



# HORIZONS

## Membership

- Lake County
- Sumter County
- Town of Astatula
- City of Clermont
- City of Eustis
- City of Fruitland Park
- City of Groveland
- Town of Howey-in-the-Hills
- Town of Lady Lake
- City of Leesburg
- City of Mascotte
- City of Minneola
- Town of Montverde
- City of Mount Dora
- City of Tavares
- City of Umatilla
- City of Wildwood
- Florida Central Railroad

## ***Our Community - Our Future*** to address the ‘Big Four’

Wednesday, Jan. 9 will be the date of the third in a series of forums focused on creating a Lake County vision for the future.

To be held at the Lake County Agricultural Services facility at SR 19 and Woodlea Road in Tavares, the two-hour event, from 6 to 8 p.m., will provide an overview of what is being called the “Big Four”.

Water, schools, transportation and economic development are major areas of concern of residents and elected officials; and the agenda for the evening will include speakers on each topic.

Said chairman of the Lake~Sumter Metropolitan Planning Organization, Minneola Mayor David Yeager, “We have groups working on each of the Big Four issues ... but what is tying these efforts together?”

The evening will conclude with a panel

to address how we can become better organized in tackling areas that cross jurisdictional boundaries.

“We know that roads continue beyond government boundaries,” said MPO chairman-elect and chairman of the Lake County Board of County Commissioners Welton Cadwell, “The same can be said, for water, schools and economic development.”

Started in May 2007, *Our Community - Our Future* is an initiative that arose as a result of the *How Shall We Grow?* seven-county regional visioning efforts. Began by the Lake~Sumter MPO and the Lake County BCC, *Our Community - Our Future* is a forum for elected leaders to discuss the future of Lake County.

“At the end of the Jan. 9 event,” said MPO executive director T.J. Fish, “We will pose a question to the group. ‘What do we do next?’”

## **MPO Horizon Awards to be presented at annual dinner**

A first-time event for the Lake~Sumter MPO, Wednesday, Jan. 23, 2008, will be the date of the inaugural Annual Dinner & Horizon Awards.

The event will be held at the Tavares Civic Center immediately following the 4 p.m. meeting of the MPO Governing Board. The event will begin with a 5:30 p.m. reception followed by dinner at 6:30 p.m.

The program for the evening will include installation of newly-elected officers of the MPO and a presentation of the first-ever Horizon Awards.

The Horizon Awards are to recognize excellence in planning, partnership and public service during 2007. Candidate projects may include physical improvements, provision of transportation services, capital projects, land or right-of-way acquisition, approved studies or designs, updates to comprehensive plans or

land development regulations and intergovernmental coordination.

Nominations are currently being accepted for the following at [LakeSumterMPO.com](http://LakeSumterMPO.com).

**Small Municipality Award-** Eligible MPO members include municipalities of less than 5,000 in population.

**Large Municipality Award -** Eligible MPO members include municipalities of more than 5,000 in population.

Both the **Keep Lake Moving Award** and the **Keep Sumter Moving Award** are extended to Lake and Sumter county departments and divisions. Candidate projects may be in areas of Growth Management, Public Works, Public Transportation or Administration.

Three awards will be presented by MPO staff: **Regional Partner Award**, **Volunteer of the Year Award** and the **Leadership Award**.

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**David Yeager,  
Chairman**

## Message from the Chairman

What a year it has been. Apart from the excitement of serving as Minneola mayor, I also have had the pleasure of serving as MPO chairman.

It has been an educational experience. I have been immersed into the world of transportation planning and funding. I have learned a great deal about the inner-workings of the Florida Department of Transportation and how our federal government interacts with our state and local governments.

I have also learned a great deal about my fellow local elected officials and their communities. No other entity brings together elected leadership like

the MPO. Chairing the MPO meeting has been a joy as I have gotten to work with colleagues from cities throughout Lake and Sumter and I have gotten to know the Lake County commissioners and Sumter County chairman.

