



**Bonita Springs Area  
Chamber Of Commerce**

*Where you want to be*

# **Economic Development and Government Affairs Report**

## **February 2010**

### **Table of Contents**

- 1. President's Note**
- 2. The US Senate to vote on the Highway/Transit Extension Bill**
- 3. Government Affairs Committee Report**
- 4. Economic Development Committee Report**
- 5. Tax Exempt Financing Available for Lee County Businesses**
- 6. Amendment 4 to Cost Over 260,000 Jobs**
- 7. Fort Myers Regional Partnership Launches Campaign**
- 8. CVT Students Elite Group Learning with VIST Simulator**

UNITED STATES CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

**ACCREDITED**



## President's Note



**Christine Ross**  
**President & CEO**

This month the Bonita Springs Area Chamber of Commerce spent a significant amount of

time monitoring and advocating for our businesses in the areas of economic development, zoning and planning at both the City and County levels. We provided both written and public comment to the Local Planning Agency on proposed Chapter Four zoning ordinance changes. We also prepared a highly viewed Candidate Questionnaire that received tremendous visibility and positive feedback just prior to our elections. Our attention to government affairs, policy discussions and planning issues in Southwest Florida is a

significant element of how we add value to your membership services. We encourage you to let us know when a local, state or federal ruling threatens to negatively affect your business; chances are good that we are already tracking the issue and that advocacy is only a phone call away.

Until next time,

Christine Ross  
*President & CEO*  
Bonita Springs Area Chamber  
of Commerce

---

## Urgent - Action Requested!

*The US Senate is expected to vote on the Highway/  
Transit Extension Bill on Monday evening, February 22nd*

We need our FTBA members to call Senator George LeMieux's office to urge his support of the bill. As of now, **the Senate is expected to use the bill number H.R. 2847 for this measure.**

**The toll-free ARTBA Action Hotline is 1-888-448-2782.**

Dial 1-888-448-2782, follow the instructions to be connected to the Capitol Hill office of Senator LeMieux, and ask for the legislative assistant who handles transportation issues. Speak to them or leave a voice mail.

### Talking Points:

- I work for [company], located in [city]. We need strong

and reliable federal transportation investment so our company can compete for transportation projects.

- I understand the Senate is scheduled to vote Monday evening on a bill that would authorize the federal highway and transit programs through the end of 2010 and strengthen the Highway Trust Fund to meet its commitments over this period.

- These programs have been operating under a series of short-term extensions since last October, making it very difficult for states to implement long-term transportation plans and for the construction industry to make

capital investment and employment decisions.

- This legislation would provide needed stability for our state's transportation program to help ensure the 2010 construction season delivers the maximum employment and economic boost possible. Failing to pass such an extension will have real-world consequences that threaten further job losses in the construction industry, which is already suffering over 24 percent unemployment.

- Will Senator LeMieux support this important bill?

The Chamber is represented at the following government meetings each month:

**City Council Meeting**

*First and third Wednesday of each month*

**County Commission Meeting**

*Every Tuesday*

**Management & Planning meeting of the Board of County Commissioners**

*First Monday of each month*

**Metropolitan Planning Organization Meeting**

*Third Friday of each month*

All meetings are open to the public and we encourage involvement in all sectors of government.



**Bonita Springs Area Chamber Of Commerce**

*Where you want to be*

25071 Chamber of Commerce Drive  
Bonita Springs, FL 34135  
(239) 992-2943  
[www.BonitaSpringsChamber.com](http://www.BonitaSpringsChamber.com)



## Government Affairs Committee

Patrick Vanasse, Chairman  
*RWA Consultants, Inc.*

D. Wayne Arnold  
*Q. Grady Minor and Associates, P.A.*

David L. Cook  
*Henderson, Franklin, Starnes & Holt, P.A.*

Brian Farrar  
*BCF Management Group*

Owen F. Feeney, Jr.  
*Bonita Estero Dental Group*

Mike Hoyt  
*The Lutgert Companies*

Jose R. Lopez  
*TINSA USA*

Heather L. Mazurkiewicz  
*B J M Consulting Inc.*

Joe Mazurkiewicz  
*B J M Consulting Inc.*

David McKee  
*Bonita Springs Utilities, Inc.*

Debbi Redfield  
*Bonita Springs Fire Control & Rescue District*

Joel Whittenhall  
*CNL Bank, Southwest Florida*

G. Donald Thomson  
*Henderson, Franklin, Starnes & Holt, P.A.*

Ted Treesh  
*TR Transportation Consultants, Inc.*

# It's Time Once Again for the Tallahassee Trek

If it's March it's the start of the annual dance of the legislature known as the Florida Legislative Session. The 60 days every year when Floridians grab on to family members along with all their worldly possessions and hangs on for dear life. It also means it is time for those bravest among us to board the bus to travel into heat of battle and experience this public policy conflict of the Titians first hand.

