

Estero Development Report

Volume 8, Number 4, August 2008

Edited by ECCL--the Estero Council of Community Leaders

For More Information about Estero

...see www.esterofl.org

This Report is available on the Estero Fire Rescue website at www.esterofire.org
and the Estero Community website at www.esterofl.org

September Opportunities for Citizen Participation In Protecting Estero's Quality of Life

Date	Time	Event	Location
Friday, September 5 th	1 p.m.	Board of County Commissioner's (BOCC) Public Hearing on the DR/GR Dover Kohl Planning Recommendations. For more information see "Southeast Lee County Dr/GR Study" at http://www.lee-county.com/dcd/	County Board Chambers, 2 nd Floor, 2120 Main Street in downtown Ft Myers
Tuesday, September 9 th	5 p.m.	BOCC Final Consideration of Land Development Code Mining Regulations> for further information see "Proposed Land Development Code (LDC) amendments" at http://www.lee-county.com/dcd/	County Board Chambers, 2 nd Floor, 2120 Main Street in downtown Ft Myers
Wednesday, September 10 th	4 p.m.	Arts Estero Executive Committee Meeting> Discussion of plans for the coming year and filling some vacant officer and board positions	To Be Determined.. the Estero Community Park may still be needed by Flood Evacuees
Wednesday, September 10 th	5 p.m.	Monthly Meeting of the Estero Fire Rescue District. And First Public Hearing on the 2008-09 Budget. For further information see http://esterofire.org/	New Estero Fire Rescue Administration Building on Three Oaks Parkway south of Corkscrew Road
Wednesday, September 10 th	5 p.m.	Estero Design Review Committee review of the following projects: See the full agenda at http://esterofl.org/edrc/agenda.asp .	To Be Determined... the Estero Community Park may still be needed by Flood Evacuees
Thursday, September 11 th	5 p.m.	BOCC First Hearing on the 2008-09 County Budget and Capital Improvement Plan	County Board Chambers, 2 nd Floor, 2120 Main Street in downtown Ft Myers
Monday, September 15 th	9:30 a.m.	BOCC Final Hearing on Rezoning the Midtowne Estero development to increase the commercial component from 90,000 s.f. to 300,000 s.f. including a big box	County Board Chambers, 2 nd Floor, 2120 Main Street in downtown Ft Myers
Wednesday, September 17 th	1 p.m.	Southwest Florida Expressway Authority Workshop On the Florida Turnpike Enterprise 10 laning tax and revenue forecasts. For further information see: http://swfea.net/SWFEA_Home/index.html	To Be Determined... the Estero Community Park may still be needed by Flood Evacuees
Friday, September 19 th	9 a.m.	Lee County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). For the full agenda see: http://www.mpo-swfl.org/agendas.shtml	The Regional Planning Commission Building, 1926 Victoria Street in downtown Ft. Myers
Friday, September 19 th	1 p.m.	Estero Council of Community Leaders (ECCL) See the full agenda at: http://esterofl.org/eccl/minutes/index.htm	To Be Determined... the Estero Community Park may still be needed by Flood Evacuees
Tuesday, September 23 rd	5 p.m.	Monthly Meeting of the Estero Fire Rescue District. And Final Public Hearing on the 2008-09 Budget. For further information see http://esterofire.org/	New Estero Fire Rescue Administration Building on Three Oaks Parkway south of Corkscrew Road

Thursday, September 25 th	5 p.m.	BOCC Final Hearing on the 2008-09 County Budget and Capital Improvement Plan	County Board Chambers, 2 nd Floor, 2120 Main Street in downtown Ft Myers
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Estero Community Website

From January through May about 53,700 persons visited this site to learn about Estero. During the same period in 2007 only about 39,500 visited the site, thus our website traffic increased by 36% year to year.

