

NAVARRE: Home Depot coming soon

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will be the traffic problems dealing with Hwy. 98, but they are dealing with that. There will be a couple out parcels with that store, too – usually they bring in a national chain restaurant,” Dubois told the seminar crowd.

■ A Hampton Inn with 110 rooms is being added to the Cayo Grande apartment complex.

“That was always going to be a three phase project,” Dubois said. “They always told us the final phase would be a Hampton Inn, and that is finally underway. It is scheduled to open late this year.”

■ The Reserve apartments in Navarre are being converted to condo units, Dubois said.

■ Navarre Town Center development has run into problems.

“The county commission’s idea was to put in the infrastructure and get the money back through property taxes. But the consultants they hired brought back some cost figures last month that were pretty

stout, so they told them to go sharpen their pencils. They are waiting to see what Tallahassee does on this property tax cut. The Navarre Town Center was never meant to be developed overnight anyway, but the development may be on hold for a while,” Dubois said.

■ An assisted living senior is on the drawing board for the 17 acres east of St. Sylvester’s Catholic Church on Hwy. 98, Dubois said. “That is in conceptual stages right now,” he said. “But they have been in several times talking with us and it looks right now, if things keep progressing as planned, that by the end of the year they should be starting on that project. It will be an assisted living center with a medical park, and some retail stores.”

■ A Family Entertainment Center is being proposed Soundside off Hwy. 98 by the same developer as the assisted living center.

“That is only in the conceptual planning stage right now, too,” Dubois said. “But this same developers did an entertainment center in Milton a few

years ago like the one they are talking about in Navarre – and the Milton center has a bowling alley, a fitness center, and such. But that would come after they get the assisted living center off the ground.”

■ Next to Publix in Navarre, on 33 acres on Hwy. 98, an Atlanta developer is still working on some kind of development.

“Originally it was supposed to be like the Boardwalk of Navarre concept, but it has now migrated into an all retail center, into more of a Destin Commons kind of place,” Dubois said. “The developer came to see us recently with some conceptual designs and it looks like it would be a two-phase project, with a bog box store as the anchor and another parcel or two with smaller national chain stores and/or restaurants. It will reach from edge of Publix property on Hwy. 98 all the way over to Hwy. 87.”

On Navarre Beach Dubois said they have heard “nothing at all from Holiday Inn people, as to whether they are going to

rebuild or sell or what”. But Port of Navarre, east of the foot of Navarre Bridge, was supposed to be the ‘big gorilla’ on the beach. He said that development was supposed to include a hotel, retail shops and a marina.

“But we have not heard a thing from them in a year, and if they come back to us they will need to start all over for their permits. But just last week we had someone come in and tell us that Port of Navarre is not dead yet, so maybe a Phoenix will yet rise from the sand to bring a new development on that parcel,” he said.

Dubois said there are many other projects being designed around the county, like more “affordable housing” for Navarre, to a large golf course just north of Berryhill Road near Pace, eventually surrounded by homes – between 6,000 to 10,000 homes when finally complete.

“That is our 800-pound gorilla right now in the county,” Dubois said. “That will take more permits than just county. It has to go the the state level, it is so big.”

Calendar @ Events

Thursday, June 21

Learn to Read tutoring workshop, today ant June 28, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Town and Country Plaza to help train volunteers to help other adults learn to read and write. Call 432-4347 for details.

AFCEA Meeting, 11:30 a.m., IHOP Restaurant, corner of Navy and Barrancas Ave., Pensacola. For more information, please email Allan Alderman at allan.alderman@gdit.com. Please send an RSVP to allan.alderman@gdit.com.

Friday, June 22

Teen Community Emergency Response Team Program's train-the-trainer course June 20-22. Held at the Emergency Operations Center located at 4499 Pine Forest Road, Milton from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Details: 983-4606.

The Santa Rosa Arts and Culture Foundation (SRACF)

will hold its annual meeting at the Dragonfly Gallery, 5188 Escambia Street in historic downtown Milton. The meeting and reception will be from 5 until 7 p.m.

SRACF will present the 2007 grants recipients during the event. Also, treasurer’s and committee reports will be given. For more information visit www.santarosaarts.org.

Saturday, June 23

No meetings as of press time.

Sunday, June 24

No meetings as of press time.

