

## LAKE ASBURY MUNICIPAL SERVICE BENEFIT DISTRICT (LAMSBD)

Submitted, June 25, 2009

[www.lakeasbury.us](http://www.lakeasbury.us)

**HB 713 was vetoed by the Governor.** The Board regrets to report that Governor Crist vetoed our legislation to increase our assessment to meet the safety and maintenance needs of the district. This legislation passed the House and Senate without one vote against and your Board provided reams of information stating the safety and maintenance needs to be addressed with the new funds. The Board had direct contact with the Governor's staff and there was no indication that he was considering a veto. You can let the Governor know your feelings regarding his actions by going to MyFlorida.com and the Governor's section.

The Board, during the July 6<sup>th</sup> meeting, will have to set a new strategy to find the revenues to correct safety deficiencies and maintain the system to today's best practices standards for earthen dams. All members are encouraged to attend. If you cannot attend, the Board's strategy can be found in the Minutes on the web site, after the July minutes are approved in August. Please get involved or at least follow what is happening regarding funding the many issues which urgently need corrective action. If you don't think this is critical, be aware that according to the initial estimate of the revenues from the Ad Valorem taxes for the 2009-2010 tax season, there will be only approximately \$55,900. Because the \$100 assessment is pledged to repay the Dredging Note, this is all the money we have for the next fiscal year's maintenance. To put this in prospective, the engineering study, which is well overdue and the baseline for the safety and maintenance plans, costs an estimated \$125,000. Without this study, the Board cannot effectively manage the maintenance of the system and argue the watershed issues with Clay County, discussed below.

**Advertising for Board members.** In addition to keeping knowledgeable of the community's challenges, members are asked to consider filling vacancies on the Board. There will be two vacancies as of the date of this news article. Keep current on the vacancies and consider volunteering your time during this critical phase to properly manage this district. Contact any Board member, if you are interested and they will direct you to Ann Mitchell at Clay County to apply.

**Survey Visit by the Department of Environmental Protection's Bureau of Mining & Minerals Regulations.** Before the Board was aware of the veto, Dr. Owete's office contacted the Board and requested that they be accompanied during their site survey of Lake Asbury. This DEP division is responsible for earthen dams in the state and especially ones like ours under the control of a Special District authority. Their purpose was to better understand the characteristics of the lake system. This survey is not an inspection with a written report. They would be most interested in the Board's understanding of the status of their system and what was required to keep these earthen dams within current standards. They were also interested in the financial plan being developed to better manage the safety and maintenance of the lakes with the new assessment.

With the veto, the enthusiasm the Board had in anticipation of this visit changed. The blow delivered by the Governor did not last long because of the knowledge and professionalism of Dr. Owete's team. The Bureau, LAMSBD members and Clay County's Public Works people attending the survey all became deeply involved, without finger pointing, in what is needed to work through the many issues facing the district and county. The members attending were immediately interested in noting what the Bureau was airing as their concerns with all earthen dams. Our system's characteristics have most of these concerns and they hope we would be addressing them, as soon as possible, and with professional support.

Highlights include the safety issues related to South Lake's, Lake Ryan's and LARC's lack of an overflows, trees on North Lake and sediment being carried into the fingers from district property and the watershed. We recognized we have problems within the district, but one of our most critical problems is the watershed's storm drainage design which delivers fast moving water and sediment through several fingers. In their opinion, the district should have professional representation in the county's development and planning activities. The district's Consulting Engineering firm should be able to review all activities related to the watershed where water is presented to the lake system. The Vision Committee's first item in the Reserve Study is an Engineering Study which establishes the baseline of the dam's current status, recommendations for corrective actions and they then would then become the Consulting Engineering firm. This firm becomes our professionals who evaluate the county's watershed planning and present to the county and state the items of remedial actions necessary to correct current damages to the lake system, especially items related to safety. In summary, associations like ours tend to present issues to other governmental entities using emotions and not facts. We need professional help to develop the facts regarding our district's problems and facts related to watershed issues controlled by the county. We are not an island of self interest; we are part of a larger system and must be able to professionally present our position with facts.

