

**Estero Development Report**  
 Volume 11, Number 10, Issued June 2012  
 Produced by the Estero Council of Community Leaders (ECCL)  
**For More Information about Estero**  
 ...see [www.esterofl.org](http://www.esterofl.org)

**July & August Opportunities for Citizen Participation  
 That will Protect Estero's Quality of Life**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Location</b>
Tuesday, July 10th	5:00 p.m.	Estero Fire Rescue Monthly Board Meeting	District Headquarters on Three Oaks just south of Corkscrew
Wednesday, July 11th	9 a.m.	Estero Fire Rescue Budget Presentation open to the public	District Headquarters on Three Oaks just south of Corkscrew
Wednesday, July 11th	5 p.m.	Estero Design Review Committee (EDRC) meeting	Estero Community Park
Monday, July 16th	6 p.m.	Estero Community Planning Panel (ECP) Meeting	Estero Community Park
Friday, June 20th	9 a.m.	Lee County MPO (Transportation Planning) meeting	Cape Coral City Council Chambers, 1015 Cultural Park Blvd, Cape Coral
Wednesday, August 8th	5 p.m.	Estero Design Review Committee (EDRC) meeting	Estero Community Park
Friday, August 10th	10 a.m.	ECCL Regular Monthly Meeting... will be our speaker	Estero Community Park
Tuesday, August 14 <sup>th</sup>	5:00 p.m.	Estero Fire Rescue Monthly Board Meeting	District Headquarters on Three Oaks just south of Corkscrew
Friday, August 17 <sup>th</sup>	9 a.m.	Lee County MPO (Transportation Planning) meeting	Cape Coral City Council Chambers, 1015 Cultural Park Blvd, Cape Coral
Monday, August 20th	6 p.m.	Estero Community Planning Panel (ECP) Meeting	Estero Community Park

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**Estero Community Website ([www.esterofl.org](http://www.esterofl.org))**

**The community groups sponsoring the site are:**

Estero Community Planning Panel (ECP)  
Estero Design Review Committee (EDRC)  
Estero Council of Community Leaders (ECCL)  
Estero Community Association (ECA)

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**BOCC Appoints a Blue Ribbon Committee  
To Review the Conservation 20/20 Program**

On June 25, the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) voted for their nominees to the newly formed "Blue Ribbon Committee" to evaluate the Conservation 20/20 Program.

The BOCC agreed that the committee would consist of a total of seven members, one person selected by each commissioner, and two people selected from the County's Conservation Lands Acquisition and Stewardship Advisory Committee, called the CLASAC Committee.

CLASAC is a citizen's advisory committee which was formed 15 years ago to oversee the selection of Conservation 20/20 eligible projects.

The Blue Ribbon Committee will hold its first meeting on August 1 and is being directed to complete its recommendations within 90 days.

The Commissioners decided to wait until the Blue Ribbon Committee completes its task before considering whether or not the Conservation 20/20 program should be subject to a referendum as to whether or not it should be extended or terminated.

The ECCL, the Conservancy of Southwest Florida and several other groups have indicated that, should the program go to a referendum, it should do so at the next presidential election in the fall of 2016 when there will be a large voter turnout.

This also would allow time for further negotiations for the acquisition of the environmentally sensitive, 4,000 acre Edison Farms property just east of The Brooks that is now in a foreclosure court.

In addition the Commissioners agreed to direct staff to continue negotiating with all the approved properties and bringing forth additional properties reviewed and recommended for purchase to the BOCC. There is currently over \$45 million on hand in the Conservation 20/20 fund and staff indicated these funds are sufficient to acquire all remaining properties on both the approved project lists.

The Conservation 20/20 Program has been under fire by Charlie Green, the County Clerk of Courts. He has accused the County of overpaying for some of the properties that have been acquired. He's stated that all properties should be valued at a rural/agricultural designation, without consideration of any development rights they have acquired through the zoning process.

## **US 41/Sweetwater Ranch Intersection Safety Discussed with State Leaders**

A ECCL Transportation Subcommittee meeting was held on Monday, June 25, 2012 to discuss traffic local safety concerns with the leadership of the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT). The meeting was set up as a "roundtable" for various officials to listen to and discuss our request for a full working traffic signal at Sweetwater Ranch Boulevard and State Route 41 that serves the Fountain Lakes and Rapallo Communities.

