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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Flagler County receives two awards from NEFRC in the areas of Healthcare Emergency Preparedness, Transportation

December 13, 2023 – Flagler County was notified on Monday that it is the recipient of two Annual Regional Awards for Excellence from the Northeast Florida Regional Council (NEFRC). Honors were awarded in the areas of “Healthcare Emergency Preparedness” for a training led by the county and hosted by AdventHealth at its new Palm Coast Parkway facility before its opening, and “Transportation” for the new Pedestrian Bridge that crosses State Road 100.

“The NEFRC awards these honors each year to recognize the best projects and the brightest leaders in the region,” said Chief Executive Officer Beth Payne in a news release issued by NEFRC. “Like previous years, there is engaging and transformational work happening across Northeast Florida. It is an honor to celebrate those projects and initiatives that enhance the community.”

The Pedestrian Bridge, situated between Colbert Lane and Old Kings Road, has more than two miles of added trails that will serve as a multimodal connection for the robust trail system that already exists in Flagler County. Benefits to the community are that it provides pedestrians and bicyclists with a safe way to cross a major, high-speed, four-lane thoroughfare. The ramps on and off the bridge are ADA compliant.

Additionally, it provides a means for users to take in often inaccessible areas of nature and experience our fabulous, huge, old-growth oaks, and wetland vegetation that they may otherwise never see.

“I’ve been out there and have had the pleasure of meeting people on the trail enjoying the new addition,” said County Administrator Heidi Petito. “Some expressed their gratitude about the bridge, because they use the amenity a few times a week.”

Before the grand opening of its brand-new Palm Coast Parkway Facility, AdventHealth graciously offered up the building for a multiagency full-scale “active shooter” training exercise for Flagler County first responders. Flagler County Emergency Management led a team which included AdventHealth, Flagler County Sheriff’s Office, Palm Coast Fire Department, and Flagler County Fire Rescue to develop and carry out the exercise.

Andy Dance
District 1

Greg Hansen
District 2

David Sullivan
District 3

Leann Pennington
District 4

Donald O’Brien, Jr.
District 5

“Of course, we sincerely hope for our community that we are never faced with a real-life active shooter situation, but the key is to train and to be prepared as if we will,” said Emergency Management Director Jonathan Lord, whose department prepared the training scenario and provided logistical support during the exercise. “And it isn’t very often that there is an empty facility like this available, so we didn’t hesitate to get things in motion once we found out we could use the building.”

The NEFRC 20th Annual Regional Awards for Excellence and Elected Officials Luncheon will be held to celebrate the winners and to honor local elected officials on January 4, 2024.

“These awards serve as a testament to the collective efforts made to shape a vibrant and interconnected community, where collaboration is not just a concept but a way of life,” Petito said. “Together, we celebrate the power of working hand-in-hand to build a resilient and thriving Northeast Florida.”

The Northeast Florida Regional Council is an independent, regional government agency serving Baker, Clay, Duval, Flagler, Putnam, Nassau, and St. Johns counties. It provides a regional perspective on economic development, emergency preparedness, resiliency, and community development to enhance the quality of life of Northeast Florida residents.

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