That right, its time once again for Lee County Days in Tallahassee when business and government leaders join together to tackle the legislature face-to-face on their home turf. This trip is not for the faint of heart as it starts with a seven hour bus ride to our State Capital, and then contemplates a 14 hours day of winding through the maze of passageways in the Capital to meet with State administrators and legislators to bring the message of Lee County to the halls of State Government. On the third day they take on another eight hours of meetings before the usually quiet seven hour bus ride back to Lee County.

Our message this year to our State Government leaders will be to "Do No Harm". We all know there is no State money

available to bring back for local projects so we will be focusing on making sure there are no new local government mandates, or new business regulations that will make our Lee County economic recovery any tougher then we already face.

We are scheduled to be meeting with the Department of Community Affairs, Department of Environmental Protection, Department of Transportation, Department of Education, Secretary of Agriculture, Attorney General, Chief Financial Officer, Visit Florida, Governor, and of course the members of our local delegation.

We will be addressing issues of local concern to Bonita surrounding comprehensive planning for the DR/GR, Lake Okeechobee, Oak Creek Cleaning, Imperial River Project, class size, replacing the FCAT, bio-fuels, transportation, tourism, and of course what would be the impact of Amendment 4 passing.

Bonita will be represented by the largest

contingency of the group made up of Mayor Ben Nelson, Council Members Janet Martin, Steve Slachta, Martha, Simons, and John Spear, local business leaders Chamber Chair Brian Farrar, and Chamber President Christine Ross. They will have additional meetings facilitated by their very capable government lobbyist Carole Green.

So the next time you run into one of these brave souls thank them for their wiliness to do battle and pray the common sense gods have favor over their efforts. If we're lucky we will discuss their successes and disappointments in the next column.

Joe Mazurkiewicz, Jr., Ph.D.  
President, BJM Consulting, Inc.

---

Thank You to Our  
Government Affairs Staff



The next Government Affairs Committee Meeting will be held on Wednesday, February 3, 2010.

Meetings are held on the first Wednesday of every month at noon at the Chamber.

# Economic Development Committee Monthly Report



Andrew DeSalvo,  
Chairman, Economic  
Development Committee

at 8:45 am. The 15 minute presentation is entitled the "State of the Economy" and will be presented by Andrew DeSalvo and Mike Kennedy.

Thru the joint efforts of the EDC and the Government Affairs committee, the City manager has agreed to facilitate the joint planning/pre-development review process. Once instituted, the joint review will allow tenants, builders, developers, and business owners the opportunity to meet simultaneously with representatives from the City's Community Develop-

## **New this month:**

The Economic Development Committee is scheduled to make a presentation to City Council on March 17th

at 8:45 am. The 15 minute presentation is entitled the "State of the Economy" and will be presented by Andrew DeSalvo and Mike Kennedy.

## **Next month:**

The Government Affairs and Economic Development committees have invited Amy Davies of Wilbur Smith Associates to give us a presentation on the new and exciting FGCU Innovation Hub. The I-Hub is expected to have a 50,000 sf research building for FGCU, and two 60,000 sf incubator buildings for developing business and research ideas. Construction on

ment Department, the Bonita Springs Fire Department and Bonita Springs Utilities.

The committee has created a business climate survey (with the help from FGCU's Dave Kakkuri PhD, and Gary Jackson PhD). The survey will be sent from the Chamber to all its members. We ask all members to take the few minutes required to complete the survey and email it back to the Chamber immediately. The results from the survey will be presented to City Council on March 17th.

## **Next month:**

The Government Affairs and Economic Development committees have invited Amy Davies of Wilbur Smith Associates to give us a presentation on the new and exciting FGCU Innovation Hub. The I-Hub is expected to have a 50,000 sf research building for FGCU, and two 60,000 sf incubator buildings for developing business and research ideas. Construction on

the Alico Road property is expected to begin this year.

We will hear a report from Committee members Rich Mancini and Kevin Newingham regarding the 23 rd Annual Corporate Survey. We hope to glean from this report key factors corporate businesses use to chose their location priorities and incorporate them into our economic diversity plan.

Our marketing sub-committee led by Mike Kennedy , Joe Ariola and Kevin Hawkesworth, will present a draft outline for a marketing strategy and budget for our proposed "roll out" to the business community.

We will also review the recently created map (by Dave Place), showing the inventory of developed and undeveloped properties citywide.

