

Scenic Watch



June
2016

Florida's Fourth of July events



Photo: VisitFlorida.com

-- VisitFlorida.com

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Legal News:

"Walton commissioners vote to remove signs, ropes from beach"



Fun Festivals and Events

Central and West

June 30-July 2
Daytona Coke Zero 400 Weekend,
Daytona Beach
July 1
Jazz Friday at Foosaner Museum of
Art, Melbourne
July 1
Vans Warped Tour, St Petersburg
July 2, 9, 16, 23, 30
Summer Music Series, Clermont
July 2, 16
St Pete Indie Market, St
Petersburg
July 2-3



Photo:nwfdailynews.com

"All obstructions on the beach must come down, say Walton County Commissioners.

Well, three of them said that, and that was all that was needed.

BCC Chair Sara Comander took charge at Tuesday's meeting and moved the most anticipated and controversial item on the agenda to the front to get it out of the way early. That item was the proposed amendment to Chapter 22 of the Beach Ordinance dealing with Leave No Trace. Specifically, the amendment addresses beachfront homeowners placing signs, poles, chains and roping off what they consider to be their gulf-front property.

'We need somebody on every half mile of beach to enforce (the ordinance),' said District 5 Commissioner Cindy Meadows. 'We need management on the beach. We have to get out on those beaches and manage them and ramp up enforcement – as many as needed. We should be like Disney. We need to look at enforcement and cleaning up our beach. Ropes and chains need to go.

'It needs to look like we feature in our ads where we show one person out there on a float,' she added.

Emmett Hildreth of Blue Mountain Beach was the first Gulf-front property owner to address commissioners,

Madeira Beach Craft Festival, Madeira Beach
 July 4
 Hunter Vision Watermelon 5K, Winter Park
 July 7
 Sunset Beach Concert Series, Tarpon Springs
 July 8
 Friday Fest, Melbourne
 July 9
 ReptiDay, Sarasota
 July 16
 Cruisin' Downtown DeLand Classic Car Show, DeLand
 July 19
 Climb to the Moon, Ponce Inlet
 July 22
 Fourth Fridays Art Walk, Sanford
 July 23
 Wine Walk on Flagler, New Smyrna Beach
 July 23
 Mixon Fruit Farms Antiques, Arts and Crafts Fair, Bradenton
 July 29-31
 Anime Festival Orlando, Orlando

South

July 1-4
 Florida Supercon, Miami Beach
 July 2-4
 Key Lime Pie Festival, Key West
 July 2, 9, 16, 23
 Third Street Farmers Market, Naples
 July 3
 Vans Warped Tour, West Palm Beach
 July 3
 Suntrust Sunday Jazz Brunch, Fort Lauderdale
 July 4
 Charlotte Harbor Freedom Swim, Punta Gorda
 July 4
 4th of July Fireworks Cruise, Sanibel Island
 July 4
 Old-Fashioned Fourth of July Picnic at The Barnacle Historic State Park, Coconut Grove
 July 6, 13, 20, 27
 Jupiter Lighthouse Sunset Tour, Jupiter
 July 8
 International Mango Festival, Coral Gables
 July 9
 Underwater Music Festival, Big Pine Key
 July 14-16
 Mel Fisher Days, Key West
 July 16-17
 MangoMania Tropical Fruit Fair, Pine Island
 July 19-24
 Hemingway Days, Key West
 July 21
 Third Thursday Art Walk, Islamorada

reminding them of his freedom of speech and private property rights.

'People have a right to place whatever they want on their property,' he said. 'That's where the issue lies. Do you respect property or not?'

Tommy Bowden of Deer Lake area agreed.

'There are plenty of places for people to go to the beach besides on my property,' he said. 'No one has offered to help pay my taxes. I like to sit on the property I am paying taxes on. Help me pay my taxes and I'll let you sit on it. I live on Deer Lake. If people are looking for a place to go, go there.' Suzanne Harris of Edgewater Beach offered a warning to commissioners.

'You are going to end up with private security guards with guns on every beach if you pass this,' she said.

However, Celeste Cobena of Dune Allen disagreed.

'I think it is completely hypocritical for us to spend millions of dollars asking people to come here then have chains keeping them from the beach and signs saying no trespassing,' Cobena said. 'If you don't think this will hurt Walton County in the long run, you're wrong.'

'When people are paying a lot of money to stay on the beach, they want to relax,' she added. 'Chains and signs are not relaxing.'

