Quarterly Issues Report

WSMR

Florida Matters Public Affairs Show

University Beat

Jan. 1 – Mar. 31, 2012
Quarterly Issues Report

Florida Matters Quarterly report January 1 – March 31, 2011

Time aired: Friday at 7 – 7:30 p.m. on WSMR 89.1 FM

Florida Matters: Newsmaker Mayor Bob Buckhorn

March 20, 2012

Radio Description:

This week, Florida Matters brings you an exclusive interview with Tampa Mayor Bob Buckhorn. Host Carson Cooper traveled to Tampa City Hall to talk with the first-term mayor.

Buckhorn has been in office about a year. When he took over, the city was facing a $34 million deficit and is looking at a $30 million deficit for the coming fiscal year.

Yet, Buckhorn started his discussion about the budget with praise for his predecessor, Pam Iorio, who left the city with a $120 million rainy day fund, compared to the $20 million fund she inherited. Municipalities are highly dependent on property taxes for their main revenue and the recession and housing crisis have meant shrinking revenues and growing deficits.

"The property taxes and the value of our real estate has diminished so much that the amount of money that is coming into us has dropped 20 to 30 percent," Buckhorn said.

Buckhorn plans to bolster the budget with revenues from the city’s new red-light cameras, but he told WUSF that money was not the reason for installing the system.

"Our rationale for putting those red-light cameras in is because red-light running in this city and this state is an epidemic and people are dying, dying as a result of people busting red lights," Buckhorn said adding that he always counts to three after a light turns green before entering an intersection because he’s seen too many accidents.

During his tenure as mayor, Buckhorn has been vocal about the Tampa Bay Rays. He’s often said he won’t be the “boyfriend” who breaks up the marriage between the Rays and the City of St. Petersburg. However, he told WUSF, “I may be the pool guy though.”

Buckhorn stressed that he can’t interfere with the contract between St. Petersburg and the Rays. However, he also said that he other Tampa Bay leaders should be prepared if there was a split.

"I think we need to know what our options are," Buckhorn said. "I think we need to know what Tampa, Tampa Bay could bring to the table financially."

Speaking of finances, Buckhorn said the city will use a large portion of the $50 million from congress to hire, house and feed additional law enforcement officers to cover security for the
Republican National Convention in August. Between the City of Tampa and Hillsborough County Sheriff’s Office, Buckhorn estimates they can deploy about 1,000 law officers.

“We are having to hire 3,000 additional law enforcement personnel from all over the state to assist us with this,” Buckhorn said. He believes the convention will be a defining moment for the city.

“I want people to come downtown. I want people to enjoy this experience. I want young people to experience democracy at the street level,” Buckhorn said. “Fifteen thousand journalists will be here talking about something. I want them to talk about all that’s good about Tampa not talk about the inconveniences or not listen to whining. I want to hear Tampa tell the world what a great place this is to invest.”

Florida Matters: Newsmaker Jeff Vinik

March 13, 2012

Radio Description:

Jeff Vinik became the new owner of the Tampa Bay Lightning just over two years ago and quickly won over fans and local officials for what he’s done both on and off the ice. He bought the team with his own money and privately funded $40 million in renovations to the publicly-owned Tampa Bay Times Forum.

Yet when the assets manager first arrived in Tampa, sports writers did not get a good first impression.

“I was myself and I’m a pretty reserved person,” Vinik recently told Florida Matters’ host Carson Cooper. “I’m a very competitive person both with my asset management job as well as with the Lightning.”

Vinik’s competitive fire is fueled by his passion for hockey.

“Even though I’m a small owner in the Boston Red Sox actually and most of my Red Sox partners thought baseball was my favorite sport, by far hockey is the sport I love,” Vinik said, “the excitement of the game, the sounds of the game just every part of it.”