This is the location where, on February 1, 2012, seventeen year old Danielle Chapman was struck by a vehicle and killed while attempting to cross US 41 to her home in Fountain Lakes. There already is a flashing yellow emergency signal at this location to enable Estero Fire Rescue emergency vehicles to safely exit their Station 42 on the East side of 41 to respond to emergency calls.

The State representatives who traveled to the meeting included FDOT Secretary Ananth Prasad, Billy Hattaway FDOT District 1 Secretary and State Senator Lizbeth Benacquisto who was responsible for the FDOT executives being in attendance. Also at the table was Ned Dewhurst, Vice-President of Oakbrook Properties, who worked with Chairman Schweers to have the exiting signal installed a few years earlier. Finally the group included Dave Loveland, Director of the Lee County Department of Transportation, and Bill Williams and Jim Boesch, Co-Chairs for the ECCL Transportation Committee. Schweers, a member of that Committee Chaired this session.

The Community representatives at the table sought to have the FDOT Officials approve a full working traffic signal at this location.

FDOT officials stated that signals often lead to more crashes and the State is committed to national guidelines regarding signal spacing and traffic count criteria so that they can objectively determine if a signal is needed at a given location. Secretary Prasad stated that this intersection does not warrant a full working signal at this time.

Several Estero residents spoke up explaining the many dangers that this intersection presents and Secretary Prasad stated that he would like to grant our request but would need more information. He stated that he hopes that a compromise can be reached. FDOT agreed to further study traffic at the intersection and the surrounding area and report back to the community in 90 days.

The Transportation Committee members agreed to continue working with State officials toward this goal. Lastly, the communities made a request to have FDOT prohibit U turns at this intersection for north bound traffic on US41 and the Secretary was more receptive to this request. The State also announced that streetlights will soon be installed on this segment of US 41 at a cost of \$1.2 million.

The ECCL Transportation committee will treat this project as an on-going project for some time.

## **Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) Program Development for the Density Reduction/Groundwater Resource (DR/GR) Area**

On March 30<sup>th</sup> the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity agreed with an Administrative Law Judge's decision that Lee County's Comprehensive Plan amendment for the DR/GR meets the state's standards for protecting our water resources. The deadline for appealing this decision by the parties contesting the plan has expired without them filing an appeal. Thus all of the provisions of the DR/GR Plan are now law.

This decision permits the County to begin to implement the provisions of the plan that would restore the flowways and wetlands in that part of the DR/GR that is not in the Future Limerock Mining Overlay. This area lies along both sides of Corkscrew Road from Bella Terra to the Collier County line.

The development of an effective Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program is the key to the success of this program. A TDR program for the DR/GR area will provide a mechanism for the owners of large DR/GR lands to sell their development rights (primarily residential) to developers in county designated areas outside the DR/GR and in a few peripheral areas of the DR/GR that wish to increase the density of their developments. The owners of these TDR sending lands will still be able to use the land for agricultural purposes.

On June 15<sup>th</sup> the ECCL unanimously approved a resolution urging the County to quickly move ahead with the development of a TDR program for the DR/GR. That resolution noted the following provisions of the DR/GR Comprehensive Plan directing such an effort:

"Policy 33.3.5 of the recently enacted DR/GR Amendment to the Comprehensive Plan states that "The Land Development Code will be amended within one year to specify procedures for concentrating existing development rights on large tracts, for transferring development rights between landowners, for seeking approval of additional acreage subdivisions, and for incorporating commercial and civic uses into Mixed-Use Communities as designated on Map 17."

In addition Policy 33.3.6 of the Lee Plan states "By 2012 Lee County will evaluate the establishment and funding of a DR/GR TDR Bank that will offer to purchase development rights for resale in the TDR system. The purpose of this program is to give potential sellers the opportunity to sell rights even if no developer is ready to use them and to give potential development applicants the opportunity to obtain the necessary rights without seeking them on the open market."

On June 21<sup>st</sup> the Watershed Council of Southwest Florida schedule a talk by Paul O'Connor, Lee County's Director of Planning, on the County's plans for updating the existing ineffective TDR program. After his presentation there was a lot of good discussion about TDR programs, where Lee County has gaps in the concept and how it can be fixed.

