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BOARDROOM REPORT

News from recent REIS board meetings

Luncheon Programs:

Fort Myers Police Chief Derrick Diggs is the guest speaker for the April 11th luncheon, sponsored by [Henderson Franklin, Attorneys at Law](#).

The May 9th luncheon will feature a development update on Babcock Ranch, sponsored by [ADG Architecture, LLC](#).

The 2017 Legislative Review is planned for the June 13th luncheon, sponsored by [Thrivent Financial](#).

REIS welcomes your suggestions for programs. Please share your ideas with [Bev Larson](#), 239.281.1290.

Sponsorships:

Contact [Chris Pacitto](#), 239.689.1474, for information and availability of opportunities to sponsor REIS events.

Annual Social Event:

Chair Arleen Hunter reports that live entertainment has been secured for the popular event to take place on November 16th.

Real Estate Symposium:

Preliminary plans include a national speaker on trends and techniques in commercial planning.

REIS WELCOMES NEW MEMBERS

Please join in welcoming our new members:

Rick Dalton, President of Dalton Communities, a residential development and home building company.

W. John Grasmeyer, Realtor and Managing Member of Real In Florida, a real estate firm specializing in investment properties.

Michael Herrera, PE, specializing in land development and regulatory processes with Stantec.

Paula McMichael, AICP, is the Director of Planning with Hole Montes and past president of the Florida Planning & Zoning Association (FPZA).

Membership information is on the [REIS website](#).

REGION LEADS NATION IN GROWTH

The U.S. Census Bureau reports the Fort Myers - Cape Coral metro area ranked 5th nationally in population growth for the 12 months ending June 30, 2016. Charlotte County ranked 8th and Collier County 17th. See details in the latest "Economic Indicator Report," published by the Regional Economic Research Institute (RERI) of the Lutgert College of Business at Florida Gulf Coast University, available at no charge on the [REIS website's Resource page](#).

2017 ECONOMIC SUMMIT

Analysis and forecast of the real estate market presented by economist Dr. Elliot Eisenberg, Collier County Planning Commission Chairman Mark Strain, and real estate appraiser Cindy Carroll on April 26th in Naples. Program hosted by [Naples Area Board of Realtors \(NABOR\)](#).

PINE ISLAND INCORPORATION

Residents of Pine Island are studying the possibility of incorporating as a municipality, supported by the [preliminary feasibility study](#). The SWOT analysis is due to be completed this month and the Incorporation Study in September. Meetings and information are posted by the [Greater Pine Island Civic Association](#).

I-75 INTERCHANGE IMPROVEMENTS

Florida Dept. of Transportation (FDOT) has identified improvements to the I-75 - Corkscrew Road interchange that involve additional turn lanes on Corkscrew Road in both directions and could be done in 3-5 years. Design has also begun for additional turn lanes on I-75 and construction will likely be included in the 5-year work plan.

AVIATION SCHOOL IS TAKING OFF

Charlotte County approved \$500,000 to improve a hangar facility at Punta Gorda Airport to be leased to the Western Michigan University (WMU) aviation school. WMU committed to invest \$2 million in improvements, operate for at least 5 years, and maintain an annual student enrollment of 150. School starts in September.



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LEGISLATURE DIVIDED

Significant differences between the Florida Senate and House of Representatives may cause the session to run late or require a special session. There is a \$2 billion difference between the budgets proposed in the 2 houses. March 31st also marked the end of subcommittee meetings and bills that have not advanced past that point are usually doomed unless they are a priority with one house. This is the case for funding the Visit Florida tourism agency, the existence of the Enterprise Florida business development agency, plans for a new reservoir south of Lake Okeechobee, and a bill that would prevent local governments from passing business regulations not expressly approved in state law.

SW FLORIDA DAYS IN TALLAHASSEE

The Chamber of Southwest Florida will lead a contingent of area businesspeople to the state capitol to discuss local issues directly with state legislators April 11-13. Excursion includes transportation, lodging and scheduled meetings. Register via the [Chamber website](#).

INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING AT RISK

The President's budget request for the remaining 5 months of the fiscal year eliminates the TIGER grant program, cuts funding for New Starts transit grants, cuts \$100 million from the Army Corps of Engineers water resources program and \$1.5 billion from the Community Block Grant program. The fiscal year began in October but Congress has not yet passed the 2017 spending bill. If Congress and the President fail to approve a spending bill or Continuing Resolution by April 28th, the federal government will shut down.

ANNUAL BROWNFIELD SYMPOSIUM

The Southwest Florida Brownfield Symposium has been expanded to include all of South Florida and will be held at the Chateau Elan Hotel and Conference Center in Sebring on June 7th and 8th. The program is designed for developers, investors, realtors, government agencies, and related development professionals. It is presented by the Southwest and Central Florida Regional Planning Councils, the Florida Dept. of Environmental Protection, and the Florida Brownfield Association. Details will be posted on the REIS website calendar of events.

LEGISLATIVE ACTION REPORT

Commercial Lease Tax (HB 223/S 484)

Bills filed in both houses to reduce Florida's 6% sales tax on commercial leases. The Senate bill would reduce the tax to 5% and passed the Community Affairs Committee. Another Senate bill, SB 378, would reduce the tax rate to 5% and would also eliminate a tax credit for insurers. The House bill would reduce the tax to 4.5% for 2 years starting January 1, then raise it to 5.5% permanently.

Property Tax Cap (SJR 76)

The current 10% cap on annual property tax increases for non-homestead properties will be automatically repealed in January 2019 unless renewed by a majority vote of electors in the 2018 general election. Bill would place an amendment on the 2018 ballot to remove the appeal and make the cap permanent. In Appropriations Committee.

Economic Development (CS/CS/HB 7005)

Eliminates Enterprise Florida and transfers programs to Dept. of Economic Opportunity (DEO). Allows Florida Tourism Industry Marketing Corp (VISIT Florida) to continue operations. Passed by the House and sent to Senate committees.

Local Business Regulation (CS/HB 17)

Bill would prohibit local governments from adopting or imposing a new regulation on a business, profession or occupation after January 1, 2017 unless expressly authorized by general law. Regulations adopted prior to this date would expire on January 1, 2020.

Water Quality (SB 10/HB 761)

A plan to acquire 60,000 acres of farmland south of Lake Okeechobee for use in storing and treating water has been amended to use existing state lands, reducing costs from \$2.4 billion to \$1.2 billion.

Septic Tank Inspections (CS/CS/HB 285)

Amended to delete proposed mandatory inspections and now just requires sellers to disclose the presence of a sewage treatment and disposal system on site.

Procurement of Professional Services (HB 789)

Proposed legislation would remove many qualifications from consideration and place more emphasis on price when awarding state contracts for architectural, engineering, and related services. Passed the Oversight, Transparency, and Administration Subcommittee.



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