

Scenic Watch

Citizens for a Scenic Florida



December 15, 2010

NEWS: Jacksonville

"Digital Billboards Signal Battle on Jacksonville Regulations"



Photo: Scenic Florida

"Clear Channel Outdoors has won approval of city attorneys to install digital billboards - that could change messages every eight seconds - at eight locations in Jacksonville.

But the plan faces fierce criticism by opponents who say it violates a 1995 settlement limiting billboards in the city...

Bill Brinton, an attorney for Scenic Jacksonville, the nonprofit group that pushed the billboard restrictions when voters approved them in a City Charter election, said the legal settlement of those

"..Officials Debating the Advertising Restrictions"

"I know this: It's a violation of the settlement agreement,' Brinton said...

City attorneys have determined Clear Channel can install the digital billboards under a provision in the settlement agreement allowing the company to 'rebuild and replace'" some billboards.

But Brinton and Tracey Arpen, an attorney who represented the city in the 1995 settlement, said digital billboards go beyond the intent of the agreement. In a letter to Mayor John Peyton, Arpen called digital billboards 'huge 672 square foot television screens.'

'It's like they're regulated to rebuild a fleet of bicycles and they're building a Harley-Davidson instead,' Arpen said.

He and Brinton said the city's Office of General Counsel got it right when a city lawyer determined a year ago the settlement agreement does not allow digital billboards.

In August 2009, a letter by Deputy General Counsel Shannon Eller, who no longer works for the city, weighed in on four applications by Clear Channel for digital billboards at four locations. She said the settlement agreement does not allow digital billboards because they are a different type of construction.

Clear Channel tried again by filing eight applications last month. Karl Sanders, an attorney for the company, said the advertising area on a digital billboard would be the same dimension as a vinyl billboard and therefore complies with the settlement agreement.

Sanders' letter said the settlement agreement does not refer to the kind of materials used in the advertising area of the billboard so it does not bar digital technology.

On Dec. 2, Deputy General Counsel Steve Rohan

regulations never contemplated digital billboards being allowed in Jacksonville.

sent an e-mail to Arpen stating Eller's opinion from last year is "not controlling" on the current legal review. 'We believe that the applications are not in violation of the billboard agreement, and subject to all other requirements, may be approved by the city,' Rohan wrote...'

'-- David Bauerlein, The Florida Times-Union

[Read Entire Article Here >](#)

December-January



Fun Festivals and Events

North Florida

Nov 20

Amelia Island Holiday Cookie Tour,
Amelia Island

Nov 20-21

Yankeetown Seafood and Arts
Festival, Yankeetown

Nov 26

24th annual Jacksonville Landing
Tree Lighting, Jacksonville

Nov 27

Jacksonville Light Parade,
Jacksonville

Dec 3

Camellia Christmas 2010,
Tallahassee

Dec 3-5

Suwannee Old Time Music
Weekend, White Springs

Dec 4

Sugar Cane Grinding, Newberry

Dec 4-5

45th Annual Market Days,
Tallahassee

Dec 10-11

Southern Pines Blues and BBQ
Festival, Perry

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Central Florida

Knight Foundation Study:

Aesthetics Tied to a Local Area's Economic Growth (GDP)



"... What Attaches People to Their Communities? What makes a community a desirable place to live? What draws people to stake their future in it? Are communities with more attached residents better off?

Gallup and the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation launched the Knight Soul of the Community project in 2008 with these questions in mind. After interviewing close to 43,000 people in 26 communities over three years, the study has found that three main qualities attach people to place: social offerings, such as entertainment venues and places to meet, openness (how welcoming a place is) and the area's aesthetics (its physical beauty and green spaces).

We've seen now why attachment is an important metric for communities, since it links to key outcomes like local economic growth (GDP). So, the next obvious question is: what drives attachment? After three years of research, the results have been very consistent, and possibly surprising.

First, what attaches residents to their communities doesn't change much from place to place. While we might expect that the drivers of attachment would be different in Miami, Fla., from those in Macon, Ga., in fact, the main drivers of attachment show little difference across communities. In addition, the same drivers have risen to the top in every year of the study.

Second, these main drivers may be surprising. While the economy is obviously the subject of much attention, the study has found that perceptions of the local economy do not have a very strong relationship to resident attachment. Instead, attachment is most closely related to how accepting a community is of diversity, its wealth of social offerings, and its aesthetics. This is not to say that jobs and housing aren't important. Residents must be able to meet their basic needs in a community in order to stay. However, when it comes to forming an emotional connection with the community, there are other community factors which often are not considered when thinking about economic development. These community factors seem to matter more when it comes to attaching residents to their community..."

