

Scenic Watch



News -
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"Turning Used Billboards Into Vinyl Backpacks"



Photo: Rareform



Image: Rareform

"What happens to billboards at the end of their advertising lives? One company in Los Angeles makes eco-friendly bags from billboards. Alec and Aric Avedissian, co-founders of Rareform, saw the need to recycle the vinyl from billboards into something more useful.

"Upcycling is going full speed ahead. From lending products a new lease of life to creating new, quality items starting from used materials, the approach affords multiple opportunities. And it is appealing to consumers. With this in mind, Californian brothers Alec and Aric Avedissian created Rareform, in 2012. Formerly an analyst, Alec Avedissian began by manufacturing surfboard bags from vinyl advertising billboards."

-- Fashionnetwork.com News

[Watch Video on Great Big Story Youtube Channel](#)

[Read Fashion Network article](#)

"Pensacola reaches agreement to save Spring Street

'heritage' oak tree in North Hill"



Photo: Tony Giberson, PNJ.com

"Pensacola has won the battle to preserve a 'heritage' oak tree on Spring Street in North Hill.

The city and property owners Larry and Ellen Vickery signed an agreement that guarantees the 61-inch diameter tree will not be cut down in exchange for the city paying the Vickerys' legal fees in the case.

Since 2019, the city and the Vickerys have been in a legal battle over the tree after the Vickerys sought to cut it down to build a new home on the vacant property.

The Vickerys complied with a new state law that allowed them to get an arborist's opinion that a tree was unhealthy or posed a risk to people or property and could be removed without having to pay the city's mitigation cost for cutting down a

protected tree.

A 61-inch tree on Spring Street in North Hill has been the center of a legal battle between a property owner who wanted to cut it down to build a new home and the city, which sought to preserve it. The city won an initial legal challenge of the tree's removal but lost two subsequent appeals, with the final ruling agreeing that the Vickerys had followed a state law as written and could remove the tree...

A city arborist inspection of the tree conducted in September found the tree to be in 'good health,' and while there were several dead branches in the crown, it posed a low risk to people or property...

The state law surrounding the case was changed this year to require the same standards for arborists to be used to determine the health of trees. The updated law strengthens the city's position in enforcing its local tree ordinance, but the courts said the new law couldn't be applied to retroactively to Vickerys' case."

-- Jim Little, Pensacola News Journal

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Legal:

"Federal appeals court upholds Madison's billboard rules"



Photo: John Hart, Wisconsin State Journal

"A federal appeals court has rejected a lawsuit by Adams Outdoor Advertising that claimed the city of Madison's sign ordinance is unconstitutional.

The city and Adams have been battling in court over the city's sign ordinances for decades, with the newly decided federal lawsuit filed in 2017. Adams owns and operates many billboards in Wisconsin, including about 90 in Madison.

Adams' federal lawsuit began as a sweeping First Amendment challenge to the city's sign ordinance under a legal standard set in a previous U.S. Supreme Court case involving another municipality. It also challenged the city's distinction between on- and off-premises signs as well as regulation of digital signs.

In April 2017, Adams submitted 26 applications to the city seeking to modify or replace existing billboards, including raising the height of structures and installing digital sign faces. In June 2017, then-city zoning administrator Matthew Tucker denied 25 of the 26 permits, citing ordinance provisions the proposed modifications would violate. The next month, Adams filed the lawsuit in federal court.

In April 2020, a federal judge dismissed the challenge, saying there's no

constitutional problem with Madison's sign ordinance. 'Whether the Capitol Square should look like Times Square is a decision that Madison city government is entitled to make,' U.S. District Judge James Peterson said at the time.

Adams appealed that decision.

Now, on Jan. 4, in a 16-page decision, the U.S. Court of Appeals, 7th Circuit, upheld the federal district court's dismissal of Adams' claims.

'The city is pleased with this outcome,' Assistant City Attorney Lara Mainella said. 'It supports and reinforces our understanding of the law. The city has always been careful to enact and enforce its sign regulations in a way that honors the First Amendment speech rights of those who wish to display signs in our city...'

-- Dean Mosiman, Wisconsin State Journal

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Everglades City:
"Historic Bank of Everglades receives Federal funds"



Photo: Courtesy Photo in Naples Florida Weekly

"The Everglades Society for Historic Preservation, Inc. reported its Bank of Everglades building project was included for funding in the Fiscal Year 2023 Omnibus Appropriations bill. With support of Congressman Mario Diaz-Balart, the Bank of Everglades was appropriated \$3 million from Transportation, Housing and Urban Development funds for community and economic development. These and other funds will be directed at stabilizing the building and its foundation, securing its structural integrity.

The Bank of Everglades building, located in the heart of Everglades City and individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places, is a prominent reminder of the heritage of Everglades City and the development of Collier County and Southwest Florida.

