



April 2015

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Scenic News:

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Editorial: Des Moines [digital billboards hurt](#) home values...

The "daffodil man" [honored for flower planting](#) in Illinois...

Scenic North Carolina [editorial](#) on bad billboard legislation...

San Pedro, CA looks [to rid itself](#) of eyesore billboard...



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After latest flap, state takes control of Philadelphia's outdoor advertising

Shortly after the Philadelphia City Council [signed off on](#) plans for giant digital advertising displays on downtown city streets, Pennsylvania's Department of Transportation [has revoked](#) the city's right to control outdoor advertising in commercial areas.

Many large cities in the United States have certification from their state Departments of Transportation to control outdoor advertising in certain areas within city boundaries. Pennsylvania granted certification to Philadelphia in 1974, but in recent years the city has sought to sell more and more public space to advertisers.



The decision was praised by Mary Tracy, executive director of Scenic Philadelphia. "The citizens of Philadelphia deserve the same protections from billboard blight that residents of other Pennsylvania communities receive."

Texas Supreme Court rules against billboard giant Clear Channel

The Texas Supreme Court has ruled in favor of the State of Texas in a lawsuit filed by Clear Channel Outdoor involving condemnation costs to acquire billboards that stood in the way of the widening of a freeway in Houston.

In a unanimous opinion the Court upheld precedent which held that evidence regarding the advertising revenues realized from a billboard may not be considered in a condemnation action. The Court concluded: "Clear Channel is not entitled to further compensation for its loss of business operations at the site."



Across the country public works budgets are being diminished by billboard company claims of lost future revenues for billboards that are condemned for highway projects. In this case Clear Channel claimed that the billboards in question had a total value of

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Georgetown Law students presented with Legal Advocacy Award:

At Scenic America's recent Board of Directors meeting, representatives of Georgetown Law School's [Institute for Public Representation](#) were presented with the Legal Advocacy Award for their outstanding representation of Scenic America in our ongoing lawsuit against the Federal Highway Administration over digital billboards.



L to R: Scenic America president Mary Tracy, student Jason Yan, attorney Danny Lutz, student Rosalie Winn, and Scenic America vice-chair Margaret Lloyd.

\$700,000, and it was seeking this amount as its award in the condemnation proceeding. Once advertising revenues were excluded from the valuation formula, however, Clear Channel's own expert testified that the value of each billboard taken was \$15,000.

"Clear Channel Outdoor pays nothing to use our public highways even though that is the source of 100% of their value," said Margaret Lloyd, vice-president of Scenic Texas. "The Texas Supreme Court said that Clear Channel should not be unjustly compensated by the taxpayers when highway construction requires their billboards to be removed. We think the Court reached a fair result."

[Click here](#) to learn more and to read Scenic Texas' amicus brief in the case.

New survey shows North Carolina voters oppose billboard blight

A new poll commissioned in response to a bill in the North Carolina legislature shows that residents are overwhelmingly opposed to giving any further concessions to the billboard industry.

A strong majority of North Carolina voters oppose key provisions of SB320, a bill that would [give further control of the state's landscapes](#) to the billboard industry, including forcing the NC DOT to issue permits for billboards even if they violate local zoning laws, such as those in the city of Durham which prohibit new billboards.



Respondents also opposed the bill's provisions allowing billboards to be moved and converted to digital billboards and increasing the amount of money NC DOT will have to pay to the owners of billboards that are condemned to permit highway expansion.

[Click here](#) to view the poll results.

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