



**Bonita Springs Area  
Chamber Of Commerce**

*Where you want to be*

# Economic Development and Government Affairs Report

September 2009



UNITED STATES CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

**ACCREDITED**



# President's Note



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

Within this e-mail you will find a brief overview of the Chamber's Economic Development plans for 2009, the initial Government Affairs report as well as an update on the Southwest Florida Innovation Network's efforts to establish high speed, high capacity broadband throughout the region.

This past week I spent three days learning about Re-

gional Sustainable Development during the first session of my Ford Foundation Fellowship in Denver, Colorado. Regional sustainable development is what many consider to be the most sure footed way to compete and prosper amid the vast global economic changes of the 21st Century. Regional sustainable development is defined by Future Works principals, Brian Bosworth and Stephen Michon as "a positive, long-term growth strategy focused on building per capita income and wealth while creating long-term opportunities for businesses and residents." They go on to note that regional sustainable development advances growth that meets environmental quality attainment standards, and combats fragmented, inefficient land use planning and wasteful development patterns that can

concentrate poverty and increase the costs to businesses and taxpayers alike. Regional sustainable development seeks to create competitive, prosperous regions that are diversified and durable over time. As I immerse myself in this program, I'll be passing along concepts and ideas which I hope will encourage discussion and debate on how we should prepare our region's foundation for future social, environmental and economic challenges.

Let us know how you like the new monthly edition of our Economic Development and Government Affairs Report.

Sincerely,

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

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.

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# Lee County Alliance of Chambers Amendment 4 Roundtable Discussion

The Lee County Alliance of Chambers would like to formally invite you to participate in a roundtable discussion and networking event on Thursday October 15, 2009 from 5:30pm – 8:00pm at The Hilton Garden Inn at College Parkway & Summerlin Road.



The event will feature speakers Ryan Houck and Carol Greene from Floridians for Smart Growth. We all know what Amendment 4 or the "Vote on Everything" amendment is; but what are we going to do about it? Carol and Ryan will lay out a specific plan to help us combat this devastating amendment.

The event is open to all Chambers of Commerce within Lee County with each Chamber bringing their paid Executive and up to three key volunteers. The cost for this event will be \$25.00 per person and will include your choice of pasta primavera or chicken piccata, a beverage (coffee, tea or water), desert and a cash bar during the networking portion.

[Click here](#) for the application. Please RSVP to Heather Mazurkiewicz before **October 9th at (239) 541-8619 or Heather@bjmconsult.com**



*Where you want to be*  
25071 Chamber of Commerce Drive  
Bonita Springs, FL 34135  
(239) 992-2943

## 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*

Ray Faubion  
*Oswald Trippe and Company, Inc.*

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

Mike Hoyt  
*The Lutgert Companies*

Jose R. Lopez  
*Chapman & Associates, Inc*

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*

Vlad Ryziv  
*GRAEF*

Ray Schumann  
*Alvarez, Sambol, Winthrop & Madson, P.A.*

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

Ted Treesh  
*TR Transportation Consultants, Inc.*

# Government Affairs Committee Overview

The government affairs committee continues to track many issues at the local, county and state levels that will have significant impacts on the business community of Bonita Springs. All three levels of government are considering new fiscal policies that deal directly with our challenged economy and the committee's concern is will these short-term solutions bring with them new long-term problems?

At city hall the council is putting the final touches on this year's budget and the debate is focused on cutting expenses to match the declining revenues that are being projected for next year. Some council members are considering putting off all capital projects and any capital maintenance. While this may be a prudent strategy to balance this year's

budget it will have negative impacts on future spending requirements. What will be the impact to our great quality of life here in Bonita? These are just two of the questions your Government Affairs Committee members are struggling with.

At the county level the commissioners were able to use reserves to balance this year's budget without cutting too many services or raising taxes. This was made possible by prudent fiscal policies during the boom years, but will there be enough reserves available to deal with next years short falls? What services will be on the chopping block when the real fiscal pinch comes next year? Will these cuts have future impacts on the need for the city to continue to wean itself away from the county to provide addi-

tional local services?

