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BOARDROOM REPORT

News from recent REIS board meetings

Luncheon Programs:

Dr. David Jones will explain the effects of national policy changes on the economy at the March 14th luncheon, sponsored by [State Insurance Agency](#). Professor Jones is an author and national commentator on the economy.

Fort Myers Police Chief Derrick Diggs is the guest speaker for the April 11th luncheon, sponsored by [Henderson Franklin, Attorneys at Law](#).

The May 9th luncheon will be sponsored by [ADG Architecture, LLC](#).

REIS welcomes your suggestions for programs. Please share your ideas with [Bev Larson](#), 239.281.1290.

Sponsorships:

Contact [Chris Pacitto](#), 239.689.1474, for information and availability of opportunities to sponsor REIS events.

Membership:

A limited number of memberships are available for new members. Application is on the [REIS website](#).

REIS WELCOMES NEW MEMBERS

Please join in welcoming our new members:

Marie Hamling, CPM, Owner and President of Paradigm Real Estate Corp., is a real estate broker, community association manager, and mortgage loan originator.

Jessica Russo, of ITEC, LLC, is a development consultant and real estate agent.

Renee Stoll, ITEC, LLC, is a real estate agent and marketing specialist.

SW FLORIDA DAYS IN TALLAHASSEE

The Chamber of Southwest Florida will lead a contingent of area businesspeople to the state capitol to discuss local issues directly with state legislators April 11-13. Excursion includes transportation, lodging and scheduled meetings. Register via the [Chamber website](#).

LEGISLATIVE ISSUES TO WATCH

Commercial Lease Tax (HB 223 S 838)

Bills filed in both houses to reduce Florida's 6% sales tax on commercial leases 10% each year until eliminated.

Property Tax Cap (SJR 76)

The current 10% cap on annual property tax increases for non-homestead properties will be automatically repealed in January 2019 unless renewed by a majority vote of electors in the 2018 general election. The proposed bill would place an amendment on the 2018 ballot to remove the appeal and make the cap permanent.

Economic Development (CS/HB 7005)

Bills originally proposed to transfer all programs of Enterprise Florida and the Florida Tourism Industry Marketing Corp. (VISIT Florida) to the Dept. of Economic Opportunity. Amended to retain VISIT Florida and passed by the Appropriations Committee on February 21st.

Local Business Regulation (CS/HB 17)

Bill would prohibit local governments from adopting or imposing a new regulation on a business, profession or occupation after January 1, 2017 unless expressly authorized by general law. Regulations adopted prior to this date would expire on January 1, 2020.

Water Quality

A \$2.4 billion plan is proposed to acquire farmland south of Lake Okeechobee for use in storing and treating water. **SB 10 / HB 761** would facilitate the plan by designating funding and initiating land acquisition efforts.

Funding Local Projects:

Senator Passidomo, a member of the Appropriations Committee on Transportation, Tourism, and Economic Development, has requested funding for local projects:

- \$3.25 million to build a food and beverage processing plant in conjunction with IFAS in Immokalee.
- \$2.5 million to expand Naples Accelerator to create space for 40 additional medical and technology firms.
- \$5.25 million for Bonita Beach Road / US 41 Congestion Reduction Project.
- \$1 million for rehabilitation of Fort Denaud Bridge



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REVISING THE STATE CONSTITUTION

Sarasota developer Carlos Beruff has been appointed chairman of Florida's Constitutional Revision Commission. The Commission will examine the Constitution, conduct public hearings throughout the state, and propose changes that will be on the ballot in November 2018. Visit the [Commission website](#) for updates and public hearings.

LIKE-KIND EXCHANGE COALITION

A powerful coalition of real estate, building, and business associations continues to closely watch tax reform efforts in Congress and encourage lawmakers to maintain the Section 1031 exchange provision in the IRS Code.

FOOD PROCESSING PROJECTS

Collier County broke ground March 2nd for the Florida Culinary Center at Immokalee. The 5,274 sf shared-use kitchen and food processing space will serve a variety of local food product businesses. The University of Florida's Institute of Food & Agricultural Sciences' SW Florida Research & Education Center will provide an adjacent food testing lab. Culinary, financial, marketing, and food certification classes will also be offered.

In December, the City of Fort Myers approved a grant for development of a similar 5,000 sf facility at the Southwest Florida Enterprise Center. Partners in the project include University of Florida's IFAS extension, Keiser University, the I Will Mentorship Foundation, and local farmers.

SCHOLARSHIP FUND GETS BOOST

The Paul Sands Memorial Slaw Dog Invitational Golf Tournament, held in December, generated a \$7,500 donation to the REIS - Paul Sands Memorial Scholarship program at Florida Gulf Coast University. REIS Scholarship Chairman Mark Morris presented the check to REIS President Karen Miller at the REIS January luncheon.

The Foundation funds the Paul Sands Memorial - REIS Scholarship program at Florida Gulf Coast University. You may contribute to the scholarship program at any time on the [REIS website](#) or by contacting Scholarship Chairman [Mark Morris](#), 239.671.2266.



AIR COMMERCE: ECONOMIC DRIVER

The role of air commerce in regional economic growth will be discussed by: Fred Ford, president of Airglades International Airport; Jeff Mulder, Executive Director of Lee County Port Authority; and James Parish, CEO of Punta Gorda Airport at [The Chamber of Southwest Florida](#) luncheon meeting on March 14th in Fort Myers.

2017 ECONOMIC SUMMIT

Analysis and forecast of the real estate market presented by economist Dr. Elliot Eisenberg, Collier County Planning Commission Chairman Mark Strain, and real estate appraiser Cindy Carroll on April 26th in Naples. Program hosted by [Naples Area Board of Realtors \(NABOR\)](#).

LATEST MARKET DATA AVAILABLE


"Florida: An Economic Overview" was published in February by the Florida Legislature's Office of Economic and Demographic Research. "The Southwest Florida Economic Almanac" was also issued last month by the Regional Economic Research Institute (RERI) of the Lutgert College of Business at Florida Gulf Coast University. Both publications are available at no charge on the [REIS website's Resource page](#), along with RERI's monthly "Economic Indicator Reports."

MASTER DEP'S ONLINE DATA TOOLS

Learn to use Oculus tools to utilize the data base of the Dept. of Environmental Protection (DEP) in a free class on March 17th. Class is designed for developers, investors, Realtors, planners, engineers, and environmental consultants. Learn to navigate Oculus, use Map Direct, and apply online for Self-Certifications and E-Applications. Morning and afternoon classes offered. Information and registration: [Terry Cerullo](#), 239.344.5600, at DEP.

ESTERO COMP PLAN PROGRESSING

The Village of Estero conducted a workshop in February to focus development of it's first Comprehensive Plan, which must be completed by next year. Consultants stressed the need for specific policies for future locations for schools, historical resources, and redevelopment. [The workshop may be viewed online](#). The next Comp Plan workshop will be March 21st. The transitional plan and amendments are available from [Community Development](#).



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