

# News Release

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **AD AGENCY DONATES DIGITAL BILLBOARD SPACE TO HELP WITH FLORIDA PANTHER RECOVERY EFFORTS**

VERO BEACH, Fla. -- Hopefully, motorists driving along US-41 in Lee County will notice a cautionary message on a digital billboard asking them to slow down and watch for endangered Florida panthers as they drive through southwest Florida.

The billboard's message is meant to remind or inform motorists that vehicle collisions are among the leading causes of panther deaths. As of July 12, seven Florida panthers have met untimely ends on roads and highways in southwest Florida this calendar year.

The billboard space was donated by Lamar Advertising. The billboard, which will run indefinitely, can be seen from US-41, just south of Alico Road.

"Over 50,000 sets of eyes will see this billboard every day," said Lamar's southwest Florida sales manager Vinny Fazio. "We're proud to help the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission reach as many motorists as possible with this message of caution."

The billboard features an image of a panther running across a road in Okaloacoochee Slough State Forest. The image was taken by Lee County Parks and Recreation Land Stewardship Coordinator Bob Repenning.

(more)

“I photographed this panther during the day, in late-morning,” Repenning said. “It goes to show you never know when a panther may appear. Drivers must be alert at all times.”

The panther population has grown five-fold since the 1980s, when its numbers dwindled to 20-30. Its increase to a current estimate of 100-160 adult panthers is a success story, but one tempered with the knowledge that an increasing population means a greater chance for vehicle collisions.

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