

Financial Planning Association of Florida March 24 & 25, 2008 2008 Day at Florida's Capitol

FPA of Florida attendees: Allen Arntzen, FPA of Florida, President – Tampa
Paul Auslander, FPA National Board Member
Charlie Fitzgerald, FPA of Florida, Chairman - Orlando
Matt McGrath, FPA of Florida, President Elect – Miami-Dade
Claudia Sachs, FPA Member - Tallahassee
Duane Thompson, FPA Director of Government Relations – Wash. D.C.

Monday - March 24th

3:00-5:00PM

Members met on the 22nd floor (top floor) of the Capitol Building and listened to CFO Alex Sink address members of the Florida Financial Literacy Council. CFO Sink talked about many of the current problems that Florida citizens are dealing with especially in the wake of the current credit crunch and record foreclosures. She also summarized last year's accomplishments of her Financial Literacy Council and she challenged them with several objectives for the New Year. The Chair of the Committee, Obdulio Piedra addressed everyone and discussed a few of the highlights from the council's 2008 report <http://myfloridamoney.com/images/FinancialLiteracyCouncilReport2008.pdf> One of the biggest challenges of this Council will be for them too find ways to advertise and motivate Florida Citizens to take advantage of the numerous financial literacy offerings that are available through-out the state, whether through our school systems, public libraries, online and through the many non-profit organizations.



Florida's New Capitol Building, circa 1970

6:30PM

Georgio's for dinner. In attendance: All FPA of Florida attendees, Wayne Edwards, CFP (President, Professional Financial Planning, Inc. Tallahassee, FL) with special guest Greg Turbeville. Mr. Turbeville is a lobbyist with Smith & Ballard. He is a member of the Florida Tax and Budget Reform Commission. Mr. Turbeville updated us on the latest efforts of the commission put forth a

Constitutional Amendment on the November Ballot that will possibly send a Services Tax our way (Proposal CP0002). Of the 25 members on the commission, 17 are required to move this proposal to the ballot. The last vote on the proposal only had 4 votes against the amendment (Mr. Turbeville was one of the no votes). There will be one final vote after the proposal comes out of Style and Drafting and if 17 of the 25 are in favor the proposed amendment it will go before Florida Citizens on the November ballot. Please see the Commission's website www.FloridaTBRC.com for information.



L to R, Matt McGrath, Allen Arntzen, Claudia Sachs, Duane Thompson, Wayne Edwards & Charlie Fitzgerald

Tuesday - March 25, 2008

8:00AM

Breakfast in Lower Cafeteria attended by all FPA of Florida attendees.

9:00AM

Cabinet Meeting at the Capitol Building. Attended meeting where a resolution was presented by members of the Financial Literacy Council to proclaim April as Financial Literacy Month. Our very own Paul Auslander is a member of this 9 person Council. Please see the Financial Literacy Council's website at <http://myfloridamoney.com/FLCHome.htm>. R. Jai Howard, Staff Director Financial Literacy Council has been a great contact and help to us.



Above, members of CFO Alex Sink's Financial Literacy Council receiving their resolution for April 2008, Florida's Financial Literacy Month



Noon

Lunch at the University Club (at the FSU Football Stadium) with representatives from the Office of Financial Regulation. In attendance: FPA of Florida attendees, Wayne Edwards, Rick White Deputy Director Securities & Finance, Karen Chandler, Deputy Chief Financial Officer (Insurance), Marta Arrington-Draughon, Division Director (Consumer Services), Amy Armstrong Groszos, Financial Administrator (Insurance Department).



In this meeting we made first official contact with representatives from the Insurance side of the Office of Financial Regulation. Karen Chandler said that they want to establish linkage with our FPA of Florida Regulatory Council so that we could also comment on proposed rules and procedural changes that will affect State Insurance Agents and their Companies. In this meeting we set the stage for representatives from the Orlando office of the Office of Financial Regulation to attend an upcoming FPA of Central Florida quarterly luncheon to bring Rick White's Jacksonville presentation. Mr. White would be happy for this presentation to be offered to all of our Florida Chapters this year. We talked about securities suitability issues, current proposals to reign in the proliferation of meaningless designations of financial planners; we talked about sales abuses with Annuity products. In this meeting we further set the stage for continuing dialogue with our Regulators which is a major step for the Florida FPA members and our brief history.

11:00AM to 4:00PM

During the late morning and early afternoon of March 25th, the FPA of Florida attendees made six visits to State Representative and Senator Offices. In these meetings we introduced the FPA of Florida, presented our handout materials, offered ourselves as resources and answered questions about our Association. We also presented our concerns about the prospect of Financial Planning Services being taxed if the current Property Tax/Sales Tax amendment makes it to the ballot and

passes. As we understand it, the amendment would eliminate about \$9 billion in Property Taxes, create an automatic 1 penny increase in State Sales Taxes but still leave the legislature with a \$6 billion budget gap that would have to be closed with budget cuts, more sales taxes and new services taxes. The offices that we visited are as follows:

Rep. Dean Cannon (District 35) office, gave materials to his Secretary Victoria. Rep. Cannon relayed back to us that he felt the Services tax initiative would be D.O.A.

Met with Senator Gwen Margolis (35th District) for about 15 minutes. She was not supportive of the TBRC amendment going forward. She thought that elimination of the Required Local Effort (Local Property Taxes for Education) would increase instability for State education funding.

Rep. Jennifer Carroll's (District 13) office, met with Michelle Fowler her Legislative Assistant. Michelle was not aware of the latest 21-4 vote in favor of the TBRC sales tax amendment. She was going to research further and bring Rep. Carroll up to speed on the Commission. Ms. Fowler was very helpful and very knowledgeable.

Rep. Garrett Richter office (District 76), met with his Legislative Aid Becky Kokkinos and also with Rep. Richter himself for about 30 minutes. Rep Richter was already versed on the TBRC efforts and was opposed to what they were trying to do.

Senator Ted Deutch office (30th District), met with the Senator. He too was knowledgeable of the TBRC efforts. He had several questions for us that Paul Auslander was following up on. Can't say we walked away from this meeting sure where he stood on the TBRC proposal.



Senator Ted Deutch, second from the right

Senator Lee Constantine's office (22nd District), met with Christopher Hudson, Legislative Assistant. Mr. Hudson appreciated our information about the FPA and our information regarding TBRC. He said that he was going to follow up on the information that we provided him on the TBRC and pass it along to the Senator.

4:00PM

Met with Don Saxon, Commissioner, Office of Financial Regulation and Rick White for just over one hour. During our conversation we talked about regulation of the securities and insurance industry, annuity sales abuses, initiatives to curb the many "less than meaningful" designations that are cropping up in the financial planning industry (especially those that prey on seniors), we talked about the possibility of FINRA coming in and regulating the Investment Advisor industry, Financial Literacy efforts in the state and efforts to include a financial planning/literacy course for high school students that would count towards the 4 year math requirement, his interest to partner with Junior Achievement and we talked about the Evelyn Brust Foundation as another Financial Literacy partner with his office

Met briefly with Alex Hager, Deputy Commissioner, Office of Financial Regulation. Introduced ourselves and talked about several of the same things that we shared with Commissioner Saxon.



The Florida Supreme Court Building, across the street from the Capitol



View of the Capitol Building from North Adams Street

Submitted by Charlie Fitzgerald, III, CFP, Chairman FPA of Florida