Yet, he believes it’s important to be bold and be willing to make the difficult decision for the betterment of an organization. So, Vinik didn’t settle on the Lightning and the Tampa Bay area without first studying all he could about sports management, hockey ownership and analyzing several different franchise opportunities.

He said the Tampa Bay Lightning came out on top because of its young talent, the welcoming community and the team had had prior success in leading the league in attendance.
Former Tampa Mayor Pam Iorio called Vinik an excellent example of “straightforward leadership” – someone who does not look to place blame, but instead looks to move forward.

“It’s all about people,” Vinik said. “I’ve been able to be fortunate enough to hire Tod Leiweke as CEO of the Lightning overseeing all the business aspects and Steve Yzerman as general manager overseeing the hockey.”

He said his job is to stay out of their way and focus on the long-term endeavor of making the organization “world class.” Vinik said he willingly invested his own money to renovate the Tampa Bay Times Forum because “it needed a soul” to build a brand and become a special place. He did not consider asking the city or county for money.

“The economy is tough down here, it’s been tough for a number of years.” Vinik said. “People are hurting and this is not the right time to go and ask for money for a private sports venture.”

He credits his dad and Harvard Business School for his leadership skills. “I learned there, hire the best people and do everything in a first class manner,” Vinik said.

When he bought the Lightning it was losing money. Those losses have shrunk, but he’s yet to make a profit.

“Things are going to work out fine as long as we can grow our brand, field a winning hockey team for the long term,” Vinik said. “Steve Yzerman will do that, I have no doubt, he’s a superstar.”

He isn’t just focused on the Lightning and events at the Forum, Vinik has talked with the City of Tampa about the Channelside District development. He said he’s not sure how he’ll get involved, but he cares about it because they are neighbors and he wants to help.

Vinik and his wife Penny have donated $10 million over five years to the Community Heroes program. The program, again the brainchild of Leiweke, recognizes an individual making a difference or a local charity at each Lightning home game and contributes $50,000.

Vinik is proud of the Community Heroes program and said he had three goals when he bought the Lightning: winning the Stanley Cup, continued excellence on the ice and making the community a better place.

The team owner also partnered with the University of South Florida to create a MBA program in Sports and Entertainment management.

“We think USF here can build one of the best MBA sports management programs in the country,” Vinik said. “We’ve got the right leader in there we’re going to try and help, given a little bit of money and a little bit of time.”

Since the announcement, Vinik said the phone has been ringing off the hook with calls from potential faculty and students.
Florida Wildlife Corridor Expedition Nears Halfway Point of Statewide Journey

March 6, 2012

Radio Description:

The Florida Wildlife Corridor Expedition is nearing the halfway mark of their trip up the length of Florida - 1,000 miles in 100 days. Their mission is to publicize the need to connect the state's disjointed wild areas into a continuous wildlife corridor. Carlton Ward Jr., Joe Guthrie, Mallory Lykes Dimmitt and Elam Stoltzfus discuss some of the surprises they found on the trip so far. Those include carrying 60-pound packs through the middle of palmetto patches - and how their preconceptions about the trip have jibed with the realities of traversing the length of Florida.

A Conversation with USF President Judy Genshaft

February 28, 2012

Radio Description:

In the last few weeks, USF President Judy Genshaft found herself in the fight of her career, taking on powerful lawmakers who wanted to slash USF's budget and make USF's branch campus in Lakeland into an independent school.

Florida Matters had a chance to talk with President Genshaft recently while she was in the middle of the budget fight. We've reported on that before.

But we also wanted to ask her about other issues -- rising college tuitions, USF's membership in the Big East, and USF's new medical facility.

The university is about to open a state-of-the-art medical training facility called the Center for Advanced Medical Learning and Simulation.

Tampa Mayor Bob Buckhorn calls it the most exciting thing to happen to downtown Tampa in 20 years - and Genshaft agrees.

She says the facility will draw thousands of doctors, nurses and other medical professionals to town for training. It also should lead to new inventions and spin-off jobs.

