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Sean Ellis, Esq., LEED AP
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Janie Hooker
Steve Hurley

Vikki Luft
Matt Rocco
Shelton Weeks, PhD
Steven C. Hartsell, Esq.

BOARDROOM REPORT

News from recent REIS board meetings

Luncheon Programs:

At the May luncheon meeting, State Representative Gary Aubuchon will review the 2009 Legislative Session. Meeting will be sponsored by MK Construction.

Land use authority Ron Weaver will be the featured speaker at the June luncheon meeting and will discuss the politics of concurrency. Meeting is sponsored by Tom James of Southwest Florida.

The current month's sponsor will also be recognized in a complimentary ad in the *REIS REPORT*. Sponsorship of future meetings is available. Contact [Steve Hurley](#), 337-3330, for details.

Meeting Registration Policy:

All luncheon meeting registrations must be made on the web site, even if paying by check. If checks are not received within 2 weeks following the event, a \$10 surcharge will be assessed. Registrations must be received by the Wednesday prior to the luncheon.

Education Workshops:

The annual Real Estate Workshop will take place in the fall this year. Chairman Matt Rocco is planning a program that will focus on capital sources, valuation methods, legal issues, and financing techniques suited for current market conditions. The Land Development Workshop will be rescheduled for next year.

Horizon Council:

REIS will continue to support the Horizon Foundation's annual Industry Appreciation Event with a \$500 contribution. The event takes place in September.

Annual Social Event:

The REIS annual social event will return to The Edison, at Fort Myers Country Club, in November. Chairpersons Janie Hooker and Vikki Luft are working on new themes, menus, and entertainment options.

LET'S MIX IT UP!

Members of REIS will gather with members of other real estate, land use, and design organizations for a social mixer at BICE Grand Café on Thursday, May 21. The mixer features complimentary appetizers and a cash bar from 5:30 to 7:30 at Coconut Point Mall in Estero. No admission and no reservations required. REIS will be joined by NAIOP Southwest Florida Chapter, ULI Southwest Florida, and AIA Florida Southwest.

Scholarship Programs:

Two outstanding FGCU scholars have been approved for scholarships to be awarded in the fall, if adequate funds are available in the REIS Scholarship Foundation. 100% of contributions to the Foundation are awarded as scholarships. Details at www.reis-swfl.org or from [Shelton Weeks](#), 590-7373.

Legislative / Regulatory Action:

South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) is considering substantial increases in application fees.

Municipalities have submitted their annexation plans and issues to Lee County, but no action is expected soon.

Lee County is increasing building permit fees - some are doubling. New fees effective June 1.

Lee County has selected a preferred site, on Daniels Parkway east of I-75, for Red Sox stadium. Also agreed to provide financial support for development of a plant to produce biodiesel fuel.

The Hometown Democracy movement continues efforts to have a voter referendum on an amendment to require voter approval for changes to land use plans.

REIS Web Site:

One banner advertisement remains available on the home page of the REIS web site, which is generating outstanding traffic. Contact [Bill Burdette](#), 936-1404, for details.



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KEY FLORIDA LEGISLATIVE ISSUES:

Permit and Development Order Extensions:

Senate has not voted on Bill 2026, which would extend and renew any approved construction or operating permit, development order, or other land use application for two years following its expiration, if the expiration date is between October 1, 2008 and October 1, 2010. It would also extend the period for completing required mitigation associated with such permits or orders.

Expedited Permitting:

Legislation (HB 073) was approved to require expedited permitting for economic development projects and provide time limits for permit approval or denial.

Impact Fee Reform:

House Bill 0227, sponsored by Rep. Gary Aubuchon, and companion Senate Bill 0580 were adopted. The bill would place a 2-year freeze on impact fee increases and hold local governments responsible for defending fees.

Property Tax Rate Cap:

Legislature approved placement of a constitutional amendment on the 2010 ballot which would limit the annual increase in ad valorem taxes on commercial and non-homestead properties to 5%.

Property Tax Challenges:

The Legislature passed property tax reform legislation that lowers the burden of proof required by owners to overcome a property appraiser's valuation.

Workers' Compensation Reform:

The House and Senate have passed bills (HB 1489, SB 903) to limit attorney fees to a percentage of the actual claim awarded to an injured worker. The legislation is expected to lower worker's compensation insurance cost.

Growth Management Reform:

The Legislature passed Senate Bill 360, which would expedite comp plan review, extend permits 2 years, and remove the current transportation concurrency requirements and encourage development in urban areas. It would also eliminate the current system of funding transportation impacts, and exempt the DRI review process for large projects in specific urban areas.

LEE INCENTIVE PROGRAM WORKS

Lee County and the State have approved financial incentives for Gartner, Inc. to expand in Fort Myers. The support will help the firm retain 346 jobs and build a new \$13.5 million, 70,000 sf Class A office building to accommodate 200 additional jobs over the next 5 years. Gartner will receive an \$800,000 Qualified Tax Incentive, with \$640,000 of it coming from the State. It will also receive \$1,050,00 in closing funds, with \$700,000 of it coming from the State. The balance is from Lee County's new \$25 million incentive fund.

INTERACTIVE COUNTY PLAN

An interactive draft of Charlotte County's Growth Plan is online and allows one the ability to review and comment, at www.SmartCharlotte2050.com.

The user-friendly plan, known as Smart Charlotte 2050, is believed to be the first of its kind in Florida. It allows you to review every component and provide immediate comments and recommendations electronically, which will be routed directly to county staff. The website also allows you to read the comments of others, bookmark pages and sign up to receive notices when changes are made to specified sections.

After this stage of public review and revision, the plan will be presented to the Board of County Commissioners for adoption. All public comment received prior to June 1 will be available for the County Commission to consider at their public hearings.

NEW COLLIER ZONING DEPT. HOURS

Collier County's Planning and Zoning Dept. front desk is now open 9 am to 1 pm, Monday through Friday, except on Monday when the desk opens at 9:15.

SUSTAINABILITY SURVEY DUE 5/15

Urban Land Institute (ULI) Southwest Florida Council is conducting an online survey of opinions on sustainable development issues. The survey will be used to develop a fall program. The brief survey is at <http://swflorida.uli.org/> and is due by May 15. Five survey takers will be selected at random to receive free admission to the fall program.

The REIS May Luncheon is sponsored by



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CONTACT BILL BURDETTE, (239) 936-1404,
or by [email](mailto:bill@reis.com)