The group suggested that there is an opportunity for the County to work with the City of Bonita on a TDR concept where density from the Lee DR/GR could be transferred to the areas of the Bonita DR/GR that have been highly impacted by mining and development. The group also encouraged the County to work on fixing the TDR program for the DR/GR.

O'Connor pointed out that there was a TDR program set up and in place within the DR/GR, but did admit that it might need to be tweaked. He said he would prefer to wait until there is a landowner interested in selling TDRs before working on that. The audience gave some very strong feedback that the changes should be done now, so that when a landowner comes forward to participate, the program is fully functional.

The Council also stated that they did not want any future DR/GR landowners to use the excuse that they cannot be expected to participate in the TDR program because it is not viable and functional and therefore they should be allowed to exit the DR/GR. O'Connor understood this position because it has happened so often in the past.

O'Connor indicated that the County planning staff did not have the time or the expertise to develop a TDR program at this time and that the County would need to outsource this project to some TDR expert consultants. He said he has a list of 11 approved consultants he might be used for this project. O'Connor further indicated that he did not know exactly how much this would cost and there are presently no funds available for the project. It would be up to the advocates to lobby to get the funding in the budget for such work.

### **First Homes Being Built and Lots for Sale at "The Preserve of Corkscrew"**

Four homes are under construction at Estero's newest gated community, "The Preserve at Corkscrew" (<http://preserveatcorkscrew.com/>). The models are being built by Pulte ([Pulte Homes](#)) and Lennar ([Lennar Homes](#)) and are expected to be open to the general public in July. Currently, lots are being offered for sale. The development is located 2 miles east of I-75 on Corkscrew Rd., just west of Bella Terra.

As reported in the September, 2011 EDR, the development is planned to include 441 single family homes. It has been designed as a quaint residential neighborhood consisting of a variety of single-family homes, including estates. The amenity package is expected to include a resort-style swimming pool, fitness center with state-of-the-art equipment, gathering room, aerobics, library, conference room, tennis courts, and pool cabana with a fireplace.

### **Bonita Springs Estero Economic Development Council Reports on 2012 Accomplishments**

The Bonita Springs Estero Economic Development Council (EDC), of which the ECCL is an investor, continues its year-long activities to stimulate business development in the area. The EDC's progress was discussed as part of a June 17 "economic workshop" for members of Bonita Springs City Council. Christine Ross, the EDC's Executive Director, reported on the EDC's 2012 accomplishments, including the following:

- "Developed a process for surveying CEO's in conjunction with FGCU Economic Research Institute. Goal to take a snap shot of existing businesses to assess their needs, potential for growth and to develop leads.
- Continued to develop partnerships with local, regional and state organizations to support regional diversification and expansion of the economic base.

- Building leads for target industries: Bio and Life Sciences, Internet Technology & Related Services, Aviation, Corporate Headquarters, Back Office & Shared Services and Clean Manufacturing & Green Technologies.
- Facilitating business mentoring services with SBDC to facilitate growth and success of local start up and existing businesses.
  - Pushed at the county and state level for targeted workforce development through local schools and universities to address the needs of existing and emerging companies.
- Established a “Red Carpet Committee” of EDC members to meet with developers and business leads.
- Monitoring occupational license and occupancy permits to gauge the speed of our recovery.
- Continue to promote the Bonita Springs/Estero marketplace as the most business friendly community in the region through internal and external marketing.”

The EDC’s Chief Executive Officer Survey of local businesses, as described above, continues; a report to investors is expected in about two months.

A number of Estero businesses have already invested in the EDC. The ECCL encourages Estero businesses to consider joining the EDC to realize the benefits of being an investor and to support the economic growth of south Lee County. Those who are interested should contact the ECCL’s Bob Lienesch at [RPL1000@aol.com](mailto:RPL1000@aol.com) or Christine Ross at [Director@BonitaEDC.com](mailto:Director@BonitaEDC.com).

For more information on the BSEEDC, see [www.BonitaEDC.com](http://www.BonitaEDC.com).

### **Estero Parkway Wal-Mart Is Alive and Kicking**

On June 13<sup>th</sup> Wal-Mart presented its latest ideas for their store on land they own on the northeast corner of US 41 and Estero Parkway to the Estero Design review Committee (EDRC). About 150 Estero residents attended the hearing.