...'The Leave No Trace ordinance now specifies that no fences, chains, or signs may be used on the beach,' BCC Public Information Officer Louis Svehla said after the meeting. 'With the exception of sand fencing on the dune or DEP-approved sand fencing on the dry sand, all others are prohibited from being on the beach at all times.'

Prior to discussion, county attorney Mark Davis explained that the board was not voting on the issue of customary use of the beach, but on amendments to the Leave No Trace ordinance, which would affect

July 21
Downtown Gallery Walk, Punta Gorda

July 23-24
Buckler Craft Fair, Fort Lauderdale

July 26-30
BugFest-By-The-Sea, Town of Lauderdale-By-The-Sea

July 28
Free Fish ID Classes, Key Largo

July 29-30
The PBR Touring Pro Division, Estero

July 29-31
Annual Caladium Festival, Lake Placid

North

July 1
First Friday Art Walk, St Augustine

July 2
Guided Tour at Kanapaha Botanical Gardens, Gainesville

July 2-3
First Weekend Union Garrison, Amelia Island

July 4
Sertoma's 4th of July Celebration, Pensacola

July 4
Riverfest, Milton

July 4
4th of July Concert & Fireworks, St Augustine

July 5, 12, 19
Bands on the Beach, Pensacola

July 6, 13, 20, 27
Music by the Sea, St Augustine Beach

July 7, 14, 21, 28
Concerts In The Plaza, St Augustine

July 7, 14, 21, 28
Americana Under the Stars, Santa Rosa Beach

July 8-9
Star Gazing on Pensacola Beach, Pensacola Beach

July 9
Artrageous Artwalk, Fernandina Beach

July 9
Museum Swamp Stomp Music Festival, Tallahassee

July 10
Summer Jazz Concert Series, Jacksonville Beach

July 15-16
Pensacola Beach Air Show, Pensacola Beach

July 18-23
Greater Jacksonville Kingfish Tournament, Jacksonville

July 19
Sunset/Moonrise at the St Augustine Lighthouse, St Augustine

July 21-23
Fiesta de San Fermin en Pensacola, Pensacola

July 22

property south of the construction line all the way to the wet sandy beach.

It will now fall on the county to enforce the amended ordinance.

...Comander acknowledged that more code enforcement was needed on the beach. In her closing remarks, she took the opportunity to shame the gulf-front homeowners.

'We are going to hire three more (code enforcement officers) and we will hire 10 more if needed,' she said. 'We need to take a look at tents on the beach and vendors. We are getting more crowded. We have changed, some for good, some not so good. We need to take a look at dogs. If we leave the ropes and chains, we will get in trouble with the feds over turtles and beach mice. To those of you who are beach-front owners, think how fortunate you are. Whoever earned the money, the Lord had a hand in it. The rest of us would like to walk that beach.'

-- Deborah Wheeler, nwfdailynews.com

[Read entire article here](#)

"Take a look at Tampa's first protected bike lane"



Photo: StreetsBlog USA

"Tampa is starting to make progress on safe bike infrastructure. Last weekend, Tampa Mayor Bob

River Rhythms, Ocala
July 23-Aug 28
Nature and Wildlife Exhibit, St
Augustine

[For many more events and details please visit the Orlando Times Travel Calendar here](#)



Buckhorn led a celebratory ride to mark the opening of the city's first protected bike lane — a curb-protected two-way lane on Cass Street downtown.

The Cass Street project is one of the first protected bike lanes in Florida — a notoriously dangerous state for biking and walking. It's about three-quarters of a mile long and the city intends to extend it in both directions, said Karen Kress of the Downtown Tampa Partnership..."



Photo: Eric Trull (blue shirt, left) Coast Bikes via StreetsBlog.org

"Tampa Mayor Bob Buckhorn (right in the green button down) led a ride celebrating the opening of Tampa's new protected bike lane last weekend.

The project also converted Cass Street from one-way to two-way car flow. While that introduces more potential motor vehicle turning movements across the bikeway, the project includes signals to reduce conflicts between drivers and cyclists.

Kress says locals are already responding. "It is blowing up," she said. "There's been so much pent up demand for safe cycling conditions. They're coming out of the

woodwork.”

Kress said her organization has been trying to help businesses find a place for all the bike parking employees are demanding.

