



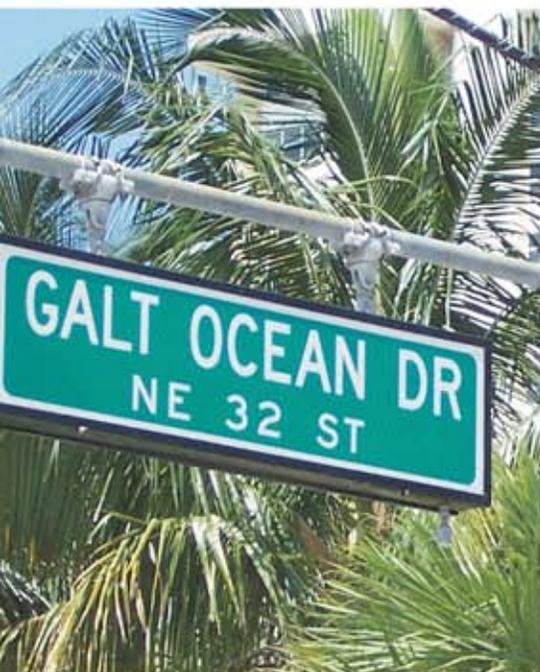
GALT MILE NEWS

FEBRUARY 2010

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RETROFIT RESOLUTION REVIVED THIRD TIME'S A CHARM

By Eric Berkowitz

Since 2002, when Florida association members hear the word "sprinklers", they either wince or cringe. Condo and Co-op owners have spent the past eight years nervously awaiting notice about some mysterious assessment that could deep-fry the household budget. Recently, some Galt Mile Associations expressed shock and dismay upon receiving a disconcerting letter from the local Fire Marshal – reminding them that they will be tagged for a boatload of money by 2014. For those of you who have moved here since 2002 and/or take pride in ignoring the legislative antics annually cooked up in Tallahassee for you and your neighbors, there's some good news. (This may also provide a modicum of relief to nervous Board members cogitating how to break the mysterious letter's bad news to residents.) First – some history.

Eight years ago, former GMCA President Robert Rozema received a call from the Florida Fire Sprinkler Association asking if a Florida Fire Marshal could address the neighborhood association. Intrigued, Rozema placed the mysterious guest on the Presidents Council agenda. At the meeting, the uniformed spokesperson thanked the membership for supporting some legislation about fire sprinklers and started to describe how they should explain some huge assessment to their various Boards. When Jack Freidman of the Commodore announced, "This is the first time I am hearing about this," perplexed association members concurred and Galt Ocean Club's Pio Ieraci asked the guest speaker to explain what he was talking about. The spokesperson cheerfully reported that fire sprinkler legislation had successfully slipped through the Florida Legislature and was now State Law. After hearing how "a 'huge insurance savings' would offset the cost of a building-wide sprinkler system in 45 to 50 years," the late Jim Gill of Plaza South asked the speaker "Who paid you to appear at our meeting." He responded "I work for The Florida Fire Sprinkler Association and they told me that all of you wanted to install their sprinkler systems."

Rozema jumped in, "We've never even heard of this legislation, much less support it; exactly why are you here?" The "guest speaker" answered, "The Sprinkler Association is sending representatives to civic and neighborhood associations throughout the state to inform their members about the new law and help them sell the idea to unit owners living in their buildings. It doesn't matter whether or not anyone supports the sprinkler retrofit, its State law and you have no choice." That night, the GMCA unanimously voted to oppose this unfunded mandate. The following summarizes what happened then... and what's happening now.

The Opening Bell

In 2002, the Florida Legislature quietly passed a bill requiring every Florida Association housed in a structure 75 feet above grade to install an approved, automatic sprinkler system throughout the structure.

Scrutiny of the new law revealed it to be a \$multi-billion payday for certain vested interests instead of effective fire protection. Drafted by the American Fire Sprinkler Association and the National Fire Sprinkler Association with input from the Plumbers and Pipefitters Union, glaringly absent from this "midnight legislation" were any studies or research clarifying its impact on common interest associations and their unit owners.

To infuse a bill designed by industry trade groups with credibility, certain representatives from the Florida Fire Marshals and Inspectors Association (FFMIA) called on legislators to pass this bill "as a testament to our heroic firefighters." Instead of presenting authoritative documentation demonstrating that a variety of different fire safety solutions should be tailored to a structure's material composition, size, entry and egress, construction features and existing fire safety elements, the impressively uniformed lobbyists convinced key lawmakers that sprinkler retrofits were a fire safety panacea for every condominium.

The Fire Marshals lobbying the lawmakers weren't solely motivated by public spirit. Many of the uniformed retrofit proponents were financially vested in the outcome of this legislation. Executive Director Chuck Akers of the Florida Fire Marshals and Inspectors Association is also the Executive Director of the American Fire Sprinkler Association, an industry trade group responsible for boosting sprinkler sales. Other Fire Marshals Association officials are also employed by the National Fire Sprinkler Association, another sprinkler trade organization behind the original legislation. FFMIA Past President and lifetime member Steven Randall was also the South Central Regional Manager of the National Fire Sprinkler Association (locally AKA Florida Fire Sprinkler Asscn)



Galt Mile State House Representative Ellyn Bagdanoff proposes House Bill 561, offering Retrofit Relief while reversing costly insurance glitches.

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move if
burdened
with
another
\$8,000 to
\$18,000
assessment?**

Sprinklers...Continued

until he retired on July 16, 2009 (after the Governor vetoed the sprinkler retrofit deadline extension). As for FFMA lifetime member Buddy Dewar, in addition to pulling a salary as the National Fire Sprinkler Association's Director of Regional Operations, he's employed as the Florida Fire Sprinkler Association's Lobbyist and Legislative Liaison.

