

Scenic Watch



Covering
Dec
2020
News

National Award: "Selby Lights in Bloom returns for open-air holiday show in Sarasota"



Photo: Mike Lang, Sarasota Herald-Tribune

"Florida Reindeer with lighted horns flock to Lights in Bloom every year. Over 2 Million LED lights are



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used to transform Selby Gardens...

Still basking in the glow of national recognition, Marie Selby Gardens' annual outdoor lighted holiday display returns this year with a few safety tweaks. Selby Lights in Bloom made USA Today's Top 10 Botanical Garden Holiday Lights shows in 2019... Thru Jan 2."

-- Vicki Dean, Sarasota Herald-Tribune

[Read entire article](#)

Land Preservation: "Pinellas County, City Of Dunedin In Lockstep On Douglas Hackworth Property"



Photo: Sierra Club

"...Pinellas County Government and City of Dunedin officials have announced new developments in the effort to acquire land in North County for environmental preservation and passive recreation.

'We're very pleased with the public and private funding commitments we've been able to garner

[the Orlando Times Travel Calendar here](#)



thus far for the property, and look forward to working with the estate to preserve the property for future generations,' said Pinellas County Administrator Barry A. Burton.

'Our community believes acquisition of this property is an intergenerational imperative,' said Dunedin City Manager Jennifer K. Bramley. 'The City of Dunedin looks forward to working with our partners, both public and private, to place a strong offer before the estate.'

County and City officials also announced they will submit a joint application next week to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection for a Florida Communities Trust state grant. They hope that the grant, coupled with an ongoing community fundraising effort, would contribute toward the final acquisition and environmental restoration costs for the Douglas-Hackworth property..."

-- Sarasota Herald-Tribune in Patch.com

[Read entire article](#)

Scenic Jacksonville: "A Gift for Sulzbacher Village - for renewal and growth in 2021"



Photo: Scenic Jacksonville

"Scenic Jacksonville is happy to announce our gift of natural beauty to the entrance of Sulzbacher Village! Now, the center is graced with trees and a landscaped garden that matches its mission of growth and renewal for families and children. 'This has been a collective effort by so many to make this happen, just in time for the holidays and with Spring around the corner,' said Susan Caven, president of Scenic Jacksonville. 'We are thrilled to make an important contribution to this special place.'

Scenic Jacksonville donated the landscape design by Board Member Karen McCombs, and the butterfly garden that will enhance the entrance and complement the live oaks, little gem magnolias and palm trees in the right of way.

Many thanks to the team effort included John November and the Public Trust Environmental Legal Institute of Florida who managed the overall project, the City of Jacksonville and the Tree Commission for approving the funding the trees, Alfred Romeu of Native, Uncommon Plants for installation - and of course the amazing Cindy Funkhouser, CEO of Sulzbacher Center for her help in making the the property more attractive and inviting for both residents and visitors.

'What a beautiful time to plant the perennials, Oaks, Little Gem Magnolias, Fringe trees and the Washingtonia Palms along the streets around the Village. As the Village grows, so will the landscape!' added Caven.

Sulzbacher Village is a community of permanent and emergency housing for women and families. Located near Gateway Center just north of downtown, the village also houses a pediatric health center offering care to children in the surrounding area."

-- Scenic Jacksonville

[Read Scenic Jacksonville's article](#)

Greenspace: "Clearwater voters reject bid to redevelop Landings Golf Course"



Photo: Google Earth, Tampa Bay Newspapers

"Landings referendum

Clearwater voters Nov. 3 soundly rejected a bid to transform the Landings Golf Course into a light industrial complex.

Just over 61% of voters (35,464) voted no on a referendum question on whether the city could lease approximately 58 acres of city-owned property across the street from the Clearwater Airpark to Harrod Properties.

The owners of the course currently lease the property from the city for \$1,000 a month. City code states that voters must approve the sale of any city-owned property identified as recreation/open space on the comprehensive land use plan...

City economic development officials say redeveloping the underused golf course into an industrial park would've brought major financial benefits, including generating \$9.735 million for the

city during its first 10 years and also creating 3,281 jobs with an average salary of about \$47,000.

Council member Kathleen Beckman and many neighbors of the project led the charge against it, claiming it wasn't compatible with the area and expressed concerns about traffic and the environmental impact of eliminating the green space...

'Once these 77 acres are gone and they're not green anymore, they're gone,' Beckman said in June."

