



2015 St. Lucie County Legislative Priorities - Recommended

Funding Requests

Continued State Funding for the St. Lucie River and Indian River Lagoon Issues Team

Background:

The St. Lucie River and Indian River Lagoon Issues Team is an established, successful collaborative focused on the restoration of the St. Lucie River Estuary and Indian River Lagoon in St. Lucie and Martin



Counties. The team is made up of federal, state and local governments in addition to agricultural and environmental interests who work together in an unprecedented fashion to research and resolve water-quality issues facing our two-county region. Since 1998, the team has received \$67.9 million from the Florida Legislature, funding more than 140 projects in the two counties and their municipalities through the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD).

Funding for these projects has declined in recent years, yet the number and cost of the critically needed projects continue to increase. Additionally, the Legislature in 2014 changed the appropriation process so that the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) now administers the Team's funding rather than the SFWMD, which has local knowledge and a proven track record for project administration.

Funding for these projects has declined in recent years, yet the number and cost of the

Action Requested:

St. Lucie County urges continued support and sufficient funding for the St. Lucie River and Indian River Lagoon Issues Team, and additionally seeks approved funding to be transferred through the state Department of Environmental Protection to the South Florida Water Management District for project administration.

Financial Support for Projects at the Treasure Coast Research Park

Background:

The Treasure Coast Research Park's mission is to attract research organizations that will make an



investment in commercial innovation and scientific research that will benefit the State of Florida. The Research Park fosters new businesses and employment, boosting the region's economic diversity and security. The success of the Park is key to St. Lucie County's effort to build a strong foundation in agriculture-based science and research.

In order to accomplish this mission, the Park needs capital investment by the State of Florida to support already-committed match of \$1 million from St. Lucie County and funding requested from the federal government. The proposed projects and the requested one-time allocations are ranked by priority as follows:

- 1) Sunshine Kitchen Food Business Incubator -- \$2 million.
- 2) Biofuel Laboratory and Processing Facility -- \$1 million.

See attached descriptions of both projects.



Action Requested:

St. Lucie County requests sufficient funding to construct the Sunshine Kitchen Food Business Incubator and Biofuel Laboratory and Processing Facility at the Treasure Coast Research Park.

Financial Support for Florida's Biotechnology Sector

Background:

The State of Florida along with local counties, cities, and other investors have invested more than \$1 billion to create a biotechnology and life sciences industry that includes research institutions such as Scripps Florida, Sanford-Burnham Medical Research Institute, Torrey Pines Institute for Molecular Studies, Inc., and VGTI. These institutions, while initially low in the number of jobs created, were seen as long-term investments with a substantial rate of return that would strategically position Florida as a world leader in 21st century research and development. The National Institute of Health funding model in place at the time was a critical component of the financial viability of these companies, a funding model that has now changed due to federal budget reductions. The financial needs of these research institutions, at least in the short run, are well beyond what local governments and communities can support.



St. Lucie County agreed to provide \$1.25 million annually over an eight-year period to Torrey Pines pursuant to a February 21, 2007, funding agreement. The City of Port St. Lucie has made substantially higher financial commitments to both Torrey Pines and VGTI which are located within its municipal boundaries.

Action Requested:

St. Lucie County recommends state financial support for Florida's biotechnology and/or life science businesses that will allow them to continue to develop and implement new business plans that will likely include collaboration/merger with Florida's higher educational institutions. Additionally, the County recommends state support for increased funding for Florida universities interested in biotechnology and/or life sciences collaboration/mergers.

Legislative Action Requests

Increase Oversight of Drug and Alcohol Recovery Residences

Background:

St. Lucie County supports those drug and alcohol recovery residences that follow State and Federal laws and do not disrupt single-family neighborhoods. However, the lack of State or Federal oversight has allowed residences, also known as "sober homes," to proliferate in ways that have degraded neighborhoods in counties throughout South Florida. When people in recovery live together in a "sober living" home, cities and counties cannot discriminate on the basis of the disability, which means an ordinance cannot treat sober living homes differently than other similar uses in single-family residential zones. St. Lucie County is supportive of efforts among cities and counties in Palm Beach and Broward counties to draft uniform statewide legislation creating a voluntary certification process for "sober home" residences through accredited credentialing entities approved by the state Department of Children and Families. This legislation should include a definition of what constitutes a "sober home" and should institute the strongest possible regulations permissible by law, including background checks on home administrators.

Action Requested:

St. Lucie County urges support for the strongest possible legislation that preserves the rights of "sober homes" to operate and provide needed rehabilitative treatment while protecting single-family neighborhoods from negative impacts caused by unregulated recovery residences.

Inmate Medical Services - Extend State Medicare Cap to Local Governments

Background:

In 2009, the Legislature codified the cap that the Florida Department of Corrections pays to medical



service providers for State inmate medical services at 110% of the allowable Medicare rate. St. Lucie County, and counties throughout Florida, pay much more. In 2010, the St. Lucie County Board of County Commissioners adopted Resolution 10-063 asking the Legislature to support a similar 110% cap for local governments. Without this cap, the County has paid up to 200% of the allowable Medicare rate per year resulting in approximately \$2 million of inmate medical costs for FY13.