Monday, June 25

Santa Rosa County Commission Committee Meeting, 9 a.m., Commissioner’s Board Room, 6495 Caroline Street, Milton

A five week **“Boat Smart” safe boating course** will be conducted from Monday,

June 25 to Monday, July 23 from 5:30 to 7:30pm at the University of West Florida Coombs Campus in Fort Walton Beach. The course is being taught as a part of the UWF Continuing Education program, and boat ownership is not required. Registration is available on-line through the UWF Continuing Education site. The cost of the course is \$45. For further information, please telephone 850-315-0686 or visit the website www.fwsp.com.

Tuesday, June 26

Board of Adjustments, 6:30 p.m., Gulf Breeze City Hall, 1070 Shoreline Drive, Gulf Breeze

Gulf Breeze Dog Lovers beginning dog obedience class

, 6:30pm, Shoreline Dog Park. The cost is \$35.00 for Gulf Breeze Dog Lover’s members and \$50. for others for the six weeks of classes. Proof of vaccination is required for the first class. Registration is by check. Call Carolyn at 850-934-5834 by Friday, June 22nd or Gordon Gibson after that date at 850-934 4744.

Wednesday, June 27

Santa Rosa Island Authority Committee Meeting, 5 p.m., SRIA Administrative Office, 1 Via De Luna, Pensacola Beach

Thursday, June 28

Santa Rosa County Commission Regular Meeting, 9 a.m., Commissioner’s Board Room, 6495 Caroline Street, Milton

School Board Meeting, 10 a.m., School District Administrative Offices, 5086 Canal Street, Milton

FORECLOSURES: Homeowners have 24 hours

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seen a spike in real estate sales, especially since interest rates are rising.

“It’s six and a half percent, and it’s still good, but people are starting to act now, during the window of opportunity while the rates are still low,” Waghalter said.

Part of Watkins’ job entails answering question from the people whose homes are being

“[The interest rate] is six and a half percent, and it’s still good, but people are starting to act now, during the window of opportunity while the rates are still low.”

– Sherlyn Waghalter
Re/Max on the Coast

foreclosed, but she said there’s nothing she can do to help them.

“The most I can do is tell them that it’s a process you can go through,” Watkins said.

After the homeowner has exhausted all efforts to pay the mortgage, a writ of possession is issued, giving the homeowner 24 hours to vacate the property.

If they don’t vacate, an officer from the Santa Rosa Sheriff’s office pays the homeowner a visit.

“It’s not usually negative,” said Janice Platt, civil division supervisor of the Sheriff’s office. However, the situation can be heartwrenching.

“It is sad. You have people who have been buying a home for 14 years, let’s say, and now they’ve lost it for some reason.”

TOLL: Increase not expected to impact traffic

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for the structure is over \$149 million, adding that the authority was paying only interest for the first couple of years the toll facility was in operation.

Despite the cost, none of the construction was paid for with tax dollars. Individuals who purchased bonds actually paid for the project’s construction, Breeding said.

“In 30 years, we will finally pay back the [original] \$95 million,” Breeding said of the bridge, which was first opened to traffic in 1999.

The authority makes a payment of close to \$5 million every six months. According to numbers available on the authority’s website, the toll facility collected just over \$5 million last year. Breeding said the authority generates additional revenue from interest on its reserves and renting space for utilities such as coaxial cable.

Breeding said the authority has paid over \$2 million in interest and close to \$480,000 toward the construction cost as of July 1 of 2006.

“Most of it has gone toward interest,” Breeding said. “We

Garcon Point Bridge Toll schedule as of July 1:

Two axles	.....	\$3.50
Three axles	.....	\$7
Four axles	.....	\$10.50
Five axles	.....	\$14
Six axles	.....	\$17.50

couldn’t pay the bond holders at first. We went four of five years before we could pay the complete [bi-annual \$5 million] payment.”

Breeding added that the State of Florida and the Bank of New York handle all financial transactions and records.

The last toll increase was from \$2.50 to \$3 in 2004. An official from URS Corporation feels this year’s increase will not have a negative impact on bridge traffic.

“With the 20 percent increase in toll [in 2004], revenue productivity has been good: toll revenue in the fiscal year ended June 30,2005 (FY 2005) amounted to \$4.6 million, up 28 percent from the \$3.6 million collected in FY 2004. This corresponds to a 1.2 percent increase in traffic despite the toll increase,” URS Vice

President Arthur Goldberg wrote in a letter posted on the authority’s website.