Following a State-wide outcry against the suspect expenditure, the legislation was subsequently modified to allow condo owners to "Opt Out" of retrofitting their units "by the affirmative vote of two-thirds of all voting interests". In 2003, the Galt Mile Community Association contacted District 91 Statehouse Representative Connie Mack IV and sophomore Senator Jeffrey Atwater, requesting legislative relief. The opt-out provision was added to Mack's House Bill 165 and Atwater's Senate Bill 592, co-filed with former Hollywood Senator Stephen Geller (currently a candidate for Sue Gunzburger's Broward Commission seat) over the virulent objections of lobbyists for the Plumbers and Pipefitters Union and the Fire Sprinkler Associations. It allowed Associations and their Fire Safety Engineers to tailor a "Minimum Alternative Life Safety System" (AKA "Engineered Life Safety System") instead of the budget busting full sprinkler retrofit. As a concession to the lobbying interests, the corrective legislation required Fire Safety Engineers to add sprinkler retrofits in every unit foyer (entry area to the unit) and common area when designing a comprehensive Fire Protection plan for an association.

Gubernatorial Gaffes

In 2006, House Bill 391 by Representative Carl Domino aspired to extend the sprinkler retrofit deadline for high rise projects from the currently mandated 2014 to 2025. The extra decade would have afforded unit owners an opportunity to recover from the 2004 and 2005 hurricane repair assessments, mega-deductibles and huge windstorm insurance increases that often required long and/or short term financing. Unit owners in these leveraged associations sought to first amortize their bloated debt service before paying another sizable assessment.

After successfully surviving comprehensive committee reviews in both legislative bodies, HB 391 was passed out of the House by a vote of 113 Yeas vs. 0 Nays and was passed out of the Senate by a vote of 40 Yeas vs. 0 Nays. Retrofit lobbyists failed to convince lawmakers that investing scarce association resources in limited sprinklers would yield a more productive safety benefit than a comparable investment in hurricane protection. Despite its overwhelming support and having unanimously passed both legislative bodies, lame duck Governor Jeb Bush frustrated condo owners by vetoing the bill, blaming the absence of any official study examining how retrofit costs will impact condominium owners.

Responding to persistent entreaties by Galt Mile Community Association officials and hundreds of constituents, on January 16, 2009, Statehouse Representative Ellyn Bogdanoff filed House Bill 419. Its sister bill, Senate Bill 714 filed by Senator Dennis Jones, was ultimately substituted for HB 419 as the session wound down. Popularly known as the association "glitch" bill, SB 714 sought to reverse some of the counterproductive and/or expensive regulations that were piggy-backed onto large omnibus association and insurance bills during the frenetic last weeks of the 2008 session (House Bill 601). Filed to correct a host of poorly drafted, contradictory or unworkable regulations, its provisions addressed a wide range of association issues including insurance, board elections, fire sprinklers, fire alarm systems, Timeshare Condominiums and back-up generators for elevators.

It primarily targeted inequitable insurance provisions, such as the right of an association to force every unit owner to purchase HO-6 insurance (condominium unit insurance) and name the association as a beneficiary (you file the claim, the association gets the check). It would also have eliminated the right of associations to "force place" such coverage if the unit owner failed to produce an insurance certificate. Another glitch targeted by the bill is the requirement that a unit owner's "hazard insurance" policy include at least \$2,000 of "special assessment" coverage - although such a product does not exist! SB 714 would have redrafted the language to "loss assessment" coverage in a "property insurance" policy and clarified that it is excess coverage, curing a defect that allows insurance companies to require a second deductible for property damaged during a covered event.

The legislation would have relieved associations of having to insure "improvements and additions" that benefit fewer than all the owners. Since current law fails to define "improvements and additions," this may or may not include balconies, fixed balcony appurtenances, vehicle enclosures such as carports, storage spaces and other building elements whose designations hover between "limited common areas" and "private property". It also changed the statutory standard for the association's insurance coverage from "full insurable value" to "replacement cost".

SB 714 additionally would have exempted some single and two-story buildings with an "exterior means of egress corridor" from being forced to install an expensive manual fire alarm system, despite the National Fire Protection Association (Subdivision 31.3.4.1.1, NFPA 101, Life Safety Code) deeming it unnecessary. Along with other fixes, the bill contained the long anticipated postponement of the multi \$million fire sprinkler retrofit - similar to the bill vetoed in 2006. Like the earlier legislation, it would have delayed an onerous mandated association assessment from 2014 to 2025.

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Sprinklers...Continued

On April 27th, SB 714 passed a vote in the Senate by 38 Yeas vs. 0 Nays (2 not voting). On April 29th, the bill passed a vote in the House by 114 Yeas vs. 2 Nays (4 not voting). On June 1, 2009, Governor Crist visited déjà vu on millions of Florida association members, vetoing SB 714 despite its overwhelming legislative and public support.

Association Attorney Gary A. Poliakoff of Becker & Poliakoff blasted the veto advice apparently accepted by the Governor. In a letter to Crist, he asked, "With all due respect, exactly who did your advisors assume will be forced to pay the special assessments to retrofit a condominium where 40 percent to 50 percent of the units are in default in payment of their assessments, or in mortgage foreclosure?" How many unit owners will be forced to move if burdened with another \$8,000 to \$18,000 assessment? Prior to the veto, Representative Ellyn Bogdanoff reminded Governor Crist that "in 30 years, not one injury resulted from an association's failure to perform a sprinkler retrofit."

Upon vetoing the bill, senatorial candidate Crist emulated his predecessor, exclaiming, "I am directing the Department of Business and Professional Regulation (DBPR) to initiate a comprehensive review of actual retrofit costs and the impacts that retrofitting may have on insurance premiums."

