

Scenic Watch



News from
December
2021

Year ahead:

"Will space advertising take off in 2022?" Current dark skies issues even without advertising



Photo: Scott Kelly/NASA via AP

"Plans to advertise from space have been around for decades, but the latest proposals have met fierce criticism.

In August, the Canadian company Geometric Energy Corporation (GEC) announced that it wanted to launch a small satellite with a billboard on it on a SpaceX rocket. The story immediately went viral, and SpaceX and GEC received a barrage of criticism.

In 2019, Russian entrepreneur Vlad Sitnikov got caught up in a similar controversy. 'I'm an ad guy', Sitnikov told Al Jazeera. 'So I thought it would be cool to see a new type of media in the sky...'

'A big wave of hate crushed me. I decided to halt the project, because people around the world started hating me.' His start-up, StartRocket, has been in limbo ever since.

A key objection to space advertising proposals is that they will contribute to light pollution from space, a problem that is growing even without ads in orbit.

Advertising in outer space might seem like a vulgar idea, but it's one with a long history. It's also getting more popular because the cost of going to space is falling. But the side effects, such as light pollution and space debris, might not be worth it...

Not in my low earth orbit

With space becoming more accessible, and less costly to access, proposals for using space for advertising or entertainment purposes have been increasing. Besides the GEC and StartRocket projects, Japanese start-up ALE wants to use satellites that drop small balls to create artificial shooting stars on demand - a proposition that raised close to \$50m in venture funding.

One key objection to these proposals [space advertising schemes] is that they will contribute to light pollution from space, a problem that is growing even without ads in orbit.

'Until recently most of our work had been on ground-based light pollution', said Jeffrey Hall, director of the Lowell Observatory, and chair of the American Astronomical Society's Committee on Light Pollution, Radio Interference, and Space Debris. 'The issue of light pollution from space is new territory for us, and it only started in 2019 with the launch of the SpaceX Starlink satellites,' he told Al Jazeera.

Large, so-called 'constellations' of small, low-flying satellites have boomed in recent years. For example, SpaceX Starlink wants to launch tens of thousands of

satellites to offer internet connections all over the world.

For astronomers, however, to observe space they need relatively dark skies. Yet bright outdoor lights on land, or satellites that emit or reflect light, like the Starlink constellation, can ruin what they do. And Hall fears space billboards might make the problem worse.

'Satellites leave very bright streaks in images', he said. 'The streaks can saturate pixels in the image, and completely ruin it...'

'Things are moving so fast it makes sense to slow down until we understand the impacts of what we're doing', said Hall. Space law

It is possible that space law will prevent satellite billboards. Space is subject to the 1966 Outer Space Treaty, which sees space as a global commons.

'There is nothing specific in the treaty about space advertising', said professor emerita Joanne Gabrynowicz, director of the International Institute of Space Law. 'But article 9 does require signatories to exercise 'due regard' of other signatories' interests and to avoid 'harmful interference' to other nations' space activities,' she told Al Jazeera.

Satellite billboards that impede astronomers from observing space could be subject to this. On top of that, the US passed a national law during the 1990s that prohibits space advertising that might be deemed 'obtrusive...'

Of course, SpaceX's Starlink satellite constellation was reviewed and approved by US authorities, even though it impacts astronomy. International law also depends on how treaties are applied at the national level. The Russian state would, for example, need to decide whether it sees a Russian space advertising startup as being in line with the Outer Space Treaty. Yet there is a legal argument for blocking space advertising if it would cause too much light pollution..."

-- By Tom Cassauwers, Alazeera

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Environment:

"Destiny's death buys time for a Florida frontier and the birth of conservation movements"



Photo: Kevin Spear, Orlando Sentinel

"The expanse of wild lands between Central and South Florida was given a second chance for conservation when, in the heart of it, the Destiny development was reincarnated as DeLuca Preserve. This landscape picture here is from the neighboring of Three Lake Wildlife Management Area.

Anthony Pugliese III closed in 2005 on a \$137 million purchase of 27,000 acres he called Destiny.

The property at Yeehaw Junction in south Osceola County is surrounded by large preserves and ranches. Destiny would be the first invasion of houses and businesses amid a landscape that connects the best environments of South and Central Florida.

'It was going to be like a can opener, prying its way for more development into one of the wildest frontiers left in the state of Florida,' said Carlton Ward Jr., a conservation photographer.

Like many Florida dreams, Destiny collapsed into a heap of recriminations and legal troubles. But its failure opened the door to transformation of the 27,000 acres into DeLuca Preserve.

