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BOARDROOM REPORT

News from recent REIS board meetings

Luncheon Programs:

News-Press Executive Editor Terry Eberle will be the guest speaker at the July 12th luncheon, sponsored by [Grandbridge Real Estate Capital](#).

The August 9th luncheon will feature a presentation by Sally Jackson of Lee Memorial Health System on its role in business and real estate.

Lee County Property Appraiser Ken Wilkinson will be the guest speaker at the September 13th luncheon.

REIS welcomes suggestions for programs from members. Please convey your ideas to [Kim Donnelly](#), (239) 768-4522. Sponsorships for future luncheons are available and [Jim Garinger](#) has all the details: (239) 418-0300.

Educational Workshop:

The September 22 half-day workshop will focus on strategies and solutions for challenging properties in today's market. Details in article at right.

Gala Social Event:

The REIS annual party will be at The Edison restaurant on November 17. To reserve prime sponsorship positions or contribute to the silent auction to benefit the REIS Scholarship Foundation, contact Event Chair Robin Mixon Contact [Robin](#) at (239) 334-6870 or 872-3273.

Scholarship Programs:

An exclusive shopping event at Chico's company store is planned, with Chico's contributing a portion of revenues to the REIS Scholarship Foundation. Details coming soon. The REIS endowed scholarship fund at FGCU will be renamed in memory of Paul Sands and will receive a portion of monies raised in the annual Paul Sands Invitational Slaw Dog Golf Tournament.

Horizon Council:

The Mid Year Investors Update was very pleased to report \$337,000 in contributions received this year from local businesses to support economic development efforts.

CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES FOR PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT TODAY

REIS will present a half-day strategy workshop September 22nd to address issues and solutions for commercial properties and residential projects in Southwest Florida. Topics include: How government agencies can assist with challenged properties; new considerations for due diligence studies; recognizing and avoiding legal land mines; development and marketing solutions; and ideas for re-positioning properties for current market conditions. Speaker presentations will be followed by a panel discussion and question and answer session.

The workshop is sponsored by Urban Land Institute (ULI) Southwest Florida; Henderson Franklin, Attorneys at Law; and HSA Engineers & Scientists.

The workshop begins at 8 am and concludes at 12:15 pm in the Magnolia Room at Pelican Preserve Country Club in Fort Myers. Admission is \$25 for REIS members, \$15 for active college students, and \$45 for all others. Details and registration at www.reis-swfl.org.

Anyone interested in sponsoring in the workshop should contact Education Chair [Amanda Brock](#), (239) 344-1269.

LEE COUNTY BUDGET / TAX HEARINGS

The Lee County Property Appraiser's office is scheduled to issue TRIM notices, stating property values and proposed tax assessments on August 2nd. Lee County Commissioners plan to begin public hearings to adopt the proposed county budget and property tax rate on September 7. Hearings will be in Commission Chambers in the Courthouse, in Fort Myers.

PUBLIC HEARING ON LDC AMENDMENTS

Lee County Commissioners will hold the final public hearing on proposed Amendments to the Land Development Code at 9:30 am, August 9, in Commission Chambers, 2120 Main St., Fort Myers. To review the proposed amendments, go to www.lee-county.com/dcd.



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LEE REDUCES ROAD IMPACT FEES

Lee County Commissioners have approved a 27% average reduction in road impact fees, effective as of June 15. Reductions in specific categories range from 14 percent for nursing homes to 46 percent for general warehouses. The fee for building a single-family residence drops 25 percent to \$6,701. The fee for building general office space is cut 27 percent to \$5,355 per 1,000 square feet. The complete schedule of fees may be reviewed at <http://www3.leegov.com/dcd>.

CHARLOTTE SUSPENDS IMPACT FEES

Charlotte County commissioners suspended impact fees on new residential and commercial construction for one year, in an effort to promote growth and stimulate construction. The suspended fees are used to pay for libraries, parks, law enforcement, fire department and public buildings. The impact fees used to pay for road construction and maintenance were not suspended. The Charlotte County Economic Development Office says the fee suspensions will cut taxes on construction by half.

AIRPORT LAND USE COMPATIBILITY

Florida Dept. of Transportation (FDOT) and Urban Land Institute (ULI) Southwest Florida will present a program regarding the new Airport Land Use Compatibility Guidebook on July 27 in Fort Myers. Details and registration will be posted at [ULI website](#).

FLORIDA REDISTRICTING MEETINGS

Florida's Legislature has begun the process to reapportion Florida's Senate, House and congressional districts. The purpose is to logically divide the state's 18.8 million residents into 120 House districts, 40 Senate districts and 27 congressional districts. Population growth has earned Florida two new congressional seats and one of those districts may be created in Southwest Florida. The deadline to draw the new maps is March 9, 2012. Public officials are holding regional town hall meetings to gather public input. In Southwest Florida there will be two meetings, both on August 31: 8 - 11 am in the Naples Daily News Community Room in Naples; and 6 - 9 pm in the Veterans Park Recreation Center in Lehigh Acres. More information at [Redistricting Florida](#) website.

CHANGING COUNTY GOVERNMENT

A new local Political Action Committee (PAC), *Families for Freedom & Fairness*, is focused on changing the Lee County Charter to decentralize the current power structure in Lee County government, thus providing better representation to local businesses and the constituency of Lee County, according to PAC organizers.

The PAC leadership asserts that "Lee County is currently structured in a way that the "executive branch" is headed by a County Manager who is appointed by the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC). As the Board retains the authority to hire and fire the Manager, they retain "de facto" executive authority over County affairs. Since the appointed Manager is only accountable to the current Board, taxpayers' concerns tend to become secondary in consideration. The proposed changes would elect the County Manager making him/her accountable to the voters -- NOT the Board."

Furthermore, the PAC would like additional changes, i. e.: "Currently, the BOCC is made up of five Commissioners elected at-large. They are elected to four year terms and are unlimited in the number of consecutive terms allowed. This current structure breeds a culture of incumbency protection making it difficult to bring new blood into the Commission as well as failing to provide proper representation to the constituency. The proposed changes include a transition to a hybrid district model with seven total members, of which there are five single member districts while an additional two members will continue to be elected at-large and will serve as Chair and Vice Chair of the Commission. Additionally, Commissioners will face term limits providing for a total of twelve (12) years of service."

The PAC believes the changes: "Create a climate for lower taxes and regulation through better representation; Provides a more responsive government for local communities through a decentralized power structure; Allows for additional oversight and scrutiny of official actions through the inherent conflict of separated powers; and Provides opportunities for fresh representation in the County Commission." PAC leaders intend to begin a petition drive for signatures on this issue to place proposed changes on the 2012 ballot.

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Contact Bill Burdette for details:
(239) 936-1404
bill@burdetteinc.com

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