

Scenic Watch

Citizens for a Scenic Florida



March 2013

Summit Meeting Announcement



Photo: New York Times

April 10

A Summit on Billboards and Electronic Messaging Signs

"Civic groups in Miami have 'had it' with the continuous battle against these forms of urban blight.

As just one an example, in the photo above, there are giant billboards blocking the views out the windows at the Miami Herald Offices so that staff members can no longer actually SEE the view.

They a called a summit meeting on:

"Billboards: How Did We Get Here and How Do We Get Out."

The panel discussion will include William Brinton, Esq., a leading national authority on scenic issues and billboard regulation.

A concrete plan of action will result from this summit which is sponsored by Miami Neighborhoods United, MiMo Biscayne Association, Scenic Miami-Dade, Inc., Scenic Miami, Inc, the Upper Eastside Preservation Coalition and the Urban Environment League of Greater Miami.

Attendees from across the state are expected and there is no charge to attend the summit. Donations will be accepted.

Those who wish to attend the summit are asked to RSVP to scenicmiamidade@gmail.com.."

March - April



Fun Festivals and Events

Central Florida

March 27-April 1

Sun 'n Fun International Fly-in and Expo, Lakeland

March 30-April 1

Spring Car Show & Swap Meet, Daytona Beach

March 31

Florida Black Bear Festival, Umatilla

March 30-April 28

DeSoto Heritage Festival, Bradenton

March 27-April 1

Sun 'n Fun International Fly-in and Expo, Lakeland

April 3

Moonlight Carillon Concert at Bok Tower Gardens, Lake Wales

April 7

45th Annual Run Forrest, Run!
Easter Beach Run, Daytona Beach

April 12-15

Celebration Exotic Car Festival, Celebration, Orlando and Daytona Beach

April 13-22

Sarasota Film Festival, Sarasota

April 13-14

Central Florida Dragon Boat Festival, Tavares

April 13-15

Gulf Coast Rhythm and Ribfest, Palmetto

April 13-15

State Legal:

Scenic Florida Weights In On Several Key Points In the FDOT Proposed Changes to Chapter 479

Scenic Florida has requested that FDOT reconsider several proposed amendments to the Florida Statute covering Outdoor Advertising, Chapter 479.

New limit on fines for illegal tree cutting

We suggested that the potential fine of \$1,000 per "sign facing" be changed to per "tree." We pointed out that the recent tree loss of approximately 2,000 trees that had a value of approximately \$2 million would clearly support such a proposal.

New spacing

We suggested that the pilot plan for shortened spacing (1,500-feet to 1,000 feet) along the interstates be eliminated, and certainly not expanded as is being considered.

[Visit Scenic Florida website here>](#)

Miami:

New Move to Plaster Ads on Parking Meters and Every Other Surface



Photo: Part of a failed experiment in New Orleans. "All 600, purchased for a steep \$450,000, have been junked..." Times-Picayune

Second Reading of Proposed Ordinance April 4

On February 14, 2013, a City of Miami ordinance allowing ads on trees, curbs, fire hydrants, etc. was heard on first reading. . The ordinance passed on first reading that day with oral changes after City and County Commissioners and administrators had received thousands of objecting emails from Scenic Miami-Dade supporters.

On March 14 the ordinance came up for second reading and enactment but now it provided, as SR5, for ads only on parking pay stations owned by the Miami Department of Off-Street Parking (DOSP). Each 'ad' would also have lots of public information and maps.

Tampa Bay Blues Festival, St. Petersburg

April 14

Dark Sky Festival, Harmony

April 14-15

Fifth Annual Tarpon Springs Sponge Docks Art and Craft Festival, Tarpon Springs

April 14-15

9th Annual Island Earth Days, Honeymoon Island State Park

April 21-22

Mainsail Arts Festival, St. Petersburg

April 21-22

Blues at the Winery, Clermont

[Read More >](#)

South Florida

Feb 24-26

Everglades Bluegrass Festival, Miami Beach

Feb 24-26

Greek Fest, Fort Myers

Feb 24-March 4

Southwest Florida and Lee County Fair, North Fort Myers

Feb 25-26

Annual Old Island Days Art Festival, Key West

Feb 25-26

17th Annual Upper Keys Gigantic Nautical Flea Market, Islamorada

Feb 18-March 11

Carnaval Miami, Miami area

Feb 25

Burrowing Owl Festival, Cape Coral

March 31

Annual Spring Fine Arts Festival, Englewood

April 7-8

Orchid and Bromeliad Show & Sale at Flamingo Gardens, Davie

April 8

Underwater Easter Egg Hunt, Key Largo

April 12

Miami Riverday Festival, Miami

April 13-15

Sharks Tooth Festival, Venice

April 14

Sharks Tooth 10K run, Venice

April 14

Scenic Miami-Dade County, Inc., supporters flooded the commissioner and administrator offices with emails again, this time with objections stating that a materially and substantially changed ordinance must be heard on first reading as a new ordinance.

The objections were based on a Florida Attorney General opinion (AGO 82-93 10/29/82). The State Attorney General states 'the original general purpose of a measure cannot be changed by amendment on passage'; the enactment process mandated by state law must start anew to accommodate a substantial amendment. Changing the general purpose from allowing ads on everything in or adjoining the public right-of-way to ads on parking payment machines only sounded pretty substantial to Scenic Miami-Dade supporters. They reminded commissioners the ordinance would be void if passed on second reading March 14.