The Retrofit Report

On September 28, 2009, former DBPR Secretary Chuck Drago (named Crist's Deputy Chief of Staff on November 30) notified Governor Crist that his Department wrapped up their study. The DBPR invited input from Florida's fire service industry, condominium community advocacy organizations, the Office of the State Fire Marshal, the Office of Insurance Regulation, Citizens Property Insurance Company, fire sprinkler installers and representatives of insurance companies. Two participating association advocacy groups were the Community Advocacy Network (CAN) and the Community Association Leadership Lobby (CALL). The Community Advocacy Network (CAN) represents 2500 associations and is headed by Donna Berger, an association attorney with Katzman Garfinkel Rosenbaum. Berger also originally initiated the Community Association Leadership Lobby while employed by Becker Poliakoff - which represents approximately 4,500 condominium associations. When she left for Katzman Garfinkel Rosenbaum and started CAN, Yeline Goin and David G. Muller succeeded Berger as CALL's Co-Directors. Also testifying on behalf of cash-strapped condos and co-ops was Harry Charles, President Emeritus of the Space Coast Communities Association, an umbrella organization with 269 member associations on central Florida's east coast.

Although statistically crippled by the negligible number of available cost estimates, the diminutive database demonstrated the costs attendant to the two prospective installation options - a full sprinkler retrofit and the partial retrofit (i.e. the "Minimum Alternative Life Safety System" or "Engineered Life Safety System") - varied widely, ranging from \$503 per unit to \$8633 per unit. While impacted by a structure's layout, material construction, existing standpipe locations, and other structural factors, costs depended primarily on whether the water lines were simply dropped from the ceiling as exemplified by low-income public housing, or effectively hidden to meet the association's aesthetic objectives. Local fire safety engineers confirm that the dropped ceilings, dry-walls and other construction variables required for camouflaging the steel, copper or CPVC substantially increases installation costs. It is highly unlikely that Galt Mile associations will tolerate the exposed pipes that earmarked most of the report's estimates.

As to the quixotic cost offsets from insurance savings hoped for by the Governor upon ordering the report, when insurance carriers granted reductions for Florida associations fully retrofitted with fire sprinklers, the price impact on their overall policies was insignificant because the discounts applied only to the modest "all other perils" portion of their property and casualty policies, not the expensive windstorm portion.

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Sprinklers...Continued

After confirming that the 5% premium discount described by Citizens Insurance earlier in the report is negligible since it applies only to the "all other perils" portion of an insurance policy, former Deputy Insurance Commissioner Lisa Miller added "An ISO (Insurance Services Office - an accredited property and liability risk assessor) considers a building that is partially sprinklered the same as a building without sprinklers, from a rating perspective." As a result, ISO will recommend that partially retrofitted Associations receive no discount and fully sprinklered buildings see a small break on their minor multi-peril costs. Additionally, since heeding the advice of ISO is voluntary - subject to the proprietary policies of individual insurance companies - carriers perceiving a captive clientele will be predisposed to blowing off any reduction.

Since the study provided the Governor with none of the fiscal ammunition promised by the Sprinkler Associations and their political avatars in the Fire Marshals Union, the three recommendations made by the DBPR to supposedly assist financially crippled associations implement the retrofits were either irrelevant or inane. DBPR suggested that associations be reminded of the statutory deadline in annual billing statements (just in case it slipped their minds). Secondly, associations should decide between partial or full sprinkler retrofits depending on their available resources - something short of a revelation. Thirdly, in view of the insurance industry's refusal to confer any rate benefit for installing the less expensive partial sprinkler system, the DBPR suggested that "The Legislature may wish to address the uncertainty of a premium discount when associations opt to install sprinklers in the common areas only." Every scrap of testimony in the report supports that premium discounts for partial installations are hardly "uncertain", they are nonexistent. In essence, the study failed to soften either the fiscal consequences or association animosity resulting from the Governor's veto.

Associations are already receiving the "reminder" notices recommended by

DBPR in their Retrofit Report. On December 30, 2009, Playa del Mar received a letter from Fort Lauderdale Fire Marshal David Raines reminding them of the 2014 retrofit deadline. Attempting to empathize with unit owners facing a crushing assessment, Raines confesses awareness of the code's financial impact and laments that he is "obligated to enforce it." Other Galt Mile Associations are in receipt of similar notices. Unfortunately, several members of Galt Mile Boards who failed to debrief their Advisory Board representatives were unaware of the reason for the notice and panicked. Unsettled board members and association officials mistook the notice for an effort to expedite compliance or surmised victimization by a "probably uncorrectable" computer glitch that inequitably singled them out for an immediate assessment.

What Safety Benefit?

The "Alternative Minimum Life Safety System" as mandated by statute was never intended for extinguishing fires. Its stated objective is to provide a moderately safe egress. It is only one of many layers of fire protection in an engineered fire safety plan. Since effective early detection and containment will save far more lives than the sprinklers placed in unit foyers and certain common areas (as required for an Alternative Minimum Life Safety Plan), they are arguably more important components to any integrated fire safety system. Acknowledging the questionable safety benefit versus the huge costs, the DBPR opined "Under the circumstances, the prospect of adding any additional costs for most associations would be difficult to propose, and perhaps result in a recall of the association's board."

The bill was written before several generations of new technology seriously dated many of the mandate's precepts. Many of our buildings are ideally adapted to Compartmentation - fire resistance rated (1, 2 or 3 hours) assemblies, with smoke treatments, that contain the fire to the room of origin until Fire-Rescue arrives. If these "compartments" are sealed against fire/smoke spread with fire/smoke dampers (which restrict air movement in ducts), firestopping penetrations, fire doors and other safety features, they become a far more effective protection protocol - without risking building-wide water damage (which adds to an association's insurance burden).

