Florida Scenic Highways Program
Florida Department of Transportation
605 Suwannee Street, MS-37
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0450
(850) 414-5267

DATE: **January 26, 2012**

TO: **Florida Scenic Highways Program Community**

FROM: **Jeff Caster, Program Administrator, Florida Scenic Highways Program, Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), Environmental Management Office (EMO)**

CC: **Mariano Berrios, FDOT, Environmental Management Office (EMO)**
Lynne Marie Whately and Andy Nicol, TranSystems

SUBJECT: **Florida Scenic Highways Program - 2012 1st Quarter District Scenic Highway Coordinator Conference Call, January 26, 2012**

The Florida Scenic Highways Program (FSHP) Quarter 1 District Scenic Highway Coordinator conference call was held on Thursday, January 26, 2012 from 2:00-3:30 P.M. (EST). The purpose of the quarterly teleconference is to discuss FSHP current events, recent developments, policy updates, and address issues, concerns and comments raised by participants.

2:00 P.M. WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

The conference call was opened with the announcement and introduction of Jeff Caster, FDOT. Mr. Caster will take over the role of the Florida Scenic Highways Program State Coordinator, replacing Mariano Berrios, FDOT. Mr. Berrios has been serving as the FSHP State Coordinator for the past 10+ years. Currently, Mr. Caster's role within the Florida Department of Transportation, Environmental Management Office, includes program management for Landscape Architecture, Roadside Management, Visual/Aesthetics, Highway Beautification Grants, and the Wildflower Program. Mr. Caster has great interest in the conservation, protection, and management of natural resources, which makes him an ideal leader for the FSHP.

A short bio and announcement for Mr. Caster are included on the FSHP website at the following location: www.floridascenichighways.com/program/news/

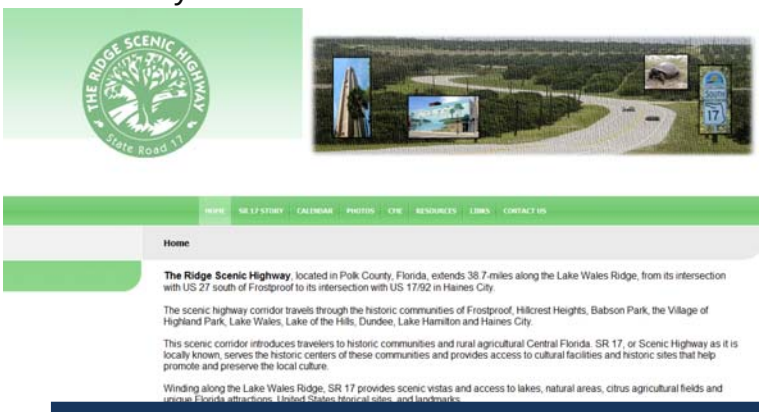
2:10 P.M. DISTRICT SCENIC HIGHWAY COORDINATOR UPDATES

Each District Scenic Highway Coordinator was provided the opportunity to discuss recent occurrences and developments related to their respective Scenic Highways within their District. This opportunity allows for interactive discussion

and information sharing among DSHCs and others involved in the FSHP. The following information is a summary of each DSHC update.

District 1

- The Ridge Scenic Highway
  - Recently launched the www.ridgescencihighway.com website
  - On November 6, 2011, the CME held their corridor wide (39-mile) yard sale, from Frostproof to Haines City.
- Tamiami Trail/Windows to the Gulf Coast Waters
  - No updates provided
- Bradenton Beach
  - No updates provided
- Lemon Bay/Myakka Trail
  - No updates provided
- Palma Sola
  - No updates provided



Screen shot of www.ridgescenichighway.com

District 2

- William Bartram Scenic & Historic Highway
  - The Corridor Management Entity (CME) is currently working on a possible Scenic Highway overlay district through local governments adjoining the Scenic Highway corridor.
  - Several initiatives are currently underway, including a bicycle safety event, a tree/plant inventory, a Speaker's Bureau and display/brochures being developed.
  - The CME is continuing to develop a viewshed analysis of the scenic areas along the corridor.
- Old Florida Heritage Highway
  - The CME has been incorporated and is working on their 501(c)(3) application.
  - A new Facebook page has been launched for the Scenic Highway.
  - The CME is hosting an Annual Meeting on January 26, 2012.
  - On behalf of the CMC, the Florida DEP with Friends of Paynes Prairie applied for a grant to construct a new visitor center along the Byway.
  - The CME has completed their 5-Year CMP Update as required by the FSHP.
- A1A Scenic & Historic Coastal Byway
  - The CME is working towards completing their Accreditation Program (under FDOT District 5).

- The Wayfinding and Interpretation Project is still underway– maintenance agreements for signage are being pursued with multiple municipalities.
- A golf tournament is planned for March 25, 2012.
- A 10th Anniversary Bike Ride, oriented around the Scenic corridor, is also being planned.

