



**Bonita Springs Area
Chamber Of Commerce**

Where you want to be

Economic Development and Government Affairs Report

October 2009

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UNITED STATES CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

ACCREDITED



President's Note



Christine Ross
President & CEO

As you will see from the latest Economic Development and Government Affairs Report, we have been busy advocating for the area business community in a variety of arenas. I have moved forward with the development of my Regional Action Plan for the Ford Foundation Fellowship on Regional Sustainable Development with support and direction from FutureWorks and The Langley Group. The vision for this project is to catalyze the regional leaders in Southwest Florida

within a six county area, including Sarasota, Charlotte, Lee, Hendry, Glades and Collier Counties, to guide sustainable economic development efforts. By establishing a working forum and dialogue, I believe we can identify opportunities and threats while building a regional mentality.

The economics of sustainability is directly related to economies in transition and as we are all aware, Southwest Florida's economic base is currently undergoing an evolution. If we are to be sustainable, we will need to employ creative new agendas. Although the **Southwest Regional Planning Council** is at the forefront of pushing this important regional agenda, there are still many county-centric groups talking about regionalization in closed silos. It is clear to everyone who is passionate about the vitality of Southwest Florida that now is the time for collective thought leadership. Through

this **Regional Action Plan**, formerly disengaged leaders will be pulled into the discussion from public and private sectors, representing every facet of the six-county community including but not limited to private enterprise, social, cultural, residential, education, government, research and healthcare organizations. I am currently working with the Southwest Regional Planning Council and **Florida Gulf Coast University's** Economic Development Office to establish a process. Shortly, leaders will be convened to continue the discussion begun at the October 2009 annual meeting of the SWFRPC when panelists responded to "Facing the Facts: People, Prosperity, Preservation: Southwest Florida's Regional Vision."

Until next month,

Christine Ross
President & CEO
Bonita Springs Area Chamber
of Commerce

The Chamber is represented at the following government meetings each month:

City Council Meeting

First and third Wednesday of each month

County Commission Meeting

Every Tuesday

Management & Planning meeting of the Board of County Commissioners

First Monday of each month

Metropolitan Planning Organization Meeting

Third Friday of each month

All meetings are open to the public and we encourage involvement in all sectors of government.

Workers Comp Rate Decrease Approved

Insurance Commissioner Kevin McCarty on Thursday, October 15th approved a 6.8 percent average rate increase for workers compensation rates, that is estimated will save employers about \$166 million. McCarty said since lawmakers reformed workers compensation laws in 2003 rates have dropped 63 percent cumulatively.

The filing by the National Council on Compensation Insurance will go into effect Jan. 1, 2010 for new and renewal policies.

McCarty cited the passage earlier this year of a bill (HB 903) that reversed a court decision and restored a cap on attorney fees in workers comp cases as the reason rates were going down. "If it were not for this legislation, the workers' compensation industry in Florida would likely have proposed rate increases instead of decreases in 2010."



Where you want to be

25071 Chamber of Commerce Drive
Bonita Springs, FL 34135
(239) 992-2943
www.BonitaSpringsChamber.com



Government Affairs Committee

Patrick Vanasse, Chairman
RWA Consultants, Inc.

D. Wayne Arnold
Q. Grady Minor and Associates, P.A.

David L. Cook
Henderson, Franklin, Starnes & Holt, P.A.

Brian Farrar
BCF Management Group

Ray Faubion
Oswald Trippe and Company, Inc.

Owen F. Feeney, Jr.
Bonita Estero Dental Group

Mike Hoyt
The Lutgert Companies

Jose R. Lopez
Chapman & Associates, Inc

Heather L. Mazurkiewicz
B J M Consulting Inc.

Joe Mazurkiewicz
B J M Consulting Inc.

David McKee
Bonita Springs Utilities, Inc.

Debbi Redfield
Bonita Springs Fire Control & Rescue District

Joel Whittenhall
CNL Bank, Southwest Florida

Vlad Ryziw
GRAEF

Ray Schumann
Alvarez, Sambol, Winthrop & Madson, P.A.

G. Donald Thomson
Henderson, Franklin, Starnes & Holt, P.A.

Ted Treesh
TR Transportation Consultants, Inc.

Government Affairs Committee Report

Things are Starting to Heat Up

You may have recently noticed a chill in the air bringing on thoughts of Fall and the upcoming holidays, but in the world of local government things are just starting to heat up. It's the beginning of campaign season leading up to city elections in early 2010 and County, State and Federal elections in the Fall.

At the city level there are three (3) seats up for election: District I, 3 and 5. Council Members Richard Ferreira and Pat McCourt have announced they are will not seek reelection. Council Member Martha Simons has announced she will be running for reelection and in fact was unopposed.

Stephen McIntosh will be running for the District 1 seat saying, "It's important to me this community continues to grow in a fashion to support

the environment, to support the economy with an efficient government," McIntosh is president of Tartan Consulting, a Bonita Springs Utilities board member and heads Florida Gulf Coast University's foundation board. Joining Mr. McIntosh in the District 1 race to fill Richard Ferreira's seat is David Morton, a realtor with John R. Woods Realtors and the former chairman of the city's Local Planning Agency.