Finally, there is the state legislature who continues to raid its trust funds to balance its budget rather than making the tough decisions of cutting services or raising new revenues. One impact of these decisions could force the shutdown of all FDOT projects by July 2010.

As you can see the Government Affairs Committee's plate is full with very important issues which will impact all of us over the next few years.

In future reports we will be getting into specific issues and proposed solution that we are discussing with our local elected officials to bring about the best possible outcomes for our business community in Bonita Springs.

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## The Gulf Coast Venture Forum (GCVF) Hosts Kickoff Meeting at Naples Grand Beach Resort

During this challenging economic environment, both nationally and regionally, business leaders, private investors and entrepreneurs need economic advice. The Gulf Coast Venture Forum (GCVF) is holding it's Kickoff meeting in Naples at the Naples Grand Beach Resort on October 8th with a panel to provide valuable insights on the health of Venture

Capital Industry, an important indicator of the overall health of the U.S. economy. Questions from the audience will be addressed concerning the investment climate. The investment climate is critical to the U.S. economy because long term gains from economic stimulus come from investment not consumption and putting capital to work in innovative and

entrepreneurial firms is the mission of the Gulf Coast Venture Forum. For more information [click here](#).

**You may securely register online, at <http://www.floridaventureforum.org/rsvp> or via telephone at (813) 335-8116. The event is \$65.00 per person in advance and \$75.00 per person at the door.**

# Economic Development Committee Monthly Report



Andrew DeSalvo,  
Chairman, Economic  
Development Committee

I am pleased to report that the Economic Development Committee has been formed and has already held its first meeting. The committee members

bring a wealth of local, economic, business, finance and development experience to the table and are all excited about giving their time and talents to our mission of improving and expanding the diversity of our area's economy. Prior to holding our first meeting Brian, Christine and I held and attended several meetings with local and area officials to get a clear understanding of what each is

proposing to do to expand the diversity of our economy.

After our fact finding we established an outline for this committee's proposed scope of work. We established three phases for the committee to complete. Phase one includes three main tasks:

- To inventory and analyze our assets: political, environmental, existing infrastructure, proximity to regional engines (SWF regional airport and FGCU), location, affordability and availability.

- To create an asset inventory list of existing building space and entitled (shovel ready) land.

- To identify those businesses we want and need in order to create a more diversified economy.

In Phase two we intend to work with local govern-

ments and agencies to establish a streamlined permitting and occupancy process, develop incentive programs and create a marketing program. Phase three consists of targeting businesses, making presentations, asking for and following up on all potential opportunities.

If any Chamber member wishes to contribute leads, (possible businesses getting ready to expand or wanting to relocate) please contact Christine or me or anyone on our committee.

Sincerely,  
Andrew DeSalvo, Chairman

## 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*

## Theseus Professional Service a Florida IT Consulting Contract Win

On September 16, 2009, Theseus Professional Services, LLC was awarded a three year information technology (IT) consulting contract from the state of Florida issued by the Florida's Department of Management Services. The Florida-wide IT consulting services contract includes different branches of the state government as well as any of its affiliations, e.g., universities, hospitals, colleges. The contract will be managed through Theseus' southern office in Fort Myers, Florida. Theseus has an initial

team in excess of twenty IT professionals located throughout the state to provide timely, responsive, and quality services. There are ten IT position classifications where Theseus will have the opportunity to bid on state-initiated project requests.

Please contact Ed Gardner, Quality Engineering Consultant/Manager at (239) 225-0413 or e-mail: ed-gardner@comcast.net should there be any questions about this contract. See the Theseus web site at [www.theseuspro.com](http://www.theseuspro.com) for more information.