The Cass Street bike lane – along with the green, buffered bike lanes on Platt, Cleveland, and Brorein streets that were added last year – emerged from a strategic planning process for the city’s downtown. Tampa was recognized by Smart Growth America recently for its strides toward walkability. The bike lane will help people biking to and from Tampa’s popular 2.5-mile Riverwalk, which was recently completed with help from an \$11 million TIGER grant.”

-- Angie Schmitt, StreetsBlog USA

[Visit StreetsBlog USA here](#) to read this article and find out what additional cities around the nation are doing with protected bike lanes.

"Digital billboards glow; residents scowl"



Photo: Michaelle Bond, Philly.com

"As she drives through her quiet, darkened neighborhood, Bobbi Jo Broomell sees a glow



brightening the night sky. As she gets closer to the source, it flashes brighter, blinks, then changes brilliant colors.

For Broomell, a drive along the residential Farmhouse Road in Downingtown is like entering 'another galaxy.'

One she would rather avoid.

She and other residents in her Chester County neighborhood want the borough to find ways to obscure their view of the digital billboard that has been flashing along the heavily traveled Route 30 Bypass since April 5.

Similar billboards, which have been gaining popularity since the beginning of the millennium, are lighting up roadways across the country - 6,400 at last count. Of those, 379 line state roads in Pennsylvania, but they evidently haven't gained as much traction in the Garden State, with only five along the New Jersey Turnpike, according to state officials.

The industry hails the billboards as vehicles for 'high-impact' exposure. It trumpets their versatility: Several advertisers can share the space as the message can rotate every few seconds. They have been enlisted for public-service announcements and even in the hunt for fugitives.

But at ground level, not everyone is liking the show, and the digital signs have stirred controversy nationwide. The International Dark-Sky Association has raised concerns about the proliferation of signs that it says are further dimming the view of the universe at night.

In Downingtown, the light from the 672-square-foot display screen shines into some residents' homes along North Lake Drive and Farmhouse, tree-lined, pastoral streets of modest houses. One resident complains she feels like she's living near a drive-in movie; another couple says they installed black curtains on their 2-year-old's bedroom window, lest the lights keep her awake; a developer who plans to build 70 townhomes in the area says the billboard outshines the Las Vegas

strip. Real estate agents say homes caught in the glow could lose value.

The residents recently took their complaints to the borough council, and one council member says she is sorry she voted to approve it. State Sen. Andy Dinniman (D., Chester) says he is drafting legislation to establish guidelines and give towns more of a say in where the billboards are sited.

Mary Tracy, executive director of Scenic Philadelphia, which has opposed digital displays in the city, said residents in surrounding towns have reached out to her for help fighting billboards that shine into their homes.

'Your room will be red, then it will be blue, then it will be yellow, whatever the color of the moment is,' Tracy said. 'That is really an issue of quality of sleep and quality of life.'

The billboard industry says that, for businesses, the primary color is green.

Digital billboards cut production costs for businesses. They also better target customers because businesses can customize the billboards to fit the time of day, the day of the week, weather conditions, and traffic patterns. A 24-hour diner, for instance, can advertise its coffee in the morning and then invite late-night snackers to visit at 11 p.m...

In Downingtown, the two-sided billboard will have a direct cash benefit. Catalyst Outdoor Advertising, the Newtown Square-based company that owns the billboard, has agreed to pay Downingtown \$25,000 and also provide \$25,000 worth of advertising to the borough annually.

Catalyst Outdoor has agreed to work with an engineering firm to limit residents' view, borough officials said. The billboard is visible to more neighbors than the company estimated when the council approved the sign. The company had no comment.

Residents such as Bobbi Jo Broomell are frustrated.

Paul and Kelly Bane, who live a few hundred feet away from the billboard, noticed the sign the day it was turned on. As they put their daughter, Paige, to bed around 7:30 p.m., the sign's light shone into her room. They installed black-out curtains.

Since then, Paul, who works at a software company, and Kelly, a teacher, have been asking the borough for glare relief.

'It's a reminder every day when you come home from work you've got more work to do,' he said...

The state regulates billboards, and approval is subject to local zoning ordinances.

Ann Feldman, a Downingtown council member, said she regrets voting to approve the digital billboard, but the plans the advertising company presented to the council complied with borough zoning.

'Our ordinances are just deficient because most municipalities have never had to deal with this before,' she said.

'Quick, quick, quick - get your zoning up to date,' she advised other towns."

-- Michaëlle Bond, Philly.com

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