

# Scenic Watch

Citizens for a Scenic Florida



June 15, 2010

## Top News:

**Crist Signs 1271, House Transportation Bill - Despite Scenic Florida's Recent Letter**

June-July



Fun Festivals and Events

North Florida

**June 17-19**

Suwannee River Jubilee, Live Oak

**June 25-26**

Panhandle Watermelon Festival,  
Chipley

**June 25-26**

24th Annual Greek Landing Day  
Celebration, St. Augustine

**July 11**

Summer Jazz Concert Series,  
Jacksonville Beach

**July 19-24**

Greater Jacksonville Kingfish  
Tournament, Jacksonville

**July 22-24**

Smokin' on the Suwannee BBQ  
Festival, Live Oak

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Central Florida

**May 15**

**Thru June 19**

Sarasota Music Festival, Sarasota

**June 17**

Seaside Fiesta, New Smyrna Beach

**Orlando Sentinel Editorial:**

*"Billboard Betrayal*

*At the industry's bidding, legislators affirmed a dubious policy."*



"State lawmakers, including one of Central Florida's own, added a new chapter in this year's legislative session to the state's sorry history of bowing to the billboard industry. Buried in a sweeping transportation bill headed to Gov. Charlie Crist, lawmakers included an amendment that would allow more billboards in more places in Florida.

The amendment was spoon-fed to lawmakers by industry representatives, and it was also swallowed by state regulators in the Department of Transportation. The groups that have served as the only true watchdogs for the industry in Florida were never at the table.

The sponsor of the bill, Republican state Rep. Mike Horner of Kissimmee, insists the amendment merely 'clarifies' current state policy toward approving locations for billboards. But that policy is already far too lenient. It violates the spirit, if not the letter, of the decades-old federal law that controls billboards.

That law, the Highway Beautification Act, restricts billboards to areas zoned for commercial or industrial development. But Florida has been allowing billboards in other zones, including residential and agricultural, as long as special exceptions have been made within them for 'commercial uses.' Those uses might include day-care centers, golf courses or even home-based businesses.

An egregious example of this policy is in Leon County, where the state allowed a double-sided, lighted and rotating 'tri-vision' billboard in an area zoned 'lake protection.' Such zones normally are intended for homes and nature trails. State officials say the billboard is allowed because the sign is within 800 feet of a business.

**June 18-20**

Harvest Festival, Clermont

**June 26-27**

Downtown Dunedin Craft Festival,  
Dunedin

**July 3-4**

Red, White and Zoo, Sanford

**July 10**

East Coast Cruiser Night, New  
Smyrna Beach

**July 17**

Snooty the Manatee's Birthday Bash  
and Wildlife Awareness Festival,  
Bradenton

**July 28**

Hyde Park Village Live Music Series,  
Tampa

**July 29**

Music on the Beach Concert, Tarpon  
Springs

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## South Florida

**June 19-20**

Invasion of the Giant Reptiles, Davie

**June 19-20**

Redland Summer Fruit Festival,  
Homestead

**June 19-20**

Downtown Venice Craft Festival,  
Venice

**July 10**

Underwater Music Festival, Big Pine  
Key

**July 10-11**

International Mango Festival, Coral  
Gables

**July 10-11**

MangoMania Tropical Fruit Fair, Pine  
Island

**July 14, 28**

Jupiter Lighthouse Sunset Tour,  
Jupiter

**July 19**

Bluegrass Music at John D.  
MacArthur Beach State Park, North  
Palm Beach

**July 30-Aug. 8**

Key Largo Wine and Food Festival,  
Key Largo

Obviously, if businesses like day-care centers are enough to transform residential, agricultural or even 'lake protection' zones into prime territory for outdoor advertising, new billboards could be popping up in Florida like mushrooms after a spring rain.

This policy needs to be stopped, not clarified. Mr. Horner, who represents a largely rural district, said it was 'not his intent' to allow more billboards in Florida. If so, he got snookered.

The Legislature last rewrote the law on billboards in 1999 after stakeholders on all sides — including the watchdog groups — spent two years working out the details. This time, the watchdogs didn't know what was coming. Now, they're barking.

This wouldn't be the only time in recent years that Florida had bent over backwards for the billboard barons. After the hurricanes of 2004 and 2005, the state allowed the industry to replace 200 billboards in locations where they no longer conformed with zoning regulations — a violation of federal regulations. To escape a federal penalty, Florida ended up pledging to spend \$15 million to remove nonconforming billboards on Interstate 75.

At least one of the industry watchdogs, Citizens for a Scenic Florida, has asked Mr. Crist to veto this year's transportation bill. We can't go that far, because the bill also would accomplish other, more worthy transportation objectives. Vetoing it would nullify all its provisions for at least a year, unless the governor revives it without the billboard amendment and adds it to the agenda of a special session he might call on offshore drilling or ethics. But we don't think a special session is justified.

