



# Pelican Bay Post

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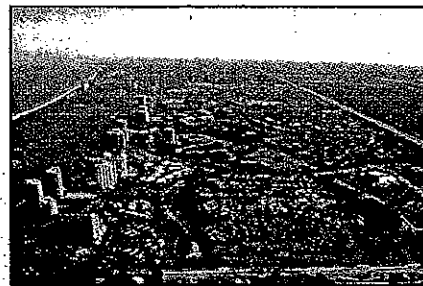
## Legislative representation

By Jim Hoppensteadt, Foundation President

Despite the fact that Pelican Bay has about 6,478 residential units located within 93 residential condominium and homeowner associations, accounting for more than 13,000 residents seasonally, and represents a tax base of over \$5.86 billion, Pelican Bay has never made its voice heard on all-important Florida legislative issues. Since owners living in common interest ownership communities are more highly regulated by the State than other real property owners, it is vital that we become informed and involved when proposals impacting our community are being debated and adopted, both at the State and local level.

For some time the Board has sought an effective way to close the gap between having the political

influence to make a difference and actually being able to harness that power. This objective has become more of an imperative in recent years, with legislative proposals from Tallahassee that dramatically affect property taxes



and insurance costs! There have also been less publicized bills proposed that would add to the costs of running an association community while significantly increasing the burden on volunteer lay board

members who administer and operate their common interest communities.

The Community Advocacy Network (CAN) is a statewide advocacy network dedicated to promoting positive community association legislation while advising legislators to resist the urge to micromanage and over-regulate private residential communities. CAN works through its website, email alerts and tools, such as the "Capitol Connection" email system, to give association leaders the information and resources needed to play a meaningful part in the legislative process before harmful bills are passed.

For this purpose, the Foundation has joined

CAN and will seek to use this relationship to protect and further the best interests of the residents of Pelican Bay. CAN will provide education and outreach to our community with regard to information and resources we need to know. Information regarding hurricane preparation and recovery resources, FEMA assistance, insurance information and financial products can be found on the CAN's website year-round, as well as a host of other useful links, articles and information.

CAN will also assist building relationships and engaging in a dialogue with our elected state representatives throughout the year in order to make our input on proposals more meaningful while the

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Legislature is in session. Whenever possible, CAN will work to set up one-on-one meetings with elected representatives during the year to discuss items of concern for Pelican Bay.

As CAN members, Pelican Bay associations are encouraged to contact Executive Director Donna D. Berger, Esq., at any time throughout the year to discuss legislation or any other information posted on the website or transmitted via email alerts. Ms. Berger has counseled condominium and homeowner associations throughout Florida for the past 15 years. Her work with these communities includes covenant enforcement, covenant amendment, contract review and drafting,

collections and foreclosures, as well as advising these associations about the statutory and documentary guidelines for the daily administration of their communities. In addition, Ms. Berger has testified before the Florida Legislature regarding community association law and has frequently appeared on radio talk shows and in print media discussing these issues.

Ms. Berger, formerly the Executive Director of CALL (the Community Association Leadership Lobby) was recognized by Florida Trend Magazine in 2006 as one of the "Legal Elite" in the area of Community Association Law. This designation was based upon a poll of Florida attorneys, who selected

peers in the top 2% of their respective practice areas.

More information will be forthcoming soon, including how to participate in an Affinity Program specifically designed for CAN members, whereby vendors and service providers specializing in the community association market will offer special discounts and services. In the meantime, if you have any interest in becoming more specifically involved in this effort, including your ability to make occasionally necessary trips to Tallahassee or spearheading a letter writing campaign, please let my office know. You may reach me at 239-596-6180 ext. 223 or via email at [jimh@pelicanbay.org](mailto:jimh@pelicanbay.org).

