

Yay! He's Talking About Insurance Again!



Photo: Butch Swank, President of Southwest Florida Business Alliance; Owner of Goodlad & Swank Insurance, LLC

Listen, I know not everyone is passionate about insurance like I am but everybody, and I mean everybody, likes saving money. Well, in the homeowner's insurance world everything has been going the wrong direction regarding dollar bills, so, in my mind, that means everybody will be interested in reading this. Our Florida Legislature just met from May 23rd to the 27th. This was unusual because they had already completed the only spring session this year and were brought back specifically to address home insurance – because they did nothing about the home insurance market imploding earlier.

As a refresher, here is a statistic to demonstrate how bad things are in Florida now. Nationally, the average number of lawsuits per state against insurance companies averaged 900 suits in 2021. Florida had over 100,000. We are literally 100 times worse than the other 49 States. So, everyone can understand why this avalanche of lawsuits

quickly becomes an avalanche of legal expenses for the insurance companies. Insurers are amazingly good at calculating the various risks Floridian homes face, like hurricanes and fire. They use these calculations to accurately price their insurance rates. However, doing the math involved with an out-of-control legal environment has proven to be impossible and our insurance marketplace is now in really bad shape. So far in 2022, we have lost three insurance companies and as I write this, there are two others in dire straits.

Ok, enough with the bad news. I mentioned earlier our Legislature met and they were very successful! Many carriers were limiting the eligible age of a roof to ten years or newer and now the legislation ups that to fifteen years which is great, considering a roof normally has a twenty-year life expectancy. Another critical change removed the ability of attorneys to charge a fee multiplier. This was an old law from the Civil Rights Era and was designed to help people who needed an attorney but could not find one willing to represent them. In that situation, the attorney who took the case could

then ask the judge for two to three times their standard fee. This was done, understandably, to encourage attorneys to handle these cases that were being ignored. There is clearly no shortage of attorneys suing insurance companies nowadays, so it only stands to reason their charging triple fees is totally unreasonable. One other important addition is that the homeowner now must pay a roof deductible. You might say "Why the heck is that good?" Well, before this session, roofers and attorneys were literally knocking on doors telling people they could get a new roof for free. And...they could! So, with this new rule, a homeowner must pay at least 2% of their total insurance limit. As an example, a \$300,000 home would now need to pay \$6,000 for the roof. The idea here is if the homeowner has some skin in the game (instead of paying nothing) they will be less inclined to have a roofer or attorney file a suit. That is designed specifically to bring down our lawsuits from the currently stratospheric 100,000+ annual suits we see now. As always, it takes time to see if these actions will be beneficial but, in my opinion, they were sorely needed, and I am very optimistic that our home insurance

By Butch Swank

market will stabilize sooner than later.

That wasn't so boring, was it? I had one more thing to share. I know it is not until next month but the Southwest Florida Business Alliance I started with Katrina Salokar and Jesse Nadell has its next meeting on July 21st. I mentioned in a past article I was trying my best to get George Schaeffer, the billionaire founder of OPI Nails, to speak at our event. Well, I am thrilled to report he has agreed to come! We expect nearly 100 people at the event based on the current signups. That is amazing to me considering this is only our third meeting and is a testament to the desire of our local business leaders to meet and grow together. I am humbled and amazed at the support shown to Katrina, Jesse, and me. This group really seems to have filled a void and it is a remarkable feeling to have the opportunity to be around such high-quality people. It is a very exciting time for Lehigh Acres, and I absolutely love the fact we, as a community, finally have the chance to participate in our own future. We're going in the right direction everybody, and I say let's keep moving forward! www.goodladandswank.com

Can Technology Make Cities Smarter?

By Terri Lewis, Planet Connected LLC

In your purse or pocket, there is a gadget that can tell if you're a candidate for a heart attack; take or send pictures; or give driving directions that will avoid heavy traffic so you arrive at your appointment on time. Technology is embedded in our daily lives, keeping us safe, productive and healthy. We can and should expect that technology can do the same for our cities. Technology adoption in government has a name called "Smart Cities". We are all now, to some degree, technologists and as such, it's time to engage with your city to ask how they are adopting technology to maintain and improve your quality of life.

Almost 30 years ago, the internet started to be used by the general public, cell phones shrank in size from the size of a brick to flip phones that could fit in the palm of your hand, computers shrank in size from 20 lb carry-on size bags to the size of a book, and

sensors started to have ability to process input signals into data inside the sensor. Adoption of this collection of technologies first started to spread into manufacturing and industry as they were seen as enablers to improve productivity, reduce costs, improve safety and compliance reporting. However, the adoption was slower than many projections due to costs and capabilities. The key innovation and volume driver that reduced costs was the smart phone introduction by Apple in 2007. Cell phone sales in the US are now at ~200Million/year and over 1.2+ Billion/year globally. The smart phone has become the "on road to the internet highway".

Not many people are exposed to manufacturing, but it's rare to know someone who doesn't have a smart phone or a smart watch. Smart phones aren't just phones, but navigation systems, cameras, calculators, books, games, etc. Smart watches match

some of the same features as your phone, doing a lot more than just tell time and now increasingly providing health information. At the doctors' office, notice robotics and equipment that works automatically. Virtual reality headsets aren't just for video games, but now help in training of surgeons, pilots, and construction equipment operators. Cars have driver assisted features for braking, lane guidance and parking. Like factories, we've become more productive, smarter and connected.

So what's next? Smart Cities! Government is the current focus of technology, with many looking to achieve the same benefits as manufacturing; reduce costs of operation, improve outcomes, streamline processes, and improve sustainability and resiliency. Some state agencies are leveraging computer technologies to improve the speed of processing and reduce the paperwork in-

involved for permits. Remote sensors placed in water systems are helping to manage and avoid storm water overflows. Electrical utility companies are using satellite images to review tree growth in and around power lines, spotting problems before they can occur. Traffic sensors capture volumes of cars and automatically adjust the red-light signal timing to improve the flow of traffic, reducing idle times at lights and congestion.

