

Executive Summary
Estero Council of Community Leaders
December 14, 2012 Meeting

Guest Speaker State Senator Garrett Richter

Sen. Garrett Richter was reelected in November to District 23, which includes portions of Collier and Lee counties, including Estero. He currently is serving as president pro tem and Chairman of the new Senate Gaming Committee. He started his political career in the Florida House in 2006. In 2008, he was elected to Senate District 37, where he served as Chairman of the Banking and Insurance Committee.

Sen. Richter talked about the upcoming challenges to passing a balanced budget, which is mandated by the state. These challenges include the proposal out of Washington to expand Medicaid to cover those at the poverty level from cradle to grave, instead of birth to 18 and then 65 and above, as it stands now. Another factor is that, a few years ago, the Florida legislature passed a bill requiring state employees to fund 3% of their pension accounts. That bill is being appealed and, if the courts rule in favor of the challenge, the state will have to pay for the full pension plan as well as pay back the 3% the state employees previously paid into the plan.

Regarding his appointment to Chairman of the Gaming Committee, Sen. Richter stated that he wants to gain a complete understanding of the economic impact of the expansion of gambling in the state of Florida. He stated there are many interested parties to consider in the gaming arena, everything from the proposed destination casinos to internet cafes, and even McDonalds and Coca Cola because of the fact they have sweepstakes.

Estero Fire Rescue District – Chief Scott Vanderbrook

Three new fire fighters started this week, replacing people who left last year. Flu shots are still being provided at the fire station. They are accepting new, unwrapped gifts for needy children as part of their gift drive again this year. They helped over 90 children last year.

Conservancy of Southwest Florida – Jeremy Frants

The Florida Farms Development (FFD), or 6 L's Farm, resubmitted their application to Lee County earlier this year to be able to mine their property.

This property is located on East Corkscrew Road adjacent to the Flint Penn Strand and CREW and to some of the rural residential neighborhoods. This is a critical area for panthers and other endangered species. The site is about 5,000 acres, with 4,500 acres being proposed for mining. They have one access road, which is Corkscrew Road, and are proposing 1269 haul truck trips daily. This proposed mine would be outside of the County's preferred lime rock mining area, Map 14.

Don Eslick stated that Lee County is the second largest supplier of lime rock in the state of Florida. For the past 30 years, the existing mines in the Alico Road corridor supplied enough lime rock for construction in 7 counties, from Sarasota down to Collier while consuming just 4,500 acres...the same as FFD wants to mine.

The FFD application is scheduled to go before the Hearing Examiner starting on January 16. It's important that Estero residents testify in opposition to this mine before the Hearing Examiner so that they may testify at a later date before the Lee County Commissioners. The Conservancy will be preparing some talking points for those interested in testifying.

Environment Director – Phil Douglas

There are only 18 communities represented where volunteers have offered to help get petitions signed for the Florida Land and Legacy (FL&L) amendment. More volunteers are needed. The FL&L is a proposed amendment which would provide state funding to protect our natural resources, with no increase in taxes. One million signatures are required for this important amendment to be placed on the ballot. A representative of the FL&L will conduct a workshop in January for volunteers. Once the date has been scheduled, a notice will go out to the ECCL representatives. Contact Phil Douglas, pdindy@comcast.net to volunteer.

Community Planning – Roger Strelow

Estero Community Plan – The Estero Community Plan is in the process of being updated by the Estero Community Planning Panel (ECPP). The ECCL board transmitted comments and recommendations to the ECPP and its contractor, urging greater attention to new commercial development in designated areas of Estero, among other things. ECCL representatives had a productive discussion with the ECPP at the ECPP's monthly public meeting in December.

Signage – Estero has very strict provisions for signage. There are currently a number of violations along US 41, Corkscrew Road and Estero Parkway. The ECCL is developing a program to seek voluntary corrections, which includes soliciting cooperation from some of the commercial organizations in order to resolve this problem.

