

3.0 COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION PROGRAM

Brief History

In an effort to preserve and protect SR A1A's intrinsic resources through the county, the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) designated SR A1A as a local Scenic Highway (per Resolution 97-43), and requested that the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) and the Federal Government designate SR A1A as a Scenic Highway. Shortly thereafter, the BCC appointed nine (9) members to the scenic highway board. The original members included; Dr. Greenberg, Chair; Pat Hamilton, Vice Chair; Jean Fitzpatrick; Chris Newman; Dr. Ralph DePasquale; Gordon Wilson; Otis Mason; Marsha Chance and Mike Cullum. In the fall of 1996, the scenic highway board members began to meet twice a week. The FDOT District II Scenic Highway coordinator, Jene Keeler was contacted to discuss the State's scenic highway requirements. The Florida Scenic Highway program requires boards to address three (3) major FDOT requirements:

- Letter of Intent
- Eligibility Application
- Corridor Management Plan (CMP)

In April 1998 Dr. Greenberg, the Corridor Advocacy Group (CAG) Chair, prepared and submitted the Letter of Intent to the FDOT. The official name for the scenic highway was "Scenic & Historic A1A". The FDOT submitted a written response to the Scenic & Historic A1A Chair, stating that they recognized the CAG's intentions in becoming a state scenic highway and identify the next progressive steps.

During the summer of 1998, the CAG hired Herbert Halback, Inc. to assist the county and the CAG in preparing the Scenic Highway eligibility application. After two years of working on this document, in the spring of 2000, the Scenic & Historic A1A board submitted their eligibility application to FDOT's Scenic Highway Advisory Committee (SHAC). On June 14, 2000, the SHAC determined that the Scenic & Historic A1A was eligible to become a state designated scenic highway. In the early fall of that year, the application was submitted to the Northeast Florida Planning & Zoning Association's (FPZA) annual award competition. The Scenic & Historic A1A eligibility application, which was prepared by the consultant, the CAG, and county

staff, was awarded a Large Scale Cultural Heritage Award.

Also in the fall of 2000, a contract was awarded to Glatting Jackson to prepare the Scenic & Historic A1A CMP, the next progressive step in becoming a state designated scenic highway, and a kick off meeting was held on November 13, 2000. The creation of the CMP required numerous public meetings and workshops, and design charrettes. These meetings included representatives from the City of St. Augustine and City of St. Augustine Beach. On January 17, 2002 after two years of meeting and proofing numerous drafts of the CMP, the Scenic & Historic A1A was officially designated as a state scenic highway. While the CMP was being finalized, CAG members also began work on the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) National Scenic Byway (NSB) designation application. This application was formally submitted to the FHWA one day after Scenic & Historic A1A was technically designated as a state scenic highway.

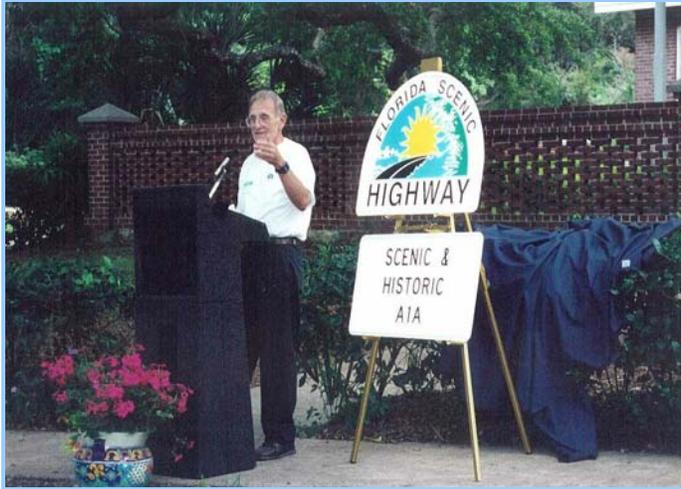
Toward the end of January 2002, the Corridor Management Entity (CME) members began to plan for their state designation ceremony. Local CME members contacted approximately five (5) local restaurants and asked them to donation food for the ceremony. The chosen main dish for this event was Minorcan clam chowder, a unique specialty of the St. Augustine area.

On April 25, 2002, Scenic & Historic A1A members held a designation ceremony at the St. Augustine Lighthouse & Museum. Over 200 participants attended the ceremony. The festivities began around 5:00 pm with scenic highway displays and vendors.

The event continued with a light dinner of Minorcan clam chowder, key lime pie, and bread. Scenic Highway members Marcha Chance, Chris Newman, Jean Fitzpatric, Vickie Paul and Barbara Jenness served food at the dedication ceremony.