It also predates various emerging sensor technologies (e.g., computer vision system, distributed fiber optic temperature sensor, and intelligent multiple sensor), signal processing and monitoring technology (e.g., real-time control via Internet) and integrated fire detection systems. By centralizing signal processing on the detector's circuit board, giving each detector its own central processing unit (CPU) and software storage, it can pass information to a central panel when polled or upon sensing a fire. Smart detection and alarm systems based on neural network technology can be integrated into building automation and control systems using a gateway to preserve the integrity of the fire safety system (as required by law).

The benefits of this newer technology include smoke control (managing variable air volumes via existing HVAC systems), single seat access to building information, easier maintenance, sharing sensor data, obtaining information about the location and status of people during an emergency, two-way voice communications with every unit's occupants and real-time data about their environment and condition. The same data can be made available for any unoccupied areas of the building, allowing firefighters to effectively assess conditions at or en route to any occupant's location.

A mechanical ratchet device that turns every window, balcony or catwalk into a viable escape egress was demonstrated and endorsed several times since 2006 at the Broward County Fire Academy. While the safety features inherent in these improvements are light years ahead of "sprinkler retrofits in unit foyers," they portend no \$billion payday for the legislation's commercial supporters.

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Sprinklers...Continued

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The Good News

In December 2009, the Galt Mile Community Association participated in an association conference called to address legislative issues. Attended by Community Advocacy Network Executive Director Donna Berger, representatives from scores of community, civic, condominium and cooperative associations from across Florida and District 91 Statehouse Representative Elyn Bogdanoff (District 25 Senatorial Candidate), they collectively reviewed an agenda for the current legislative session in Tallahassee.

On January 4, 2010, Representative Bogdanoff filed House Bill 561, which not only revives the insurance fixes and other glitch repairs napped earlier by the Governor, it improves on the fire sprinkler retrofit resolution proposed in last year's vetoed Senate Bill 714. Bogdanoff's bill states, "In no event shall the local authority having jurisdiction require completion of retrofitting with a sprinkler system or other engineered life safety system before the end of 2019," extending the existing 2014 deadline by five years. Granted - the extension in SB 714 would have pushed the deadline to 2025, another six years out. However, Bogdanoff's bill vests associations with an additional "right" lacking in SB 714, an element that distinguishes the legislation from its failed predecessors.

HB 561 also removes the current statutory language, "However, a condominium association may not vote to forego the retrofitting with a fire sprinkler system of common areas in a high-rise building. For purposes of this subsection, the term 'high-rise building' means a building that is greater than 75 feet in height where the building height is measured from the lowest level of fire department access to the floor of the highest occupiable story."

Redacting the provision that prevented high-rise structures from fully opting out of the sprinkler retrofit, it adds "A vote to forego retrofitting may be obtained at a special meeting of the unit owners called by a petition of least 25 percent of the voting interests, once every 3 years. Notice shall be provided as required for any regularly called meeting of the unit owners, and the notice shall state the purpose of the meeting. Electronic transmission may not be used as a method of giving notice of a meeting called in whole or in part for this purpose."

Bingo! A petition including at least 25% of the high-rise association's voting interests will trigger a special meeting wherein the unit owners can vote to opt out of any sprinkler retrofit. The bill returns the decision to retrofit a home of any height back to the homeowners who must live with and pay for that decision. To insure that the decision to opt out reflects the intentions of unit owners in perpetuity, the vote must be repeated every three years.

On January 14th, Broward Senator Jeremy Ring filed Senate Bill 1222, which mirrors the text of Bogdanoff's bill in the other chamber. On January 20th, the house bill was referred to the Civil Justice & Courts Policy Committee, the Criminal & Civil Justice Policy Council and the Insurance Business & Financial Affairs Policy Committee for vetting. The bill was voted favorably by the Civil Justice & Courts Policy Committee on February 2. Prior to calendar consideration by the entire House of Representatives, the bill will also undergo review by the other two committees.

What about the Governor's Heavy Pen?

"Hold on! Last year the Governor vetoed the sprinkler retrofit extension. Why won't he do the same thing to this bill?" When the Governor opted to placate the Sprinkler Associations and the Fire Marshals, he was laboring under the misconception that his political future was a lock. Since then, Charlie Crist has faced stiffening competition for his dream job in Washington D.C. - from former Statehouse Speaker Marco Rubio and Congressman Kendrick Meek.

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 \$345,000



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SPACIOUS UNIT WITH
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 \$195,970



CORNICHE CONDO

SPECTACULAR 3/3, SE CORNER UNIT IN
 BOUTIQUE BUILDING ON THE OCEAN.
 \$1,250,000



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PHENOMENAL VIEWS OF OCEAN, INTRACOASTAL AND
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RENOVATED 3/2 WITH IMPACT WINDOWS &
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STUNNING SE CORNER, 2/2 UNIT.
TOTALLY REMODELED, LIGHT & BRIGHT.
\$449,000



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OCEAN VIEWS FROM LIVING ROOM, KITCHEN & BOTH
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L'HERMITAGE

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2/2 CORNER, 1650 SQ. FT., WRAP AROUND OCEAN & CITY VIEWS BALCONY. PRICED FOR A QUICK SALE! \$390,000



PLAYA DEL MAR

LUXURY 2 BEDROOM IN ALL AMENITY BUILDING & PETS ARE WELCOME. \$499,000



L'HERMITAGE

BRIGHT HIGH FLOOR 2/2 + DEN, HUGE BALCONY AND MAGNIFICENT VIEWS. \$679,000



OCEAN CLUB CONDO

LARGE 2/2 CONDO ON THE BEACH WITH 1600 SQ. FT. LOW MAINTENANCE \$379,000



L'AMBIANCE

3/2.5 WITH 2300 SQ. FT., DIRECT SE CORNER UNIT WITH IMPRESSIVE VIEWS. \$725,000



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3 BEDROOM PENTHOUSE WITH OCEAN & INTRACOASTAL VIEWS. LUXURY FINISHES. \$565,000