Steven Slachta a resident of Bonita Springs since 1994 and city zoning board member will face off against perennial candidate and long-time Chair of the zoning board Pete Pastore for the vacant District 3 seat presently occupied by incumbent Pat McCourt.

At the County level we have three (3) of the five (5) Commission seats up for

reelection. Districts 2, 4 and 5 will all be involved in elections next November. To date only Commissioner Hall has started the reelection/campaigning process. Time will tell if Commissioners Brian Bigalow and Frank Mann will run for reelection, and if, or how many challengers they will have to fend off.

At the State level all the House Members will be up for elections and two of our three State Senate seats will be vacant as Senator Mike Bennett is facing term limits and Senator Dave Aronberg is running for Attorney General.

Remember no matter how cool the temperature gets it will certainly be a hot political season so get ready to hang on to your wallets and please be sure to vote.

City of Bonita Springs Land Development Regulations *Chapter 4 Zoning LDC*

[Click here](#) to view the full document regarding changes and other modifications made to the proposed **Chapter 4 Zoning LDC** as a result of the meeting with Bonita Springs City staff on August 17, 2009. The memorandum created by James G. LaRue can be [viewed here](#) and provides a shorter overview of the changes proposed.

Thank You to Our
Government Affairs Staff



The next Government Affairs Committee Meeting will be held on Tuesday, November 3, 2009.

Meetings are held on the first Wednesday of every month at noon at the Chamber.

Economic Development Committee Monthly Report



Andrew DeSalvo,
Chairman, Economic
Development Committee

The EDC held its second meeting on October 16th. We reviewed The Lee County Business site (www.leecounty-business.com) and found it to be an excellent tool for ready information on businesses in Lee County and its four cities. We also reviewed FGCU's Regional Economic Research Institute site (www.FGCU.edu/cob/reri). This site post monthly economic reports on the SW Florida region and gives individual breakdowns of each of the area's six counties; Lee, Collier, Charlotte, Hendry, Glades and Sarasota. It also gives monthly traveler and freight reports for both SW Regional and Sarasota airports.

As a response from our first meeting we requested and received from the City of Bonita Springs detailed maps depicting the area we defined as our marketplace. We now have available in the Chamber office an aerial map showing the Marketplace (Immokalee Rd to Alico Rd), as well as maps of Bonita and Estero depicting zoning, land use and planned developments. We discussed and put together a long list of regional

and area assets which covered the spectrum from "A" affordable and available housing, retail, industrial and office space to "T" transportation. We are currently working on breaking down this extensive list into a shorter list of what we believe businesses look at prior to considering a move or expansion to an area. That shorter list will be categorized into "prerequisites", things that must be here or close by in order for a business to even consider the area and "discriminators", those tangible and intangible things we have to offer above and beyond other areas.

We have already arrived at a couple of items we believe would greatly help our businesses and our economy:

1. A review of impact fees for "change of use" on existing buildings in the City of Bonita Springs.
2. A review of the current definition of commercial zoning and the possibility of expanding it to include manufacturing that meet ISO or other highly recognized standards for clean emissions.

We believe these are just two examples of what we hope will become a longer list of actionable items that if implemented would hasten our economic recovery as well as strengthen and diversify it.

Our next meeting will be held Friday, November 13th.

Sincerely,
Andrew DeSalvo, Chairman

Economic Development Committee

Andrew DeSalvo - Chairman
Premier Commercial Properties of Southwest Florida

Joe Ariola
Key Bank

Ned E. Dewhirst, P.E.
Oakbrook Properties, Inc.

Margaret Emblidge
Emblidge Design Group, Inc.

Kevin Hawkesworth
Shaw Development, LLC

David Kakkuri
Florida Gulf Coast University

Michael W. Kennedy
MKA Marketing

Richard Mancini
Henderson, Franklin, Starnes & Holt, P.A.

Joseph A. Murgalo
Hyatt Regency Coconut Point Resort and Spa

Ben Nelson
City of Bonita Springs

Kevin Newingham
Lee Memorial Health System



Adding *life* to your business.

The Lee County Horizon Council invites you to take about 5 minutes to participate in the latest Horizon Council Quarterly "Business Snapshot" online survey. The "Business Snapshot" is produced by the Business Climate Task Force of the Horizon Council and is used quarterly as a tool to provide feedback to business leaders and to the Board of County Commissioners.

All results will be tabulated and shared with every respondent in 3 - 5 business days following the closing of the survey. Your answers are strictly confidential and results are presented only in the aggregate.

To take the survey, please go to <http://questionweb.com/72982/>

Use the Password: Horizon1009

Please forward this questionnaire link to other business associates in your company or organization. The goal is to have the survey taken by as many different businesspeople in Lee County as possible. The survey will remain open only through Tuesday, October 27, 2009.

The Horizon Council was established in 1991 as a public-private advisory board designed to advise the Lee County Board of County Commissioners and the business community on economic development issues and to promote a positive business spirit in Lee County.

