



## Los Angeles and San Francisco Crack Down on New Billboards

### Los Angeles Stops New Billboard Construction (Maybe)

The City of Los Angeles is the latest major city to take a stand for scenic beauty, stopping new billboard construction and imposing high annual inspection fees. However, the Council also passed a measure that permits the creation of sign districts, where property owners could petition the city to create their own rules for billboards.

On April 30, the City Council approved a measure to stop new billboard construction citywide. Council Members Jack Weiss and Cindy Miscikowski led the effort. The next day, the Council passed a follow-up ordinance allowing 75 percent of property owners in a given zoning district or council district to create "sign districts," with their own billboard rules that may or may not honor the prohibition or other city laws.

Local anti-billboard activist Gerald Silver characterized the follow-up ordinance as a giant loophole and urged residents to contact their council members with the message "No deals, no exchanges, no Special Use Districts (SUD's) in my district!"

In addition to these measures, the Los Angeles City Council imposed new inspection fees to fight the problem of illegal billboards. Councilman Weiss, noted that "No one seems to know how extensive the problem is, where the billboards are, or whether they have permits. The lack of an inventory of legal billboards has made it very difficult for law enforcement authorities to determine which billboards are illegal and warrant prosecution." To provide funds to fight the problem, the new law requires all billboards to pay an annual \$477 fee.

City Council members and staff are also working with state officials on legislation to remove the five-year statute of limitations on removing illegal signs and to expand the amortization powers of California municipalities. City officials are evaluating the feasibility of a referendum aimed at imposing taxes on billboard income which they would use to pay for the removal of nonconforming billboards.

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Billboards obscure many of San Francisco's famous sites, including the Bay Bridge.





# Federal Legislative Update

## TEA-21 Reauthorization

Scenic America was a key player in the original coalition that secured the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA) and its successor, the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) in 1998. ISTEA and TEA-21 established the National Scenic Byways Program, created the transportation enhancements program to help communities fund improvements ranging from billboard removal to bike and pedestrian facilities, and established new planning, public involvement, and environmental requirements for transportation projects.

With TEA-21 scheduled for reauthorization in 2003, Scenic America is again heavily engaged in efforts to make the next transportation bill (dubbed "TEA-3") the best it can be. We are working closely with the Surface Transportation Policy Project (STPP) and other organizations on reauthorization. Scenic America has also requested to testify at one of the 11 Senate hearings on TEA-3 in late summer.

## Community Character Act

On April 25, 2002, the Senate Environmental and Public Works Committee recommended pas-

sage of Senate Bill 975, the Community Character Act.

The Act would authorize up to \$50 million per year in grants to state, tribal, and local governments to help them update and improve their land use plans. Among the criteria for awarding grants is that the proposed plans "...to the maximum extent practicable... enhance community character and conserve historic, scenic, natural and cultural resources." Scenic America helped Senator Lincoln Chafee's staff draft the original version of the bill in 2001.

## The Farm Bill

The recently passed 2002 Farm Bill includes a dramatic increase in funding for the Farmland Protection Program (from \$53.4 million to \$985 million), a new two billion dollar incentive payment program for maintaining and increasing land stewardship practices, and substantial increases for other programs such as the Wetlands Reserve Program and the Environmental Quality Incentives Program. With an increase in conservation easements made possible under the bill there will be additional opportunities to include scenic protection as well. ■

# Keeping America Beautiful!

Every gift, large or small, helps Scenic America empower communities to protect the natural beauty and distinctive community character. There are many ways to make a contribution to the work we do fighting billboard blight, improving the scenic byways program, or collecting innovative scenic conservation solutions. Your cash gifts (check, credit card, stock gifts) or special gifts (deferred or planned giving) provide the resources we need to keep America beautiful.

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## BILLBOARDS

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After the City acted on its prohibition, Los Angeles County noted a flood of new permit applications. Reflecting the strength of the anti-billboard movement, the County immediately implemented a 45-day moratorium on new billboard construction which activists are working to make permanent.