L'HERMITAGE

BEAUTIFULLY FURNISHED 2/2.5 + DEN. RARELY AVAILABLE SE VIEWS. \$1,049,000



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VICE MAYOR BRUCE ROBERT'S NEWSLETTER

** District 1 Commissioner and Vice Mayor Bruce Roberts weaves seven informational snippets into his January snapshot of Fort Lauderdale. He opens by ironically juxtaposing the joy experienced by 100,000 celebrants at the Downtown Countdown emulation of the world-renown Times Square New Year's event with how deterioration of local real estate values will pitfall next year's budgeting efforts. The Commissioner cites a report indicating that revenue declines will burden budgeting strategies through 2014.*

After describing how the census impacts funding entitlements (more than \$400 billion in federal fund allocations) and political representation, the Vice Mayor sheds light on the rationale for some recently established Advisory Committees. En route to providing long-range guidance for Commission policy, a Visioning Committee will first formulate a strategy to insure that public input is all inclusive and fully representative. The Centennial Celebration Committee will plan activities and events worthy of the City's year-long hundredth birthday blowout throughout 2011. Although the committee is already powered by such political staples as E. Clay Shaw, John Aurelius and Cindi Hutchinson, at the December Presidents Council meeting, Mayor Seiler made a passionate presentation outlining plans to recruit Connie Francis and other "Spring Break" icons as Centennial headliners. In January, the Vice Mayor confirmed to the Galt Mile Advisory Board that the Mayor is committed to engaging celebrity participants for upcoming municipal events.

*Hoping to keep Fort Lauderdale Stadium financially afloat, the City is researching replacement alternatives for the annual rental income lost when Sarasota hijacked the departed Baltimore Orioles spring training program. In conclusion, Commissioner Roberts summarizes progress toward actualizing the evolving Central Beach Master Plan. Following accrual of input from municipal Advisory Boards empanelled to study Beach Redevelopment and Economic Development, in mid-December the Commission approved public realm enhancements and other fundamentals of the draft plan created by Sasaki Associates, Inc. If you want the City's pulse... read on... - [editor]**

FROM THE DESK OF VICE MAYOR BRUCE G. ROBERTS

Happy New Year! I hope everyone enjoyed the Holiday Season. The Downtown Countdown 2009, which was held New Year's Eve, was sponsored by AT&T. Touted as one of the largest New Year's Eve celebrations in Florida, this year's free event was full of fun and excitement for both children and adults. An estimated 100,000 revelers crowded downtown Fort Lauderdale on Thursday, December 31, 2009 along S.W. 2nd St between S.W. 2nd Ave and S.W. 5th Ave to wait with anticipation for the ball to drop at midnight. The event ran from 5 p.m. to 3 a.m.

We have another tough budget year before us. We need to gear up for an intensive review of every budgetary program item and explore new avenues for both cost savings and potential new revenue streams. According to the final report from the November 30, 2009 Florida Ad Valorem Estimating Conference, Broward County taxable values are projected to continue to decline: - 11.6% in 2010; -6.2% in 2011; -2.5% in 2012; -0.8% in 2013; and finally rising 3.1% in 2014. The Budget Advisory Board is working very closely with the Commissioners to help us through this process. I can assure you that this Commission will meet this challenge and maintain vital City services.

The 2010 Census is just around the corner (April 1, 2010) and we want you in the number. Each year, more than \$300 billion in federal funding is distributed to communities based on census data. Let's make sure the City of Fort Lauderdale receives its share. The census is important for many reasons, but the most important is funding for our community. Every citizen counts. Just one person not counted means less funding for programs such as Head Start, Title I Grants, public transportation, road rehabilitation and construction, programs for the elderly, emergency food and shelter, and empowerment zones. Census results also impact economic development planning and the number of government representatives. The Census Survey is short and simple. You can go to the City's webpage to read what questions will be asked - <http://ci.ftlaud.fl.us/census/index.htm>.

Visioning Committee At the November 17, 2009 City Commission Conference meeting, the City Commission reached a consensus to establish a visioning committee to develop a long term visioning plan that the City Commission can use as a guide for policy and decision making. The first task of the Committee will be to develop an initial model plan, which outlines a process to seek the perspectives of under-represented individuals so that a citywide vision will reflect the viewpoints of all residents in the City. Initial membership will consist of 11 citizens. The Mayor and Commissioners will appoint two members each, and agree upon one consensus member. At least one of each of the Commissioner's selections must reside in that Commissioner's district. All members shall either be a resident of the City or work in the corporate limits of the City. This committee will be termi-

nated on December 31, 2011 unless the City Commission extends the term. To see what current members are serving you can go online at <http://ci.ftlaud.fl.us/clerk/boards.htm>.

The Centennial Celebration Committee was recently established by the City Commission to commemorate Fort Lauderdale's 100th Anniversary in 2011. This committee will help the City plan events and activities that celebrate Ft. Lauderdale's past, present and future. The committee is in the process of working with the Commission to develop a strategy to solicit input from residents, businesses and local organizations. By involving the public as early as possible, the City hopes to build on the momentum surrounding the Centennial, and provide an opportunity for all stakeholders to be part of the planning process and become invested in the Centennial events and activities. Residents are encouraged to participate in the Centennial by providing input at a Centennial Celebration Committee meeting. You can also get involved by sending an email to centennial@fortlauderdale.gov.

