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BOARDROOM REPORT

News from recent REIS board meetings

Monthly Programs:

Lee County's goals and challenges will be discussed by Kevin Ruane, chair of the Lee County Board of County Commissioners, at the **March 9th luncheon**, sponsored by [Stantec](#). Registration for this luncheon is now closed.

Emerging trends in residential development will be explained by Kristine Smale, of Zonda Advisory, at the **April 13th luncheon**, sponsored by [LSI Companies](#).

The annual legislative review will be presented by State Representative Jenna Persons-Mulicka at the **May 11th luncheon**, sponsored by [Sallee Promotions](#).

We welcome your ideas for programs and speakers, which may be submitted to [Kent Poli](#), 239.337.3993. If you would like to lead the pledge of allegiance and prayer at a luncheon, please contact [Don Miller](#), 239.571.4968.

Sponsorships:

Contact [Molly Scott](#), 239.226.0500, for information and availability of opportunities to sponsor REIS events.

Marketing Opportunity:

The rare opportunity to promote your business on the REIS website home page is now available. Contact [Bill Burdette](#), 239.936.1404 for details.

Scholarship Program:

Donations are needed for scholarships to be awarded in 2021. REIS Scholarship Foundation is a 501(c)3 corporation and donations may be tax deductible. The Real Estate Investment Society manages the Foundation, allowing 100% of donations to be used for scholarships in real estate related programs at Florida Gulf Coast University. Information and an online donation form are on the [REIS webpage](#) or contact [Bev Larson](#) for details.

Membership:

All REIS memberships expired December 31st and any memberships not renewed are now available to new members. Information is on the [REIS website](#).

Website:

Check the [REIS website](#) regularly for the latest details on meetings and events for REIS and other organizations in Southwest Florida's real estate community.

MARKET TRENDS 2021

Local real estate experts analyze market trends, present research, and provide insights and predictions in a free virtual event on March 9th. Development and new home sales will be addressed by Randy Thibaut, residential real estate will be discussed by Denny Grimes, and commercial real estate will be presented by former REIS president Stan Stouder, CCIM. Details and registration are on the [Market Trends website](#).

ALL ELECTRONIC PERMITTING

The Lee County Department of Community Development (DCD) is transitioning to a fully electronic submittal process for building permit, zoning, planning and development review applications. The new system begins April 19th. Contractors, design professionals and agents will be required to submit applications and supporting documents through the DCD Public Portal, which is called eConnect. Any paper submittals received before April 19th will remain a paper process through issuance or approval. DCD will offer free training on the new system and will post the schedule on the [E-Permitting Webpage](#). Further information is available on the [DCD website](#).

REIS PRESENTS SCHOLARSHIP

Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU) student Justin Fiorello was introduced at the REIS February luncheon as one of three outstanding students to receive a \$2,500 scholarship from the Paul Sands Memorial - REIS Scholarship program. Justin also becomes an honorary member of REIS for the year. "We welcome outstanding scholars to join us, to learn about the area's commercial real estate industry, and develop relationships with members of the business community," explained REIS President Bill Morris. Scholarships have also been awarded to FGCU scholars Tania Vega-Arreola and Cydnee Sims.



REIS President Bill Morris and Scholarship Chair Bev Larson present FGCU scholar Justin Fiorello with his scholarship and honorary membership in REIS at the REIS February luncheon.

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LEGISLATIVE ISSUES TO WATCH

The 2021 Florida Legislature is now in session and is scheduled to continue through April 30th.

Affordable Housing HB 0013 and SB 510 would protect the State Housing Trust Fund and Local Government Housing Trust Fund from transfers to cover other expenses. SB 510 has passed 2 committees. HB 563 and SB 674 authorize counties & municipalities to adopt ordinances to grant ad valorem tax exemptions to property owners whose properties are used for affordable housing.

Tourism SB 778 would make "Visit Florida" permanent. The state's tourism marketing organization is currently scheduled to be repealed in October, 2023.

Business Liability HB 7 and SB 72 would provide protections from civil liability claims relating to damages from COVID-19. Both bills are advancing quickly.

Building Design HB 55 provides that regulations relating to building design elements may not be applied to certain structures. Advancing through committees.

Growth Management HB 59 and SB 496 require property rights element in comprehensive plans; provides that certain property owners are not required to consent to development agreement changes; prohibits municipal annexation of specified areas; authorizes developments of regional impact agreements to be amended. Both bills are proceeding.

Regional Planning Councils SB 62 would revise a requirement for the Governor to consider reports and analyses relating to revision of the state comprehensive plan and eliminate advisory role of councils in state comprehensive plans. Now in Judiciary Committee.

Taxes HB 129 and SB 1222 would raise the corporate income tax rate from 5.5% to 6.5%. SB 652 would create a severance tax of 12.5 cents per gallon of water extracted from state waters, while SB 1776 would create a fee of 5 cents per gallon.

MCORES PROJECT AT RISK

A bill (SB 100) to repeal the legislation that created MCORES, Multi-use Corridors Of Regional Economic Significance, is moving swiftly through the Florida Senate. The major public works project would include a toll road from Collier County to Pasco County, where it would connect with other freeways. The Governor's proposed budget includes \$700 million for MCORES.

FLOODING AND SEA LEVEL RISE

Proposals in the Florida House of Representatives would require the Department of Environmental Protection to conduct a statewide assessment of flood risks, encourage local governments to set up regional coalitions on resilience issues and establish the Florida Flood Hub for Applied Research and Innovation to address flooding and sea-level rise issues. \$100 million would be available to help local governments address sea level rise. A tax break for elevating homes is also proposed.

Governor DeSantis has proposed a \$1 billion investment over four years to allow local governments to build new infrastructure to address the impacts of sea level rise and intensifying storms. The program, "Resilient Florida," would use revenues from state documentary stamp taxes to pay for the debt service on \$1 billion in bonds for projects.

SCHOLARSHIP FUND SUPPORTED

The REIS Scholarship Foundation received over \$10,500 from the Paul Sands Memorial Slaw Dog Invitational golf tournament. Generous donations have also been received from the Rockstar Harley-Davidson family and former REIS President Bev Larson. The Foundation funds the Paul Sands Memorial - REIS Scholarship program at Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU).



REIS President Bill Morris, Slaw Dog Tournament Director Lisa Sands, Ron Hamel of FGCU, and REIS Scholarship Chair Bev Larson display the donations at the REIS February luncheon.

REIS WELCOMES NEW MEMBERS

Please join in welcoming our newest members:

Lauri Albion is vice president of finance with Cushman & Wakefield | Commercial Property Southwest Florida and oversees the finance and marketing department.

Jeanette Richards, owner of Better Buildings, is a State Certified General Contractor and licensed real estate broker.

Membership information is on the [REIS website](#)

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