

Lake Okeechobee Regional Initiative (LORI)

Presented September 16, 2010



COLLINS CENTER
FOR PUBLIC POLICY

LORI

Lake Okeechobee Regional Initiative is a convening of elected officials and other stakeholders around the southern rim of Lake O to re-imagine their economy in light of the potential that exists there!



Goal # 1: Establish a Regional Framework by (examples):

- **Developing a regional marketing plan for the Lake Okeechobee area, including audience research, branding, proposed media buys, exploration of interest by “extreme sports” enthusiasts, festivals, and the like. We have emphasized that Lake Okeechobee is a common asset to the region and developing its tourism potential is critical to diversification.**
- **Ensuring that an important transportation link, a bus route between the cities of Clewiston and Belle Glade, continues in operation.**
- **Spurring the Florida Department of Transportation to put high priority on improving the intersection of State Road 80 and U.S. Highway 27, a safety concern to all in the region.**
- **Reinforcing work performed by FRACC (Florida Rural Area Construction Coop) to utilize existing Federal funds to assist business development in the region. We have partnered with the Florida Heartland Rural Economic Development Initiative in this area.**
- **Procuring and distributing to regional leaders a set of maps that show infrastructure; land and water resources; public facilities; tourism attractions; and employment centers.**
- **Initiating discussions in the “Tri-Cities” of Pahokee, Belle Glade and South Bay regarding their unique opportunities.**

Goal # 2 Identify Regional Working Groups (Strategies):

- **Established multiple regional committees to include transportation and tourism that work effectively across county borders to implement and maintain “regional” infrastructure**
- **Establish tourism committee as overarching regional working group; establish “Big Water” as a brand for the southern “shores” of Lake Okeechobee. Involve the Palm Beach County Convention and Visitors Bureau and economic development practitioners from all three counties working together to produce a regional attraction program to include a regional tourism brochure and video.**
- **Introduce “information lead” and economic development mining concepts to the region**
- **Establish other regional networks around issue of census undercount and data dissemination under the Collins Compact. The Collins Compact is a partnership between the Collins Center and Social Compact funded by the Collins Center.**
- **Link workforce training initiatives to projects facilitated by Florida Rural Area Construction Consortium (FRACC)**
- **Establish web site for marketing and regional brand identification for attraction and retention purposes**

Economic Diversification Plans (phases):

- **Phase 1: Focus on “Doable Deeds” (Non- competitive acts that engender civic pride and regional cooperation) such as the transportation initiative for the widening of State Road 80 and the support of the Florida Rural Area Construction Consortium focused on economic development infrastructure and the rendering of technical assistance designed to help diversify the economy in the region. Other doable deeds such as the establishment of an urban farm in Belle Glade are designed to build civic pride and add to the civic fabric of the region.**
- **Build and equip Public/ Private Partnerships**
- **Phase 2: Build regional brand and supporting infrastructure (web site(s), quasi regional economic development committee with committees formed to discuss and support economic diversification such as transportation and tourism**
- **Phase 3: Synergies in Alternative Energies /Agriculture/ Environmental Restoration**
- **Phase 4: Regulatory legislative strategies to attach region’s concerns to FHREDI and other existing rural initiatives for the greatest chance of continued support in tight budget years.**
- **Concurrent engagement in workforce and educational issues**

Diversification (con't)

What is a “Localvore”? Or How You Can Prosper in the New World of Food

A presentation and dialogue with the
Division of Marketing and Development
Florida Department of Agriculture

- The latest research on consumer tastes and trends
- How the state is involved in ag marketing
- How you can leverage state resources, including international assistance
- Examples of brand awareness, entry into giant food retailers such as Costco, Wal-Mart and Publix

Tuesday, Sept. 21

9:00 – 11:00 a.m.

