



The 2006 County Election is the most important event of the decade. If you don't believe it, read "Concurrency" on page three!

January 2006

IRNA ANNOUNCES FIRST MEMBER'S LUNCH

On Thursday February 2nd the IRNA's first member luncheon for members and guests will be held at Captain Hiram's in Sebastian. Everyone is invited. It will start at 12:00 and the cost will be \$10 per person. Nate McCullum, the Mayor of Sebastian and the Emergency Management Coordinator for the County, will be the principal speaker. The IRNA will also lay out its mission and its goals for 2006. Make your reservations by calling 772-794 IRNA (4762). Space is limited to 125, so reservations are essential.

THE IRNA NEEDS YOUR HELP

The Press Journal said it best in its New Years editorial. "If readers could tell elected officials on the Treasure Coast one thing in 2006, it would be to get a handle on growth- or kiss paradise goodbye." Our quality of life is being threatened and collectively we can do something about

it. The IRNA is the only voice representing the vast majority of Indian River County citizens. You need us and we need you. Make your 2006 contribution today, get involved and help us demand that the County Commissioners, Planning and Zoning Boards, Town and City governing boards

be responsible to the people and not to special interest groups favoring excessive growth. The IRNA has 5,200 members now and our goal is to have 8,000 by the end of the year. If we reach our goal we can make a difference where it really counts and that's at the ballot box.

Visit the IRNA web site — www.indianriverna.com for our mission, updates on issues, meeting schedules and everything going on in Indian River County. It's been updated and is packed with all the information necessary to be a well informed citizen.

THE IRNA DOES MAKE A DIFFERENCE

The IRNA led the fight against New Towns which are theoretically self contained population pockets in the west county. This unproven concept is a leapfrogging of the Urban Service Line and would be the fastest way for Indian River County to be instantly just like the southern counties we don't want to emulate. In 2005 the IRNA helped stop the expansions of 43rd and 27th avenues and Indian River Boulevard. We pushed strongly

for impact fees so that growth would help pay for some part of expansion, not 100% by tax payers, and we succeeded. We supported Joseph Paladin's Growth Awareness Task Force. Their efforts are improving the quality of development and reducing densities. We backed Nate McCullum and his winning ticket in the Sebastian elections where the key issue was annexation. That victory was very important to Sebastian and also to all of us

in the County.

In 2006 there will be critically important County Commissioner elections. Two seats will be open and it is imperative that IRNA supported candidates win. There will be new issues and many that continue to be fundamental to our slogan— *Dedicated to Quality Growth.* After reading these key issues you'll know why you need us and we need to work together.

EXCESSIVE GROWTH

Indian River County is growing twice as fast as the planners admit. The official County estimate for the population growth rate which determines all infrastructure planning was 2.6% from 2000 through 2005 and then slowing to 2.0% through 2010. There is adequate evidence, factual and empirical, to show a rate of 5% or more. In fact, according to the Wall Street Journal area building permits increased 85% last year. This is the highest among all metro areas tracked by Housing Economics, a publication of the National Association of Home Builders. The consequences of these miscalculations are overcrowded roads, beaches, parks, schools, jails, ever higher taxes, more harm to the environment and the potential for shortages of water and sewage facilities.

IS THE COUNTY BUILDING BOOM A BUBBLE?

In the book "Cities-Ranked & Rated" Vero Beach was the only Florida city with a top ten designation for best small cities. With over 80% of the County having a Vero Beach postal address it's no wonder that we have been discovered. When the County planners say our growth rate will slow they must not be aware of the 30 million baby boomers and the marketing power of national builders and developers.

BACKLOG OF APPROVED CONSTRUCTION

The County now admits to 31,000 (up from 14,000) units that are under construction or in various stages of approval. Ralph King has documented over 57,000 and that would increase housing units by over 80%. How can the planners predict a slow down in population when the applications and approvals are exploding? Are they assuming developers are in a rush to get approvals and then intend to sit on them for 20 years? That doesn't make sense.

DOES GROWTH PAY FOR ITSELF?

The Gulf Coast Conservancy reports that there have been over 700 studies analyzing the impact of growth on communities. The results have been almost unanimous, the cost of growth has been greater than the revenues produced.

"County taxpayers are providing a substantial subsidy to sellers of land, private contractors and individual homeowners in order to allow (residential) development", concluded a Palm Beach County study. Separately, Hillsborough County estimates that growth costs \$1.53 for every \$1.00 of new taxes and Lake County estimates \$1.56. Importantly, a Dade County study showed that growth outside the USL is even more expense for tax payers than inside the USL.

CONCURRENCY

It seems simple. State law requires that no new development may be approved if the level of service of the impacted roads would be reduced below acceptable levels. Thus, each time a development is approved, there must be a calculated number of trips that will be generated and on which roads. Fairly simple, except in making the required calculation, Indian River County does not factor in the demand on the roads from projects previously approved that are in advanced stages of development but that don't yet have building permits. The catch 22 for builders and developers is that they may spend many millions preparing an approved development and may get turned down for a building permit because roads are inadequate. It's happening and law suits are being filed!

