

Okaloosa County News Release

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Okaloosa County Hosts Sustainability Conference *Large Ideas Discussed with a Small Footprint at Conference*

Managers from Leon, Bay, Escambia, Santa Rosa and Okaloosa attended a Sustainability Conference; however Okaloosa attendees were the only ones at the Extension Office in Crestview. “The whole idea of sustainability is to be able to have meetings utilizing the technology available – The University of Florida/Okaloosa County Extension Office, as well as extension offices throughout the state are already equipped to do this and do it well,” exclaimed Okaloosa County Commissioner John Jannazo, who spearheaded the effort.

Many other counties are already ahead in creating a more sustainable county by measuring their consumption and waste and implementing sustainable programs. What are they doing and how are they doing it? Below are just a few examples:

- Bay Area Resources (Pensacola MSA) program of Landfill Mining has saved space and extended the life of their landfill by an estimated 35 years.
- Sarasota created a “Road Map” for departments to follow to stay on task and their map is enormous and far-reaching.
- Leon County has accomplished much and are looking at hiring a Sustainability Manager to move forward with more opportunities.

All of these counties made presentations from their offices and shared their success in getting ideas into programs and projects. PowerPoint presentations were presented for all to see; speakers were viewed and heard via a telecom system. The one thing the 86 “virtual” attendees took away is that other counties are having success, and teaching the community as a whole to conserve is a vital part of the process for the future of our cities, counties and state and the people we leave behind. Vice President Tim Center, Sustainable Florida Initiative, said it best when he said “we cannot afford not to do everything we can, when the cost is greater in the long run.”

The presentations from Thursday’s conference can be found on the University of Florida web site at <http://okaloosa.ifas.ufl.edu/index.shtml> The conference also showcased exhibitors featuring new environmentally friendly flooring, Insulated windows, solar energy information and more. Another conference will be held in the spring, in the meantime, please learn how you can be improving sustainability in your home or office, saving money and precious resources. For more information, visit www.okaloosafl.com or call 651-7105.

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