

## Scenic Watch

Citizens for a Scenic Florida



December 29, 2011

### Miami: Giant Ad on City Building Promotes Drinking:

**Officials are divided over whether the mural ad should be hanging from the city building**

"Should be a giant beer advertisement be plastered on the city of Miami's main administration building?"

Commissioner Francis Suarez doesn't think so. 'It bothers me that I get complaints about it. One was from my mother, so I don't think it's necessarily the right message for the city,' said Suarez.

The giant Heineken mural advertisement hangs on the side of the Miami Riverside Center, the city's administration building in downtown Miami. Mayor Tomas Regalado told NBC Miami that the sign generates about \$10,000 per month for city coffers, and he said the city desperately needs the money...

'All ads there are worth 10 grand a month. You could put an Apple ad there. It will be worth 10 grand a month,' (Commissioner) Sarnoff said. There is an Apple advertisement for an iPad 2 on one of the county buildings in downtown. There are also other booze advertisements on other buildings but those are not owned by the taxpayers.



Video: NBCMiami.com

### Scenic Miami's Peter Erlich Speaks Out

Many think it's not appropriate for the city to be promoting beer. Peter Erlich with Scenic Miami, a group that fights visual pollution, thinks the mural ad and dozens of other billboards take away from Miami's beauty.

'We'd like the tourists and residents to look at our scenery and our iconic buildings, our trees, the palm trees. We'd rather have them not look at any ads,' he said.

The sign doesn't violate any city ordinances, but Erlich says it's likely in violation of a state law because it's so close to an interstate highway."

-- Steve Litz, NBCMiami.com

[WATCH Video and Read Article Here>](#)

Nov - Dec



Fun Festivals and Events

### Florida Trend Article: Digital Billboards are a Sign of the Times

This article is full of facts and figures about digital billboards and covers some of the various swap deals the industry has made with communities around our state. It includes coverage of the ongoing battles between citizen groups and industry lobbyists.

Attorney Bill Brinton is representing Scenic Jacksonville during their struggle with Clearchanne. He was interviewed for this article and said:

**"These battles are often fought between the industry through their lawyers and lobbyists and others they bring to the table to influence elected officials versus neighborhood associations and garden clubs and beautification organizations. Local citizens are simply overwhelmed."**

## Central Florida

**Nov 19-Jan 1**

Festival of Lights, Punta Gorda

**Nov 14-Jan 4**

Leu's Holiday House, Orlando

**Nov 26-Dec 31**

Now Snowing Nightly, Celebration

**Dec 3-31**

Annual Christmas Light Canal Tours,  
Punta Gorda

**Dec 3-30**

Wild Wonderland at Tampa's Lowry  
Park Zoo, Tampa

**Dec 29**

Champs Sports Bowl, Orlando

**Dec 31**

Orlando Citrus Parade, Orlando

**Jan 7, 14, 21, 28**

Winter Music Series--Lakeridge  
Winery and Vineyards, Clermont

**Jan 13-15**

Sunshine City Antiques and  
Collectibles Show, St Petersburg

**Jan 7-8**

Sarasota Orchid Society Show and  
Sale, Sarasota

**Jan 7-8**

38th Annual Florida Rail Fair and  
Model Train Show and Sale, DeLand

**Jan 7**

Carillon Concert at Singing Tower,  
Lake Wales

**Jan 12-22**

Manatee County Fair, Palmetto

**Jan 13-29**

South Florida Fair, West Palm Beach

**Jan 13-15**

Nautical Flea Market and Seafood  
Fest, Tampa

**Jan 14-15**

Central Florida Scottish Highland  
Games, Winter Springs

**Jan 21-22**

Venice-Nokomis Rotary Art Festival,  
Venice

**Jan 14-15**

Coquina Beach Winterfest,  
Bradenton Beach

**Jan 14-16**

Tarpon Springs Sponge Docks Art  
and Craft Festival, Tarpon Springs

**Jan 15**

25th Annual Circus Ring of Fame

[Visit Florida Trend Magazine Here>](#)