Technology allows us to think differently about our challenges. When multiple groups engage and align, including residents, government, business, education and healthcare, there isn't a problem that can't be resolved. We are all now, to some degree, technologists. We all certainly know where there are challenges in our community. Let's make Southwest Florida a leader in Smart Cities using technology to improve our quality of life.

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2022 Sales Tax Holidays And Exemption Periods For The State Of Florida

Submitted By Markham Norton Mosteller Wright & Co., P.A

Every year various states offer sales tax holidays and/or tax-free dates to help reduce the cost burden for its residents. The Florida Department of Revenue has released the 2022 sales tax holidays and exemptions for residents. We have compiled a list of the upcoming dates to take note, along with links to the Tax Information Publication (TIP) documents for each here:

FREEDOM WEEK JULY 1, 2022 - JULY 7, 2022

During this sales tax holiday period, tax is not due on the retail sale of admissions to music events, sporting events, cultural events, specified performances, movies, museums, state parks, and fitness facilities. Also exempt from sales tax during this holiday period are eligible boating and water activity supplies, camping supplies, fishing supplies, general outdoor supplies, residential pool supplies, and sporting equipment.

This sales tax holiday does not apply to:

- Rentals of any eligible items
- Sales within a theme park, entertainment complex, public lodging establishment or airport.

SALES TAX EXEMPTION PERIOD ON ENERGY STAR APPLIANCES JULY 1, 2022 - JUNE 30, 2023

Florida's sales tax exemption period on new ENERGY STAR appliances for noncommercial use begins Friday, July 1, 2022, and ends Friday, June 30, 2023. During this sales tax exemption period, tax is not due on the retail sale of eligible new ENERGY STAR appliances purchased for noncommercial use. The rental of eligible new ENERGY STAR appliances does not qualify for the exemption.

SALES TAX EXEMPTION PERIOD ON IMPACT-RESISTANT DOORS, GARAGE DOORS, AND WINDOWS JULY 1, 2022 - JUNE 30, 2024

During this sales tax exemption period, tax is not due on the retail sales of impact-resistant doors, impact-resistant garage doors, and impact-resistant windows for commercial or noncommercial use. "Impact-resistant doors," "impact-resistant garage doors" and "impact-resistant windows" refer to doors, garage doors or windows that are labeled as impact-

resistant or have an impact-resistant rating.

BACK TO SCHOOL SALES TAX HOLIDAY JULY 25 - AUGUST 7, 2022

During the sales tax holiday period, tax is not due on the retail sale of:

- Clothing, footwear, and certain accessories with a sales price of \$100 or less per item*
- Certain school supplies with a sales price of \$50 or less per item,
- Learning aids and jigsaw puzzles with a sales price of \$30 or less*
- Personal computers and certain computer-related accessories with a sales price of \$1,500 or less, when purchased for non-commercial home or personal use

This sales tax holiday does not apply to:

- Any item of clothing with a sales price of more than \$100
- Any school supply item with a sales price of more than \$50
- Books that are not otherwise ex-

empt*

- Computers and computer-related accessories with a sales price of more than \$1,500
- Computers and computer-related accessories purchased for commercial purposes
- Rentals of any eligible items
- Repairs or alterations of any eligible items
- Sales of any eligible items within a theme park, entertainment complex, public lodging establishment or airport

SALES TAX HOLIDAY FOR TOOLS COMMONLY USED BY SKILLED TRADE WORKERS SEP 3, 2022 - SEP 9, 2022

During this sales tax holiday period, tax is not due on the retail sale of eligible items related to tools commonly used by skilled trade workers.

The sales tax holiday does not apply to:

- Rentals of any eligible items
- Sales within a theme park, entertainment complex, public lodging establishment or airport

Buy A Blanket, Save A Life

By Kathryn Sisson

Fine Folk Pizza has a new product on their menu, but not one that goes in your stomach. They are selling pizza themed blankets. 100% of the proceeds will go to the Because of Zane organization and scholarship fund.

Because of Zane is an organization whose mission is to teach water safety awareness, education, and survival skills to prevent childhood drownings. Because of Zane provides educational information to the public, educates on the layers of protection needed to keep your child safe in and around water, and offers financial help to families who are unable to afford survival swim lessons.

The swim lessons are taught by certified instructors that have completed an eight-week intensive academic and in-water training program. With your help, more families can have

access to these life saving lessons. No cost should outweigh the cost of keeping children safe.

The proceeds of every blanket sold will go directly to the organization's scholarship fund so that parents can afford swimming lessons for their children. You also have the opportunity to either keep the blanket you purchase, or donate it to the Golisano Children's Hospital of Southwest Florida in Fort Myers. There will also be a donation box set up for new blankets to be donated to the hospital as well.

Fine Folk Pizza is passionate about the Because of Zane organization and their mission to help others. Drowning is the #1 cause of accidental death in children ages 1 to 4. The Zane A. Witmer Foundation was created in 2017 in memory of a special little boy

who was so sweet and so full of love, but gone too soon. The Witmer family is dedicated to protecting young children and their families from having to experience the heartbreak of losing a child to drowning.

Any donation, big or small, is greatly appreciated and will help save lives. So come by Fine Folk Pizza and buy a blanket to donate to the cause to help the children and families of Fort Myers and other areas of Southwest Florida.

Over 3,000 blankets have been do-

nated since the foundation was created in 2017. Every year on Zane's birthday, November 21, the Witmer family donates the blankets to Golisano Children's Hospital of Southwest Florida.

