

Estero Development Report
 Volume 10, Number 6, Issued January 2011
 Produced by the Estero Council of Community Leaders (ECCL)
For More Information about Estero
 ...see www.esterofl.org

**February Opportunities for Citizen Participation
 That will Protect Estero's Quality of Life**

Date	Time	Event	Location
Tuesday, February 8 th	6:00 p.m.	Estero Fire Rescue Meeting	Estero Fire Rescue Headquarters
Wednesday, February 9 th	5 p.m.	Estero Design Review Committee (EDRC)	Estero Community Park
Thursday, February 10 th	6 p.m.	Conservation 20/20 CLASAC Committee consideration of the Edison Farms acquisition	County Community Development Building, 1500 Monroe Street, Ft Myers
Friday, February 11 th	10 a.m.	Estero Council of Community Leaders (ECCL) Guest Speakers Commissioner John Manning and Suzanne Bradach, Manager of the Bonita Community Health Center	Estero Community Park
Monday, February 21 st	6 p.m.	Estero Community Planning Panel (ECP)	Estero Community Park

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Estero Community Website
The community groups sponsoring the site are:
 Estero Community Planning Panel (ECP)
 Estero Community Association (ECA)
 Estero Design Review Committee (EDRC)
 Estero Council of Community Leaders (ECCL)

Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) Widening of US 41 from Corkscrew Road to San Carlos Park

On Thursday, January 6th FDOT conducted a Public Information Program at the Estero Community Park on the [widening of US 41](#) from Corkscrew Road to San Carlos Park. Over 100 Estero residents attended this meeting to learn about FDOT's plans for six-laning this two mile segment of US 41, the last one to be six-laned between Ft. Myers and Naples.

Russell Engineering, based in Fort Lauderdale, has been awarded the contract for the project. Construction is now underway with underground utility work starting just north of Corkscrew Road. The project is expected to be completed in the summer of 2013 at a cost of \$14.2 million. The historic buildings in Koreshan State Park will be preserved by taking the necessary right-of-way from the east side of the road. FDOT has been asked to develop a proposal for installing historic street lighting on US 41 from Corkscrew to Broadway. The plans for the road include landscaping in the median but do not presently include any street lighting.

If you have any questions about the project as it goes forward please contact Debbie Tower of FDOT by phone at 461-4300 or by email at Debbie.Tower@dot.state.fl.us or Kris Cella, their communications consultant, by phone at 337-1071 or by email at KCella@cella.cc .

The Bonita Community Health Center (BCHC) Extends Its Hours

On January 17th the BCHC began to increase their hours by three hours per day, from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., on all weekdays. The South Lee County Hospital Committee has long been seeking better access to emergency care...adding three hours per day to the schedule of the walk-in clinic begins to address this need while the Committee continues to work on obtaining a 24/7 Free-standing Emergency Department and eventually a hospital.

In addition the BCHC has invested in the following major facility improvements:

- Added the latest 16 slice CT scan and high field MRI equipment
- Enhanced their endoscopy suites with new digital technology
- Added three additional treatment rooms in its urgent care center.

The facility improvements demonstrate the commitment of the BCHC Board to the goal of ensuring that the residents of Estero and Bonita Springs have easy access to an up-to-date health care facility with a broad array of services.

Read more about these changes by clicking on the following link
<http://esterofl.org/EsteroLife/healthcare/Revised%20hours%20flyer%201-5-11.pdf> .

We encourage all residents of Estero and Bonita Springs to take advantage of the new and extended healthcare services now being offered by the Bonita Community Health Center in Coconut Point.

Further expansion of healthcare services in Estero and Bonita are not likely to be implemented until this facility is more fully utilized. Your support of the Bonita Community Health Center will demonstrate to the BCH Board that the community supports the Committee's efforts to improve access to emergency health care and eventually a hospital.

Background

On December 6th the leadership of the [Bonita Community Health Center](#) (BCHC) notified the South Lee County Hospital Committee that their Board had approved longer hours for the BCHC Walk-in Clinic starting in early January 2011. This was one of the recommendations of the Steering Committee set up by the BCHC Board that included 3 community representatives.

