The Ridge Scenic Highway Annual Report



October 1, 2008

Corridor Information

Road: State Road 17 (Scenic Highway) Limits: US 27 to US 17/92 Centerline Miles: 38.7 Scenic Highway Name: *The Ridge Scenic Highway* Location: Polk County Date of Designation: February 2005

CME Contact Information

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Corridor Conditions

1. Discuss the condition of the intrinsic resources and any changes in the corridor since designation. If necessary, provide photographs or other graphical representation of the resources.

As discussed in last years report, citrus groves continue to be removed as property is transitioning to residential, commercial, and industrial/distribution centers. In regards to the other intrinsic resources listed in the Corridor Management Plan, little if any changes have occurred since the last annual report.

2. What, if any, intrinsic resources have been degraded or altered?

Over the last year, some of the orange groves that were not taken care of have now been replanted with a new crop of trees.

The City of Lake Wales has established a Downtown Historic District. The district includes Stuart and Park Avenues between the Scenic Highway and First Street and also includes the Grand Hotel on the west side of First Street. The National Register District is included in the locally enacted district. Several of the historic buildings front the Scenic Highway.

3. Identify and discuss enhancement projects that have been initiated or completed.

Haines City

Just one block west of the Scenic Highway, Lake Eva Community Park is being completely reconstructed. The grand opening of the redesigned park will be on July 4th, 2009. The park will include the following:

- 1. New Banquet Hall;
- 2. Two new pools with a splash pad;
- 3. Basketball, Racquetball, and Tennis Courts;

- 4. Expanded Playgrounds;
- 5. Open Stage Overlooking the Great Lawn;
- 6. New Fishing Pier next to the Extended Boat Ramp; and
- 7. New Addition to the Community Center

<u>Dundee</u>

The Lake Marie Park is being updated. Funding for these improvements came from the City's Park Impact Fees. The updates include:

- 1. Lightning around the lake for the safety of the early morning and dusk usage;
- 2. New drainage and stormwater retention with a weir system;
- 3. A new boardwalk is being constructed over the currently surfaced pathway around the lake system. This boardwalk will be useful during the rainy season when the surfaced pathway floods; and
- 4. The improvements will allow for more usage of the park especially the 4th of July carnival event.

Lake Wales

The next phase of the Rails to Trails is currently under construction. This section includes the extension of the trail that currently runs from 4th Street to Kiwanis Park to Buck Moore Road. The trail should be completed by the end of the year. The funding for this project came from FDEP office of Greenways and Trails.

Restoration of the 1920 City Barn is underway; and will serve as the future Trail Head Center. The funding for this project came from Division of Historical Resources for the State of Florida.

Babson Park

Babson Park Beautification Group is enhancing the center of Babson Park with native plants and wildflowers. One of their tasks has been completed, the landscaping of the U.S. Post Office. Funding for this enhancement came from a Safe Routes to School Grant in the amount of \$701,000.

4. Describe plans for future development in the corridor and how this issue will be addressed.

This is the CME's number one Action Plan priority since designation in February 2005, to work with local governments in developing comprehensive plan policies and corresponding land development regulations that truly protect and enhance the corridor, as required in FDOT's Scenic Highway Manual. Currently, much of the land along the corridor is undeveloped, however, very little of this land is publicly-owned adjacent to the scenic highway, so there is no guarantee that the scenic views will remain.

<u>The East Polk Selected Area Study</u> is being initiated by the Long Range Planning Division of Polk County with the City of Dundee. This land use study is for the area east of Dundee to Lake Pierce. The process includes three stages: (1) Existing Conditions Profile (completed), 2) Vision Plan (on going), and 3) Land Use Plan/Policy development and implementation. (See Appendix A for the location map)

<u>The Southeast Polk Selected Area Study</u> is being initiated by the Long Range Planning Division of Polk County. The study area includes Babson Park south to Frostproof east of Crooked Lake. This land use study will include similar stages to the East Polk Selected Area Study. (See Appendix A for the location map)

The East Polk 2030 Network Needs Study is being initiated by the Polk Transportation Planning Organization. The study area is from Haines City south to just south of Frostproof

and from US 27 to the east to Lake Pierce. The plan will include transportation alternatives to US 27 and SR 17 as well as transit opportunities along the study area. (See Appendix B for the location map)

Polk County has created a section for the Scenic Highway in their Comprehensive Plan:

- 1. The SR 17 Ridge Scenic Highway overlay recognizes the importance of protecting and enhancing a key community asset of scenic, environmental, historic and archeological importance.
- 2. OBJECTIVE 2.124-H: The Polk County Plan shall identify, protect and enhance the scenic, environmental, historic and archeological character of the SR 17 Ridge Scenic Highway through:
 - a. the designation and mapping of the general location of the Ridge Scenic Highway overlay boundary,
 - b. the establishment of development criteria to protect the Ridge Scenic Highway from encroachment by incompatible land uses,
 - c. the establishment of quality design standards beyond those required countywide that unify development along the highway aesthetically and help enhance its unique characteristics, and,
 - d. the establishment of incentives to encourage increased open space abutting the SR 17 Ridge Scenic Highway, the construction of a multi-modal trail along the length of SR 17 Ridge Scenic Highway and the construction of scenic pulloff areas in appropriate locations along Ridge Scenic Highway.
- 3. POLICY 2.124-H1: DESIGNATION AND MAPPING The SR 17 Ridge Scenic Highway Resource Protection overlay shall be generally shown on the Future Land Use Map Series. The SR 17 Ridge Scenic Highway Resource Protection overlay applies to parcels and proposed development abutting the SR 17 Ridge Scenic Highway.
- 4. POLICY 2.124-H2: QUALITY DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS Polk County shall establish quality development standards within its Land Development Code that protect and enhance the scenic, environmental, historic and archeological character of the SR 17 Ridge Scenic Highway. These standards shall include provisions that address roadway and development landscaping, screening, open space, street lighting, walls and fences, building height, location and orientation, signage, non-compatible uses or other development features that will help protect and enhance the SR 17 Ridge Scenic Highway.
- 5. POLICY 2.124-H3: INCENTIVES Polk County shall establish incentives within its Land Development Code to encourage increased open space abutting the SR 17 Ridge Scenic Highway and in areas identified as scenic vistas or viewsheds through properties, the construction of a multi-modal trail along the length of SR 17 Ridge Scenic Highway and the construction of scenic pull-off areas in appropriate locations along SR 17 Ridge Scenic Highway. These incentives may include an expedited review process, increased densities and/or intensities in accordance with the land use, and modified dimensional regulations to encourage the protection and enhancement of key community asset of scenic, environmental, historic and archeological importance.
- 6. POLICY 2.124-H4: INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION Polk County shall continue to coordinate with the municipalities (Frostproof, Hillcrest Heights, Highland Park, Lake Wales, Dundee, Lake Hamilton and Haines City) and other established communities within the Ridge Scenic Highway Overlay to coordinate the implementation of the quality development standards and recreational

opportunities along the SR 17 Ridge Scenic Highway to ensure the continued protection and enhancement of key community asset of scenic, environmental, historic and archeological importance.