Fine Folk Pizza is located at 11300 Lindbergh Blvd #114, Fort Myers, Florida 33913. Open Tuesday through Sunday for pick up or delivery from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. You can stop by the store or call at 239-313-5155 for more information on the foundation and how you can help donate to the cause. ☀️

Montage Women's Club

By Rita Artwohl

The Montage Women's Club is a social and philanthropic club open to all women residing in Lee County. We meet on the fourth Thursday of each month at The Landings Yacht, Golf, and Tennis Club (community entry off McGregor Blvd between Cypress Lake Drive and College Pkwy). Meetings begin at 11:30 a.m. with a short social period followed by lunch at Noon and normally an informative speaker program. Within the organization are various interest groups for members' participation. Membership is open to both year-round and seasonal residents. We welcome you to visit Montage for a luncheon.

Our next meeting will be held on

Thursday, June 23, and our speaker will be from Golisano Children's Hospital. Luncheon fee is \$25.00 per person and the planned menu will be turkey, fresh asparagus and Parmesan crepes with sundried tomato cream, harvested wild rice, rolls and butter, and Chef's choice of dessert. There is always an optional plant-based/vegan menu entrée with fresh fruit for dessert available.

If you would like to attend a Montage meeting, need further information, or would like to make a reservation, please call Rita Artwohl at (239) 703-7787. Reservations cut-off to attend this meeting is Noon, Thursday, June 16th. ☀️

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Planning For Your Final Curtain Call

By Alina Gonzalez-Dockery



Photo: Alina Gonzalez-Dockery

Do you believe to make a will is depressing or a sure ticket to planning one's death? What if drafting your will or trust is the most certain way of living in the moment?

This subject was part of the theme of season 3 finale of 9-1-1 Lone Star. In this episode, TK, a young firefighter and son of Captain Strand (played by Rob Lowe), was upset that his partner was redrafting his will. He felt that if you have a will, death was right around the corner. He railed against having his will made, despite being in a high-risk profession. It wasn't until the show's final moment that Captain Strand, who of course escaped certain death and was in the hospital, responded to TK, "No one is guaranteed anything. That is why you make a will. It is not to prepare for the end because that comes too no matter what we do. It is for the moment that it is taken care of, so we can live in it." First, I admit I am a Gen-X and a fan of Rob Lowe. Second, I found myself clapping at this

perfect and simple statement of why we should make our wills.

Life is unpredictable, life is exciting, and life is not guaranteed. But the one thing that is a guarantee, by preparing your estate plan, you can ensure how your loved ones will be taken care of. It is a guarantee that you put into place who and how you want to be taken care of if you are unable to care for yourself. And, through effective estate planning, you can still have control from the grave.

A well-rounded estate plan requires a number of steps to ensure that the estate plan will work effectively when needed. First, if you have a trust, have you funded it? Funding your trust means you have coordinated the ownership and beneficiary designations of your accounts and property to work with the trust. For real estate, a deed must have been recorded with the proper government recorder's office. Most bank and brokerage accounts should be titled in the name of the trust if you want your trustee to control those accounts should something happen to you.

Second, have you checked the beneficiary designations on your retirement accounts and insurance policies to make sure they name the correct people or your trust? Life insurance policies should usually name the trust as the beneficiary. Retirement plans may name a trust as a beneficiary, but be careful! Naming a trust as the beneficiary of an individual retirement account or 401(k) has significant tax consequences and may not be advisable in many situations. Speak with your tax advisor before changing the beneficiary designations on your retirement accounts.

Third, have you shared copies of your medical power of attorney and healthcare directive with your doctor and local hospital? Doing so can alleviate family members' worries about digging through your documents should you have a healthcare issue in the future.

Fourth, in many states, a financial power of attorney document that names an agent to act on your behalf must be accompanied by a signed acceptance document from the agent before it can

be used. Has this step been taken? If not, your estate plan may not be complete.

Fifth, writing things down does not guarantee that misunderstandings will not arise among your loved ones or beneficiaries. In addition to the important work of documenting your wishes, you should talk with your loved ones to help them understand the kind of plan you have put in place as well as the roles you want them to fulfill. Finally, having open, honest communication with those individuals involved in your estate plan will minimize the chances of miscommunication and hurt feelings.

Can estate planning be grim? That depends on your perspective. I have seen how a well-structured estate plan provides guidance and relief to families through health care, and living will decisions, end of life arrangements, and distribution of assets.

Before that final curtain drops, take a moment to create your estate plan so that you may live in the present and enjoy what this life has to offer. www.lifelawplanning.com (239) 789-2533 ☀️



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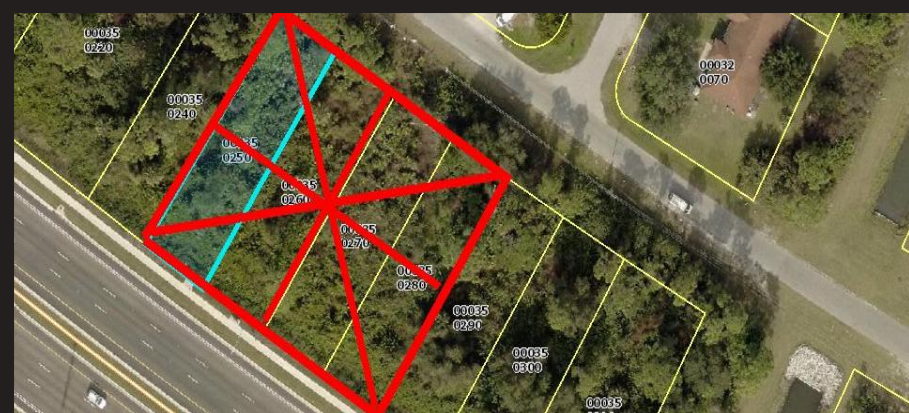



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Summer Business Opportunities For Southwest Florida

By Kathryn Sisson

SWFL Business Network and SWFL Business Alliance have set up networking events to lead you to success. This June and July, all over SWFL from Lehigh to Cape Coral and everywhere in between. There is something for everyone to get involved in, from connecting over coffee to dining and dancing! There are a variety of times these events take place, so no matter what your schedule is, you can get involved in growing relationships with other local businesses.