Despite the increased toll, Breeding and Gulf Breeze Mayor Lane Gilchrist believe the bridge is worth the money for commercial traffic.

“With the price of gas being what it is commercial people can figure out that saving a few miles may be worth it,” Gilchrist said. “\$3.50 is almost the price of gas now.”

Breeding said the toll for vehicles with three axles will increase from \$6 to \$7, four axle tolls will increase from \$9 to \$10.50, five axle tolls will increase from \$12 to \$14 and six axle tolls will increase from \$15

to \$17.50.

“In my opinion, the effect of the toll increase on Garcon Point bridge will be minimal,” said Santa Rosa County Commissioner John Broxson. “Those who use the bridge everyday would be hard pressed to justify the fuel costs for taking an alternative route. Therefore, there should be no significant change in south end traffic patterns. Fortunately or unfortunately toll roads in Florida will continue to be an extremely viable alternative. In other areas of the country motorists pay very high toll rates in order to save time and experience greater efficiencies and safety in travel.”

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mayor@ci.gulf-breeze.fl.us

BEVERLY ZIMMERN
(850) 932-4717
bzimmern@ci.gulf-breeze.fl.us

CARL HOFFMAN
(850) 932-4948
choffman@ci.gulf-breeze.fl.us

J.B. SCHLUTER
(850) 232-0939
jschluter@ci.gulf-breeze.fl.us

RICHARD FULFORD
(850) 932-5135
rfulford@co.gulf-breeze.fl.us

SANTA ROSA COUNTY COMMISSION
6495 Caroline Street, Milton, FL 32570; (850) 932-1340 or 983-1877

JOHN BROXSON, Dist. 5
(850) 932-2617
comm-broxson@co.santa-rosa.fl.us

GORDON GOODIN, Dist. 4
(850) 939-1274
comm-goodin@co.santa-rosa.fl.us

DON SALTER, Dist.3
(850) 983-1877
comm-Salter@co.santa-rosa.fl.us

BOB COLE, Dist. 2
(850) 983-1877
comm-cole@co.santa-rosa.fl.us

TOM STEWART, Dist. 1
(850) 983-1877
comm-stewart@co.santa-rosa.fl.us

SANTA ROSA COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT
5086 Canal St., Milton, FL 32570; (850) 983-5000

ED GRAY III, Dist. 5
(850) 932-6287

JOANN J. SIMPSON, Dist.4
(850) 994-5446

DIANE COLEMAN, Dist. 3
(850) 939-5538

HUGH WINKLES, Dist. 2
(850) 623-6299

DIANE SCOTT, Dist. 1
(850) 623-0413

FLORIDA STATE REPRESENTATIVES

GREG EVERS (R)
District Office: 5424 Willing St., Milton, FL 32570
(850) 983-5550
greg.evers@myfloridahouse.gov

DAVE MURZIN (R)
District Office: Suite 22B, 7100 Plantation Rd., Ste. 3, Pensacola, FL 32504
(850) 494-7330

C.V. “CLAY” FORD (R)
District Office: 1804 W. Garden St., Pensacola, FL 32501-4418
(850) 595-5550

RAY SANSOM (R)
District Office: 348 SW Miracle Strip Pkwy., Bldg. C, Ste. 12, Fort Walton Beach, FL 32548-5257
(850) 833-9328

FLORIDA STATE SENATOR

DON GAETZ (R)
District Office: 217 Miracle Strip Pkwy., Fort Walton Beach, FL 32548
(850) 897-5747
SunCom 277-5009
don.gaetz.web@flsenate.gov

U.S. REPRESENTATIVE

JEFF MILLER (R)
Pensacola Office: 4300 Bayou Blvd. Ste. 17C, Pensacola, FL 32503
(850) 479-1183
Toll Free: (866) 367-1614

U.S. SENATORS

Senator MEL MARTINEZ (R)
315 E. Robinson St., Landmark Center 1, Ste. 475, Orlando, FL 32801
(407) 254-2573

Senator NELSON, BILL (D)
US Court House Annex, 111 N. Adams St., Tallahassee, FL 32301
(850) 942-8415