Miromar Lakes Commercial Development – There is a proposal to move roughly one-third of this large commercial development, which was originally planned to be north of the Florida Gulf Coast University, to south of the University where it will better serve the growing student dormitory population at that end of the campus. While this is in the San Carlos planning area, it could have significant impacts on Estero. Several ECCL directors will be attending a meeting next week to learn more about what the ramifications might be.

Research & Enterprise Diamond - This is an 1100-acre area which includes the airport and Florida Gulf Coast University, where there is potential for new commercial and industrial development which takes advantage of the engineering and other capabilities at the University.

The County staff's plan for a contractor to conduct a strategic planning study for the area will go back before the Board of County Commissioners next month.

Transfer of Development Rights (TDRs) – The TDR program relates to the Density Reduction Groundwater Resource (DR/GR) area east of Estero. The Lee Plan provides for very low density development in that area. Some of the landowners have density allowances they could use, but probably won't. Those landowners could receive an economic benefit for the density they may not want to use by selling that density to developers in such areas as the heavily trafficked corridors near I-75 and in other urban and mixed use areas. The ECCL is leading a task force to work with the County on this program.

Lee County Comp Plan - Lee County's Comprehensive Plan update is nearing completion. There is a new focus on multi-modal transportation, which includes everything from buses, biking and pedestrian paths. Funding is declining at the Federal and state levels, which means the County will have to fund more of the costs in the future, perhaps turning from "impact fees" to broader-based "mobility fees," as a number of other local governments are doing. The Estero Community Planning Panel web site has more information at <http://esterofl.org/>.

Transportation – Jim Boesch

Antique Lighting – The ECCL determined not to go forward with antique lighting on US41 from Corkscrew Road to Broadway Avenue. A municipal entity would have to be set up which would take responsibility for selecting the lighting fixtures, installation and maintenance, as well as pay for the electricity. As an alternate, poles that accommodate banners promoting special events and/or the historic district are being considered for that section of Estero. A committee will be set up to determine the design and use of the banners.

MPO Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) – At the December 6 meeting, a member of the CAC announced support of the Boca Mine Development in Bonita Springs. This is a proposed residential community of 550 homes on the Boca Grande Mine property. It was also announced that Bonita Springs will be supporting an effort to revive CR 951 to accommodate this new community.

Also at the CAC meeting, it was announced that the I-75 four-lane exit to the airport started in October. This \$54 million project should be completed in 2015.

US Post Office – Work is scheduled to start next week on the left turn out of the property.

Communications – Marilyn Edwards

Communications Round Table – The ECCL is asking that the representatives attend this round table discussion on **Friday, January 18, at 9 a.m., Rm. 102 B** at the Estero Community Park. We're looking for ideas of how to get the ECCL's message out and more residents involved. Also, Howard Levitan will give a presentation on the new web page "Estero Today."

A few of the ECCL directors met with the editor and other executive staff of the Naples Daily News to acquaint them with some of the projects the ECCL is involved with and to work together on increasing coverage of these projects in the future.

News Releases - A news release was issued regarding Sen. Richter speaking at this month's meeting which ran in the News-Press on Tuesday, Dec. 11, as well as on their web site, and The Banner on Dec. 12.

The news release regarding the naming of the Don Eslick Bridge continued to receive coverage. The story ran in the News-Press, a full page feature on Don in The Banner, the full release in The Banner on Dec. 12, and the December edition of Natureside.

Estero Lifestyle magazine carried a three-page article about the new ECCL Board members.

Don Eslick "Retirement Party" – There will be a party on Sunday, January 20, from 2 – 5 p.m. at the Shadow Wood Club House in The Brooks, to honor Don Eslick for all he has done for the Estero community. There will be hors d'oeuvres, coffee, cash bar and dessert. Pre-sale tickets are \$20; \$25 at the door. Contact any of the ECCL Board members for tickets.

Next Meeting: Friday, January 11, 2013, from 10 a.m. to 12 noon, Estero Community Park.