Instead, Mr. Crist — who seems to be getting back in touch with his green roots now that he has left the Republican Party — should reassemble the group that did the last rewrite of state law on billboards. That group can straighten out the mess that lawmakers and regulators have made, and bring Florida back in sync with the Highway Beautification Act. "

-- Editorial Orlando Sentinel, May 15, 2010



**New Generation of Billboards:**

**Spray Smell Devices!**

**Are They Covered by Your Local Code?**

We wonder how downwind residents and retail business owners will feel about their property being sprayed with scents. Unlike the scented candles and air fresheners that many residents purchase, these scents have not been selected by the people being subjected to them.

How will a bakery owner feel if the normal daily smell of baking bread is covered up by the mint freshness of a toothpaste ad or Calvin Klein's Obsession? Or an asthma patient suddenly smelling BBQ smoke?

"MOORESVILLE, N.C. —

The smell of steak along Highway 150 in Mooresville is coming from what could be a one-of-a-kind scented billboard for a grocery store. The billboard for Bloom, a division of Food Lion, is fashioned into the shape of a gigantic piece of steak on a fork. However, the most appetizing part of the billboard might not be the picture. It smells like uh, Barbecue, like hickory or something like that

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Note from the Editor

Suggestions for improvement are always welcome.

being Barbecued and smells like steak,' one motorist described.

The scent is emitted by a high-powered fan at the bottom of the billboard that blows air over cartridges loaded with the BBQ fragrance oil, said Murray Dameron, marketing director for Charlotte-based ScentAir, which provides custom scents and fragrance-delivery systems for businesses, including hotel lobbies, casino gambling and retail stores."

-- Orlando Sentinel

[Read The Article Here>](#)

### **Florida GIVES Lamar \$2.5 M For Adding New Technology to Billboards**



"Lamar Advertising recently announced plans to spend \$12.5 million over the next two years to add small wind- and solar-power generating systems on 1,370 large roadside billboard across Florida in eight markets, including Daytona Beach.

'We think this is the right thing to do,' said Robert Switzer, vice president of operations for Lamar Advertising of Baton Rouge, La. 'The billboards are visible and will serve as a way for the state to get the message out that solar is easy and doable. Just put it out there, and it works for 20 to 25 years.'

...

It took Lamar about two years to convince the state to assist the project with a \$2.5 million grant through funds the Governor's Energy Office receives from the U.S. Department of Energy.

...

Daytona Beach officials threw Lamar a curve ball recently, denying the company permits to erect the wind-powered turbines that have a 20-foot-tall tower capped with small propellers on top of the billboard. 'Our code officers said the propellers are animation and moving signs, and those are prohibited,' city spokeswoman Susan Cerbone said. 'Lamar said that state statutes overrule the city codes so the attorneys are discussing it.'..."

-- Bob Koslow, Daytona Beach News Journal

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**St. Petersburg Battle Update:**

***"Neighborhood Group Officials***



***not included in St. Petersburg  
Digital Billboard Negotiations"***

"...On Thursday, the City Council held its third workshop since December to talk about allowing digital billboards in St. Petersburg. Clear Channel Outdoor and CBS Outdoor, the two companies with the largest number of billboards in the city, want to remove older billboards in exchange for putting up fewer digital billboards. Representatives from the Council of Neighborhood Associations attended, but were not included in the discussions. 'This is the second workshop where a proposed ordinance supposedly brought forth by city staff has allowed comment from special interests in the billboard industry, but not the public,' said Travis Jarman, who chairs the cityscape subcommittee for CONA. 'We don't understand why preferential treatment is being given to the industry....'"

-- Michael Van Sickler, St. Petersburg Times

[Read Complete Times Article >](#)

### **Quirky Technology Added to Billboards**

#### **Are These Covered in Your Code?**



French Billboards Call Nearby Cell Phones

German Billboard Squirts Water On Passersby When Called

"...Under early experiments for more sophisticated marketing, the user has to key in a code to receive a text message that can be used as a discount

voucher or some other enticement - or in the case of one garden center advertisement in Germany, to have a billboard squirt water on passersby...."

-- Thomas Crampton, New York Times

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### **What Happens When City's Bus Shelter Advertising Partner Doesn't Make a Profit?**

**City To PAY \$220,000**

**"It's Just Business" - Lamar**

"Augusta, GA - Lamar Advertising wants the city of Augusta to pay up or the company plans to take down local bus shelters. City leaders met behind closed doors hoping to hammer out a deal to keep local bus riders out of the elements.

'On a hot day like this,' said bus rider Marvin Mims, 'you need these shelters.' News 12 was there as Lamar Advertising met with the city hoping to unload the shelters.

'They are not out here having to deal with the heat, the cold, the rain," said bus rider Joseph. 'They are in their plush offices.'

Lamar says it is nothing personal. It is just business..." -- Chris Thomas, WRDW 12.1 Augusta

-- Thomas Crampton, New York Times

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### **What Happened in NC After A Few Digital Billboards Were Installed?**

*"No further placements on NC highways for 1 year"*



"DURHAM -- Two local legislators have joined a N.C. House colleague from Greensboro in sponsoring a bill that would slap a one-year moratorium on further placements of electronic billboards alongside the state's highways..."

-- Ray Gronberg, Herald Sun

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