Wal-Mart’s new plans call for an 180,000 square foot store including space for general merchandise, a grocery store, a lawn and garden store, a pharmacy with a drive-through but without a tire lube facility and one outlet. The existing zoning for the property approved by the Board of County Commissioners in October 2004 contains a 228,000 square foot store with all the same uses but with a tire lube facility on the south end of the building, no drug store and one 20,000 square foot outlet.

The existing zoning was the product of two years of negotiation between a joint committee of the Estero Council of Community Leaders and The Vines community, which at that time was the only abutting community that was occupied. As a result the existing zoning contains twenty-four (24) site development regulations that prescribe in detail the landscaping and architecture of the development; the kind and location of sidewalks; the walls surrounding all noise producing equipment, including delivery areas; the hours of operation and delivery. In addition they prohibit many of the practices that have made some Wal-Mart stores objectionable like: the location of the outdoor seating; outdoor display and sales; outdoor storage; overnight vehicle parking; construction blasting; sidewalk, tent and parking lot sales; auto shows and other special events and any temporary signage.

The members of the EDRC and the public had many suggestions for Wal-Mart and its representatives. Wal-Mart wants some time to respond to all these ideas, make the necessary adjustments and return to the EDRC. Once they have firmed up the site plan and the design they plan to present to the Estero Community Planning Panel (ECP) before filing for rezoning with the County. The community will have several more opportunities for input on this project. Wal-Mart expects that the store will not open for business for at least 22 months.

### **Corkscrew Woods Comprehensive Plan Approved by BOCC**

On June 18<sup>th</sup>, the Lee County Board of County Commissioners voted to transmit the Corkscrew Woods Comprehensive Plan Amendment to the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity. The 722 acre Corkscrew Woods property, currently vested for 254 units, is inconsistent with the one unit per 10 acres allowed within the DR/GR. Thus, when the owner proposed changes through amendment to the Lee Plan, the community's primary objective was to find a land use strategy that would create greater consistency with the intent of the DR/GR while maintaining the integrity of the recently adopted DR/GR amendment.

After consideration of all of the possible options, the ECCL, Conservancy of Southwest Florida and others decided that the best solution was to amend relevant DR/GR sections of the Lee Plan to create an "Improved Residential Communities" overlay with associated implementing policies and map amendment. While the ECCL generally is opposed to increases in density within areas such as the DR/GR, we believed that this proposed amendment provides assurances that its applicability will be limited properties satisfying specific restrictions, such as requiring the site to already be inconsistent with the DR/GR standards and be adjacent to lands designated as future urban areas.

For sites that qualify, increases in density are available only through a rezoning to Residential Planned Development that demonstrates compliance in meeting a series of meaningful environmental and conservation standards. In addition, the actual increase in density can only be gained through the applicant's selection of, and commitment to, environmentally beneficial criteria which they identify as part of their rezone application. This results in three layers of regulation which assure that any increase in density through this new overlay will be balanced by significant net benefits to the environment.

As the utilization of TDRs was an integral part of the recently implemented DR/GR program, the ECCL and others discussed with staff and the applicant the need for any Lee Plan amendment to include the ability for density increases on the Corkscrew Woods site to be achieved by decreasing density elsewhere in the DR/GR. The proposed language, as recommended by staff, contains such policy language and included:

- The ability for density to be gained through an applicant acquiring offsite property within the DR/GR and extinguishing density on such land, and
- Allowing the applicant to provide funds to Lee County to extinguish density on other DR/GR parcels.

Monetary payment to the County could be used as seed money for a future County DR/GR TDR Bank, which was anticipated through the Lee Plan to be part of the DR/GR TDR program. Such funds could be important in launching the TDR program and establishing its viability as a mechanism for transferring density. In addition, this money could also be used to fund a

panther crossing on Corkscrew Road, which has already been permitted but does not have any allocated funds at this time.

### **Estero Community Planning Panel (ECPP) Expresses Concerns About the Horizon Council's Development Approval Recommendations**

At the June 18th ECPP meeting, the panel members spent considerable time going over each of the recent recommendations made by the Business Issues Task Force of the Horizon Council that had been presented and discussed by the Board of Commissioners on June 4th.

