



From the Desk of Andrew D. Gillum
 Mayor Pro Tempore / City Commission, Seat 2



2009 - 1:2

Yes We Can !!!

Presidential elections and inaugurations swell with pomp and circumstance, each one with its mark in the chronicles of time; at least that's what I could gather from watching them on television. Witnessing the inauguration of President Barack Obama firsthand was exhilarating, mind-boggling, and strangely comfortable.

People traveled from locations near and far to witness this history-making event. During my three hour wait in the chilling weather outside the U.S. Capitol the occasion was made all the more euphoric when I turned to the couple behind me who had traveled all the way from Indonesia to witness the day. Meeting people from around the world, Europe, Africa, South America...deepened my understanding that this was an event of global proportions. People waited – imagining what the next four years would look like. We thought about all of the possibilities and projected our strongest hopes and ambitions onto the country. What made this moment different is that we each believed that we would play a role in making this country what we envisioned it to be.



After a while, the freezing temperatures and long lines no longer mattered – after all, we had a seat at history!

A week prior to the Inauguration, Nancy Pelosi, U.S. Speaker of the House of Representatives, invited me as her guest to witness the Joint Session of Congress count the Electoral College ballots for this election. Although this special honor was bestowed upon me, there are many Americans of various ages and backgrounds who were instrumental in electing Barack Obama as President of the United States. Who really knew that when Obama was campaigning in Tallahassee that he would become the 44th President of the USA. I am extremely proud of the citizens of Tallahassee who were particularly crucial in delivering Florida's electoral votes.

(Continued next column.)

The activity of the past several weeks should inspire each of us to assess our role in improving the conditions of our community. Let's join together in finding solutions to the difficult challenges that lay ahead.

↻ The Urgency of Now ↻

President Obama declared that the state of our economy calls for bold and swift action. In keeping with the plea to do our part to help remake America – remake our community – the City of Tallahassee, Leon County Commission, regional governmental officials, and leaders from educational and health care institutions have united to develop a strategy to get our share of the stimulus money for our region.

The United States Congress passed a sweeping \$819 billion bill to help get Americans working again. The bill passed over the objection of the Republican caucus and eleven Democrats. As the bill heads into a conference committee of the House and Senate, let's help make clear to Congressman Boyd, Senator Nelson and Senator Martinez that the people of his district are concerned about the state of this economy. Contact their offices to share your stories of increasing joblessness and the insecurity that you may feel about your own financial situation.

Florida citizens could be in line to receive a billion or more from the stimulus. Included in this package is relief for families, dramatic increases in funding for alternative energy exploration, and much needed aide to rebuild schools, provide healthcare to the poor and elderly and reconstruction funds for highways and bridges. Contact your federal elected officials and encourage them to support the joint house and senate American Reinvestment Act.

↻ Reflections of Mission Accomplished ↻

I was fortunate to be a part of the grassroots activities that resulted in this historical election. A few [photos](#) are provided to share this experience with you.

“Serving is Leading”

🌀 **Hot Topic** 🌀
Biomass Power Plant

The Biomass Gas and Electric (BG&E) Plant announced a few weeks back that it was withdrawing its plans to locate in Tallahassee. Over the past several months a vigorous debate about the details of the plant's location and efficacy consumed many in our community.

Important to this community is the desire to have full disclosure, expanded public involvement, and thorough and detailed analysis of any project – especially one of this scale. To this end the process failed the community. BG&E, FSU and the City of Tallahassee should have engaged in a vigorous public discussion about the Biomass plant, the technology, the proposed location and the many health, traffic, noise and concerns associated with the plant. We learned an important lesson that should never be repeated!

I regret that the plant was pulled from consideration before the City Commission and the community was able to weigh the plant's complete strengths and weaknesses. Because I shared many of the concerns raised by community groups, I made suggestions as to how some of the issues around the plant might be addressed. It is my assessment that when compared to other energy plants the emissions were a fraction of that produced by others. However, I recognize and am sensitive that this was a major factor for acceptance or rejection of this proposal.

