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BOARDROOM REPORT

News from recent REIS board meetings

Luncheon Programs:

Lee County School District Superintendent Dr. Nancy Graham will discuss development of the Five Year Strategic Plan at the July 10th luncheon, sponsored by [Achieva Credit Union](#).

Teen Challenge will sponsor the August 12th luncheon.

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. See [Randy Krise](#), 239.690.4100, for sponsorship opportunities.

Scholarship Programs:

Scholarship Chairman Mark Morris is requesting contributions to fund scholarships for the fall term and reminds that contributions may be made with credit cards on the [REIS website](#).

Education Workshop:

Real estate development symposium planned for Sept. 12 will feature insights and strategies by speakers and panelists from government and the private sector. Contact Education Committee Chairs [Alexis Crespo](#) and [Nikole Wesley](#) about sponsorship opportunities.

Membership:

A limited number of memberships are now available for new members, who may apply on the [REIS website](#).

Annual Social Event:

Bev Larson is planning an encore of last years' festive party, happening in November at Bratta's Piano Bar & Ristorante. Contact [Bev](#), (239) 281-1290 to reserve a sponsorship position.

Reception for Lee Commissioners:

The popular bi-annual reception for the Lee County Board of Commissioners will take place in early December, hosted by Edison National Bank and Henderson Franklin Starnes & Holt, P.A.

WATER PROJECTS ADVANCING

The Water Resources Reform and Development Act (WRRDA) is now law, authorizing the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to construct the Caloosahatchee (C-43) West Basin Reservoir in Hendry County. Florida's new budget includes \$18 million for the joint federal-state project, enabling work to begin as early as October.

The Caloosahatchee River Watershed Protection Plan, developed by South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD), includes several projects designed to reduce nutrients and manage flows in the river basin. The C-43 Water Treatment and Lake Hicpochee Shallow Storage projects are both in design stage. Closer to the coast, hydrological restoration at Six Mile Cypress Slough North Preserve is underway and expected to filter stormwater and alleviate local flooding. The Charlotte Harbor Flatwoods Initiative is studying restoration of natural flows in Lee and Charlotte Counties toward Charlotte Harbor.

ESTERO MARKET ACTIVE

Lee County Commissioners agreed to transmit the [Estero Community Plan Update](#) to the State for review. Estero leaders expect the Plan to be the basis for the Village of Estero municipality, should it be approved by voters in November. The incorporation issue will be explained by Estero community leaders Nick Batos and Don Eslick at the July 16 [Tiger Bay Club](#) meeting.

Commissioners also approved:

- rezoning 36 acres at Three Oaks Pkwy. and Koreshan Blvd. from Commercial Planned Development to Mixed-Use Planned Development for 280 mf units and 130,000 sf of retail and office space.
- rezoning 39 acres on Plantation Rd. from Commercial District to Residential Planned Development to allow 130 dwelling units.
- redistributing commercial development planned on 1,800 acres along Ben Hill Griffin Pkwy to accommodate plans for University Village mixed-use development on south side of Florida Gulf Coast University.



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COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE UPDATE

The Mid-Year Market Update will be July 16 in Sarasota, presented by CCIM Southwest Florida and West Coast Florida districts. Keynote Speaker is Danielle M. Squires of Wells Fargo Bank, N.A. Market Reports include:

- Collier County: Fred Kermani, CCIM
- Lee County: Adam Palmer, CCIM
- Charlotte & Sarasota Counties: Ron Struthers, CCIM
- Tampa Bay Area: Ron Weaver, CCIM
- SW & West Florida Land: Bill Eshenbaugh, CCIM, ALC

The program will be preceded by an Excel Calculator Workshop. Details and registration on both programs are on the [CCIM website](#).

COMMERCIAL LEASE TAX

State Senator Lizbeth Benacquisto addressed the REIS June luncheon and offered assurance that the bill to repeal sales tax on leased commercial property would be submitted again in the 2015 Legislative Session. The bill (SB 176 / HB 11) failed to pass this year. It would have reduced the tax rate by 1% of gross rent each year, eliminating the tax in 6 years.

REIS PLAYS WELL WITH OTHERS

A large turnout of members of the Real Estate Investment Society (REIS) gathered with members of Lee Building Industry Association (BIA), Cape Coral Construction Industry Association (CCCIA), Urban Land Institute Southwest Florida (ULI), CSI - Construction Specification Institute, U.S. Green Building Council, and the Promised Lands Chapter of American Planning Association Florida (APA) for the annual Joint Mixer on June 24.

REIS WELCOMES NEW MEMBERS

Please join in welcoming our new members:

Jason White, Exceptional Engineering, Inc.
Bj Brundage, DeAngelis Diamond Construction
Noel Davies, Roetzel & Andress, LPA
John Hill, Forbes Realty, Inc.
Michael Babair, IBERIABANK
Josh Ware, IBERIABANK
Debra Newell, IBERIABANK

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

DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP

REIS and the Lutgert College of Business at Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU) are developing a half-day workshop on SW Florida market trends, development strategies, government incentives and the changing regulatory environment. The workshop will be Sept. 12 at FGCU. Details will be posted soon on the REIS website. Contact Education Committee Chairs [Alexis Crespo](#) and [Nikole Wesley](#) to reserve prime sponsorships.

NEW, IMPROVED REIS WEBSITE

The [REIS website](#) is undergoing a major redesign to improve function and appearance. The launch of the website will be announced by email in early July. The site will offer expanded resources, direct links to elected officials, government agencies, related professional organizations, and Southwest Florida market data. There are also new advertising opportunities!

SUSTAINABILITY GROUP ON HOLD

Lee County's Community Sustainability Advisory Committee has suspended meetings, pending direction from the Board of County Commissioners on the role of the committee. The Board earlier requested supporting information from County staff in order to consider adoption of the proposed Sustainability Plan.

LEE PUBLIC VOICE - SPEAKS OUT

"Lee Public Voice," a network of civic and environmental activists led by Don Eslick, has submitted a letter to Lee County Commissioners demanding that they adopt the proposed Sustainability Plan. In recent months the group has pleaded for reinstatement of full impact fees, protection of the 2020 conservation tax revenues, and more opportunity for public comment. They charge that Lee County government is beholden to developers and special interests at the expense of the community.

DEVELOPMENT CODE CHANGES

Lee County has amended the Land Development Code regarding the Lehigh Acres Homestead Road Compact Community Activity Center, the Upper Captiva Community Plan, and condensing zoning districts for recreational vehicles and community facilities like parks and libraries.

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