

REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT SOCIETY

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BOARDROOM REPORT

News from recent REIS board meetings

Luncheon Programs:

The May 8 luncheon will focus on efforts to prepare our future workforce, presented by Joseph Burke, PhD, Superintendent of Lee County School District. Sponsored by [Chris-Tel Construction](#).

John Manning, chairman of the Lee County Board of Commissioners will address County priorities and challenges at the June 12 luncheon, sponsored by [HSA Engineers & Scientists](#).

The July 10 luncheon will feature a discussion of growth management, environmental regulation, and property rights by land use attorney Ron Weaver. Sponsored by [GFA International](#).

Remediation and opportunities with brownfield sites will be the focus of the August luncheon, with speaker Janet Peterson. Sponsored by [Roetzel & Andress](#).

REIS welcomes suggestions for programs from members. Please convey your ideas to [Steve Hurley](#), 239.337.3330. Sponsorships for future luncheons are available. Contact [Jean Gruss](#), (239.275.2230) for details.

Scholarship Programs:

Scholarship Committee chairs Matt Simmons and Lisa Sands have arranged a shopping event at Chico's company store to benefit the REIS Scholarship Foundation. Details are at the [REIS website](#).

Horizon Council:

REIS officers and board authorized the contribution of \$500 to the Horizon Council's annual Industry Appreciation Event.

Seminars & Workshops:

Education Committee chairs Steven P. Kushner and Karen Miller are developing an intriguing program on land use strategies, re-positioning properties, and mitigation. Contact [Steven](#) (239.433.7707) or [Karen](#) (239.936.4003).

REIS SHOPPING EVENT AT CHICO'S

REIS members and their guests will have exclusive access to incredible bargains at Chico's company store on June 1. Chico's will donate 10% of sales revenue to the REIS Scholarship Foundation. There is no admission but the event is limited to the first 100 persons registered. REIS members may each register 2 guests (or 3 if the member is not attending). Details and registration are on the Events page at the [REIS website](#).

REAL ESTATE & LAND USE SUMMIT

The annual ULI (Urban Land Institute) Florida Summit takes place June 7-8 in St. Petersburg. Event features interactive sessions and workshops covering the future of housing, economic development, transit, tourism, airports/seaports, capital markets/development financing, and regional cooperation. <http://swflorida.uli.org/>

SMART GROWTH COMMUNITIES

The principles and benefits of smart growth and sustainable development will be explained in a 4-hour course at the REALTOR® Association of Greater Fort Myers and the Beach on June 1.

HOUSE CANDIDATES FORUM

Candidates for Florida House of Representatives in local districts will discuss key issues in a public forum on May 16 at Royal Palm Yacht Club in Fort Myers. The forum is presented by Tiger Bay Club of Southwest Florida. Details and registration at Tiger Bay Club [website](#).

WORKSHOP ON REAL ESTATE TOOLS

Past president Kevin M. Fitzgerald represented REIS at the Horizon Council's recent workshop on commercial real estate tools. The program included presentations by the Lee County Economic Development Office and Property Appraiser's Office on the use of new site analysis features on their respective websites.



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HOUSE REVIEWS TAX EXTENDERS

Tax provisions that expired at the end of 2011 are being reviewed by the House Ways and Means Committee and its subcommittee on taxes. The expired "tax extenders" include **Leasehold Improvement Depreciation**, which allows a building owner to deduct the cost of customized tenant improvements on a 15-year depreciation schedule. If the provision is not reauthorized it automatically reverts to a 39-year depreciation schedule. If Congress fails to extend the 15-year schedule and make it retroactive for 2012, it will increase capital costs for building owners. **Brownfields Remediation Expensing**, which allows a developer to immediately expense the costs of cleaning up a brownfield site, also expired at the end of 2011. The Internal Revenue Service is urging Congress to act on the tax extenders before the end of the year. Commercial real estate organizations recommend that the tax extender provisions should be made permanent.

BUREAUCRATIC DELAY IS COSTLY

A recent study analyzes the cost of one week of government-caused delay in the start-up of a new business in Florida. The report estimates the cost of a one-week delay to an unemployed worker is \$900 in lost wages and benefits, while the total combined cost in lost wages and benefits for a typical start-up staff is \$2,700. A week of delay to all start-ups costs the state of Florida up to \$9.9 million. The one-week cost to the federal government is about \$47.7 million. The costs of delay to county governments are as much as \$1.74 million, and \$670,000 to municipal governments. The full report is available at the [Foundation for Government Accountability](#).

PAYING LEE'S LEGAL SETTLEMENTS

The cost of court judgements and settlements on lawsuits involving Lee County government could be a factor on tax bills this fall. Lee County's Attorney's Office budgets a small amount each year for legal costs and losses on lawsuits and appeals. Costs that exceed the budgeted amount are covered by a Municipal Services Taxing Unit (MSTU), which is added to tax bills for property owners countywide. Lee County is currently facing a number of lawsuits and pending court decisions that could result in large awards or settlements.