We also asked her about another difficult moment for her. It was two years ago, when USF Football coach Jim Leavitt was accused of striking one of his players and then trying to cover it up.

Last year, Leavitt settled a lawsuit against USF for almost $3 million. Genshaft said she really cannot talk about the case because of that settlement.
"But I can just tell you I have a lot of respect for Jim Leavitt. Personally, I like him very much. So, it was very sad for me personally to have to...go through the whole scenario."

When we talked with her, she was in the thick of a battle with Senate Budget chairman JD Alexander of Lake Wales. Most of those proposed cuts have now been scaled back. Genshaft says that's thanks to pressure from people in Tampa Bay.

Of course, there's more than one side to this debate. WUSF has an open invitation for Senator JD Alexander to join us for an interview.

Meanwhile, we are including in the show part of the Senate debate where Alexander and two other Senators talk about the fight over USF's budget and Polytechnic. We hear from Republican Senators Jack Latvala of Clearwater and Jim Norman of Tampa. But first, Senator Alexander describes why he lost faith in Genshaft's ability to help create Florida's 12th university in Lakeland.

**USF, JD Alexander, Polytechnic and the Budget Fight**

February 21, 2012

**Radio Description:**

What started as a fight over a new university in Polk County has blossomed into a battle over budget cuts to the University of South Florida. On this Florida Matters, we delve into the origin of the fight, and talk about how it may be resolved.

Senate Budget Chairman JD Alexander was once one of USF's biggest supporters. That's important, because Alexander has the power to direct millions of dollars toward USF...or, as we found out recently, to take it away.

"I have lost confidence in USF's leadership of that issue," he said recently.

That issue is the creation of what would be Florida's 12th university -- Florida Polytechnic -- in Alexander's home county, Polk County.

Alexander has said USF officials have dragged their feet on helping what is now a USF branch campus gain its independence.

This comes as Alexander's budget committee proposed budget cuts that USF said equal 58 percent of their state appropriation -- more than any other university.

USF President Josy Genshaft immediately called the Tampa Bay Community to action:

"What is key is, we can change this. It is not a done deal," she said at a community meeting after the proposed Senate budget was announced.
Since then, Senate leaders have backed off some of those proposed cuts, but Dr. Genshaft says more work needs to be done to make sure USF is treated fairly in this year's budget.

Dr. Genshaft spoke recently with WUSF news director Scott Finn about how we got here, and her plan for steering USF through it.

Of course, Senator JD Alexander has a different take on the dispute over USF Polytechnic and the USF budget fight.

Alexander's dream is to create what's called a polytechnic university on land along I-4 outside Lakeland, with a focus on STEM degrees -- science, technology, engineering and math.

At first, Alexander was a big supporter of having the new Polytechnic university remain as part of USF, under the UC model.

But just three years later, Alexander was saying this at a Board of Governors meeting, where he asked for immediate independence for Polytechnic.

"All I can tell you is it has been tortuous...impossible to get the program arrays, to hire the faculty, to recruit the students," he said.

Alexander elaborated on the USF Poly split and the proposed cuts to USF recently with a group of reporters at the state Capitol.

Other universities are being cut as well, but USF officials say the Senate's version of the budget disproportionately affects them.

It's led to a movement of community leaders and students to try and reverse the cuts -- or at least make them more in-line with other universities. USF Student Body President Matthew Diaz led a group of student to Tallahassee recently and spoke to the Senate Budget Committee -- where he received a lecture from Senate Higher Education Appropriations Chairwoman Evelyn Lynn.

Diaz talked with Florida Matters about his experience in fighting proposed budget cuts to USF.

We've also been hearing from you on WUSF's Facebook page. John Hayes says, "(Senator) Alexander is acting like an elementary school bully, trying to use his position to "get even" with President Genshaft. Her opposition to his desire to make USF Polytechnic become its own, independent school, is no reason to decimate USF's budget."

