

COLUMN: EDC, Big Dog enjoying extra daylight

[Thomas J. Monigan](#) Friday March 7th, 2008

Just in case you didn't know, Freedom Communications has family roots that make us Libertarian. Not Democrat, not Republican, and we emphasize individual responsibility. This means we're not always thrilled with the federal government, to say the least. But in this case, your business editor would like to tip the Northwest Florida Daily News cap to Uncle Sam for moving up the official arrival of daylight-saving time. Sure to help all the fun and frolics arriving this week on the Emerald Coast.

Oh and yes, before we get rolling here today, Malcolm Berko's syndicated column is slated to run Thursdays and Saturdays in our business section. Space permitting, of course. Meanwhile, you can find our Speaking of Business spotlight involving Kindred Hearts on Page C8 of this section.

EDC highlights tech

More than 150 folks showed up last week for Wednesday's roundtable hosted by the Economic Development Council of Okaloosa County. "Advancing Technology Talent" was the program, and it was even better than a seriously tasty breakfast served in the Empire Room of the Ramada Plaza Beach Resort.

Longtime residents might have no trouble recognizing just how much the Air Force means to tech development here. But remember, there are new folks arriving daily. I might have just come back here last month after almost 21 years away from the Emerald Coast, but I know an important question when it gets asked. Someone wanted to know: What's going to happen to the 46th Test Wing?

That was directed to Col. Kirk Kloeppel, the panelist from Eglin Air Force Base. The colonel deferred to Bob Arnold, chairman of Eglin's Mission Enhancement Committee. "There are no plans to move the 46th Test Wing," Arnold said without hesitation of any sort. "There's only been a streamlining of the organization. ... We're keeping all of the manpower and all of the resources in place."

Overall, the message of this event was worth remembering. We have to attract tech talent here with money, not just lovely beaches. And we need to grow our own, because those emerging global powers from Asia have their best and brightest here in ever-increasing numbers.

Don't think this is a big deal? Call up someone involved with making steel, automobiles or textiles. They'll share the lessons they learned, most of which came far too late to avert economic disaster.

Just so we don't gloom and doom too much, here's a photo of Okaloosa's local EDC team. They radiate energy, and they appear to know what the mission is.