

Memorandum

Community Development Department

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TO: Anthony Jones
Director

FROM: Fran Pheeny
Senior Program Administrator

THROUGH: Pam Bell
Programs Division Manager

CC: Cheryl Reed
Assistant Director

SUBJECT: **MOBILE HOME EXPO 2006**

DATE: May 24, 2006

The Mobile Home Expo was held on May 11, 2006 at the Largo Cultural Center. The event was very successful and was attended by approximately 700 residents of mobile home parks throughout the County. The event was strongly supported by the Federation of Manufactured Home Owners of Florida, Inc. (FMO) and the Florida Manufactured Housing Association (FMHA). The FMO played a major role informing residents of the local mobile home parks about the event.

The FMHA also promoted the Expo in several newsletters which resulted in generating additional vendor interest in the event. Eleven private sector vendors representing lenders, mobile home/manufactured home retailers, realtors and management companies. Also in attendance were local non-profits, state and county agencies providing information on housing programs, insurance, credit issues, senior services and other areas of interest for mobile home owners.

County staff including Jane Muhrlin, Daphne Johnson, Silvia Wood-Judy and I, organized the Expo and worked to bring vendors to the table. Expo attendees and vendors surveyed rated the event's location and team in a positive manner. The survey also indicated vendors recommended the Expo be held earlier in the year when additional seasonal residents of mobile home parks would be in residence and able to participate. The vendors also recommended that the extended hours of the Expo be shortened from this year's 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 pm, to closing at 5:00 pm.

In addition to vendor comments, county staff also solicited comments from attendees of the event. Following are some of their comments regarding future events:

- Hold Expo earlier in the year before the snowbirds leave our area. Consider the possibility of holding it twice a year; Winter & Spring
- Invite speaker on certain topics in addition to one-on-one with vendors.
- Provide information on mobile home repair, tie down requirements, and hurricane protection.
- Computer access for the purpose of evacuation zone look-up.
- Place the emphasis of the event solely on current mobile home owner, not those looking to acquire a mobile home.
- Include a mobile home display.
- Invite an insurance company or some entity familiar with insuring mobile homes.

Staff also recommends the following if this event will be held again next year:

- Allow more lead time for planning: at least 8 months.
- Hold Expo in late January or early February on a Saturday.
- Add more variety in the types of vendors (landscape, repair, tie downs).
- Place banner for the event outside the building.
- Invite the Cities to participate.
- Prepare event diagram handout for attendees, detailing vendor location and service.
- Invite Insurance representatives.
- Have presenters on certain topics periodically throughout the event.
- Contract with a food vendor.
- Revise vendor drawings; winners need not be present.

The MH Expo Committee greatly appreciated the opportunity to be part of the first Mobile Home Expo. We also want to thank the rest of the Community Development Department staff for all of their help and support with this event. Please contact me or any other MH Expo Committee member if you have any questions.