The community groups sponsoring the site are:

- Estero Community Planning Panel (ECPP)
- Estero Civic Association (ECA)
- Estero Design Review Committee (EDRC)
- Estero Council of Community Leaders (ECCL)
- Greater Estero Cultural Arts Council (Arts Estero)

www.esterofl.org

September is the Month for Many Key DR/GR Decisions

After two years of research and planning the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) will be making many important decisions about the 83,000 acre Density Reduction/Groundwater Resource (DR/GR) area located just east of I-75 in Estero and Bonita Springs. We urge all the citizens of Estero who have followed this process to participate by attending and testifying at the Board's decision-making meetings in September. See the schedule on the front page of this report for the time and place for each of these important sessions.

On September 5th the BOCC will decide where it will encourage aggregate mining to take place in the DR/GR. Under present zoning regulations mining could be approved in any part of the 83,000 acre DR/GR. There are many applications pending for large mines along east Corkscrew Road. If all these mines were approved Estero would see thousands of dump trucks on its major roads every working day.

On September 9th the BOCC will adopt a new chapter in the Land Development Code regulating the approval and operation of existing and new mines in Lee County. These regulations are essential for the preservation of our future water supply...70% of our drinking water comes from wells in the DR/GR...; the preservation of the habitat needed by many endangered plants and animals that inhabit the area; to prevent flooding of our rivers and streams and to improve the cleanliness of these water bodies and Estero Bay.

On September 10th and 12th two of the Board's advisory committees will consider a consultant's recommendation that would for the first time impose road impact fees on mines and the trucks that serve them so that they will begin to pay for some of the road maintenance and repair costs that they cause. This user fee is long overdue. This matter will be considered by the BOCC late in September or in early October.

Should Lee County Approve any More Aggregate Mines in the DR/GR Area?

For the last quarter century DR/GR mines have been the dominant supplier of aggregate for all of southwest Florida. On September 5th the BOCC will decide if Lee County can continue to supply the lion's share of this large market and if it needs to do so. The following research should be helpful in making this important decision.

The Dover Kohl Report, recently prepared for Lee County, provides a large amount of valuable information on the role the DR/GR mines have been playing and their potential for satisfying the future demand of the region for aggregate. Most of the following is based upon their Report. It has been supplemented by recently released information about new sources of regional supply.

1. Existing permitted mines in the DR/GR contain 13,496 acres of which 7,645 acres are mineable;
2. Between 1980 and 2006 3,597 acres out of the 7,645 acres have been mined for rock. During this 26 year period an estimated 190,642,518 tons of aggregate was mined in this area, or 7,332,405 tons per year;
3. According to Dover Kohl Lee County's existing permitted mines contain another 3,576 acres of land for future limerock extraction, almost exactly as many acres as have been mined during the last 26 years. Because the limerock in these areas is deeper than the areas already mined, existing permitted mines contain an estimated 205,424,604 tons of limerock for future extraction or about 108% the amount mined during the last 26 years
4. There is a rough correlation between the amount of aggregate produced annually in Florida and the State's permanent population. This relationship produces a ratio of 9 tons of limerock products consumed each year per permanent Florida resident.

The Dover Kohl Report suggests that this methodology overestimates the demand for limerock inasmuch as the existing permanent residents do not need new housing and, unlike new residents, are not generating increased demand for workplaces, retail establishments or infrastructure, but rather for maintenance and rehabilitation of these existing facilities... a much smaller need.

