

Stakeholder *Partnership*



Partnering with the community is an everyday activity for the Department of Economic Development and Tourism.

Actively engaged in promoting the County, the Department works closely with municipalities and chambers of commerce to accomplish the goal of communicating with residents, tourists and businesses about the opportunities Lake County has to offer. Promotional activities are being expanded and a continued focus is being applied to market the County's *outstanding* features.

Among the marketing activities in 2005 was a continued effort to increase Lake County's Web presence to attract more tourists. The Department doubled its Internet presence with a revamped Web site, a new tourism-related online magazine and increased use of digital newsletters and news releases. A few features of the new www.lakecountyfl.com site are an online calendar featuring upcoming events, digital postcards that can be e-mailed to others, and screensavers of pictorial representations of Lake County. Extensive listings of Lake County attractions, restaurants and various other tourism-related businesses are regularly updated on the Department's Web site.

The Board of County Commissioners approved a \$6 million *renovation* project for the Lake County Expo Center and Fairgrounds, which will allow the County to offer additional facilities for events such as graduations, shows, festivals and weddings. The center



and fairgrounds are used by many groups and businesses for various functions, including a weekly Farmers' Market and a variety of family-oriented festivities, such as the Lake County Fair. Construction is set to begin in 2006 on the project. A highlight for Economic Development in fiscal year 2004-2005 was the sale of the remaining available property in the County-owned Christopher C. Ford Commerce Park. More than 50 acres were purchased by seven different companies that sought to locate their business in the park. Total sales equaled nearly \$2 million.

The Department staffed booths at events such as Bikefest in Leesburg, George Fest in Eustis and the Art Car annual event in Mount Dora. This outreach effort at area events resulted in visitors better understanding what *assets* Lake County has to offer.

The Lake County Historical Museum is also providing *additional* opportunities for the enjoyment of Lake County residents and education on the history of Lake County. A new exhibit this year included "Movies at the Museum," a nationally publicized exhibit featuring the movies and television shows that have been filmed in, or relate to the County. Other exhibits feature Rotary International Club memorabilia from around the nation, including some from clubs established in Lake County, and an exhibit on eight suspected people who fled to Lake County after being connected in one way or another with the President Abraham Lincoln assassination.