

# Estero Development Report

Volume 8, Number 7

Edited by ECCL--the Estero Council of Community Leaders

**For More Information about Estero  
...see [www.esterofl.org](http://www.esterofl.org)**

This Report is available on the Estero Community website at:  
<http://esterofl.org/eccl/EDR/>

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

Date	Time	Event	Location
Tuesday, December 9th	5 p.m.	Monthly Meeting of the Estero Fire Rescue District. For further information see <a href="http://esterofire.org/">http://esterofire.org/</a>	Estero Fire Rescue Headquarters... Three Oaks Parkway south of Corkscrew
Wednesday, December 10th	9:30 a.m.	Hearing Examiner Hearing on the LeeComm 3.6 acre commercial development at 19976 Tamiami Trail	2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor Hearing Room, Community Development Building, 1500 Monroe St in downtown Ft. Myers
<del>Wednesday, December 10th</del>	<del>5 p.m.</del>	Estero Design Review Committee review of the following projects: POSTPONED TIL JANUARY See the full agenda at <a href="http://esterofl.org/edrc/agenda.asp">http://esterofl.org/edrc/agenda.asp</a> .	Estero Community Park
Friday December 12th	12 p.m. noon	Estero Historical Society Holiday Luncheon. For tickets call Mary Ann Weenen at 495-9761	Garden Room, Village of Country Creek Clubhouse
Friday December 12th	1 p.m.	Estero Council of Community Leaders (ECCL) meeting. See the full agenda at: <a href="http://esterofl.org/eccl/minutes/index.htm">http://esterofl.org/eccl/minutes/index.htm</a>	<b>Estero Fire Rescue Headquarters... Three Oaks Parkway south of Corkscrew</b>
Monday, December 15th	6 p.m.	Estero Community Planning Panel meeting. See the full agenda at <a href="http://esterofl.org/ecpp/ecpp_meetings.htm">http://esterofl.org/ecpp/ecpp_meetings.htm</a>	Estero Community Park
Monday, December 15 <sup>th</sup>	9:30 p.m.	BOCC Final Zoning Hearing on the ASAP Corkscrew Mini Storage Development	County Board Chambers, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor, 2110 Main Street in downtown Ft. Myers
Friday, December 19 <sup>th</sup>	9 a.m.	Lee County MPO meeting.	1926 Victoria Street in downtown Ft. Myers

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### **Estero Community Website**

From January through October about 75,500 persons visited this site to learn about Estero. During the same period in 2007 only about 59,700 persons visited the site, thus our website traffic has increased by 26% year to year.

The community groups sponsoring the site are:

Estero Community Planning Panel (ECP)  
 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](http://www.esterofl.org)

### **Red Sox and County Select South Lee County for Spring Training Site**

On November 1<sup>st</sup> Lee County and the Boston Red Sox signed a 29 page agreement committing the County to provide the Red Sox a new spring training ballpark and training facility (Project Site) in south Lee County by a "target date" of December 1, 2011 "but in no event later than December 1, 2012 (Outside Date)."The agreement specifies a 30 year lease commitment, an 80 acre site for the Red Sox and contains a detailed description of the 9,999 seat facility plus capacity for another 2,000 fans.

Early in November the BOCC voted to allocate one cent (out of 5 cents) of the proceeds of the Tourist Development Tax Revenues to help finance the Project

The Project Site must be south of Daniels Parkway; east of US 41; north of Bonita Beach Road and west of the proposed alignment of CR 951. These boundaries include several possibilities in Estero but only two likely prospects. They are the 220 acre site just north of Germaine Arena and the western sections of the Edison Farms site located just east of I-75 adjacent to The Brooks.

Owners of large properties located within the "Project Boundaries" have until December 23<sup>rd</sup> to submit proposals to Lee County. At its meeting on November 21<sup>st</sup> the ECCL decided to wait until after all the proposals have been filed and reviewed by the ECCL before deciding if they what to make a recommendation to the BOCC.

The Red Sox contract contains a very aggressive schedule. It calls for the two parties to approve a 30 year lease and for the County to prepare a preliminary cost estimate for the project by the end of the year. A detailed financing plan is required by January 15, 2009; the project architect, engineer and construction firm must be hired by February 1, 2009; the County must make "all reasonable efforts" to select and obtain control of a site by June 1, 2009.

The site selection criteria in the contract states that “the cost of land acquisition will not be the sole determining factor...but will serve as one of many factors considered...” Other factors to be considered include: existing and/or needed infrastructure improvements; environmental impacts; timing and availability; proximity to full service hotels; proximity to other complementary and accessory uses such as number and size of retail, commercial, restaurant, sports and entertainment venues; prospects for complimentary development on nearby property; acquisition cost and the economic impact generated by the project.