Dec 30

Orlando Citrus Parade, Orlando

Jan 2-30

Winter Music Series - Lakeridge Winery and Vineyards, Clermont

Jan 5-6

13th Annual Snowbirds Fine Arts and Fine Crafts Show, Siesta Key

Jan 7-9

Sunshine City Antiques and Collectibles Show, St Petersburg

Jan 8-9

Sarasota Orchid Society Show and Sale, Sarasota

Jan 8-9

31st Annual Florida Rail Fair and Model Train Show and Sale, DeLand

Jan 13-23

Manatee County Fair, Palmetto

Jan 15-16

Nautical Flea Market and Seafood Fest, Tampa

Jan 15-16

34th Annual Central Florida Scottish Highland Games, Winter Springs

Jan 15-16

Coquina Beach Winterfest, Bradenton Beach

Jan 15-17

Tarpon Springs Sponge Docks Art and Craft Festival, Tarpon Springs

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South Florida

Nov 13-20

Ninth annual Miami Short Film Festival, Miami

Nov 14-20

Miami Book Fair International, Miami

Nov 26-Dec 5

Pirates in Paradise Festival, Key West

Nov 27-28

11th annual Downtown Delray Beach Thanksgiving Weekend Art Fest, Delray Beach

Nov 20-Jan1

Festival of Lights, Punta Gorda

Dec 2

Art and Jazz on the Avenue, Delray

The website for this study has data visualization tools to help understand the results for various communities across the county.

[Knight Foundation "Soul of the Community" Study Website Here >](#)
[Data Visualization Tools Here >](#)



Photo: Mikhail Fomichev

"... From every nook and cranny they scream out 'Look at me!' – and in the process Moscow's orgy of adverts is harming the city's health.

Russia's capital is ranked ninth in the world for the density and scope of on-street advertising, with the clamour of commercials higher than anywhere else in Europe. It's a psychological strain on residents – and a potentially deadly distraction for drivers.

Last year, 72 road deaths were blamed at least in part on roadside hoardings (translation: billboards), according to Ilya Kotov of the Duma advisory committee on transport.

...Notorious displays of recent years have included the wrap-around banner over the renovation work at the Moskva hotel – which was bigger than Rome's Coliseum. Historic Arbat was long distinguished by a multi-storey lingerie ad, while a residential block on Kutuzovsky Prospekt has long been bereft of natural lighting due to over-zealous admen, Newsmsk reports. And the impact of all this quickly takes its toll on Muscovites, Noviy Izvestiya reported.

.. According to psychologist Dmitry Cinarev, there is just too much to take in. "In Moscow there is more to see than just giant billboards, but citizens have no choice," he told Noviy Izvestiya. "While the human psyche defends itself from an information overload, cutting out the conscious perception of advertising, subliminally it continues to operate.

...From banners slung across major routes on precariously thin cables to a jumble of signage at busy junctions, the distractions to motorists are everywhere.

Complex legislation makes it hard to order the removal of these signs, which some say gives the city a third-world appearance...City Hall has already ruled that attaching adverts to road signs and their supports is illegal, as is creating ads which resemble ' the technical means of traffic management and special signals..."

-- Andy Potts, The Moscow News

Officials Blame

Moscow's

Overwhelming

Outdoor Advertising

For 72 Traffic Deaths

[Read the Entire Article Here >](#)

Beach

Dec 2-5

Art Basel Miami Beach, Miami

Beach

Dec 3-5

Pirates in Paradise Festival at Fort

Zachary Taylor, Key West

Dec 3-5

West Palm Beach Antiques Festival,

West Palm Beach

Dec 10-11, 17-18

Historic Lighted Inn Tours, Key West

Dec 9-Jan 1

Holiday Nights at Edison and Ford

Winter Estates, Fort Myers

Dec 11

Annual Holiday Parade and Lawn

Mower Contest, Havana

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Note from the Editor

Suggestions for improvement are always welcome.

St. Pete Times Editorial:

"Pasco County Should Resist Making Deals with Digital Billboard Companies"



"Clear Channel asked commissioners to consider allowing new digital signs if the company agreed to take down an unspecified number of its traditional billboards...

For starters, more than just Clear Channel own billboards around Pasco County. And, the proliferation of the signs is the private sector's own creation as it rushed to beat a county ban on all new billboards more than a decade ago.

The county's sign ordinance also prohibits so-called LED screens that change messages.

Despite those regulations, digital billboards have popped up in at least two locations — along U.S. 41 and at the intersection of Little Road and State Road 54. The county has yet to explain publicly how that happened.

In 2007, the Federal Highway Administration gave states the green light to approve digital billboards, as long as appropriate regulatory controls were in place. Since then, private companies have sought to replace their old signs with the new, highly profitable signs that change messages as frequently as every six seconds, allowing billboard owners to sell multiple advertising spaces in a single location.

A Clear Channel representative asked Pasco commissioners to follow the lead of other neighboring governments that have allowed the digital boards.

But commissioners need a broader view beyond the industry's spin. In Tampa, the City Council was pressed into developing a new ordinance and allowing digital boards to settle a long-running lawsuit after the city required companies to take down billboards, but offered no relocation options. There is no such lawsuit in Pasco.

In Pinellas County, commissioners opted to wait for the federal study before considering a proposal to relax its billboard controls.

And, in St. Petersburg, the negotiations became a moving target. There, Clear Channel originally it said it would remove 110 of its 144 billboards if it could erect just 10 of the new digital boards. Later, the city discovered the company doesn't have 144 billboards, but 132 so Clear Channel proposed to take down 80 old boards (actual signs, not structures) if it could put up eight digitals, a 10 for 1 swap. Still, it wanted signs to be taller than the previously agreed upon 25 feet.

Pasco shouldn't fall for any trickery. While removing some of the roadside clutter in exchange for fewer signs is worthy of discussion, the county is bargaining from a position of strength and shouldn't acquiesce to anything that

will be dangerous to motorists or add to visual pollution.

-- St. Petersburg Times Editorial

[Read the Editorial Here >](#)