Here is what they have in store for you. Be sure to mark your calendars and RSVP if possible. Walk-ins are always welcome!

Weekly Wednesday Lunch Connection Meeting: Grab a bite at Torched Bar and Grill and meet new local business owners! Genuine connections lead to better referrals, so coming to our regular meetings can help you establish relationships that can bring you leads. Bring at least 10 business cards to give for others to hand out over the next week. **Come as early as 11:30 and stay until 1:00 p.m.**

Located at: Torched Bar and Grill 2408 Surfside Blvd, Cape Coral, FL 33991

Weekly Friday Brunch Connection Meeting: Meetings are a chance for you to connect with other local, reputable businesses. It's a great opportunity for networking and gaining referrals. **Every Friday from 7:30 AM - 9:30 AM at Metro Cafe and Deli**, bring at least 10 business cards to give for others to hand out over the next week. Come-and-go, arrive anytime, leave when you need to.

Located at: Metro Cafe and Deli 12951 Metro Pkwy # 11, Fort Myers, FL 33966

Aki's Dance Studio and SWFL Business Network Presents: Dance With Us! Put on your dancing shoes and grab your business cards, it's time to schmooze and boogie at Aki's Dance Studio! Enjoy a free introductory ballroom dance class followed by some time to enjoy snacks, beverages, and good company on **Wednesday, June 15th from 5:30-7:30 p.m.**

Located at: Aki's Dance Studio 6240 Metro Plantation Rd, Fort Myers, FL 33966

Stogie Pairing Networking Event: SWFL Business Alliance presents A Special Networking Event sponsored

by Jesse Nadell of Greater Florida Financial. Join us on **Thursday, June 16th at Stogie Pairing from 5:30 to 7:30** to network and enjoy food catered by Fresh Market.

Located at: Stogie Pairing 13499 S Cleveland Ave Ste 245, Fort Myers, FL 33907

SWFL Business Alliance Quarterly Meeting: Clear your calendars folks and join us for lunch as we hold our **Summer 2022 Quarterly meeting on Thursday, July 21st from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at Victory Conference Center.** We will welcome this quarter's guest speaker, George W. Shaeffer, founder of dominant global consumer brand OPI® offering nail polish, nail care, and nail art worldwide, and Chairman and CEO of People's Trust Insurance. Seating is limited so please be sure to sign up online.

Located at: Victory Town Center and Victory Church 1201 Taylor Lane Ext, Lehigh Acres, FL 33936

SOUTHWEST FLORIDA HOMES TEAM OF COLDWELL BANKER EVENTS

Ribbon Cutting: Join Amy Admire

and Catherine Van Til with the Southwest Florida Homes Team of Coldwell Banker to celebrate their membership with the Greater Fort Myers Chamber of Commerce. **This special ribbon-cutting ceremony will take place on Friday, July 29th from 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.** at the Coldwell Banker office. Enjoy light refreshments, wine, and raffle prizes. **RSVP by calling (239) 990-2023.**

Located at: Coldwell Banker Office, 7950 Dani Dr. #125, Fort Myers, FL 33966.

Business Before Breakfast Networking: Grab a cup of coffee and get to know other local business owners on **Thursday, July 14th from 7:30 a.m. to 9:30 p.m.** at the Coldwell Banker Office. **RSVP at call (239) 990-2023.**

Located at: Coldwell Banker Office, 7950 Dani Dr. #125, Fort Myers, FL 33966.

If you are interested in joining SWFL Business Network or SWFL Business Alliance or in coming to these events, head over to their websites: www.swflbusinessnetwork.com and www.swflbusinessalliance.com for more information. ☀️

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Coldwell Banker Hosting Networking & Ribbon Cutting Events

By Amanda Mitrani



Photo: Amy Admire and Catherine Van Til

Amy Admire & Catherine Van Til with the Southwest Florida Homes Team of Coldwell Banker are happy to announce their membership in the Greater Fort Myers Chamber of Commerce, and they would like to invite you to celebrate with them. Join the team at their special ribbon-cutting event on July 29th from 5:30 pm to 7:00 pm at the Coldwell Banker office 7950 Dani Dr #125 Fort Myers, FL. 33966. Enjoy food, sip wine, and enter raffles to win fun prizes!

Amy Admire of Coldwell Banker states, "Being a part of the Chamber has allowed us to become more involved in the community and help elevate other local businesses."

With hurricane season around the cor-

ner, The Southwest Florida Homes Team will also be offering guests of the ribbon-cutting a complimentary hurricane preparedness swag bag so that you can enter the summer with the essentials.

In addition to the ribbon-cutting, the team will also be hosting a Business Before Breakfast Networking event. Grab a cup of coffee and get to know other local business owners on July 14th from 7:30 am to 9:30 am at Coldwell Banker office at 7950 Dani Dr #125 Fort Myers, FL 33966. It will be an excellent opportunity to expand your network in a low-pressure space, and please remember to bring business cards to share with others.

ABOUT THE HOSTS

Amy Admire and Catherine Van Til are the dynamic duo behind the Southwest Florida Homes Team within Coldwell

Banker. Southwest Florida has a rapidly changing real estate market. These two ladies work together to serve the Fort Myers, and surrounding areas will service property buyers and sellers. In addition, two sets of eyes, ears, and minds will strategize and take the actions necessary to get every transaction closed seamlessly.

