



FIRST COAST MANUFACTURERS ASSOCIATION

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FIRST COAST MANUFACTURERS ASSOCIATION

**NORTHEAST FLORIDA
SOUTHEAST GEORGIA**

VOICE

MARCH 2007
3/16/2007

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Property Tax Reform - 2007: The Key Business Issue

This is a red alert bulletin for FCMA members!

On second thought, it is a red alert for all Florida businesses! Property tax reform is the hot issue in this session of the legislature. For a major governmental policy on taxation, this baby is moving at warp speed. I predict a raft of unintended consequences if the Governor and Legislature are not deliberate and cautious in their collective approach to addressing what may not even be a problem.

The betting in Tallahassee is that property tax reform in some fashion will be pushed through both House and Senate, obtain the Governor's signature, and head for a special election to change the State Constitution. This reform movement has been sparked by a rapid increase in residential home prices that led the Governor to suggest a doubling of the \$25,000 homestead exemption. The House has floated the idea of eliminating property tax by increasing the state sales tax.

I am very concerned that Florida businesses will not be given fair treatment and that its struggle to compete will be made more difficult by the shifting of the residential tax relief to the backs of business. I urge each of you to be involved in this major policy issue for the very simple reason that your pocket may be picked. The majority voices currently being heard are cities and counties and residential property owners. Please consider the following in understanding property tax reform:

1. **Equity:** Business, commercial and industrial interests should be treated equitably with residential property owners. While I can sympathize with the increase in taxes, when I sell my home to buy a new one, I am more concerned about the business owner who creates the job that allows the employee to buy a home in the first place. I believe everyone should pay something. For example, residential owners should pay on the first \$15,000 of assessed value, and then have the \$25,000 homestead exemption kick in.
2. **Excuse to Eliminate Exemptions:** There are a variety of sales tax exemptions currently in force. I am concerned that part of the reform will be the elimination of these exemptions. Manufacturing's exemptions, such as no sales tax on utilities, help keep us competitive with surrounding Southeastern states. Elimination makes us uncompetitive.



3. **Diversify Revenue Sources:** Florida needs a range of revenue sources. If we can eliminate property taxes and replace it with an increased state sales tax, result will be:

- Increased dependence on sales tax with the known fluctuations in the economic cycle.
- Loss of local control by elected officials who are very accountable to the voters.

4. **Cap on Revenues:** While apparently logical to tie an increase in revenues to a growth in population and/or inflation, it can easily result in local government not being able to provide essential services and not be able to invest in infrastructure. Jacksonville has been disciplined in reducing millage rates annually for over ten years.

5. **Listen to the Market:** no one has learned how to repeal the law of economic gravity. What goes up must come down. The current correction in home prices is the latest example. Why adjust tax policy in response to an extreme market condition?

My bottom line is that we should slow this train down and have a reasoned debate on the subject. Then, and only then, should we change our current policy. I urge you to get involved. If the voice of business is not heard, loud and clear, then I predict we will be the loser in the reform battle.

NEW MEMBERS

W. W. Gay Mechanical Contractors, Inc.

W. W. Gay, C.E.O.
(904) 388-2696
524 Stockton Street
Jacksonville, FL 32204

Certified Mechanical, Plumbing and General Contractor.

Sponsor: FCMA

AllRad Direct

Steven Gass, Vice President, Business Development
(516) 589-2673
8300 W. Sunrise Blvd.
Plantation, FL 33322

A national radiology network which partners with employers, TPAs, and insurance companies to provide radiology services efficiently and at reduced costs.

Sponsoring Member: Claude Revels, JM Family

LFR, Inc.

Marianne Gruber, Sr. Project Geologist
(904) 724-0408
2121-A Corporate Square Blvd., Suite 176
Jacksonville, FL 32216

Environmental management and consulting firm.

Sponsor: FCMA

Matrix Employee Leasing, Inc.

G. Lane Feezor, Market Development
(904) 739-2722
9016 Philips Highway
Jacksonville, FL 32256

An outsource for their clients' HR, payroll and workers' comp coverage.

Sponsoring Member: Great Atlantic Outfitters, Blair Wygle

NEXT GENERAL MEETING

March 26 at WhiteWave

- Where:** WhiteWave Foods
2198 West Beaver Street
Jacksonville, FL 32209
- Directions: click [here](#)
- When:** Monday, March 26
4:00 - 6:00 PM
- Special Guest:** **The Honorable John Peyton, Mayor**
City of Jacksonville
- RSVP:** By email to information@fcmaweb.com
or call the FCMA reservation line at 904-343-9372



Like to drink "Silk" soymilk products? Come see where they make the stuff! WhiteWave is proud to show off its newly completed expansion, which was built by our own **Auld & White Constructors** (who will be providing refreshments). You must wear flat, closed-toe shoes in order to tour the plant. Directions: I-10 west to Stockton Street; west on Beaver; enter plant at King Street gate; follow signs to parking.