At that time BCHC indicated that they were planning to open the Center each weekday morning at 7 a.m. and asked the Committee to suggest when they should close in the evening and how those hours should vary from “season” to “summer”. In response to that request the Committee surveyed the members of the South Lee County Hospital Committee, several community service organizations and Estero’s residential communities. Many responses were obtained and summarized and reported to BCHC in a short period so that the new policy could be implemented in early January.

As a result of this effort BCHC announced on December 22nd that they would increase their hours to 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. from Monday through Friday and continue to be open on Saturday from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. and on Sunday from 8 a.m. to noon commencing Monday, January 17th. This represents a increase of 3 hours per day from Monday through Friday. If the community responds favorably to this change, the policy will continue throughout the entire year, season and summer.

January Progress on the Renewal of The Estero Community Plan

The Existing Plan

It has been ten years since the Estero Community launched its community planning effort, eight years since the existing Plan was adopted by the County Board and five years since the Board last updated the Estero Chapter of the County Land Development Code.

Since then the Estero Community Planning Panel (ECP) has been intensively involved with the zoning of a large number of developments that include most of the land along the US 41 and Corkscrew Road commercial corridors. In addition the Estero Design Review Committee (EDRC) has influenced the architecture, site plan, landscape and appearance of scores of projects located in these developments.

Meanwhile Estero has tripled in population and property used for commercial purposes has increased fourfold from less than 1,000,000 square feet to 4,500,000 square feet in spite of the sluggish market that has persisted for the last four years.

This economic slowdown presents the ECP and the community with an outstanding opportunity to reevaluate and update our Community Plan and the Land Development Code provisions specific to Estero.

The January ECP Meeting

On January 24th the ECP met to discuss the development of the Work Plan requested by Lee County Planning in order for them to consider the ECP’s funding request. Chairman Lienesch asked the Panel members to accept assignments for the development of the priority planning

areas in need of change. Dan DeLisi agreed to manage development of new signage provisions and Neal Noethlich agreed to supervise development of the new architectural design provisions.

County Planner Kathie Ebaugh suggested that the Panel meet with the County Planning Director Paul O'Connor to discuss development of a Work Plan for the update. It was agreed that Lienesch, Noethlich, and DeLisi will meet with O'Connor and Ebaugh on February 10th.

Mrs. Ebaugh told the Panel that some members of the Hillsboro County planning staff will be visiting Lee County on January 31st and February 1st to learn more about Lee County planning procedures. Among other things, the Hillsboro staff expressed an interest in seeing how Estero, as an unincorporated community, manages its planning, zoning and design review responsibilities. A short tour of the community was also requested. The Panel agreed to meet with the Hillsboro County staff on Tuesday morning, February 1st.

Starting the Plan Renewal Process

On December 20th the members of the ECPP and EDRC met to discuss the Dicken's Report on the Community Planning Workshop along with members of the public and County Planning staff. Under the leadership of Kathy Ebaugh of the Lee County Community Development Department, the group and the public discussed the 13 major community planning areas that the participants at the Community Workshop identified the priority areas in need of change. The discussion resulted in five areas being designated as High Priority areas, three as Medium Priority and five as Low Priority.

The Joint Committee further identified the key elements and features within each area that needed to be addressed; how difficult it would be to make the necessary changes; how long it would be to implement those changes; what organization(s) should be responsible for addressing the needs of the area.

These factors often had an influence on the priority assigned to an area by the Joint Committee. If an area is very difficult, will take a long time or is very expensive it may be assigned a lower priority even though it would greatly benefit the community.

The five High Priority areas identified by the Joint Committee are as follows:

- What architectural style or styles should be required in the community? How should those styles be defined and where should they be permitted within the Estero Community Planning area?
- What changes in the existing sign standards are needed? How should administration of the Estero sign ordinance be changed?
- How can Estero be made more pedestrian and biker friendly? Where are the existing bike/ped deficiencies and what needs to be done to remedy these deficiencies? How can Estero's attractions be made more pedestrian and bicycle accessible?
- How can the Estero River and Estero Bay be made more accessible by the public no matter their mode of transportation...on foot, biking and by boat? How can golf course ponds and retention ponds be made more accessible?

