

Scenic Watch

Citizens for a Scenic Florida



July 18, 2011

More Progress in Miami

U.S. Officials Disallow Miami's Downtown Ad Murals



Photo: The Miami Herald

"The controversial City of Miami program that allows oversized 'murals' to drape building facades downtown violates federal restrictions on outdoor ads, U.S. officials say."

"The controversial 2007 Miami ordinance that allowed 35 giant advertising banners to be draped over buildings in and around downtown violates federal regulations and requires an overhaul, U.S. officials have concluded....

...the city ordinance's standards permit murals that are too large, and possibly also too close to existing billboard signs in the area, violating rules that restrict commercial advertising along designated U.S. roadways, the Federal Highway Administration said in a June 17 letter to the state



Photo: The Miami Herald

Ironically, both the city and the county have ad banners on public buildings. The city's administration building on the Miami River sports a banner for a TV show facing I-95, while the county has a mural hanging on a downtown building near county hall. That ad is expected to generate \$1.5 million for the county over five years in rent from Fuel Outdoor, the company that provides many of the murals.

The FHA also instructed the Florida Department of Transportation, which enforces the federal rules across the state under a 1972 agreement, to review existing murals for compliance with size and spacing restrictions....

'It is obvious that city of Miami elected officials are incapable of protecting the visual beauty of South Florida from being abused and assaulted by illegal elements of the outdoor advertising industry,' Barbara Bisno, co-founder of Scenic Miami...

The city ordinance limits the number of ad banners inside the mural zone to 45, although just 35 have been permitted....



Photo: The Miami Herald

of Florida. The FHA has jurisdiction because the murals are in close proximity to Biscayne Boulevard, a designated federal highway, as well as Interstate 95, I- 395 and Interstate 195.

The FHA letter does not mean existing murals will come down soon. But it does appear to mean the city will have to redraft its ordinance to incorporate stricter limits on banner size and placement -- strictures that could bar at least some existing murals. It would also likely require Miami-Dade County to redo an amendment to its sign code that authorized the city's mural district.

The Miami Herald building sports two of the permitted ad murals, including an Apple iPad banner facing Biscayne Bay that measures 9,800 square feet. A third mural that often hangs on the south wall of the newspaper building facing the MacArthur Causeway, like a banner on the facade of the nearby Arsht Center for the Performing Arts, is permitted separately by the city as a public service ad."

Andres Viglucci -- The Miami Herald

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July - August



Fun Festivals and Events

Central Florida

July 23

Art Walk on Flagler, New Smyrna Beach

July 22-24

25th Annual Mid-Summer Dollhouse and Miniatures Show and Sale, Lakeland

July 27

Hyde Park Village Live Music Series, Tampa

July 28-30

Celebrity Mascot Games, Orlando

July 28-31

Summer Sidewalk Sale and "Survivor" Reunion, Celebration

Aug 5-6

ArtWalk, Bradenton

Aug 6

WaZoo, Tampa

Aug 6

First Saturday Jam, Barberville

Aug 7



Photo: WWF / Lory Tan

Coca-Cola Plant Billboard Absorbs Air Pollution

"...The 60 x 60 foot living billboard in Manila is made of thousands of Fukien tea plants surrounding the iconic curvy shape of a silver Coke bottle. The project with the CO2-eating plants was created in conjunction with Coca-Cola Philippines' Live Positively sustainability program"....

-- Huffington Post

[Read Article and Comment on it Here >](#)

City of Miami Fails to Opt Out of the County Sign Ordinance

Legality of Digital Billboards That Are

National Lighthouse Day, Ponce Inlet

Aug 13

Caribbean Night and Island Market, Ormond Beach

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South Florida

July 19-24

Hemingway Days, Key West

July 29-Aug 7

Key Largo Wine and Food Festival, Key Largo

July 30-31

MangoMania Tropical Fruit Fair, Pine Island

Aug 3-7

Miami Salsa Congress, Miami Beach

Aug 5, 12, 19, 26

Broadwalk Friday Fest, Hollywood Beach

Aug 12-14

Key West Lobsterfest, Key West

Aug 13

Bon Festival, Delray Beach

Aug 13

Grape Stomp Festival, Lake Placid

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North Florida

July 18-23

Greater Jacksonville Kingfish Tournament, Jacksonville

July 22-24

Smokin' on the Suwannee BBQ Festival, Live Oak

Aug 5

First Friday Art Walk, St. Augustine

Aug 5-7

St. Joseph Bay Scallop Festival, Port St. Joe



Photo:From Miami NewTimes Site

Springing Up Around Miami Questioned

"Miami-Dade County will continue to regulate billboards and other signs in the city of Miami and other municipalities, a county commission committee decided Wednesday.

Miami-Dade Commissioner Bruno Barreiro could not get a second from any of four fellow members of the land-use committee on his controversial proposal to allow Miami and other municipalities to write their own sign and billboard rules, meaning the measure died without a vote.

The lack of action, however, does not resolve simmering controversies over the legality of new digital LED billboards approved by the city in and around downtown Miami.

Miami-Dade officials say the county's ordinance does not allow the digital billboards, while state regulators say the American Airlines Arena's LED mesh, also approved by the city, violates federal regulations controlling advertising along federal highways like Biscayne Boulevard. The U.S. government, meanwhile, has said the ad banners the city has approved downtown and in surrounding districts also appear to violate federal law.

Miami officials continue to insist the ad signs are legal, but the city's liberal handling of outdoor ads -- roundly criticized by half-a-dozen billboard critics at Wednesday's hearing -- plainly left some county commissioners unwilling to surrender control of regulation. The city has signed agreement with three billboard companies allowing them to install more ads along expressways...."

-- Miami Herald

County Puts the Brakes on Miami's Bid to Cover Every Vertical Surface With Advertising

"....'It was a big win for us,' says Bill Pollak, a member of Scenic Miami, a group fighting billboard expansion. 'But there will be another fight. We hope the community sees the danger and mobilizes.'

Tim Elfrink -- Miami NewTimes

[Read "Miami-Dade County to Keep Control Over Billboard Regulation" Here](#)

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[Read Tim Elfrink's story in the Miami NewTimes Here](#)

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[Read Related Article "Bruno the Dim Loses One for the Billboard Industry"](#)

[Here](#)

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Aug 6

FunDay and Possum Festival,
Wausau

Aug 6-7

First Weekend Union Garrison,
Fernandina Beach

Aug 13

Artrageous Artwalk, Amelia Island

Aug 14

Summer Jazz Concert Series,
Jacksonville Beach

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Note from the Editor

Suggestions for improvement are
always welcome.



Listen to NPR Radio's WLRN's Tropical Currents Program

This Segment Covers Issues Related to Building Murals, Billboards, Mega Billboards and the Lack of Enforcement of Existing Laws

Scenic Miami's Peter Erhlich and Lobbyist Dusty Melton are guests on the program that aired recently. They both know their stuff and don't pull any punches. After the initial interview segment, a number of callers participated in the program, so you may want to continue listening to catch some of the comments and questions from the listeners.

"...having been one of the coauthors of the governing statute, I've been regularly offended by very sophisticated sign companies and their sophisticated lawyers and representatives seeking government approval to install signs that clearly, manifestly violate the law of our communities. I am passionate about the rule of law..." -- Dusty Melton, co-author of 1985 Miami-Dade County Sign Ordinance.

Tropical Currents Program -- WLRN Public Media For South Florida 6/20/11

[Download and listen to MP3 of the Entire Program Here >](#)
[WFLN Archive Page Here >](#)