Scenic Watch

Breaking Legal News:

"Federal Appeals Court Hears Oral Arguments In Landmark Digital Billboard Case"

"On September 25, 2007, the Federal Highway Administration issued a so-called Guidance Memorandum to its Division Offices.

The Guidance reversed a long held position of the Headquarters Office as to the prohibition on intermittent lighting.

This prohibition is found in nearly all Federal-State Agreements.

FHWA headquarters opined that changes in messages through lighting every 4 seconds were not intermittent, and therefore not prohibited.

This implied that digital billboards operating in such manner were consistent with customary use in 1965.

Exactly eight years later - September 25, 2015 - the question of customary use and the legality of the Guidance were before a three judge federal appeals court in Washington, D.C."

[Hear the oral arguments from court website](#)
Note: The court's site may be slow when downloading the .mp3

International Coastal Cleanup Day

Massive Efforts Across Florida

September 19 was a big day in Florida. The news media is full of reports about volunteers who were out collecting trash along the coast and in our waterways across our state. The final numbers take a while come in on exactly how much trash was collected statewide, but it's clear that this was a massive effort.   Here's just a few places that are much more scenic as a result of the efforts.

Bradenton Beach

Fun Festivals and Events

Central and West

Oct 1-4
Port Orange Family Days, Port Orange
Oct 3
Central Florida Fall Harvest and Peanut Festival, Williston
Oct 3
Children's Cane Pole Fishing Tournament, DeLeon Springs
Oct 3, 24
Oktoberfest, Casselberry
Oct 9-11
MusicFest, Winter Garden
Oct 9-11
Daytona Blues Festival, Daytona Beach

Photo: Grant Jefferies, Bradenton Herald

"Dozens of volunteers worked to pick up about 120 pounds of trash along Coquina Beach on Saturday morning as part of the kickoff for the Keep Manatee Beautiful event, which is part of the 30th annual International Coastal Cleanup, the world's largest single-day volunteer effort to clean up beaches, lakes and rivers.

No strangers to volunteer work, Girl Scout Troop 705 came to help with the beach cleanup.

'There's a lot more trash than I though there would be, and bones. I never pictured there to be bones on the beach,' said Annabelle Martin, 12, a seventh-grader at State College of Florida Collegiate School, which requires community service.

Cigarettes butts were the most abundant find, she said.

'You can throw away your own cigarette butts. There's a place just for them or you can put them in the normal garbage,' Annabelle said.

Fellow Girl Scout Katelyn Roundy, 12, and a seventh-grader at Nolan Middle, helped sort the finds.

'I thought it was very useful and fun,' she said. 'The place looks a lot cleaner than it did before.'

The girls and other volunteers helped sort the trash collected so it could tracked and included in an annual index of global marine debris. The data will be collected worldwide and released after the International Coastal Cleanup concludes in October..."

-- Jessica De Leon, Herald

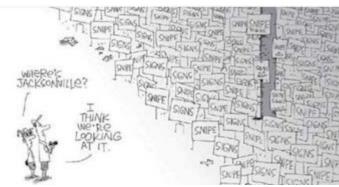Photo: Traci Moyer, News Leader

Miami

Photo: Caitlin Granfield, Miami Herald

"During the 30th annual International Coastal Cleanup Day, about 2,400 volunteers of all ages Saturday helped beautify more than 30 miles of coastline at 40 sites in Miami-Dade County — by picking up 10 to 12 tons of trash and recyclable materials..."

-- Caitlin Granfield, Miami Herald

Read entire Bradenton Herald article here
Read entire Miami Herald article here

Jacksonville:
"Finally Action on Snipe Signs"

Drawing: Scenic Jacksonville

"Since 2014, more than 4 tons' worth of signs have been eliminated through two highly successful "Snipe Sign Buyback" events

But for too long, proposed legislation to further discourage the explosion of snipe signs — by gradually increasing the fines imposed on repeat offenders — hasn't been able to get beyond the blight panel's desk to final approval by the entire City Council.

The reason for this gridlock?

There has been torturous fretting about endless hypothetical scenarios and potential 'unintended consequences' that might arise by making snipe sign violators more accountable for littering the city.

For instance:

'Oh, what if this affects the Westside grandmother who happens to put up a handwritten sign on her oak tree on a Sunday morning, hawking her homemade honey?'

Answer: It won't. The legislation is largely designed to deter repeated snipe sign offenders who flood neighborhood corners and blocks with their seemingly endless supply of signs.

Or:

'Gosh, what if a Southside hardware store happens to print some signs for someone who then tacks them on telephone poles — and they're taken down for being snipe signs. Couldn't that possibly lead to a convoluted chain of events where Mr. Friendly Hardware Store Owner has to close down his business?'

Answer: No. Come on, now. No.

All this handwringing has left the effort to drive through snipe sign legislation in a puzzling state of limbo.

"We just can't seem to get to where we want to go on this," said Councilman John Crescimbeni, a blight committee member who has been leading the effort to toughen the fines on snipe sign offenders, during a recent panel session...

Crescimbeni's frustration is understandable. And one reason is because other communities have been able to figure how to make repeated snipe-sign violators pay a heavy price for plopping their eyesores across neighborhoods.

St. Petersburg, for example, has a robust ordinance that allows it to fine chronic violators up to $500 per snipe sign for cluttering up the community with their tacky junk.

And at last look, there's been no reports from St. Petersburg of honey-selling grandmas being taken away in handcuffs for signs stuck to oak trees.

Or corner hardware stories across the city putting up "Closed — Forever" signs in their windows...

And the current members on the city's blight-fighting committee should do what's necessary to make that [legislation] happen..."

-- Editorial Staff, Florida Times-Union

[Read entire article here](#)