Let us know what you think -- go to Facebook.com/WUSF and hit the like button. There's also lots more about the USF budget battle, including the most recent updates, on our website, WUSF.org.

The Closing and Privatizing of Florida's Prisons
February 15, 2012

Radio Description:

Florida lawmakers have shot down a bill that would have privatized prisons in the southern half of the state. But several prisons may be still be closed because there are more than 10,000 empty prison beds statewide.

One of those is Hillsborough Correctional Institution – a woman’s prison on the “hit” list. Backers of keeping the faith-and character-based prison open the state made a huge error because it did not consider the recidivism rate of prisoners. That could cost the state more money as inmates get out, commit new crimes and end up back behind bars.

Veterans and Unemployment: Finding Solutions

February 7, 2012

Radio Description:

In Florida, the unemployment rate among veterans, especially among the National Guard and Reservists, hovers above the national civilian average. This week on Florida Matters, we look at the hurdles veterans face when looking for work as well as initiatives aimed at encouraging employers to hire veterans.

Resources for Veterans looking for work:

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce, Hiring Our Heroes, program has onsite job fairs including a Tampa Hiring Our Heroes event scheduled February 23rd from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Bayanihan Arts and Events Center, Tampa.

Employ Florida Veterans is an online portal promoted by Gov. Rick Scott in late January.

Hero 2 Hired, the Military Spouse Job Board and the Department of Labor Gold Card program are among the links available on the White House Veterans page.

Joining Forces - - includes a national resource directory of employers looking to hire veterans, a military spouse board among other links.

Veteran Employment - a collaborative website between veterans and Monster.com.

G.I. Jobs - a guide to "post-military" success with tips on resumes, interviewing and dressing for success.

Florida National Guard Career Connections - information on job fairs, job banks and job searches of Florida government positions.
Florida One-Stop Career Centers - links and addresses to centers statewide.

Veterans Gold Card - employment opportunities for post 9/11 era veterans.

Resources for Employers looking to hire veterans:

ESGR Employer Resource Guide

Employer Sample HR Policy

Florida Employer Resources - tips on recruiting qualified candidates.

No Choice: Florida Charter Schools and Students with Disabilities

January 31, 2012

Radio Description:

Charter schools are supposed to accept students regardless of ability…but in Florida, many are not.

Charter schools are designed to be an alternative for students who aren’t happy with their neighborhood school. But an investigation by StateImpact Florida and the Miami Herald found that charter schools aren’t an option for many students with severe disabilities.

Only 14 percent of charter schools serve kids with severe disabilities, compared to half of traditional public schools.

StateImpact Florida reporters Sarah Gonzalez and John O’Connor tell us the story behind their investigation, and the impact it is having.

We also talk with Kathleen McGrory of the Miami Herald. She and reporter Scott Hiaasen published “Cashing in on Kids,” a six-month investigation into charter schools.

Florida’s GOP Primary: What to Expect
January 24, 2012

Radio Description:

In the final days before the Florida GOP primary, and we’re speaking with top political experts about what to expect, and what it all means.

Joining us is Adam Smith, political editor of the Tampa Bay Times, GOP political consultant Mark Proctor, and USF political scientist Susan MacManus.
Redisccuting 2012: Who Will Dominate Florida's Politics?

January 17, 2012

Radio Description:

It happens every ten years, regular as clockwork. It’s when Florida lawmakers redraw the political boundaries that determine who you get to vote for. They’re doing it right now in Tallahassee.

On this special Florida Matters, WUSF in Tampa and WMFE in Orlando are working together to answer the question, what does redistricting mean to you?

Gov. Rick Scott's 2012 State of the State Address

January 10, 2012

Radio Description:

Governor Rick Scott says Florida's economy is on the mend and promised to put $1 billion back into education in his 2012 State of the State Address. Hear part of his address, along with analysis from USF political science professor Seth McKee and the Democratic response from Senate Minority Leader Nan Rich.