After dinner, Dr. Greenberg, A1A Scenic & Historic Highway Chair and Master of Ceremony, lead the dedication speeches with the introduction of Aage Schroder, FDOT Secretary. Other speakers included Mary Konkee, St. Johns County Commissioner; Mariano Berrios, State Environmental Program Administrator, and local historian David Noland, who spoke about the famous people who lived along the scenic highway over

the years. The event continued into the evening with a live local band until 8:00 pm.



Dr. Greenburg – 2002



Commissioner Kohnke – 2002

After the state designated ceremony, the first order of business for the Scenic & Historic A1A Corridor Management Council (CMC) was the creation of a scenic highway brochure and the installation of the state scenic highway signs throughout the FDOT scenic highway corridor.

In May 2002, the FHWA asked St. Johns and Flagler counties to become one scenic NSB, since both counties submitted NSB applications to the federal government in the same year. With the help of Al Hadeed, Attorney for the byway, local governments along the byway

agreed to become one Scenic Byway, and this agreement was documented in the Letter of Understanding (LOU). The following month, at the NSB dedication ceremony in Washington D.C., the FHWA officially designated the A1A Scenic & Historic Coastal Byway as one NSB along with thirty other designation recipients throughout the United States.



Washington DC's NSB Dedication Ceremony - June 2002

After the A1A Scenic & Historic Coastal Byway was officially designated as such, many of the CMC members who had been working on this designation resigned while other representatives from both St. Johns and Flagler counties formed a Byway Executive Committee. Corridor Management Council (CMC) members from St. Johns and Flagler counties coordinated various scenic highway activities at monthly meetings. The byway meetings were active from the beginning since Flagler County was awarded a NSB grant in 2002 to develop a master plan. The grant funding was used to facilitate the preparation the 501(C)(3) not for profit paperwork so the byway could become a non-profit organization. Funding in the NSB grant was also available for Flagler County to prepare a master plan and establish land development regulation (LDRs) to protect the live oak canopy overhanging the scenic highway.

In 2003, St. Johns County was awarded a NSB grant to have a Master Plan prepared along A1A in St. Johns County (a total of 52 miles). Also during this same year the byway executive committee was awarded a separate NSB seed money grant to create a byway web site. In late 2003, Flagler County began their A1A master plan

public workshops/ design charrettes. Since there was a one year time difference between Flagler County's NSB grant award in 2002, and St. Johns County's NSB grant award in 2003, there were concerns among many of the St. Johns county byway representatives that the proposed master plan design themes were not being coordinated between the two counties. Besides these concerns, the byway executive committee formed a sub-committee to work on the A1A coastal byway's web site design. This sub-committee met separately from the regular monthly byway meetings until the design of the web site was completed. Jim Netherton, Mayor for the Town of Marineland, functioned as the Project Manager for this project.

October 2003, the Scenic & Historic A1A Corridor Management Plan (CMP) was submitted to the Northeast Florida Planning & Zoning Association (NE-FPZA) to be evaluated in their annual award competition. The NE-FPZA awarded the Scenic & Historic A1A's CMP a Pubic Awareness & Public Participation Award that year.



Approximately one year later, in 2004, Vickie Renna, Project Manager for the Scenic & Historic A1A Master Plan, completed the required FDOT Local Agency Program Agreement (LAPA), the Request for Proposals (RFP), and awarded the master plan contract to Glating Jackson. In June 2004, advertisement began for the Scenic & Historic A1A Master Plan public workshops and design charrettes. The entire master planning project began with a Visual Preference Survey initiated by the consultant at one of scenic highways regularly scheduled monthly meetings. This was followed by four

neighborhood design charrettes, one in each one of the coastal neighborhoods of Ponte Vedra, Vilano, Mid Anastasia and South Anastasia. Each of the neighborhood charrettes lasted three (3) days. On the first day of the charrette, both the CMC scenic highway members and the local residents worked with the consultants and informed them how they wanted the proposed corridor improvements to be designed in their respective neighborhoods. From these meetings, the consultant came up with design themes for each of the four coastal neighborhoods. This gave each neighborhood community the opportunity to select their own design theme. To create continuity among the neighborhoods, the consultant created common design elements that were repeated throughout the corridor.

Over the course of two years in the creation of the Master Plan, approximately fifteen (15) public workshops and design charrettes were held to solicit public feedback. The CMC members spent a lot of time discussing various issues related to the master planning projects including, but not limited to:

- FDOT's proposed redesign of Summer Haven bridges
- A1A resurfacing projects
- A1A continuous multi-purpose path,
- Design of various coastal parks
- Pedestrian-friendly traffic calming techniques
- Flagler County's Master Plan proposed design themes in relationship to the A1A design themes.
- Marineland's proposed comprehensive plan amendment (high rise condominium project) for the remarkable coastal places project.