- How can Estero's relationship with Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU) be improved and broadened to the benefit of both the community and the University? How can the Estero community reach out to the University? How can a continuing liaison between Estero and FGCU be established?

The Medium Priority areas identified by the Joint Committee are as follows:

- How can the Community Plan be amended to encourage the development of a historical district east of US41 between Corkscrew Road and Broadway, especially including the Highlands Avenue area? How can the older commercial developments that were built before the Community Plan was adopted be improved so that they are compatible with their surrounding areas as they develop in conformance with the plan? What incentives can be developed to help achieve these objectives?
- How can the connectivity for all modes of transportation be improved within each development and between adjacent developments along our major roadways?
- How can Estero's parks and preserve areas be made more accessible and connected to one another and to the River and Bay? Are there additional properties that need to be developed as park and recreation areas in order to better link the system of parks and open space?

The Low Priority areas identified by the Joint Committee are as follows:

- How should the Community Plan be amended to provide for gateway features at the entrances to Estero on major roadways? How many and where should these gateway features be located? What should the theme of these features and what elements should be included within them?
- What kind of mass transit facilities does Estero need, rail, bus rapid transit, local transit connection various shopping venues, water ferries etc? Where should they be located? How can they be made accessible for pedestrians, bikers and drivers?
- How can Estero attract more businesses to occupy its undeveloped commercially zoned land? How can Estero diversify its economy so that it is less reliant on tourism and retail?
- Should the Community Plan be amended in order to provide for a town center? If so, where should it be located and what should it include?
- Should the Estero Community Planning boundaries be changed? If so where should they be changed?

The Dicken's Report on the Community Planning Workshop may be viewed on the ECPP website at http://esterofl.org/EsterofLife/estero_community_plan.htm

Lee County has budgeted \$150,000 for community planning grants during the present fiscal year which began on October 1, 2010. County Planner Ebaugh indicated that the ECPP should convert the agreed outline of changes into a Work Plan to be submitted to the County in order to obtain a community planning grant of up to \$50,000. That grant and an equal amount of local matching funds will be needed in order for the ECPP to employ the professional assistance necessary to prepare amendments to the Community Plan and Land Development Code that incorporate the changes that the community decides it wants the County Board to approve.

Council of Community Leaders (ECCL) Role In the Community Plan Renewal Process

Many of the high priority ideas that came out of the Community Planning Workshop on November 13th do not require changes in the Community Plan or Land Development Code. Instead they require the assistance, cooperation and, sometimes, approval of various governmental and/or private institutions. A group of ECCL members have reviewed these ideas and have begun to organize to implement them.

These suggestions have been organized into four major categories:

- Transportation
- Economic Development
- Parks, Open Space and Recreation, and
- Miscellaneous.

The ECCL's Transportation Committee will work with Lee County Department of Transportation (DOT), Florida DOT, the Lee County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), BikeWalkLee and the owners of the railroad that lies just east of US 41 to improve the availability of transit in Estero; to remedy the deficiencies and disconnections in Estero's sidewalks and bike paths; to add attractively landscaped gateway signage on all the major roadway entrances to Estero and to improve the deficient and unsafe intersections scattered throughout the community.

The Economic Development Committee will work with the Lee County Economic Development Department and its public private partner, the Horizon Council; FGCU; the Lee County Port Authority; Lee County Community Development Department; the City of Bonita Springs; the Bonita Springs Chamber of Commerce and the major owners of vacant commercial parcels in Estero to strengthen Estero's connection with FGCU through economic development cooperation; development and implementation of a business attraction plan; installation of infrastructure improvements conducive to the location of major national firms in Estero and preparation of a public relations program for the community and area.

The Parks, Open Space and Recreation Committee will work with the following County departments: Community Development, Natural Resources, Transportation, Parks and Recreation, Conservation 20/20 and the Board of County Commissioners; the following State Departments: Transportation, Parks Management and Florida Forever and the South Florida Water Management District, key property owners, communities fronting on the Estero River and BikeWalkLee to improve access to the Estero River; link Estero's existing park, recreation and open space properties and complete the development of the Estero Community Park.