After much debate on the dais on March 14, Commissioner Francis Suarez made the motion and Commissioner Michelle Spence-Jones seconded the motion that the ordinance be heard on first reading. The motion passed unanimously. The ordinance then passed on first reading. Only Miami City Commissioner Frank Carollo voted against this ordinance on all occasions.

On April 11, this ordinance will probably come up for second reading.

Scenic Miami-Dade County supporters will now ask that the ordinance explicitly prohibit ads on single space parking meters as well as prohibit internal or external lighting. Further, they will request that these ads be limited to the Coconut Grove business district as well as be limited in size and number."

-- Scenic Miami-Dade

[Visit Scenic Miami-Dade, Inc. website>](#)

Legal:

Competing Sign Company's Attorney Weighs In Against Clear Channel's Assertions

"Clear Channel's assertion that its digital billboards promote public safety makes no difference. The Sign Ban was not enacted for the purpose of incentivizing occasional public safety announcements. An occasional Amber Alert does not advance aesthetics and traffic safety in Los Angeles, but compliance with zoning laws does."

-- Attorney for Summit

LA City Attorney Demands Take Down of 100 Digitals Now

Earth Day Celebration at Bahia Honda State Park, Big Pine Key

April 14

Naturescaping 2012 -- A Green Celebration, John D. MacArthur Beach State Park

April 15

18th Annual Bay Jam, Islamorada

April 18-21

Miami Wine and Food Festival, Miami

April 20

Las Olas Wine and Food Festival, Fort Lauderdale

April 20-21

Cardboard Boat Regatta, Cape Coral

April 20-29

Conch Republic Independence Celebration, Key West

April 21

TurtleFest, Juno Beach

April 21

Coral Springs Craft Guild Spring Show, Coral Springs

[Read More >](#)

North Florida

March 29-April 7

Clay County Agricultural Fair, Green Cove Springs

April 5-7

Antique Tractor and Engine Show, White Springs

April 6-9

Paddle Florida, Lee

April 7

Bluegrass in the Park, Silver River State Park

April 7-8

The Villages Craft Festival, The Villages

April 13-15

George's Music Springing the Blues, Jacksonville Beach



Photo: Daily News Los Angeles

"Calling for an end to the 'billboard wars,' City Attorney Carmen Trutanich on Thursday appealed to two sign companies to remove nearly 100 digital billboards erected across Los Angeles.

Standing in front of a large blinking sign at the intersection of Santa Monica and Sepulveda boulevards, Trutanich called for CBS Outdoor and Clear Channel, the owners of about 100 digital displays, to take them down.

'I'm asking Clear Channel and CBS to turn off these signs,' said Trutanich, who is running for re-election. 'The days of backroom deals are over.'

On Thursday, Trutanich also filed a court order asking the L.A. Superior Court to order the digital displays shut down and the digital signs faces removed..."



Photo: Daily News Los Angeles

'... In a statement, Clear Channel, which owns about 80 of the 100 signs, indicated it won't take them down until a final court order is issued. The company re-affirmed its plans to sue the city if forced to remove the digital signs.

April 14-15

Fifth Annual Tarpon Springs Sponge Docks Art and Craft Festival, Tarpon Springs

April 15

Spring Festival, Alachua

April 18-29

37th Annual Pioneer Days High Springs, Downtown High Springs

April 20-21

Apalachicola Antique and Classic Boat Show, Apalachicola

April 20-21

Down Home Days Festival & PCA Rodeo, Madison County

April 20-22

Jacksonville International Boat Show, Jacksonville

[Read More >](#)



Note from the Editor

Suggestions for improvement are always welcome.

CBS Outdoor didn't immediately return a phone call.

Thursday's press conference was the most vocal challenge to the sign companies by Trutanich. The lawsuit has dogged the city for more than 7 years.

The 100 billboards were erected as a part of a backroom deal between then-City Attorney Rocky Delgadillo, and CBS Outdoor and Clear Channel. The companies were allowed to put up the displays, in return for taking down a small number of static signs, despite an existing citywide ban on digital billboards.

That prompted a lawsuit by Summit Media, a competing sign company. An appeals court sided with Summit last fall and ordered a lower court to revoke the permits. The California Supreme Court declined last month to hear the case, upholding the appeals court ruling.

In a statement, Clear Channel Outdoor spokesman David Grabert said the company won't act until the court issues an order.

'The City Attorney has called for specific guidance from the Court in their forthcoming order, we also await this direction. Until these final orders are received, we will continue to legally operate our digital signs in L.A.,' Grabert said.

On Thursday, Trutanich also called for the Superior Court to be specific when it issues its order. The City Attorney's office fears that sign companies will skirt around the court's direction.

For instance, a court order could tell the Department of Building and Safety to revoke the sign permits, but Clear Channel could appeal that Building and Safety decision, and tie up the issue through city bureaucracy.

Clear Channel and CBS Outdoor have a financial interest in challenging any attempt to bring down the signs, which can earn \$100,000 a month.

Last month, attorneys for Clear Channel told city officials they would sue the city for at least \$100 million if forced to take down the displays.

Trutanich also extended an olive branch to the sign companies, calling for the formation of a working group of sign industry executives and community leaders to help craft new digital sign policies. A similar working group was formed last year by City Hall leaders.'

. -- Daily News Los Angeles

[Read entire column here >](#)