Scenic America provided technical assistance to the city including guidance on drafting the prohibition. Tom Pelikan, Director of Policy is currently working with the city to gather information on billboard permit and inspection fees nationwide.

## San Francisco Disciplines Billboard Blight

On March 5, 2002, 79 percent of San Franciscans voted in favor of Measure G, an initiative led by San Francisco Beautiful, to cap the number of billboards citywide. Measure G specifically requires billboard companies to remove signs as large or larger than ones they propose to erect, limits relocation of signs, and requires permits for new signs to go through an open and thorough public special exception process.

*San Francisco Beautiful* did an outstanding job in rallying support for the measure. Senator Diane Feinstein was an honorary chair of the campaign, as were other city luminaries. Every newspaper in the Bay Area and several radio stations ran stories about the measure.

Scenic America provided some guidance on drafting the measure. While Scenic America strongly recommends against cap and replace laws if there is any chance of a complete prohibition on new billboards, we helped to ensure that Measure G was well-written and will prevent the worst consequences of many cap and replace measures. ■



# Federal Highway Administration Names 36 New National Scenic Byways and All-American Roads

## **2002 ALL-AMERICAN ROADS**

- † Historic National Road (IL, IN, MD, OH, PA & WV)
- † Wilderness Road Heritage Highway (KY)
- † Creole Nature Trail (LA)
- † North Shore Scenic Drive (MN)
- † Lakes to Locks Passage, The Great Northeast Journey (NY)
- † Pacific Coast Scenic Byway (OR)
- † Volcanic Legacy Scenic Byway (CA & OR)
- † Utah's Scenic Byway 12 (UT)
- † Beartooth Scenic Byway (MT & WY)

## **2002 NATIONAL SCENIC BYWAYS**

- † Alaska's Marine Highway (AK)
- † Glenn Highway (AK)
- † Great River Road (AR, IL, IO, MN & WI)
- † Arroyo Seco Scenic Byway (CA)
- † Death Valley Scenic Byway (CA)
- † Dinosaur Diamond Prehistoric Highway (CO & UT)
- † A1A Scenic and Historic Coastal Highway (FL)
- † Indian River Lagoon Scenic Highway (FL)
- † Northwest Passage Scenic Byway (ID)
- † Payette River Scenic Byway (ID)
- † Pend Oreille Scenic Byway (ID)
- † Country Music Highway (KY)
- † Red River Gorge Scenic Byway (KY)
- † Chesapeake Country Scenic Byway (MD)
- † Woodward Avenue (MI)
- † Historic Bluff Country Scenic Byway (MN)
- † Minnesota River Valley Scenic Byway (MN)
- † Little Dixie Highway of the Great River Road (MO)
- † Sheyenne River Valley Scenic Byway (ND)
- † Amish Country (OH)
- † Rogue-Umpqua Scenic Byway (OR)
- † Logan Canyon Scenic Byway (UT)

On Thursday June 13, 2002 the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) announced 23 new National Scenic Byways and 13 All-American Roads for a total of 119 roads that feature unique scenic, archaeological, cultural, historical, natural, and recreational qualities. Several of the designations were extensions of current National Scenic Byways or upgrades to All-American road status.

All-American Roads, the higher designation, like Montana's Beartooth Scenic Byway, provide visitors with a unique driving experience and are considered destinations unto themselves.

National Scenic Byways are exceptional roads through areas that exemplify regional characteristics. They possess distinctive scenic, cultural, historic, natural or other qualities unique among neighboring states.

