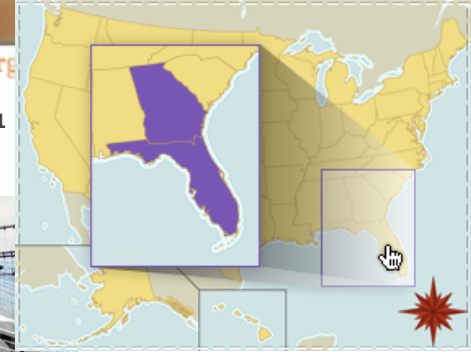




June 2008

Get Local



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Scenic Quote of the Month

"I believe tourists come to Tennessee to see the scenery, not the billboards."

~ Then-Governor Lamar Alexander of Tennessee, in January of 1986, introducing legislation intended to clean up Tennessee's highways.

Illegal billboard workshop to be held in New York City on July 1

Scenic America has long been concerned about the growing problem of signs and billboards polluting our treasured urban environments. Our [visual essay](#) on urban sign pollution has been viewed over 10,000 times and counting.

Activists estimate that half the billboards in New York City are illegal. Between falsified permits, lack of enforcement, and millions in profit, outdoor advertising has become a corporate black market that won't flinch at breaking laws to get your attention.

On July 1, the [Anti-Advertising Agency](#) and Rami Tabello of [illegalSigns.ca](#) will give a free workshop teaching citizens how to identify illegal advertising and get it taken down. Participants will leave this workshop equipped to have illegal signs removed in their neighborhood.

The workshop takes place on Tuesday, July 1, at 6 p.m. and registration is free. [Click here](#) for more information and to sign up for the workshop.



image mashup by [Joe McKay](#) and [incendiarymind](#)

Court upholds Tuscon sign codes

Arizona's Pima County Superior Court has ruled against Clear Channel Outdoor in their constitutional challenge to provisions in the city of Tuscon's sign and land use codes.



Downtown Tuscon, Arizona photo by [Solidago](#)

Clear Channel claimed that Tuscon's sign codes, which limit billboards, violate the First Amendment because the city allows other off-site advertising in the public right of way via their street furniture program.

The Court, recognizing that the true intent of Tuscon's sign codes is to improve the aesthetics of the city, reaffirmed that "aesthetics alone are a substantial and sufficient governmental interest" to justify the

restrictions in Tuscon's sign codes.

The Court said that the city has a vested interest in its street furniture that it does not have in billboards: "There is an aesthetic difference, as a structure, between a billboard

Scenic Trivia Question

Q: When did the town of Southampton, New York, remove its last billboard?

A: In April of 1984. The town had originally passed a law in 1970 calling for amortization of all signs over a five-year period, with all signs to be removed by 1975. The removal of the signs was held up by a series of court challenges by three billboard companies. After nearly a decade of litigation during which the town prevailed in all cases, the remaining billboards were removed.

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and a bus shelter. The structure on which billboard advertising is placed serves no functional purpose other than to carry the advertising itself. Compare this to the replacement of old, dilapidated bus shelters...with new aesthetically pleasing shelters that have, integrated and incorporated in them, advertising panels."

To read the entirety of the Court's ruling, [click here](#) to download it as a PDF document.

Scenic Virginia celebrates ten years

One of our affiliates, [Scenic Virginia](#), is currently [celebrating](#) its tenth anniversary. We congratulate them and are proud to salute their first decade, which included the following successes:

Established an annual Scenic Awards program to recognize excellence in the field of scenic conservation, particularly with projects that can be replicated across the state.

Coordinated the multi-agency effort to secure the America's Byways™ designation for Virginia's four federal parkways - and were successful with all four on the first attempt.

Sponsored legislation in the Virginia General Assembly that led to a new Virginia DOT policy for the trimming of trees along Virginia's roadsides.



Route 250 in Highland County, Virginia
photo by Lucile S. Miller

Currently developing a new Virginia Viewshed Register to educate citizens about the value of preserving significant vistas and to assist localities with planning decisions.

We send a big "job well done" to everyone at Scenic Virginia, including their hard-working executive director Leighton Powell. Here's to your next ten years!

News and notes from Scenic Alabama

The Jefferson County Board of Zoning Adjustments turned down a request from Lamar Advertising to install a digital billboard near the city of Vestavia Hills. There were issues of driver safety due to the location, as well as long-standing land covenants. The request is part of a continuing effort to put billboards on unincorporated land near or within cities that ban billboards. In this case, at least, the billboard company lost.

The city of Northport pushed back against Lamar when their Board of Zoning Adjustment voted to uphold the city staff's denial of a digital billboard permit request. The city recently adopted a new billboard ordinance which restricts billboards to certain zones. Lamar wanted to change a "grandfathered" billboard in an area that no longer allows billboards. This was despite the law's provision creating certain areas within the city where new digital billboards can be legally constructed. The Board's vote was unanimous against Lamar.

For more information check out [Scenic Alabama](#).

Commercial of the year: If you want to view paradise...



Sky Movies, a premium movie channel based in the UK, produced [this commercial](#) based on the total ban on outdoor advertising in the city of Sao Paulo, Brazil. Set to the classic Willie Wonka song "Pure Imagination," it conveys the general desire of people not to be force-fed advertising, whether on TV or on the street.

Imagine seeing America's cities without their cloaks of outdoor advertising. *"If you want to view paradise, simply look around and view it..."*

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