Orioles Stadium The Orioles have confirmed that they will not be returning to the Fort Lauderdale Stadium for the 2010 Spring Training season. As pointed out in previous

Continued on page 15



Roberts Hits New year Running

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Sprinklers...Continued

Despite his love affair with the D.C. Republican establishment and an endorsement by the National Republican Senatorial Committee, he started breaking a sweat in October when Marco Rubio raised \$1 million in the third fundraising quarter of 2009 and emulsified the Governor's big leads in the Quinnipiac University and Rasmussen polls. After losing 16 straight County Republican Committee polls (including in Pinellas, Crist's home county), the Governor learned that Rubio scored \$1.75 million and Democrat Kendrick Meek raised \$1.2 million last quarter. Although straw polls are close to meaningless, events have led Crist to the conclusion that he would benefit from an opportunity to recapture much of the support lost when he vetoed SB 714.

Since the DBPR report findings proved a barren source of vindication for Governor Crist, his alienation of more than 1.8 million condo and co-op owners yielded no ostensible political benefit. A savvy politician, the Governor is amenable to reconsidering his position.

His survival instinct appears to be functionally intact. The Governor is evidently willing to trade off a prospective photo op with a handful of "in uniform" sprinkler lobbyists for the gratitude and good will of 1.8 million cash-strapped albeit voting association members. By endorsing a bill enjoying the overwhelming support of lawmakers and voters alike, Charlie Crist stands to reduce the County straw polls' impact to confetti. Not bad for a day's work since all he has to do is... nothing!

While this is a giant step in the right direction, we have not, as yet, arrived. GMCA and allied common interest associations across the state will have to nurse the legislation through several legislative mine fields. However, challenges such as this have fueled the Galt Mile's reputation as a small neighborhood with a big voice. Of course, we have a secret weapon... each other! More to come... •

Roberts...Continued

discussions with this Commission, the City needs to decide how to manage the Stadium facility in light of the Orioles' departure. The continued operation of the Stadium, excluding the adjacent practice fields and event site, has been estimated at \$10,500 per month. Maintaining the adjacent fields adds approximately another \$20,000 per month to the cost of the recreational facility. We are in the process of seeking new management, events and or tenants to keep this facility viable and financially in the black.

Central Beach Master Plan: On May 15, 2007, Commission approved a contract for consulting services for preparation of the Central Beach Master Plan and Las Olas Gateway Plan by Sasaki Associates, Inc. The Central Beach Master Plan was undertaken to develop a long-range community vision, building upon the planning foundations set forth in previous studies, outlining public improvements in the area, and proposing design guidelines that set the standard for future development. The plan represents the voice of numerous stakeholders and addresses the unique opportunities and challenges for future development patterns and private and public investment in the area. A series of public meetings took place throughout the development of the plan to obtain community input and provide the public with opportunities to discuss and analyze the plan. Following the final presentation of the draft plan at the April 30, 2009 public meeting, in addition to editing and formatting changes, some minor revisions were made to the plan. Staff also obtained additional input from various members of the public as well as the Beach Redevelopment Advisory Board and the Economic Development Advisory Board. On December 15, 2009 the Commission approved the basic concept of the plan as it related to public realm enhancements and the flexibility needed for redevelopment within the various land zones. •

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TUE

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<p>14 Valentine's Concert w/ Jon Secoda Fairchild Tropical Garden Info/Tix.: 305-663-8058</p> <p>Urban Gourmet Market 1201 E. Las Olas Blvd. 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Info.: 954-462-4166</p>	<p>15 President's Day</p>  <p>Commissioner Bruce Roberts: Pre-Agenda Meeting Cardinal Gibbons High School, Media Room 6 p.m. Info.: 954-828-5033</p>	<p>16 Mardi Gras</p> <p>Fort Lauderdale City Commission Meeting City Hall 6 p.m.</p>	<p>17 Tony and Tina's Wedding (Through 2/28) Broward Center Info.: 954-462-0222</p> <p>The 39 Steps (Through 2/28) Parker Playhouse Tix.: www.parkerplayhouse.com</p>
<p>21 ATA Marathon Las Olas to ATA 6 a.m. to Noon Info.: 954-241-3801</p> <p>Urban Gourmet Market 1201 E. Las Olas Blvd. 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Info.: 954-462-4166</p>	<p>22</p>	<p>23</p>	<p>24</p> <p>Taste of the Beach El Prado Ave., LBTS 6 to 9 p.m. Info.: 954-776-1000</p>
<p>28</p> <p>Urban Gourmet Market 1201 E. Las Olas Blvd. 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Info.: 954-462-4166</p>	<p>1</p> <p>Commissioner Bruce Roberts: Pre-Agenda Meeting Cardinal Gibbons High School, Media Room 6 p.m. Info.: 954-828-5033</p>	<p>2</p> <p>Fort Lauderdale City Commission Meeting City Hall 6 p.m.</p>	<p>3</p>
<p>7 Sunday Jazz Brunch Riverwalk, Downtown FL 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Info.: 954-828-5985</p> <p>MS Walk Birch State Park, 7 a.m. to 2 p.m. Info.: 954-731-4224</p> <p>Urban Gourmet Market 1201 E. Las Olas Blvd. 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Info.: 954-462-4166</p>	<p>8</p>  <p>SUNDAY JAZZ BRUNCH On Riverwalk</p>	<p>9</p>	<p>10</p>
<p>14 Daylight Saving Time Starts</p> <p>Urban Gourmet Market 1201 E. Las Olas Blvd. 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Info.: 954-462-4166</p>	<p>15</p> <p>Commissioner Bruce Roberts: Pre-Agenda Meeting Cardinal Gibbons High School, Media Room 6 p.m. Info.: 954-828-5033</p>	<p>16</p> <p>In The Heights (Through 3/28) Broward Center Tix.: www.browardcenter.org</p> <p>Fort Lauderdale City Commission Meeting City Hall 6 p.m.</p>	<p>17 Saint Patrick's Day</p> <p>Food Fight! (Through 3/28) Broward Center Tix.: 954-462-0222</p>