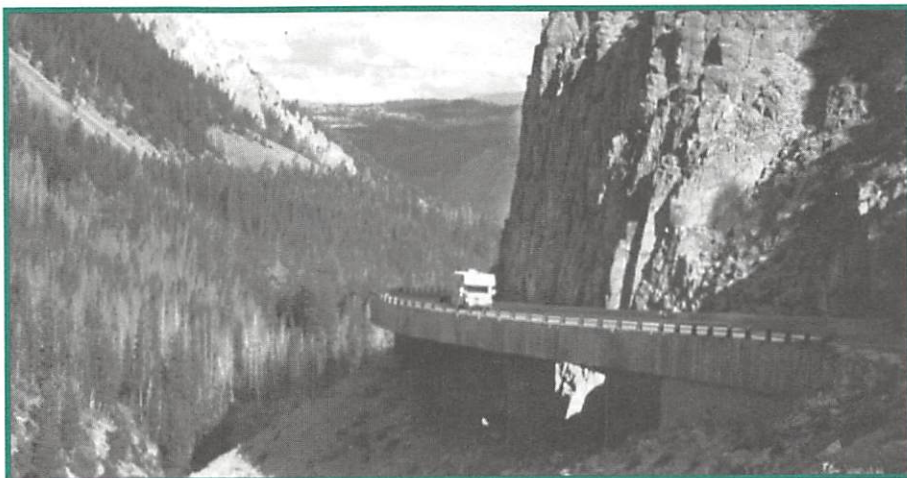
The National Scenic Byways Program was created to preserve and

protect the nation's scenic roads and, at the same time, promote tourism and economic development. Participation in the program is voluntary and emphasizes local involvement.

Congress established The National Scenic Byways program in 1991 as part of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) and increased the program's funding in 1996 under the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21). Scenic America helped secure the National Scenic Byways program, and is currently working with many organizations to improve the program in the upcoming reauthorization of TEA-21.

For more information on The National Scenic Byways program, and how to begin the designation process of a road in your community, call the America's Byways Resource Center at 1-800-4BYWAYS (1-800-429-9297), or visit their website at [www.byways.org](http://www.byways.org).

**Beartooth Scenic Byway All-American Road, MT**





# THE BIG Picture

BY MEG MAGUIRE, PRESIDENT

This issue of Viewpoints illustrates the power of America the Beautiful to motivate people to action. Through victory, defeat and compromise our activists are taking on those who would destroy natural beauty and community character. Time and action are surely our teachers. We have made mistakes and learned from them, and made more mistakes and learned anew. One of the central things we have learned is that building a scenic conservation movement in states and local communities can effectively challenge those who have little regard for our public realm. Over the past two years we have hammered out a better advocacy structure with our 10 affiliates and 15 associates to be more effective on sign control, cell tower siting, road design, scenic byways planning, corporate franchise design, under-grounding utility lines and other scenic issues.

Our Affiliate Workshop in April brought together 21 "scenic" representatives, board and staff to share stories, to learn more about development and fundraising, and to explore how communities and states can strengthen planning laws to achieve a better quality of life. There is no substitute for this annual face-to-face workshop to inspire our own community to keep the faith, to celebrate victories, to rise from defeat and move on to new gains.

At the end of May, I attended a retreat on movement building with



## Building a Movement for Scenic Conservation

There is no tactical theory so neat that a revolutionary struggle for a share of power can be won merely by pressing a row of buttons. Human beings with all their faults and strengths constitute the mechanism of a social movement. They must make mistakes and learn from them, make more mistakes and learn anew. They must taste defeat as well as success, and discover how to live with each other. Time and action are teachers.

-Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., 1963

directors of other environmental groups. We looked at three challenges every organization faces in planning for the future: 1) framing our message to turn people on, not off; 2) reaching out to a diverse American population; and 3) collaborating among national, state and local organizations. Some large organizations operate only at the national level with various ad hoc local partners; others have chapters or independent affiliates. I am pleased that we are in the latter category.

Collaboration between national and statewide organizations is routine within the Scenic America "family." Our California Scenic Conservation Initiative with Scenic California promises to yield some impressive results. Our support of legislative issues in Colorado, Florida, Michigan, Texas, Georgia, and elsewhere lends national support to a wide variety of issues. Our twice-a-week *Scenic News* digest shows how scenic issues are playing out around the country, even in communities where we have no contacts.