<u>The City of Dundee has a statement of concern</u> for development along the corridor in their Land Development Code. This statement of concern is being expanded to include development standards along the corridor.

<u>The City of Lake Wales' Parks Board</u> is looking at concepts for upgrading landscaping, including a sidewalk or bike trail on the east side of the Scenic Highway and planting trees along the west side of the Scenic Highway between Sessoms and Polk Avenue.

<u>There has been a collective effort</u> to get an inventory of the existing sidewalks along the Scenic Highway. A map of the existing, possible, and not possible locations been created. This map could be used for local governments in future grant opportunities or road resurfacing projects.

<u>Corridor Conditions – Photographs</u>



Figure 1. Bok Tower Gardens and Crooked Lake as seen from the Windy Hill Viewpoint



Figure 2. SR 17 curve near Highland Park



Figure 3. Crooked Lake Prairie



Figure 4. New development along SR 17 – North Lake Wales



Figure 5. Fall Color – Tiger Creek Preserve



Figure 6. Reedy Creek Bluffs – Lake Wales Ridge State Forest



Figure 7. Village of Highland Park



Figure 8. New development - open space/landscape buffer adjacent to SR 17



Figure 9. Recently planted citrus grove – near Lake Easy



Figure 10. Cleared grove – land for sale, near Babson Park



Figure 11. Babson Park Beautification Project – Babson Park



Figure 12. Yard of the Month – Town of Hillcrest Heights



Figure 13. Lake Eva Community Park (Under Construction) – Haines City

Goals, Objectives and Strategies

5. Mention how effective the goals, objectives and strategies have been in accomplishing the Corridor Vision.

The goals, objectives and strategies contained in the CME's Designation Application have been used by the CME as a guide in the CME's efforts to implement the Action Plan. Many of the Action Plan items have been completed or initiated by the CME.



Figure 14. Scenic 17 Sprint Triathlon Banner- Babson Park



Figure 15. Scenic 17 Sprint Triathlon Start of Race - Babson Park

6. Which goals and objectives have been met thus far and how were they accomplished?

Since designation, the CME has completed and/or started to implement the following goals through their annual action plan.

This year's action plan includes the following (check marks = completed):

CME Organization

- ✓ Develop a list of Priorities to be adopted at the Annual Meeting. *These Priorities* should be consistent with the CME's Adopted Action Plan and Annual Reports.
- Develop Active Committees to help implement Action Plan Priorities
- ✓ Prepare and submit an Annual Report to the FDOT
- ✓ Maintain Active membership
- ✓ Incorporation
- Tax Exempt Status (CME is seeking donations at this time)

Education/Awareness/Community Participation

- ✓ Develop a Corridor Brochure (See Appendix C)
- Speakers Bureau Local Gov. and Community Group Presentations
- ✓ Media Coverage/Press Releases
- ✓ Website Development (See Appendix D)
- Scheme State St
- Start to Plan for a Scenic Highway Event (to be held in 2009) Citrus, History, **Environmental Theme?**

Scenic Highway Enhancement/Protection

- Support County Focus Group Efforts for County Comp. Plan/LDC Regulations
- Encourage/Support City Adoption of similar Regulations
- Encourage and support Grants that are consistent with the CME's Action Plan
- Seek and support protection/Enhancement of key resources of the Scenic Highway (Prominent View Points, Windy Hill, Lake Wales Trail & Trailhead Interpretive Center, Chalet Suzanne, Historic Downtowns)
- 7. Which goals (unlikely in the first year), objectives and strategies have been or need to be modified in order to attain the Corridor Vision? At this point no modifications are being suggested. This issue may be best addressed as part of the Corridor Management Plan update in 2009/10.
- 8. What new ordinances, policies and/or regulations have been issued as a result of the scenic highway? See Question 4.
- 9. Are there proposed ordinances/regulations that may aid goals? See Question 4.

Community Participation Program

10. Discuss the effectiveness of the Community Participation Program to date.

The CME has been very active in engaging local governments and increasing public awareness. The CME schedules meetings at a different location every other month and provides opportunity for the public to comment on the CME's plans and programs. The group is well covered by the local newspapers which have published numerous articles about the efforts of the CME.

Haines City and Lake Wales has monthly bike fests that attract bikers from across the region. As you drive the Scenic Highway during this time of the month you will find several bikers along the way.

Lake Wales holds their annual Pioneer Days. This is a day of celebration of the community's history and its earliest pioneer settlers. An antique car ride down the Scenic Highway is one of the features during the celebration.

Haines City and Dundee has their annual 4th of July celebration off the Scenic Highway. Haines City celebrates at the park of Lake Eva, while Dundee celebrates on Lake Marie. Both celebrations bring the locals and out-of-towners to the activities and fireworks display. Each of the fireworks can be seen very easily from the Scenic Highway and depending on your location along the Highway you can see both fireworks display.

This year was the first "Inaugural Scenic 17 Sprint Triathlon" held at Webber International University. Alta Vista Sports coordinated the event. Members of the CME were there cheering on the athletes. The Scenic Highway logo was also featured on the t-shirts that were worn by the volunteers. Many of the athletes said this was one of the most beautiful and most difficult courses they have competed in.

This year was the first year the CME has been able to get information to a lot of people via the web. As a partner with Visit Florida, the CME has created a profile and added pictures of the corridor to attract visitors to our area. (See Appendix D for screen shots of the website)

A brochure has been created showcasing the corridor. This brochure is available at all of the Chambers of Commerce along the corridor. (See Appendix C for the brochure)

There have been several public meetings along the corridor. The public meetings have been associated with the Selected Area Studies and the Scenic Highway Focus Group as mentioned in #4 above.

