

## 2023 OFFICERS:

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Richard Akin  
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Janet Davis, CCIM  
Phil Fischler, CCIM  
Zannon Garza  
Ryan Shute  
Past President Kent Poli

## BOARDROOM REPORT

News from recent REIS board meetings

### Monthly Programs:

Sanibel Major Richard Johnson and Fort Myers Beach Mayor Dan Allers will discuss rebuilding after the storm at the **May 9th luncheon**. The luncheon is sponsored by [Midland 1031](#).

Southwest Florida legislators will review the 2023 Florida Legislative Session at the **June 13th luncheon**. Former state representative Matt Caldwell will moderate. The luncheon is sponsored by [Pavese Law Firm](#).

Doug Duncan, senior vice president and chief policy advisor at Fannie Mae, will present the housing and financing outlook at the **July 11th luncheon**. The luncheon is sponsored by [Velocity Engineering](#).

Property values and trends will be analyzed by Lee County Property Appraiser Matt Caldwell at the **August 8th luncheon**, sponsored by [Cogent Bank](#).

Sponsorships have been reserved for 2023 luncheons but sponsorship opportunities are available for other REIS events and for 2024 luncheons. Please contact [Janet Davis](#) if you're interested.

### Membership:

Memberships expired December 31st but you may still be able to renew by logging in on the [REIS website](#). Annual dues are \$150 per person, based on the calendar year.

### 2023 Real Estate Symposium:

The annual half-day program presented by REIS and Lutgert College takes place September 21st at Florida Gulf Coast University. Sponsorships are now available.

### REIS Annual Social Event:

Festive event exclusively for members and their guests will be at Sydney's Rooftop at the Davis Arts Center overlooking the Fort Myers historic River District on November 9th. Sponsorships are now available.

### Scholarship Program:

The REIS Scholarship Foundation is a 501(c)3 organization that enables individuals and businesses to make tax-deductible donations in support of scholarships. Learn how you can participate and support the REIS scholarship program on the [REIS webpage](#).

## SANIBEL REDUCES BUILDING FEES

The City of Sanibel is discounting Building Department fees by 50% until September 30th. The discounts are retroactive to November 1, 2022. This supercedes the 25% discount instituted in February and refunds will be processed for fees already paid. .

## SELF-STORAGE PROJECTS ON HOLD

Cape Coral City Council is imposing a 9-month immediate moratorium on permitting for self-storage projects. Applications already submitted will be processed but no new applications will be accepted until at least January 2024. Storage units reportedly comprise 11% of the City's commercial space and demand is driving increased development of the facilities.

## GREATER DUNBAR INITIATIVE

ULI's [Signature Lee County event](#) will feature the Greater Dunbar Initiative and the Housing Authority of the City of Fort Myers. Speakers include Housing Authority Director Marcia Davis, Lee County School Board Member Debbie Jordan, Dan O'Berski, managing broker of Trinity Commercial Group, and Sandra Seals, senior VP Development, with McCormack Baron Salazar. The event is May 11th at the Collaboratory in downtown Fort Myers.

## US 41 TRAFFIC RELIEF PROJECTS

The City of Bonita Springs is proceeding with design and permitting for a new roadway in the northwest quadrant of the US 41 and Bonita Beach Road intersection. Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) proposals to deal with increasing congestion at the intersection are in the project development and environment phase. The two FDOT alternatives considered would both require expanding Bonita Beach Road to 6 lanes.

## FLOOD INSURANCE RISK RATING

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is reviewing the pricing formulas in Risk Rating 2.0, according to Homeland Security, the department that oversees FEMA. Grant programs are also being reviewed to provide relief to businesses and property owners. The most recently revised [FEMA Coastal Risk Map Project](#) for Lee County became effective in November 2022. Collier County floodplain maps are on their way.

**BEV LARSON, CCIM**

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## REIS FETES LEE COMMISSIONERS



Greg Burton and 1995-96 REIS President Robbie Roepstorff of Edison National Bank, Lee County Commissioners Brian Hamman, Cecil Pendergrass, Kevin Ruane, Mike Greenwell, and Ray Sandelli, and Richard Akin of Henderson Franklin Starnes & Holt.

REIS welcomed the Lee County Board of County Commissioners to a private members-only reception on April 6th, hosted by Edison National Bank and Henderson Franklin, Starnes & Holt, P.A. All five commissioners participated in the festive bi-annual event, providing an opportunity for all to become

acquainted in a relaxed, social atmosphere.



REIS Vice President  
Justin Thibaut



Former REIS Presidents Mary Gentile, Sean Ellis, and Kim Donnelly

## WELCOME NEW REIS MEMBERS

**Leanne Borza** is the business development / account manager with Cotton GDS, a national full-service disaster recovery firm. Leanne has extensive experience in the field throughout South Florida.

**Kevin Brown** is area president for M/I Homes, Inc. SWFL, covering Lee, Collier and Charlotte Counties. He has worked with national builders and commercial developers in Southwest Florida for many years.

## REMEMBERING JOHN STATES

REIS salutes the late John E. States, founding member and first president of RESSI/REIS in 1982-83, who passed away in March. John was also founder of Florida Investors, a leader in land investment and development in Southwest Florida. John's motto was "you can accomplish anything you want in life by helping enough other people accomplish what they want out of life."



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## LEGISLATIVE ISSUES TO WATCH

The 2023 Florida Legislative regular session is underway and key issues for the business community include:

**Affordable Housing** - The "Live Local Act" (SB 102) has passed and been signed by the governor. It includes \$711 million for affordable housing projects through the Florida Housing Finance Corp. and increases the money that goes into the Sadowski Trust Fund by adding a portion of the revenue from online sales taxes. The legislation was supported by the Florida Association of Realtors.

**Economic Development** - Enterprise Florida, the state's business-recruitment agency, is again facing elimination as the House Appropriations Committee has passed a bill (HB 5) that would transfer the agency's funding, currently \$13 million, to the Department of Economic Opportunity. Senate and House budget negotiators have agreed to increase the Job Growth Grant Fund from \$50 million to \$75 million to provide funds for job training programs and regional infrastructure.

**Water Quality** - Bills are proceeding in both houses (HB 1197, SB 1240) that would prohibit local governments from regulating water quality, pollution control (including local fertilizer ordinances), and wetlands. Regulation would become the responsibility of state agencies.

**Land Development** - Proposed bills (HB 671, HB 383) seek to reduce the time limits that local building departments have to respond to permit applications and requested zoning changes, variances and development orders. Other bills (HB 359, SB 540) would allow prevailing parties to collect attorney fees and costs in court challenges to small scale development amendments to land use plans. All are still working through committees.

**Tax Relief** - The Senate Appropriations Committee has approved a package of tax breaks (SPB 7062) that includes \$32.9 million in tax credits for brownfield site clean up projects and offers property owners a refund of up to 50% of the cost of installing greywater systems.

**Commercial Lease Tax** - a proposed package of tax breaks in the House of Representatives includes a 1% reduction in the commercial lease tax. Two years ago, the Legislature directed the tax to be reduced to 2 percent when revenue from sales-tax collections on out-of-state retailers replenished the Unemployment Compensation Trust Fund, depleted during the pandemic. The Fund is expected to be replenished in the coming fiscal year.

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