Everglades Research and Education Center
3200 East Palm Beach Road, Belle Glade

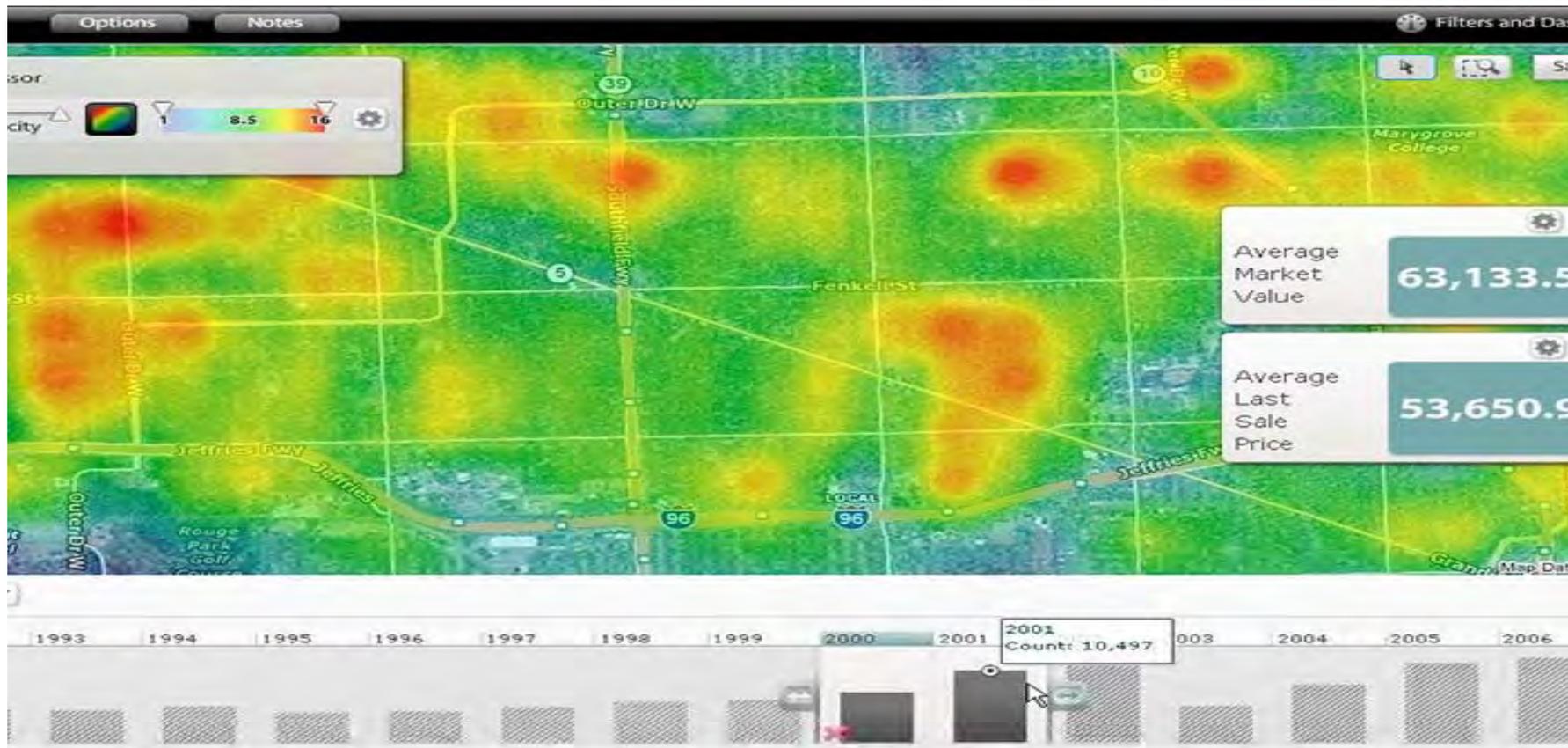
This event co-sponsored by the Western Palm Beach County Farm Bureau, the Hendry Glades County Farm Bureau and the Lake Okeechobee Regional Initiative of the Collins Center for Public Policy

Open to all interested members of the grower community and their supporters

Urban Farming



Social Compact



Facilitating public and private investment in underserved communities by quantifying market characteristics of low and middle-income neighborhoods by addressing such issues as census undercounts, foreclosures and undocumented purchasing potential.