11. Provide a synopsis of major issues discussed at public meetings held in the past year and elaborate on any critical issues that have arisen during these forums and how they were dealt with or will be addressed.

Since the Ridge Scenic Highway was designated, development related issues along the corridor have been the major topics brought up by CME members, as well as public participants.

Some of the other items discussed at the CME's meetings have included unique signage for the corridor, a Ridge Scenic Highway website, public events, roadside pull-offs/parks and additional planning/engineering studies that focus on some of the specific items contained in the Action Plan.

Funding

12. Describe corridor funding needs, acquisitions and expenditures.

The CME has been able to carry out the administration activities (meeting locations, public notices, meeting materials, copies, postage, etc.) without a budget. The group has been able to utilize volunteerism and other in-kind services from its members to its advantage.

In implementing the Action Plan, the CME will continue to research grant opportunities. Grants that require a local match may not be feasible in the short term due to the current fiscal situation in many of the municipalities/jurisdictions that comprise the CME. The CME would appreciate advisement and assistance from the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) in determining appropriate sources for funding enhancements referenced in the Action Plan.

The CME anticipates the need for assistance from the FDOT as it prepares the update to its Corridor Management Plan (due 2010). Additionally, the CME has discussed various small scale studies/plans that evaluate the feasibility of Action Plan items.

The CME has been incorporated as "Ridge Scenic Highway.CME, Inc." This is our first step towards accepting donations. A bank account has been set up to receive and distribute funds as appropriate. At this time there is \$100 in the account, a donation from the Lake of the Hills Community Center. The money will fund a variety of items that will help carry out our action plan items. The CME is saving the donations that are received at this time for seeking non-profit/tax exempt status. (See Appendix E for the Incorporation Documents)

13. Has funding been a problem?

Yes. It seems that most of the grants that are available require local matching funds. Based on the actions taken by the Florida Legislature and Governor earlier this year, the climate is poor for matching local government funds, as they have had to cut funding to meet their budget needs. As mentioned earlier, the CME would like to study further some of the items contained in the action plan, but the lack of local funding has hindered their ability to do so.

14. If so, how will the CME attempt to resolve this issue?

Additional guidance is needed from the FDOT. Particularly for funding and grants that do not require a local match. Without a dedicated funding source, the CME and many of the Action Plan items (particularly construction items) are subject to grant availability and local governments willing to support (contribute funding). The CME will continue to be an advocate for the corridor and promote the projects that support the vision, goals and objectives of the Scenic Highway.

15. Are funding sources being pursued?

The Babson Park Visioning Group applied for a Safe Routes to School grant in the amount of \$701,000. The project was awarded for the 2008/2009 funding year. Construction is scheduled for 2009.

Lake Wales has applied for the Special Category Grant Application for the 1919 Hardman Hall in the amount of \$350,000 and on the Small Matching Grant Application for restoration of the 1940 Cafeteria to serve as an Activity Center in the amount of \$50,000. Both applications were sent to the Florida Department of State, Division of Historic Resources. They were ranked high; however, were not funded due to budget shortfalls.

16. If so, when does the CME anticipate receiving them? See Question 15.

17. How will the funding be used? See Question 15.

Measuring success

18. Traffic Counts Along the Corridor

| FDOT Site Location | 2006 AADT | 2007 AADT | Percent Change |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-------------------|
| 0064 SW of Livingston Lake Rd | 2,400 | 2,700 | +12% |
| 5038 S of CR 630 (Frostproof) | 8,100 | 7,100 | -12% |
| 5039 N of CR 630 (Frostproof) | 3,600 | 3,700 | -3% |
| 0049 N of McCloud Road (Frostproof) | 3,900 | 3,400 | -13% |
| 0122 NW of Libby Rd (Babson Park) | 7,300 | 6,800 | -7% |
| 0018 S of Bellview Drive (Lake Wales) | 4,900 | 4,700 | -4% |
| 5122 SE of Polk Ave. (Lake Wales) | 5,100 | 4,700 | -8% |
| 5123 NW of Polk Ave. (Lake Wales) | 7,400 | 7,400 | 0% |
| 5124 N of Central Ave (Lake Wales) | 11,200 | 9,800 | -13% |
| 0047 S of Mtn. Lake Cut-Off | 14,800 | 13,200 | -11% |
| 5212 S of Chalet Suzanne Rd | 10,500 | 8,100 | -23% |
| 0048 S of Waverly Road | 8,700 | 6,700 | -23% |
| 0071 N of Waverly Road | 8,200 | 6,800 | -17% |
| 0092 NW of Lk Mabel Lp Rd (Dundee) | 7,900 | 6,500 | -18% |
| 5030 E of Center Street (Dundee) | 10,100 | 8,500 | -16% |
| 5031 N of Main Street (Dundee) | 9,100 | 8,400 | -8% |
| 0046 S of SR 544 (Haines City) | 8,800 | 11,000 | +25% |
| 5049 N of SR 544 (Haines City) | 12,600 | 11,700 | -7% |
| 0039 S of US 17/92 (Haines City) | 13,300 | 12,000 | -10% |

This information was obtained from the Florida Department of Transportation.

19. Corridor Resources

Historical Resources

There are 19 historic sites and structures within a mile of SR 17.

Downtown Haines City Commercial District – contains 25 buildings 20 of historic interest. Chalet Suzanne – On National Register of Historic Places. Includes inn, restaurant, shops, airstrip, soup cannery, gardens museum, citrus groves and vineyard. Mountain Lake Historic District – Gated community of 101 buildings, 65 of historical interest. North Avenue Historic District – in Lake Wales 12 contributing structures.

Lake Wales Historic Residential District – 206 historic buildings. On National Register of Historic Places.

Lake Wales Commercial District – 16 historic buildings. On National Register of Historic Places.

Haines City Heritage Museum – History Museum

Dundee Depot Museum - History Museum

Lake Wales Deport Museum – History Museum

Frostproof Historical Museum and Library

Historic Bok Sanctuary - Pinewood Estate - World-renowned Carillon & Majestic Belltower and historic Olmsted-designed Gardens

Lake of the Hills Community Club

Babson Park Women's Club

Cultural Resources

There are 24 churches and 30 government facilities located along SR 17.