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COLLIER ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Over 200 business, government and community leaders attended a forum April 23 to address the future of economic development efforts for Collier County. The forum was presented by the Greater Naples Chamber of Commerce and Hodges University to explore options in the wake of Collier's defunct economic development council. Collier County Manager Leo Ochs hopes plans to promote economic development will have support of Collier commissioners in the next few months.

REDUCED PARKING REQUIREMENTS

Lee County staff has conducted a review of parking regulations and is proposing that requirements can be reduced for most business uses. The proposal will proceed through pertinent advisory committees and be scheduled for public hearings. Review the proposal at Lee Dept. of Community Development [website](#).

20/20 CONSERVATION CONTINUES

Lee County is proceeding to review lands for conservation and negotiate acquisitions. Policy changes include an increased requirement for appraisals and greater public exposure of pending transactions. Other recommended changes to the program remain under consideration by county commissioners. There are currently 2 openings on the Conservation Land Acquisition & Stewardship Advisory Committee, to be appointed by Commissioners Manning and Hall.

ECONOMIC STRATEGY WORKSHOPS

Public meetings to gather input for development of the Regional Economic Strategy conclude this month with the Collier County Meeting, 5 - 6:30 pm May 9 in Commission Chamber, and the Regional Meeting, 10 am - noon May 19 at Southwest Florida Regional Planning Center office in Fort Myers. All interested parties are encouraged to attend and participate. Details and registration at www.swfrpc.org. Information from the public workshops will be used to create a 5-year economic development plan for the state. The process further seeks to position Southwest Florida for growth by identifying investment priorities and economic development projects that need to be accomplished to build prosperity, quality employment opportunities, and vibrant communities.

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PREPARING SOUTHWEST FLORIDA PROPERTIES FOR HURRICANES

By Jason Salmon, ValleyCrest Landscape Maintenance

Building owners and managers know that one of the unfortunate realities in SW Florida is the fact that storms frequently inflict negative impacts on the landscapes at properties. Fortunately, there are things that can be done to help minimize landscape damage and quickly get a property back to normal after a storm strikes:

ENSURE TREES SURVIVE: Most maintenance contracts cover tree pruning to provide traffic clearance but this doesn't prepare trees for hurricanes and excessive wind. Dramatically reduce the risk of damage and injury by structurally pruning weak or dead branches and opening canopies to reduce resistance.

PLAN FOR POST-CLEANUP NOW: Document specific services that should be performed by a landscape maintenance contractor that has storm removal experience, so that clean-up begins without delay as soon as the storm passes.

HAVE A COMMUNICATION PLAN: After the storm, telephone and cellular services will be stressed to the limit, if available at all. Be sure the appropriate parties on the property team and landscape maintenance team have current contact information including backup numbers and email addresses.

BE CAREFUL: Storm cleanup can be very dangerous work. Power lines may be down and still live, there may be snakes present in debris piles, and chainsaws in the hands of untrained workers is risky.

About the Author

Jason Salmon, is a member of the Real Estate Investment Society (REIS) and is Regional Business Developer with ValleyCrest Landscape Maintenance and can be reached at jsalmon@valleycrest.com or (239) 410-6416. ValleyCrest has 35 offices in Florida and is an integrated landscape services company. For more information, visit www.valleycrest.com.

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Contact [Jean Gruss](#) for details.
239.275.2230

RESEARCH - ENTERPRISE DIAMOND

Lee County is considering a strategic master plan for diverse, high-tech, sustainable development of a 40 square mile section in the southern part of the County. Urban Land Institute (ULI) has led the research and analysis of the project.

AIRPORT EXPANSION UNDERWAY

A variety of projects are underway to expand capacity and improve access to Southwest Florida International Airport.

Daniels Parkway is being widened to 6 lanes and the intersection with Chamberlin Parkway is being realigned. The project is scheduled for completion in June.

Terminal Access Road it be widened to 6 lanes with construction to begin in 2015.

Terminal Apron and Taxiways project includes expanding aprons and developing a crossfield taxiway that will connect the existing runway with the future parallel runway. Bid opening was scheduled for May 2. Completion scheduled for July 2013. Total project is estimated at \$41 million.

Parallel Runway and Air Traffic Control Tower are in the design phase, including benefit/cost analysis, permitting and mitigation. Project includes a 9,100' runway, relocated air traffic control tower, and relocation of FPL power lines. Initial permitting to begin this year. Total project is estimated at \$433 million.

I-75 Access Road will provide direct access from I-75 to the terminal. Design, permitting and mitigation near completion. Construction expected to begin this year. Total estimated project is estimated at \$107 million.

Skyplex Boulevard will provide a roadway connection, with utilities, from Daniels Parkway to development sites along Chamberlin Parkway. Design began in April. The project is intended to encourage commercial and industrial development in the area between JetBlue Park and Southwest Florida International Airport.

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to join you as a member of the*

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*A limited number of memberships are presently
available. Details and application are at
www.reis-swfl.org*