

# Scenic Watch

Citizens for a Scenic Florida



July 16, 2010

## Top News:

### Advertising on Bus Benches and Shelters Under Consideration by Florida Cities

As expected during an economic downturn, many communities here in Florida are considering bus shelter advertising or the installation of advertising on benches to help them balance the budget. Both Clearwater and St. Petersburg are looking into such agreements.

Metropolitan Advertising has approached several city governments around the state. Here's exactly what the advertiser is intending to sell to their advertisers via examples shown on their web site.

[See Metro Bench Examples By Clicking Here>](#)

Many other bus shelters and benches are going to new technology and now even have digital advertising that is interactive.

When city leaders consider the issue, they may not be aware of some very creative ads that could negatively impact the functionality of these structures for bus riders.



Photo: Sukle Advertising

### Avoid Assumptions When Writing Your Ordinances?

Just like digital billboards these ads could behave in radically new ways near future: Imagine bus riders being submitted to BBQ smells, splashing people with water, twitters from passing motorists, etc.

#### July-August



#### Fun Festivals and Events

#### North Florida

#### July 19-24

Greater Jacksonville Kingfish Tournament, Jacksonville

#### Aug. 7

Funday and Possum Festival, Wausau

#### "Clear Channel Spent

**\$940,000**

**on 1Q Lobbying"**

**Aug. 7-8**

St. Joseph Bay Scallop Festival, Port  
St. Joe

**Aug. 7-8**

First Weekend Union Garrison,  
Fernandina Beach

**Aug. 8**

Summer Jazz Concert Series,  
Jacksonville Beach

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## Central Florida

**July 17**

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

**Aug 7**

WaZoo, Lowry Park Zoo, Tampa

**Aug 7**

National Lighthouse Day, Ponce  
Inlet

**Aug 14**

Caribbean Night and Island Market,  
Ormond Beach

**Aug 15-16**

Pioneer Settlement Outdoor  
Extravaganza, Barberville

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## South Florida

**July 15-18**

IFE-ILE Afro Cuban Dance Festival,  
Coconut Grove



Photo: Bill Jonson

"Clear Channel Communications Inc. spent \$940,000 in the first quarter lobbying the federal government on local radio ownership rules and other issues, according to a recent disclosure report.

That's more than the \$819,000 the radio station owner and outdoor advertising company spent in the fourth quarter, and more than the \$760,000 it spent in the first quarter of 2009.

Clear Channel also lobbied on congressional oversight of digital billboards, enforcement of broadcast decency rules and diversity of ownership of telecom businesses, according to a report filed April 20 with the House clerk's office that covered January through March..."

-- Bloomberg Businessweek, The Associated Press, June 25, 2010



Photo:LA Times

"Lawmakers are being asked to launch a feasibility study to determine if the advertising revenue from millions of electronic license plates would help close the state's \$19-billion deficit. In addition to being a moneymaker, the high-tech plates also could be used to streamline automobile registration procedures and to quickly tell motorists about hazardous road conditions and Amber Alerts, officials suggest.

Critics warn, however, that the ads would distract drivers and add to a growing clutter of roadside digital billboards, freeway message boards and other intrusive signage. Some also fear that the computerized equipment that would control the advertising could be hacked and hijacked by vandals intent on posting rogue messages.

**California Considering**

**Digital Advertising on**

**License Plates!**

**July 19**

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

**July 20-25**

Hemingway Days, Key West

**July 30-Aug 8**

Key Largo Wine and Food Festival,  
Key Largo

**Aug 4-8**

Miami Salsa Congress, Miami Beach

**Aug 6-8**

Key West Lobsterfest, Key West

**Aug 7-9**

Roots Cultural Festival, Delray Beach

**Aug 14**

Bon Festival, Delray Beach

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**Note from the Editor**

Suggestions for improvement are  
always welcome.

Backers of the advertising idea say the digital plates could be programmed to display the ads only after an auto has been stopped for four seconds. The car's license plate number would be visible in small type at the corner of the plate when ads are being displayed, they say. The ads would disappear and the plate numbers would be shown when the car was moving..."

-- Los Angeles Times

[Read The Article Here>](#)



**How were digital signs uprooted in Va. Beach?**

**Gardeners**

"Sure, these women throw the occasional tea party. Yes, their floral arrangements are always impeccable. And there's no denying that they are of a certain age – mostly older than 50.

But as Virginia Beach's politicians and business leaders know, it is a mistake to dismiss them as little old ladies in tennis shoes. The gardeners stuck a green thumb in the eye of opponents Tuesday when the City Council voted to ban new electronic signs. They cheered from their chairs after six of the 11 on the council voted for the ban.

When it comes to the issue of signs and billboards in Virginia Beach, few groups carry as much political clout as the garden clubs. They are passionate, well-connected and unafraid to flex their pruning shears.

The clubs and members of the city's beautification commission have also been out in force in recent months battling billboard company Adams Outdoor Advertising. They have targeted council members who want to change the Beach's strict billboard ordinance to allow them to go digital. With their e-mail and letter-writing campaigns they recently got the council to defer a vote on digital billboards.

"When they speak, the council listens," said Councilman Harry Diezel, who sponsored the change in the billboard law, but who sided with the clubs on the LEDs. "They have some interesting voice power there.'..."

-- by Deirdre Fernandes, The Virginian-Pilot

[Read Complete Article >](#)

**Follow up:**

**Citizen and Press Outrage Over  
This Issue**

**"Neighborhood Group Officials**



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

**Resulted in a Major Change In  
The Way Government Conducts  
It's Business!**

Last month we reported on the City Council Digital Billboard workshops that included Billboard executives in active discussions and excluded citizen input of any type.

As a result, many local leaders and the St. Petersburg Times were incited to work on the issue of open government.

Further fuel was added to the bonfire, a City Council member used comments in the content of a Council of Neighborhoods Newsletter as an excuse to further restrict communications with citizens when he canceled an important meeting with their leaders. The article covering this issue in the St. Pete Times drew a highly unusual number of online comments from the readership, triggering an additional, hilarious article by the Times Premier Columnist, Howard Troxler.

Today St. Petersburg City Council agreed with the citizens and voted to televise additional meetings.

[Read the Michael Van Sickler, St. Petersburg Times Article >](#)  
[Read the Humorous Howard Troxler Column in the St. Petersburg Times >](#)  
[Read the Original Comments in the CONA Newsletter >](#)



**Examples of Ongoing Swap Negotiations  
Around the Country -**

**How Many Take Downs Per Digital?**

Bentonville, Arkansas -- "Bentonville officials will meet Tuesday to decide if they'll welcome digital billboards to the city.

To get one digital billboard, a company would have to trade in four existing billboard faces. Currently there are 50 billboards in the city, and the city isn't approving any new ones..."

-- Aired on 4029TV

Myrtle Beach, SC -- "...The city wants to make sure that for every one new digital billboard that goes up, two of the city's existing 111 traditional billboards come down..."

"Mozingo said there should be more time for public input on the billboard swap, and for the commissioners to make a recommendation 'because this is a planning issue.' The council has agreed to hold off on a decision for 30 days more to allow the Planning Commission to consider digital billboards. "

--by Lorena Anderson, The Sun News

[Read Bentonville Article>](#)  
[Read Myrtle Beach Article>](#)