- Florida Black Bear Scenic Byway
  - The Corridor Master Plan is still underway and is planned to be complete on February 25, 2012.
  - The CME has developed a membership database to assist with contacting and organizing their members.
  - The new corridor Facebook page has been launched.
- J.C. Penney Memorial Scenic Highway
  - The CME recently completed a tree inventory along the corridor and planted new trees along Palm Drive.
  - The CME held a quarterly meeting on January 12, 2012 at which they outlined future fundraising activities including a plant sale and golf event. The CME is seeking to do one event per month.

District 3

- Pensacola Scenic Bluffs
  - The CME is planning an oral history event titled "History Surrounds Gull Point" for February 4, 2012.
  - A Community Workshop on is being scheduled to present techniques to avoid erosion control along the Bluff, removal of invasive species, tips for native and shoreline plantings, and techniques for establishing oyster reefs.
- Scenic Highway 30A
  - The CME is hosting a kick-off event for their Wildflower Pilot Program.
  - A sign inventory has been completed through coordination with the Public Works Office, which outlines the removal of sign clutter.
  - The CME is assisting with the development of an Adopt a County Road Program.
- Big Bend Scenic Byway
  - No updates reported.

District 4

- Martin Grade
  - No updates provided
- Broward A1A
  - The CME held a water taxi tour in October from Ft. Lauderdale to Hollywood, FL. The tour highlighted the development potential along the corridor and the history of the natural areas (which is something the group would like use for marketing, etc.).

- The CME is looking for opportunities to add a visitor center on the corridor in the City of Hollywood, FL.

District 5

*Not in attendance

- Ormond Scenic Loop and Trail
  - No update provided
- Green Mountain Scenic Byway
  - No update provided
- Indian River Lagoon National Scenic Byway
  - No update provided
- Heritage Crossroads
  - No update provided
- River of Lakes Heritage Corridor Scenic Highway
  - No update provided
- Scenic Sumter Heritage Byway
  - This is a new byway currently working towards eligibility.
- Halifax Heritage Byway
  - This is a new byway currently working towards eligibility.

District 6

- Florida Keys Scenic Highway
  - The Wayfinding Plan is underway and all signs on the Scenic Highway have been inventoried. The CME is hoping the plan moves into the construction phase by the fall of 2012.
  - Approximately 25 additional miles of trails are being constructed along the Overseas Heritage Trail.
  - FDOT District 6 is working towards a PD&E study for a Key West Trailhead project.
  - The CME is working on their organization structure and methods to better organize and become a sustainable organizational entity.

District 7

- Courtney Campbell Scenic Highway
  - The CME and FDOT are continuing with final plans for two (2) sections of trail along the Causeway. Outreach meeting will be held in the coming months.

Turnpike

- Suncoast Scenic Parkway
  - Comments on the 5-Year CMP Update have been received and the CME is working to address the recommendations.
  - The CME has begun helping implement 911 Call Boxes along the Suncoast Trail.

- The CME is currently looking at requests for spring and fall events for 2012.

2:45 P.M. FSHP General Updates and Information

FSHP Vision and 2012 Work Plan

- A FSHP Vision Plan and 2012 Work Plan are being developed, with the overall intent to outline a long-term action plan for the State Program, as well as identify initiatives and activities to be completed in the coming year (2012-2013). Once completed, the Vision and 2012 Work Plan will be provided to FDOT Management for their support, as well as made available to the program participants.

NSB Program Update

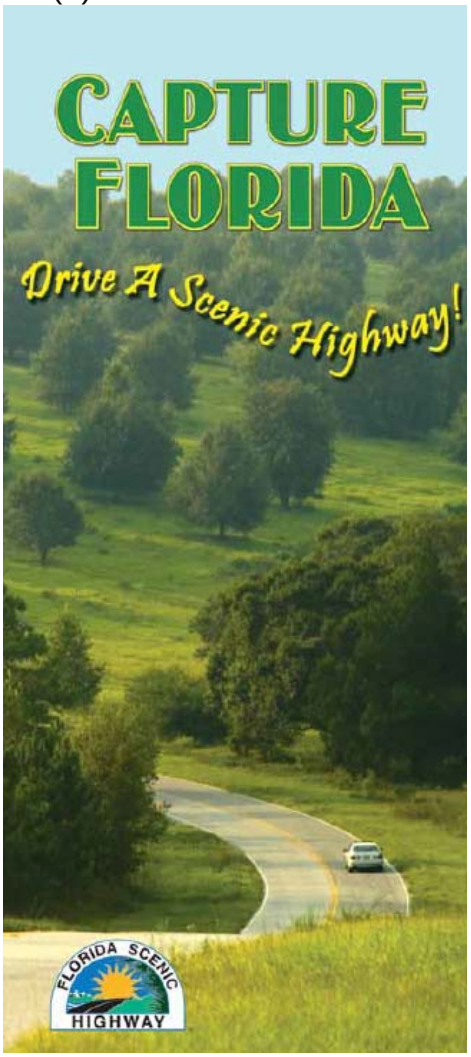
- No news on reauthorization yet. The National Scenic Byways Program may still move into the Livability Program as was previously announced.
- America's Byways Resource Center (ABRC) is closing June 30, 2012. Prior to closing, FSHP staff will work to gather and provide the existing resources created by the ABRC for use and storage on our program website.
  - Vicki Renna encouraged the State Program to examine ways in which to fill the roll being vacated by the ABRC in providing valuable education, training and research initiatives for Florida's corridors.
- The Byway Assessment Tool is now available. Please contact FSHP staff if you are interested in receiving a copy of the electronic file(s).

