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**Stephen Gidus**  
President  
Home Builders Assoc of Metro Orlando  
10/19/04

**Introduction:**

Mr. Gidus wears two hats.

His first hat is his "day job" where he is president of PSG Construction, a Winter Park-based firm that is acknowledged as one of the nation's foremost residential remodeling and custom home building companies.

Yet it is his other "hat" that brings Mr. Gidus here today. He is president of the Home Builders Association of Metro Orlando -- -- the 1400 member-company professional organization that represents some 98,000 housing industry practitioners in the Orange, Osceola and Seminole County region.

While we all know the industry "builds houses", few of us may recognize that the HBA is a major factor in the economic health of Central Florida. A recent study using Federal Reserve data shows that in 2003 the industry contributed \$1.68 billion to the local economy, paid \$214 million in taxes, created 41,000 primary jobs and 12,500 secondary and tertiary jobs.

HBA of Metro Orlando is a principal force behind the engine that drives our local economy. As the HBA motto proclaims, "Home Builders Are Community Builders". In his role as a housing industry leader, Mr. Gidus serves as a director of the Florida Home Builders Association and the National Association of Home Builders. He holds positions on significant committees with both groups and has been honored for his accomplishments by his peers in the local, state and national organizations.

**Transcript of Remarks:**

Stephen, thank you on behalf of the Home Builders Association of Metro Orlando for the invitation to participate in today's Talk To Us. I'd like to begin by speaking to question number one. Aaa, we would expect the electronic media of the next decade to provide service that reflects and accommodates the technological breakthroughs that are being developed to improve and expand the capabilities of radio and television industries. In recognition of Central Florida's role in the global community and service in Central Florida, aaa the service in Central Florida should be on par with the service available in any major market in any part of the world, but the keys to service go beyond the hardware. It is very much the responsibility of the broadcaster to provide the hardware or to provide the programming with in-depth stories about the economic and quality life issues in the community. Housing Central Florida's citizens should be a paramount in the mix.

Question number two, WMFE should deliver these elements that are consistent with the mission of public broadcasting. The physical plant and equipment to be similar, if not equal, to that offered by commercial broadcasters in the region, but the strength of public broadcasting is in its very difference from commercial broadcasting. The creative product must continue to be unique reflecting the objective of public broadcasting to fill the voids unserved by the commercial providers, and because public broadcasting has the capability to expand news coverage and opinion pieces beyond the norm in commercial broadcasting, that coverage should not only be informative, it should be comprehensive, unbiased, educational and maintain a sense of fairness. From a personal viewpoint, the Home Builders Association of Metro Orlando would like to see more emphasis on knowledgeable discussions on the housing industry, a major contributor to the health of our economy, in-depth coverage that can't be accomplished with sound-bites on issues such as infrastructure funding, affordable housing, Workers Compensation reform, impact fees, growth management, also known as smart growth, and the real cost-drivers of housing that may be clear to the general public.

Question number three, WMFE is a well-recognized professional broadcasting operation. There is no reason that WMFE with the necessary funding can't deliver programming reflective of the tough challenges we face in a growing and dynamic community. As with any undertaking, the resources to

effectively perform come in two categories: people and plant. Both elements require funding. The key to WMFE meeting these expectations is the ability and the willingness of the community to support public broadcasting. If the listening public has confidence in WMFE's ability and willingness to engage all sides of the issues for educational examination of complex issues, those stakeholders will see the value in investing in the reliability of public broadcasting.

Question number four, while the size of the public broadcasting audience is large in actual numbers, it is small in relation to the total listening and viewing audience. However, within the public broadcasting community, these recommendations will find a substantial number of supporters because the suggestions reflect the mission and the goals of public broadcasting. If there is to be a future for public broadcasting in general and WMFE in particular, the hard issues facing our state and specifically Central Florida must be embraced so the public has an avenue to view all of the facts.

Why is it important that WMFE give air-time to the discussion of the important questions surrounding how our community directs growth? It is important that our citizens have a forum to adequately study what it means to live in a community that fosters the concepts of smart growth instead of no growth. Growth is not limited to the number of new homes built or even the number of new residences that move into our area. The challenges of growth also come from internal population growth, the changes we make in how we live, the number of cars and drivers in our families, the way we shop, the kind of housing we want and the kind of jobs we hold. Local governments expend energy and tax dollars to attract new businesses to our area in the effort to sustain the growth of job creation. Instinctively, we know that a growing dynamic community affords us access to the best in medical care facilities, the best in cultural endeavors, the best services and educational opportunities that enhance our lifestyles. The question becomes not how do we stop growth, but how do we define it? What does it mean to grow smart? We can turn our heads and bemoan the many people who come to join us here in Central Florida or we can instead face the challenges head-on and work collectively to create a community vision that addresses where and how we house the families and individuals that want to take advantage of all our community has to offer. The choices we make today need to be made within the framework of embracing growth as an agent for creating opportunities as well as paying jobs, a chance to own our own homes and the abundance of housing options. A fair and inclusive dialogue containing these elements will attract viewers and listeners and can only result in a place we can all be proud to call home.

And question number five, finally, WMFE must continue to collaborate with all the usual suspects, the corporate and academic communities, the service industry and the politicians, and most important of all, the community-at-large, because they are the audience and they must become the funders. Thank you.

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