My appreciation goes out to James Yatsuk, who chaired the MPO in 2006. He provided a foundation on which I have tried to build. To Chairman-elect Welton Cadwell, who takes over in January, I leave a quality organization that is ready to solve our needs in the multi-modal world of transportation.

Finally, to the MPO staff, I have always been impressed that such a small group can get so much accomplished. Many thanks to Sue, Nancy, Mike, Tom and T.J.

## LakeXpress adjusts routes

The Lake County Board of County Commissioners took action Dec. 18 to adjust routing of the LakeXpress.

The changes include new stops at Lake-Sumter Community College, Lake County Agricultural Center and better routing through the downtowns of Leesburg and Fruitland Park.

The changes came about after public hearings held by Lake County's Community Services Public Transportation Division in cooperation with the MPO. New schedules are now being printed, and route adjustments will be fully implemented by January.

LakeXpress runs every hour from The Villages to Eustis with a circulator route in downtown Leesburg. LakeXpress operates Monday through Friday, 6 a.m. to 7:45 p.m.

For a LakeXpress bus schedule, call (352) 326-8637 or log on to [www.RideLakeXpress.com](http://www.RideLakeXpress.com).

## Sumter County, Wildwood and MPO embrace regional partnership

Change is inevitable. In the planning world, change is the one constant.

For example, the days are gone of Sumter County or Lake County being called simply rural counties.

With The Villages continuing to expand with their third town center called Brownwood, and the City of Wildwood expanding by 20,000 acres, Sumter County is on the verge of a development explosion.

The Lake~Sumter MPO has partnered with Sumter County and the City of Wildwood to help prepare for this pending change.

The MPO, represented by Sumter

County and Wildwood on its Governing Board, recognizes that northern Sumter County is an urbanized area in development. That fact was recognized by the 2000 Census.

In an effort to aid Sumter County in planning for the upcoming surge in demand on the local transportation system, a series of interlocal agreements has been entered into among Wildwood, Sumter County and the MPO.

Long range planning will help to ensure that the necessary infrastructure will be in place to meet the future travel demand from the expected growth in the region.

Last year, it was agreed that all of Sumter County would be included in the MPO's next plan update, the 2035 *Transportation Plan*.

A significant portion of the expected future development in Sumter County and Wildwood are likely to occur in large developments called Developments of Regional Impact (DRIs). Therefore, the current agreements among the county, city and MPO to review these DRIs are critical.

Regional partnerships like the one among Wildwood, Sumter County and the MPO represent a new era in addressing local concerns.

### January/February 2008

**Jan. 9, Our Community—Our Future: Session 3, 6—8 p.m.**  
Lake County Agricultural Center, Tavares

**Jan. 16, Technical Advisory Committee, 2 p.m. Citizen Advisory Committee, 4 p.m.**  
Lake~Sumter MPO, Leesburg

**January 17, BPAC, 3 p.m.**  
Lake~Sumter MPO, Leesburg

**January 21, MPO Executive Committee, 2 p.m.**  
Lake~Sumter MPO, Leesburg

**Jan. 23, MPO Governing Board, 4 p.m. Reception, 5:30 p.m., Dinner, 6 :30 p.m.**  
Tavares Civic Center, Tavares

**Feb. 11, Lake County TDCB, 2 p.m.**  
Lake County Agricultural Center, Tavares

**Feb. 12, Sumter County TDCB, 2 p.m.**  
Sumter County Government Offices, Bushnell

**Feb. 20, Technical Advisory Committee, 2 p.m. Citizen Advisory Committee, 4 .m.**  
Lake~Sumter MPO, Leesburg

**Feb. 21, BPAC, 3 p.m.**  
Lake~Sumter MPO, Leesburg

**Feb. 25, MPO Executive Committee, 2 p.m.**  
Lake~Sumter MPO, Leesburg

**Feb. 27, MPO Governing Board, 2 p.m.**  
Tavares Civic Center, Tavares

# Where the Rubber Meets the Road

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) reports that the new six-lane segment of **US Highway 441**, from Mills Street to College Drive, in Leesburg, should be complete by January. Personnel are adding final touches now. The Tavares-to-Mount-Dora section should be fully opened by spring.