**FOR A COMPLETE LISTING OF EVENTS, GO TO THE CALENDAR AT
WWW.GALTMILE.COM**

ONE SOURCE FOR COMMUNITY HAPPENINGS

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<p>18 BINGO Southpoint's North Lounge (3400 Galt Ocean Dr) 7 p.m. \$5/person for 3 boards</p> <p>GMAC Advisory Board Meeting Nick's Italian Restaurant 11 a.m.</p>	<p>19 Jazz on the Square The Village Grille Commercial Blvd. & A1A 7 p.m.</p>	<p>20 Buckler's Craft Fair S. Florida Fairgrounds Info.: 386-860-0092</p> <p>Florida Renaissance Festival (Weekends through 3/14) Quiet Waters Park 10 a.m. to Sunset Info.: 954-776-1642</p>
<p>25 Movie Night When Harry Met Sally Fairchild Tropical Garden 6 to 9 p.m. Tix.: www.fairchildgarden.org</p> <p>BINGO Southpoint's North Lounge (3400 Galt Ocean Dr) 7 p.m. \$5/person for 3 boards</p>	<p>26 Jazz on the Square The Village Grille Commercial Blvd. & A1A 7 p.m. Info.: 954-776-5092</p> <p>Big Cypress Shootout (Through 2/28) Billie Swamp Safari</p>	<p>27 Erev Purim</p> <p>Jimmy Buffett and the Coral Reefer Band BankAtlantic Center Tix.: www.bankatlanticcenter.com</p> <p>Fort Lauderdale Gun & Knife Show War Memorial Auditorium Info.: 954-828-5380</p>
<p>4 Riverwalk Tribute River House 5 to 8 p.m. Admission: \$150 Tix.: 954-468-1541</p> <p>BINGO Southpoint's North Lounge (3400 Galt Ocean Dr) 7 p.m. \$5/person for 3 boards</p>	<p>5 Jazz on the Square The Village Grille Commercial Blvd. & A1A 7 p.m.</p>	<p>6 Las Olas Art Fair - Part 2 (Through 3/7) Las Olas Blvd. Info.: 954-472-3755</p> <p>Walk for the Animals Huizenga Plaza, Registration: 8 a.m. Info.: 954-266-6817</p> <p>MIASF's 33rd Annual Waterway Cleanup 33 Cleanup Sites in Ft Lauderdale 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Info.: 954-524-2733</p>
<p>11 BINGO Southpoint's North Lounge (3400 Galt Ocean Dr) 7 p.m. \$5/person for 3 boards</p> <p>2nd on 2nd Thursdays Block Party 200 Block SW 2nd Street 5 to 9 p.m. Info.: 954-468-1541</p>	<p>12 Jazz on the Square The Village Grille Commercial Blvd. & A1A 7 p.m.</p> <p>Fairchild's 8th Annual (Through 3/14) International Orchid Festival 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.</p>	<p>13 Pridfest 2010 Jaco Pastorius Park Dixie Hwy/40th Ct Oakland Park Info.: 954-561-2020</p> <p>LBTS Craft Festival A1A & Commercial Blvd. Info.: 954-472-3755</p> <p>Fort Lauderdale Saint Patrick's Day Huizenga Plaza Info.: 954-828-5985</p>
<p>18 BINGO Southpoint's North Lounge (3400 Galt Ocean Dr) 7 p.m. \$5/person for 3 boards</p> <p>Billfish Tournament (Through 3/21) Fort Lauderdale Info.: 954-523-1004</p>	<p>19 Jazz on the Square The Village Grille Commercial Blvd. & A1A 7 p.m.</p> <p>Once Upon A Quilt Show War Memorial Auditorium Info.: 954-987-8827</p>	<p>20</p> <p>A Night of Literary Feasts Cocktail Reception & Book Signing Fundraiser for Ft. Lauderdale Libraries Hyatt Regency Pier 66 6 p.m. / Dinner 8 p.m. Admission: \$150/person</p>

UPCOMING EVENTS IN OUR AREA

March 25
Movie Night - Pretty in Pink
Fairchild Tropical Garden, 6 to 9 p.m.
Tix.: www.fairchildgarden.org

March 25
Disney On Ice: Worlds Of Fantasy
BankAtlantic Center
Tix.: www.bankatlanticcenter.com

March 26 - 29
Home Design & Remodeling Show
Miami Beach Convention Center
Info.: www.homeshow.net

April 3 - 4
Orchid/Bromeliad Show & Sale
Flamingo Gardens
Info.: www.flamingogardens.org

April 16 - 18
Ocean Fest Dive & Adventure Expo
Ft. Lauderdale Beach
Info.: www.oceanfest.com

April 18
Bon Jovi
BankAtlantic Center
Tix.: www.bankatlanticcenter.com



Thursday Nights
AT FAIRCHILD

A JOHN HUGHES PRODUCTION
pretty in pink



BROWARD MAYOR KEN KEECHL'S NEWSLETTER

** When Ken Keechl was battling to unseat incumbent Jim Scott in 2006, his platform read like a wish list. He would marry accountability to governance, environmental preservation to development and proclaimed "I will never vote for a tax increase." During his past three years as our District 4 Commissioner, he pursued these objectives with a vengeance.*

Keechl developed into the Commission's primary sparkplug for tax reduction. He is the main reason why Broward taxpayers no longer have to cough up \$380 million each year. Keechl enacted the developmental deterrent that currently protects Broward's few remaining large green spaces and before signing off on any county project, Keechl requires the incorporation of cures to associated adverse environmental impacts. Closer to home, were it not for Keechl, the Galt Mile Reading Center would be an empty storefront adorned by a "for rent" sign. He has also been intimately involved with overcoming the seemingly endless obstacles to beach renourishment.

