

# Board of County Commissioners

## Agenda Request

Date of Meeting: April 21, 2009

Date Submitted: April 3, 2009

To: Honorable Chairman and Members of the Board

From: Benjamin H. Pingree, County Administrator  
Jennifer Langston, Special Projects Coordinator

Subject: Board Update Regarding the American Reinvestment & Recovery Act (ARRA) Funding Opportunities for Wakulla County Projects

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### **Statement of Issue:**

This agenda item provides an update to the Board on the recent activities related to seeking American Reinvestment & Recovery Act (ARRA) funding opportunities for Wakulla County projects.

### **Background:**

At the January 20, 2009 Board meeting, the Board accepted staff's recommendation of shovel-ready projects in anticipation of the potential economic stimulus funding opportunities initiated by the Federal Government. The approved projects totaled \$41.5 million and included:

- ✓ Community Center/ EMS/Fire Facility-\$5.3 Million
- ✓ Wakulla Gardens Sewer Expansion & Plant-\$20 Million
- ✓ Expanded Solid Waste Transfer Station-\$3 Million
- ✓ Bridge Construction Projects-\$3.1 Million
- ✓ Courthouse Renovation/Expansion-\$4.2 Million
- ✓ Storm water Plan-\$1 Million
- ✓ U.S. Hwy 319 Transportation Improvements-\$2.9 Million

The Board was also made aware of the proactive efforts taken to obtain stimulus funding by partnering with neighboring counties, our municipalities, our school board, and other entities in a cohesive regional approach now referred to as the Tallahassee Capital Region group. The school board and our two municipalities have participated in the regional meetings and their respective projects are included in the regional list.

Since the Board meeting, the following activities have occurred relating to the regional stimulus effort:

- Weekly regional meetings have continued
- Press Release held at the Capitol Press Corps & Local Press Release conducted
- Meetings and conference calls with the Florida Department of Transportation, & Capital Region Transportation Planning Agency
- Meeting with the Office of the Governor
- Discussions held with State & Federal Legislators

- Coordination with FAC, SCC, Florida's Stimulus Czar and Wakulla County Representatives

**Analysis:**

There are many sources of ARRA funding and contains strict eligibility criteria. ARRA funding is either distributed by established state and federal formulas to allow funds to flow from the Federal Government through the State, or are discretionary funds where we must make application directly to state, or federal government. (For example-flarecovery.com or grants.gov)

**Wakulla County Economic Stimulus Lobbying Effort**

At the March 17, 2009 Board Meeting the Board approved for the existing State contract lobbying firm (Governance Services) to lobby relevant State and Federal Governmental entities to leverage Economic Stimulus funding on behalf of Wakulla County as part of an overarching regional effort to secure lobbying services specifically for stimulus funding. County staff and Governance have had ongoing communications in identifying the various appropriate funding opportunities related to Wakulla County's stimulus projects.

To date, the potential sources identified by staff and lobbyists are: Department of Transportation-Discretionary Grants for a National Surface Transportation System, USDA Rural Development Grants, Rural Utilities Services, Rural Water & Waste Disposal Program, US Department of Energy-Energy Efficiency & Conservation Block Grants, Department of Justice Byrne Grants, FEMA State & Local Programs-Firefighter Assistance Grants, and Bureau of Reclamation Water & Water Related Resources. Staff and Governance are working together to establish a plan of action in obtaining funding by having conference calls and meetings with appropriate state and federal representatives.

**The State of Florida Stimulus Activities**

The Governor appointed Don Winstead as the stimulus czar for the state of Florida to oversee the influx of federal funds to state programs over the next three budget years. In an effort to be transparent a website [flarecovery.com](http://flarecovery.com) has been activated to communicate available funding opportunities and other information to eligible entities. The website also allows for taxpayers to track how the stimulus funding is being spent.

It is unknown at this time, specifically how much of the ARRA funding will be used by the State to close the Budget deficit at this time, thereby it is unknown of the amount of potential discretionary funding that we may apply for through many of the state agencies. However, it is anticipated that there will be several billion dollars available for disbursement through the State via appropriations, grants, etc.

**WAKULLA COUNTY PROJECTS CURRENTLY FUNDED BY ARRA**

**TRANSPORTATION**-Through Federal Highway Administration and the Florida Department of Transportation, Wakulla County has already been notified of the following funding:

- ✓ \$200,000 for Rural Road Safety pavement Marking-Striping of Curtis Mills Road, Rail Road Ave., Oak Park, & Persimmon Road
- ✓ \$417,000 for Turn lane at US 319 Crawfordville Highway @ Russell Drive -near *Happytime* NOTE: This turn lane is included in the Board approved stimulus projects referenced above in the U.S. Hwy 319 Transportation Improvements).

Final approval of funding is contingent upon the Florida Legislative Budget Committee and the Federal Highway Administration. By the end of April, the County should be notified of final approval of ARRA funds. The safety pavement project will be coordinated by the local RFP process, and overseen by the County. FDOT will assist the County in this process to ensure that Wakulla County adheres to the state and federal funding requirements. The Russell Drive turn lane project will be conducted by FDOT, with assistance provided by the County, if needed.

**HOUSING-**Through the federal Department of Energy and Florida Department of Community Affairs

- ✓ Wakulla County is projected to receive as much as \$3.5 million in stimulus funding from the 2009 ARRA, 35 times the County's normal allocation.

Staff and Governance are tracking the following grant opportunities at this time:

- U.S. Department of Commerce's Public Works and Economic Development Act (PWEDA) grant program
- Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grants
- USDA's Rural Community Facility Grants
- USDA's Rural Utilities Service (RUS) programs

Staff and Governance will provide updates to the Board, and information will be posted on the county's website as progress is made in obtaining funding for the projects. At this point, the stimulus has generated an estimated \$4.1 million for county projects and services. We are exploring opportunities to generate funding for nearly \$40 million in other projects.

**Options:**

1. Accept the update regarding the American Reinvestment & Recovery Act (ARRA) funding opportunities for Wakulla County projects.
2. Do not accept the update regarding the American Reinvestment & Recovery Act (ARRA) funding opportunities for Wakulla County projects.
3. Board Direction.

**Recommendation:**

Option #1