*The biggest concern the Panel has, by far, is the proposed restrictions on the Community Plan Review Processes in Section V of the recommendations.* When Estero was the only planning panel in Lee County, the members worked hard to ensure the both the ECPP and EDRC members were technically qualified, properly chosen and appropriately assigned to ensure a balanced approach to the review process. This has taken years to achieve and the members and the community is proud of the accomplishments of these groups. The Panel agrees that the review process for both Zoning and Development Order approvals can be improved, but we are in total disagreement that this can be accomplished by removing any community review procedures and requirements for public meetings.

Both groups have endeavored never to be a holdup to a developer -- if they request a meeting for an administrative amendment the day after a scheduled public meeting was held, the groups can (and often have) reviewed them electronically and supported or responded to them within two to three days of receiving the request. As has been stated many times, community planning panels are NOT approval bodies. They cannot block a developer from ignoring our concerns and proceed directly to the Hearing Examiner.

*Regarding the Rezoning Process recommendations, the ECPP has strong reservations about the task force recommendations.* Although Estero is essentially free of Conventional Zoning Districts, the Panel feels any *Carte Blanche* granting of zoning changes anywhere in the County can be dangerous without restrictions or certain thresholds. In addition the Panel is also very concerned about loosening the requirements for administrative amendments. The ECPP and the Estero Design Review Committee (EDRC) can accommodate developer requests quickly and electronically for minor updates. The Panel has done this frequently in the past without requiring a public meeting unless there are concerns that may arise in neighboring residential developments. Again, the words and phrases "reasonable" and "not contrary to the public interest" and "do not have significant external impacts" are certainly subject to interpretation. The ECPP would favor erring on the safe side to provide a public forum to address such amendments.

With regard to the concerns expressed about the expiration of Master Concept Plans (MCP), the Panel is sympathetic to the development community when a project lands in "zoning limbo" due to such expiration. However, several examples were brought up at our meeting that might impact this -- what if a road fails between the approval of a MCP and its expiration? What if surrounding land uses have changed and would conflict with approved uses? What about additional environmental restrictions that become important? In general the Panel is uncomfortable with having no expiration date for MCPs for many of the reasons stated above.

The panel is in general agreement with all of the Sufficiency Review Process recommendations that are primarily process issues that can prove burdensome depending on what actions the staff takes. These changes require guidelines for the staff that applicants can understand.

Among the Submittal Requirements recommendations, The ECPP questions the need for not requiring narratives as part of a rezoning sufficiency review and we do not agree with the point of not requiring upgrades for minor improvements. Estero is justifiably proud of our buffering and landscaping requirements and feel that they help make us a special place in Lee County. Although these points are referred to as "being implemented administratively", the ECPP cautions the County that this can be dangerous depending on the staff interpretation of words such as "minor", "reasonably possible", "common sense" and "upgrade". Again, to make these changes workable, the County Staff needs published guidelines that applicants can understand and that are not left for interpretation.

The panel agrees that a uniform procedure for public presentations before community planning panels should be established. They should be developed by county staff. The Estero groups are more than willing to participate in that process. A developer should be able to know that wherever he goes in the County for public review of a proposed development, the package he needs to bring would be uniform and relatively simple.

### **Estero Economic Development Task Force Pursues Economic Diversification Strategy**

The current recession has clearly demonstrated the need for southwest Florida to diversify its economy. Lee County's Economic Development Office is committed to a long-term, forward-thinking mission that will expand and diversify our local economy.

The ECCL has committed itself to assist Lee County Economic Development to accomplish this mission by helping it create a **Catalyst Club**. The members of the Catalyst Club are business executives and professionals who have retirement homes in the area, are frequent vacationers or have other kinds of connections to Lee County. Bonita Springs and Estero are blessed to have many retired execs with extensive knowledge of their industry and profession, many years of insightful experience and many valuable relationships with key decision-makers who can greatly assist the Lee County Economic Development staff to attract new businesses and encourage the formation of new businesses.

### **Recent Activities**

#### **The Research and Enterprise Diamond**

A couple of years ago Lee County government decided that the area around Southwest Florida International Airport (SRW) and just north of FGCU offered its best opportunity for diversifying our economy which is now heavily reliant on tourism. The area was called the Research Diamond but that designation was not accorded any legal status, zoning overlay or plan.