These three committees are still in formation and all residents of Estero are invited to volunteer to serve on any that interest them. Please contact Don Eslick by email at doneslick@comcast.net or by phone at 273-9493.

Proponents Make Second Attempt to Add CR 951 to the 2035 Needs Plan

County Road 951 (CR951), is a proposed four lane roadway that would run parallel to I-75 through the environmentally sensitive Density Reduction/Groundwater Resource (DR/GR) area on the east side of I-75 including Edison Farms. For the last six months the owners of Edison Farms has been working with a coalition of community and environmental groups, including the ECCL and the Brooks Concerned Citizens (BCC), to have this 4,000 acre parcel be acquired by Conservation 20/20 and other public programs for conservation and possible restoration. The deletion of CR951 from the 2035 Needs Plan will reduce the purchase price of Edison Farms and thus greatly increase the odds of restoring this vast wetland.

Keeping CR 951 out of the 2035 Needs Plan will benefit Estero in the following additional ways:

- These wetlands store rainwater and thereby reduce the possibility of flooding the communities that lie downstream of this land, the Brooks, Rapallo, March Landing, Fountain Lakes, West Bay Club, Villages of Country Creek and Pelican Sound.
- These wetlands clean the water that flows to the west thus helping to keep Estero Bay a vital estuary that supports many species of fish, birds and wildlife.
- Some of the water stored on these lands help to recharge the aquifers below that supply fresh water to Estero and most of Lee County.

On January 21st the Lee County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) discussed adding CR 951 back into the 2035 Needs Plan for the second time since it was removed by the MPO on October 18, 2010 on a vote of 12 to 2. They took up this issue because some proponents of CR 951 were able to convince a majority of the MPO's Citizen Advisory Committee (CRC) to advise the MPO to restore the road project. The ECCL and the BCC spoke in opposition to this proposal.

Commissioner Judah, the primary supporter of CR-951 on the MPO, tried to use the past expenditures on right-of-way for this road as the basis for reinstating it in spite of the fact that most of those funds have been spent on the CR-951 section north of Corkscrew Road that remains in the 2035 Plan. The recommendation did not come to a vote at this meeting but will undoubtedly be revisited again soon.

Adding CR 951 to the 2035 Needs Plan was considered by the MPO at its December meeting because of efforts by the City of Bonita Springs to have the CRC advise the MPO to add it back into the 2035 Plan. That motion was defeated by a vote of 14 to 1.

Protecting Estero's Future by Acquiring and Preserving Edison Farms

A coalition of national, state and local environmental and civic groups have united in support of public acquisition and preservation of the 4,000-acre Edison Farms site just east of I-75 south of Corkscrew Road.

The Estero Council of Community Leaders, the Brooks Concerned Citizens, Conservancy of Southwest Florida, Collier County Audubon Society, Audubon of Southwest Florida, CREW Land & Water Trust, Florida Wildlife Federation and The Trust for Public Land have formed a coalition in support of this effort.

The Coalition of organizations supporting the Edison Farms acquisition and the owners of Edison Farms meet monthly in order to pursue every possible funding source for this acquisition.

Because of the size of this property funding will be necessary from a number of sources, local, state and national. Because of the slow economy conservation purchases like this will be paid off over several years, not all at the time of purchase.

On January 19th the Edison Farms Public Acquisition Coalition met to review progress and plan the next steps in the acquisition process.

The following summarizes the status of each element currently underway:

Conservation 20/20 Update – All of their site visits have been completed as of January 12, 2011. These site visits complete the secondary review process; therefore, the CLASAC Advisory Committee can now rank the properties and send their recommendation to the BOCC. The next step is a Criteria and Ranking Subcommittee meeting on February 1st, 2011, where the staff is expected to provide a proposed ranking. Hopefully, the subcommittee recommendation will then go to the full CLASAC Committee that will meet on February 10th.