This legislation is supported by the Florida Association of Counties.

Action Requested:

St. Lucie County requests legislation that reduces jail expenses by setting a reimbursement amount paid by counties to medical providers for health-care services for inmates and arrestees at no higher than the established Medicare rate plus 10%, the same rate as currently charged to the Department of Corrections.

Letter of Support

Support Marion County as Site of 8th State Veterans' Nursing Home

Background:

Florida has the third-highest number of veterans in the nation, after Texas and California, with 1.5 million veterans. These veterans deserve the best-quality end-of-life care. The State's six Veterans' Nursing Homes, operated by the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs (FDVA), are each experiencing 99 percent occupancy rates, with waiting lists for those desperately needing supportive care specifically designed for the veterans' population. The Cabinet in September approved St. Lucie County as the site of the State's 7th Veterans' Nursing Home. It is abundantly clear that more homes are needed now, and the FDVA has already renewed the search process for the next home. In this year's Site Selection Process, Marion County finished a close second to St. Lucie County, demonstrating substantial local support and need for a Veterans' Nursing Home in the Ocala region. It is unwarranted to require Marion County to start over and undergo the same intensive, expensive Site Selection Process for the next home when it has demonstrated that it is ready to proceed now with a "turn dirt" site that will serve veterans in a densely populated region.

Action Requested:

St. Lucie County supports Marion County as the site of the 8th State Veterans' Nursing Home and urges the Florida Legislature to set aside the Site Selection Process in order to save time and costs associated with a new statewide search.



State of Florida Funding Request SUNSHINE KITCHEN FOOD BUSINESS INCUBATOR

Do you have an idea for a fantastic new food? Would you like some assistance in perfecting an existing product? This exciting new facility will assist food producers, processors, marketers, and entrepreneurs as they develop, improve, and promote their food and natural products. Whether a beginning food entrepreneur, or an established company, the staff at the Food Innovation Center will assist you in all phases of product development—from the concept phase through product development, processing, packaging, and marketing. Only \$2,000,000 of the total \$680 million of agricultural production in the four county Treasure Coast Region goes directly into meeting the region's \$1.4 billion of consumption. This facility will serve the residents across the Treasure Coast region consisting of Martin, St. Lucie, Indian River and Okeechobee Counties. The Sunshine Kitchen is a collaboration of Indian River State College and the Treasure Coast Education, Research and Development Authority and is located in Ft. Pierce, FL. By sharing facilities and equipment that create value added products for local and regional consumption, the Sunshine Kitchen will reduce the barriers to entry and increase the market opportunities for new startups and local agribusiness innovations. The proposed facility will include:

Wet kitchen



Dry kitchen



Natural products manufacturing



One Time Capital Request - 9,781 square feet Shared Kitchen

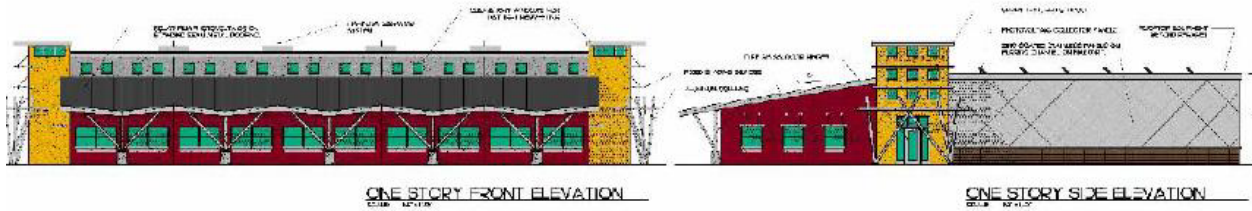
Building shell, interior design and construction	\$2,500,000
Non-recurring Entrepreneurial training allocation	\$ 600,000
TOTAL COST	\$3,100,000

Matching contributions

St. Lucie County	\$1,000,000	Cash, Committed, one time
TCERDA	\$ 100,000	Land and In Kind, Committed, 5 years
TOTAL MATCH	\$1,100,000	