SHORT TAKES

FCMA Wage and Benefit Survey

It's that time of year again! Only our **manufacturing** members are invited to participate in this survey. Responding members receive a free copy of the results; copies are available to FCMA members for purchase for \$150. You may download the questionnaire in [pdf](#), or wait for us to email to you.

Don't be left out! We had over 50 participate last year and hope to have even better participation this year.

VOTE - March 20!

Don't forget to get out and vote on Tuesday, March 20. FCMA's endorsed candidates are listed:

<u>District Number</u>	<u>Endorsed Candidate</u>
One	Cheryl Donelan Grymes
Two	Bill Bishop
Three	Richard Clark
Four	George Banks
Five	Art Shad
Six	Sean Reichard
Seven	Irvin "Pedro" Cohen
Eight	E. Denise Lee
Nine	Fred Engness
Ten	Mia Jones
Eleven	Michael Saylor
Twelve	Daniel Davis
Thirteen	Art Graham
Fourteen	Michael Corrigan

At-Large One Ronnie Fussell
 At-Large Two Jay Jabour
 At-Large Three Stephen Joost
 At-Large Four Kevin Hyde
 At-Large Five Glorious Johnson

Endorsed candidates were introduced at the February General Meeting at Atlantic Marine.



March Government Relations Guest

Duval County Property Appraiser Jim Overton visited the committee this month, hosted by Joe Durkin and Aerotek. Jim was able to share with the committee information on how changes to statewide tax policy will affect us.



February EEOC Workshop Highlights



Mellanese Jones with Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, Miami District Office, came and shared the latest initiatives at EEOC, which included youth at work and the EEOC Mediation Program. Other topics covered: how to prepare a Position Statement and "Do's & Don'ts" on Interviewing. We have a limited number of disks available titled "10 Reasons to Mediate" at FCMA.

NAMES IN THE NEWS

Manufacturing News

Rayonier celebrated completion of its *Biomass Boiler* with a dedication luncheon on March 2. This state-of-the-art \$29 million project will reduce the mill's fossil fuel usage by more than 90%, with an 80% reduction in emissions. With the installation of this boiler, the *Fernandina Mill* is now virtually 100% energy self-sufficient. Thank you for setting a shining example in Northeast Florida!

Coastal Industries is opening a distribution center in Houston and expanding... Click [here](#) for the full JBJ story.

New Hires, Promotions, Awards, etc...

Golder Associates is pleased to announce *Dr. Chris Brown*, PE, has joined the Jacksonville office.

Oasis Staffing hired *Sean Carmody* as a professional staffing consultant.

Fowler White Bogs Banker named *Bethany Crawley* a shareholder--congratulations!

Auld & White Constructors promoted *John High* to project manager.

BB&T promoted *Ryan Green* to banking officer.

The Ronco Group: *Philip Green* has joined as director of sales and marketing.

Ellis & Associates promoted *Mike Gruber* to construction materials testing operations and customer service manager.

Reynolds, Smith & Hills hired *Laurie Donahoo* as vice president of recruitment and retention.

Jacksonville Port Authority hired *Nancy Rubin* as director of communications and public relations and promoted *Robert Peek* to director of marketing development.

Rogers Towers: *Michael S. Mullin* joins as a shareholder.

PAST GENERAL MEETING

February 26 at Atlantic Marine



Members heard a special 2007 Legislative Preview from FCMA lobbyist, former Speaker of the House *John Thrasher*



We extend our special thanks to *Herschel Vinyard* and his staff at Atlantic Marine who made us all feel very welcome.



Wow! What a great crowd we had at our last General Meeting at Atlantic Marine. We appreciate those that were willing to travel the extra mile to visit one of the world's premier shipbuilders!

Special Awards were presented for exemplary service to FCMA, pictured from left to right: Gary McKinney, **Anheuser-Busch**; Dan Gauthier, **Coca-Cola Bottling of Jacksonville**; Jennifer Johnson, **Bacardi Bottling Corp.**; Cindy Hildebrand, CF Machine (presiding past Tri Chairman); Kim Wygle, Great Atlantic Outfitters (Community Relations Co-Chair)



UPCOMING EVENTS

After Hours - March 20



Tuesday, March 20!
5:00 – 7:00 PM
The Florida Theatre
128 E. Forsyth Street

Join us for this great networking opportunity with your fellow members! Your business card is your admission. Sorry, but this event is for **FCMA members ONLY!** There is no charge for this event--each person gets two drink tickets and finger foods! Join us downtown at the beautiful Florida Theater for this **strictly social event!**

sponsored by...

