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BOARDROOM REPORT

News from recent REIS board meetings

Luncheon Programs:

The April 13th luncheon, featuring Lee County Manager Karen Hawes, will be sponsored by [Advanced Roofing & Sheet Metal](#).

FGCU President Wilson G. Bradshaw will be the guest speaker at the May 11 luncheon, sponsored by [Vanasse Daylor](#), a Weston & Sampson Company.

The June 8 luncheon will feature Florida Dept. of Transportation and be sponsored by [Fifth Third Bank](#).

Contact Jim Garinger, (239) 418-0300 for future sponsorship opportunities.

Scholarship Programs:

The REIS Scholarship Foundation fund-raising campaign is underway. Anyone wishing to make charitable contributions is encouraged to contact Shelton Weeks, (239) 590-7373 or sweeks@fgcu.edu.

Annual Social Event:

The REIS Gala Social Event returns to The Edison restaurant at Fort Myers Country Club on Nov. 18. A silent auction is planned to raise money for the REIS Scholarship Foundation. Contact Vikki Luft (vluft@compassconstruction.com) for sponsorship opportunities or to donate auction items.

Reception for Lee Board of Commissioners:

The popular bi-annual reception is scheduled for Dec. 9 at Edison National Bank in Fort Myers. It is sponsored by Edison National Bank and Henderson Franklin Attorneys at Law. The event is by invitation only.

Education Workshop:

Education Committee Chair Stephanie Keyes is planning a half-day workshop on business and real estate capital. Contact Stephanie, (239) 936-3537 ext. 243, if you would like to assist in organizing or sponsoring the event.

COMMENT ON WATER QUALITY REGS

The Environmental Protection Agency will host 2 public hearings in Fort Myers on proposed changes to Florida's water quality regulations. The hearings are 12 - 4 and 6 - 9 pm April 13 at Harborside Event Center.

The changes are proposed by the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in response to a lawsuit filed by environmental groups demanding specific standards for nutrient levels in waterways. Florida Chamber of Commerce asserts that the cost of compliance will exceed \$75 million and the proposed rules have the potential to increase the average Floridian's water bill by over \$700 annually. Mining and agricultural interests also fear a major economic impact from the proposed standards.

LEE COMP PLAN UPDATE UNDERWAY

Lee County is updating its Comprehensive Plan, which takes place every seven years. Take part in guiding Lee County by participating in one of the public workshops:

April 15, 5 - 7 pm: Community Development / Public Works Building, 1500 Monroe St., in Fort Myers

April 20, 5 - 7 pm: Riverdale Branch Library in Olga

April 21, 5 - 7 pm: Pine Island Public Library in Bokeelia

April 27, 5 - 7 pm: North Fort Myers Public Library, 2001 N. Tamiami Trail, in North Fort Myers

April 28, 5 - 7 pm: South County Regional Library, 21100 Three Oaks Parkway, in Estero

May 4, 5 - 7 pm: Lakes Regional Library, 15290 Bass Road, in South Fort Myers

May 5, 5 - 7 pm: East County Regional Library, 881 Gunnery Road, in Lehigh Acres

May 11, 10 am - noon: Boca Grande Community Center, 131 First Street West, Boca Grande

May 13, 10 am - noon: Captiva Civic Association, 11550 Chapin Lane, Captiva Island



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REIS OPPOSES AMENDMENT 4

The Real Estate Investment Society has formally joined the opposition to Amendment 4. The proposed amendment to Florida's Constitution will be on the November ballot. If enacted, it would require voter approval for the adoption or amendment of any local comprehensive plans in the state. Information about the proposed amendment and the official REIS resolution are available at

<http://www.reis-swfl.org/amendment-4.html>



JANES MEMORIAL & SCHOLARSHIP

REIS has created a memorial page on its web site for late Lee County Commissioner Bob Janes and designated a scholarship in his honor. Visit <http://www.reis-swfl.org/commissioner-janes-memorial.html> to learn how you can honor his memory by making a charitable donation to the Commissioner Janes Scholarship.

IMPACT FEE RELIEF IN COLLIER

Collier County's Impact Fee Program for Existing Commercial Development just concluded its first year with 40 applicants participating, including 20 new businesses. The program provides an exemption from impact fees (excluding water and sewer) for changes of use in existing commercial buildings that have had a certificate of occupancy for 5 years. The impact fees exempted in the first year total \$1,266,277. The program goals include encouraging new business, retention and expansion of existing businesses, and absorbing vacant commercial space in older buildings.

REGIONAL ECONOMIC INDICATORS

The REIS March luncheon meeting featured a presentation on economic trends and forecasts for Southwest Florida, provided by professor Dr. Gary Jackson, director of the Regional Economic Research Institute (RERI) at the Lutgert College of Business at Florida Gulf Coast University. RERI publishes monthly economic indicator reports, available at no charge, at <http://www.fgcu.edu/cob/reri/>.

LAND USE SYMPOSIUM

"Where do we grow from here? Transit-oriented development and walkable communities for a better future" is the scope of a half-day symposium on April 16. The event takes place in Lee County Commission Chambers in downtown Fort Myers. Speakers include: former DCA Secretary Linda Shelley; Alachua County's Senior Transportation Planner Jeff Hays; Univ. of Florida Law Professor James Nicholas, and renowned architect and town planner Seth Harry. Admission is free. Hosted by Lee County Government, City of Fort Myers, Florida Gulf Coast University, Reconnecting Lee County, Fowler White Boggs P.A., and the American Planning Association Florida Promised Lands Section.

SWF TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS

A regional transportation update will be presented April 21 at Edison State College in Fort Myers. Air Transportation Infrastructure will be covered in the morning session from 9:30 to 11:30. Surface Transportation Infrastructure will be the focus of the midday session, 12 to 1:30. Speakers include Stan Cann and Johnny Limbaugh from Florida Dept. of Transportation; Emily Underhill of Lee County Port Authority; and Dave Loveland and Norm Feder of Lee and Collier County Depts. of Transportation. Sponsored by The Chamber of Southwest Florida. Information at www.chamber-swflorida.com.

PANTHER ADVOCATES SUE

A coalition of environmental groups filed a lawsuit in February that asks a judge to force the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Interior Department to start the process of designating 3 million acres in Collier, Lee and Hendry counties as critical habitat under the Endangered Species Act. The suit was filed by The Conservancy of Southwest Florida, The Sierra Club, the Center for Biological Diversity, Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility and the Council for Civic Associations. About 1.1 million acres in the area is privately held, including much of the site of the planned town of Big Cypress, where Collier Enterprises hoped to develop 9,000 homes on 2,800 acres in rural Collier County. Combined with the new EPA stormwater regulations, the habitat designation could have a devastating economic impact on agriculture and real estate in Southwest Florida.

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