As a result Lee County staff asked the local chapter of the Urban Land Institute (ULI) to create a Technical Assistance Panel of real estate professionals to review the 40 square mile area now known as the Research and Enterprise Diamond ("Diamond") and advise the County on three areas: Market Potential; Planning and Design and Implementation Strategies. On February 24<sup>th</sup> the ULI presented the County with a 22 page report that contained 8 recommendations the

central one being that the County should “develop a Strategic Master Plan for the Research and Enterprise Diamond by convening all the major stakeholders in the area for a planning charette facilitated by ULI Southwest Florida”.

On May 7<sup>th</sup> County staff made a presentation to the Board of County Commissioners updating them on the Diamond and summarizing the research staff had done with their Global Information System (GIS) to develop layers of detailed information about the property in the Research Diamond. However to date there has been no analysis of this information as it relates to the Diamond area.

On May 29<sup>th</sup> several members of the Estero Economic Development Task Force met with Glen Salyer who confirmed that he has been designated by the County Manager to lead the Research and Enterprise Diamond strategic planning effort. Salyer expects that the ULI will assist in the implementation of one or more stakeholder workshops. He also anticipates that there will be a number of committees formed to deal with specific aspect of the strategic plan and that he would welcome the participation of our Catalyst Club members.

On June 28<sup>th</sup> Salyer indicated that the County was still working on the scope of work for the Strategic Planning project with the ULI to determine who would be responsible for each element in that work plan. In addition the County is trying to identify possible funding sources, presumably including the \$6.7 million remaining in the County's Economic Development Incentive Fund.

### **Innovation Economy**

On June 6<sup>th</sup> several members of the Economic Development Task Force met with Tim Cartwright, President of the Gulf Coast Venture Forum, who is developing a second Tamiami Angel Fund and is seeking Lee County investors for that fund. The Gulf Coast Venture Forum is seeking to create an Innovation Economy in southwest Florida that relies on two of our underutilized assets:

- The private investment capital of the area's many retired and semi-retired successful entrepreneurs and business owners, and
- The intellectual capital of our experienced business retirees who can mentor the area's start-up entrepreneurs.

Cartwright suggested that we meet with Steve Walling, a founding Board member of “Jump Start” who recently sold his firm and retired to southwest Florida. Jump Start is a very successful entrepreneur support organization located in Cleveland Ohio that has now been encouraged by the Federal Government to facilitate adaption of its approach to other communities throughout the country. On June 15<sup>th</sup> some members of the Economic Development Task Force met with Walling to learn more about Jump Start and how it might be adapted to southwest Florida.

### **Existing Alternate Energy Initiatives**

On June 5<sup>th</sup> three members of the Task Force met with Dr. Joseph Simmons, who just completed his first year in the "Backe Chair for Renewable Energy" at the FGCU. His focus is on solar energy in particular but he is very supportive of other renewable energy sources. He

has a great desire to stimulate energy research and related industrial energy business in the Diamond area around the University.

On June 29<sup>th</sup> Roger Strelow and Don Eslick met with Paul Woods, CEO of Algenol, an industrial biotech company commercializing the use of hybrid algae to make ethanol & high value organic green chemicals through carbon dioxide, water and sunlight. The company employs nearly 100 scientists and engineers at their laboratory just north of Alico Road, in the Research and Enterprise Diamond.

### Earlier Efforts

During the “2011-12 season” the Estero Council of Community Leaders (ECCL) Economic Development Committee and Lee County Economic Development hosted ten “Catalyst Club Receptions” attended by over 110 Estero and Bonita Springs businesspersons.

In addition to presentations by Lee County Economic Development several of the meetings also heard presentations by the Gulf Coast Venture Forum that discussed how members could participate in “start up” investment opportunities in Florida and especially southwest Florida.

The time commitment of most Catalyst Club members will be quite limited. It’s not the members’ time that is needed; it’s their knowledge, experience and relationships that are needed. From time to time they will be invited to advise the County about business attraction strategies appropriate for their industry or profession, how best to work with a prospect in that industry that is considering Lee County as a site for expansion or to see if the member has some business relationships that may be useful in attracting a business to the area.

### Estero’s May Home Building Permits Hold Steady

During May, fifteen single family homes with a building value of \$3.8 million were permitted in Estero. May’s number of [Housing units permitted](#) was consistent with the figures for March and April, but the dollar value this month picked up due to the issuance of larger value permits for two new homes in West Bay.