It is estimated that the BOCC will take up the matter in March, but with County budget talks starting in June/July it is important that the BOCC vote on the 2020 Priority List no later than March or April. Phil Flood of the South Florida Water Management District's (SFWMD) Ft. Myers office agreed to write a letter to the CLASAC committee in support of the public acquisition of Edison Farms. Our local member of the SFWMD Board, Charles Dauray, concurs in this support but the District's Executive Director Carol Wehle has not yet approved the letter.

SFWMD Funding—for the foreseeable future the SFWMD is not going to fund any projects other than for water quality and water storage in the Everglades.

FGCU support – The Committee continues to seek the support of Dr. Bradshaw, President of FGCU. A meeting is expected soon.

Lee Port Authority Funding – When the Southwest Florida Regional Airport adds a parallel runway in a few years it will need to expand its mitigation plan. The Port Authority has hired a consultant whose study exploring the mitigation options for the runway will be completed shortly. Once this report becomes available the Committee plans on meeting with the staff of the Port Authority to explore the possibilities of some of this mitigation, and the funds to pay for it, being designated for the Edison Farms property.

Florida Forever Funding – Due to the State precarious financial condition Florida Forever funds are not likely to be available for some time. One of the two Florida Forever grant programs, the Florida Communities Trust (FCT) has a grant application deadline of February 23, 2011. The

Committee is considering filing a grant application by that date. The maximum size of these grants is \$5 million.

Background

During September at least eight (8) Estero community organizations approved resolutions supporting the acquisition and restoration of Edison Farms. Please urge your Community Board to approve the Edison Farms petition that can be obtained on the ECCL webpage at http://www.esterofl.org/Issues/edison_farms.htm.

In addition The Conservancy of Southwest Florida initiated a petition necessary for the project to be considered for funding from the Federal government's "Great Outdoors Initiative" program. Please add your name to this petition by selecting The Conservancy link on the right side of the same internet page... http://www.esterofl.org/Issues/edison_farms.htm.

On August 12th The Coalition testified in support of the project before Lee County's Conservation 20/20 Conservation Lands Acquisition and Stewardship Advisory Committee (CLASAC) who subsequently voted unanimously to nominate Edison Farms for acquisition. CLASAC is a 15-member citizen's advisory committee appointed by the Board of County Commissioners. This committee, along with a sub-committee, recommends to the commissioners which properties should be purchased. Only properties with a "willing seller" may qualify for the Conservation 20/20 program. If the commissioners agree, the Division of County Lands then will initiate the negotiation process.

Earlier this year the state's "Florida Forever" land acquisition program ranked the property and contiguous Corkscrew Regional Ecosystem Watershed (CREW) area as #3 statewide in the Partnerships and Regional Incentives Projects category.

Representatives of Corkscrew Regional Ecosystem Watershed (CREW) Land & Water Trust and the Calusa Land Trust announced they will be contributing \$100,000 and \$10,000 respectively towards the purchase of this land. Pledged donations from community and other organizations will help Edison Farms chances for approval by the Committee and the Board of Commissioners. We would urge all Estero community organizations to consider pledging some funds, no matter how small, for the acquisition.

Conservation 20/20 funds were committed in 2009 for the acquisition of a select group of properties using phased acquisition over the next several years. All Conservation 20/20 nominations received since January 1, 2009 have only undergone a preliminary evaluation to be retained and held for future consideration when funds became available again or to be rejected. As a result of the preliminary evaluations, CLASAC has retained a total of 28 nominations, including Edison Farms. About \$20 million per year is raised for the Conservation 20/20 program by a special property tax levy approved by the voters of Lee County in 1996.

Troyer Brothers Mine Hearing Complete After 9 Days

The Troyer Brothers mine hearing concluded on January 26th after nine days of testimony by all parties and about 80 members of the public...all opposed to the mine. The Hearing Examiner gave no indication about how he planned to handle the case. It is expected that it will be several months before his report becomes available and the case can be considered by the BOCC.

January 20th was the last day that the public could testify. The final two days were reserved for the closing arguments by the applicant and county staff. On January 20th the county's blasting expert, Dr. Glen Rix, testified that any structures within 2,300 feet of Troyer's blasting would be at risk of damage. Dr. Rix also found a number of inconsistencies with the applicant's blasting plan report regarding setbacks, etc.