Community Events and Festivals: Lake Wales Pioneer Days - annual event Lake Wales Art Show - annual event Old Fashioned Ice Cream Social - Lake of the Hills Annual Event Haines City Heritage Days - annual event International Carillon Festival - annual event held at Historic Bok Sanctuary Landmark Baptist College - Haines City Haines City Community Theatre Haines City Community Center Haines City Civic Center **Dundee Community Center Dundee Chamber of Commerce** The Museum at Chalet Suzanne Historic Bok Sanctuary Lake Wales Little Theatre Lake Wales Art Center Lake Wales Model Railroad Club Lake Wales Museum and Cultural Center Highland Park Club Webber International University Babson Park Woman's Club Frostproof Art League and gallery Frostproof Chamber of Commerce Frostproof Depot Frostproof Historical Museum and Library

Recreational Resources

Haines City Railroad Park - Community Park in Downtown Lake Eva Park – Haines City Yale Field – Haines City Lake Hamilton Park - Across from the town hall Merrill Street Park - Athletic park in Dundee Lake Marie Trail - Bike/Ped trail in Dundee Lake Marie Park – Dundee Lake Menzie Fitness Trail - Dundee Johnson Park – Dundee East Central Park - Polk County Hardman Recreational and Cultural Complex - includes a trailhead for the Lake Wales Trail (Lake Wales) Lake Wailes Park - Trail and lake access Crystal Lake Park - Lake Wales Carson Park - Hillcrest Heights/Babson Park Crooked Lake Park – Hillcrest Heights (Private) Friendship Park - Frostproof Frostproof Sports Complex Fewox Park – Neighborhood park in Frostproof Henderson Field - Baseball fields in Frostproof Lake Reedy Park - Frostproof Lake Reedy Boardwalk - Frostproof Frostproof Football Field Wall Street Park - Frostproof Clinch lake Park - Frostproof Gymnasium - Frostproof Lake Livingston Boat Ramp - South of Frostproof access via SR 17 Pine Ridge Nature Trail – Hiking trail at Historic Bok Sanctuary

Lake Wailes Trail – Multi-use trail in Lake Wales Lake Wales Trail – Multi-use trail with trailhead on SR 17 Tiger Creek Preserve Hiking Trails Ridge Aububon Nature Trail – Hiking Trail Crooked Lake Sandhill – Hiking Trails Crooked Lake Prairie – Hiking Trails Hickory Lake Scrub – Hiking Trails

Lake Access:

Lake Eva Lake Easy Lake Annie Lake Pierce Lake Marion Lake Wailes Crooked Lake Little Crooked Lake Lake Walk-in-the-Water Lake Arbuckle Lake Clinch Lake Reedy Lake Livingston

Natural Resources

Highland Park – Designated bird/wildlife sanctuary.
Historic Bok Sanctuary – Botanical gardens, endangered plant garden and nursery.
Pine Ridge Preserve – Endangered sandhill ecosystem with hiking trails and expansive views of the Ridge.
Ridge Audubon Center – 4 Acre sandhill site with interpretive center and hiking trails.
Crooked Lake Sandhill – 25 acre endangered sandhill/scrub ecosystem.
Crooked Lake – designated Outstanding Florida Water.
Crooked Lake Prairie – Lake Wales Ridge endangered scrub ecosystem
Peace Creek Canal System.
Tiger Creek Preserve – 4800 acres
Hickory Lake Scrub – 57 acre scrub preserve.
Sun Ray Scrub – State-owned scrub northeast of US 27.
Lake Wales Ridge State Forest
Lake Kissimmee State Park

Scenic Resources/Vistas

Lake Gordon – Lake Hamilton Lake Marie – Dundee Views of Bok Tower – Lake of the Hills/Dundee/Lake Easy Windy Hill – Highest point on SR 17 at over 300' above sea level. Points as far away as Lakeland, Highlands County and Osceola County can be seen. Lake Moody – Excellent views north and south of the lake. Murals – Downtown Lake Wales and Frostproof. SR 544 @ SR 17 – Excellent south views of the Ridge and Bok Tower. Historic Bok Sanctuary/Pine Ridge Preserve – Outstanding views from the top of Iron Mountain and Knoll Hill.

20. Marketing and Promotional Efforts

A corridor brochure has been developed and has been sent out to the Chambers of Commerce along the corridor.

The 2007 Florida American Planning Association State conference was held in Orlando. This conference was the highest attended conference in its history. The conference included a mobile workshop on the SR 17, Ridge Scenic Highway. This mobile workshop reached the max capacity allowed. The mobile workshop included the efforts behind the creation of the Scenic Highway, its importance, and the group efforts to create regulations to manage growth along the corridor. Members of the Focus Group and CME participated in the coordination of the mobile workshop. (See Appendix F for the summary of the workshop)

The CME has created a profile on the Visit Florida website to showcase the corridor and attract visitors our area.

21. Lodging Facilities

There are 9 hotels located along the corridor. All are small/local establishments.

22. Food Facilities

There are approximately 20 restaurants and eateries. The majority are small local establishments.

23. Chambers of Commerce

Haines City Chamber P.O. Box 986 Haines City, Florida 33845 (863) 422-3751

Dundee Chamber 310 Main Street Dundee, Florida. (863) 439-3261

Lake Wales Chamber 340 W. Central Avenue P.O. Box 191 Lake Wales, FL 33859 Phone (863) 676-3445

Frostproof Chamber 118 E Wall St Frostproof, FL 33843 Phone: (863) 635-9112

24. **Private Development**

With the slow down of the residential development along the corridor, a new wave of commercial, industrial, and business park development has begun.

Haines City has seen a boom in their southeast business park. Frostproof has also seen an increase in the distribution businesses off the Scenic Highway.

25. Demographic Changes

There has not been a discernable difference in the areas demographics over the past year.

26. Property Value Changes

Over the last year, Florida has experienced a change in the legislation. Amendment One was passed which helped to lower the property taxes. In the last year the land for sale signs are a common site.

27. Changes in Tourist Traffic

While this corridor continues to be a popular "scenic" alternative to US 27, especially for motorcyclists and bicycle groups, traffic volumes do not seem to indicate an increase in tourist traffic due to the designation of the corridor. Due to construction on nearby US 27, portions of Scenic Highway are being used as an alternate. This might explain the significant increases in traffic volumes at some locations along the corridor.