In some ways our movement is ahead of the game, with an excellent model and precedents of collaboration in place. Together we're on the go and gaining momentum.

Every day I marvel at how much a few people can accomplish when they organize to make change. For all of you who work year after year to make America the Beautiful a reality, thank you for inspiring others to stay the course. ■

### Corrections:

A careful reader pointed out several inaccuracies in our Winter 2002 Viewpoints which we want to correct. 1) My column should have read: "Or will we drill on 2000 acres spread over a 1.5 million acre area within the 19.5 million acre Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.....;" 2) the article on the Marsh Islands of Coastal Georgia, a 2001 Last Chance Landscape, should have said "river otter," not "sea otter."



# California's Highway 99: Main Street or Back Alley?

**H**ighway 99, from Los Angeles to Sacramento, runs through California's Great Central Valley. The vast Central Valley is well known for scenic agricultural landscapes and small, vibrant urban communities. However California's rapidly growing population is pushing development into the Valley, threatening the region's scenic, rural, and cultural resources. Now there is pressure to clean up Highway 99's numerous billboards, junkyards, housing developments, and strip malls.

Through the Packard Foundation's Conserving California Landscapes Initiative, Scenic America and Scenic California are building on local efforts

stop thinking of the all important road as a back alley and develop pride in Highway 99 as the Valley's Main Street."

To identify and prioritize scenic conservation opportunities along Highway 99 Scenic California, Project Manager Sheila Brady is developing an extensive scenic resources inventory and Geographic Information System (GIS) map database for the 250-mile long corridor. Among the problems identified so far from Scenic California's survey are:

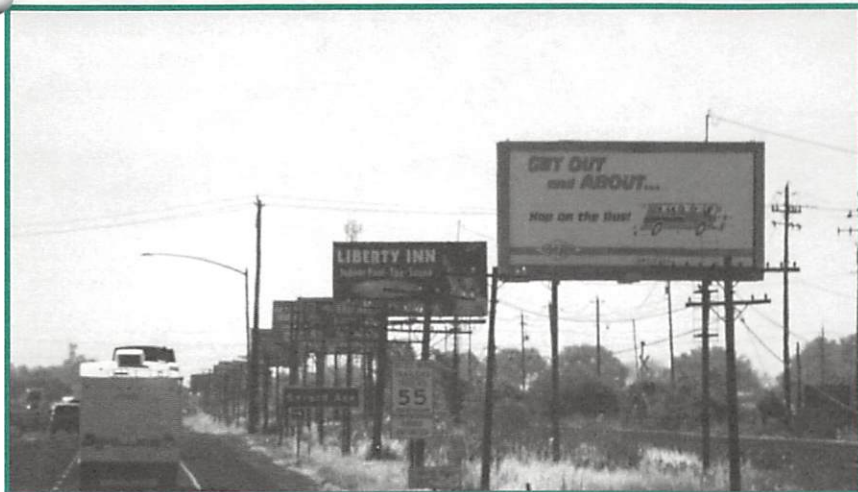
- Poor air quality that prohibits motorists from seeing the Sierra Nevada or Diablo ranges;
- Little screening to shield views of junkyards, strip malls, and other com-

mercial development;

- Large numbers of billboards and giant on-premise signs;
- Wireless telecommunications tower proliferation;
- Excessive litter;
- Inadequate roadside landscaping;
- Unimaginative overpasses, safety barriers, and exits;
- Decaying historic structures; and
- Few community identifiers or gateways.

Scenic America and Scenic California are also working to develop a community outreach exhibit on the Highway 99 project to present at county fairs along the corridor this summer where our team will survey citizens, distribute Scenic America publications, and offer ways to support the project.