The Grimes Companies - Michael O'Leary (904-786-5711), a full-service third party logistics firm that has provided logistics solutions to the nations distribution industry.

CORA Health Services - Tracey Nelson (904-891-7969), an outpatient rehabilitation company providing physical and occupational therapy.

Kelly Services - Heidi Hanes (904-245-7550), provides staffing solutions to businesses around Northeast Florida. Staffing solutions for: temporary, temp-to-hire, direct hire, contract and leasing services.

Smith, Gambrell & Russell - Patricia J. Hill (904-598-6140), a premier full-service law firm.

Workforce Development NLRB Workshop - March 28

The NLRB investigates unfair labor practice allegations made by employees and unions. Union members or employers who desire to file an unfair labor practice charge should first contact an Information Officer at the Agency's regional office in the jurisdiction of the workplace where the alleged violation occurred, for more information about the process, and whether the alleged violation falls within the NLRB's jurisdiction. Speaking with an Information Officer first can avoid delays and mistakes when filing charges. Sign up for this workshop we still have a few seats left.
 RSVP: sherri@fcmaweb.com

Click here for details: [NLRB Workshop 3/28](#)

Tee Off for Tuition - Golf Tournament: April 2

We hope your team has reserved your spot in the tournament--only (4) team openings left!

When: April 2, 2007

Where: Queen's Harbour Yacht Club, Jacksonville, FL

Secure your spot by signing up for the Special (Foursome and a Hole Sponsor) for \$750.00. Call the FCMA office **TODAY!**

This is our 17th annual golf tournament. As part of its commitment to workforce education, FCMA is a strong supporter of the University of North Florida's Engineering School. We created a scholarship years ago to benefit engineering students. This year's proceeds will go to our FCMA Engineering Scholarship Program in continuing that support.

Deadline for goody bag items, door prizes and silent auction items is: Friday, March 23 at noon. Please call the FCMA office if you have something you would like to donate.

Workforce Development Committee Workshop - April 18

Workers Comp Case Management for Employers--A Global Perspective...

This workshop is the first in a series of healthcare topics. The program represents an interesting overview of workers' compensation case management topics to assist employers in addressing Workers' Compensation claims. FCMA member companies will bring a wealth of expertise in discussing these noteworthy topics and will share with you the services that each

company provides. Please join us on Wednesday, April 18, at the Florida Times-Union for this informative program. Click [here](#) for flyer and registration information.

Tax Workshop - April 19

**Cost Segregation Strategies * Research & Development Credits
Energy Tax Credits * State and Local Tax Incentives**

Don't miss out on these important and strategic topics of discussion:

- *Cost Segregation Studies*: Why wait 39 years to recover your investment in real property when you can do it in 5?
- *R&D Tax Credits*: Explore opportunities to recoup money spent on qualified activities
- *Energy Tax Credits*: Tax credits for property owners
- *State & Local Sales Tax Exemptions*: Recover taxes you've already overpaid
- *Empowerment/Enterprise Zone Incentives*: Businesses in economically challenged areas may qualify

Click [here](#) for flyer and details...

"Retooling Your Career" Career Fair - May 21

FCMA's Spring 2007 Career Fair
May 21, 2007
4:00 PM - 7:00 PM
UNF University Center
12000 Alumni Drive
Jacksonville, FL 32224

50 Exhibitors - Space Cost (\$350)

Looking for manufacturing members who need employees now or in the near future!

If you are an associate member and become a sponsor then if space allows and you are looking for employees, you will be allowed to exhibit.

For additional information call the FCMA office.

Sponsorships available: [click here](#)

PLATINUM PLUS MEMBERS

2007 Platinum Plus

We would like to recognize this year's early contributors:

Platinum Plus

Pilot Pen
Maxwell House (Kraft)

Platinum

Atlantic Marine, Inc.
Auld & White Constructors, Inc.

Silver

Moran Environmental
Smith Gambrell & Russell
Rex Corporation

Bronze

FMC Corporation
REDD Team Manufacturing
Rogers Towers
The Ronco Group
WhiteWave Foods

Patron

Ameritape, Inc.
Automation Engineering
Colliers Dickinson

Platinum Plus was designed to provide added benefits and recognition for your company and to help fund specific FCMA initiatives, such as:

- Lobbying efforts to eliminate state taxes on manufacturing inputs
- Promote manufacturing
- Manufacturers Association of Florida (MAF)

Benefits include:

- * Promotion of your company at FCMA events and in VOICE monthly
- * Prepaid fees to select workshops/seminars based on contribution

If you are interested in joining this list of contributors, contact [Sherri Mitchell](#).

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