Not only are two heads better than one, but what sets these ladies apart and makes them such a great team is their shared values. A strong work ethic, exceptional communication, and above and beyond customer service are crucial for their clients. From the different communities and neighborhoods to the must see's and do's around town, Amy and Catherine had the vision of becoming the trusted resource for all things Southwest Florida when they joined forces. Their reliable knowledge and network of trusted vendors ensure that each client gets whatever they need. They'll

always have your back when it comes to knowing Southwest Florida. You can visit the Southwest Florida Homes Team at the Coldwell Banker office at 7950 Dani Dr #125 Fort Myers, FL 33966 or online at www.SouthWestFloridaHomesTeam.com.

Contact Amy and Catherine with the Southwest Florida Homes Team for your real estate needs, call (239) 990-2023, or email: SouthwestFloridaHomesTeam@gmail.com.



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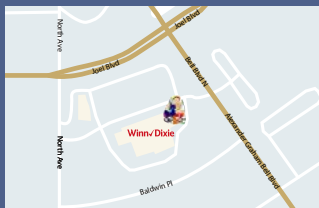


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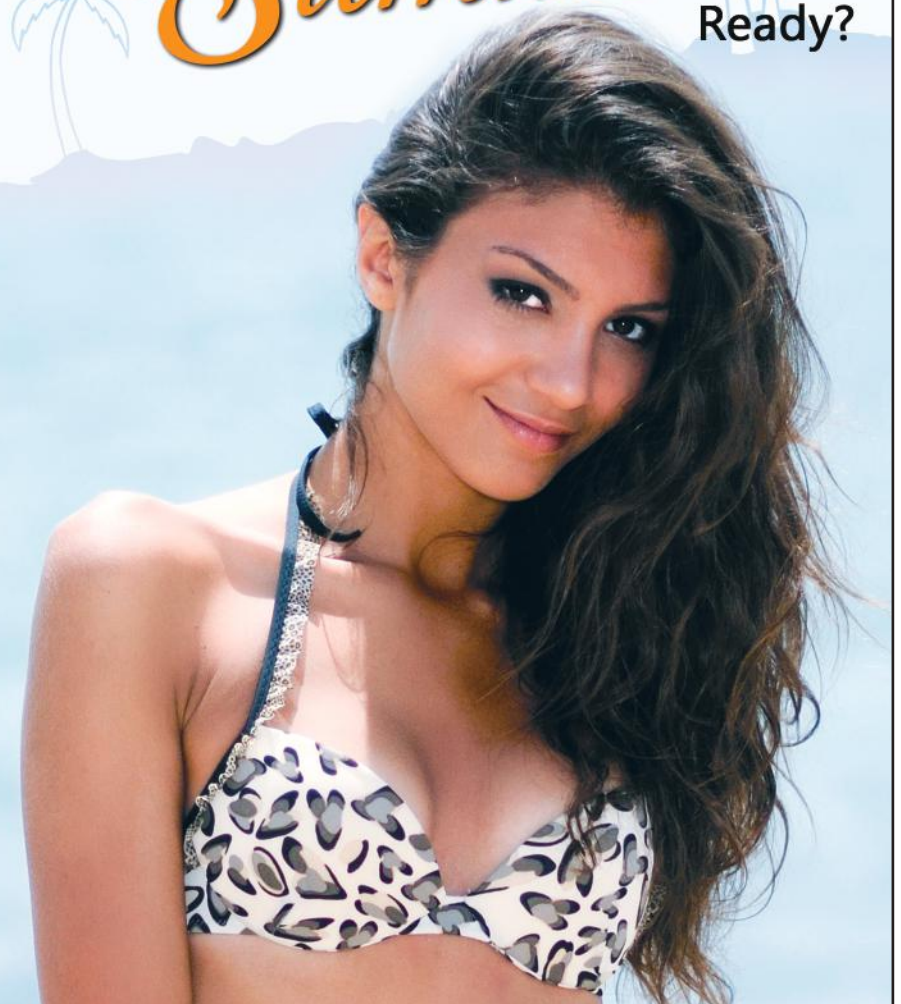
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Pet Preparedness

By Dr. Veja Tillman, DVM

It is officially hurricane season in southwest Florida. It's time to get our pet(s) emergency and disaster ready. Whether it is the next hurricane or other natural disaster, or it is man-made, having a plan for your pets must be included with your family's emergency plan.

GET A PET EMERGENCY KIT

A collection of basic supplies that you may need in the event of an emergency.

- Food and water for at least 3 days
- Pet medications (2 weeks supply replaced often to maintain their quality based on expiration dates.)
- Pet First Aid Kit
- Updated Pet Identification (microchip, ownership documentation, your contact information, pictures of you and your pet together, etc)
- Updated vaccination documents (include the name of your veterinarian with telephone number, address and email)
- Crate or carrier, harness or leash/collar
- Pet litter, paper towels, plastic bags, cleaning supplies

- Familiar items (favorite toys, bedding, treats, etc)
- Assemble kit in an easy-to-carry, waterproof tote; stored in an easily accessible area away from extreme temperature changes and keep this kit in a designated place ready in case you must leave home/ work quickly. Make sure all family members know where the kit is kept.
- Consult your veterinarian for advice on making a pet emergency kit that is appropriate for your pet's individual needs.

HAVE AN EMERGENCY PLAN FOR YOUR PETS

- Identify family or friends who will be willing to take you and your pets in during and/or after an emergency.
- Locate hotels that are pet friendly outside of the evacuation/emergency area.
- Research local boarding facilities that are emergency shelters for pets incase you are not able to evacuate with your pet.
- Talk to your pet's veterinarian about emergency planning, especially if your pet has medical conditions that require consistent monitoring and supervision.



Photo: Pack Of Luggage With Pug Sitting In Dog Carrier And Waiting To Leave

- Gather contact information for animal emergency treatment facilities locally and outside of the emergency zone.

STAY INFORMED

- Be aware of the types of emergencies / disasters that can happen where you live and work.
- Sign up to receive local emergency alerts on your cell phone or email available through your city and county.

