

Scenic Watch



Covering
News From
Jan
2018

State Control of Tree Cutting?
"Clearing trees from I-95 in Georgia
will make roads safer, DOT says"



Photo: The Florida Times Union

"The drive along Interstate 95 in Georgia gets uglier by the day as trees are taken down, but state transportation officials say the clear cutting will improve safety.



Fun Festivals
and Events

Central

Feb 2, 9, 16, 23
Artisan Alley Farmer's
Market and More on
Georgia, Deland. Feb 3-4
Brevard Renaissance Fair.
Melbourne.

The 'vegetative management projects' along I-95 are aimed at reducing the number of traffic fatalities and serious injuries along the interstate corridors in the state's coastal region, said Jill Nagel, spokeswoman for the DOT's District 5 office in Jesup...

The projects consist of removing all the vegetation inside the right-of-way and anything that's hanging over the fence. All the cut trees and brush is then mulched flush with the ground, Nagel said.

Actually, not all of it. One of the contract companies loaded a couple of trailers with saw timber pine logs Tuesday at the Woodbine exit.

No grubbing will be permitted so the soil surface won't be disturbed to remove stumps or roots.



Photo: The Florida Times Union

The clearing of trees will benefit billboard companies who will no longer need to get permits to cut trees to ensure their signs can be seen.

Starting in 1963, the Garden Club of Georgia had lobbied for control of signs on Georgia roadways and was successful in getting hundreds removed. More than 15 years ago, the Georgia legislature adopted a statute to allow the clearing of trees from in front of billboards. The Garden Club sued saying the law violated the gratuities clause of the Georgia

Feb 2
Jazz Friday at Foosaner
Museum of Art,
Melbourne. Feb 3
Art Stroll and Gallery
Walk, New Smyrna Beach.
Feb 3-4
The Mount Dora Arts
Festival, Mount Dora.
Feb 9
Friday Family Fest,
Melbourne.
Feb 9-10
Old Florida Outdoor
Festival, Apopka. Feb 9-
10
Celtic Family Jamboree,
Brooksville.
Feb 9-11
Wine Fest, Clermont.
Feb 9-18
Osceola County Fair,
Kissimmee. Feb 10
DeLand Craft Beer
Festival, DeLand
Feb 10-11
Downtown Sarasota
Festival of the Arts,
Sarasota
Feb 10-18
Speedweeks, Daytona
Beach
Feb 15-18
Space Coast Seafood and
Music Fest, Viera
Feb 16-18
Silver Spurs Rodeo,
Kissimmee
Feb 17
Art Walk, Sanford
Feb 17
Ozello Chili Cook-Off and
Craft Show, Crystal River
Feb 17
Beer, Bourbon and BBQ
Festival, Tampa
Feb 17-18
Downtown Dunedin Craft
Festival, Tampa Bay
Feb 19-25
Pasco County Fair, Dade
City
Feb 17
Ozello Chili Cook-Off and
Craft Show, Crystal River
Feb 17

constitution but the courts ruled that billboards also benefited Georgians...

The DOT is monitoring the projects to ensure the work results in visual quality."

-- Terry Dickson, The Florida Times Union

[Read entire article](#)

Legal:

"Pasco considering easing sign restrictions"



Photo:Orlando Sentinel

"Pasco County, which prohibits digital signs for commercial uses, is poised to ease that restriction.

Kind of. Sort of.

If you own 200 acres or have a 35,000-square-foot building with 2,000 seats or 450 parking spots, you can have a digital sign.

So far, that would be the Pasco County Fairgrounds outside Dade City and the Florida Hospital Center Ice complex in Wesley Chapel.

Beer, Bourbon and BBQ
Festival, Tampa
Feb 17-18
Downtown Dunedin Craft
Festival, Tampa Bay
Feb 19-25
Pasco County Fair, Dade
City
Feb 24-25
45th Annual Pioneer Days
Festival, Orlando

South

Feb 1
One Team Scavenger
Hunt Adventure, Miami
Feb 2
Little Haiti Dance, Drum
and Dine Tour, Miami
Feb 2
Little Havana Paint, Taste
and Sip Tour, Miami
Feb 2-3
Pigeon Key Art Festival,
Marathon
Feb 3-4
ArtFest Fort Myers, Fort
Myers
Feb 4
JM Lexus Sunday Jazz
Brunch at Riverwalk, Fort
Lauderdale
Feb 9-11
19th Annual Garlic Fest,
Lake Worth
Feb 9-11
Everglades Seafood
Festival, Everglades City
Feb 10
Everglades Day Festival,
Boynton Beach
Feb 10-11
ArtsFest, Stuart
Feb 11-14
Sweetheart Express with
Murder Mystery, Fort
Myers
Feb 11-18
Edison Festival of Light
Junior Events, Fort Myers
Feb 11-18
Winter Star Party, Florida
Keys
Feb 14-20

The county commission is considering amending its sign rules to allow the LED signs that rotate messages for so-called regional attractions, defined as tourist destinations that play host to at least 50 events throughout the year.