Roland Ottolini, head of Lee County Natural Resources department, testified about adverse impacts that the mine would have on the area's surface water hydrology and historic flow ways. In concluding testimony for Lee County, lead planner Tony Palermo presented an excellent summary of the basis for Lee County Staff's recommendation to DENY the Troyer Mine rezoning.

The Hearing Examiner then opened the hearing to public testimony. Approximately 10 residents spoke in opposition to the mine bringing the total to about 80 residents on the record as opposed to this project.

Richard Quist, a resident of Copperleaf in the Brooks, retained a Hydrologist, Dr. Danemiller, who was subsequently qualified as an expert and testified very effectively about the adverse impacts this mine would have on groundwater resources. Dr. Danemiller also pointed out a number of errors in the applicant's Hydrology Report. The ECCL and the BCC want to thank Mr. Quist for so strongly demonstrating his commitment to Estero's future.

Background

With hearings on December 7th, 8th, and 9th the Troyer Brothers Mine hearing now has gone on for six days. During the first six days of public hearing we've had excellent support by the public with more than 65 residents from Estero, Corkscrew and Lehigh speaking in opposition to this project. However the attorney for the applicant has resisted allowing some factual testimony by several public and expert witnesses, especially as it relates to evidence questioning the need for additional rock mines in Lee County.

As has been done in prior cases, the last hour or so of each hearing day is set aside for public comment. If you do not appear before the Hearing Examiner, by law you will not be permitted to appear before the Board of County Commissioners at the final hearing in this case.

The Hearing has been scheduled for three more days, January 20th, 25th and 26th. Some of these dates may be cancelled if they are not needed to finalize the case. Thus we would urge those of you who have not testified to set aside some time on the afternoon of January 20th to travel to downtown Ft. Myers to testify. You may find some talking points at the following webpage... <http://esterofl.org/Issues/mining.htm>

Lee County Staff has issued a recommendation of DENIAL of the Troyer Brothers Mine application, finding it inconsistent with the Lee Plan, incompatible with surrounding uses, fails to protect natural and environmental resources, and fails to meet traffic standards.

On November 17th a Lee County Hearing Examiner began consideration of another Corkscrew Road mining application; the third application to proceed through the County's rezoning process in the last 3 years. This project is called "Troyer Brothers Excavation" and would rezone 1,803 acres from Agriculture District (AG-2) to Mine Excavation Planned Development (MEPD) to

allow mining activities including administrative offices and rock crushing operations. A 110 foot maximum mine depth is proposed with a mine duration is 35 years. In addition blasting and dewatering are proposed. At over 1,800 acres, this is the largest mine yet proposed for the DR/GR area.

**Over 50 Estero residents testified against each of the last two Corkscrew Road mines
...we look forward to your support once again.**

This is the first mine application to be heard using the revised Lee County Mining Code adopted by the BOCC on September 9, 2008.

In June 2010 the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) voted unanimously to deny zoning for the 1,365 acre RCH mine on east Corkscrew Road after 22 days of Hearing by a County Hearing Examiner who recommended approval of the mine. This mine would have produced an average of 3,000 round-trip truck trips per day for the next 30 years. As a result of a court order this mine was heard under the old, far less stringent County mining regulations.

On June 16, 2008 the BOCC voted unanimously to deny zoning for the 318 acre Estero Group mine located about 7 miles east of I-75 on Corkscrew Road after a then record 17 days of Hearings before a Lee County Hearing Examiner.

As in the RCH Mine case the lawyers for Troyer Brothers have asked to have someone other than Lee County's Chief Hearing Examiner Diana Parker hear the case. In the RCH Case Judge Parker agreed to step aside and the case was assigned to an Assistant Hearing Examiner with no experience in such matters.

This time Lee County raised objections to this motion and a hearing was scheduled for November 2nd. Hearing Examiner Diana Parker denied the applicant's motion that she recuse (remove) herself, however she left the door open by saying that the applicant could restate their motion at the time of the hearing "should she be the Examiner assigned to the case". As of now, she has not made that assignment.