On November 17, 2009, he was elected Mayor of Broward County by his peers on the Broward Board of County Commissioners. Since Broward's Mayor controls the Commission's agenda, Keechl's priorities will see considerably increased daylight. Shortly after being sworn in, Keechl said, "This upcoming year's budget will be our most difficult and challenging yet. In the past three fiscal years we have cut spending by \$385 million. We must continue to separate our wants from our needs and starting tomorrow, I will begin overseeing the 2011 budget process." Needless to say, he did.

Keechl inherited a litany of ongoing projects. Since economic development will enhance the tax base and alleviate the tax burden on homeowners, he is committed to maintaining the infrastructure necessary to insure that Broward's port and airport remain competitive. As such, he must balance making progress on the southern runway extension at Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport with impact mitigation for surrounding neighborhoods. He is charged with finding a funding solution for the scaled down Courthouse and supports continued expansion at Port Everglades.

*The Mayor is Broward's official representative, interfacing with State and Federal officials and agencies as well as the public. Keechl's wholesome political history should help rehabilitate some of the damage suffered by the County's image from recent ethics-related feeding frenzies. At the January 21st GMCA Advisory Board meeting, the Mayor outlined the ingredients required for an effective, enforceable ethics code. The challenge entails balancing actionable guidelines and realistic deterrents with the rights of constituents and issue groups, who could conceivably be precluded from constructive interaction with their own public officials. While staunchly supporting an ethics code, he warned that carelessly crafted provisions could disallow elected officials from participating in educational forums and traditional Town Hall meetings. He concluded with a reminder that if Broward County fails to approve ethics guidelines, the issue will automatically bounce back to the electorate as a ballot issue. Read on - [editor]**

UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE OF YOUR BROWARD COUNTY MAYOR

By Broward County Commissioner and Mayor Ken Keechl

It's been two months since my colleagues elected me to be the Mayor

of Broward County for 2010 and if the last 60 days are any indication of what's to come, I'm going to enjoy it. Residents are already asking me: "Ken, what's the difference between being a Broward County Mayor and a Broward County Commissioner?" Well, that's a great question; here's the short answer.

To understand the role of your Broward County Mayor, you have to understand how your County Commission operates under Broward County's Charter. Basically, we have what is known as a "weaker mayor" system of governance in Broward County. What does that mean? It's simple. Your County Mayor is elected by his or her colleagues for a one-year term and isn't elected by the people for a multiple year term (unlike Fort Lauderdale or Lighthouse Point, for example.) Your Broward County Mayor (while also serving as your County Commissioner) has the same one vote as each of his or her eight colleagues. Your County Mayor doesn't have veto power. As compared to other governmental structures, Broward's Mayor has less influence over the Commission.

Well, then, why have a Broward County Mayor in the first place? Here's the short answer.

Your Broward County Mayor has an important role. The Mayor appoints County Commissioners to numerous, important committees such as the Value Adjustment Board or the Broward Planning Council. He or she represents Broward County locally, statewide, nationally and internationally. He or she runs the Commission meetings. (By the way, if you get the chance to watch one of our meetings on television or the internet, you'll see that it's not so easy!) And in the case of natural disasters (think hurricanes), Broward County's Mayor declares a state of emergency and interfaces with the public, the Sheriff, the Governor and the President, if necessary.

But probably, on a fundamental basis, the most important responsibility of your Broward County Mayor is to decide what issues will be addressed by the Commission each week. In other words, the mayor sets the agenda during his or her tenure.

And if you've been listening to me over the last three years, then you already know my personal agenda. I strongly, strongly believe that lowering the property tax burden on our families — by operating Broward County more efficiently and eliminating waste — is the most important job of the Commission. It's my top priority. I have strenuously (and successfully) advocated this position during each of my first three years of my first term as your County Commissioner. Broward's annual budget is now \$385 million dollars smaller than it was when you elected me. And, as I predicted, the world didn't end! Now, as your Mayor (as well as your Broward County Commissioner), I'll advocate for additional measures and efficiencies to decrease Broward's annual budget even more.

After all, that's why you elected me in the first place.

My best to you and your families.
Broward County Commissioner and Mayor Ken Keechl
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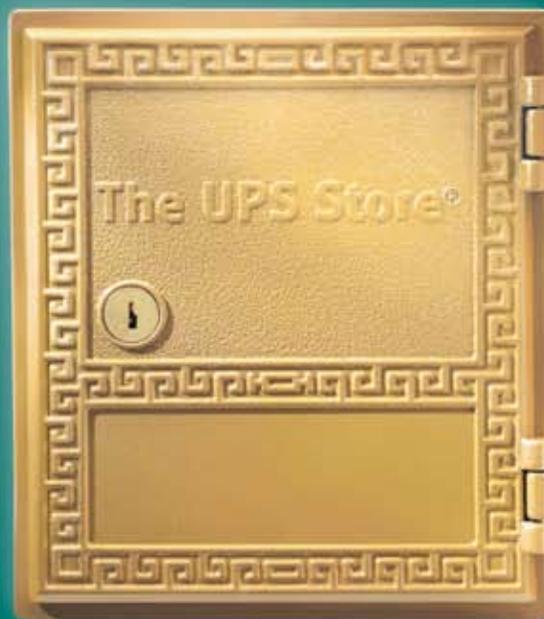
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