

# Scenic Overlook

The Monthly Newsletter of Scenic America

January 2012

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Billboard industry is [trying to push](#) politicians towards using digital signs in their campaigns...

Report [recommends denial](#) of high-voltage corridors through Everglades National Park...

Mail Tribune [explains why](#) Oregon saw new billboards go up after a 30 year cap...

Ohio scenic byway [will honor](#) Quaker heritage...

Tennessee Court of Appeals [dismisses](#) billboard challenge...

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~ New Publication ~

## New study shows billboards hurt nearby property values

A new study shows that billboards negatively affect the values of neighboring properties. It also found that cities with strict billboard controls are experiencing greater economic prosperity than those with controls that are less strict.

The report, "Beyond Aesthetics: How Billboards Affect Economic Prosperity," found that, in Philadelphia, homes within 500 feet of a billboard are worth \$30,826 less on average at the time of sale than those properties further away from billboards. The study also found that each additional billboard within a census tract resulted in a decrease in home values of nearly \$1,000.



Additionally, a survey of billboard controls and economic prosperity in 20 cities across the United States showed that cities with stricter billboard controls have greater median incomes, lower poverty rates and lower home vacancy rates than city with less strict billboard controls. [Click here for more information and to download the full report.](#)

## High Country News investigation: it's billboards vs. democracy

An [epic new investigation](#) by *High Country News* reveals various ways that the billboard industry uses money and influence to override the wishes of citizens and community leaders.

Senior Editor Ray Ring's article looks at how billboard companies entrench themselves in city halls and state houses and endear themselves to some politicians with campaign contributions of cash and free advertising.



[Scenic Michigan](#) has partnered with the Planning and Zoning Center at Michigan State University to publish the [Michigan Sign Regulation Guidebook](#).

The guidebook addresses a wide range of issues associated with local sign regulation with a major focus on legal issues and how communities can develop sign ordinances that minimize legal risks.

Though laws vary from state to state, this guidebook will be a valuable resource to anyone with an interest in sign regulation. [Click here](#) for more information and to order.

A well-timed [new video](#) from Ossian Or examines similar themes: the way the billboard lobby works state legislatures in particular to bypass or eliminate local control of signage regulations. That video, more from the Blightfighter series, and others can be viewed [on our video page](#).

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## *Florida grand jury finds major violations in tree-cutting case*

A grand jury in Florida [has found flagrant violations](#) of the law in a case in which Salter Advertising was granted permits to cut down more than 2,000 state-owned trees without being required to pay mitigation fees totaling \$4 million.

The case included an investigation of the activities of State Sen. Greg Evers, who the report says “actively advocated on behalf of Salter Advertising,” though Evers has said he was just trying to help a constituent.

The [grand jury report](#) lays most of the blame on the Florida DOT for failing to follow the law. Though they failed to return an indictment, the grand jury recommends that Salter Advertising be encouraged to pay the mitigation fees as well as remove 56 nonconforming billboards that should have been taken down as part of the permitting process.

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