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BOARDROOM REPORT

News from recent REIS board meetings

Luncheon Programs:

The newly formed Southwest Florida Economic Development Alliance will be presented by News-Press Publisher Mei-Mei Chan at the January 14th luncheon, sponsored by [Velocity Engineering Services](#).

The February 11th luncheon will be sponsored by [Castle Group](#). The March 11th luncheon will be sponsored by [Maxwell, Hendry & Simmons, LLC](#).

REIS welcomes your suggestions on programs and speakers you would like to see at the luncheons. Please share your ideas with [Matt Simmons](#), 239.337.0555.

REIS Committees:

Committee chairs for 2014 are listed below. Members are encouraged to participate and may contact the chairs for more information.

- Social Events: Bev Larson (281-1290)
- Education Workshop: Alexis Crespo (405-7777), with Co-Chairs Charles Mann, Karen Miller, and Nikole Wesley
- Scholarship Programs: Mark Morris (671-2226)
- Communications: John Nicola (947-5077)
- Horizon Council Representative: Kim Donnelly

Scholarship Programs:

The Paul Sands Memorial - REIS Scholarship Program and the REIS Scholarship Foundation are both accepting donations to fund 2014 scholarships. Contact Scholarship Committee Chair [Mark Morris](#) to contribute.

Membership:

Memberships expired December 31. A limited number of memberships are now available for new members. Annual dues remain \$125 and may be paid online.

Luncheon Registration Policy:

Registration is required for monthly luncheons. Luncheon fees are not refundable but may be transferred to another member or colleague prior to the deadline.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS

The **Southwest Florida Economic Development Alliance** is gathering money and momentum to promote economic growth and diversity. Initiated by Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU) College of Business Advisory Council, the public-private organization includes Lee County's Horizon Council and The Partnership for Collier's Future Economy, a subsidiary of the Greater Naples Chamber of Commerce. The Alliance has received financial commitments from Lee and Collier Counties and leading area businesses. Neighboring counties are expected to join the Alliance in the near future. A website will be launched in early 2014,

Collier County commissioners approved funding and a public-private partnership with the Greater Naples Chamber of Commerce to promote the area as an economic development hub.

Bonita Springs downtown redevelopment is moving ahead with \$14.5 million from Lee County. Roadway, sidewalks, and drainage improvements are planned to allow property owners to build on a larger portion of their properties.

FLOOD INSURANCE REFORM

Florida legislators are expediting legislation to create a framework for private insurance companies to issue flood insurance as an alternative to policies issued by the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). The Florida Senate Banking and Insurance Subcommittee has unanimously approved a bill (SB 542) that would allow companies to offer the option of covering either the replacement or cash value of the property, or just the mortgage balance. A similar bill is proposed in the House of Representatives.

Meanwhile, the U.S. Senate is expected to vote in January on a bill (S. 1846) that would delay some of the rate hikes triggered by the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act by as much as 4 years. A similar bill (HR 3370) in the House of Representatives would only delay rate increases for 6 months.



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REIS AWARDS SCHOLARSHIPS

The Real Estate Investment Society (REIS) proudly announces the award of the annual Paul Sands Memorial – REIS Scholarships to Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU) students Karen Vilorio Muchnik and Pamela Perez. Each scholarship provides \$2,500 toward tuition and books. Karen Vilorio Muchnik is pursuing a bachelor's degree in Finance with a minor in Real Estate, with the ambition of following a career in real estate development. Pamela Perez is majoring in Business Management with a minor in Economics and looks forward to a career advising real estate investors and homeowners in Southwest Florida.



REIS 2013 Vice President Sean Ellis, Scholarship Chairs Matt Simmons and Lisa Sands, scholars Pamela Perez and Karen Vilorio Muchnik, and Professor Shelton Weeks of Florida Gulf Coast University.

REIS WELCOMES NEW MEMBERS

Please join in welcoming our new members:

- Bob Koenig, Chris-Tel Construction
- Claude Lyles, Reliance Bank
- Bridget Trombley, Cleveland Construction, Inc.
- Larry Settlemire, Fort Myers Realty & Property Management, LLC

Membership is strictly limited, but a few remain available. The membership application is on the [REIS website](#).

STAYING INFORMED & INVOLVED

Join the [REIS LinkedIn Group](#) for to participate in discussions, network with others in the local commercial real estate industry, and stay abreast of breaking news. The [calendar of events](#) on the REIS website is constantly updated with industry and government events.

Southwest Florida's
Commercial & Residential
Real Estate Team

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MARKET INTELLIGENCE

The new year starts with a variety of programs to analyze economic and real estate trends. Check the calendar on the [REIS website](#) for information and links to event sites.

The annual **CCIM Southwest Florida Real Estate Outlook Conference** is January 29 at Harborside Event Center in Fort Myers. Event features presentations and panel discussions on area economy and real estate market sectors, with expectations for the future. Details at [Southwest Florida CCIM Chapter website](#)

Horizon Council Annual Meeting features review of economic development achievements, initiatives, alliances, and outlook for 2014. Presented by Lee County Horizon Council at Broadway Palm Dinner Theater on January 31.

BIA Contractors Showcase, annual trade show and networking event will be Jan. 28 at Harborside Event Center. Details at [BIA website](#).

MarketWatch: Real Estate 2014 reviews and forecasts local trends, with former REIS President Stan Stouder, CCIM, REIS member Randy Thibaut, and Denny Grimes. At Harborside Event Center on Feb. 25.

REPEAL COMMERCIAL LEASE TAX

Bills have been filed in the Florida Senate (SB 176) and House of Representatives (HB 11) to repeal the sales tax on commercial space leases. The House bill would reduce the tax rate by 1% of gross rent each year, thereby eliminating the tax in 6 years.

FORECLOSED PROPERTY REGISTRY

As of January 1, Lee County requires lenders to register foreclosed vacant properties and pay a \$150 annual fee per property. Ordinance and procedures may be reviewed on [Dept. of Community Development website](#).

STREAMLINING PERMITTING

Lee County Dept. of Community Development continues to streamline its planning, zoning, development and permitting processes. A recent report and a powerpoint presentation on their progress and goals are now available at the Community Development Department's website: <http://www.leegov.com/dcd/ReportsStudies>

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