Pugliese was then a veteran South Florida developer from Delray Beach. His partner was Fred DeLuca, co-founder of Subway restaurants, who was cited by Forbes magazine then as being worth \$1.5 billion and the world's 512th-richest

person...

The tract they acquired had been a quarter of the 100,000-acre ranch assembled in the 1930s by Latimer 'Latt' Maxcy, who died in the 1970s as a titan among Florida ranchers.

Latt Maxcy Corp. believed the 27,000-acre sale was the region's largest land deal since Walt Disney bought his kingdom. 'At this time,' the corporation said when the deal closed, no details had been 'released as to the buyer's plans for the property.'

That would come a year later when Pugliese and DeLuca unveiled their ambitions, including features to attract a quarter-million residents.

Huge risks

They designed the community for canals, waterborne taxis powered by electricity, health clinics for the boomer generation, organic restaurants, a biomedical research center and a biomass energy plant.

Pugliese said the location, the Yeehaw Junction of three major highways, was an 'aligning of the stars...'

But the proposed development was viewed as an abomination by the Florida Department of Community Affairs. DCA was the state's vaunted watchdog for growth and development regulations.

There was a reason the per-acre price of the would-be city was relatively cheap at less than \$5,000. The land had no development permissions and was far from government services.

DCA sparred with Destiny at every juncture. Then came more resistance to the project.

The housing bubble burst and the Great Recession began in 2007. Proposed developments across Florida bled out...

Destiny's visionary, Pugliese, was sentenced in 2015 to six months in jail for defrauding DeLuca, who had died of cancer a few months earlier and whose estate took ownership of the land.

'Yeehaw Junction is rural, almost wilderness and no place for urban development,' said Thomas Pelham, DCA secretary and vocal foe of Destiny when it was in play.

A University of Florida sign for DeLuca Preserve stands near Yeehaw Junction in south Osceola County and 70 miles south of Orlando...

Hibernating giant

At the least, many environmentalists figured, Destiny's death bought time to keep one of Florida's last frontiers alive.



Photo: Ricardo Ramirez Buxeda, Orlando Sentinel

'I don't know if I was ecstatic as much as 'thank God,'" said Julie Morris [Florida program manager for the National Wildlife Refuge Association and director of the Florida Conservation Group], who grew up on ranch and natural spaces and has worked for government and nonprofit conservation groups.

'I drive by it all the time and all I could think about for years was, if this goes for development, I think I used the phrase that we might as well pack up and go home,' Morris said."

-- Kevin Spear, Orlando Sentinel via WUSF 89.7 Public Media

Read more details on new Conservation Science, view maps and understand the people behind the ranch lands and wildlife corridor movements who helped protect and preserve Florida's scenic beauty.

[Read entire article](#)

"Selby Gardens To Launch New Boat Tour Between 2 Campuses"