If you would like to learn more about the Highway 99 project, contact Sheila Brady at (510) 883-0390 or via email at [sceniccal@lsa-assoc.com](mailto:sceniccal@lsa-assoc.com). For more general information on the Highway 99 corridor please visit, [www.greatvalley.org/99](http://www.greatvalley.org/99). ■



Two different views of the Highway 99 corridor in Merced County.



to improve Highway 99 by helping communities look at the corridor and develop scenic conservation plans that preserve and enhance their unique beauty and distinctive character. "In many ways, we've been treating Highway 99 as a sort of back door to our communities," said John Wilbanks of RRM Design Group which is helping the cities of Turlock and Fresno develop plans to improve the appearance of Highway 99. "It's high time we

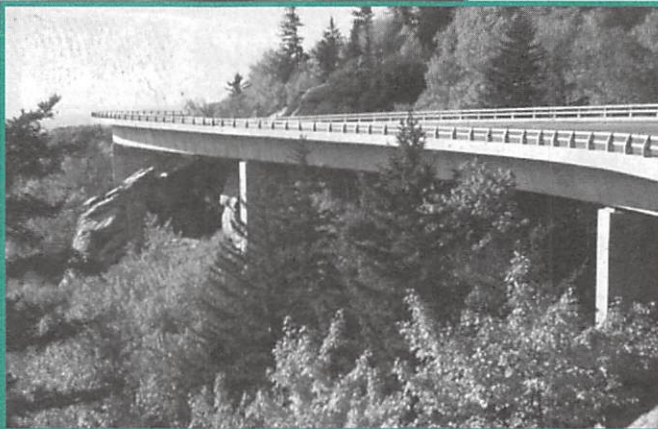
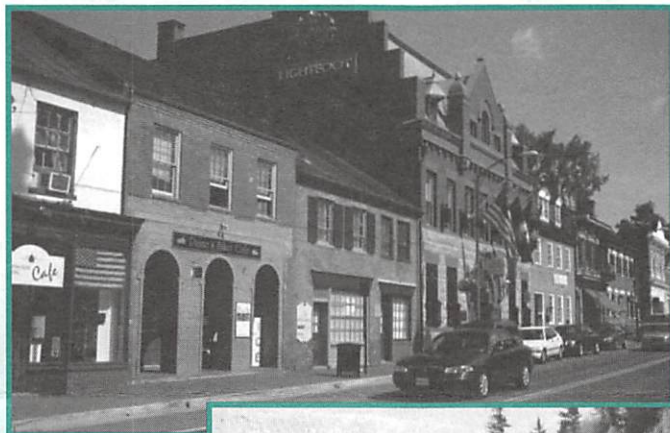


# Scenic Solutions: A Call for Case Studies and Examples

Scenic America is now accepting *Scenic Solutions* submissions as part of the *Scenic Summit: Action for America's Communities, Countryside, and Public Lands*, August 3 - 6, 2003 in Denver, CO. *Scenic Solutions* are short case studies highlighting exemplary approaches to scenic issues which other communities can use to make a positive difference in their appearance. A panel of nationally recognized scenic conservation experts will review the submissions. Scenic America and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service will publish selected *Scenic Solutions* as an interactive CD-ROM. Scenic America will distribute more than 3,000 *Scenic Solutions* CDs to *Scenic Summit* attendees and sponsors, community activists, design professionals, government officials, and other interested parties before and after the conference.

"Nationally, an alarming number of communities and rural areas are being overrun by haphazard development, insensitive road projects, poor corporate franchise design, billboards, and other visual blight," said Meg Maguire, President of Scenic America. "Most of these issues are addressed at the local level, and most scenic conservationists elsewhere are largely unaware of how others solve problems. *Scenic Solutions* will help bridge this information gap and present *Scenic Summit* attendees, citizen activists, organizations, professionals, government officials, and other interested parties with projects showcasing the state-of-the-art in scenic conservation."