Regards

Andy DeSalvo  
*Chairman, Economic  
Development Committee*

## Economic Development Committee

Andrew DeSalvo - Chairman  
*Premier Commercial Properties  
of Southwest Florida*

Joe Ariola  
*Key Bank*

Ned E. Dewhirst, P.E.  
*Oakbrook Properties, Inc.*

Margaret Emblidge  
*Emblidge Design Group, Inc.*

Kevin Hawkesworth  
*Shaw Development, LLC*

David Kakkuri  
*Florida Gulf Coast University*

Michael W. Kennedy  
*MKA Marketing*

Richard Mancini  
*Henderson, Franklin, Starnes &  
Holt, P.A.*

Joseph A. Murgalo  
*Hyatt Regency Coconut Point  
Resort and Spa*

Ben Nelson  
*City of Bonita Springs*

Kevin Newingham  
*Lee Memorial Health System*

# Tax Exempt Financing Available for Lee County Businesses

*Over \$56 million in Federal Recovery Zone Facility Bonds*

*Allocated to Help Local Economy*

Businesses looking to locate or expand in Lee County now have a new low interest financing option to consider in the form of tax-exempt Economic Recovery Zone Facility Bonds (RZFBs). The Federal government has made \$56.1 million in tax-exempt financing available to Lee County businesses through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

However, time is of the essence since applications will

only be accepted for the next nine months. Applications are being accepted now and will be processed on a first come, first serve basis until the \$56.1 M allocation has been exhausted or through September 30, 2010, whichever happens first.

The purpose of these bonds is to provide tax-exempt, low interest financing to businesses that would normally not qualify for tax-exempt debt. This conduit financing program has been implemented by

the Lee County Industrial Development Authority (IDA) to promote growth and economic development in the County, per Lee County Ordinance #09-029.

If a business qualifies for regular bank financing, there is a good chance it will qualify for a tax-exempt bond under this program.

[Click Here for more information.](#)

---

## Study Says: Amendment 4 to Cost Over 260,000 Jobs

Business, civic and labor leaders gathered in Tallahassee recently to hear the report of a top Florida economist indicating that Amendment 4—a proposed re-write of our state constitution—would lead to massive job loss.

With unemployment nearing 12 percent, that's the last thing Florida needs. Tony Villamil, founder of The Washington Economics Group (WES), which conducted the study, reported that "Amendment 4's passage will have potentially devastating consequences to Florida's economy at a time when the economic situation at both the state and national levels is uncertain and

at a time when attracting new businesses to Florida is essential for the future recovery and prosperity of the state and its residents."

The WES study indicates that Amendment 4 will lead to severe job loss in numerous sectors of Florida's already struggling economy as well as have major impacts on Florida's "economic dynamism," ultimately causing a "steady decline in the standard of living for all Florida residents." The resulting economic gridlock would erode Florida's tax base, forcing state and local governments to either "raise taxes or cut services."

The impacts of Amend-

ment 4 would not be limited to a few sectors of our economy. According to the WES study, the negative impacts of Amendment 4 would "affect the whole economy of Florida." In particular, efforts to diversify Florida's economy by attracting "high-wage and high-skill jobs" would be jeopardized.

Florida Chamber of Commerce president Mark Wilson summed up the situation pointedly: "If you like the recession, you'll love Amendment 4."

[Click Here to view the full article.](#)

# Add to Lee County Business... and Your Art Collection!

*Fort Myers Regional Partnership launches campaign to help boost economy with incentives from famous local artist Ikki Matsumoto*

The Fort Myers Regional Partnership recently launched a unique, grass-roots campaign encouraging local residents and businesses to play an active role in boosting the region's economy and ensuring the future of Lee County.

The partnership is taking a non-conventional approach

to promoting the region's economic development by initially focusing on those already in the region, and partnering with them to help spread the word about the benefits of living and working in Lee County.

"As one person, you may not think you can help attract or expand businesses to Lee

County. But an idea you have or a person you know just may be what we're looking for," explains Jennifer Berg, spokeswoman for the Fort Myers Regional Partnership.

[Click Here for the full article or for more information.](#)

---

## CVT Students Among Elite Group Learning with VIST Simulator

Threading a needle through arteries surrounding a heart, working to clear a blockage and successfully seeing a patient through recovery - in health emergencies, experience matters.

Cardiovascular Technology Professor Jeff Davis brings cutting edge technology to Edison State students to provide 'simulated' real world experience before his students enter a hospital.

"Simulator training adds significant value to what we teach our students in the classroom," said Davis. "They will definitely make positive impressions in hospital and cath lab settings because of this training."

Edison State is one of

only three colleges in the country to have a VIST Simulator allowing students to practice such sophisticated and delicate procedures as removing blockages and inserting stents in the arteries surrounding the heart. The machine allows for simulated procedures in the heart, brain and other major organs.

"Many medical schools don't have this type of technology. We're really working with the future of our field," said Davis. "Until now, all techs and many doctors never performed real-time procedures until seeing their first patient in a hospital!"

What does this mean for CVT students and graduates?

"Future employers know Edison State students

will bring an advanced level of training to the job," Davis said. "This high-tech simulator teaches anyone learning - from a first year student to an attending physician - to gain real world exposure to routine and sophisticated procedures."

For more information about the capabilities of the CVT program, [Click Here.](#)

