

Around the County

Volusia County earns green government certification



*IT'S REWARDING BEING GREEN – Volusia County Council and Environmental Management staff were presented the FGBC Local Government Certification during the Oct. 7 County Council meeting. Pictured back row, from left: **County Manager Jim Dinneen**, County Council members **Andy Kelly** and **Josh Wagner**, **Vice Chair Joie Alexander**, **Volusia County Chair Frank Bruno Jr.**, and County Council members **Carl Persis** and **Pat Northey**. Pictured front row, from left: Environmental Management staff **Heather Squires** and **Ginger Adair**; Lyonia Environmental Center Manager **Katrina Locke**; Florida Green Building Council board member **Stephanie Thomas-Rees**; **Ralph Locke**, president/CEO of Environmental Construction and Consulting; and **Michelle Leigh**, Environmental Management.*

The Florida Green Building Coalition (FGBC) – a membership-based nonprofit organization that promotes sustainable building, development and business practices – has designated Volusia County as a Florida Green Local Government after it successfully met the sustainability standards established in the FGBC Green Local Government Certification program. Volusia achieved 32 percent, earning a silver level designation.

The designation demonstrates a strong commitment by Volusia County elected officials to embrace the tenants of sustainability, while also helping to better manage the cost of government.

To achieve the certification, Volusia County staff undertook an extensive audit of the functions performed by every department within their government. The criteria included evaluations of energy and water usage, air quality, health issues, land use, waste disposal and recycling, maintenance policies, educational programs, purchasing practices, regulatory policies, and many others. From there teams used FGBC's online program tools to identify methods to improve the sustainability of their business practices and operations.

Through these efforts, there were reductions in operating costs and capital outlays, improvements in departmental communication and cooperation, improved risk and asset management, a wealth of environmental benefits

including measureable CO reductions and identification of programs that will improve community involvement and enhance sustainability throughout Volusia County.

FGBC's Green Local Government Certification program developed in 2004 was the first of its kind in the nation and is the only one of its type in Florida. With endorsements from the Florida Legislature, the Florida League of Cities and the Florida League of Mayors, FGBC has become the leading certifier of green projects in Florida.

Some of the significant accomplishments achieved by the county include the installation of LED traffic lights, utilization of green cleaning practices, creation of a reclaimed water infrastructure, and a recycling program at the beaches. Volusia County also provides a public transportation network with connectivity to a bicycle and pedestrian-friendly circulation system. Community residents can search online for route information and find information on carpool and vanpool assistance. The county also operates a public reuse store, encourages green building and development, utilizes green fleet management, and encourages employee environmental innovation to save fuel, electricity and other resources through a "Go Green, Win Green" reward program. Economic Development, tourism and an enhanced quality of life environment are promoted through the ECHO tourism campaign, which provides hiking, biking and blue trails, as well as heritage and cultural value within the county.