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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Flagler County has three new graduates from Northeast Florida Regional Council Leadership Academy

September 28, 2023 – Flagler County Commissioner David Sullivan, Deputy County Administrator Jorge Salinas, and Emergency Management Director Jonathan Lord were among the 13-member 2023 graduating class of the Northeast Florida Regional Council (NEFRC) Leadership Academy that also included Palm Coast Chief of Staff Jason DeLorenzo. It was the 17th graduating class.

“The program allows leaders from a wide variety of organizations to see what occurs in our region (seven counties: Baker, Clay, Duval, Flagler, Nassau, Putnam, and St. Johns),” said Leadership Academy Program Director Tyler Nolen, who is also special projects coordinator and emergency preparedness planner for NEFRC. “With this region being so diverse there are lessons to be learned from each other on what works well or what doesn’t.”

The NEFRC Leadership Academy is a seven-month program that meets for one day each month – the last Wednesday – at each of the counties that make up the region.

“There are speakers arranged at each county location where we discuss issues specific to that county,” Nolen said. “The focus of this program is to nurture and cultivate a commitment to regionalism. Our program topics change and evolve based on what each of our counties is doing well, and how they can teach each other along the way.”

Meeting themes include topics from around the region like economic development, housing, agriculture, resiliency, and emergency preparedness.

“The graduates from the Regional Leadership Academy become members of the Regional Community Institute, a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization that works with the NEFRC, serving as a policy ‘think tank’ for the Northeast Florida Regional Council,” Nolen said. “This organization routinely works on various policy initiatives that impact our region.”

Andy Dance
District 1

Greg Hansen
District 2

David Sullivan
District 3

Leann Pennington
District 4

Donald O’Brien, Jr.
District 5

To date, 298 individuals have graduated from the NEFRC Leadership Academy, including 2022 graduate Flagler County Administrator Heidi Petito. Participation is encouraged throughout a range of industries, including both large and small businesses, education, nonprofits, agriculture, government, healthcare, elected officials, and media.

“I am incredibly grateful for the knowledge and expertise of the 13 individuals who participated in the RLA Class of 2023,” Nolen said.

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