There was one recommendation they had for the Board to consider and that was grants. The Board has and will consider grants. It is working through the Florida Association of Special District (FASD) to be

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included in a list of shovel ready projects that FASD will send to the Governor for consideration. The Board has sent its own individual request for stimulus money directly to the Governor.

DEP indicated that they would send any information they find which could direct the Board to additional grants. The Association of State Dam Safety Officials (ASDSO) is having its annual conference this fall and DEP encouraged the Board to join the two day conference to help develop contacts for grants, engineering companies and to better understand the efforts being made at the state level to address earthen dams in Florida.

Approximately 850 attendees from all 50 states, Puerto Rico, plus foreign nations will attend the ASDSO conference in Hollywood, FL.

During the Fact Finding Session, Mike Bueme, Bueme Engineering reviewed LAMSBD past dredging and its impact on the future. To sum up Mike's presentation, the keys to the silt problems are stability, erosion control and water flow. The increasing level of sediment adds pressure on our aging dams' everyday and we need to solve this problem very quickly.

It is the opinion of the Chairman before we plan any more dredging, we will need a comprehensive plan between the County & LAMSBD in order for any new dredging plan to be lasting. Lake Lot Owners may have to put in bulkheads where none exist and the County will have to slow the rate & amount of water flow into our lakes. The water flow will have to be an amount conducive to dam safety.

Ronnie Robinson is organizing a meeting between the County Staff and LAMSBD to begin solving our issues. It should be noted this process will not be completed over night.

**This was not a Board meeting. There will be summary notes related to the Bureaus' survey visit for disclosure to the members and placed on the web site.**

**Members' help has made Lake Asbury the squeaky wheel at Clay County Publics Works.** We thank members for their help in making Public Works aware of our drainage problems created by water draining into our lakes from the surrounding watershed. Please continue to report your problems directly to them and remember it is very helpful to provide pictures. The Board remains interested in being copied on your Public Works complaints and your documented evidence, especially the pictures. You can send your information related to your report to the County's Public Works to the Board's Chairman at [carlkocher11@comcast.com](mailto:carlkocher11@comcast.com) or any other Board member. The county contact information is Dave Austin, Director of Public Works: GCS 284-6335, Fax 284-0083 email [Public.Works@co.clay.fl.us](mailto:Public.Works@co.clay.fl.us) .

**The Vision Committee** cancelled its special meeting to finalizing the district's initial pro forma financial plan consisting of the annual best practices budgets and the 10-year Blueprint for the Future. The committee will finalize the plan during its August meeting, after the Board decides what the new strategy is for additional funds and revised operating budget subject to available revenue.

**Flood Insurance:** Please consider or reconsider Flood Insurance. Clay County's Emergency Management Officials strongly urge all Clay County residents to look in to purchasing flood insurance, whether or not their homes are located in a designated flood plain. There is a standard 30-day waiting period before a policy becomes effective. Flood insurance is easy to obtain and is sold by most insurance agents.

**Advertising for a District Secretary.** The Board is looking for part-time, paid Secretary to the Board. The pay rate will be dependent upon your skill's matching the duties to be performed. For more information, please contact the Board Chairman at 864-7709, or at [carlkocher11@comcast.net](mailto:carlkocher11@comcast.net) or attend the Board meeting, if you have questions and/or interest.

**Meeting dates.** LAMSBD next meets are on July 6<sup>th</sup> and August 3<sup>rd</sup>. LAMSBD's meetings, the remainder of the calendar year, are on the first Monday of the month, except September's meeting is on the 14<sup>th</sup> & November's is on the 9<sup>th</sup>, both being the second Mondays of the month. Reading of the Budget was legally advertised in Clay Today, May 25<sup>th</sup> for June, July and August. The July meeting will be the first time the Board has to address the Budget after the veto. Please join us.

*Your Board hopes you and your family enjoys Independence Day, the 4<sup>th</sup> of July holiday weekend.*