The proposed change comes 18 months after the Pasco County Fair Association asked for permission to install a digital sign and a year after the grand opening of the ice center, which used a mobile LED sign company to tout the new complex...

Currently, the county's land development code bans digital signs that change messages. The rules aren't applicable to government agencies using a flashing message for a public purpose.

That's why a few public schools and the Pasco Hernando State College campuses have the brightly lit LED signs.

Commissioner Mike Moore said he wanted the commission to carve out a similar exemption for community development districts as part of the ongoing rewrite of the land development code.

The signs also are visible on businesses in some Pasco cities, including Dade City and Port Richey, which allow the digital signs.

'I'm good with it,' said Commissioner Kathryn Starkey, who founded Scenic Pasco and advocated for better sign controls in the county in the late 1990s and early 2000s.

Allowing LED signs for regional attractions is the second time the commission has eased its previous hard-line stance on aesthetic controls. Last year, commissioners lifted their ban on all new billboards to allow outdoor advertising companies to swap new LED billboards for traditional signs with static messages..."

Palm Beach Jewelry, Art and Antique Show, West Palm Beach

Feb 15

Third Thursday Art Walk, Islamorada

Feb 15

Downtown Gallery Walk,

Punta Gorda Feb 16-17

Annual Historic House

Tours, Key West

Feb 16-18

Greek Fest Fort Myers, Ft Myers

Feb 17-18

Sanibel Arts and Crafts

Fair, Sanibel Island

Feb 16-25

Delray Beach Open,

Delray Beach

Feb 17-19

Artigas Fine Arts

Festival, Jupiter

Feb 19

VKOC Kid's Day Camp,

Miami

Feb 19-25

The Honda Classic, Palm

Beach Gardens

Feb 21-25

SoBe Food Fest, Miami

Feb 21-26

Food Network and

Cooking Channel South

Beach Wine & Food

Festival, Miami

Feb 22-March 4

Southwest Florida and

Lee County Fair, North

Fort Myers

Feb 24-25

Swamp Cabbage Festival,

LaBelle

Feb 24

Burrowing Owl Festival,

Cape Coral

Feb 24

Punta Gorda Wine and

Jazz Festival, Punta

Gordapark (during the

show)

Tickets start at \$65

Feb 24-25

Old Island Days Art

Festival, Key West

Feb 24-25

-- C.T. Bowen, Tampa Bay Times

[Read entire article here](#)

Snipe Signs:

"Hillsborough County cracks down on illegal placement of signs"



Photo: WTSP

"Snipe signs -- you see them everywhere; while you're driving, walking or riding your bike. You probably had no idea how many problems they cause.

Now, two men in Hillsborough County have made it their mission to get rid of as many illegal signs as possible. **The public can help, too.**

Sometimes even before the sun is up, Jim Reed and Bill Staley hit the pavement along State Road 60 in Brandon. One after another, they pick up the signs that they call 'roadside spam.'

'Free TVs, free money, we will pay for your rent, we will give your groceries, this that,' Reed said.

Snipe signs are illegal in the right-of-way in Hillsborough County. The signs can't be installed on public property, but the law is difficult to enforce. It is why drivers and pedestrians see these signs at busy intersections in the county...

Annual Upper Keys
Gigantic Nautical Flea
Market, Islamorada
Feb 24-25
Street Painting Festival,
Lake Worth

North

Feb 1
The Venardos Circus, St
Augustine
Feb 2
First Friday Art Walk, St
Augustine
Feb 2-4
Hoggetowne Medieval
Faire, Gainesville
Feb 3
Long Weekend Music
Festival, Gainesville
Feb 3
Dance Love Life,
Jacksonville
Feb 3
Double Bridge Race,
Pensacola
Feb 4
Tallahassee Marathon and
Half Marathon,
Tallahassee
Feb 7
Paint and Sip to benefit
Walk to End Alzheimer's,
Jacksonville
Feb 10
Artrageous Artwalk,
Fernandina Beach
Feb 10
Field Day Music Fest,
Tallahassee
Feb 10
Beatles Tribute,
Pensacola
Feb 10
Mardi Gras, Pensacola
Feb 15
The House that Jazz
Built, Ocala
Feb 16
Once Upon A Time,
Gainesville
Feb 16-17
Olustee Festival and Craft
Show, Olustee/Lake City

Anyone can pick up the signs. They are considered litter. Besides the fact that they are not visually appealing, the signs end up in storm drains, can be a hazard to the county crews and can promote scams.