28. Other Comments on Measuring Success NA

Local Government Comprehensive Plan (LGCP) Relationship

29. Discuss how effective the integration of the CMP into the local government comprehensive plans has been.

At this point, LGCPs have not been amended to incorporate the Ridge Scenic Highway. However, this is one of the action items in the CME's Action Plan. Unlike many of the other scenic highways in Florida, the Ridge Scenic Highway contains numerous areas with dramatic vistas and views due the relatively high elevations on the Lake Wales Ridge. The views along the Ridge Scenic Highway are considered one of it's most significant intrinsic resources. As mentioned earlier, much of the land along the corridor is currently undeveloped, however, very little of this land is public-owned adjacent to the scenic highway, so there is no guarantee that the views will remain. It is the goal of the Ridge Scenic Highway CME and many of its member local governments to include much more than what is suggested in the Florida Scenic Highway Manual.

30. Discuss any actions that are underway or are needed to maintain consistency with the LGCP and other plans.

For these policies and regulations to be successful, the local governments need to work closely with property owners and other stakeholders. The Polk County Long Range Planning Division has taken the lead in developing policies and regulations in support of the Ridge Scenic Highway and has formed a focus group comprised of landowners, agriculture and business representatives, citizens, and other stakeholders from along the corridor, as well as CME members. This group has been meeting since May of 2006 and anticipates the County Commission taking action on these policies by the June of 2009. Considering the length of the corridor (38.7 miles) and number of jurisdictions along the corridor (8), these efforts have been time consuming and challenging.

Problem Areas

31. Describe any problems that have arisen regarding the corridor.

As mentioned earlier, due to the lack of input from large land owners and developers in the development of the CMP, there was a lot of public opposition to the proposed comprehensive plan policies that were being considered due to the designation of the highway.

A related issue is educating the public about the corridor. Unless you are a land owner along Scenic Highway, a frequent attendee of municipal or county meetings, or a member of any of the participating agencies affiliated w/the Corridor Membership, you more than likely know very little if anything about the corridor, it's goals/vision, or the plan for it's preservation and development of attributes. While the CME had a very successful corridor celebration event in 2005, that was covered well by local media and attended by many, a continuing effort is needed on the part of the CME to promote the corridor.

32. Describe present and future actions to resolve these issues.

Over the last year, a Scenic Highway Focus Group has been formed specifically for the purpose of developing comprehensive plan policies and land development regulations that protect and enhance the qualities of the Scenic Highway. Additionally, the Focus Group and CME will be presenting their work to the municipalities along the corridor in an attempt to establish consistency between jurisdictions along the corridor.

The CME has diversified its membership by adding citrus representatives, realtors and developers to the CME Board and included many additional representatives to the mailing list.

In terms of promoting the corridor, The CME should consider sponsoring an educational campaign focusing first on government bodies from elected officials to municipal management to staff, then Chambers of Commerce to business owners, and on down to citizens needs. The spread via word of mouth as a result of this campaign would be invaluable. This could be accomplished by establishing mobile workshops/presentations local governments, Chamber of Commerce member meetings, and local meetings of organized clubs and citizens to ensure the promotion and prosperity of the Scenic Highway. Development of a corridor brochure and website will aid this effort as well.

Other Issues

33. Describe how well the CME has operated

The CME has held regular meetings bimonthly since last year. In general, participation has been consistent. The CME is made up of a cross section of various interests. The CME Board is comprised of 17 members. In addition to the 11 positions which represent local governments, five (5) at-large positions were created to diversify the CME membership that include Agriculture, Tourism, Cultural, Historical, Commercial/Developer and Environmental interests.

The CME has created a working committee that meets every other month. This working committee meets to resolve various issues and carry out the Action Plan items. This committee has been very successful in completing the action items. The committee provides reports to the CME at their regular meetings.

The CME holds regular meetings every other month which are noticed a week prior to the meeting. The meetings have minutes prepared and are then approved by the Board. There is an opportunity for the public to participate and offer comments. In an effort to foster participation from all of its members/jurisdictions, the CME rotates the meeting locations.

34. Describe how partnering and coordination efforts have worked.

There is excellent coordination on the CME. The CME and its members work very closely with the local governments and the FDOT in implementing the Action Plan items. The CME has been able to carry out all of these activities without a budget. The group has been able to utilize volunteerism and other in-kind services from its members to its advantage.

The CME has partnered with the following groups:

- Alta Vista Sports Inaugural SR 17 Spirit Triathlon as mentioned in # 10 above
- DEWMOE Youth Corporation cleanup on certain parts of the Highway
- Babson Park Visioning Group Polk County Text Change Focus Group
- Florida Department of Transportation creation of the brochure
- Visit Florida creation of the Ridge Scenic Highway profile
- Polk County Text Change Focus Group creation of development standards along the corridor

35. Provide discussion of any other issues the CME feels are relevant to the corridor's success.

Continued involvement by all of the jurisdictions and various stakeholders is very important to maintaining success. Funding for improvements/enhancements along the corridor is very important as well.

The CME is seeking the trade marking of their logo.

APPENDIX A

Polk County Selected Area Study Maps

East Polk County Selected Aren Study Existing Conditions Profile

Polk County/ US 27 Context Legend



- Major Roads
- HHH Railroad
- East Polk Selected Area Study Boundary







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Southeast Polk **Selected Area Study**



APPENDIX B

East Polk Network Needs Study



Figure 1

East Polk County 2030 Roadway Needs Network Study Area Map

APPENDIX C

The Ridge Scenic Highway Brochure

POINTS OF INTEREST



1. Historic Downtown Haines City



2. Chalet Suzanne



3. Bok Tower Gardens



4. Spook Hill





5 N = 5 - 5 - 5

7. View from Highest Point on SR 17



8. Historic Downtown Frostproof



9. Hickory Lake Scrub





10. Lake Wales Ridge State Forest



The Ridge Scenic Highway: The Early Years

First known as Keystone City, the Town of Frostproof was laid out in the early 1880's. Stephan Washington Carson and his family, the first family in Frostproof, settled in the wilderness in 1886.

