

NEWSLETTER#37

Most of you that sold your lot quit taking the newsletter but to all the rest of you be glad you didn't sell because the price is starting to go up thanks to Chuck Svirik. He is doing this by creating a market for the lots by building and selling homes on some of the lots he purchased. Many are lots that the original owners still own but haven't paid the taxes on for years. Many of the owners have moved without sending the Hendry or Glades County Tax Appraiser your new address. In Hendry County the address is:

Glades County is:

**Hendry County Tax Appraiser
P.O. Box 1840
LaBelle, FL 33975
Phone 1-863-675-5270**

**Glades County Tax Appraiser
P.O. Box 1106
Moore Haven, FL 33471
Phone 1-863-946-6025**

This is 2004 and I am still amazed at something that happened this morning at our meeting of the Barron Water Control District. I have been on that board over 30 years now and Chairman for the past many years. A young man came into the meeting representing one of the large major landowners and sat down without taking his cap off. Now I was raised to always remove your hat when entering a building so it was a shock to me when he did not. I just mentioned it to him and he took his cap off after a very sincere apology. The two other board members said at the end of the meeting that they agreed with me and would have backed me in whatever I intended to do. My intention was to leave the meeting room and if either one of them followed it wouldn't leave a quorum.

My on going fuss with the County because of the way Lester Baird, the County Administrator, has been treating the bonding issue on the Banyan Village water line installation. For over two months, Jennifer the young (Hendry County Chief Financial Officer) has failed to supply the bonding company with the information needed to proceed with the bonding analysis. Lester told me earlier this week that he had asked Jennifer to get the figures to him and he would contact the bonding person and ask them to come and get the figures so they could start their study which will take about two weeks. To my simple brain this means we will be lucky to have the results by our scheduled April 12 meeting.

As far as I am concerned the county is at it again. Postpone the installation of the water lines to Banyan Village as long as possible with no regard to the cost to the lot owners in Banyan Village. Yet


when I talk to the County Administrator or any of the County Commissioners most seem to feel everything is moving along ok.

My e-mail address has changed to impact@strato.net but the mailing address is the same P.O. Box 3028, LaBelle, FL 33975. The phone # IS STILL 863-675-0215 AND THE FAX # IS 863-675-6510.

According to the last census 64% of all residents in Hendry County live in mobile homes. With Florida having a \$25,000 homestead exemption (the first \$25,000 of taxable value is tax exempt) most of these people don't pay any taxes but use more of the county services (schools, roads, trash pick-up, social services etc.). This has always been a problem but until the last few years the employers of most of these people were the big land owners and through their employees controlled the votes needed to get change.

Now with hundreds of new people moving into Florida every day we aren't as much of an agricultural economy as we once were. Hendry County is now looked at, by the Counties to the west, as an area with very cheap real estate prices and no impact fees. We are also about to get a new 4 lane highway in SR 80. The next major transportation project by the state is already on the drawing board because the Governor moved it up by several years. That is the widening of SR 80 to 4 lanes east of LaBelle to Highway 27 because it is only one of two west to east hurricane evacuation routes. The other is Interstate 75 south of Naples where it goes from a North to South Highway to a West to East Highway or hurricane evacuation route.

Several of us have for years tried to get the county to hire a County Planner and a full time county attorney only to be told we can't afford either. Now with the developers swarming over Hendry and Glades counties, looking for land to build on, it's almost too late to do anything. At best we can try and control the density by zoning. We were finally able to get the County to hire an Impact expert from the University of Florida to do a study to see if the county needed impact fees and if so how much. He presented his study several weeks ago and the Commissioners will vote on the amount at the next meeting. At least one of the Commissioners asked the administrator to prepare the paperwork for 100%, 75%, 50% or 25% of the impact fee recommended by the PHD paid to do the study.

**It just makes me sick to think about it. Best Regards,
Harold **