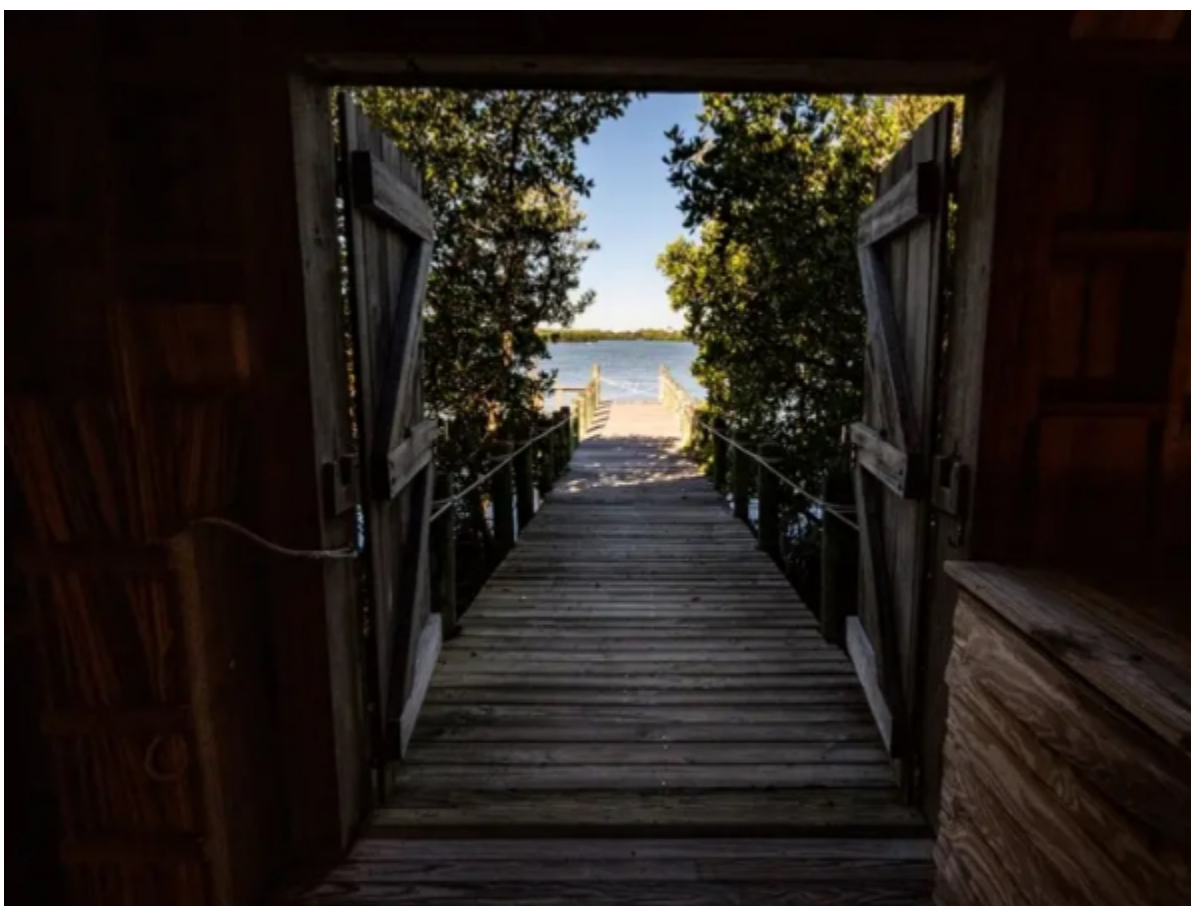


Photo: Selby Gardens via Patch.com

"The Marie Selby Botanical Gardens soon will offer visitors a brand-new, 'Old Florida' way to experience both of its bayfront campuses, according to a news release.

Starting in January, Selby Gardens will launch Selby Gardens by Boat, a boat tour that includes a narrated, round-trip cruise between its Downtown Sarasota campus and its Historic Spanish Point campus, access to both sites for self-guided touring, and lunch at the Historic Spanish Point campus...

'Selby Gardens' two sanctuaries are so significant and beloved in large part thanks to their bayfront locations,' Jennifer Rominiecki, president and CEO of Marie Selby Botanical Gardens, said. 'The water is central to the history and appeal of our two campuses, so it only makes sense to connect them by boat. This tour is going to offer an immersion into native nature, our regional history and the ecology of the area...'

Highlighting the full-day experience is roughly three hours of leisurely cruising with educational narration from Sarasota Bay to Little Sarasota Bay and back.

'It's 10 miles of beauty — a kind of aquatic garden, if you will,' said John McCarthy, Selby Gardens' vice president for the Historic Spanish Point campus. 'Then you'll arrive at our Historic Spanish Point campus the way people did 100 years ago — by boat'..."

-- Tiffany Razzano, Patch.com

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Robotic Kiosks:

"20,000 Pizza Vending Machines Are Coming to North America"



Photo: PizzaForno via Thrillist

"For years there's been buzz about a robot revolution, and it looks like it's here. PizzaForno Partners Les Tomlin and Will Moyer are leaning into the future and appeasing both the robot overlords and people who like good pizza fast by rolling out fully automated pizza kiosks across North America.

QSR Magazine reported that the pair plans to place 20,000 fully automated PizzaForno kiosks across the country by 2026. That number includes 1,000 kiosks in the United States by the end of 2022, with locations between Southern California, Louisiana, and Florida first.

'I think North America has been very late to the game on robotic food,' Tomlin told the outlet. 'I mean, look at PizzaForna—the technology has been around France for the better part of 10 years. COVID, the labor shortage, people don't want to spend 10 minutes waiting for anything. All those things add up to super fast, super convenient, super quick serve. That's where I think everybody's got to go.'

Customers who step up to a PizzaForno kiosk will be met with a 32-inch touch screen on which they can choose their pizza and how they plan to pay. The machine builds each pizza, and then a robotic arm removes it from the cold section, opens the lid, and puts it into a proprietary convection oven where it bakes. That takes between 90 and 120 seconds. The pizza is then dropped into a slot where customers can reach it. The entire process takes about three minutes. Customers can also take their pizza home cold and cook it themselves..."

-- Caitlyn Hitt, Thrillist

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