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## Scenic News:

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Scenic Byway [designation sought](#) for Virginia's Route 5...

Chicago neighborhood rejoices as [digital billboard removed...](#)

Billboards [won't be allowed](#) to grow taller in Texas...

Scenic Aquidneck [secures funds](#) to underground wires...

## Study shows Florida's highway beautification efforts paying off

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) has [commissioned a study](#) to estimate the regional economic impacts of highway beautification expenditures within the state.

Each year the Florida state legislature allocates funds for highway landscaping projects not only to improve the experiences of motorists but also to attract tourists, businesses and other private investment.

The results showed that highway beautification by FDOT from 2008 to 2013 generated annual average economic impacts of \$74 million, or more than \$3 for every \$1 of investment.

These findings will help FDOT determine how to direct future highway beautification projects for maximum scenic and economic benefits to the state.



## Oakland, CA rejects digital billboards

The Oakland City Council has voted unanimously to reject proposals from Foster Media and Iris Media to erect eight digital billboards along a major city thoroughfare.

The proposal had been making its way through City departments for many years but was rejected by city leaders on July 29 after input from citizens and public interest coalitions.



"The council has made clear its commitment to stop blighting our city with digital billboards that distract motorists and drive down property values," said Karen Hester, co-founder of [Scenic East Bay](#). "The vote makes clear the council's desire to clean up the city and protect the image that we have been working so hard to promote."

The win is the latest in a series of victories for Bay Area residents over digital billboards. Officials in the cities of Richmond and



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 scenic conference still

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Albany have voted to block digital billboard blight, and the city of San Francisco has outlawed digital billboards for several years.

## Marketing expert says visual blight a drag on business appeal

A longtime leader in community destination marketing says that the kind of visual blight exemplified by roadside billboards is [detrimental to an area's overall business appeal](#) and city and state governments would do well to clean up their images.

Reyn Bowman, a 40-year veteran of community-destination marketing and former CEO of Durham, N.C.'s convention and visitors bureau, says that visual pollution can negatively affect how an area is perceived when evaluated by businesses.

"If legislators want to lower the cost of doing business, one of the important ways they can do it is to eliminate roadside blight, starting with billboards," Bowman said, citing [a survey](#) of businesses that showed upkeep and cleanliness to be major influences during decisions to locate, relocate or expand.



His words jibe with those of many speakers at Scenic America's [recent conference](#) in Houston, including developer Gerald Hines who said [beauty is good for business](#), and Doug Harman, former President & CEO of the Fort Worth Convention and Visitors Bureau, who said [good taste means better business](#).

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