Brand and Logo



▪ Sept. 16, 2010



COLLINS CENTER
FOR PUBLIC POLICY

Marketing Objectives

- **Create brand awareness of Lake O**
- **Increase attendance at attractions, festivals and events**
- **Grow target audience engagement with region**
- **Drive traffic to Web site**

Tourism



Clockwise from top: Horseback riding around Lake O, sturgeon, Palm Drive in Pahokee, a gopher tortoise



DIRECTIONS TO LAKE OKEECHOBEE
 From Fort Myers and the west coast take S.R. 80 east to U.S. 27.
 From West Palm Beach take S.R. 98 west.
 From Orlando take I-4 to U.S. 27 south.
 From Miami take U.S. 27 north.

FOR ACCOMMODATIONS, DINING AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION VISIT:

- www.bellegldechamber.com
- www.citylabelle.com
- www.clewiston.org
- www.clewiston-fl.gov
- www.clewistonmuseum.org
- www.labellechamber.com
- www.lakeokeechobeeoutpost.com
- www.myglades.com
- www.pahokee.com
- www.palmbeachfl.com
- www.seminoletribe.com
- www.southbaycity.com
- www.torryisland.com
- www.visitglades.com
- www.visithendrycounty.com

This brochure has been funded by the Collins Center for Public Policy, [visit collinscenter.org](http://visitcollinscenter.org).

LakeOBigWater.com

SOUTHERN SHORES OF
Lake Okeechobee
 GATEWAY TO THE EVERGLADES

Your guide to the southern shores of Lake O

LakeOBigWater.com



Welcome

The southern shores of Lake Okeechobee encompasses the counties of Hendry, Glades and Palm Beach counties. These areas are united in history as part of the great era of agriculture, citrus, cattle and sugar cane environmentally, and united by their proximity to the shores of the second largest natural freshwater lake in the nation and the Everglades.

HENDRY

Established May 11, 1923, as Florida's 63rd county, Hendry County offers something for everyone: nature and wildlife, culture and history, sporting and fishing, and heaps of old-time charm. Named after Capt. Francis A. Hendry, one of its first settlers, Hendry's major cities are Clewiston and LaBelle.

GLADES

Named after the Florida Everglades, Glades County was established in 1921. Water is one of Glades' big draws, since it borders the western side of Lake Okeechobee and hosts the Caloosahatchee River, the main outlet to the Gulf of Mexico. There is an abundance of natural resources and outdoor activities here, including boating, fishing, wildlife, golf, walking and bicycling. The major city and county seat is Moore Haven. Also, in Northeast Glades County is the Brighton Seminole Indian Reservation.

From cover top to bottom: flock of birds, bass, small kite, canoeing on Fishing Creek



Brochure

Nature & Environment

Fresh water, unspoiled environment, abundant wildlife: Many of the compelling reasons to visit the area south of Lake Okeechobee fall into these categories. "Lake O" is the second largest freshwater lake in the U.S. - it is 33 miles long by 30 miles wide - and there is much to do along its shores. But that is not all. Places like the Caloosahatchee River, Torry Island, and the Big Cypress Seminole Indian Reservation offer a world of adventure, fun and scenic pleasures.

AIRBOAT RIDES Big "O" Guide Service H

A Scenic Eco-Tour on Lake Okeechobee. See alligators, manatees, pelicans, birds and more.
Roland & Mary Ann Martin's Marina & Resort
920 E. Del Monte Ave., Clewiston
800-741-3141 • www.bigofishing.com

Billie Swamp Safari BC

Take a swamp buggy or airboat Everglades Eco-Tour at Big Cypress Seminole Indian Reservation, featuring 2,200 untamed acres.
30000 Gator Trail Trail, Clewiston
800-GO-SAFARI • www.seminoletribe.com/safari

Eagle Nest Airboat Tours PB

Two-hour guided tours of Lake Okeechobee, an interesting and entertaining trip exploring the plants, birds, and animals that live in and around the lake.
3300 West Lake Road, Belle Glade • 561-261-3655

BIRDING

Audubon Society of the Everglades PB

Enjoy field trips, activities and more.
6301 Summit Blvd., West Palm Beach
561-588-6908 • www.auduboneverglades.org



Filmmaking airboat ride over the water, alligators



Left: Hiking the LOST trail. Below: A brilliantly colored kingfisher.