*Scenic Solutions* will provide an immediately useful resource for the professionals and activists working on scenic conservation in their communities and regions. *Scenic Solutions* may feature projects in public participation, commu-



nity improvement, public policy, environmental or aesthetic education, and scenic or environmental mitigation. Potential *Scenic Solution* topics include:

- ▶ Design guidelines that help maintain the integrity of the built environment;
- ▶ Smart growth measures and quality of life plans that integrate aesthetic elements;
- ▶ Alternatives to franchise and "big box" designs;
- ▶ Main Street revitalization;

- ▶ Brownfield redevelopment;
- ▶ Outdoor lighting;
- ▶ Agricultural preservation;
- ▶ Scenic byways;
- ▶ Forest and public lands management;
- ▶ Greenway design;
- ▶ Mine reclamation;
- ▶ Parking area design;
- ▶ Scenic conservation ballot initiatives;
- ▶ Scenic conservation ordinances;
- ▶ Public policy projects;
- ▶ Environmental art programs;
- ▶ Real estate values and aesthetics;
- ▶ Corporate franchise design;
- ▶ K-12 environmental education;
- ▶ Community visualization;
- ▶ Visual simulation; and
- ▶ Other *Scenic Solutions*.

Call for entries information and submission guidelines are available on the *Scenic Summit* website, [www.scenicsummit.org](http://www.scenicsummit.org), or by calling Scenic America at (202) 543-6200, ext. 18. **Scenic America must receive submissions no later than October 15, 2002.** There is no fee to submit a *Scenic Solution*.

We encourage submissions from a broad range of professions and disciplines including, conservation organizations, citizen activists, government agencies, design professionals, educators, students, and others.

Scenic America is grateful to the **Ittleson Foundation** for support to undertake this project. ■



# Scenic America People

## Congratulations

At the April 2002 Scenic America Board meeting **Kathy Whitmire**, Chair, turned over the position to **Chris Bayley** of Seattle, Washington. Ms. Whitmire has served on the Scenic America Board since 1993 and chaired the organization from 2000-2002. The staff and Board are grateful for Kathy's leadership during challenging times and look forward to her continuing wisdom and counsel on the Executive Committee.

The Scenic America Board voted to accept **Scenic Ohio's** application as our 10th affiliate! On April 27, 2002, **Christine Freitag**, co-founder and President of Scenic Ohio, was honored as the first recipient of the F. A. and Gertrude Seiberling Award in Akron, Ohio. The annual award recognizes an individual who embodies the Seiberlings' philanthropic character and spirit through dedication to improving quality of life both locally and nationally.

**Ellen Kelly**, a long-time Scenic America Board member and one of the organization's founders, received the Scenic America Stafford Award for her years of dedication to the scenic conservation community. After 24 years of service to the organization she is rotating off the Board. Congratulations, Ellie, and we want to keep you involved in our work!

**Wendy Taylor**, Scenic America's Vice President for Administration and Affiliate Development, joined the staff in 1997. During this period, the affiliates grew from four to 10 organizations and the associates to 15 organizations. Wendy is working for Outward Bound in Colorado in a program for people with disabilities. Thank you, Wendy, for the difference you have made in the scenic conservation movement.

## Internships

We welcome our Roberta M. Henderson Intern **Erica Frankel** from the University of Pennsylvania. The summer internship program honors long-time **Scenic Kentucky** activist, **Roberta Henderson**, who chaired the Scenic America Board from 1996-1998, generously helping the organization to find new resources and to launch the *Scenic Century Fund*. ■



**Ellen Kelly (center), receiving the Stafford Award from Meg Maguire (left) and Kathryn Whitmire (right)**

## GIFTS

Continued from page 2

As you are planning your gift, please consider the following options:

- ▶ Start an Earth Share campaign at your job or business and encourage employees to make contributions through payroll deductions to top environmental and conservation organizations, including Scenic America.
- ▶ Make a contribution to a scenic legacy through a planned or deferred gift to our Scenic Century Fund to ensure our scenic conservation work is adequately funded for generations to come.
- ▶ Determine through your employer's personnel office whether your company will match your contribution to Scenic America, which may double your gift.
- ▶ Designate Scenic America as a grantee through your donor-advised fund.
- ▶ Honor a special relative or friend by making a contribution in their memory or in their honor to recognize their love for America's scenic beauty or their life and accomplishments.

