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BOARDROOM REPORT

News from recent REIS board meetings

Luncheon Programs:

The Legislative Report will highlight the May 14 luncheon, delivered by Representative Heather Fitzenhagen. Sponsored by [HSA Engineers & Scientists](#).

Cecil Pendergrass, Chairman of Lee County Board of Commissioners, will be our speaker at the June luncheon, sponsored by BB&T Oswald Trippe & Co. The July luncheon will feature Lee County Clerk of Courts Linda Doggett, sponsored by [GATES](#).

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.

Education Workshop:

Scheduled for September 13 at Florida Gulf Coast University, the workshop will offer practical ideas for capitalizing on the Real Estate Market Revival, including Site Selection, Project Resurrection, and Innovative Financing. Prime sponsorship opportunities are available. Contact Education Committee Chairs [Steven Kushner](#) and [Karen Miller](#) for details.

Scholarship Programs:

Contributions are needed to fund scholarships to be awarded for the fall term. Details are available on the website or from Chairs [Matt Simmons](#) or [Lisa Sands](#).

Horizon Council:

Funds are still available to provide cash incentives for businesses relocating or expanding in Lee County and the Economic Development Office welcomes leads.

Annual Social Event:

[Chair Bev Larson](#) is planning a gala event for November. Prime sponsor positions are available.

Membership:

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

PUBLIC HEARINGS ON LEE LDC

Proposed amendments to Lee County's Land Development Code (LDC) are scheduled for public hearings before County Commissioners on May 14 and 28. Hearings begin at 9:30 am in Commission Chambers. The amended codes involve development order review, sign regulations, open space and surface water standards, planned developments, zoning maps, and related procedures. [Draft changes](#) are available online.

DEVELOPMENT REGS FOR AG LAND

Proposed amendments to Chapter 6 of Lee County Land Development Code (LDC) include an ordinance to regulate and require permits for man-made improvements or building on agricultural lands in flood plain areas. The regulations would also apply to other structures exempt from the Florida Building Code, such as temporary sales offices or construction offices and sheds.

BONITA SPRINGS PROPOSES CRA

Lee County commissioners will schedule a public hearing to consider a request from the City of Bonita Springs to form a Community Redevelopment Area (CRA) along old US 41. The City proposes to encourage development in the area by building a centralized drainage system, street parking, medians, sidewalks, and green space, thereby allowing property owners greater use of their land for building. The CRA would be funded by the increase in ad valorem taxes in the designated area. The projects are estimated to cost \$15.6 million.

AIRPORT PROJECTS UNDERWAY

Projects now underway at Southwest Florida International Airport include: a \$40 million expansion of apron and taxiways; \$432 million parallel runway and air traffic control tower; \$4 to remediate hazardous wildlife; \$5.8 million design of Skyplex Boulevard between Daniels Parkway and Chamberlain Parkway; and construction of a roadway system providing direct access between I-75 and the airport.



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LEGISLATIVE REVIEW

Fast-track Foreclosures - PASSED

HB 87 requires banks to file a deficiency judgement within one year rather than 5 years. Condo associations have the ability to speed up foreclosures if the lender is not moving quickly. Expedites getting properties into the hands of those with the means to manage them properly, reduces backlog and burden on court system.

Commercial Lease Tax - FAILED

Legislation (SB656/HB 629) to phase out the sales tax on commercial rental property died in the Senate Commerce and Tourism Committee and the House Finance & Tax Subcommittee.

Environmental Regulation

HB 999 was passed and will streamline environmental permitting, although language restricting fertilizer and wetlands regulations was stripped. HB 33 and SB 584, to limit conservation land acquisitions, both died.

Conservation Land Amendment

A proposed amendment to the state constitution has gone to the state Supreme Court for review. The amendment would dedicate 33% of net revenue from the existing excise tax on documents for 20 years to be allocated for the acquisition, restoration, and management of conservation lands.

Affordable Housing - PASSED

Legislators approved SB 1852, allocating monies received in the settlement with national lenders to a variety of affordable housing programs and assistance for those harmed in the foreclosure crisis.

Transportation Concurrence

SB 1716/HB 321 died in committees in both houses. Was intended to prohibit local government from applying transportation concurrence or requiring a proportionate-share contribution or construction for new business.

Transportation Development - PASSED

HB 319 was approved, revising provisions for implementing transportation concurrence and providing requirements for alternatives.

LEGISLATIVE WRAP-UP

REIS joins the Urban Land Institute (ULI) to present a panel discussion to assess what happened in the 2013 Legislative Session and how it affects our industry. The panel includes state legislators and experts in development planning and legal issues and takes place 8:30 -10:30 May 22 at The Club at Grandezza in Estero. Details and registration at [ULI website](#).

FORECLOSED PROPERTY UPDATE

Refinancing and sales of existing homes are rising while foreclosure filings are dropping, reducing the number of foreclosed properties in Southwest Florida. April foreclosures in Lee County dropped 34.86% and 51.05% in Collier County, compared to 2012. Meanwhile, Lee County commissioners are considering a proposed ordinance 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 an annual registration fee, inspect and maintain the subject properties. The registry would assist code enforcement and generate revenue for the County. Realtor® and banking associations and the Horizon Council are concerned about adverse effects on business resulting from the additional regulations. Comments on the [draft ordinance](#) may be submitted to [Dawn Lehnert](#) at the County Attorneys Office.

SCHOLARSHIP FUND GROWS

The Paul Sands Memorial Slaw Dog Invitational has contributed \$5,000 to the Paul Sands Memorial - REIS Scholarship program. The program and the REIS Scholarship Foundation have also received donations from Mark Morris, Jim Garinger, Lisa Sands, Randy Krise, Bev Larson, and David Douglas Associates.

KRISE NAMED TO LDC BOARD

Randy Krise has been appointed to the Land Development Code Advisory Board, which advises Lee County commissioners and staff on land development code issues. Krise also serves as a governor of the Real Estate Investment Society (REIS).

STAYING INFORMED & INVOLVED

The [calendar of events](#) on the REIS website is constantly updated with industry and government events.



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