5. The amount of aggregate mined in Lee County annually between 1980 and 2006, 7,332,405 tons, when divided by 9 tons per permanent resident would supply 812,000 southwest Florida residents. During this period all of southwest Florida, from Sarasota to Collier County averaged 1,014,809 permanent residents. Thus since 1980 Lee County has been supplying 80% of the region's total demand for limerock products.
6. In 2005 Lee County had 37.4% of the region's population...thus between 1980 and 2006 over half of Lee County's limerock production was exported to other counties in the region.
7. In order to develop a more accurate estimate of future demand for limerock Dover Kohl assumed that 25% of future limerock demand is for maintenance and rebuilding and 75% for new development or growth.
8. 550,036 dwelling units were built in the six county southwest Florida region between 1980 and 2006. Based upon University of Florida BEBR population forecasts an estimated 575,045 dwelling units will be constructed in these counties between 2007 and 2030, 5% more than in the last 26 years.
9. After weighting the growth factor and the rebuilding factor and adjusting for the fact that the unused portion of the already permitted mines have a thicker layer of limestone, Dover Kohl estimates that 233,933,872 tons of limerock would be needed for Lee County to continue to supply 80% of the total demand for all seven counties in southwest Florida for the period from 2007 through 2030. In other words the DR/GR mines that are already permitted are capable of supplying 80% of the Dover Kohl estimated limerock demand for all seven southwest Florida counties for the next 19 years, through 2027. All of this assumes that the increase in gasoline prices doesn't impact our way of life in ways that cause us to use less limerock for our roads, homes and businesses...a highly unlikely assumption.
10. Much additional limerock supply will likely be forthcoming from Florida Rock Mine #2 if it ultimately gains all the necessary approvals that Florida Rock has been seeking since 1994. This land includes 4,839 acres of which 2,471 acres are presently considered mineable. If approved at this level Florida Rock #2 would be by far the county's largest aggregate mine. Approval of this mine as presently configured would increase the available permitted DR/GR mining capacity by 69% and add 13 years to our ability to supply 80% of the region's demand. Even if this mine is scaled back somewhat, its approval will easily provide, in conjunction with already permitted DR/GR mines, 80% of the limerock demand for all of the Southwest Florida region through 2030 and extend the ability of these mines to supply the region, if necessary, for many years thereafter.
11. There are several new sources of limerock supply that are coming online that will reduce the need for DR/GR mines to continue to be the dominant supplier of aggregate for the seven county region.
12. The future demand for aggregate in southwest Florida is likely to be supplied by some or all of the following new limerock sources:

- a. Collier County: Dover Kohl estimates that Collier County will consume 22.7% of the region's limerock production between 2007 and 2030. Collier has substantial limerock reserves and according to Dover Kohl has recently approved three new limerock mines that should contribute greatly to satisfying this need.
- b. Sarasota County: According to Dover Kohl Sarasota County will consume 22.6% of the region's limerock production between 2007 and 2030. Much of the future demand of Sarasota County will probably be supplied by rock imported through the Manatee County Port Authority and the Port of Tampa.

The Manatee County Port: Florida Rock was the first aggregate tenant of Port Manatee. In 2000 Vulcan Materials, now the parent company of Florida Rock Industries, entered into a long term lease with Port Manatee. Since that time it has built a construction aggregates distribution facility at the Port that it uses to distribute high quality limestone produced by an affiliated company on Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula. Aggregate imports are projected to grow from 305,000 tons this year to nearly 1.3 million tons in 2030. The Port Authority estimates the following distances to some of their southwest Florida markets: the City of Sarasota...14 miles; Arcadia ...54 miles and Punta Gorda... 68 miles.

The Port of Tampa: During 2008 the Port estimates that it will process 2.3 million tons of aggregate. By 2013 the Port estimates that its aggregate leasehold customers will process almost 9 million tons, an annual increase of nearly 7 million tons. If rail facilities are developed all of southwest Florida is included in the Port's planned market. While truck transport is being used their market would extend to the City of Sarasota.

- c. Glades and Hendry Counties: Dover Kohl estimates that Glades and Hendry counties will consume only 2.26% of regional limerock production between 2007 and 2030. In April the Palm Beach County Board approve two rock mines south of Lake Okeechobee containing 11,000 acres that, if they are successfully developed, would provide a convenient source of supply for these two counties for decades to come.
- d. Charlotte County: Dover Kohl estimates that Charlotte County will consume 9.7% of the region's limerock production between 2007 and 2030. The County's limerock needs could most efficiently be supplied by mines located within the County. The closest Palm Beach County mine is located only about 65 miles from the Babcock Ranch mega-development.
- e. Desoto County: Dover Kohl estimates that Desoto County will consume only 1.9% of the region's limerock production between 2007 and 2030. Its supply can most efficiently be met by the Port of Tampa, the Manatee County Port or by the limerock mines in Charlotte County.

