


"WORKING DRAFT"

**Glades County Board
of
County Commissioners**



US SUGAR BUY-OUT

Revision #1

August 12, 2008

Glades County Board of County Commissioners

Preliminary Request for Short-term and Long-term Projects to Offset Impacts of the South Florida Water Management District's Acquisition of U.S Sugar

Mission Statement:

It is the desire of the Glades County Commission to take an honest look at the impacts of the acquisition and provide to our state and federal partners a realistic vision of how we can address the impact on our community in both a short range and long range manner and create a vital sustainable community.

We have created the attached list with this goal in mind. We believe there are short term necessities that are within the purview of the state which are achievable and which will ameliorate to some degree the initial impacts but they are followed by long term needs which are necessary to achieve the stated goals of our state and federal partners of assisting the affected communities, maintaining and securing a replacement tax base for continued community viability, maintaining and securing the population base and redeveloping and enhancing local economies and communities

We look forward to working with our partners to make their stated goals and our mission statement and vision for our community a reality.

This is a working document, which represents the current situation as of August 12th, 2008 subject to the ongoing process and the inclusion and exclusion of additional priorities as we move forward.

Short-term necessities:

* 1) Providing funding of at least \$1,000,000 for infrastructure at the Glades County Business and Commerce Park to put in place the last pieces necessary for interested parties to locate new enterprises that will add additional jobs to the area.

2) Providing Funding for the construction of a new health department facility on lands provided by the county. This construction should be fully funded and the requirement of a local match should be waived for this facility. We ask that this be placed in the Department of Health's LBR for the next fiscal year and that the Governor include it in his budget recommendation to the legislature.

* 3) That in addition to continued support for currently allocated funding, we request that the Governor direct the appropriate state agencies to begin the process of the improving and upgrading of the existing South Central Florida Express Railroad and for its expansion to link that rail to assist in providing freight transportation and passenger services from Miami to Tampa. We would like to work with you to give you our ideas as to the specifics of how this can be accomplished and the priorities of the pieces of this project as they relate to the greatest opportunity for expanded economic development in Glades County.

* 4) Expedite with all available resources the Moore Haven Canal project already committed to by the water management district over the next five years. We would like to see it done as quickly as possible. In addition, we would like to have the district look at Harney Pond and other areas with similar needs but to focus on expediting our existing commitments first.

5) That at some point 589 Acres of TIFF land around Lake Hickpochee be dredged to restore water flow to the lake so that an inland port for sea barges could be developed and connected to US 27 only one mile away. And that during that process based on discussions between the state and the county that the land be transferred to the county.

Long-term Goals

- 1) Return all lands possible not needed for restoration projects back to agricultural uses and to surplus out other agricultural infrastructure back into the economy so that those processing facilities can continue to serve the local agricultural economy.
- 2) Promote Eco-tourism on Lake Okeechobee in Glades County and on the trailheads around it as well as along the Caloosahatchee River Area.
- 3) Any surplus lands not necessary to restoration or needed for agricultural production should be surplused to the county and OTTED and Enterprise Florida should be directed to making it a top priority to locate a large manufacturer of environmentally friendly products to the area such as, a hybrid or hydrogen cell automobile manufacturer, a solar film or other solar technology enterprise or a wind turbine systems manufacturer and the state will provide the needed infrastructure such as roads water and sewer for the facility and OTTED would provide the needed job training to transition workers to the new enterprise.
- 4) That the state assist in using lands in the area to expedite permitting and construction of a variety of clean energy facilities which our area is uniquely positioned to accommodate.
- 5) That the state consider legislation related to the PILT program for environmental land acquisition just recently passed for a provision to apply only to lands acquired in this acquisition to create the series of reservoirs for Everglades restoration. PILT is based on the tax rate paid on the property prior to its acquisition for purposes of this acquisition PILT payments would be based on its end use by the district which is a more industrial related purpose and the local governmental entities would receive PILT payments based on that rather than the current agricultural use. This would offset the tax base losses and the loss of future changes in development.



6) That to insure a competitive environment for future development that natural gas lines are run into Glades County from the surrounding area. One of the options would be to run down from existing lines in Highlands County. This is very important for Glades and Hendry County for future development.



7) Target our area for bio fuel production.



8) Continue to completion the wastewater system located in Moore Haven and secure and develop a potable water supply for the city. Both are critical infrastructure for long-term economic development.

9) In conjunction with the new health department facility assist us in creation of a partnership with one of the state's medical schools to create a rural health initiative which would provide valuable educational internships for physicians at the school and provide much needed healthcare access to the citizens of the region.

10) Target assistance to our educational system, create something akin to the DCD (the district cost differential) in the FEFP (Florida Education Finance Program) which adds additional dollars for urban school districts for higher costs of living purposes by creating a lets call it a SCD or sugar cost differential. This would provide that regardless of the impacts or loss of FTE's (Full-time equivalents or number of students) from the buyout proposal that the local districts would never be funded at less than the FTE levels of the year prior to the acquisition. In addition, we would like enhanced assistance with vocational training and real world business training we could serve as a pilot for rural areas with enhanced funding to make these programs viable. Any other enhancements to the funding formula which would assist in dealing with the ever expanding overhead experienced by the district which it cannot offset with economies of scale like larger districts.

11) Look at locating state facilities in our community. For example, a DOT regional office or similar agency presence, which would bring additional diverse job opportunities to our community.

Sustainability

- 1) Work with our EDC and other interested parties to expand the opportunities for new single and multifamily affordable housing.
- 2) Work to provide attractive community for our residents and to attract new citizens and employment opportunities. This can be done by riverfront improvements and along the US 27 corridor. One project that would be included in this would be the donation of 90 acres between Riverside Drive and the School Board property by the WMD for purposes of resort type development.
- 3) Assist the Main Street program in the acquisition of four buildings at cost of \$350,000 and support their application for \$1,000,000 from the Hope VI grant program to rehab those properties
- ~~4) Assist us with our federal partners in designating Glades County as a federal empowerment zone.~~
- 5) Assist us in obtaining an EOC facility for the County.
- 6) Help with projects in the historic district such as the \$625,000 current proposal.

In Summary:

We believe that in order to allow for long term sustainability to be achieved an ongoing commitment to economic development, education and job training are vital elements of a three legged stool, which will support and make possible a viable and sustainable future for our community.