Please use the donation envelope in this newsletter if you would like to make a cash gift now. For all other gift options, or for more information on multi-year gifts, please call Joan Woods at 202-543-6200, ext. 12 or e-mail [woods@scenic.org](mailto:woods@scenic.org). ■



## Scenic America

Scenic America, a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization, is the only national group devoted solely to preserving and enhancing the scenic character of America's communities and countryside.

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*Viewpoints* is a publication of Scenic America and is available free to its members. Individual memberships in Scenic America costs \$35.

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# Florida Communities Suffer a Bitter Blow from Gov. Jeb Bush

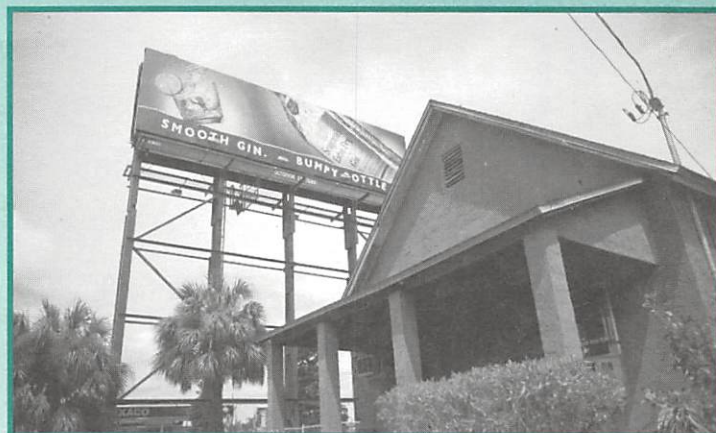
**O**n April 4, 2002, Florida Governor Jeb Bush signed House Bill 715, prohibiting amortization and effectively eliminating the ability of communities to remove billboards without paying the industry's demands for excessive cash compensation. The Florida billboard industry heavily backed the bill in this most recent in a long string of attempts by the industry to pass similar provisions at the state level.

Virtually every county and municipal leader in Florida, every newspaper (except the billboard industry-owned Times Union of Jacksonville), and environmental and community development activists aggressively opposed the bill. However, in the Orlando area, the billboard industry made substantial campaign contributions to legislators who voted for the bill. The industry also contributed heavily to the Governor's 1998 election campaign.

In his letter, Governor Bush echoed the industry's false analogy of a billboard to a home or business to justify billboard

property rights over community rights. He claimed, for example, that the law merely leveled the playing field, treating billboards the same as gas stations or restaurants. He also cited industry statistics saying that 39 other states prohibit amortization (Scenic America believes that the figure is closer to 28). Finally, Bush insisted that nothing in the law prohibited communities from offering longer amortization periods in a mandatory arbitration process, but that compensation would apply if arbitration failed.

Bush's action sparked massive criticism in the Florida press. *The Orlando Sentinel* urged local tax assessors and citizens to seek revenge, saying "If billboard owners think the signs are worth so much, then every property appraiser in the state now has an obligation to



**Florida's new regulations make it nearly impossible for communities to remove billboards without paying the industry cash compensation.**

scrutinize whether taxpayers are getting their money's worth in tax payments from the industry. The Governor failed Floridians. Taxpayers should now fight back."

Scenic America and Citizens for a Scenic Florida spoke out, repeatedly calling on Bush to veto the bill. Scenic America letters to the editor were printed in the *Miami Herald* and other papers. Since the signing, Scenic Florida leaders and municipal officials have been making plans to overcome this defeat, including protecting Florida's scenic beauty through a state constitutional initiative. ■



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