Estero Greatly Helps Re-elect County Commissioner's Judah, Janes and Mann

All three incumbent County Commissioner's...Ray Judah, Bob Janes and Frank Mann... were successful in the August 26th Republican Primary election. As you know these office-holders have consistently voted to support the vast majority of issues impacting Estero.

As the following table shows the voters of Estero once again supported these candidates with results that far exceeded their countywide percentages. Commissioner Ray Judah received the support of nearly 80% of all voters in the five precincts that only include Estero residents, 12% more than he obtained countywide. Commissioner Frank Mann did almost as well with 72% of the Estero vote, nearly 12% above his countywide average.

In the closest race Commissioner Bob Janes was reelected by 1,706 votes over his closest rival. More than 65% of Estero voters supported Janes, almost 19% higher than his countywide vote. The exclusively Estero voting precincts carried Janes by 875 votes... more than half (51.3%) of his total victory margin.

	Judah	Janes	Mann
Exclusively Estero Precincts	78.8%	65.4%	72.3%
All Estero Precincts	64.2%	61.3%	69.0%
Countywide Results	66.4%	46.7%	60.7%

Congratulations to Commissioner's Judah, Janes and Mann for what they accomplished on Tuesday and best wishes as they each face further opposition in the General Election on November 4th. Congratulations to the voters of Estero who took the time to participate in this unusual, low turnout, summer Primary Election where only 32% of registered Republicans voted in this hotly contested election.

Estero's registered voters are assigned to only 8 of the 171 precincts in Lee County and 3 of these precincts extend well beyond Estero's boundaries. Nonetheless the precincts that are totally in Estero include 5.9% of all registered Lee County Republicans while all eight precincts include 8.3% of Lee County registered Republicans.

The Estero Community Improvement Foundation (ECIF) Sponsors a Fashion Show in Support of Their Landscaping Project around Estero High School

On November 12th the ECIF will hold their second annual Fashion Show and Luncheon at Bice Grand Cafe at Coconut Point. Enjoy a wonderful lunch while Dillard's presents the latest Fall Fashions. Come and receive a Dillard's gift bag containing, among many items, with a three day 15% discount. Raffle tickets will be sold for \$1 each or 6 for \$5. Raffle prizes include:

- a \$500 shopping spree at Dillard's,
- dinner for two at Tarpon Bay Restaurant at the Hyatt,
- one complimentary round of golf for four at the Colony Golf and Country Club,
- two \$100 gift certificates for dinner at Angelina's Ristorante.

Door prizes will also be awarded.

100% of the proceeds will benefit the Estero Community Improvement Foundation's [landscaping project](#).

Seating begins at 11:30 and a lunch of Asian salad with plum dressing, rolls, a luscious dessert of brownie with ice cream and whipped cream plus coffee, iced tea or soft drink will be served at noon.

The ticket price for this event is a donation of \$35. Tickets will be available starting Sept. 2 and are expected to sell-out quickly again this year!

Tickets may be purchased at:

- Colonial Bank in the Corkscrew Plaza
- Dillard's office on the second floor,
- Judy Beach at 948-9366
- Barbara Goodrich at 948-1485
- Dot Dronkers at 949-0383.

Fire District Merger Study Moves Ahead

On June 17th the three Fire District Boards, Bonita Springs, Estero and San Carlos Park, voted to approve a contract with System Planning Corporation, Tridata Division to evaluate the merger of the three districts. During July each of the three Fire District Boards voted to approve funding their share of the cost of this consulting contract. Each district will pay \$40,162.

During August each of the Board's approved the contract with System Planning Corporation, Tridata Division. The consultant will begin work on the study early in 2009 so that widespread public input can be obtained prior to their analysis of the issues involved in such a merger. The study is expected to be completed in about six months, or about mid-2009.

Estero's Housing Permits Continue Stall

During June and July 51 housing units, forty-one single family homes and five duplexes, with a value of \$15.1 million were permitted in Estero. The first seven months of 2008 continue the downward trend in new housing construction in Estero that began over two years ago, in the spring of 2006.

