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Travis Merrick
Lori Moore
Mark Morris
Kent Poli
Past President Karen Miller

BOARDROOM REPORT

News from recent REIS board meetings

Luncheon Programs:

The April 10th luncheon will feature an update on community redevelopment by Fort Myers CRA Director Leigh Scrabis, sponsored by [Kimley-Horn and Associates](#).

State Representative Matt Caldwell will be the guest speaker at the May 8th luncheon, sponsored by [Henderson Franklin, Attorneys at Law](#).

Village of Estero Mayor Jim Boesch will address the June 12th luncheon, sponsored by [Velocity Engineering](#).

REIS welcomes your suggestions for programs. Please share your ideas with [Alexis Crespo](#), 239-405-7777.

Sponsorships:

Contact [Kent Poli](#), 239-689-7174, for information and availability of opportunities to sponsor REIS events.

Scholarship Program:

The REIS Scholarship Foundation is a not-for-profit, registered 501(c)3 corporation that provides an opportunity to make charitable donations for local college scholarships. More information is available from Scholarship Chairman [Mark Morris](#), 239-671-2266.

Education Programs:

The 2018 Real Estate Symposium is planned for September and will look at growth trends and issues for inland areas of Southwest Florida. Anyone interested in participating on the committee is encouraged to contact Committee Chairs [Lori Moore](#) (239-338-4248) and [Tim Hancock](#) (239-646-4040). Prime sponsor positions are currently available.

Reception for Lee Commissioners:

The popular bi-annual REIS Reception for the newly elected Lee County Board of County Commissioners will take place December 13th. The exclusive members-only event is sponsored by Edison National Bank and Henderson Franklin, Attorneys at Law. Invitations will be sent immediately after the election in November.

BONITA BEACH ROAD CORRIDOR

A series of public presentations and interactive sessions will look at future land uses and connectivity in the Bonita Beach Road corridor. The opening presentation is April 9th, followed by open house sessions April 10th and 11th and the closing presentation April 12th. All begin at 5:30 p.m. at Bonita Springs City Hall. Details at [City web site](#).

ENVIRONMENTAL BUSINESS EXPO

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) South District presents a free event featuring training sessions and a product and services expo on April 11th in Fort Myers. The Expo is offered for environmental consultants, waste management, utilities, developers, park systems, natural resources managers, engineering firms, manufacturers, drinking water, wastewater and distribution systems operators, and other interested parties. Details at [DEP South website](#).

COMMUNITY PLANNING SUMMIT

The "Human-Centered Planning Summit" will be April 19th in Fort Myers and feature an overview of work in land use economics and property tax analysis, and methodology for linking these concepts to land use decisions. Invited speakers include: Doug Alderman, Assistant Bureau Chief from the Office of Greenways and Trails; Victor Dover, FAICP, of Dover, Kohl & Partners; Ian Lockwood of Toole Design Group; Orlando Transportation Director Billy Hattaway, P.E.; and Joe Minicozzi, AICP, of Urban 3. Details at [American Planning Association \(APA\) website](#).

REIS WELCOMES NEW MEMBERS

Please join in welcoming our newest members:

Jennifer Castriotta, senior vice president of Lee and Associates Commercial, specializes in commercial and investment properties.

Church Roberts, of Church Environmental, an environmental consulting firm serving South Florida.

A limited number of REIS memberships are now available to new members. Full information and application are on the [REIS website](#).

BEV LARSON, CCIM
COMMERCIAL INVESTMENT OFFICE
RETAIL LAND - ACREAGE DEVELOPMENT


Bev
239.281.1290
bev1314@aol.com


239.337.0555 MHSappraisal.com


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FLOOD INSURANCE EXTENSION

The National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) received a 4-month extension as part of the federal spending package approved March 23rd. Congress now faces a July deadline to reform the program, extend it again, or let it lapse in the middle of hurricane season.

STATE WETLANDS PERMITTING

Governor Scott approved legislation that will enable Florida's Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) to take over issuing federal wetlands permits in addition to state wetlands permits. FDEP is negotiating Memorandums of Agreement with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Environmental Protection Agency, and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service to assume regulation of permitting under the "404" program of the Clean Water Act. The change is intended to alleviate lengthy delays in acquiring permits from federal agencies.

COMMERCIAL TAXED UPON TAX

Although the Florida Legislature reduced the sales tax on commercial property rent to 5.7% effective January 1st, 2019, the issue of double taxation remains. Florida charges sales tax on the "total rent or license fee," which includes property insurance premiums, ad valorem taxes, utilities and taxes on utilities included in Commercial Area Maintenance (CAM) charges.

ADA REFORMS PROVIDE RELIEF

The U.S. House of Representatives passed HB 620 to reform the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and curb the practice of "drive-by" lawsuits by providing for a period of notice, education and remediation efforts by property owners. The bill now goes to the Senate for approval.

Florida has also passed legislation (Statute 553.5141) to address the surge in frivolous lawsuits. The law allows businesses not in compliance with ADA regulations to submit plans that detail proposed remedies and state when the remediation will be initiated and completed, which must be within 10 years. This extended time frame will enable businesses to control the timing and cost of their remediation measures, as they will be able to implement the changes in conjunction with any planned future renovations or remodeling projects.

REIS SCHOLARSHIPS GROW

The Paul Sands Memorial - REIS Scholarship Fund has received \$6,300 from the annual Paul Sands Slaw Dog Invitational, which will be added to the principal balance of the endowed fund at Florida Gulf Coast University. REIS is able to award 3 \$2500 scholarships this year and donations are being sought to fund one more.

[Click here](#) to learn more about donating to the scholarship program.



Scholarship Chairman Mark Morris and President Bev Larson report donation to the scholarship program.

STATE BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

Florida's Legislature and Governor have approved an \$89.7 billion budget for 2018-2019. Key items include:

Economic Development: The budget for Visit Florida tourism agency will remain \$76 million, same as this year. \$85 million is allocated for workforce training or construction projects that aid economic development.

Environment: \$100+ million budgeted for Florida Forever program to acquire environmentally-sensitive lands.

Property Taxes: The education budget is increased enough to allow a small decrease in local property taxes.


Affordable Housing: Affordable housing projects, rental assistance and housing rehabilitation will receive nearly \$124 million through state and local trust funds.

CORKSCREW ROAD AREA STUDY

Lee County has posted a [web page](#) with information regarding the Corkscrew Road Improvement Study. It provides an interactive map of the affected area and a sign-up for email updates on the progress of the Study.

ESTERO COMP PLAN UPDATE

The Village of Estero's first Comprehensive Land Use Plan was submitted to the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity for review by State agencies on January 10th. Upon its return, the Plan will be revised as needed and presented in a public hearing before the Village Council, likely in April.



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