Preliminary work began on the **Fruitland Park and Lady Lake Trail Project**. This first phase of the project, a PD&E study, will identify the preferred trail corridor and assess the environmental issues and conditions in and around the corridor.

*(photo of South Lake Trail)*



The City of Minneola and Lake County have commenced a Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Study for the **Minneola Collector**, which will look at potential connections between US 27, SR 50 and the proposed interchange with the Florida Turnpike at Hills of Minneola.



## BPAC recommends Roadway Design Committee to help vision meet reality

The Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) developed the following recommendations to maintain and improve the current and future cycling conditions and infrastructure in Lake and Sumter counties.

1. **Develop** and update annually the Lake & Sumter County Bicycle Suitability Map.
2. **Update** the existing Lake County Bicycle & Pedestrian Masterplan (1996) as part of the 2035 Transportation Plan; the update should include Sumter County. Encourage all municipalities to adopt the appropriate sections of the Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan into their Comprehensive Plans.
3. **Establish** an MPO Roadway Design Committee, tasked with review of all roadway plans. The purpose of this committee is to provide guidance and to inspire a new approach to roadway design,

emphasizing that our communities' streets are significant public spaces for all modes of transportation; embracing the concept of moving people, not just cars, to enhance the 'livability' of roadways throughout the region.

4. **Create** and annually update the Bicycle & Pedestrian Crash Data System (PBCAT) for Lake and Sumter counties.
5. **Host** an annual Law Enforcement Bicycle & Pedestrian Workshop
6. **Enhance** BPAC website to include maps, educational, and promotional information.

The BPAC made these recommendations as the foundation not only for a more livable roadway system but for a modern transportation system indented to serve the mobility needs of Lake and Sumter counties.

## MPO & Eustis partner on downtown traffic & pedestrian study

In an effort to improve walkability and facilitate redevelopment in its downtown core, the City of Eustis has partnered with the MPO and FDOT to study traffic and pedestrian circulation patterns within the downtown area.

The City has plans to rejuvenate their downtown through the redevelopment of the former Waterman Hospital site, as well as several of the surrounding parcels, with a mix of land uses, including residential, commercial and office.

A supporting effort has been launched to address future parking supply and demand in the area. Ultimately, the City's desire is for a viable downtown core that provides safe pedestrian access and maintains vehicular mobility to, within and through the area.

### The Downtown Eustis Traffic & Pedestrian Circulation

**Study** will aid in the determination of appropriate actions to provide for this vision.

The importance of this effort can be seen on an average weekday when a pedestrian attempts to cross Grove Street to access the downtown restaurants and shops. Vehicles traveling at high speeds and a general lack of adequate gaps in the traffic make crossing Grove Street much more of an adventure than it should be.

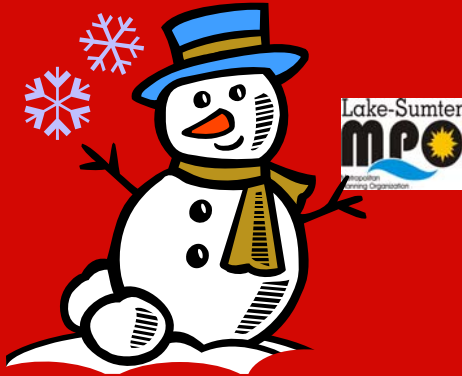
The study will evaluate potential tools to make crossing this and other downtown streets a safer endeavor.

The study is now underway and public meetings are being held.

For additional information on these meetings, please visit the MPO's website at [LakeSumterMPO.com](http://LakeSumterMPO.com).



# WARMEST HOLIDAY WISHES



WISHING YOU A SAFE  
&  
HAPPY HOLIDAY SEASON

*Tom*

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