



Florida Headlines

Billboards

[Legislative train wreck a vehicle for advertisers](#)

Scenic Highways

[Workshop for Bartram scenic highway scheduled for June 24](#)

Farmland Protection

[Court rejects Lake Okeechobee backpumping ban](#)

Scenic Things to Do

[Scenic travel calendars](#)

Other Scenic Views

[Interior secretary promises to revitalize Everglades](#)



Citizens for a Scenic Florida, Inc. is dedicated to preserving and enhancing Florida's scenic heritage. But it needs your support. This newsletter comes to you free whether you are a member or not. But we hope you will join us to work together to keep Florida the scenic place it is. Joining is easy and rewarding.

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National News:

New Safety Report Urges Major Restrictions on Digital Billboards

A major report has been issued that for the first time recommends policies to improve the safety of digital billboards by severely limiting appropriate locations for the signs and establishing new criteria governing sign behavior, including the frequency with which the brightly illuminated electronic images should be allowed to change.

Digital Billboard



Written by renowned human-factors expert Jerry Wachtel, the report, [Safety Impacts of the Emerging Digital Display Technology for Outdoor Advertising Signs](#), was produced as a project of the National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP) of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO).

Special

Have you ever wanted to hear how candid our presidents can be in private conversations. Listen to a recorded telephone conversion of LBJ discussing his views of the billboard industry. [Click here.](#)

Billboards

Legislative train wreck a vehicle for advertisers

In Print: Wednesday, May 20, 2009

In the waning hours of the legislative session, state lawmakers approved a 56-page transportation bill that contains everything but the kitchen sink. Among the inappropriate, unwise or irrelevant items packed into this bill are several that could lead to more or bigger advertising signs along Florida roadways. One provision could even result in Florida losing more than \$163 million in federal highway money. There are more than enough reasons for Gov. Charlie Crist to veto this legislative train.

It has become commonplace for goodies for the powerful outdoor advertising industry to be buried in

catchall bills like HB 1021. Under the guise of "An act relating to transportation ... " there are these provisions in the bill that relate more to advertising than transportation:

- Billboards on the same side of interstate highways could be every 1,000 feet apart, rather than the current 1,500 feet apart, in Hillsborough County. Hillsborough officials did not ask for this provision, don't like it and don't know why the county was included in what is described as a pilot program for Hillsborough, Orange and Osceola counties and the city of Miami.
- Along federal highways, so-called "wall murals" — giant ads hung on the sides of high-rise buildings — are subject to limits on size and location contained in federal law and in agreements between the states and U.S. Department of Transportation. But HB 1021 would let cities and counties ignore federal provisions and make their own decisions about wall murals. A letter from the Federal Highway Administration warns the legislation conflicts with federal law and could subject Florida to a penalty of 10 percent of its annual federal highway funding, which this year would be \$163,044,523.
- The installation of pay-telephone booths would be permitted within the right-of-way of any city, county or state road. Since cell phones have made pay telephones almost obsolete, this provision seems odd until you read on: Each telephone booth could contain up to 24 square feet of advertising. This would turn street rights of way, which are public property, into venues for commercial advertising.
- While current law limits the frequency with which popular changeable billboards may switch messages so that they are not a distraction for motorists, the bill eliminates that reasonable safety provision. There is plenty to dislike in this bill even beyond the outdoor advertising giveaways. Just one example: Any commercial or industrial project related to a port would not be designated as a development of regional impact, even if that project were up to three miles from the port. Some very large projects with substantial impact on communities could avoid the extra layers of review required by the DRI process.

Last year the governor wisely vetoed a bill similar to HB 1021. This one deserves the same treatment.

[Return to Headlines](#)

Scenic Things to Do

Scenic travel calendars

The Sun-Centinel publishes monthly travel calendars of interesting things to do in Florida. Some of you sent your own calendars to be included. Time and space prevents researching every city so if you would make sure your local events are included in the Sun-Centinel calendars then the rest of the state will know about them. Here are links to the upcoming May events:

[North Florida & the Panhandle Travel Calendar for June](#)

[South Florida Travel Calendar for June](#)

[Central Florida Travel Calendar for June](#)

[Return to Headlines](#)

Scenic Highways

Workshop for Bartram scenic highway scheduled for June 24

From Staff | Posted: Friday, June 5, 2009 ; Updated: 12:42 AM on Friday, June 5, 2009

The public is invited to participate in a follow-up design workshop on a master plan for the William Bartram Scenic & Historic Highway Corridor Management Council.