# The Southwest Florida Innovation Network Vital Project Number Five

The Southwest Florida Innovation Network was gratified this month to have the Southwest Regional Planning Council add broadband as vital project

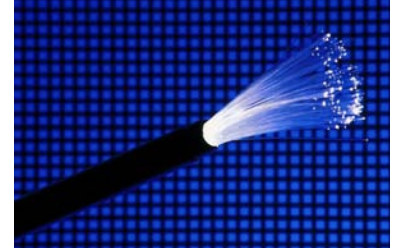


number five to their five year Comprehensive Economic Development strategy. These efforts are being championed by representatives from Sara-

sota, Charlotte, Lee, Collier, Glades and Hendry Counties. We are learning about the needs of both higher and secondary education, government and municipalities, health care and medical, E911 emergency and disaster recovery, research, business, economic development and our vendor/installers. Through this collaborative approach we will design a plan of action and specific tactics for raising adoption levels and developing future broadband

infrastructure to improve and sustain our economic development efforts for a more diversified economy.

There will be more to come, so stay tuned.



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## Annual Small Business Innovation Research Small Business Technology Transfer Funding Opportunity Announcement

[This notice](#) describes Phase I funding opportunities for the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) and the Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) programs for Fiscal Year 2010. [This notice](#) also includes some aspects of the Phase II process as reference information.

The objectives of these programs include increasing private sector commercialization of technology developed through DOE-supported

research and development (R&D), stimulating technological innovation in the private sector, and improving the return on investment from Federally-funded research for economic and social benefits to the nation. DOE will support high-quality research or R&D on advanced concepts concerning important mission-related scientific or engineering problems and opportunities that are likely to lead to significant public benefit from promising research.

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The next Government Affairs Committee Meeting will be held on October 7, 2009.

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

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Thank You to Our Government Affairs Staff

**BJM Consulting, Inc.**

# The School Board of Lee County

## 2010 Legislative Priorities

Place a Proposed Constitutional Amendment on the ballot in 2010 that would freeze Class Size Reduction Implementation at the Class Size Average instead of mandating class-by-class caps. Implementation of the current Class Size Reduction Implementing Statutes assumes that beginning in 2010-2011 each school district will comply with class size caps in every single core subject area classroom. Given the mobility of our population and difficulties in scheduling at the middle school and high school levels, we respectfully request that the Legislature ask citizens to amend the requirements to maintain the averages instead of a class-by-class cap.

Provide for Appropriate Funding for Public Schools Operations as required by the Constitution. Article IX, Section (1), Florida Constitution: "The education of children is a fundamental value of the people of the State of Florida. It is, therefore, a paramount duty of the state to make adequate provision for the education of all children residing within its borders. Adequate provision shall be made by law for a uniform, efficient, safe, secure, and high quality system of free public schools that allows students to obtain a high quality education..."

- Establish a long-term plan to make Florida's public

education system world class including a long-range plan to provide for adequate and stable funding.

- Safeguard the "90% Rule" for base FEFP funding to protect citizens of property-wealthy districts, such as Lee County Schools, from having to bear an unfair portion of their public school costs for the state.

- Fund 100% of the true operational costs of Class Size Reduction from state funds as required by the Constitution.

- Reject any new unfunded legislative mandates.

Amend Statutes to Improve Instruction and Accountability. We respectfully request that the Legislature:

- Allow school boards to waive the Statute limiting the start of the school calendar for students by a super majority vote of the board.

- Change the school grading system to remove scores of new district students for the first year of testing until both performance scores and learning gain scores are available for these students.

- Update the system for determining graduation rates and drop-out rates to more accurately calculate the true graduation rates in Florida.

Assist with

Classroom Space Needs.

We respectfully request that the Legislature:

- Maintain school impact fees and capital outlay property taxes for the purposes for which they were collected.

- Reject any new proposals to shift capital property taxes into operations either in the required local effort or the discretionary local effort.

For additional information, please contact:

**Bob Cerra**

Cerra Consulting Group, Inc.  
(850) 222-4428  
bobcerra@comcast.net

**Steven K. Teuber, J.D.**

Vice Chairman, District 4  
School Board  
Legislative Liaison  
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StevenKT@leeschools.net

**John Cerra**

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cerraj@comcast.net

### Have a Suggestion?

We are always looking for new ways to enhance your Five-Star Chamber.

If you have a suggestion for the Economic Development and Government Affairs Report or for the committee, please submit it to Tiffany Esposito, Communications Manager at (239) 992-2943 or Tiffany@BonitaSpringsChamber.com.