TOTAL STATE FUNDING REQUEST 2,000,000

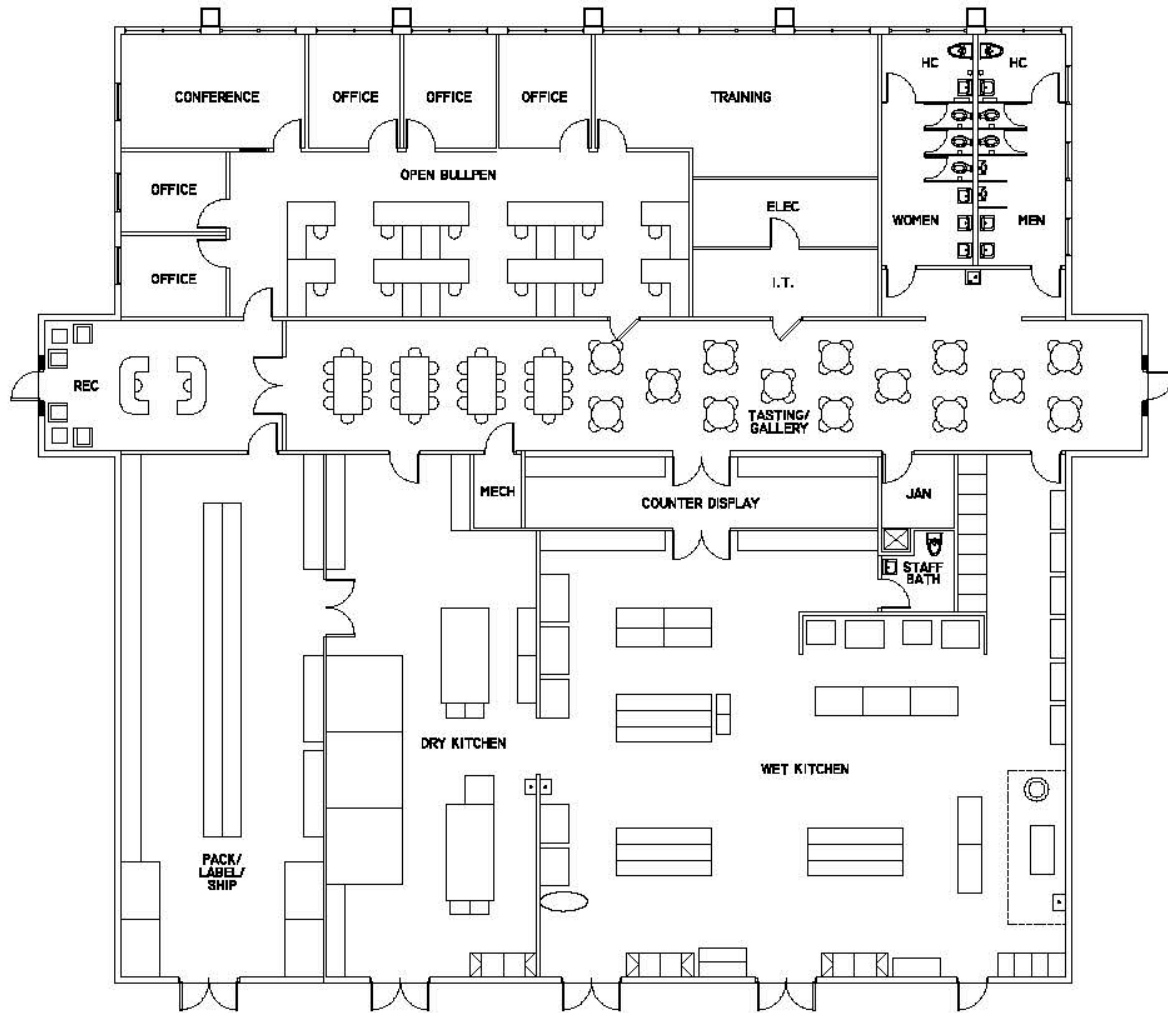
Building



Site



Floor and Equipment Plan



BioEnergy Partnership

State of Florida Funding Request

Sugar, sweet sorghum, sweet potatoes and other crops are well suited for Florida's sandy soils, sub-tropic climate and have the potential to exceed corn, soy and other seed crop biofuel yields. This exciting new facility will assist bioenergy producers, processors, marketers, and entrepreneurs as they develop, improve, and promote their crop and fuel products.

Whether a beginning entrepreneur or an established company, the staff at the Center for AgriLife Research and Entrepreneurship will assist in all phases of product development—from the concept phase through breeding, propagation, cultivation, harvesting, product development, processing, packaging, and marketing. The AgriLife center to be located in Ft. Pierce, FL is a joint venture between USDA ARS, UF IFAS and the Treasure Coast Education, Research and Development Authority. This facility will serve residents across the Treasure Coast region consisting of Martin, St. Lucie, Indian River and Okeechobee Counties.

Sharing facilities, test fields and equipment that create value added products for local and regional growers, consumers and businesses the AgriLife BioEnergy Partnership will reduce the barriers to entry and increase the market opportunities for new startups and local agribusiness innovations.

Biofuel laboratory, small batch processing facility and 200 ac. test fields



One Time Capital Request – 5,000 square feet building

Building construction	\$ 600,000
Interior construction	\$ 150,000
Equipment	\$ 125,000
<u>Design and permits</u>	<u>\$ 125,000</u>
TOTAL	\$1,000,000

Matching cash or in kind contributions by St. Lucie County, the Treasure Coast Education, Research and Development Authority, Indian River State College, the University of Florida and the City of Fort Pierce will equal or exceed the funds contributed.