

## **FRANKLIN COUNTY HEALTHCARE SALES TAX REFERENDUM**

In November 2007, Franklin County residents approved a referendum to levy a one cent local option sales tax to support the replacement of the county owned hospital and develop an outpatient clinic in Carrabelle. The new hospital will be a replacement for George E. Weems Memorial Hospital located in Apalachicola, Florida and originally built in 1959. The sales tax referendum will assist in financing the construction of a 6,000 square foot outpatient clinic to serve the needs of eastern Franklin County, and a 45,000 square foot, 25 bed replacement facility which is projected to open in 2009.

A recently completed economic analysis of the benefits of the hospital to Franklin County indicated that the total financial impact on Franklin County in sales was \$10.6 million per year. The hospital also generated \$4.3 million in total labor income and 148 jobs for the community.

The Florida Office of Rural Health has been working with Franklin County and Weems Hospital to assist with improving quality of patient care and building a replacement hospital. Support for these efforts by the Office of Rural Health included \$103,000 in capital improvement funds and a \$30,000 grant for pharmacy health information technology equipment to the hospital during fiscal year 2006-07. An additional \$100,000 in capital improvement funds will be provided during the 2007-08 fiscal year.