In 1917, H. E. Fairchild originated Hillcrest Heights. The Southern Land Company built the Hillcrest Lodge in 1917 to attract prospective land buyers. The original building burnt to the ground in 1918, but was reconstructed as the Hillcrest Lodge in 1919. Scenic Highway linked the community to existing towns and railroad stations. A charter incorporating the Town of Hillcrest Heights was granted in 1923.

In 1923, Roger W. Babson purchased 400 acres of land on the north side of Crooked Lake. In 1924, he outlined a town plan, which was named Babson Park. Babson hired Fredrick Law Olmsted to develop plans for landscaping the town. The town did not incorporate and became known as a village of homes.

Frostproof•Hillcrest Heights•Babson Park•Village of Highland Park•Lake Wales•Lake of the Hills•Dundee•Lake Hamilton•Haines City

In 1921, Irwin Yarnell began the development of Highland Park. Yarnell chose to build his home, the Casa de Josefina, near the entrance of the Village of Highland Park. The Casa de Josefina, modeled after a Spanish mansion, was constructed in 1923, and added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1975. The home contained over 36 rooms, green lawns, exotic flowers, and rare tropical trees. The Village of Highland Park was incorporated in 1927.

Lake Wales began as a turpentine complex and small hamlet. In 1911, Tillman, Johnson, Bullard, and Stuart founded the Lake Wales Land Company. The railroad was extended to the hamlet in June 1911, and the turpentine complex opened in 1912. In 1916, Lake Wales was connected to both the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad and the Seaboard Air Line Railroad, providing unsurpassed access to markets across Florida. The City of Lake Wales was incorporated in 1917.

Lake of the Hills was also envisioned as a community of spacious rural estates. The W. J. Howey Land Company surveyed and platted the land around Lake Starr in 1914-1915 into a subdivision called Starr Lake Villa and renamed Lake of the Hills in 1923. The W. J. Howey Land Company set aside a lakefront lot of 200 by 200 feet for a Community Club. A Community Club was constructed in 1929, and was added to the National Register of Historic Places in the year 2000. The building is the meeting place for the Lake of the Hills Community Club and the Lake of the Hills Garden Club. Dundee was platted in 1911 by the Highlands Development Co., and incorporated in 1925. It was the first new town platted on the Haines City-Sebring branch of the railroad. The first industries were the Mixon Sawmill Co., Rayburn Turpentine Distillery, and Glen St. Mary Nursery

Lake Hamilton also owed its development to the railroads. Lake Hamilton, named after the lake on which it is located, was founded in 1913. The Atlantic Coast Line Railroad completed a station in April 1914. A Woman's Club was established early on, and a Board of Trade was established by 1915.

Originally named Clay Cut, Haines City, the Gateway to the Scenic Highlands, was established in 1883. The city was named after Colonel Haines, an official of the South Florida Railroad. It is said that this gesture played a role in enticing the railroad to serve Haines City. The economy was primarily based around cattle, citrus, and residential development. Tomatoes were also grown in the area in the 1890's. In the first years, Haines City grew quickly. A school was built beginning in 1880, with 37 students enrolled in the two-story schoolhouse by 1887. The first telephone installation in Polk County was made in the 1890's in Haines City, which became the link for telephone service throughout unsurpassed access to markets across Florida.

Contact Information Jennifer Nanek /JNanek@cityoflakewales.com Lake Wales Museum & Cultural Center 325 S Scenic Highway Lake Wales, FL 33853 Phone (863) 678-4209 Fax (863)678-4299 For Scenic Highway Program Information: http://www.dot.state.fl.us/emo/ScenicHwy/



The Ridge Scenic Highway





APPENDIX D

Visitflorida.com: Screen Shots

| = | Palma Sola Scenic Highway | | | |
|---|--|----------------------------------|--|--|
| Photos (4) | State Road 64 West Bradenton, FL 34209 941-709-6300 View on Map | D Locole lies this | | |
| | A short yet wonderful trip that highlights Florida and the state's many assets. Located on beautiful Palma Sola Bay in Manatee County this scenic More | | | |
| | Add to My Travel Page | Compare | | |
| Pixtos (3) | Pensacola Scenic Bluffs Highway | | | |
| | Scenic Highway Foundation, Inc., P.O. Box 10666 Pensacola, FL 32524 850-438-5855 | Decole like this | | |
| | <u>Website View on Map</u> The Pensacolo Scenic Buffs Highway provides panaramic views of Escambia Bay from tail, day buffs. Come enjoy this unique driving experience of ferin More | | | |
| | CO Add to My Travel Page | Compare | | |
| ALL A | The Ridge Scenic Highway | | | |
| Photos (23) | 325 S. Scenic Hwy, Loke Woles, Pl. 33853 963-670-4209 Website I. View on Map | 2 people like this | | |
| | The Corridor The Ridge Scenic Highway, located in Polk County, extends 38.7- miles along the Lake Wales Ridge, from its intersection with U More | | | |
| | add to My Travel Page | Compare | | |
| Photos (28) | Sawgrass Recreation Park | | | |
| | 1006 N. U.S. Hwy. 27 Weston, Fl. 3327 000-424-7262, 954-309-0202 Website Vew.on Map | Erom \$20 25 people like this | | |
| | One-of-a-hind airboat tour in the heart of the Florida Everglades. Come visit this family owned and operated classic South Florida attraction dee More | | | |
| | Add to My Travel Page | Compare | | |
| Commenced For | enic Parkway | | | |
| Suncoast Parkw Brooksville, FL 3 352-754-4057 | ay | C Likethisi | | |
| Website View | on Map | | | |
| Contraction of the second | r Travel Page | Compare | | |

Search Screen





Amenities and Map



Blown up Picture

APPENDIX E

Incorporation Documentation



5125 Adanson Street Suite 500 Orlando, FL 32804 407-539-0814 phone 321-274-0119 fax info@floridaincorporationservice.com

Dear Corporation Service Customer,

Thank you very much for selecting Florida Incorporation Service to incorporate your new Florida Non- Profit business.

Enclosed are materials to confirm that your new corporation is a legal entity in the State of Florida.

A corporation annual report/uniform business report will be due to the Division of Corporations between January 1 and May 1 of the year following the calendar year of the file/effective date.

It is your responsibility to keep a current address with the Division of Corporations. If you need assistance with this, please call our office during normal business hours.

If you ordered the Certificate of Status it will also be included.

