

**Franklin County, Florida Tourism Media Day
St. George Island - March 21, 2012
Mayor Van Johnson Remarks**

To all those who understood the importance of keeping our local economy viable.

A show of appreciation and acknowledgments are most definitely in order today.

Hats off to the Franklin County Board of County Commissioners, represented here today by its Chair Pinki Jackel, our Tourist Development Council, also represented today by its Chair Cheryl Sanders and the Tourist Development's Council administrator Curt Blair for their collaborative efforts in working toward restoring nationwide confidence in the pristine waters of Franklin County and in the succulent bounty harvested daily from our seas.

Special recognition and thanks goes to Helen Spohrer and her marketing team for making it all happen with professionalism, conviction, and passion.

Utilizing the concept of teamwork - our county leadership strategically expended the \$1.6 million dollar allotment from BP to launch a nationwide marketing campaign and to fund tourist related events throughout the Franklin County community.

Their efforts have kept the reputation and image of our area as a tourist destination intact before a concerned and tuned in nation.

To our partners at BP, thanks for taking ownership of the worst man made environmental disaster in our nation's history since the 1930's Dust Bowl and for honoring your commitment to the affected communities along the Gulf of Mexico to restore and make them whole.

However, I caution! If we're not out of danger and the risk to our livelihood hasn't been adequately addressed or that Franklin County and its communities haven't been made whole - then there's still much work to be done.

If that were the case - then I encourage you to continue working with our local government and our Tourist Development Council until every heart has been healed and every mind has been put at ease and your commitment fulfilled.

However, until the communities of Franklin County, Florida are completely made whole and every heart is healed and every mind set at ease there will continue to be work to do.

I cannot express enough the importance of teamwork, and the collaborative efforts that went into promoting Franklin County post BP oil spill.

A grateful community salutes you all.