- Tune into your state and federal emergency management websites and social media for information from official sources.
- Become familiar with your local emergency response plan, evacuation routes, etc

ABOUT DR. TILLMAN, DVM

Dr. Tillman is a 2002 graduate of Tuskegee University School of Veterinary Medicine. Her veterinary practice and work experience focuses on health and wellness of pets. She is the owner of Just 4 Pets Wellness Center and can be reached at 239-270-5721. ☀️

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WEDNESDAY LUNCH CONNECTIONS Grab a bite to eat and meet new local business owners!

WEDNESDAYS 12:00pm-1:00pm
Come as early as 11:30am

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FRIDAY BREAKFAST CONNECTIONS Meetings are a chance for you to connect with other local, reputable businesses.

FRIDAYS 8:00am-9:30am
Come as early as 7:30am

Metro Deli & Cafe Bring at least 10 business cards for us to put in the box and hand out over the next week.
12951 Metro Pkwy # 11
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BALLROOM DANCE & NETWORKING Put on your dancing shoes and grab your business cards, it's time to boogie at Aki's Dance Studio!

WED, JUNE 15 5:30pm-7:30pm Enjoy a free introductory ballroom dance class courtesy of Aki's, followed by some time to enjoy snacks, beverages, and good company.

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Congratulations To Our High School Graduates – Lehigh/East Lee Finishes The “Season”

By Mike Welch



Photo: Mike Welch
Let Us Hear From You!
Contact Us At:
voicesoflehigh@gmail.com

As we move into the summer months our communities will adapt to a little less congestion on the roadways, the end of the school year and an ever-watchful eye on the tropics.

Lee County Commissioner aptly points out that the County Government is moving into hurricane preparations and strongly suggests that you and your family and friends also prepare. In addition, he announces the County’s plans for a new library on the corner of Homestead Road S. and Milwaukee Blvd. Please give Cecil a call at 239-533-2227.

Sheriff Carmine Marceno alerts us

on the ongoing problem of construction theft in our area. As more people are moving into our area new homes are being built and, criminals are out on the prowl. In addition, the Sheriff’s Office has and is stepping up patrols on our roadways looking out for speeders, aggressive drivers who bully other drivers, red light runners, DUI’s and a myriad of bad behavior that makes our roadways dangerous. I have also long suspected that we

have a significant population that lacks the privilege of being allowed to drive at all: no driver’s license, suspended driver’s licenses, lack of insurance to name a few. These people endanger all of us and we pay the price in higher insurance premiums as well as further victimization in the event of an accident with one of these offenders who have no insurance – YOU pay and at times tragically. ☀

Lehigh Acres Update From District 2

By Commissioner Cecil Pendergrass



Photo: Commissioner Cecil Pendergrass, District 2 | Chairman – Board of County Commissioners

Another busy season has come and gone, but it’s clear that Lee County is a year round destination. Our SWFL International Airport had a record breaking month this past March with more than 1.5 million passengers in its 39 year history The tourism industry continues to be a vital resource for economic growth and job creation throughout the County and it’s a positive experience that keeps visitors and seasonal residents coming back. We’re not recovering, we’re thriving.

head home, the County continues to work for you and forge ahead on long awaited projects and future planning. Your Board remains committed to completing and accelerating transportation and infrastructure projects like roads, bridges, sidewalks, and utilities, throughout the County. During our May 17 Board meeting, one of our agenda items included approval of a change order for Lehigh Local Roadway Resurfacing. This change order provides funding for the resurfacing of additional roads at the northwest corner of Lee Boulevard and Gunnery Road. For more updates on the County’s Road Repaving program please visit www.leegov.com/dot/roadwatchupdate.

the purchase of over 13 acres located at the northwest corner of Milwaukee Boulevard and Homestead Road South. I am excited to report this site will serve as a future library and will be sure to keep you updated as this project progresses.

The rainy season is already here and the hurricane season is quickly approaching. It is important to always be prepared in case of an emergency or natural disaster. Last year’s season brought 21 named storms – the third busiest on record. Although we did not receive any direct hits, each season is different.

We encourage all residents and business owners to use our helpful notification tools to stay informed about storm threats.

You can download the Lee Prepares App on your phone and sign up for Alert Lee by going to www.alertlee.com. It will generate calls, emails or texts about significant emergencies. We encourage you to prepare early this season, make a family plan, put together your disaster supply kit, and take advantage of the Governor DeSantis’ upcoming tax-free days for buying supplies. Response and recovery involves the entire community and the time is now to prepare. Visit www.leegov.com/hurricane for more resources and information.

It is a privilege and honor to continue serving and representing you and all of Lee County. As always, please feel free to contact my office at (239) 533-2227 if I can ever be of assistance. ☀

As some of our seasonal residents

During that meeting we also approved

Summer Breakspot To Provide Free Breakfast And Lunch While School Is Out

Submitted By Rob Spicker

The School District of Lee County is partnering with the Florida’s Summer BreakSpot program to keep children healthy and well-nourished while school is out. The Summer BreakSpot Program allows the District’s Food and Nutrition Services Department to provide free meals to children who are 18 years and younger at no cost to them during the summer.

This summer, breakfast and lunch will be served at more than 80 school-based and community sites in Lee County between June 7th and July 29th. There are no income requirements or registration. Anyone age 18 or younger may come to eat. Meals must be consumed on site as there is no longer any grab and go service.

“The School District of Lee County

has partnered with the Summer Feeding Program for over twenty years” says Food and Nutrition Services Director Kandy Messenger. “Serving summer meals to the students when school is not in session is an important service that we are able to provide.”

There are three ways to find a Summer BreakSpot site and serving times for breakfast and lunch. Dial 2-1-1,

Text “FoodFL” to 304-304 or visit www.SummerBreakSpot.org.