-- Chris George, Tampa Bay Newspapers

[Read entire article](#)

Holiday Placemaking: How Downtown Lansing's Ornaments Became A Cult Fave"



Photo: Abigail Censky, WKAR PBS

"The big red ornaments sitting in the roundabout in front of the Capitol have been a Lansing tradition for more than a decade. But, last year—there was a chance that they'd disappear forever before a good Samaritan stepped in...

Craig Terrill is one of the brains behind the online satire platform Lansing Facts. Their followers know the ornaments as the Orbs of Winter...

Tragedy struck in December of 2018 when a driver hit the sculpture and drove away leaving the ornaments broken. Many assumed once they were taken down, they'd return fixed the following holiday season.

Ty Forquer is the Chief Advice Officer at Lansing Facts. He said, when the 2019 holidays were approaching the Lansing Facts team checked in on some of the city's big holiday decorations.

'There was a social post about the tree going up. And we're like, alright, we're on. We're on Orbs of Winter watch, you know, look for these coming up soon. And the deputy mayor tweeted back at us and said, Well, they're not coming back this year, they were damaged, we're not going to repair them.'

Immediately there was a public outcry from people who were concerned their favorite city decorations had become casualties. Cathleen Edgerly is the Executive Director of Downtown Lansing Inc. She said her office was fielding some of the calls...

One concerned young man even offered to start a GoFundMe campaign to foot the \$7,000 dollar repair bill that the city wasn't prepared to pay...

'We have folks who use it for proposals, for their family holiday Christmas cards,' said Edgerly. 'I think it really caught people off guard to hear that this thing that they expect to be there is not going to be there. And you know, I think, like I said, it revealed his weird affection that maybe a lot of us did not know we had...'

In a Christmas miracle, before they were gone forever local real estate owner and retired racecar driver Paul Gentilozzi stepped up to pay for the repairs—restoring the oversized fiberglass ornaments

to their original condition..."

-- Abigail Censky, WKAR PBS

[Read entire article](#)

Tree Planting: "Planting helps restore longleaf pine forests in Florida, other coastal states"



Photo: AP in Tampa Bay Times

"Scientists estimate that longleaf savannas once covered an area bigger than Germany. By the 1990s, less than 3 percent remained in scattered patches.

When European settlers came to North America, fire-dependent savannas anchored by lofty pines with footlong needles covered much of what became the southern

United States. Yet by the 1990s, logging and clear-cutting for farms and development had all but eliminated longleaf pines and the grasslands beneath where hundreds of plant and animal species flourished.

Now, thanks to a pair of modern-day Johnny Appleseeds, landowners, government agencies and nonprofits are working to bring back pines named for the long needles prized by Native Americans for weaving baskets. The trees' natural range spans the

coastal plain, nine states from eastern Texas to southeast Virginia and extending into northern and central Florida.

Longleaf pines now cover as much as 7,300 square miles – and more than one-quarter of that has been planted since 2010.

'I like to say we rescued longleaf from the dustbin. I don't think we had any idea how successful we'd be,' said Rhett Johnson, who founded The Longleaf Alliance in 1995 with another Auburn University forestry professor.

That's not to say that the tall, straight and widely spaced pines will ever gain anything near their once vast extent. But their reach is, after centuries, expanding rather than contracting...

Of the 1,600 plant species found only in the Southeast, nearly 900 are only in longleaf forests, including species that trap bugs as well as fire-adapted grasses and wildflowers.

The forests harbor turkeys and quail – but also about 100 other kinds of birds, nearly 40 types of animals and 170 reptile and amphibian species found only among longleaf. One is the gopher tortoise whose burrows shelter scores of animal species including mice, foxes, rabbits, snakes, even birds, and hundreds of kinds of insects...

Because most longleaf acreage is privately owned, 80 percent to 85 percent of the planting so far has been on private land, said Carol Denhof, president of The Longleaf Alliance.

Another 5,160 square miles must be planted or reclaimed from stands overly mixed with other tree species to meet the initiative's 2025 deadline, she said. 'I'm hopeful we can get there but ... we have a lot of work to do.'...

About 400 acres of land returned to longleaf were planted by the Alabama-Coushatta Tribe of Texas,

for their needles. But branches from most of the first planting are now too high to reach. So Gesse Bullock, the tribe's fire management specialist, said he is pushing for another planting on the 10,200-acre reservation.

Basket weavers include the tribe's realty officer, Elliott Abbey. 'When I was younger,' he said, 'I thought it was work – something my aunts made me do,'

Now, Abbey said, 'It strikes me in the heart that this could die out.'"

-- Janet McConnaughey, AP, Tampa Bay times

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