Unlike the recent RCH mine hearing which proceeded by Court order, the Troyer Brothers application has met the County's sufficiency requirements under the new Chapter 12 Mining standards of the Land Development Code adopted by the BOCC in late 2008. These guidelines are quite stringent in terms of water modeling and monitoring.

The proposed Troyer Mine is located outside of the "Preferred Mining Area" overlay map which is part of the pending DR/GR Comp Plan Amendment. But because of the pending status, it will not be considered by the HEX in this case.

The Troyer Mine property has an existing unpaved access road entrance on Corkscrew Road; however the applicant is not proposing use of this entrance for dump trucks "at this time".

Estero's Housing Permits Finish the Year at Extremely Slow Pace

During December, thirteen single family homes and two duplexes with a building value of \$2.4 million were permitted in Estero. Most of the permits this month continue to be for lesser-priced homes in Bella Terra. At least the slowdown in new home construction is helping to reduce the inventory of unsold new homes constructed in Estero during 2005.

For the year, [Housing units permitted](#) were up about 17% over 2008 and 2009, but the figure remains far below 2000-2006, and equals 13% of the figure recorded in 2002, the year immediately following the tragedy of 9/11/2001. In addition, the average building value, exclusive of land, has fallen precipitously this year to compete with the lower priced homes on the market. Notably, the 2010 building value of \$39.2 million is the lowest in this decade and down 20% from the previous low in 2009.

Of the 154 single family homes (building value of only \$28 million) permitted this year, 61% of the permits have been issued to Lennar's Bella Terra, on Corkscrew, east of I-75. The two Toll Brothers' developments (Belle Lago and The Reserve of Estero) on Estero Parkway have contributed another 28% of the total.

The following table compares 2010 with the prior ten years:

Year	Annual Total Housing Units	Building Value of Units	Average Building Value Per Unit	Percentage of Single Family Units
2000	2,088	\$291,811,402	\$139,756	41%
2001	2,104	325,403,253	154,659	47
2002	1,500	278,888,919	185,926	51
2003	1,425	231,712,400	162,605	47
2004	1,646	365,109,794	221,816	60
2005	2,833	627,683,225	221,561	46
2006	1,310	343,633,334	262,316	39
2007	432	123,231,025	285,257	38
2008	167	56,356,637	337,465	81
2009	164	48,775,436	297,411	76
2010	194	39,205,544	202,090	79

The County permit information used in this report may be found at <http://www.lee-county.com/dcd/Reports/EsteroReports.htm>

Estero's Permitted Commercial Building Values in 2010 Hit New Low

During December, permits totaling only \$500,000 were issued for Estero commercial buildings. About half of this depressed amount was for the Meadows of Estero.

As shown below, Estero's commercial development started to expand rapidly in 2004 and peaked in 2006 with a total of \$184.7 million (excluding the land values). Since then, total commercial investment in Estero has fallen precipitously. For 2010, the value of [commercial buildings](#) permitted in Estero totaled \$9.3 million, the smallest annual total in the last ten years, and down 4% from 2009.

Year	Annual Total
2000	\$77,250,835
2001	44,116,526
2002	23,135,139
2003	23,234,725
2004	60,859,820

2005	111,037,977
2006	184,709,240
2007	157,614,045
2008	39,261,677
2009	9,752,556
2010	9,322,546

The major projects permitted in 2010 were:

- \$4,222,000 for [Coconut Point Town Center](#)
- \$1,925,000 for [Miramar Outlets](#) expansion
- \$1,200,000 for the Lee County Corkscrew Road wellfield
- \$1,160,000 for [Meadows of Estero](#)
- \$800,000 for a new bank in the [Coconut Trace Center](#)
- \$619,000 for [Villages of Country Creek Water Storage System](#)
- \$500,000 for the new Chase Bank on Tamiami
- \$400,000 for [Wildcat Run Country Club](#)
- \$258,000 for remodeling [Bonita Health Center](#)
- \$248,000 for Hyatt Equities
- \$202,000 for The [Brooks Town Center](#)
- \$128,000 for [Corkscrew Palms](#)
- \$104,800 for [Estero Park Commons](#)

Reminder: The building values understate the cost of each residence or commercial building because they exclude the value of the underlying land.