We hope you found our services convenient and efficient and will share our website, <u>www.floridaincorporationservice.com</u>, with friends and associates who are looking to establish corporations.

If you have any questions, please call or email us.

Sincerely,

Thomas P. Page, Esquire CEO

Enclosure: Articles of Incorporation

Electronic Articles of Incorporation For

N08000005416 FILED June 05, 2008 Sec. Of State jshivers

RIDGE SCENIC HIGHWAY.CME, INC.

The undersigned incorporator, for the purpose of forming a Florida not-forprofit corporation, hereby adopts the following Articles of Incorporation:

Article I

The name of the corporation is: RIDGE SCENIC HIGHWAY.CME, INC.

Article II

The principal place of business address:

325 SOUTH SCENIC HIGHWAY C/O DEPOT MUSEUM LAKE WALES, FL. US 33859

The mailing address of the corporation is:

325 SOUTH SCENIC HIGHWAY C/O DEPOT MUSEUM LAKE WALES, FL. US 33859

Article III

The specific purpose for which this corporation is organized is: PUBLIC AND COMMUNITY SERVICE REGARDING LAND USE

Article IV

The manner in which directors are elected or appointed is: AS PROVIDED FOR IN THE BYLAWS.

Article V

The name and Florida street address of the registered agent is:

MIMI REID HARDMAN 300 S. LAKE SHORE BLVD. LAKE WALES, FL. 33853 I certify that I am familiar with and accept the responsibilities of registered agent.

N08000005416 FILED June 05, 2008 Sec. Of State ishivers

Registered Agent Signature: MIMI REID HARDMAN

Article VI

The name and address of the incorporator is:

EDWARD V. ESTEVE 300 S. LAKE SHORE BLVD.

LAKE WALES FL, 33898

Incorporator Signature: EDWARD V. ESTEVE

Article VII

The initial officer(s) and/or director(s) of the corporation is/are:

Title: P D MIMI REID HARDMAN 300 S. LAKE SHORE BLVD. LAKE WALES, FL. 33853 US

Title: V D LINDA RINER MIZELL PO BOX 1000 DUNDEE, FL. 33838 US

Title: S D JENNIFER NANEK 200 EMERALD AVE, APT 30 LAKE WALES, FL. 33853 US

Title: T D SUSAN WELBORN 361 LAKE AVENUE BABSON PARK, FL. 33827 US

Article VIII

The effective date for this corporation shall be: 06/04/2008

Certificate of Status

I certify from the records of this office that RIDGE SCENIC HIGHWAY.CME, INC. is a corporation organized under the laws of the State of Florida, filed electronically on June 05, 2008, effective June 04, 2008.

The document number of this corporation is N08000005416.

I further certify that said corporation has paid all fees due this office through December 31, 2008, and its status is active.

I further certify that said corporation has not filed Articles of Dissolution.

I further certify that this is an electronically transmitted certificate authorized by section 15.16, Florida Statutes, and authenticated by the code noted below.

Authentication Code: 080605144530-100130909631#1

Given under my hand and the Great Seal of the State of Florida at Tallahassee, the Capital, this the Fifth day of June, 2008



Luri S. Browning Secretary of State

Bylaws

of

RIDGE SCENIC HIGHWAY.CME Inc

a Non-Profit Florida Corporation

June 6, 2008

BYLAWS OF <u>Ridge Seenic Highway</u>, <u>CHZ</u>. Fre ARTICLE I - NAME, PURPOSE Section 1: The name of the organization shall be <u>AS ABOVE</u> Section 2: The <u>Rigge Suppic Highway</u> <u>CALE</u> is organized exclusively for charitable, scientific and educational purposes, more specifically to <u>CREATE</u>, <u>REMIDER</u>, <u>ZX2007E</u>, <u>AND</u> (OR OTHER WISE (ULTIDATE THE CULTURAK, HISTORICAL SUDACTION CALLARTISFIC FACETS of 2AND USE AND DEVELOPMENT ALONG THE SCIENCE HIGHWAY</u> CORRIDOR

Section 1: Membership shall consist only of the members of the board of directors, AND AT ANY GUEN HIME THERE Shall NOT EXCERD directors HOR be less many _____ Directors ARTICLE III - ANNUAL MEETING

Section 1: Annual Meeting. The date of the regular annual meeting shall be set by the Board of Directors who shall also set the time and place.

Section 2: Special Meetings. Special meetings may be called by the Chair or the Executive Committee.

Section 3: Notice. Notice of each meeting shall be given to each voting member, by mail, not less than ten days before the meeting.

ARTICLE IV - BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Section 1: Board Role, Size, Compensation. The Board is responsible for overall policy and direction of the Council and delegates responsibility for day-to-day operations to the Council Director and committees. The Board shall have up to ______ and not fewer than ______ members. The board receives no compensation other than reasonable expenses.

Section 2: Meetings. The Board shall meet at least $\frac{1}{1002}$ invat an agreed upon time and place.

Section 3: Board Elections. Election of new directors or election of current directors to a second term will occur as the first item of business at the annual meeting of the corporation. Directors will be elected by a majority vote of the current directors.

Section 4: Terms. All Board members shall serve _____ year terms, but are eligible for re-election. IN The first JEAR 1/2 The MEMbers Shalle he for a fore frar true, all continue directors Elections mereafter shall be for Staggard TEEMS w/ 1/3 of The BOARD to be elected every YEar.

Section 5: Quorum. A quorum must be attended by at least 51 percent of the Board members before business can be transacted or motions made or passed.

Section 6: Notice. An official Board meeting requires that each Board member have written notice two weeks in advance.

Section 7. Officers and Duties. There shall be five officers of the Board consisting of a Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary and Treasurer. Their duties are as follows:

The Chair shall convene regularly scheduled Board meetings, shall preside or arrange for other members of the executive committee to preside at each meeting in the following order: Vice-Chair, Secretary and Treasurer.

The Vice-Chair will chair committees on special subjects as designated by the board.

The Secretary shall be responsible for keeping records of Board actions, including overseeing the taking of minutes at all board meetings, sending out meeting announcements, distributing copies of minutes and the agenda to each Board members, and assuring that corporate records are maintained.

The Treasurer shall make a report at each Board meeting. Treasurer shall chair the finance committee, assist in the preparation of the budget, help develop fundraising plans, and make financial information available to Board members and the public.