There is a lengthy list of prohibited signs in Section 7.02.02 of the county code. It is important to note that most of these signs are allowed on private property.

'We have collected 56,000 signs from Eastern Hillsborough County,' Staley said.

That's about 150 signs per week. Last year, Hillsborough County Code Enforcement officers picked up an added 70,000 snipe signs.

It's important to note that Staley and Reed can't show partiality, but they do not always pick up lost pet signs or yard sale signs right away. The pair picks up everything else, sometimes right after the sign is put up. Staley and Reed have volunteered for almost seven years and hope the community learns a lesson...

Anyone who wants to volunteer to help pick up snipe signs should visit the Hillsborough County website. If you decide to go out on your own, remember not to pick up signs on private property."

-- Hilary Zalla, WTSP

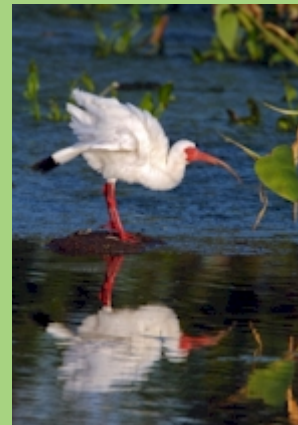
[Read entire article](#)

Snipe Signs: "Destin continues battle vs. snipe signs"

"Another week, another batch of 'snipe' signs removed.

Feb 16-17
Sandestin Gumbo
Festival, Destin
Feb 16-18
Steinhatchee Fiddler Crab
Festival, Steinhatchee
Feb 17-18
Five Points of Life Race
Weekend, Gainesville
Feb 23-25
Dancing with the GODS
Weekend, Gainesville
Feb 24-25
Seawalk Music Festival,
Jacksonville Beach

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



That Whac-A-Mole-like scenario is a routine part of the workload of code enforcement officers, including those who work for the city of Destin..."

-- Tony Judnich, NW Florida Daily

[Read article here](#)

Orlando: Council OKs program to swap old billboards for digital ones



Photo: Orlando Sentinel

Orlando commissioners Monday OK'd a plan that aims to remove billboards from the city's neighborhood streets by allowing them to be swapped out for digital signs along major roadways.

The Digital Billboard Exchange Program, approved unanimously by the City Council, will allow companies to build digital billboards along Colonial Drive, Orange Blossom Trail and International Drive, among other main arteries, in exchange for tearing down several traditional billboards in other areas.

The city is specifically targeting 16 billboards in its main street districts such as Mills 50 and College Park. Chief Planner Jason Burton said the program's

goal is to cut back on “visual clutter” and encourage development.

Anti-billboard advocates argued the city could have required the removal of more standard billboards in exchange for each new digital sign, and that digital billboards are distracting to drivers...

'As we move this city forward into a true metropolitan city my hope is that we do complete exchanges, and the whole city is full of digital boards,' said Commissioner Regina Hill, who called standard billboards 'outdated.'

-- Orlando Sentinel

[Read entire article](#)

Legal:

"Longboat sign code rewrite not to be heard again until after elections"



Photo:YourObserver.com

"Longboat Key commissioners shelved until after the March elections a sign code town staff have been rewriting for more than a year to meet Supreme Court standards of content neutrality..."

The latest iteration of Longboat's proposed sign code allows, among many other regulations, two

temporary signs per property which may be permitted by the property owner or his or her agent for six months. This includes one two-square-foot sign and one four-square-foot sign with a one-square-foot informational rider (like 'for sale,' 'this way,' etc.).

It was the cost of permitting a sign that gave commissioners trouble. The former code permitted four five-square-foot political signs, which were, and still are, exempt from permitting and the fees accompanying them, according to Code Enforcement Officer Chris Elbon.

'You think it's hard getting people to run [for the commission] now, just wait until they have to pay \$1,000 for signs,' said At-Large Commissioner Jim Brown.

Political signs would be treated as any other temporary sign under the new code, all of which would require permitting. District 2 Commissioner George Spoll suggested removing all temporary sign permit requirements for 30 days before an election.

'[Permit costs] interferes with the most basic part of our democracy, the ability to reach out in an election,' Spoll said...

Signs exempt from permitting under the proposed code include government signs, signs carried by a person, historical signs and regulatory signs.

Revenue from temporary signs ranges between \$300 and \$600 each year, said Finance Director Sue Smith..."