[Housing units permitted](#) during 2007 were by far the lowest in the 9 years that the County's system has tracked Estero's permits. It would appear that 2008 will be only about a quarter of the prior minimum performance. The County permitting information used in this report may be found at <http://www.lee-county.com/dcd/Reports/EsteroReports.htm>

The following table shows how the first seven months of 2008 compare with the prior eight years:

Year	Annual Total Housing Units	Building Value of Units	Average Building Value Per Unit	Percentage of Single Family Units
2000	1122	\$154,418,948	\$137,628	41%
2001	1399	213,746,261	152,785	45
2002	905	153,144,578	169,221	68
2003	1033	155,939,745	150,958	38
2004	1049	225,841,691	215,292	65
2005	1645	340,070,708	206,730	51
2006	969	236,835,506	244,412	31
2007	384	108,303,686	282,041	38
2008	107	36,466,269	340,806	83

Not only are this year's total housing units far below all prior years, they equal only 12% of the comparable number in 2002, the season immediately following the tragedy of 9/11/2001 and is only 28% of last year's total for the period.

On the other hand the average building value, excluding the land beneath it, continues to increase, up 21% from the prior high set last year and almost two and one-half times the average in 2000.

Permitted Commercial Building Values Continue Slow Growth

The building permits of all types issued during the first seven months of 2008 continued at a very slow pace. The value of [commercial buildings](#) permitted in Estero during the seven months totaled \$35 million.

Year	Year to Date	Annual Total
2000	\$71,541,520	\$77,250,835
2001	22,496,652	44,116,526
2002	15,288,582	23,135,139
2003	22,842,650	23,234,725
2004	13,548,400	60,859,820
2005	44,789,557	111,037,977
2006	150,602,944	184,709,240
2007	138,368,161	157,614,045
2008	35,018,481	?

As the right hand column of the above table indicates Estero's commercial development started to expand rapidly in 2004, peaking in 2006 with a total of \$184.7 million. (All figures are exclusive of the underlying land). The 2000 calendar year was exceptional because it was the year that the Hyatt Coconut Point Hotel and Resort was permitted.

2007 was Estero's second highest commercial development year, far ahead of the third place year, 2005. Thus far 2008 is Estero's fifth ranked commercial development year. While Estero's commercial development has slowed considerably since last year, many commercially zoned properties along US 41 and Corkscrew Road have been cleared, the sites prepared and the

designs approved by the Estero Design Review Committee. Estero's commercial growth is poised for expansion once the current slowdown is over.

During the first seven months the major projects that contributed to the year to date totals are:

- \$10.19 million for the Hyatt Garden Hotel at Coconut Point
- \$8.0 million for Extra Space Storage in Coconut Point
- \$6.70 million in the [Coconut Point Town Center](#);
- \$4.95 million for [Miromar Outlets](#) expansion
- \$1.7 million for Finemark National Bank at the Brooks Town Center
- \$1.06 million for Lee County Utilities
- \$950,000 for Wachovia Bank at Coconut Point
- \$450,382 for 24231 Walden Center remodeling
- \$300,000 for West Bay commercial development
- \$240,000 in the Estero Ridge Shopping Center
- \$241,600 in Estero Town Commons
- \$190,000 in the [Brooks Town Center](#) (retail) at Coconut Road and Three Oaks Parkway
- \$129,000 in the [International Design Center](#)

REMINDER: The building values understate the cost of each residence or commercial building because it excludes the value of the underlying land.

Lee County Population Continues to Grow

The University of Florida Bureau of Economic and Business Research estimates that the population of Lee County was 623,725 in April, 2008, up by about 8,000 from April 2007. Prior to 2007 Lee County's annual population growth had been averaging about 30,000 per year.

Growth in unincorporated Lee County, including Estero, was an estimated 4,394, an increase of 1.35%. During this 12 month period the City of Bonita Springs had the fastest pace of growth at 3.4%, an increase of 1,533 to 46,681.