Everglades Agricultural Areas PB

Agricultural fields and Lake Okeechobee's shallows in and around Belle Glade host wading birds and migrating shorebirds.
561-696-8800 • www.sfwmd.gov/da

STA 1E PB

This vast wetland site offers a public access point for hiking, bank fishing, bicycling, bird-watching and nature photography.
Access from S.R. 80/U.S. 441, open sunrise to sunset Fri - Mon.
800-432-2045 • www.sfwmd.gov/recreation

STA 1W PB

Bird-watchers may spot great blue herons, ducks, roseate spoonbills, white pelicans and wood storks from a three-mile levee trail and gaze-hos overlooking the wetlands. Other activities include hiking, cycling and photography.
Access from C.R. 880, open sunrise to sunset Fri - Mon.
800-432-2045 • www.sfwmd.gov/recreation

STA 5 Bird-Watching Tours H

In partnership with Hendry Glades Audubon, the South Florida Water Management District offers escorted birding tours at the South Florida Birding Trail. STA 5 is ranked one of the best bird watching area in the country.
Labelle • 863-674-0695 • www.hendrygladesaudubon.org

BY FOOT, BIKE OR HOOF Clewiston Walking/Biking Tour H

Four self-guided trails all start from the Clewiston Inn and meander through the residential areas of Clewiston.
108 Royal Palm Ave., Clewiston • 863-983-7979

Dinner Island Ranch WMA H

Large acreage and mix of wetlands and uplands create outstanding wildlife viewing. Part of the Great Florida Birding Trail offers fishing, hiking, cycling, camping, hunting, horseback riding and scenic driving.
29 miles southwest of Clewiston off C.R. 833
<http://myfwc.com/recreation/WMA/Sites/DinnerIslandRanch/index.htm>

Fishing Creek Outpost G

Offers camping, paddling, hiking and eco-adventures along one of the most pristine creeks in Florida.
7555 U.S. Hwy. 27 N., Palmdale
863-675-5999
www.fishingcreekoutpost.com

BC: Big Cypress Seminole Indian Reservation
H: Hendry County
G: Glades County
PB: Palm Beach County
♿: Handicapped Accessible

Lake Okeechobee Scenic Trail (LOST) G, H, PB

Get LOST along 110 miles of hiking trail that encircles "Lake O" - the second largest freshwater lake in the contiguous United States. Designated as part of the Florida National Scenic Trail in 1999, more than half of the trail is paved, and the remainder consists of a two-track gravel roadway on top of the 35-foot-high Herbert Hoover Dike. There are numerous locations for access by hikers and bikers, as well as equestrians.
863-983-8101 • www.dep.state.fl.us/gwt/state/lakeotrail

Okealoocoochee Slough State Forest H

Encompassing nearly 35,000 acres mostly in Hendry County, the slough extends northward to the Caloosahatchee River and southward about 50 miles into Big Cypress Swamp. There are 39 miles of trails open for wildlife viewing, hiking, non-motorized biking, and horseback riding. It is also designated as part of the Great Florida Birding Trail and hosts the annual Big "O" Birding Festival in March.
Accessed along C.R. 832, marked by self-service pay stations
863-652-0776 • www.floridastateforests.com/okealoocoochee.html

Spirit of the Wild WMA H

This is an excellent area to view wildlife year-round. This area is part of the Great Florida Birding Trail and offers fishing, hiking, biking, horseback riding and scenic driving.
12 miles south of Labelle, on C.R. 832 • 850-488-4676
<http://myfwc.com/recreation/WMA/Sites/SpiritoftheWild/index.htm>

Torry Island PB

This getaway spot offers boating, fishing, bird watching, nature trails, camping and more - located on the southeast shore of Lake Okeechobee.
Southeast S.R. 77, Belle Glade
561-966-6322 • www.torryisland.com

DRIVING TOUR Big Water Heritage Trail G, H, PB

Officially opened in May 2009, Big Water Heritage Trail is a regional driving tour on state, county and city streets that links historical, cultural, natural, recreational and educational points of interest in five Florida counties including Hendry, Glades, and Palm Beach.
Clewiston Chamber of Commerce
863-983-7676 • <http://tinyurl.com/z3bpqfm>

