



Ask the Mayor

by Mayor John Peyton

Tough economic times lead to tough choices

A few weeks ago, I toured the Second Harvest Food Bank of North Florida. There, I saw shelves with dwindling supplies and heard reports of similar resource challenges throughout Jacksonville's non-profit sector. Clearly, residents of our city, like others across the nation, are becoming victims of these difficult economic times.

This tough environment is leading to tough choices. Some of our neighbors are choosing between food and paying the rent or mortgage. Many are struggling to keep the lights on or to provide warm clothing

for themselves and their children. Some service organizations are reporting as much as a 30 to 40 percent increase in demand for food aid compared to this same time last year. Unfortunately, this increase is occurring at the same time that donations are seeing a significant decrease, and victim services organizations are feeling the pinch as well.

As mayor, I'm working on economic development to grow jobs and restore prosperity to Jacksonville - but future jobs don't pay the bills today. That's why I'm asking those who can

to give, and give generously, to charities in the weeks and months to come. I can't think of a better gift to give your family than the knowledge that you are helping others during their time of need.

Keep in mind that one of the best donations is cash. Monetary contributions are the most flexible form of support for non-profits, and the impact of your contribution can be much bigger than you think. For example, the Second Harvest Food Bank has relationships with national distributors that allow them to buy about \$53 worth of food

for every dollar you donate. That means your contribution of \$25 equals about \$1,325 in purchasing power!

Worthwhile charities are conducting food drives as well, and you can support them by donating items and asking friends and family to contribute also. Finally, if you can't contribute food or money this year, please volunteer your time. Volunteering can be a wonderful way to spend time with your family while instilling good values in your children.

I'd also like to remind you not to forget the vital work done by non-profits serving victims in our area. These organizations, like food banks and shelters, depend heavily on

donations of time and monetary contributions, and the assistance they provide is truly priceless.

Jacksonville's situation is not unique, but it is urgent. Fortunately, our non-profit community has an incredible reputation for working together to accomplish results - and Jacksonville residents have a history of caring and compassion that's unmatched anywhere in America.

I have no doubt that our city will meet these current challenges and make the new year brighter, warmer and more satisfying for all concerned. Thank you in advance for your generosity, and Happy New Year!

My personal commitment to help make a difference in the life of innocent victims of violent crime:

- Please accept my donation for food or gift for a crime victim _____
- Please accept my one-time donation to support victims of violent crime _____
- Please mail to me the Victim's Advocate newspaper - \$25/year _____
- Please contact me to discuss how I can personally help victims _____
- Please send me a volunteer application _____

Name _____

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