

Board of County Commissioners

Agenda Request

Date of Meeting: June 2, 2009

Date Submitted: May 15, 2009

To: Honorable Chairman and Members of the Board

From: Benjamin H. Pingree, County Administrator
Lindsay Stevens, Assistant County Administrator
Pamela Joy, Administrative Assistant

Subject: Request Board Consideration of a Request from US Census to form a *Complete Count Committee*

Statement of Issue:

This agenda item requests Board consideration of a request from the US Census to form a local government-sponsored *Complete Count Committee*.

Background:

The census has been constitutionally mandated every decade since 1790 to determine the number of people living within the US and its territories. The data is used to make decisions regarding congressional reapportionment and redistricting and also affect how more than \$300 billion in federal funds are distributed each year.

One of the primary goals of the 2010 Census is to increase the national mailback response rate of census questionnaires. The Census Bureau is asking communities and business organizations to help achieve this goal by bringing local knowledge and expertise to the process by participating in a *Complete Count Committee* (“*Committee*”).

If created, the *Committee* will plan and implement local outreach efforts to publicize the importance to all citizens of participating in the 2010 Census.

The Census Bureau has provided guidelines to use in structuring such a committee. Detailed specifics are provided in the attached **Complete Count Committee Guide** (“**Guide**”), and highlights are outlined as follows:

- The County’s highest elected official is asked to appoint a chairperson for the *Committee*.
- The chairperson will coordinate subcommittees involving all aspects of the local community – government, education, faith-based, media, business, community organizations, recruiting. (See page 16 of the attached **Guide**.)
- The Census Bureau regional staff will serve as liaison and informational resource. The Census does not manage the *Complete Count Committee*.

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Analysis:

The activities of the ***Committee*** will rely on volunteers. Along with the appointed chairperson, community leaders from business, media, schools, churches and community organizations will be encouraged to serve on the subcommittees.

Staff recommends that representatives from the following community organizations be asked to serve on the ***Committee***:

- Chairperson – The County Chairman or designee
- Local Government – County staff person, City of St. Marks, City of Sopchoppy
- Education – School Board Member, COAST Charter
- Faith – One or more church representatives
- Media – Wakulla News, Wakulla.com, Wakulla Area Times
- Community – Sr. Citizens Center, Historical Society
- Business – Chamber of Commerce
- Recruiting – Big Bend Workforce, Volunteer-Wakulla

The Census has provided several creative ideas in the attached ***Guide*** to get the message out to the community in a variety of ways. Some of these include posters/flyers, stickers, media ads, special events, signs/banners, and messages on mailouts and websites. The Board may also decide to allocate funds to use for promotional materials, special events, or customized products.

It is recommended that the ***Committee*** be formed prior to 2010 for planning purposes and to provide sufficient time to prepare materials, schedule events and implement ideas. It is important to note that census forms will be mailed in March 2010 and “Census Day” is April 1, 2010. It is anticipated that the promotions determined by the ***Committee*** will be utilized from April 1 through July 2010, to increase awareness throughout the questionnaire response timeframe.

Evelin M. Ramirez of the US Census Bureau will be attending the BOCC meeting and has requested 5-10 minutes presentation time. Her contact information is:

Evelin Ramirez
Partnership Specialist, North Florida Team
Partnership and Data Services Program
US Census Bureau - Atlanta Regional Census Center
285 Peachtree Center Avenue, NE
Marquis Two Tower, Suite 1000
Atlanta, GA 30303
Phone: (850) 521-9608
Email: Evelin.M.Ramirez@Census.Gov

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Options:

1. Approve the formation of a ***Complete Count Committee***, as provided in the analysis section.
2. Do not approve the formation of a ***Complete Count Committee***.
3. Board Direction.

Recommendation:

Option #1 – Through the creation of a Complete ***Count Committee***, the County can promote, and hopefully increase, participation in the upcoming census. Only when the County's population and demographics are correctly accounted for can the County ensure accurate representation and funding opportunities.

Attachment:

1. *US Census Bureau Complete Count Committee Guide*

[LS:pj]