profile local candidates through unbiased questionnaires, and distribute the results.

Educational Seminar: Leadership Development

On April 27, 2001 Forward hosted its second educational workshop on Leadership Development. The workshop, lead by organizational development expert Mark Hopkins, introduced the concepts, tools, and skills needed to become an influential and confident leader. The workshop covered a multitude of issues related to effective leadership skills including the adaptive process, leadership awareness, and stewardship. The workshop was a success with over forty of Northeast Florida's emerging leaders attending. The Leadership Development Workshop was made possible by a grant from The Community Foundation's Harold K. Smith Charitable Fund. Future seminars will include Trusteeship and Philanthropy.

Stay Tuned...

As this year of Forward has drawn to a close, the Forward Coordinating Committee is already planning its next series of issue forums and educational seminars. Topic selection for next year's Issue Forums are slated for July 2001. Current Forward members and the general public are encouraged to participate in the 2002 Forward process. More information can be found on the Forward website at: <http://www.jcci.org/forward>.

Community Leaders and Resource Experts

Issue forum groups met with both community leaders and resource experts who provided valuable information for group discussions. We thank the following individuals for their contributions to the Forward process.

Business Climate and Economic Trends

Heather Surface; JEDC; Super Bowl Host Committee
Theresa O'Donnell Price; Special Events Department; City of Jacksonville
Sam Kouvaris; Sports Anchor; WJXT Channel 4
Jim Dalton; The Dalton Agency
Mike Sullivan; Director of Sports and Entertainment; JEDC; Super Bowl Host Committee
Bob Baldwin; Vice President; Chamber's Alliance for Small Businesses (CH.A.S.E)
Ellen Morris; Owner; Tempforce Staffing Services
Dr. Torri Lilly; Dean of Workforce Development; FCCJ – Kent Campus
Victoria Robas; Operations Director, Talleyrand Docks, Jacksonville Port Authority
Chip Snowden; Director of Operations; Jacksonville International Airport
Michael Blaylock; Jacksonville Transportation Authority
Pat Duncan; JEDC; Super Bowl Host Committee
Ron Wolf; Program Manager; FCCJ Hospitality and Culinary Arts
Irving Kass; General Manager; Adam's Mark Hotel

Community Growth and Development

Jack Diamond; Rink, Reynolds, Diamond, & Fisher Architects
Joe Miller; Department of Public Works
Mary Sorge; Bank of America
Al Battle; JEDC; DDA
Terry Lorince; Downtown Vision, Inc.
Ben Baggett; Downtown Resident
Jason Thiel; Downtown Development Authority
Lt. Robert Connor; Commanding Officer of the downtown bicycle & walking beats; JSO
Darrell Smith; mass transit operations; JTA
Paul Krutko; Downtown Development Authority
Alex Coley; Hallmark Partners
Mike Lissner; Young Men's Shop
Brett Williams; downtown resident

Enriching the Community

Bob White; Cultural Council
Milt Russos; FCCJ Artist Series
Sara Boone; Executive Director; Theatre Jacksonville
Sharon Hoffman; The Boardwalk Group
Felicia Walton; Co-founder & Co-director; Alfie's Performing Arts Center
Lee Beger; Theatre Department Chair; Douglas Anderson School of the Arts
Warren Skeels; Actor; J Films
Matt Hemphill; Educational Outreach Director; Theatre Jacksonville
Bob Prichard; Jacksonville Stage Company
Tod Booth; Tod Booth Productions

Human Needs

Jay Plotkin; State Attorney's Office
Hodges Sneed; Duval County Public Schools
Donna Cobb; Duval County Public Schools
Marilynn Bahari; Matthew Gilbert Middle School
Jimmie Johnson; Duval County School Board
Shelley Grant; State Attorney's Office
Chief Gordon Bass; Jacksonville Sheriff's Office
J.R. Manning; School Resource Officer; Jacksonville Sheriff's Office
Morgan Miller; Youth Crisis Center
Dr. Shannon Perry; The Bridge of Northeast Florida
Sandi Harrington; PACE Center for Girls
Carrie Rittberger; Truancy Case Manager; State Attorney's Office
Sylvia Johnson; Principal; West Jacksonville Elementary School
Gene Heath; Chief Truant Officer; City of Jacksonville

Political Leadership and Citizen Participation

Wayne Hogan; Democratic Party Attorney; Brown, Terrell, Hogan, Ellis, McClamma & Yegelwel
Reynold Hoover; Republican Party Attorney; Smith, Hulsey, & Busey
Terri Ganson; Public Information Officer; Division of Driver Licenses
Suzanne Jenkins; Councilwoman – District 4; Jacksonville City Council
Betty Schroeder; Volunteer Poll Worker
Robert Phillips; Director of Operations; Supervisor of Elections Office
Ray Reid; Assistant General Counsel for the City of Jacksonville
Reggie Fullwood; Councilman – District 9; Jacksonville City Council
Patricia Clark Taylor; Political Consultant
Leslie Goller; Attorney; Brown, Terrell, Hogan, Ellis, McClamma, & Yegelwel
Jim Post; Attorney; Smith, Hulsey, & Busey
Barbara Sheen-Todd; State Election Task Force

Leadership Development Seminar

Mia Jones, Seminar Coordinator
Mark Hopkins, Organizational Consultant (independent)

JCCI Forward Participants

Forum groups met biweekly for five months. They received information from knowledgeable resource people and additional written materials provided by *Forward* staff. We congratulate their efforts, civic involvement, and advocacy.

Coordinating Committee

Bob Snell; Chair
Carla Marlier; Chair-elect
Oliver Barakat; Past Chair
*plus all committee chairs and vice-chairs

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Jack Manilla
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Andrew Jaffa
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