Recognizing the importance of saving the structure, ESHP has undertaken its rehabilitation. The building has survived hurricanes and floods, gone through uses as a rooming house and then bed and breakfast, only to be vacant for more than six years. Once rehabilitation is completed, a multi-year, multi-phase undertaking, the building will serve as the Everglades Area Visitor Center as well as one of Florida's Trail Town Headquarters. In addition, the renovated structure will be

available for community meetings, educational programming, travelling exhibits and other activities appealing to visitors and supporting local businesses and community groups...

For information, visit www.eshp.org

-- Naples Florida Weekly

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"You can rent a massive billboard in New York's Times Square for \$150" Or just photo shop whatever into your selfie for free?



Photo: Credited as "provided" as seen on New York FOX TV

"...People can now post their own photos on a massive billboard in the heart of Times Square to be displayed throughout the day for \$150..."

The project, called Welcome-to-Times-Square.com, was launched by Miami-based lawyer Jaime Suarez and began with the idea of helping local brands advertise in Times Square at an affordable price. But the project took an 'interesting turn' when Suarez then had the idea of letting regular people post their own pictures, directly from their phones, according to a press release.

...Slots can be booked at TimesSquareBillboard.com, where people can pick a date, upload a photo, and pay \$150. The photo will then appear on the billboard for 15 seconds once an hour for 24 hours on the date they selected.

'We will send you your exact hourly time slot to the email you provided while booking at least one day prior to your display date,' the website states..."

-- Kelly Hayes, New York FOX TV

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Undergrounding: "Fort Myers Beach raise questions about the future of infrastructure"



Photo: NBC-2.com

"...The underground cables have been a concept brought to NBC2 since 2013. Now ten years and a Category 4 hurricane later, a FPL 'Storm Secure' sign is posted on the corner of Estero Blvd and Carolina Ave.

'I know other communities have done it and had some success with it,' said Jason Cantrell, Fort Myers Beach resident.

Cantrell lives down the street from the sign. He said it brings him hope after he came back to Estero Island to 13 feet of water damage.

'There was no power when we got here. Everything had been ripped off from the house, so there wasn't even connection to the house,' he said.

Cantrell claimed FPL was ready to respond, but first, he had to bring in an electrician.

'To have those underground and not have to worry about the wind damage would certainly speed recovery up and allow people to get back quicker,' he said.

Underground power lines are great against wind damage, but it's no silver bullet. Ian proved that. About 25% of LCEC lines are underground. On Sanibel, a storm surge washed away some of the transformers.

NBC2 asked FPL why the sign is posted and when underground power lines could come to the area. FPL said it does not have any current Undergrounding projects on Fort Myers Beach..."

-- Jennifer Kveglis, NBC-2.com

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High School Student in Jacksonville:
"Arbor Day Tree Seed Giveaway"



"In honor of Florida Arbor Day, join us at the Arboretum for a TREE SEED GIVEAWAY sponsored by local non-profit CO2NSQUENCES.ORG!"

January 21 at 9 am. Limit 1 plant/tree per person. While supplies last. First come first served.

About : CO2NSEQUENCES.ORG!

High school senior Grant Tucker connects with community leaders and individuals who are working to combat the most cataclysmic issue mankind has ever been faced with- climate change.

Change is a concern for all of mankind and it is our generation's responsibility to work towards reducing our carbon footprint. By consolidating youth coalition within the movement, amending our current dependency on fossil fuels, and utilizing the benefits of our Mother Earth, we can reach net zero emissions."

-- Jacksonville Arboretum & Botanical Gardens

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FDOT:

"Litter reduction and protecting our beaches"



Photo: Dirk Shadd, Tampa Times

"Pockets of open space dot Gandy Beach. Each one is an opening to the blue

waters of Tampa Bay, canopied by billowing mangroves. It's picturesque — just don't look too close.

If you did, then you might see the beer can peeking out of the sand like a burrowed crab. Or the plastic bag swaying from a mangrove branch.

The empty gallon of water sitting squarely near the shore? Well, that's a little harder to miss.

But the Florida Department of Transportation is hoping a new project will stop people from littering and parking in the mangroves at Gandy Beach in St. Petersburg. The agency is spending about \$70,000 to install bollards — large wooden posts — in front of mangroves lining the beach, Kristen Carson, a spokesperson for the department, said in an email Wednesday.

Gandy Beach averages about 8,000 pounds of trash a day that's picked up as both litter and from trash cans, according to Carson.

Dana Paganelli, a frequent visitor to the beach, says she's happy about the bollards. She floated near the shore Wednesday in a pastel-colored pool float. Usually, she said, she'll bring her own bag and fill it with the garbage she finds at the beach and throw it out later...

The Florida Department of Transportation began installing the posts last week, and the entire project will wrap up in about two weeks. Carson said the agency expects to install about 880 posts.

After the bollards are installed and cars can no longer reach the shore, the agency's maintenance contractor will begin planting small mangroves in the open areas where the plant could not grow previously due to car traffic..."

-- Michaela Mulligan, Times

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