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## BUSINESS BRIEFS

## Verandah holds earth day cleanup



COURTESY PHOTO

Residents and employees of Verandah recognized Earth Day by cleaning up the Orange River

Residents and employees of Verandah took to the water April 20, scouring the banks of the Orange River for litter and cleaning up around the 1,456-acre community's numerous lakes. The annual cleanup, conducted in celebration of Earth Day and now in its fourth year, focused on the Fort Myers community's waterways - its 1.75-mile frontage along the Orange River and the lakes that are woven into the Old Orange and Whispering Oak golf courses.

Kym Mathe, Membership Director for Verandah Club, said about 20 volunteers participated in the cleanup, which netted nearly 100 pounds of litter, along with debris such as tires, cans, Christmas trees and construction debris. "Our residents really take pride in their community," said Mathe. "And as more people move into

Verandah each year, our annual Earth Day effort continues to attract more resident volunteers."

As with past Earth Day cleanups, crews used Verandah's kayaks and canoes and launched from the community's River Village. After the cleanup, they were treated to a cookout at Blossom's Community Grill.

"This annual cleanup has really become a symbol of Verandah and Bonita Bay Group's ongoing commitment to the environment," said Mitch Hutchcraft, regional vice president of Bonita Bay Group, which is developing Verandah. "Verandah was the first green-certified land development in Florida, and we take that designation very seriously." ■

## J.L. Wallace to renovate old Armory

The Florida Department of Military Affairs has awarded J.L. Wallace Inc. the contract to renovate and expand the National Guard Armory, located at 3405 Marion St. in Fort Myers. The project includes the renovation of the existing 10,520-square-foot National Guard Armory with a 2,500-square-foot expansion. The expansion will bring the facility a new training area, add storage areas and expand the mechanical and electrical rooms. In addition, J.L. Wallace will demolish an existing one-story structure east of the

Armory building and replace it with a new motor pool storage and maintenance bay building.



MORGAN

The original Armory building was constructed in the 1950s and has several unique architectural features including a barrel vault roof

structure, which will remain intact. Harold Morgan of J.L. Wallace will serve as senior project manager, and Jeff Griffith will serve as job superintendent. Renovation is expected to be complete November 2007. ■

## New board members

Four Southwest Floridians have been elected as members of the Uncommon Friends Foundation's Board of Directors. They are Guenther Gosch, Jim McLaughlin, Lee Pitts, and Brenda Stewart. They will serve three-year terms.

Guenther Gosch is President/CEO of Moorings Park, Collier County's leading provider of nursing home based rehabilitation services and in-home health services. He has had a career in public health and long term care, serving as a licensed nursing home administrator and managing full service retirement communities. He holds a Master of Public Health from the University of Minnesota and a MBA from Florida Gulf Coast University.

Jim McLaughlin, former WINK-TV anchor, now operates a free-lance photography business specializing in commercial and corporate photography. He holds a BA in Modern Languages from St. Bonaventure University. McLaughlin started his broadcast career at WCCF-FM radio in Punta Gorda in 1976. He was employed by WINK-TV from 1977, starting as Charlotte County Bureau Chief and becoming an anchor in 1980. He served in that position until retiring in 2005.

Lee Pitts is a former vice president at Wachovia Bank, managing the community development-lending department for South Florida. He is the founder of the Lee Pitts Swim School, a nationally recognized swim program established to teach free swim lessons for disadvantaged youth. His publications include over 25 articles on swimming and water safety. Pitts is host and executive producer of the television talk show, "Lee Pitts Live," which focuses on issues and people impacting the minority community in South Florida. He received his Bachelors in Business Administration from Talladega College and his Masters in Economics from Clark Atlanta University.

Brenda Stewart is Executive Director of the Lee County Dental Society, Inc. She has been employed by the organization for the past 13 years. Mrs. Stewart has been an Uncommon Friends Foundation volunteer for a number of years, serving on scholarship, traveling exhibit, and fund-raising committees. ■

## Riverside expands in Naples

Riverside Bank of the Gulf Coast reports that the company's newest branch in Golden Gate is under construction. Located adjacent to Saint Elizabeth Seton Church on the south side of Golden Gate Parkway, this new facility is the company's first freestanding location in Naples.

Currently, Riverside Bank operates a branch located within Wal-Mart off of Collier Boulevard. Founded in 1997, Riverside Bank has grown to over 13 banking centers from Bradenton to Naples, has 200 employees and nearly \$600 million in assets. ■

## New building announced



ARTIST RENDERING

The architect's rendering of the new AIM Engineering building to be built on Colonial Boulevard near Interstate 75.

Architecture, Inc. announced the groundbreaking of the new AIM Engineering building near I-75 on Colonial Boulevard will take place later this month. The building is a 60,000-square-foot professional office building costing more than \$10 million.

Embracing its surroundings, the building will feature exterior porches and will use earthy products such as galvanized steel, wood, concrete and neutral stucco.

Early 20th century classic Southern architecture inspired the rustic, yet modern design and invites tenants and visitors to enjoy preserve views on three sides.

"The AIM Engineering building is a true testament to classic and modern designs melding together and cohabitating with nature," said Jason Dontje, Project Manager with Architecture, Inc. "We are excited to see it come to fruition over the next few months." ■