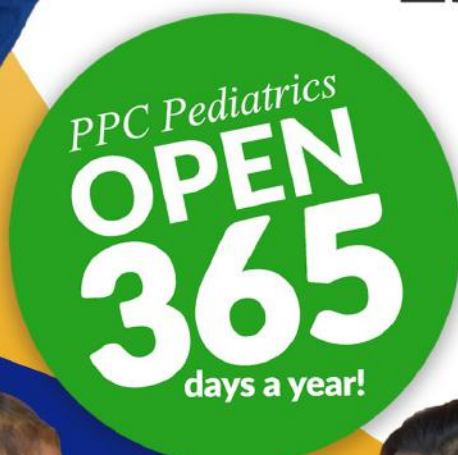
There will be a summer meals kick-off event at Paul Sanborn Park on Tuesday, June 7th from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. The Cape Coral Parks & Recreation Fun-Mobile will be on site until 1:00 p.m. to offer a variety of free games and activities. Media is invited to attend. ☀

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Ongoing Construction-Site Theft

By Sheriff Carmine Marceno



Photo: Sheriff Carmine Marceno, Lee County Sheriff

Last August, I reached out to a number of areas in our county regarding the theft of materials, tools and appliances from new construction sites. In response to this growing nationwide issue, I formed the Lee County Sheriff's Office Construction Theft Unit and dedicated significant resources in an effort to proactively address the matter and to respond to reported thefts.

While it appears that this unit has functioned effectively, the increase in new construction has both increased demand for materials and increased theft opportunities.

While we will continue to utilize required resources to prevent and investigate construction site crimes, the most

successful law enforcement efforts require community concern and involvement.

Statistics reflecting criminal activity in Lee County have continued to decline, each year, and the Lee County Sheriff's Office is working diligently to see this trend continue. Without pause, I thank the citizens and guests of Lee County who reach out to us and share their suspicions, concerns and ideas.

Once again, we are in need of your assistance.

Throughout the county, we see concrete slabs, roofing materials, excavating machinery, tools, etc.

In varying stages of completion, these sites are vulnerable to theft of machinery, appliances, cabinetry, paint supplies, doors, flooring...and much more.

The state, as a whole, is experienc-

ing these thefts and working to address them. This is, in no way, unique to Lee County.

Nationwide, an estimated \$1 billion of materials are stolen annually from construction sites...Florida ranks third in the nation behind California and Texas.

According to insurance reports, the majority of theft occurs between Friday at 6:00 pm and Monday's early morning hours.

Water systems, well equipment, air conditioning units and kitchen/laundry appliances are also taken at a disconcerting rate.

Your assistance is invaluable!

Contact the Lee County Sheriff's Office immediately (239-477-100 non-emergency / 9-1-1 emergency) should you suspect construction-site theft or

observe:

- Vehicles or individuals at the construction site during the evening and overnight hours.
- Loud noises during these darkened periods. This should raise red flags!
- Juveniles as they have no reason for being at or near construction locations.
- Flashlights and cellphone lights after dark.
- Suspicious vehicles parked in driveways or on the property...especially if equipment, appliances or materials are being loaded INTO/ONTO the vehicles.

Until next month...I thank you for your support and for your diligence! ☀

Lehigh Acres Senior Center Gift Shop Has An eBay Store

Submitted By Lehigh Acres Senior Center

The Golden Shell is located within the Lehigh Acres Senior Center at 219 Plaza Dr. Lehigh Acres, FL 33936. The Golden Shell store is run by volunteer Linda Dillon who is also a board member of the Lehigh Acres Senior Citizens Center, Inc. (LASCC) a non-profit organization.

The Golden Shell thrift store provides quality used merchandise at prices that seniors on a limited income are able to afford. We are a small, but quality-oriented thrift store. Our prices are low and we always have a wide variety of items for sale. Our boutique is located just inside the main door of the Senior Center and is open to the public. In other words, you don't have to be a member of the Lehigh Acres Senior Center to take advantage of our bargains or to just browse in our delightful store. LASCC has supported a number of other non-profit organizations in the Lehigh area including Lehigh Community Services, Kiwanis and Goodwill. The Store hours are Monday thru Friday from 9am to 3pm. We invite you to stop in and shop with us soon.

The Golden Shell thrift store has recently opened up an eBay store called thegoldenshell21, where higher valued products are sold. As a non-profit store, all proceeds go back into the community to help seniors at the Lehigh Acres Senior Center. This eBay store is managed by volunteer Donna Long who is also a board member of LASCC.

Should you like to become a member of the Lehigh Acres Senior Center, please stop by or contact Mary Vance, Monday thru Friday 8 am-4pm at 239-369-5355. The Senior Center has a great deal to offer with an annual membership of \$30. ☀



Photo: Linda Dillon and Donna Long stand among a display within The Golden Shell. Donna is holding a sign that promotes the new eBay store.

Peggie's Place Cafe

Submitted By Lehigh Acres Senior Center

Peggie's Place Cafe' is open from 8:30 a.m. - 1 p.m. Monday through Friday. They serve soups, sandwiches and other snacks, along with bi-weekly meals on Mondays. Rose Ann Marr is the Kitchen Manager as well as the President of the Board of Directors of the non-profit, Lehigh Acres Senior Citizens Center, Inc. (LASCC). Rose Ann has worked in the Kitchen for 7 years and has taken over as manager for the past 3 years.

Peggie's Place Cafe' plays an important role in making special events a huge success. They make most of the food they serve and the pot roast is a crowd pleaser at our bi-monthly birthday celebrations. Special Events require membership, however no membership is required to enjoy the day to day dining at Peggie's Place Cafe'. Come in and enjoy a good meal at a very reasonable price.

We invite you to come in and check out

what Lehigh Acres Senior Center has to offer. The senior center is a wonderful place to make some new friends, fill your belly with great food, and lots of laughs.