St. Johns County and consultant Glatting Jackson will hold the workshop June 24 at the St. Johns

County Northwest Annex, 725 Flora Branch Blvd., St. Johns.

The workshop includes several sessions, and the public is welcome to attend any or all:

- * 1:30 to 2:30 pm: Corridor Architecture
- * 2:30 to 3:30: Shands Pier area Enhancements
- * 3:30 to 4:30: Logo and Signage Design
- * 6:30 to 8: Brochure and Newsletter Meeting

This workshop follows an initial design workshop held in January and will review the progress of the conceptual drawings related to corridor architecture, Shands Pier area enhancements, logo and signage improvements, and a brochure and newsletter.

The citizen-led William Bartram Scenic & Historic Highway Corridor Management Council is working in coordination with St. Johns County to develop a master plan for the highway.

This plan will address recreation and open space improvements, signage and way-finding, land development, and related transportation improvements.

State Road 13 has been designated a Florida Scenic Highway by FDOT.

The conceptual designs developed during the January workshops are available at www.glatting.com/williambartram.

For information, go to the Web site or call St. Johns County Principal Planner Vickie Renna at 209-0615.

[Return to Headlines](#)

Farmland Protection

Court rejects Lake Okeechobee backpumping ban

Water managers may pump canal water into Lake Okeechobee even if it's contaminated, an appeals court ruled.

BY WALTER PUTNAM

Associated Press

ATLANTA -- A federal appeals court on Thursday reversed a Miami judge's ruling that Florida water managers violated the Clean Water Act by pumping contaminated water from farmland into Lake Okeechobee.

The decision hinged on what a three-judge panel of the 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals termed the "ambiguous" language of the federal anti-pollution law. The judges said they had no choice but to accept the Environmental Protection Agency's interpretation that transferring polluted water from one navigable body to another does not require a permit.

The decision overturned a 2006 ruling by U.S. District Judge Cecilia M. Altonaga of Miami, who concluded that the South Florida Water Management District had failed to obtain the necessary permits for backpumping operations.

David Guest, an attorney for one of the environmental groups that had sued to stop the pumping, said the full 11th Circuit Court would be asked to reconsider the decision.

The district has pumped water from canals along sugar-growing lands into Lake Okeechobee since the

1970s, both for flood control and to maintain water levels in the lake during times of drought.

The canal water contains what Circuit Judge Ed Carnes in Thursday's opinion called "a loathsome concoction of chemical contaminants," including nitrogen, phosphorous and ammonia.

Friends of the Everglades, the Florida Wildlife Federation and other groups filed suit in 2002 to stop the pumping. The suit was joined by the Miccosukee Tribe of Indians, which considers the 730-square-mile lake and the Everglades part of its ancestral home.

They maintained -- and Altonaga agreed -- that the pumping constituted a "discharge of a pollutant" under the Clean Water Act and required a National Pollution Discharge Elimination System permit. The water district appealed the ruling, concerned that it could complicate necessary movements of water and add costs to a broader effort to restore the Everglades.

[more...](#)

[Return to Headlines](#)

Other Scenic Views

Interior secretary promises to revitalize Everglades

Secretary of Interior speaks to Herald Editorial Board

U.S. Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar talks about the Everglades, the environment, and oil drilling during an interview with the Miami Herald Editorial Board Thursday, May 28th, 2009.

Miami Herald Staff



By **CURTIS MORGAN**

cmorgan@MiamiHerald.com

Saying the federal government had "not kept its end of the bargain," the Obama administration on Thursday promised to pay its fair share of an Everglades restoration effort now estimated to reach \$22.5 billion and to make long-stalled projects a top priority.

"We are committed to it. We will get it done," said Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar, the highest ranking White House executive to visit the Everglades since President Barack Obama took office four months ago.

Salazar, a former Colorado senator who spent nearly two hours aboard an airboat flanked by U.S. Sen. Bill Nelson and Florida Gov. Charlie Crist, was struck momentarily verb-less after his foray across the

shimmering marshes of Broward. He called the experience: ``Awesome! Crown jewel! Natural wonder!"

Such tours are mandatory for any incoming Interior secretary, whose department oversees Everglades National Park and other federal lands, and many an aspiring national politician has made similar pledges with sawgrass providing a scenic media backdrop. But this one broke from many federal pledges in the past, in that Salazar put his mouth where the money already is.

[more...](#)

[Return to Headlines](#)

Wilton Rooks

Scenic Watch Editor