The location of the Red Sox site and the development that it will stimulate will have a great impact on south Lee County and the Estero community. It is a testament to the quality of the south Lee County communities that the Red Sox management insisted on locating in our area. Consequently the ECCL and the Estero Community Planning Panel will be following this process very closely in the months to come.

### **South Lee County Hospital Committee Progress Report**

The South Lee County Hospital Committee met on November 20<sup>th</sup> with 19 members attending. After bringing the new members up to date, the Committee discussed how to proceed while awaiting responses to the Committee’s letter to the three local hospital systems.

The Committee decided to appoint two sub-committees: Public Relations and Needs Assessment. The Public Relations sub-committee was asked to draft a press release announcing the formation of the Committee and its mission of obtaining convenient emergency medical services for the south Lee County area. The purpose of the Needs Assessment sub-committee is to determine the area’s health care needs that the community can support.

Since this meeting the Committee has been contacted by representatives of Lee Memorial Health Systems and Physicians Regional Health Systems in response to the Committee’s recent letter. Representative of the Committee will be meeting with these organizations to discuss how they propose to work with the Committee in order to satisfy the Committee’s goals for the area.

#### **Background**

Last summer Ben Nelson, Mayor of Bonita Springs, and Don Eslick, Chairman of the Estero Council of Community Leaders (ECCL) agreed to jointly form a Committee to improve hospital services in south Lee County. The first step in the process was to recruit residents of Bonita Springs and Estero to join the Committee. The response was significant and enthusiastic. Thus far 36 persons have volunteered to serve on the Committee, many with extensive backgrounds in a wide variety of healthcare professions.

The first meeting of the Committee was held on July 18<sup>th</sup>. Most of the meeting was devoted to a request for community support from a Lee Memorial representative in anticipation of discussion by one of their committees of a possible free-standing emergency department on property owned by that system in south Estero. In addition the Committee adopted the following mission statement:

“The mission of the Committee is the establishment of a Community Hospital to serve the community’s health care needs as soon as possible and a 24/7 free-standing emergency department during the period prior to the hospital’s opening”.

Recently the Committee leadership asked all three regional hospital systems...Lee Memorial, Naples Community Hospital and Physicians Regional... to develop a proposal detailing their interest in helping the Committee reach its goals and outlining the collaborative steps that need to be taken in this process. Once this written proposal has been completed the hospital system is asked to meet with the Committee within the next two months. In addition the Committee is preparing a statement summarizing the extensive talent and experience on the Committee.

### **Installation of a Traffic Signal at US 41 and Estero Parkway**

On November 13<sup>th</sup> Johnny Limbaugh, Director of the Southwest Area Office of the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), notified ECCL that they have worked out an agreement with Lee DOT to install a temporary signal at US 41 and Estero Parkway prior to the opening of the Estero Parkway Flyover (overpass) over I-75 next fall. The signal is currently being designed by FDOT. When completed in March 2009 it will be turned over to Lee DOT along with the necessary equipment. Lee County DOT will install the signal prior to the opening of the Estero Parkway Overpass.

In addition FDOT informs us that the design of the detention pond necessary for completion of the Corkscrew to San Carlos Park six-laning project is nearly complete. The design must be approved by Lee County and then the land needed for the pond can be acquired. The widening project is still expected to commence in late 2010. For background on this project see last month’s Estero Development Report.

### **Williams Road Sidewalk Nearing Completion**

All too often Estero residents have found our sidewalks and bike paths to be disconnected. This often results from an undeveloped parcel of land being located between many others that have been developed. Typically the zoning on these properties require that the developer install the sidewalks/bike paths when the property is developed.

For several years the segment of Williams Road from US 41 to Three Oaks Parkway has been one of these missing links. This gap is now being closed with a sidewalk along the north side of the street.

### **Estero Voted Heavily in the General Election**

Almost 91% of all registered voters cast ballots in Estero’s five exclusively Estero precincts, much higher than the countywide average of 85%. More and more Estero voters are casting their ballots prior to Election Day. Only 36.5% of Estero voters voted on Election Day while over 31% voted by absentee ballot and over 32% cast their ballots at one of the five County “early voting” locations. Countywide 45.6% of registered voters voted on Election Day, 30% voting absentee and 24.5% voting “early”.

Estero also supported the three incumbent County Commissioners who have been so supportive of Estero's needs with far higher percentages than other parts of the County. Commissioner Bob Janes received 73% of the vote in the five "all-Estero" precincts, 13% higher than his countywide share of 60%. Commissioner Ray Judah received 76% of the vote in these same precincts, 8% points higher than his countywide share in spite of the fact the his opponent comes from south Lee County. Finally, Commissioner Frank Mann received 79% of the vote in these precincts, 10% points higher than his countywide share of 69%.