Should you like to become a member of the Lehigh Acres Senior Center, please stop by or contact Mary Vance, Monday thru Friday 8am - 4pm at 239-369-5355 or visit us at: <http://lehighacresseniorcitizenscenter.com/> Located behind the sheriff's office at 219 Plaza Drive, the Senior Center has a great deal to offer with annual membership of \$30. ☀



Photo: Rose Ann Marr, president of the Board of Directors alongside Mary Schmidt kitchen volunteer during a birthday celebration.

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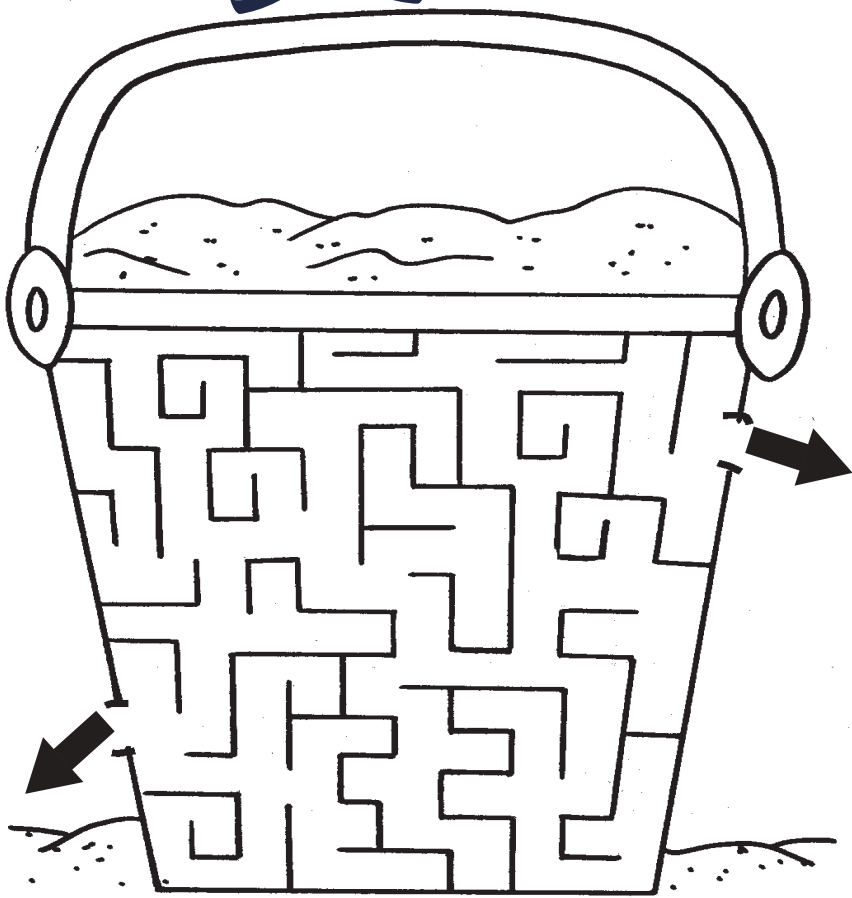
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Dates & descriptions provided by www.holidayinsights.com

June 6 National Frozen Yogurt Day

Frozen yogurt is a great, healthy and tasty treat. So, we are ecstatic that there are two days to celebrate it. But, don't limit your consumption of frozen yogurt to just two days a year. Eat it as often as you can! National Frozen Yogurt Day was created in 1993 by The Country's Best Yogurt (TCBY's). Obviously, they did so to promote frozen yogurt. And, we are so glad that they did.

June 10 National Iced Tea Day

With the official start of summer just a few days away. The timing is perfect for National Iced Tea Day. Today may serve as a good reminder to make and enjoy your first (of many) Iced Tea drink of the season. Have it plain, add a little lemon, or sweeten it with sugar. Iced Tea is certainly a favorite summer cooler of millions of Americans. And best of all, tea is good for your health! It takes no imagination to decide how to enjoy this great day: Grab an Iced Tea and head out to the hammock strung under a shady tree.

June 18 Go Fishing Day

Today is Go Fishing Day. Now, this is my kind of day! It's a day to go out and bring home a healthy, tasty, meal for the family. Celebrate today, on the shore or in a boat, with a fishing pole in one hand, and your favorite beverage in the other. And, don't go home until you have caught your limit of fish!

June 19 Juneteenth Day

Juneteenth day celebrates and symbolizes the end of slavery in the United States. President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation on September 22, 1862. It was not until June 19, 1865 that all slaves were finally freed. That concluding event was when General Gordon Granger rode into Galveston, Texas with his troops and issued Order Number 3 which finally freed the last of the slaves. The formal end of slavery was marked by the passing of the 13th amendment of the constitution.

June 21 National Sea Shell Day

Today is the first day of summer. It's time to hit the beach, soak up some rays, and search for seashells. It makes perfect sense that today is also National Sea Shell Day. What's your favorite seashell? A conch, a clam, a sand dollar or a seahorse, perhaps? As you pick them off the beach, make sure the shell is empty and not alive. When in doubt, gently, place them back in the ocean. The best time to search for sea shells is from an hour before to an hour after low tide. Most can be found along the high tide mark.

ANSWER KEY
 JUNE 2022

4	7	8	9	2	6	1	5	3
2	3	9	1	4	5	8	7	6
5	1	6	7	3	8	4	9	2
8	2	5	6	9	3	7	4	1
9	6	7	4	5	1	2	3	8
3	4	1	8	7	2	9	6	5
7	8	3	2	6	4	5	1	9
6	9	2	5	1	7	3	8	4
1	5	4	3	8	9	6	2	7

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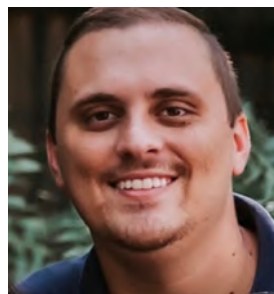


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