May’s permits, excluding those for West Bay, were primarily for Lennar’s Bella Terra, with the balance for Toll Brothers two developments, Belle Lago and The Reserve of Estero. On a year-to-date basis, 90% of the permits have been issued to Lennar and Toll Brothers. Four permits have been issued this year for the newest Estero community, The Preserve at Corkscrew (see article above: “Homes Being Built and Lots for Sale at The Preserve of Corkscrew”).

The following table compares year-to-date May figures with those of the prior twelve years:

Year	Annual Total Housing Units	Building Value of Units	Average Building Value Per Unit	Percentage of Single Family Units
2000	858	\$116,877,412	\$136,221	38%
2001	1,035	155,925,738	150,653	40
2002	599	99,942,722	166,849	52
2003	872	127,480,453	146,193	33

2004	631	126,737,869	200,852	72
2005	1,275	253,271,426	198,644	45
2006	702	164,942,772	234,961	24
2007	286	78,418,241	274,190	36
2008	56	19,730,130	352,324	80
2009	60	22,082,017	368,034	84
2010	97	17,999,000	185,557	75
2011	78	14,489,392	185,761	87
2012	95	17,145,867	180,483	90

### Estero's May Commercial Permits Include Another Large Investment

During May, permits totaling \$1.8 million were issued for Estero [commercial buildings](#), which included \$1.5 million for clubhouse remodeling and a new facility at Spring Run in The Brooks.

As shown in the following table, Estero's commercial development peaked in 2006 with a total of \$185 million. After 2006, commercial investment in Estero fell precipitously through 2010 and began to improve in 2011. As shown below, the value of permits issued through the first five months of 2012 is up significantly compared with the past few years. This could suggest that a modest rebound is in process.

Year	Year to Date	Annual Total
2000	\$68,297,657	\$77,250,835
2001	16,911,976	44,116,526
2002	5,968,501	23,135,139
2003	8,176,174	23,234,725
2004	8,661,787	60,859,820
2005	34,119,981	111,037,977
2006	74,470,848	184,709,240
2007	70,938,231	157,614,045
2008	21,989,153	39,261,677
2009	7,439,170	9,752,556
2010	1,211,381	9,322,546
2011	5,800,777	11,717,593
2012	7,663,878	?

The major projects permitted so far this year are:

- \$1,500,000 for expanding and remodeling Spring Run Country Club;
- \$1,400,000 for remodeling Shadow Wood Country Club;
- \$1,100,000 for various Coconut Point remodeling projects, and
- \$1,000,000 for a new Goodwill Industries facility.

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

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

### June Estero Single Family Home Sales Up; Year to Date Sales Flat

Multiple Listing Service (MLS) figures indicate that 32 single family homes in Estero were sold in June. As shown below, this represents a 14% increase from a year ago, but 5 less than were sold in May. On a year-to-date basis, sales total 209, about the same as last year through June.

Period	Sold in 2011	Sold in 2012	Inc (Dec)	Inc (Dec) %
Jan	23	58	35	152%
Feb	45	21	(24)	-53
Mar	39	32	(7)	-18
Qtr 1	107	111	4	4
Apr	50	29	11	-42
May	27	37	10	37
June	28	32	4	14
Qtr 2	105	98	-7	-7
YTD	212	209	-3	-1
July	26			
Aug	31			
Sept	24			
Qtr 3	81			
YTD	293			
Oct	16			
Nov	21			
Dec	24			
Qtr 4	61			
Year	354			

As of June 30, 2012, there were 355 listings of currently active unsold single family homes in Estero. This is about the same as the beginning of the year, and 25 less (6%) than a year ago.

Of the 355 active listings, about 20% represent “distressed sales,” i.e., short-sale listings or bank owned properties which, in each case, the bank is expected to receive less than its loan amount. This percent is about the same as last month.

Based on sales in recent months, 355 active listings represent a 12 month supply of unsold homes, about the same as at the beginning of the year. A six month supply typically indicates a good market.

Thanks again to Joe Pavich, Sr. of Realty World in Estero for compiling these figures for the ECCL.

Note: These amounts include most of Estero, but do not include the Estero portion of Pelican Landing, which is not separately listed in the MLS. Also, none of the above amounts include listings of multi-family homes.