

# Scenic Watch

Citizens for a Scenic Florida



February 28, 2010

## Editor's Message New Look!

Wilton Rooks is a tough act to follow as the Scenic Watch editor. Thank you, Wilton, for many years of dedicated service here in Florida and for the many hours spent editing this newsletter. Of course, Wilton is not retiring. He will continue to work on scenic issues with Scenic Georgia.

You may notice that we are making some changes, but rest assured that we will strive to make sure you continue to get the relevant information that you may need to keep Florida Scenic.

-- Trudy Barker, Editor Scenic Watch

## Legal News:

### Clear Channel loses at the U.S. Second Circuit Court of Appeals

Footnote 7: "Essentially, Plaintiffs have benefited from their own misconduct and now suggest to this Court that the City should be precluded from enforcing its zoning scheme because it has not always enforced its regulations in a manner that would allow it to achieve full compliance. That cannot be the law."

[Read the Case Here](#)

## March



Fun Festivals and Events

## North Florida

### March 5-7

Greater Good Music, Art and Children's Festival, Milton

### March 6

Fourth Annual Red Ribbon Historic Homes Tour, Crystal River

### March 6-7

Weeki Wachee Swamp Fest, Weeki Wachee

### March 6-7

## Breaking News

### St. Petersburg Council Falls for "Rope-a-Dope"

#### Citizen Groups outraged at unfair treatment during city workshop session.

In a disappointing decision, on February 25th the St. Petersburg City Council agreed to move forward with negotiations to allow digital billboards in their city.

At their afternoon workshop, the Council was swayed by arguments from the billboard industry and the city's own legal staff. The Council accepted the idea that the city needs to approve an agreement with Clear Channel because "the state may swoop in with legislation that will take away the city's ability to regulate billboards". This, in spite of the fact that it looks like there is NO SUCH LEGISLATION IS ON THE HORIZON AT THE FLORIDA LEGISLATURE during this session.

Sadly, this tactic is just another page taken directly from the industry's Rope-A-Dope playbook.

Citizens are outraged that three Clear Channel representatives were permitted to make multiple presentations while concerned citizens and knowledgeable Council of Neighborhood Associations representatives were not allowed to speak or present information during the meeting.



[Read More >](#)

Azalea Festival, Palatka

**March 6-7**

Floral City Strawberry Festival, Floral City

**March 15-17**

Garden Week 2010 at Cummer Museum of Art and Gardens, Jacksonville

[Read More >](#)

## Central Florida

**March 4-March 17**

Florida Strawberry Festival, Plant City

**March 6**

St. Cloud Life Extravaganza: Celebrating Mardi Gras, St. Cloud

**March 6-7**

Thirty-third Annual Leesburg Fine Art Festival, Leesburg

**March 27**

Wing Break '10, Orlando

[Read More >](#)

## South Florida

**Feb. 6-March 13**

Carnaval Miami, Miami area.

**Feb. 26-March 7**

Southwest Florida Lee County Fair, North Fort Myers

**March 2-23**

Sanibel Music Festival, Sanibel Island

**March 4-6**

Sanibel Shell Fair and Show, Sanibel Island

**March 6**

Conch Shell Blowing Contest, Key West

**March 6-7**

Carnaval on the Mile, Coral Gables

**March 6-7**

Asian Culture Festival, Homestead

**March 6-7**

Las Olas Art Fair Part II, Fort Lauderdale

**March 20-21**

Peace River National Arts Festival, Punta Gorda



## Tell the Voters First!

### Digital Billboard Was a Rude Surprise to Neighbors

These articles illustrate what happens when residents are kept in the dark about upcoming digital billboards until it's too late.

"South St. Paul residents took the floor of the West St. Paul City Council meeting Feb. 8 to officially voice their discontent with the newly installed digital billboard along the Highway 52 border of West St. Paul." - Southwest Review News

"...the 80-foot-tall dynamic digital billboard...stretches 48 feet, with an LED digital sign that changes every eight seconds." A

neighbor said "I saw this tower going up, and it kept getting higher....we had no idea this was going to be put up. I'm still flabbergasted" She went on to describe it as "an enormous plasma TV that I cannot turn off". According to the article, South St. Paul homeowner Nikki Laliberte feels that "...the new giant eye pollution near her home is too much". The homeowner also was quoted saying "I have Sean Hannity staring at me all day and I cannot stand it....it's like that painting where the eyes move. He's watching me everywhere I go in my house." - Pioneer Press

[Southwest Review News Article >](#)

[Pioneer Press \(image - top of page\) >](#)

[Pioneer Press \(image - bottom of page\) >](#)

## State Government - as an Ad Agency?

### Will Florida be Next?

The Governor in CA is gearing up to sell ads on freeway electronic signs and the state's electronic transportation signs could be commercial electronic billboards.



[Read More >](#)

Bee file photo 2002



## Rush to Convert to Digital Billboards?

### Digital Billboard Executives and Professional "Lobbyist" Working In Communities Around Florida!

Various city and county officials in communities around Florida have begun to decide that it's best to not be in a rush to allow digital billboards. They have expressed a variety of concerns about the new technology in terms of safety, liability, impact on current sign ordinances, fit with community visioning and planning, residents expressing reluctance and many other issues; both known and unknown. Their hesitation may be spreading, but it's not over yet as the billboard interests actively lobby for conversion to digital in many communities around Florida.

Pinellas [Read More >](#)

[Read More >](#)



### Note from the Editor

Suggestions for improvement are always welcome.

Just for fun....if you want to guess the date for the first Myrtle beach article with the theme of "outraged citizen/homeowner", you can send it along to the editor.

The person with the closest guess will be nominated for the coveted Scenic Visionary Personage Award - SVPA.

Winner will not receive a tshirt or a mug...hey, this isn't PBS.

St. Petersburg [Read More >](#)

Tampa [Read More >](#)

### Judge: Turn off Electronic Billboard

**Blair Township can pull the plug on an expensive electronic billboard that violates its zoning ordinance.**

In Michigan, a "township sued Lamar OCI North, a division of Lamar Outdoor Advertising, for failing to obtain a township permit when it replaced an existing billboard with the LED sign.

Existing billboards can remain as a legal, non-conforming use, but the township requires signs conform with its ordinance when improvements or repairs exceed 30 percent of value.

The new sign replaced a double billboard that was non-conforming because of its size, height, and proximity to other billboards." - Travis City Record Eagle



[Read More \(scroll down\) >](#)

### Other Recent News

- [Around Florida](#)
- [Around the Nation](#)
- [Around the World](#)

**Here's a collection of links to items that we found interesting and collected here for you.**



Clear Channel doesn't own as many billboards in St. Pete as first thought

[Read More >](#)

Lamar posts loss for 2009

[Read More >](#)

Flashy signs on road to Myrtle Beach

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A Digital Billboard that Watches You....

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3D Bus Shelter Advertising in UK

[Read More >](#)

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