Since there were so many issues, CMC members formed separate sub-committees to discuss the different issues. Other special meetings were held in Ponte Vedra, St. Augustine Beach, and South Anastasia to resolve various outstanding corridor design concerns.

In 2004, byway Project Manager Jim Netherton, hired a consultant to prepare a Financial Fundraising Plan for the byway organization. Wanda Maloney and Frances Kidd of Corridor Solutions, Inc. were hired to create this plan. Through the plan, future funding for the byway would be solicited through the marketing scheme known as the "Crew of 72" featuring one major byway donor for each mile of the byway. The first seventy-two

byway donors would help finance this newly created non-profit organization so it could continue its mission to preserve, protect and maintain the scenic byway's intrinsic resources. Residents and businesses were given three (3) different funding level opportunities they could financially donate funds to byway organization to help this organization begin. These three (3) different funding levels included the Ensign level at \$1,000, the Captain level at \$2,500, or the Admiral level at \$5,000.

In 2005, again through the NSB seed money grant, the A1A Scenic & Historic Coastal Byway members were able to begin planning for their National Scenic Byway Dedication Ceremony, and another sub-committee was formed to plan this event. Other funds awarded through this seed money grant were used to hire a part time Byway Administrator who was responsible for arranging and coordinating byway meetings, maintaining the A1A byway web site, seeking sponsorships and donations according to the financial plan, assisting with various grant writing, and implementation of the various Corridor Management Plans along the entire byway.

In October of 2006, the Scenic & Historic A1A's - Master Plan was submitted to the Northeast Florida Planning & Zoning Association (NE - FPZA) to be evaluated in their annual awards competition.



The Scenic & Historic A1A Master Plan, prepared by Glatting Jackson, was awarded the Public Master Planning Award and evaluators stated, "that the A1A Master Plan was one of the best Master Plans prepared for a public agency."

The following month, the A1A Scenic & Historic Coastal Byway held their first Byway Dedication Ceremony in the Town of Marineland (Atlantic Ocean side) on Saturday morning. Al Hadeed, Byway Attorney was the Master of Ceremony for this event. The event began with the Boy Scouts' Pledge of Allegiance and continued with Mayor Netherton and Charlie Helm, Byway President, welcoming the byway guests.



Al Hadeed Master of Ceremony - Dedication Ceremony 2006

Speakers included U.S. Congressman John Mica, and State Representative William Proctor, as well as Jim Darby, Flagler County Commissioner; Cyndi Stevenson, St. Johns County Commissioner, and Mariano Berrios, Florida Scenic Highway Program Administrator. All spoke about the unique beauty of the A1A Coastal Byway, and many reflected upon their childhood years when the byway was less developed, and discussed the importance of preserving and protecting the intrinsic resources along the byway for future generations to enjoy. Byway awards were awarded to Congressman Mica, Representative William Proctor, Town of Marineland Mayor, Jim Netherton, Flagler County Commissioner James Darby, St. Johns County Commissioner Cyndi Stevenson, FDOT Environmental Program Administrator Mariano Berrios, Flagler County Attorney Al Hadeed, Dr. Greenberg, Anne Wilson, Barbara Jenness, George Harden, Mary Ann Ruzacki, and Charlie Helm. These individuals all significantly



contributed their time and effort in creating the byway organization.

After the awards were presented, city police blocked traffic along the byway and the ribbon across the A1A



Coastal Byway was cut and in so doing, this officially dedicated A1A as a National Scenic Byway. Speakers as well as all dedication participants celebrated with cake and a light lunch while discussing the scenic byway and viewing local byway artists and writers displays.



With the completion of the Scenic & Historic A1A – Master Plan and the hiring of a new Byway Administrator, St. Johns County’s CMC members began to meet once every two months (6 times a year), while St. Johns County Byway Representatives continued to meet monthly (12 times a year).

Under the direction of the new Byway Administrator, Sallie O’Hara, 2007 was an active year for the byway community activities beginning with several coastal and road clean-ups in Marineland, Vilano Beach, St. Augus-

tine Beach and Washington Oaks State Park, and continuing with new volunteer workshops. The byway organization was also busy informing the public about the byway activities at many of the local festivals, such as the Gamble Rogers Folk Festival, Birding Festival, Anastasia Park Day, Earth Day, Flagler Rotary Bike Run, Vilano 5K Run, Flagler Beach 4th July celebration. Other byway local activities included participation in the St. Augustine Beach and Flagler Beach’s weekly farmers markets.