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BOARDROOM REPORT

News from recent REIS board meetings

Luncheon Programs:

Matt Walsh, editor of the *Business Observer*, will comment on the effects of government regulation of business at the March 12th luncheon, sponsored by [Owen-Ames-Kimball Co.](#)

REIS welcomes your suggestions on programs and speakers you would like to see at the luncheons. Please share your ideas with [Sean Ellis](#), 239.337.3850.

Sponsorships for future luncheons, workshops and social events are available. Contact [Jean Gruss](#), 239.275.2230, for details.

Scholarship Programs:

Students pursuing business or real estate degrees at Southwest Florida colleges and universities are urged to apply for scholarships to be awarded in the fall. Awards are typically for \$1,000. Scholarship criteria and contact information for the participating schools are provided on the [REIS website](#).

Membership:

A limited number of memberships are now available to new members. The [membership application](#) is on the REIS website.

Horizon Council:

The [Quarterly Business Climate Report](#), prepared by the Bureau of Economic and Business Research at Florida Gulf Coast University, has been issued for the first quarter of 2013. The report analyzes the local business community's assessment and outlook on the economy, offering interesting guidance on hiring and business expansion.

Marketing Opportunity:

Two banner ads are available on the REIS website and one ad is available on the REIS REPORT, offering an economical way to maintain a presence at the forefront of an important audience. Contact [Bill Burdette](#),

IMPACT FEE HEARING MARCH 12

Lee County commissioners will consider suspending or reducing impact fees at a public hearing on February 12. Lee County's current impact fees are among the highest in the state. The meeting begins at 9:30 in Commission Chambers in the County Courthouse in Fort Myers.

On March 4, county staff presented a variety of options, including a 2-year suspension, overall reduction, reductions in certain geographic areas, and fee payment assistance. Staff has now prepared a draft ordinance to reduce Road, Park and School fees for 2-years, with no change to fees for Emergency Services. The Horizon Council, Building Industry Association, Realtors Association, and Chambers of Commerce have supported a 2-year suspension on fees.

SPECIAL REIS GUEST INVITATION

Now is the perfect time to treat a colleague, customer, or perhaps a student to a great lunch, an interesting program, and the camaraderie of fellow professionals. REIS members are encouraged to bring guests to the March luncheon and any guest registered by a member may attend at the member rate of \$25. Just select the "guest of member" ticket when registering your guests on the REIS website.

YOUR GO-TO CALENDAR OF EVENTS

The [calendar of events](#) on the Real Estate Investment Society (REIS) website is being constantly expanded to include meetings and programs for all organizations serving the real estate and development professions. It also includes the latest information on government regulatory meetings and hearings on issues that pertain to the business and real estate community. You can access the full schedule by clicking the EVENTS link at the top of the page - or by clicking dates in the calendar on the left side of the page.

You may submit event information for consideration via email to [Bill Burdette](#), REIS Executive Director.



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LEGISLATURE ISSUES TO WATCH

Fast-track Foreclosures

Rep. Passidomo of Naples has filed HB 87 that would require banks to file a deficiency judgement within one year, rather than 5 years. Condo associations would have the ability to speed up foreclosures if the lender is not moving quickly. It would expedite getting properties into the hands of those with the means to manage them properly and is supported by the Florida Bankers Assn.

Commercial Lease Tax

Legislation (SB656/HB 629) has been filed to phase out the sales tax on commercial rental property. The bills would provide for incremental reduction and eventual repeal of the tax.

Florida Forever - conservation land budget

The Florida Forever Coalition is seeking \$100 million to be budgeted for buying conservation land, up from \$8.4 million last year. Governor Scott has requested \$75 million for the program. Some money may come from the sale of surplus state lands.

Conservation Land Amendment

A coalition of environmental groups is pushing for an amendment to the state constitution to be on the 2014 ballot. The amendment would dedicate 33% of net revenue from the excise tax on documents for 20 years to be allocated for the acquisition, restoration, and management of conservation lands.

Affordable Housing

Sadowski Housing Coalition has asked legislators to use dedicated state and local trust funds to support housing programs and not divert the money for other purposes.

Property Insurance Reform

Major changes to state-run Citizens Property Insurance are being considered by the Governor, legislators, and insurance regulators with the goal of reducing Citizens' portfolio and getting more policies covered by private market insurers.

Infrastructure Funding

Funding for investments in infrastructure in Florida ports, including development of an inland port or distribution center is being supported by The Florida Chamber.

COUNTY FORECLOSURE REGISTRY

While foreclosures rapidly diminish in Lee County, an ordinance is being proposed that would require all private and institutional lenders to register properties that are vacant and in process of foreclosure or foreclosed. Lenders would be required to pay a registration fee, inspect and maintain the subject properties. The ordinance is being prepared by the Lee County Attorneys office, to be considered by County Commissioners at a public hearing in the next few months.

Realtor® and banking associations have expressed concern that additional regulations create an unnecessary burden and impede economic recovery, while also raising issues about property rights and liability of the property's representatives. Observers have noted that a registry of properties being foreclosed may be a valuable resource for real estate investors if it is accessible to the public.

DEVELOPMENT REGULATION

Streamlining development regulation in Bonita Springs, Cape Coral, and Fort Myers is the focus of a panel discussion taking place March 15 in Fort Myers City Council Chambers. Officials from the cities will participate in the program presented by Urban Land Institute (ULI) SW Florida. Register at [ULI website](#).

FLOOD INSURANCE DISCOUNT

The Lee County Dept. of Community Development (DCD) is updating its mailing list of engineers, surveyors, real estate agents, insurance agents, and mortgage providers in order to participate in the National Flood Insurance Program's Community Rating System. Participation enables policy holders in unincorporated Lee County to receive a 25% discount on flood insurance policies. Contact DCD Communications Manager [Joan LaGuardia](#), CFM, to provide your mailing address.

REALTORS COMMERCIAL RESOURCE

A free workshop will explain the features of Realtors® Property Resource (RPR) - Commercial, an application produced by National Association of Realtors® (NAR) to analyze commercial properties and markets. Presented by NABOR Commercial Committee on March 21. Register on [www.nabor.com](#).

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Contact Bill Burdette for details:
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