The tough reality that we must face is that the citizens themselves determine the future energy needs and resources of this community. If the health effect concerns are proven to be undeniably valid, then location should not be the determinant, as the plant shouldn't be located anywhere in the community.

I am also sympathetic to the environmental justice argument presented during this debate. Too often the most undesirable projects are located in the lower census tracks of the community, impacting what is perceived as the most often disenfranchised constituencies. Many of these decisions are attributed to issues like “appropriate zoning,” available zoning, cheap land, and more. I often wonder if previous leaders had been more equitable in their distribution of undesirable projects throughout the community – “spreading the pain” – if the same reaction would have been spurred regarding the BG&E proposal.

(Continued next column.)

Maybe it would have, as there is always a “not-in-my-backyard” element to any project. But maybe it would not have met with the same level of ferocious rejection. The BG&E plant could have been a good neighbor. Coming on the back of historic injustices, perceived mistrust of questionable action throughout the process all amounted to a false start.

The City Commission still has an obligation to make good decisions about meeting the future energy needs of this community. I firmly believe that Biomass and other renewable sources should be a viable part of that energy future. We must learn the lessons of this failed effort, redouble our energy and move forward collaboratively with the citizens of this community as fully engaged partners in the process.

🌀 **Hot Topic** 🌀
Fire and Emergency Medical Services (EMS)

The City will move forward on an Interlocal Agreement with Leon County for the functionally consolidated provision of EMS/Advanced Life Support (ALS) services. A public hearing is set for February 25, 2009 on the intent to use the uniform method of levy, collection and enforcement of non-ad valorem assessments for the purposes of adopting a common fire services fee with Leon County. ([CC Meeting 1/14/09 agenda item # 22.](#))

🌀 **For Your Information** 🌀

[ADG E-News](#) – be sure to register [on-line](#) to get your e-mail subscription to future editions of this newsletter.

[Wakulla Springs Springshed Restoration Workshop](#) – to be held on February 25-26, 2009.

[2008 Green Initiatives Annual Report](#) – focuses on City of Tallahassee sustainability initiatives.

[2008 Statistical Digest for Tallahassee and Leon County](#) – a comprehensive overview of economic and demographic trends and developments in Tallahassee and Leon County.

[“Energy Smart Plus”](#) – program offers initiatives to help customers use less. Call 891-4968 to learn more. Contact Capital Area Community Action Agency at 222-2043 for information/applications for the [Good Neighbor Program](#).

[The Long Range Planning Target Issue Committee](#) – the Florida Department of Transportation approved City staff's recommendation to install a crosswalk on Thomasville Road at the southerly leg of 5th Avenue to enhance pedestrian circulation within an area under redevelopment as an urban center.

“*Serving is Leading*”



Barack Obama & Gillum



Michelle Obama & Gillum



Gillum & Joe Biden



Gillum & Friends @ Inauguration

View a list of City Commission meetings at: talgov.com.

Date	Time	Event
2	9am-4pm	City Commission Retreat @ Tall Timbers Research Station
3	8:30am	Digital Harmony Team @ Nims Middle School
4	8am-4 pm	Office Appointments
5	6pm	Town Hall Meeting re: Economic Stimulus @ Bethel AME Church
9-10	Various	Schott Foundation Board
11	8am-4pm	Office Appointments
17	5:30pm	Access Tallahassee Panelist Legislative Priorities @ CHC
18	9-11am	LRTI @ CH, Room 4F
18	9am-3:30pm	Office Appointments
19	10:30am	Lawton Chiles High School Black History Program
19	7pm	FSU SOAR's Banquet
20	10am	StarMetro Tour
20	8pm	Riley House Gala @ Carriage House Goodwood
23	Noon	Charter Review Committee @ CH, Tallahassee Room
23	2pm	CRA @ CHC
23	3pm	CRTPA @ CHC
25	8am-4pm	Office Appointments

Code:

CC – City Commission

CH– City Hall

CHC – City Hall Chambers

CRA – Community Redevelopment Agency

CRTPA – Capital Region Transportation Planning Agency

LRTI – Long Range Target Issue Committee



View of U.S. Capitol