HUNTING Chappy's Outfitters G

A complete outfitters for boat fishing on Lake Okeechobee, or wild boar, whitetail deer or Osceola turkey hunting with the method of your choice: stand, swamp buggy or dog hunt.
11698 E. S.R. 76, Moore Haven
800-358-5541 • www.okeechobee-hunting-fishing.com

Silver Lake Preserve H

This pristine 1,876-acre tract offers a customized hunting program with some of the best year-round native wildlife (alligators, quail, wild hog and Osceola turkey) opportunities in south Florida. The Silver Lake Lodge, built in the early 1900s, can accommodate ten guests and offers satellite TV and Internet access, private bedrooms with bath and a bonfire for socializing.
2880 Silver Lake Road N.W., Labelle
863-441-1364 • www.silverlakepreserve.com

STARGAZING Stargazing G, H, PB

Starry, stary nights. You don't need a telescope to stargaze around Lake O, just good weather. Walk out on the dike and you'll see thousand of stars.

Festivals & Events

FEBRUARY Hendry County Fair and Livestock Show, Clewiston

Celebrating agriculture, plus livestock, exhibits, pageants, shows and more.
863-983-9282
www.hendrycounty.com

Swamp Cabbage Festival, LaBelle

Parade, rodeo, food, arts & crafts, Miss Swamp Cabbage Festival, armadillo races and fun for all ages.
www.swampcabbagefestival.org

MARCH Chalo Nika Festival and Rodeo, Moore Haven

Chalo Nika (which means "The Day of the Big Bass") is held the first weekend in March.
chalonikafestivalandrodeo.com

Afro Arts Festival, Belle Glade

Held every March, the Festival offers food, crafts, arts, and music from the many cultures that make up the "Glades Region"
www.bellegladerhambies.com

APRIL The Clewiston Sugar Festival

Country music, arts & crafts, farming, beauty pageant, dessert contest and more. Held the second and third weekends in April.
www.clewiston.org



APRIL Big "O" Birding Festival, Clewiston

Held the last weekend of March or the first of April in Clewiston.
www.bigbirdingfestival.com

Black Gold Jubilee Festival, Belle Glade

The end of the harvest festival, held every April, shows off Belle Glade's agricultural roots and organic "black gold" soil. Food, entertainment, fireworks, and more.
www.palmbeachfl.com

MAY Brown Sugar Festival

Held in Harlem, just southwest of Clewiston, featuring arts & crafts, music, games, exhibits and food.
863-903-3322

OCTOBER Kids Fall Festival, Clewiston

Featuring games, food and a pumpkin carving contest.
863-983-1492 • 863-983-7979

NOVEMBER Grassy Waters Festival

Pahokee means "Grassy Waters" and every November the Festival celebrates the city's rich history.
Evergladesplan.org

Big O Hike

Celebrated Thanksgiving week every year, the Big O Hike challenges hikers to walk around all of Lake Okeechobee.
<http://fox.floridatrail.org/big>

DECEMBER Christmas on the Caloosahatchee, Moore Haven

Come enjoy the lights at City Park and their reflection on the water. Arts and crafts, music, Santa and more.
www.vistaglades.com

Alligator wrestling at the Chain Nests Festival



**COLLINS CENTER
FOR PUBLIC POLICY**

Diversity and Location

Culture & Landmarks

The area that encompasses the counties and cities around the shores of Glades, Okeechobee and Palm Beach is rich in culture, history and entertainment facilities.

Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum SC

1400 NW 1st Street, Ft. Pierce, FL 34947
www.ah-tah-thi-ki.com
888-888-8888

Bills Veney School SC

1000 W. 1st Street, Ft. Pierce, FL 34947
www.billsveney.com
888-888-8888

Captain Stanley Home SC

1000 W. 1st Street, Ft. Pierce, FL 34947
www.captainstanley.com
888-888-8888

Clayton Museum SC

1000 W. 1st Street, Ft. Pierce, FL 34947
www.claytonmuseum.com
888-888-8888

Daily Bread Cultural Arts Center SC

1000 W. 1st Street, Ft. Pierce, FL 34947
www.dailybread.com
888-888-8888

Fort Center SC

1000 W. 1st Street, Ft. Pierce, FL 34947
www.fortcenter.com
888-888-8888

Fort Pierce Bridge SC

1000 W. 1st Street, Ft. Pierce, FL 34947
www.fortpiercebridge.com
888-888-8888

Gladesville SC

1000 W. 1st Street, Ft. Pierce, FL 34947
www.gladesville.com
888-888-8888

Lawrence E. Will Museum SC

1000 W. 1st Street, Ft. Pierce, FL 34947
www.lawrencewill.com
888-888-8888

Leahville Heritage Museum SC

1000 W. 1st Street, Ft. Pierce, FL 34947
www.leahville.com
888-888-8888

Okeechobee National Park SC

1000 W. 1st Street, Ft. Pierce, FL 34947
www.okeechobeenationalpark.com
888-888-8888

SpaceShip Tours SC

1000 W. 1st Street, Ft. Pierce, FL 34947
www.spaceshiptours.com
888-888-8888

The Lane Cypress SC

1000 W. 1st Street, Ft. Pierce, FL 34947
www.thelane.com
888-888-8888



Fishing & Sporting

Great FISHING! - It doesn't get any better than the 300+ fishing spots for Saltwater - especially Trout, Catfish, Tarpon, and Snook. Lake Okeechobee has fishing in 10 different areas of the lake. Fishing is the United States' 2nd largest recreational activity. Visit our website for more information on fishing in the area.

MARSH & WETLANDS

Fort Pierce Marsh SC
This marsh is a great place to watch birds and other wildlife. It is a great place to take a walk or a bike ride. Visit our website for more information on the marsh.

Lake Okeechobee Outpost SC

This outpost is a great place to watch birds and other wildlife. It is a great place to take a walk or a bike ride. Visit our website for more information on the outpost.

Wetland State Park SC

This park is a great place to watch birds and other wildlife. It is a great place to take a walk or a bike ride. Visit our website for more information on the park.

Shades of Nature SC

This area is a great place to watch birds and other wildlife. It is a great place to take a walk or a bike ride. Visit our website for more information on the area.

Richard Martin Marsh SC

This marsh is a great place to watch birds and other wildlife. It is a great place to take a walk or a bike ride. Visit our website for more information on the marsh.

Richard & Mary Ann Martin's Marsh & Beach SC

This area is a great place to watch birds and other wildlife. It is a great place to take a walk or a bike ride. Visit our website for more information on the area.

Wetland State Park SC

This park is a great place to watch birds and other wildlife. It is a great place to take a walk or a bike ride. Visit our website for more information on the park.

The Glades SC Resort & Marina SC

This resort is a great place to watch birds and other wildlife. It is a great place to take a walk or a bike ride. Visit our website for more information on the resort.



GOLF

Stellar Oaks Golf Club SC
This club is a great place to play golf. It has a beautiful course and a clubhouse. Visit our website for more information on the club.

SPORTS

Glades County Motorsports Park SC
This park is a great place to watch motorsports. It has a track and a grandstand. Visit our website for more information on the park.

RODDEO

Fort Smith Roddeo Arena SC
This arena is a great place to watch rodeo. It has a large arena and a grandstand. Visit our website for more information on the arena.

GLADE COUNTY YOUTH LIVESTOCK ARENA SC

This arena is a great place to watch livestock shows. It has a large arena and a grandstand. Visit our website for more information on the arena.

GLADE COUNTY FAIR & GLENDALE SHOW ARENA SC

This arena is a great place to watch fairs and shows. It has a large arena and a grandstand. Visit our website for more information on the arena.

GLADE COUNTY WEST RECREATION CENTER SC

This center is a great place to watch recreation. It has a large arena and a grandstand. Visit our website for more information on the center.

GLADE COUNTY THEATRE AND ENTERTAINMENT CENTER SC

This center is a great place to watch theatre and entertainment. It has a large arena and a grandstand. Visit our website for more information on the center.

SKI CENTER

Glades Ski Center SC
This center is a great place to watch skiing. It has a large arena and a grandstand. Visit our website for more information on the center.



Questions? Thank **you**

- **Phil Bacon**
- **Collins Center for Public Policy**
- pbacon@collinscenter.org