-- Bret Hauff, YourObserver.com

[Read entire article here](#)

Complete Streets:

"Bike Dreams"



Photo: Roberto Gonzalez

"Can we ever find a path that leads to bicycles and cars sharing the road in harmony? Many believe so. Here's a bit of history and a look to the future. ...Cyclists and many of Central Florida's civic and government leaders have been promoting biking in recent years, whether it is the occasional weekend rider who throws his/her bike in the back of the SUV and heads out to a multi-use path like the popular West Orange Trail in Winter Garden or someone who pedals to work rather than driving a car.

Leading the push are people like Billy Hattaway, a former Florida Department of Transportation administrator who used to be primarily involved with building roads. A cyclist, Hattaway was hired last year by Orlando Mayor Buddy Dyer to head up the city's transportation department. Among his goals: getting more people to hop on bikes—and not just on the annual ride to work day that the mayor usually leads...

The problem facing Hattaway and any area cycling enthusiast is that bikes were not a part of the equation when Metro Orlando started to grow, even though Florida's subtropical climate makes being outdoors a viable option year-round, albeit a hot, wet and muggy one through much of the year.

Starting in the years after World War II, the car became the main—and only—choice to get from Point A to Point B. Roads, as a result, were built wide and often straight, the sole intent being to move motorized vehicles at the fastest speed, practical or not.

Development became more dispersed over time with self-contained subdivisions springing up throughout the region, often connected to the rest of the community by major four- and six-lane roads hosting an endless string of strip malls anchored by a supermarket or pharmacy chain. Quite simply, people on foot or bikes were not really considered in the transportation plans...

Orlando, Hattaway says, has adopted a complete-street philosophy that contends roads are for everyone, not just cars and trucks. The city, as a result, has been adding painted bike lanes to roads and widening sidewalks from 5 and 6 feet to 12 feet to encourage everything from walking to biking to rollerblading. The City Council also passed an aspirational resolution in December calling for a 'Vision Zero' plan to eliminate deaths and serious injuries to pedestrians by 2040.

Orlando now has more than 300 miles of bike lanes and multi-use paths, with more planned. A \$9 million pedestrian bridge is under construction at Colonial Drive near Interstate 4 and should open in the fall.

There are 26 bike-only or multi-use paths covering more than 150 miles scattered throughout Orange, Seminole, Lake, Volusia and Osceola counties. Some of those will become part of the planned 250-mile coast-to-coast bike-only connector that will link St. Petersburg and the Gulf of Mexico with Titusville on the Atlantic. About 69 miles of gaps need to be filled in. The proposal is more than \$63 million short on funding, according to the Florida Greenways and Trails Foundation.

Like many cities and counties in Central Florida, Orlando does not really have a budget dedicated solely to cycling. Instead, it typically will stripe in a bike lane with funds it has for repaving a road or if a street is torn up for new sewers and then rebuilt."



Photo: Roberto Gonzalez

"Peter Martinez, who helped start the Juice bike share program in Orlando five years ago, says those renting the sturdy orange cycles put out by his former company invariably stopped when they reached a major road like Colonial. Quite simply, he says, they wanted nothing to do with the traffic.

'You have to know how to navigate the streets,' he says about riding in Metro Orlando.

Local actor and filmmaker Ricardo Williams knows how to get about because he likely is the most prolific Juice biker around. He reckons he has ridden some 5,800 miles on the rentals since the spring of 2015. Most of his trips cover two to three miles, but he occasionally will throw in a 20-miler. He owns a car and drives it for longer trips.

The bikes, he says, are more convenient than driving because they relieve him of worrying about parking since he lives downtown and does much of his business there. Yet, as much as he rides, he often worries about being hit—which has happened three

times in recent years. Fortunately, all the mishaps were minor, he says, and he escaped injury.

The Juice program now rents more than 200 bikes at nearly 30 locations throughout Metro Orlando. It started with four sets of racks and 20 cycles.

One group of riders has set out to dispel the notion that bikes don't belong on Metro Orlando streets. They meet after work at Loch Haven Park on the last Friday of every month to ride seven to eight miles through downtown, then back to the starting point.

The ride, similar to ones held all over the country, is called Critical Mass. Usually 150 to 300 men, women and children pedal along, taking up an entire road lane—which bicycles are allowed to do, by law. The Orlando Police Department has no issues with Critical Mass, says department spokeswoman Michelle Guido.

'It's a pretty cool event,' says Brandon Tuma, who participated in Critical Mass for five years. 'We show up to ride bikes and have fun and to make people aware bikes are on the road...'

-- Dan Tracy, Orlando Magazine

[Read entire article](#)

4401 Emerson Street, Suite 10
Jacksonville, FL 32207
