

**2018 OFFICERS:**

President Bev Larson, CCIM  
Vice President Alexis Crespo, AICP  
Treasurer Mary Gentile, CSM, CRX  
Secretary Bill Morris, P.E.

**2018 GOVERNORS:**

Jason Brewer  
David Fry  
Tim Hancock, AICP  
Travis Merrick  
Lori Moore  
Mark Morris  
Kent Poli  
Past President Karen Miller

## BOARDROOM REPORT

*News from recent REIS board meetings*

**Luncheon Programs:**

The February 13th luncheon will look at Lee County's goals and challenges with County Commission Chairman Cecil Pendergrass, sponsored by [Stokes Marine](#).

The resurgence of infrastructure and public-private projects in Cape Coral will be reviewed by Mayor Joe Coviello at the March 13th luncheon, sponsored by [Busey Bank](#).

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. Donations may be made on the [Scholarship web page](#).

**Membership:**

All REIS memberships expired December 31st and those memberships not renewed are now available to new members. Full information and application are on the [REIS website](#).

## REIS WELCOMES NEW MEMBERS

Please join in welcoming our new members:

**Jennifer Rogers** is an environmental engineer at GHD Services, with a background in utilities engineering.

**Christopher DePaola** is the chief operating officer with Tortuga Capital and a member of the Florida Bar.

**Karen Moore** is the owner and publisher of *Southwest Florida Business Today*.

## WATER RESOURCES CONFERENCE

"The Changing Climate of Regulation and Funding" for Florida's water resources is the theme of the annual Southwest Florida Water Resources Conference, a day-long event February 2nd at Pelican Preserve, co-sponsored by REIS. The conference brings together researchers, technical experts, managers, decision-makers, consultants, and other interested parties to discuss ongoing scientific research and innovative projects, share ideas, and increase awareness of water supply, water use efficiency, and watershed health. A panel of experts will discuss the effects of Hurricane Irma on our groundwater, stormwater, and natural systems. Registration is on the [American Water Resources Association website](#).

## DEVELOPMENT INCENTIVES PASSED

On January 16th, Lee County Commissioners approved a package of financial incentives to further encourage redevelopment in North Fort Myers. The program area includes the North Cleveland Avenue and North Tamiami Trail corridors and commercial nodes on Pondella Road, Hancock Bridge Parkway, and Pine Island Road. The financial incentives are in addition to the Mixed Use Overlay which allows increased height and density, reduced parking, setbacks and open space requirements, and streamlined approvals. Program details are on the [Lee Economic Development website](#). The economic stimulus effort in North Fort Myers is a pilot program that is expected to be extended to other areas targeted for economic recovery in Lehigh Acres and Dunbar.

## FLOOD INSURANCE EXTENDED

Congress approved another short term extension of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) to allow lawmakers time to negotiate a long term deal involving major reforms. The NFIP was originally set to expire September 30th but was extended to December 8th, then again to December 22nd and again to January 19th. The latest extension was part of a resolution to fund the government until February 8th.

**BEV LARSON, CCIM**

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## AIRPORTS DRIVING GROWTH

"Airports as Engines of Economic Development" will be presented January 31 by [ULI Southwest Florida](#). The program will focus on airport expansion plans and development on surrounding lands. Speakers include airport and county officials from Lee, Charlotte, Hendry and Collier Counties.

## REAL ESTATE MARKET WATCH

The annual overview and forecast for local market sectors will be presented on February 27th at Germain Arena in Estero. Former REIS president Stan Stouder, CCIM, will analyze commercial real estate, REIS member Randy Thibaut will discuss land sales and development, and Realtor Denny Grimes will review residential real estate trends. Details at [www.MarketWatch2018.com](http://www.MarketWatch2018.com)

## REIS 2018 BOARD ANNOUNCED

The REIS 2018 officers and board of governors are:



*Seated, from left:*

*President Bev Larson, CCIM, Lahaina Realty  
Vice President Alexis Crespo, AICP, Waldrop Engineering  
Treasurer Mary Gentile, CSM, CRX, LandQwest Property Management; and  
Secretary Bill Morris, P.E., Morris-Depew Associates.*

*Standing, from left: Governors Mark Morris of VIP - Commercial; Travis Merrick of GFA International; David Fry of The Place On First; Jason Brewer of BB&T; Lori Moore of Roetzel & Andress; Tim Hancock, AICP, of Stantec; and Kent Poli of Busey Bank. Immediate Past President Karen Miller of GHD Services remains on the board but is not pictured.*

## STATE LEGISLATION TO WATCH

Growth Management (SB 362, HB 207) would require local governments to include a property rights element in their comprehensive plans that protects private property rights and encourages economic development. The element must be adopted at the plan's next evaluation and appraisal or by July 2020, whichever comes first. If this bill passes, local governments would be required to consider the impact on private property rights of all proposed development orders, plan amendments, ordinances, and other government decisions.

Private Property Rights (SB 292) would exempt property owners who produce renewable energy on their property and distribute it to users on the property from being defined as a public utility. It would allow apartment complexes to produce and sell solar power to tenants.


Environmental Regulation (HB 1149, SB 1708) would provide examples of reclaimed water use that would create an impact offset when water management districts are evaluating consumptive use permits. It would also require The Water Resource Implementation Rule to include criteria by which an impact offset or substitution credit may be applied to the issuance, renewal, or extension of a consumptive use permit.

Impact Fees (CS/SB 324 and HB 697) initially would prohibit local governments from collecting fees prior to the issuance of an occupancy certificate but has been amended in the Senate to allow collection upon issuing a building permit. It also restricts the use of collected fees.

The Florida Legislature is also considering bills to fund Conservation Land Acquisition (SB 204); conduct Local Tax Referenda (CS/SB 317); manage Metropolitan Planning Organizations (HB 575), and to restrict the creation and operation of Community Redevelopment Agencies (CS/HB 17 and SB 432).

## REDUCED LEASE TAX IN EFFECT

Florida's Business Rent Tax on commercial property rents dropped from 6% to 5.8% on January 1st. The new rate also applies to commercial leases initiated prior to 2018. Florida is the only state to levy tax on business rents and real estate organizations continue to press for the Legislature to eliminate the tax entirely.



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