

SCC Beautification Corporation

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Creating a First Impression of the Greater Sun City Center Area

By Diane M. Loeffler, Photos by News Staff

First impressions count. If you walk in the lobby of a hotel and see run-down furniture, a dirty carpet and tacky drapes, you probably won't want to stay there. Likewise, if you drive into a town and see

median strips that are barren except for semi-maintained grass and no landscaping along the sides of the road, you may think about buying a home elsewhere. The Greater Sun City Center Beautification Corporation (GSCCBC) provides the first impression for people considering purchasing a home in the area. Just as importantly, residents of Greater Sun City Center can enjoy looking at the fountain, flowers, bushes and trees every day.

What the Greater SCC Beautification Corporation Does

The Beautification Corporation is the reason why we have lovely landscaping along the median and roadsides from just east of Cortaro Drive to just west of US-301. This includes landscaping, the Sun City Center monument sign and the Blue Star Memorial sign. Without the Beautification Committee's work, we would just have grass in those areas and wait for the state to mow it.

The GSCCBC hires people to repair and maintain the fountain and adjacent pond, the irrigation system, and other structures. It also hires and oversees the landscape company that trims bushes, mows the lawn, and prunes trees. The corporation also pays for new plantings. When possible, Florida-friendly plants are incorporated into the landscape. Irrigation is done with treated wastewater.

How the Beautification Corporation Is Funded

The corporation is a not-for-profit organization. It is overseen by five volunteers. Two are from Kings Point, two are from the Sun City Center Community Association and one is an "at large" member. Currently, John Luper is the president of the group. Presidents of associations (HOAs, COAs, POAs, etc.) vote. The number of votes an association president has is equal to the number of homes in their group.

Most of the GSCCBC funds come from the residents of Sun City Center Community Association and Kings Point whose homes were built after late 1991. Currently, these households pay about \$3.44 a month (about \$41 a

year) to help maintain and improve the landscaping along the medians, roadsides and also the low lying, depressed, often wet land along the south side.

Residents whose homes were built before October of 1991 do not automatically contribute. They are encouraged to make voluntary contributions to the Greater Sun City Center Beautification Corporation. To do so, make a check payable to GSCCBC and mail it to GSCCBC c/o Vesta Property Services, 1020 Brandon Boulevard, Suite 207, Brandon Florida 33511. John Luper says, "We spend what we get. There is always something that needs to be done."

Whenever possible, the corporation applies for grants to help cover expenses. All donations are welcome. The SCC Community Association and Kings Point Federation do not contribute to the beautification funds.



This sign celebrates the many clubs, civic groups, and veterans organizations that make SCC such a great place to live and play.

Impact of SR-674 Road Improvements

The property alongside the road and in the medians all belongs to the state. Luper says, "We have an agreement with the Florida Department of Transportation. If we want to take better care of the property than the state does, it is on our nickel. If something is damaged or removed, it is up to us to get it back to normal. The state won't pay for it." Our agreement with the Department of Transportation allows The GSCC Beautification Corporation to make improvements if two criteria are met. First, it gets the state's approval. Second, the Corporation pays for any and all improvements.

Luper says, "We don't own any of the property. We just want to keep it to a higher standard." The state and county will leave it as unadorned grass. If we as a community want more, it is up to us. The GSCC Beautification Corporation will use all funds it receives to make the area more attractive.

Using the proposed plans for 674, the Beautification Corporation had its landscapers cap and bury some of the irrigation sprinklers. In the end, extended turn lanes, bike lanes, new sidewalks and paving took up more land than anticipated and much of the irrigation system was lost. The road was enhanced. However, landscaping was lost and the means of watering much of what remains was destroyed.

As a result of the roadwork on 674, Luper says, "Irrigation is a top priority. Currently we have six medians with irrigation not working. Much of the land was scraped and removed. It will cost over \$55,000 to make those repairs. It is on us to maintain our improvements on state property and to replace trees and landscaping."

A Little History

At one time, anyone driving into the area would go down a two-lane road with a grassy median. Later it widened into four lanes with the same type of median. In 1989, Al Hoffman was the only builder in the area. He and his company, most recently known as WCI, wanted the area to look nice so

houses would sell. The GSSCBC was originally called the "Master Beautification Association." All unsold lots owned by the developer on October 10 were classified as "Class A Members." These Class A Members (one per household even if more than one person lives there) were to be required to pay an annual assessment to what was then called the "Master Beautification Association." Aston Gardens and the Courtyards are also Class A Members. Since the developer could only make requirements for property he still owned, those with homes purchased before October 10, 1989 were not billed.

As long as WCI and, later, Minto were here, they took care of expenses for many of the repairs such as repairing the fountain. After they left, it was all up to the Corporation to finance. Whether you already contribute to the GSSCBC or not, you may wish to send a donation to the corporation. All monies received go to maintaining and improving the medians and the areas alongside the road.

HEADLINE PHOTO: *This bright sign and beautiful water feature welcome residents, guests, and prospective buyers to Sun City Center. (Photo by Shelba Porter)*