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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## Commissioner Nate McLaughlin address JAXUSA

**March 15, 2016** – Commissioner Nate McLaughlin addressed JAXUSA Partnership at its recent quarterly forum.

The forum met to discuss both the current trends and future needs for economic development.

“We are fortunate to be located in a strong economic corridor; the assets that the region offers are too numerous to name,” said McLaughlin, who also serves as chairman of the Economic Opportunity Advisory Council. “Over the last several years, Flagler County has reinvented how we do economic development. We now have a department with a dedicated annual budget, which eliminates the distraction of fundraising while providing a direct connection to the county commissioners with respect to infrastructure and improvement funding.”

McLaughlin praised the efforts of Helga van Eckert, Flagler County Department of Economic Opportunity executive director.

“She has built relationships with people at the state level and across the country,” McLaughlin said. “She is getting us a lot of notice by the people who are either looking to start or move businesses.”

McLaughlin also spoke on the benefits Flagler County has reaped with its many road improvements, like the Matanzas Woods Interchange at Interstate 95 and other projects largely funded through the Florida Department of Transportation.

“Also, since economic development is now part of the county administration, we are brought into the process early and able to assist in the planning process and to make accommodations for immediate decisions,” he said. “This improves turn-around times on permitting and improvements.”

JAXUSA Partnership is a private, nonprofit division of the JAX Chamber and is Northeast Florida’s regional economic development initiative.

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