Section 8: Vacancies. When a vacancy on the Board exists, nominations for new members may be received from present Board members by the Secretary two weeks in advance of a Board meeting. These nominations shall be send out to Board members with the regular Board meeting announcement, to be voted upon at the next Board meeting. These vacancies will be filled only to the end of the particular Board member's term.

Section 9: Resignation, Termination and Absences. Resignation from the Board must be in writing and received by the Secretary. A Board member shall be dropped for excess absences from the Board if s/he has three unexcused absences from Board meetings in a year. A Board member may be removed for other reasons by a three-fourths vote of the remaining directors.

Section 10: Special Meetings. Special meetings of the Board shall be called upon the request of the Chair or one-third of the Board. Notices of special meetings shall be send out by the Secretary to each Board member postmarked two weeks in advance.

ARTICLE V - COMMITTEES

Section 1: The Board may create committees as needed, such as fundraising, housing, etc. The Board Chair appoints all committee chairs.

Section 2: The five officers serve as the members of the Executive Committee. Except for the power to amend the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws, the Executive Committee shall have all of the powers and authority of the Board of Directors in the intervals between meetings of the Board of Directors, subject to the direction and control of the Board of Directors.

Section 3: Finance Committee. The Treasurer is chair of the Finance Committee, which includes three other Board members. The Finance Committee is responsible for developing and reviewing fiscal procedures, a fundraising plan, and annual budget with staff and other Board members. The Board must approve the budget, and all expenditures must be within the budget. Any major change in the budget must be approved by the Board or the Executive Committee. The fiscal year shall be the calendar year. Annual reports are required to be submitted to the Board showing income, expenditures and pending income. The financial records of the organization are public information and shall be made available to the membership, Board members and the public.

ARTICLE VI - AMENDMENTS

Section 1: These Bylaws may be amended when necessary by a two-thirds majority of the Board of Directors. Proposed amendments must be submitted to the Secretary to be sent out with regular Board announcements.

These Bylaws were approved at a meeting of the Board of Directors of _____, 20_____, 20_____.

Witness + Arrantag

RIDGE SCENIC HIGHWAY, CME., INC

Articles of Incorporation, Continued:

ARTICLE VII: Directors of the Corporation :

- 1. DAVID PRICE
- 2.
- 3. LARRY SULLIVAN
- 4. MARK BENNETT
- 5. EDWARD V. ESTEVE
- 6. MARTHA SEHI
- 7. MARLENE WAGNER
- 8. JIM BELL
- 9. RANDY WILKINSON
- 10. ELLIS HUNT
- 12. ERIC HINSHAW
- 13. JUNE FELT
- 14. TRICIA MARTIN

Alternate Directors of the Corporation:

15. JOE SORTLAND

- 16. BOB BURT
- 17. JOHANNA BUSCHER
- 18. JEAN REED
- 19. DAVID SIMMONS
- 20. DEE HINSHAW
- 21. RYAN KORDEK
- 22. LORI CARLTON
- 22. AARON FLINT
- 23. CURTIS KNOWLES
- 24. TIM IRBY
- 25. LISA IRBY

APPENDIX F

2007 Florida American Planning Association State Conference



<section-header>Annual
Conference
2007FAPAQODQOD

CONFERENCE *planning a delicate balance*

September 5-8, 2007

At the Hilton in the Walt Disney World[®] Resort (Orlando)

workshops

Thursday, September 6th Canoe Disney Wilderness Preserve 7:30 AM – 11:00 AM/\$45

Nestled on the shores of Lake Russell, just south of Poinciana and east of the Osceola-Polk County Line border, lies a nature lover's paradise known as the Disney Wilderness Preserve. Enjoy the wonders of the preserve from the water as we take a canoe trip over the lake and through the adjacent wetlands. The Preserve, established by the Nature Conservancy in 1992, is a mitigation site for former ranchlands. The canoe tour will offer participants a chance to learn about the Preserve's plants and animals as well as the Conservancy's efforts to restore and protect them. The Preserve serves as a place where people from all walks of life can come together to learn and exchange knowledge about how to be good stewards of our natural environment. The canoe tour is limited to 20 participants. Bottled water provided. Outdoor appropriate attire including hats, sun protection, and bug repellent is recommended.

Itinerary

| 7:30 AM | - Leave Hilton |
|---------------|--|
| 8:00 AM | - Arrive at Disney Wilderness Preserve |
| 8:15-10:15 AM | - Canoe Tour |
| 10:30 AM | - Leave Disney Wilderness Preserve |
| 11:00 AM | - Arrive at Hilton |
| | |

The Scenic Lake Wales Ridge 7:30 AM – 5:15 PM/\$35

Discover the rolling hills, pristine waters, high sandy ridges, and scenic vistas of the Lake Wales Ridge via a drive along its Scenic Highway (SR 17). The scenic Lake Wales Ridge corridor is rich in archaeological sites, cultural enclaves, tourist destinations, historic commercial and residential districts, farming communities, national landmarks, conservation lands, migratory bird preserves, and green spaces. The Scenic Highway introduces travelers to Central Florida's historic communities and rural agriculture. Stopping at Tiger Creek Preserve, the tour will provide the opportunity to experience a globally unique ecosystem of Ancient Scrub, pine flatwoods, and wetland areas that represent the ancient flora and fauna of North America. Enjoy lunch at Bok Tower, the highest point in peninsular Florida at an elevation of 295' above sea level. Historic Bok Tower is a National Historic Landmark and is also listed on the Great Florida Birding Trail. Take a break at Hickory Lake Scrub before returning to the Conference. This tour will accommodate a minimum of 25 and maximum of 45 participants. Bottled water and lunch provided. Casual attire including comfortable shoes, hat or visor, sunglasses, and sunscreen are recommended. Will be some walking outside. Consider bringing your binoculars and/or camera!

Itinerary

| 7:30 AM | - Leave Hilton |
|------------|--------------------------------|
| 8:00 AM | - Start Scenic Tour |
| 10:00 AM | - Visit Tiger Creek |
| 12:00 Noon | - Lunch/free time at Bok Tower |
| 2:30 PM | - Continue Scenic Tour |
| 3:30 PM | - Break at Hickory Lake Scrub |
| 5:15 PM | - Arrive at Hilton |
| | |