

## **External Affairs January 2009**

Our committee, with the support and assistance of Tom Padgett, Board President and Don Huprich, Club Manager, sent letters to both District 1 Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) and Lee County Department of Transportation on November 21, 2008 outlining our concerns about the potential loss of our right turn lane on Bonita Beach Road. We pointed out that in 1998 Hunters Ridge paid for the construction of this turn lane which serves Hunters Ridge Blvd.

FDOT has responded to our letter. They state that our turn lane will be preserved in this interchange improvement project. Of greater interest to our residents, the opening in the divided highway medium strip, which allows a left turn onto Bonita Beach Road, will be preserved by FDOT. Even more important, FDOT has decided to have neither a yield nor a stop sign where the northbound exit ramp merges onto Bonita Beach road near Hunters Ridge Blvd. Instead, FDOT now plans to have a signal light at the end of the exit ramp. This means exiting onto Bonita Beach Road from Hunters Ridge Blvd. will be safer after these interchange improvements are completed by FDOT. However, it is possible Lee County DOT may eliminate our ability to make a left turn exiting from Hunters Ridge Blvd. We plan to aggressively pursue keeping our opening in the Bonita Beach Road medium with Lee County DOT.

We have reviewed the FDOT Sound Barrier Study of 2005 which was the basis of determining which communities or developments along I-75 in both Lee and Collier Counties would receive an FDOT constructed sound barrier. We have found a number of anomalies or, in some cases, discrepancies in these reports. Our committee has developed a number of questions for the FDOT District 1 project manager. A meeting has been scheduled at District 1 on January 6, 2009 between our Chairman and Vice Chairman to go over our questions with FDOT. There is a Phase 1 Sound Barrier project which is currently underway for the expansion of I-75 from a 4 lane expressway to a 6 lane expressway (currently under construction). Currently Hunters Ridge does not qualify for a sound barrier. Getting Hunters Ridge approved for the government constructed sound barrier is going to take a lot of time and effort and we may still not get it approved. The estimated cost in the 2005 report for a Phase 1 Sound Barrier of approx. 1,150 feet long for us was approximately \$667,000. The Phase 1 sound barrier would be built along #9 hole from slightly south of our property to just beyond the green. We will update everyone on the results of our January 6 meeting with FDOT and Lee County DOT at a later time.

On January 29, the property owners along Bonita Beach Road east of I-75 will be hosting a meeting at Village Walk at 2:00 PM. Representatives of Hunters Ridge, Worthington, Quail West, Palmira, Village Walk and San Remo will be at this meeting. Major participants in this meeting will be Ray Judah, Chairman of the Lee County Commission, Gary Price, City Manager, and Bill Lonkart, our City Councilman. Some of the more important agenda items include funding availability for Bonita Beach Road required to take advantage of FDOT Phase 1 interchange improvements; proposed annexation of the north side Bonita Beach Road by the city; status of widening Bonita Beach Road to full 4 lanes; and many other topics. This meeting is open to anyone from the five gated communities.