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## MITA hosts seawall info seminar

By Andrea M. Galabinski

**In light of an upcoming proposed city seawall ordinance, the Marco Island Taxpayer's Association (MITA) recently hosted an informational program on the maintenance and care of seawalls.**

Common terms were explained and representatives from several different companies attended the meeting, talking about both traditional and alternative methods to seawall repair.

"When you talk about the repair of seawalls, it's big money," said MITA president Dr. Fay Biles. "With the seawall ordinance before City Council in early August, people are going to have to pay attention to their seawalls."

"The city recognizes that after 40-some years, some of the seawalls are in dire need of repair," added Biles. "And it depends on the type, but it can be a domino effect if certain types of pilings go down or fail. It could effect neighbors."

Local business leader and inventor James Timmerman was the featured guest speaker.

A resident of Marco Island for the past 20 years, Timmerman has extensive experience in the maritime field as a salvor and having served in the Merchant Marines. He also holds current United States Coast Guard licensure.

He's also the inventor of the Dynamic Seawall Maintenance System (DSMS), an alternative to traditional seawall care. He personally holds a patent for the product.

Timmerman said creating his product was a classic case of "necessity is the mother of invention." When his seawall was condemned several years ago, he knew he didn't want to tear up his dock and yard.

His system eliminates the need to tear up yards, landscaping, docks and pool areas and is significantly less costly than traditional repair.

"But DSMS is not a panacea," said Timmerman. "There's a definite set of criteria that must be met prior to DSMS being applicable."

DSMS is suitable where the engineering review prescribes tiebacks. The system was specifically designed for use where access to installing traditional dead-man supports from shore side is not feasible, due to close proximity of structures.

DSMS is also intended for use in applications at, or below, the waterline, or in any other areas only accessible from the water. The procedure works best if the seawall isn't heavily damaged. If it is, said the speakers, traditional repair methods are the way to go.

"My company repairs and replaces by traditional methods," said Brian Gilmore, vice president of Collier Seawall & Dock. "If the seawall is on a vacant lot, it's more cost effective to replace with traditional methods, because of easier access. If you're putting up an expensive home, the amount of money it costs to do a new wall now versus the amount of money to try to stabilize an old wall makes sense proportionally."

"If I am looking at someone's wall and they have a home and possibly a dock existing, I like to be able to offer a way to help them extend the life using Jim's method as a way to help prevent having to do the whole wall," said Gilmore. "Again, that's if it's applicable. It makes me feel good to have an alternative for people because I know it can be a real burden to have to replace an entire wall."

Timmerman said the exchange of different information and getting out general information was important to him.

"What I'd like to bring to this community is information so people can make an informed decision on what can and can't be done," he noted. Timmerman is the manufacturer of DSMS, while Blue Marlin Marine Construction handles the installation.

Former Marco City Councilman Heyward Boyce also attended the meeting.

"I'm a satisfied customer of DSMS," he said. "I have some background in engineering projects. In the 1980's, I was overseeing a construction project on a pier in Indonesia. As part of the that project, there was the removal of an old piling installed by the Dutch East Indies Company 100 years ago."

Boyce said it was practically impossible to remove the pilings, and years later told Gilmore about the solutions they came up with that involved horizontal screws like DSMS uses.

"He said there was such a system now," Boyce added.

He said he used the DSMS alternative and that it was done in a much more cost effective and faster manner.

"Over 70 feet of seawall was repaired in a day. I find that remarkable," he said.

Greg Mann, owner of Blue Marlin Marine Construction, agreed that installation time with this alternative method was a big advantage.

"With the traditional dead-man method, it can take a week," said Mann. "It takes so long because there is so much waiting; it takes time for the concrete to be poured and



*The Marco Island Taxpayers Association recently hosted an informational meeting on seawall maintenance and repair. Pictured from left is Brian Gilmore, vice president of Collier Seawall & Dock; inventor James Timmerman; MITA president Dr. Fay Biles; and Greg Mann, owner of Blue Marlin Marine Construction.*

then for it to dry. One also has to wait on contractors and municipal permitting process. As DSMS is less invasive and more environmentally-friendly, the company's experience to date with local municipal permitting processes has been very favorable."

DSMS has been recognized by the City of Marco Island, the City of Cape Coral, the City of Naples, the City of Bonita Springs and Lee County's Division of Environmental Sciences.

The system has been installed in numerous residential and commercial properties in the area and has been covered by local television and radio stations and featured in both local and national publications.

"We'd like to repeat this program in season when everyone is back," said Biles.

MITA is open to everyone on Marco Island and to people off the island that own property here or are interested in island issues.

Both Timmerman and Biles were happy with the turnout, and said the audience had very valid questions.

At their next meeting on Aug. 15, MITA will host Richard Thern who is running for the District 1 (Marco Island) seat on the Collier County School Board.

Individuals can call the MITA Resource Center for information at 394-3089 or send an e-mail to [faybiles@aol.com](mailto:faybiles@aol.com).