## New Study Shows Billboards Hurt Nearby Property Values

### Beyond Aesthetics: How Billboards Affect Economic Prosperity



Photo: SCRUB

"A new study shows that billboards negatively affect the values of neighboring properties. It also found that cities with strict billboard controls are experiencing greater economic prosperity than those with controls that are less strict. The report, "Beyond Aesthetics: How Billboards Affect Economic Prosperity," by urban planner Jonathan Snyder, is believed to be the first study on the economic impacts of billboards on nearby real estate values. Snyder found that in Philadelphia there is a correlation between a home's value and its proximity to billboards. He found that homes within 500 feet of a billboard are worth \$30,826 less on average at the time of sale than those properties further away from billboards. The study also found that each additional billboard within a census tract resulted in a decrease in home values of nearly \$1,000.

"This groundbreaking study proves what many people have long believed: that billboards are detrimental to the neighborhoods they hover over," said Mary Tracy, President of Scenic America. "We've known that billboards detract from a neighborhood's aesthetics, its sense of place, and the mental and physical wellbeing of its residents. Now we know that billboards have the very real impact of lowering property values." Additionally, Snyder performed a survey of billboard controls and economic prosperity in 20 cities across the United States. His report found that cities with stricter billboard controls have greater median incomes, lower poverty rates and lower home vacancy rates than city with less strict billboard controls."

To download the study go here:

[http://scenic.org/storage/PDFs/Beyond\\_Aesthetics.pdf](http://scenic.org/storage/PDFs/Beyond_Aesthetics.pdf)

-- Jim Mullen, SCRUB "Public Voice for Public Space"

[Visit www.publicvoiceforpublicspace.org Here>](http://www.publicvoiceforpublicspace.org)

## Emails Show Billboard Group Wrote Bill, Told Senator What to Say About Cutting Trees

### New Details Emerge

"State Sen. Greg Evers has admitted in the past that a lobbying group representing the billboard industry helped craft legislation he filed last legislative session. The bill made it easier and cheaper for companies to put up billboards.

Induction Ceremony, Sarasota

**Jan 16**

Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday

Carillon Concerts, Lake Wales

**Jan 14-15**

Downtown Venice Craft Festival,

Venice

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## South Florida

**Nov 19-Jan 1**

Festival of Lights, Punta Gorda

**Nov 24-Dec 31**

Key West "Bight" Before

Christmans, Islamorada

**Dec 2-Dec 31**

Holiday Nights at Edison and Ford

Winter Estates, Fort Myers

**Dec 17-23**

Holiday Evening Tours of Whitehall,

Palm Beach

**Dec 31**

New Year's Eve Celebrations, Key

West

**Dec 31**

Downtown Countdown, Fort Myers

**Dec 31**

New year's Eve Fireworks on

Blackwater Sound, Key Largo

**Dec 31**

Peace at Last, White Springs

**Dec 31**

New Year's Eve Beach Ball Drop,

Panama City Beach

**Jan 3**

Orange Bowl Swimming Classic, Key

Largo

**Jan 2**

63rd Annual Junior Orange Bowl

Parade, Coral Gables

**Jan 4**

78th FedEx Orange Bowl Football

Game, Miami

**Jan 5-8**

30th Annual Key West Literary

Seminar, Key West

**Jan 14-15**

Cape Coral Festival of the Arts, Cape

Coral

**Jan 8**

River, Roots and Ruts Trail Run, Alva

**Jan 13-16**

He filed it 'at the request of the [Florida Outdoor Advertising Association],' he said during an interview last month. 'I was doing the people's work, putting folks back to work, as our governor says.'

Now, emails between the association and Evers' staff obtained by the Times-Union in a public records request show the association provided Evers more than a helping hand. The group wrote the bill and provided the Crestview Republican with talking points used to pitch the legislation to other lawmakers.

Evers is part of a grand jury investigation looking at how billboard company Bill Salter Advertising was granted permits to cut 2,094 state-owned trees without paying required fees or filing needed mitigation plans. Earlier this year, the Times-Union reported that Evers reached out to then-Transportation Secretary Stephanie Kopelousos, who is now Clay County manager, on Salter's behalf.

Evers, Kopelousos, and Salter officials, among others, have already given testimony as part of the probe.

In a March 14 email, association president Charlotte Brand Audie sent changes to Evers' bill that lengthened it from two to 12 pages.