UNIVERSITY BEAT FIRST QUARTER 2012

University Beat runs every Friday on WSMR 89.1 FM every Friday at about 7:30 pm. Each report is between two and a half minutes and three and a half minutes in length.

University Beat: Morsani Medical School (week of January 2, 2012)

By Mark Schreiner

A look at the USF Morsani College of Medicine, why it’s changing its name and what it means for USF Health’s future. (Medicine, Business, Education)

University Beat: Marshall Scholar (week of January 9, 2012)

By Mark Schreiner
Meet Jean Weatherwax, the first USF Marshall Scholarship ever, who will soon study electrical engineering at one of England’s premier schools. (Education, Science)

**University Beat: Electric Cars** (week of January 16, 2012)

By Mark Schreiner

USF is plugging into the future with the installation of the first electric vehicle charging stations on the Tampa campus. (Environment, Science)

**University Beat: STEM Research Part 1** (week of January 23, 2012)

By Mark Schreiner

First part of a look at USF’s STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) efforts, beginning with a National Science Foundation-funded study that’s examining how STEM education can help students go from high school to community college to high-tech jobs. (Science, Education, Children)

**University Beat: STEM Research Part 2** (week of January 30, 2012)

By Mark Schreiner

Second part of a look at USF’s STEM efforts, this time examining USF efforts to develop a new education program aimed at creating strong STEM teachers for middle schools. (Science, Education, Children)

**University Beat: Natural Art Exhibit** (week of February 6, 2012)

By Mark Schreiner

A profile of Mark Dion and his wildlife art, which is decidedly unlike anything else you’ll see in an art museum. (Arts, Environment, Education)

**University Beat: Engineering Scholarships** (week of February 13, 2012)

By Mark Schreiner

A look at how corporate and individual gifts are helping USF Engineering students afford their education. (Education, Science, Economy)
University Beat: Darwin Days (week of February 20, 2012)

By Mark Schreiner

An examination of USF’s recent Darwin Days, where biology teachers and students from elementary schools through the university level had a chance to hear about the continuing battle over teaching evolution from one of the country’s most renowned science educators. (Science, Education, Religion, Children)

University Beat: Not In Our Town (week of February 27, 2012)

By Mark Schreiner

It took the brutal murder of a Hispanic immigrant for one Long Island community to say “not in our town.” Now USF, WUSF and “Community Tampa Bay” are teaming up to share a message of inclusion for the Bay area, directed particularly at immigrants and high school students. (Discrimination, Minorities, Crime, Politics, Education)

University Beat: USF Health CAMLS (week of March 5, 2012)

By Mark Schreiner

A look at the new USF Health “Center for Advanced Medical Learning and Simulation,” or “CAMLs,” the new high-tech, downtown Tampa facility which opens at the end of the month. (Medicine, Business, Education, Science)

University Beat: USF Band-London (week of March 12, 2012)

By Mark Schreiner

USF’s marching band is preparing for what could be its biggest performance ever, as the "Herd of Thunder" has been invited to play the 2013 New Year’s Day Parade in London, England. (Arts, Education)

University Beat: Kony 2012 (week of March 19, 2012)
University Beat: Kony 2012 (week of March 19, 2012)

By Mark Schreiner

USF Sarasota-Manatee Assoc. Professor Lynn McBrien, who has traveled to Africa and worked closely with some of the "child warriors" forced to serve in Joseph Kony's army, shares her thoughts about a controversial internet documentary about the Ugandan guerilla leader. (Education, Children, Poverty, Military, Refugee, Violence)

University Beat: Stronger Than I Knew (week of March 26, 2012)

By Mark Schreiner

As part of a USF-created campaign called "Stronger Than I Knew," USF students share their personal stories on YouTube with the goal of inspiring classmates and giving them hope. (Education, Homosexuality, Handicapped, Immigration)