The Horizon Council operates as part of the Lee County Office of Economic Development and consists of representatives from nearly every Lee County Chamber of Commerce, Economic

Development and Trade organization, Educational Institution, City Government along with the Lee County Industrial Development Agency.

The Horizon Council meets monthly to discuss business issues in a forum with Lee County Commissioners and Staff along with members of the business community. These meetings are always open to the public.

Thank you for taking time to share your opinions and information. Your input is extremely important. If you are a representative of an organization representing businesses, please feel free to forward copies of this invitation to your constituents.

For more information about the Horizon Council, please [click here](#).

Have a Suggestion?

We are always looking for new ways to enhance your Five-Star Chamber. If you have a suggestion for the Economic Development and Government Affairs Report or for the committee, please submit it to Tiffany Esposito, Communications Manager at (239) 992-2943 or Tiffany@BonitaSpringsChamber.com.



Southwest Florida
Green Futures Expo
&
Energy Options Conference

The Green Futures Expo and Energy Options Conference is only two weeks away. If you have not registered for the conference, you may click here to access the form online. The deadline is Monday, October 26th.

Green Futures Expo

Sunday, November 1, 2009
10:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Various business will be showcasing their green products and services. And in addition to exhibitors, short workshops will be conducted throughout the day. You may preview the program schedule here.

Concurrent with the Expo is the LEED Green Asso-

ciate Exam Prep Course to be taught by Waste Management's sustainability experts, the Green Squad. You may register here.

Energy Options Conference

Monday, November 2, 2009
8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Representatives from some of the leading companies in the field of energy will participate in panel discussions on various energy issues. A Continental Breakfast and luncheon will also be served. You may preview the program schedule with the list of keynote speakers, panel speakers and moderators here. A special DVD preview of some of our speakers is available here.

Please come prepared with your questions for our experts as both days are meant for learning about the many aspects pertaining to energy options and green living. You may view the list of sponsors and exhibitors here.

Contact Information:

Green Futures Expo
Mary Ann Grey
941-743-1245
maryann.grey@charlottefl.com

Energy Options Conference
Ruth Buchanan
941-743-5372
ruth.buchanan@charlottefl.com
www.CharlotteCountyFL.com

Broadband and Our National (and State) Economy *Taking a Look a Broadband Policy and Strategy*

Broadband as an essential utility has become the central nervous system of our economy; an individual or entity can not fully participate in our society without broadband access. "Broadband networks provide a fundamental platform on which many different entities can build to offer valuable goods and services that will benefit Ameri-

cans as consumers, workers, and citizens." As recognized by Congress and the Federal Communications Commission, broadband networks are now seen as a vital component of the 21st century national infrastructure comparable to canals, railroads and telegraph in the 19th century; and interstate highways, telephones and electricity in the

20th century. [Click here](#) for the full article.



Lee Memorial Health System's Annual Community Healthcare Symposium

We would like to invite you to attend Lee Memorial Health System's Community Healthcare Symposium. This event is designed to help raise awareness of key trends impacting healthcare both nationally and locally.

Paul Keckley, Ph.D., will serve as the keynote speaker. As Executive Director of the Deloitte Center for Health Solutions, Dr. Keckley is at the forefront of the ongoing debate, dialogue and negotiations over national health care reform. Dr. Keckley will share insights regarding the major proposed reform bills which could take significantly more shape in the next few weeks. He will share consumer perspectives regard-

ing reform efforts as well as potential obstacles for adoption of reform legislation. Dr. Keckley will conclude with some observations regarding the likely short term and long term implications and challenges for health providers and for the overall health of residents and visitors of Southwest Florida.

Following Dr. Keckley's insight, an update on Lee Memorial Health System including some of our clinical and financial achievements over the last year will be provided. I will also share my perspective regarding the potential impact, opportunities and challenges health reform may have on LMHS and on our community. Paul and I

will then field questions from attending guests.

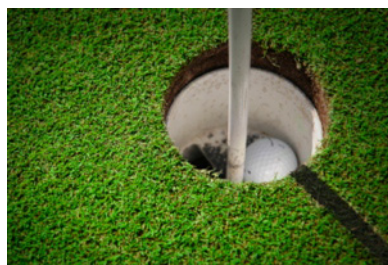
The event will be held at Harborside Event Center on Monday, November 2, 2009 from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. A continental breakfast will be available from 8:30 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. Valet parking will be available.

Please RSVP to Elsie Sambrato at 239-985-3505 or email to elsie.sambrato@leememorial.org.

I hope you can join us in this important event.

Sincerely,
Jim Nathan, *President*
Lee Memorial Health System

Annual Golf Tournament Friday, October 30th! *Only a Few Spots Left!*



You are invited to attend the **Annual Golf Tournament** to be held at Raptor Bay on Friday, October 30, 2009, a Shotgun Scramble starting at 1:00 p.m.

Registration per golfer is \$150.00. There are only a few spots left. Make your reservation TODAY!

Professional photographs of participant's golf swings will also be available after the event provided by **Photography by David Michael**.

For more information, please call Julie Digby at (239) 992-2943 or email Julie@BonitaSpringsChamber.com.