'The amendment includes the changes we previously discussed with Senator Evers regarding vegetation management at outdoor advertising signs,'" she wrote. 'We will prepare talking points ... for the Senator to reference and get them to you tomorrow.'

Brand Audie did not return requests seeking comment.

The changes were put in after the bill's first committee stop and added provisions that allowed companies to choose either to compile a blueprint — known as a vegetation management plan — showing how they will replace trees that are cut, pay fees to the state, or do some combination of the two. Under current law, both the plan and fees are required.

The changes also lowered from two to one the number of older — or non-conforming — signs a company has to give up when it receives a new permit. The original bill made no mention of loosening the requirements for putting up billboards.

Two days after sending the association-authored amendment, Brand Audie sent a one-page list of talking points to help Evers sell the bill during the committee process, emails show. They made no mention of loosening state billboard regulations.

In a two-pronged approach to help ensure passage of the changes, the language was also slipped into a much larger transportation bill on March 28, emails show. That bill also did not pass..."

-- Matt Dixon, Florida Times-Union

[Read Entire Article Here>](#)

Legal Case:  
Court Upholds City's Denial Of

Miami International Art Fair, Miami Beach

**Jan 13-15**

Art Deco Weekend, Miami Beach

**Jan 14**

7th Annual Florida Keys Seafood Festival, Key West

**Jan 14**

Art Under the Oaks, Islamorada

**Jan 14-15, Feb 11-12, March 10-11**

Bonita Springs National Art Festival, Bonita Springs

**Jan 14-15**

Coquina Beach Winterfest,

Bradenton Beach

**Jan 14-15, 21-22**

Medieval Faire, Fort Myers

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## North Florida

**Jan 1**

Polar Bear Plunge, Pensacola Beach

**Jan 2**

67th Annual Gator Bowl,

Jacksonville

**Jan 14**

Artrageous Artwalk, Fernandina

Beach

**Jan 12-22**

Manatee County Fair, Palmetto

**Jan 14-16**

Tarpon Springs Sponge Docks Art and Craft Festival, Tarpon Springs

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Photo: Scenic Rapid City

## Digital Billboard Request

"City officials received a signed order Wednesday from Judge Wally Eklund ruling in the city's favor in an appeal filed by the billboard company in July, assistant city attorney Joel Landeen said.

Lamar had asked the court to force the city Zoning Board of Adjustment to issue the sign building permits required to convert six existing static billboards to digital faces. But according to Landeen, Eklund said the city board was within its rights to deny the permits and require a conditional use review first.

'It's a victory for the voters,' Mayor Sam Kooiker said late Wednesday. 'The voters have spoken, and now the courts are backing up the decision.'

Lamar applied for the building permits in early April, only a few days after a citizen group turned in petitions to trigger a citywide vote on new billboard restrictions. Rapid City voters overwhelmingly approved the two initiated measures in June to ban new digital billboards within city limits and further limit the size and spacing of new static billboards.

City staff and the Zoning Board denied the Lamar requests on the basis that each required a location-specific conditional use permit from the city Planning Commission before the building permits could be issued. But the billboard company argued that in the past, the city had not required the conditional use permits to change existing signs and therefore should not have denied the building permits.

In upholding the city's denial of the permits, Eklund said Lamar's reliance on past city approvals was not reasonable, according to Landeen.

'They applied for these signs a year after they had already been informed that they were going to need to get conditional use,' Landeen said. 'It was hard for them to argue that it would be unfair for them to not be issued at that point.'

In 2010, Lamar sued the city after two conditional use permits to convert static boards to digital were denied; the parties later settled on allowing the conversion on East Anamosa Street and denying the other on Mount Rushmore Road...

Supporters of the initiated measures, though, said they were glad to hear that at least for now, Lamar will not be allowed to put up any more digital billboards.

'It truly is a reinforcement of where the community and its opinion are, and where it wants to go,' said Lisa Modrick, president of Scenic Rapid City, the group that championed the initiated measures.



### Note from the Editor

Suggestions for improvement are always welcome.

'It's very positive. It's positive for everyone. It wasn't just Scenic Rapid City that worked so hard.' "

-- Emilie Rusch, Rapid City Journal

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