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**FLORIDA HUMANITIES COUNCIL**  
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**Media Kit / Photos available on website**

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## **"IMAGINING A NEW FLORIDA"**

### **Can Florida Move from Sprawl to Community?**

**Watch our Statewide Public-Television Documentary May 13**

What will Florida look like in 20 years? More importantly, what will it live like? If the state's population climbs again as is projected, will Florida develop more strip malls, far-flung housing tracts, and massive highway systems? Or will it develop on a more livable, human scale that allows people to better connect with one another in communities?

A compelling one-hour documentary, "Imagining a New Florida," explores these questions May 13 at 8 p.m. on most PBS television stations around the state.

The program, produced by the Florida Humanities Council (FHC) and WPBT2-TV Miami, looks at how our car-oriented lifestyle is causing social isolation, as well as taking a toll on the environment and the pocketbook. It explores how Floridians might chart a new path towards sustainable growth and a better quality of life.

“We were on the General Motors track for the last 50 years,” says Bruce Stephenson, a professor of environmental and growth management studies at Rollins College. “If you want to stay on the General Motors track for the next 50 years, you’re going to go bankrupt.”

Stephenson is one of many Floridians—including architects and artists, developers and scholars, planners and plain folk—who discuss these issues in the program.

“We hope that this documentary will help Floridians re-imagine our state,” says Janine Farver, executive director of FHC, the independent, nonprofit affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities. “It will explore how architecture, community design and a sense of place come together to create more sustainable development and a more engaged citizenry.”

WPBT2 producers crisscrossed the state for the past year to examine the meaning of community and the negative impacts of sprawl and to ask such questions as: Has the Florida dream morphed into a Florida nightmare? Is Florida too built out? What is community and how is it created?

“A lack of vision got us to where we are today,” says Jack Kelly, WPBT2’s vice president for production. “So where we go from here lies in the hands of every Floridian.” Kelly and co-producer Joyce Belloise say they hope the documentary will promote dialogue among Floridians on a topic many would argue has serious public-policy implications.

The upcoming program is a natural follow-up to FHC’s previous statewide documentary, “The Florida Dream,” which chronicled the state’s half-century of

runaway population growth since World War II—and how a sparsely populated southern backwater was transformed into today’s multicultural megastate.

Four regional public-television documentaries, also sponsored by FHC, premiere locally on May 13 along with “Imagining a New Florida.” They also air statewide on Florida public-television stations on Sunday, May 16. Check local listings for details. Each regional program looks at the issue of developing community from a different Florida perspective:

- “Jacksonville Beach: Through the Change,” produced by WJCT—Jacksonville, examines how Jacksonville Beach maintains its unique identity and whether its sense of community is important to the residents and their quality of life.
- “Venice, Florida: Moving Forward by Looking Back,” produced by WEDU—West Central Florida, looks at the legacy of John Nolen, who designed Venice in the 1920s as a walkable community built around nature, and reports on the city’s current efforts to create a better place in a new time.
- “St. Petersburg: New Place in the Sun,” produced by WUSF—Tampa, explores the urban transformation ongoing in historic downtown St. Petersburg, focusing on its livability and issues related to “redeveloping paradise.”
- “Florida: Heaven on Earth?” produced by WGCU—Fort Myers, examines the origins and development of four spiritual communities in Florida—the Cassadaga Spiritualist Camp, the Koreshan Unity, Kashi Ashram, and Ave Maria—and looks at the importance of ideas and motivations in the creation of sustainable communities. #