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## News Release

### Everglades Acceler8 Restoration Projects Utilize Innovative Technology to Expand Outreach

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Efforts to restore America's Everglades, one of the largest environmental restoration projects in the world, received a significant boost when Governor Jeb Bush initiated Acceler8, a program managed by the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD). The ultimate goal of Acceler8 is to complete eight important restoration projects years ahead of schedule, resulting in immediate environmental benefits and substantial savings to taxpayers.

Since Acceler8 affects a vast population of residents, tourists, environmentalists and businesses, completion of the fast-tracked program depends largely upon the District's ability to effectively communicate and collaborate with these diverse stakeholder groups. SFWMD is inviting the public to comment on each project's preliminary design report and has selected the IBM - Neighborhood America Public Comment<sup>®</sup> Service to collect and manage the information.

"The efforts now underway to restore America's Everglades is unprecedented," said Jo Ann Hyres, SFWMD's Director of Public Information. "Using Public Comment<sup>®</sup> Service gives our various audiences and stakeholders additional opportunities to clearly and effectively communicate their concerns and opinions during the project development process. Any member of the public can now go online to quickly learn about an Everglades Restoration project, and then provide their opinions about it."

Neighborhood America's web-based technology enables project teams to collect and manage public comment, and utilize the results in their decision-making processes. "Our systems provide the means for citizens to participate in decisions that affect their communities, while enabling diverse groups to work together to achieve a common goal," stated Kim Patrick Kobza, Neighborhood America's President and CEO. "The Everglades Restoration is a great example of how small teams from federal, state and local partnerships can work together constructively to achieve significant results. We are privileged to support the District's efforts, which are paramount to the future of our region."

For more information on the Everglades Acceler8 Restoration projects, visit [www.evergladesnow.org](http://www.evergladesnow.org). Learn more about the IBM – Neighborhood America Public Comment Service online at [www.PublicComment.com](http://www.PublicComment.com).

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