The combination of higher voter turnout and higher share of the total vote caused Estero to contribute more to the reelection of these three candidates than any other area in Lee County.

### **FGCU President Bradshaw Addresses ECCL**

On November 21<sup>st</sup> Dr. Wilson Bradshaw, President of Florida Gulf Coast University, spoke at the monthly ECCL meeting. He spoke about the progress that the University has made over the last ten years and his plans for the years ahead. He also stressed his desire for the University to be a good neighbor with the Estero community. In this regard he introduced the new Director of Community Outreach, Isaac Brundage, invited ECCL to meet on the FGCU campus from time to time and to tour the campus. Mr. Brundage offered to meet with the leadership of ECCL to further strengthen the existing relationship.

### **Arts Estero 2009**

Estero Community Park will host an all-day *Celebration of the Arts* on Saturday March 28, 2009. The celebration, sponsored by the Estero Council of Community Leaders (ECCL), will include continuous live entertainment on and off stage, art exhibits, food booths, information booths, art for sale, demonstrations and other displays of interest starting at 11 a.m. and going throughout the day until the Gulf Coast Symphony Orchestra brings the days event to a close on stage at 4:00 PM when it will present a full program of music.

A core group of Estero leaders of non-profit and civic organizations are in the process of setting the agenda of the day's events. Appointed by the ECCL, Bev MacNellis will be the chairperson of this celebration. "Pulling in several community organizations to take the lead in organizing this event is in progress at this time. The committee will be contacting cultural organizations, artists in all media and performers in music, song, dance and theater to consider being a part of this celebration of the arts," said Bev MacNellis, chairperson of the event.

Participation can include on stage or walk-about performances by local talent, an exhibit table to showcase an organization's offerings, or marketing goods and services to the arts community to raise money for their not-for-profit organization. The park's outside amphitheater-style stage provides attendees with a true lawn setting experience. Anyone interested in participating should contact Bev MacNellis at 498-0678 or by email at [Beverlyann@comcast.net](mailto:Beverlyann@comcast.net).

### **Foreclosure Information for Estero Community Leaders and Residents**

State Representative Gary Aubuchon has provided us with extensive information on Federal, State, County government's Home Foreclosure programs and policies. This information has been posted on the Estero community website at <http://esterofl.org/new/> If your community has one or more properties that are subject to this legal process you may find this information useful.

### **Estero's Housing Permits Continue Slow**

During October 23 housing units, all single family homes and duplexes and mostly at Bella Terra, with a value of \$6.2 million were permitted in Estero. The first ten months of 2008 continue the downward trend in new housing construction in Estero that began nearly three 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 that 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 ten months of 2008 compare with the prior eight years:

<b>Month</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>
Jan	77	146	83	109	153	176	75	59	9
Feb	252	143	108	267	95	315	90	80	28
Mar	177	295	101	156	123	392	404	79	3
Apr	227	159	161	162	135	178	79	40	7
May	125	292	146	178	125	214	54	28	9
June	116	155	191	98	165	190	139	90	18
July	148	209	115	63	253	180	128	8	33
Aug	202	221	90	97	106	279	117	21	9
Sept	386	128	129	125	98	349	105	2	4
October	151	115	231	49	140	288	44	9	23
November	95	207	63	61	92	138	33	12	
December	132	34	82	60	161	134	42	4	
Annual Total	2088	2104	1500	1425	1646	2833	1310	432	143

Not only are this year's total housing units far below all prior years, they equal only 11% of the comparable number in 2002, the season immediately following the tragedy of 9/11/2001 and is only 34% of last year's total for the period.

### **Permitted Commercial Building Values Continue Slow Growth**

Building permits of all types issued during the first ten months of 2008 continued at a very slow pace. The value of [commercial buildings](#) permitted in Estero during the ten months totaled \$38.5 million.

Year	Year to Date	Annual Total
2000	\$75,191,144	\$77,250,835

2001	36,770,251	44,116,526
2002	21,575,789	23,135,139
2003	17,809,178	23,234,725
2004	40,832,565	60,859,820
2005	71,014,931	111,037,977
2006	177,322,397	184,709,240
2007	152,471,225	157,614,045
2008	38,454,732	?

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 sixth ranked commercial development year out of nine years. 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 ten 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
- \$7.07 million in the [Coconut Point Town Center](#);
- \$5.0 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
- \$549,510 for Chick-Fil-A in Paradise Shoppes
- \$450,382 for 24231 Walden Center remodeling
- \$376,000 for Estero Chevrolet
- \$300,000 for West Bay commercial development
- \$240,000 in the Estero Ridge Shopping Center
- \$241,600 in Estero Town Commons
- \$648,000 in the [Brooks Town Center](#) (retail) at Coconut Road and Three Oaks Parkway
- \$209,000 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.