Also totally ignored by the County in calculating concurrency is the massive amount of development just South of the County line in St. Lucie County. The result of the thousands of new houses and high rises is a clogging of Indian River County roads now and it is only going to get worse.

To add fuel to the fire the County road congestion is a much worse problem than has previously been acknowledged. In a December 20, 2005 report the County lists 64 road segments that are at 80% to over 100% of capacity. The shocking part of the report is that only 19 of these are scheduled for widening. The remaining 45 have no schedule for widening and, of these seven are over 100% of capacity right now!

What is needed, as the IRNA and others have advocated, is for the County to change course, stop approving new projects, make necessary changes to the Comprehensive Plan and determine which roads need expanding and at what cost. We must also meet the needs of already approved projects. The County refuses to do this because it would be admitting they have been wrong. Instead, they have responded by fudging the numbers and procedures. In the last year the County has:

- Accepted level of service D on all roads when it was previously C.
- Determined that new roads need not be in place when a project is occupied, but only that the roads be started within three years.
- The trip generation rate for Waterway Village, the largest development in the County, was approved with little more than half the generation rate used for other large scale projects.
- Just last month the County reduced the time that we calculate vehicles on major roads take to go from a stop at a light to driving speed from three seconds to two and one half. Thus, theoretically and magically increasing road capacity by 10%.

IRNA NEIGHBORHOOD LIST

Arbor Trace	Orange Heights
Baytree	Orchid Island
Bent Pine	Park Shores
Bermuda Bay	Pebble Bay
Cache Cay	Pebble Beach Villas
Castaway Cove	Pelican Pointe of Sebastian
Central Beach	Peppertree
Citrus Springs	Pointe West
Cypress Lake	Regency Park
Diamond Lakes	Riomar
Dixie Heights	Riomar Sands
Estuary	River Oak Estates
Fairlane Harbour	Riverside at Island Club
Forest Lake	Riverwind
Fountains	Robles del mar
Grand Harbor	Sanctuary
Hammock Lakes	Sawyer Park
Indian River Club	Seaforest
Indian Trails	Seagrove Oceanside
John's Island	Seagrove West
Kenwood Village	Sea Oaks
Laurels	Sea Watch
Laurelwood	Sebastian Highlands
Marbrisa	Shores
Moorings	Smugglers Cove
Oak Chase	Stonebridge Sub
Ocean Colony	Timber Ridge
Ocean Pearl	Vero Isles
Old Orchid	Vero Lake Estates
Old Sugar Mill Estates	Village Green

Bold text indicates New Neighborhoods since summer 2005

THE URBAN SERVICE LINE THREAT

The Urban Service Line (USL) is roughly 58th avenue except for the Route 60 corridor. Inside (East of) the USL the County must provide water, sewage, parks, roads and other amenities and zoning allows up to six homes or ten condominiums per acre. Outside (West of) the USL the County provides minimum services and zoning is one unit per five, ten or twenty acres and three story restrictions also apply. County Commissioner Gary Wheeler proposed that no change could be made to the USL or current zoning and height restrictions without voter approval. His reasoning is simple, inside the USL there is enough room to accommodate 300,000 people versus 130,000 now. That is more than enough for many years of growth and secondly, why leave this all important decision open to political pressures. It's similar to the Vero Beach ordinance that requires voter approval to exceed three stories. Vero Beach's desirability is defined by this ordinance and it will never be challenged. The USL should be the County's Maginot Line for controlled growth. Any County Commissioner, city council member or board member in our towns that believes this issue doesn't impact its constituents better wake up because voters aren't stupid. Those who oppose Wheeler say the County Commissioners represent the people and will make rational decisions. That's true on most decisions but the County School Board has proven that political pressure should not be ignored and just like in Vero Beach landmark decisions are best left to the voters.

IRNA Executive Officers

John Higgs, Chairman
Bob Pickett, President

THE ANNEXATION THREAT

Under Florida law, a municipality has the right to annex contiguous property under certain circumstances. Once done the county loses control over zoning, density and height controls in the annexed property. As an example, Fellsmere could annex much of the property outside the USL and permit high rise development. It has annexed 3,700 acres and has permitted one building that exceeds County height restrictions so this is not mere idle speculation. Fellsmere has also changed the zoning in the property it annexed from one unit per 10 acres to three per acre, thus permitting up to 11,000 units where only 370 were possible before. Moreover the County loses tax revenue in annexation and can be saddled with infrastructure costs. The Wheeler USL initiative would restrict any development in newly annexed property to those permitted under County law at the time of the annexation, thus nicely balancing the rights of municipalities with those of the residents of the County anxious to preserve their quality of life.

THE OPPOSITION

The pro growth forces are led by the Concerned Citizens for the future of Indian River County and the Chamber of Commerce (partially funded by County tax dollars). They claim to have noble goals and don't necessarily want to have a high profile but on every controversy and issue they are opposed to the IRNA position. They are well financed and organized and are determined to capitalize on the desirability of the County for their own commercial benefit and at our expense.

**MAKE YOUR
IRNA CONTRIBUTION TODAY!
USE THE ENCLOSED
PREPAID ENVELOPE.
WE NEED YOUR HELP.**