NSB Grant Update

- Fiscal Year 2012 NSB Grant Update
  - The complete Florida Scenic Highways Program Grant Package was submitted to FHWA on January 6, 2012.
  - Several CMEs offered comments and suggestions on the current grant cycle. These comments are noted below:
    - It was suggested that guidance be developed to assist CMEs with the requirements and methods for the "use" of federal funds, once grants are received. With many of the new CMEs being voluntarily staffed, this additional guidance will help to understand the "do's and don'ts" of federal funding.
    - It was suggested that guidelines be developed to ensure consistent Scenic Highway Advisory Committee (SHAC) review comments to grant applications. There appeared to be a range of scores or conflicting comments may have been given out. Guidelines will ensure the SHAC is ranking in a consistent and predicable manner.

- It was suggested that the CMEs be allowed the opportunity to respond to SHAC questions or have the opportunity to clarify issues for the SHAC in regards to grant applications, prior to ranking.
- It was suggested that the FSHP consider a state-only grant program. FSHP staff discussed that this is in-fact a 2012 initiative outlined in the FSHP Work Plan and will require management approvals.

- Seven (7) grants were submitted and five (5) were forwarded on for funding consideration. These included (in ranked order):
  1. Planning for Big Bend Scenic Byway Economic Competitiveness Through Tourism – Big Bend Scenic Byway
  2. Wayfinding Signage System Master Plan Implementation - A1A Scenic & Historic Coastal Byway
  3. Welcome Center - Indian River Lagoon National Scenic Byway
  4. Multi-Media Interpretation - Florida Keys Scenic Highway
  5. Traveler Wayfinding Signage Project - Broward County SR A1A Scenic Byway



- FY2012 Grant Update – 260 applications requesting $112 million, $17.8 million available; awards expected by May

CME Sustainability Review

- FSHP Staff is reviewing comments/suggestions from Wanda Maloney (consultant working on the Sustainability Analysis for the FSHP).
- New policies, procedures, and training will result from the recommendations in the Sustainability Analysis report.

FSHP Newsletter

- The second FSHP newsletter was sent out at the beginning of January 2012 (also posted on the Program Website)
- Please send content and articles to Joan Bernat for upcoming issues at Spokebusters@gmail.com

FSHP Themed Brochures and State Brochure

- Any DSHC or CME in need of state brochures or the themed brochure series - please contact FSHP staff. These can be sent for your use and distribution.

New FSHP Hi-Def DVDs

- Any DSHC or CME in need of FSHP DVDs - please contact FSHP staff. These can be sent for your use and distribution.

SHAC Meetings

- 2012 SHAC meeting dates are planned to be: February 8, July 11, and October 10.

Conference Calls 2012

- 2012 Conference call dates are planned to be April 26, July 26, and October 25.

Growing FSHP Partnerships

- Florida Tourism Day – FSHP staff attended the 2012 Florida Tourism Day hosted by VISIT FLORIDA on January 18, 2012 in Tallahassee, Florida. Florida Tourism Day is held annually to bring together members of the Florida's tourism industry to share information about statewide efforts and programs and to encourage cross-promotion of tourism based programs.
  - The FSHP maintains an ongoing partnership with VISIT FLORIDA; however, the cost of membership for each individual corridor is the responsibility of the respective CME.
  - Each designated highway has its own webpage on the VISIT FLORIDA site (under the Program's partnership). CME's are asked to ensure their information is correct on this website.
- Florida Wildflower Association – Any DSHC or CME in need of seed packets, please contact FSHP staff. The seeds can be sent for your use and distribution.

NSB Website Update

- CME's are asked to ensure their information is correct on this website (www.byways.org). Please visit this site and double-check your information. This site is highly-visited and generates tremendous travel opportunities for Scenic Byways in the U.S.

FSHP Website Update

- Tourist Website (www.floridascenichighways.com) – Please continue to add stories and pictures by sending them to FSHP staff. Please visit the site regularly to ensure that all information is current and correct.
- Program Website (www.floridascenichighways.com/program) – all grant information, webinar information, and other similar content has been posted on the program website in the resources section.
- FSHP Library – We are pleased to announce this page has been added to the Program Website, in the Resources section. The address is: www.floridascenichighways.com/program/resources/fshp-library/ and all CMPs, 5-Year CMP Updates, grants, SHAC meeting minutes, DSHC meeting minutes, and Quarterly District Scenic Highway Coordinator (DSHC) conference call minutes are located on the page.

3:30 P.M. CONCLUSION

The FSHP Q1 Conference call concluded at approximately 3:00 P.M. (EST).

The next Quarterly conference call will be held on April 26, 2012 at 2:00 P.M. (EST).