

FRAUD
from 1B

Wildwood and other parts of New Jersey, but also at least four town homes in Summit Place, off Collier Boulevard in the Naples area.

According to court documents and statements, the conspirators targeted financially distressed residential developers in New Jersey and Naples who had overbuilt, negotiated a buyout price for their properties, and then recruited fake buyers, who never planned to live in the homes, to defraud mortgage companies.

The fraudulent buyers purchased the properties at much higher prices, generating profits for the conspirators. False documents were used to make the buyers appear more creditworthy to convince lenders to give them loans.

Mortgage brokers were also involved in the scheme, according to the FBI.

Once the loans were approved and the mortgage lenders sent the money for the real estate closings, Henson got a cut after his conspirators wired or deposited checks into various accounts they controlled.

When Henson learned about a subpoena seeking documents involving a sale to one of the buyers he'd recruited for the scheme, he contacted someone else to kill the buyer, who ultimately was shot several times after being lured to a wooded area in Mobile, Alabama, according to the FBI.

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Richard Davenport, the manager of the original joint venture that built Summit Place, said the group sold the first 309 town homes in the development before it was taken over by national builder DR Horton a few years ago.

He said he knew authorities were snooping around and asking questions related to the project, but he never knew why.

When told about Henson's arrest and sentencing, he said it was news to him.

"I don't know anything about that," he said. "I'm glad they caught them."

UBER
from 1B

In Tampa and in Collier County, officials have gone after Uber over the past year by ticketing its drivers.

The app-based service has come under attack elsewhere, from Jacksonville to Broward County, where Uber is threatening to pull out.

In Tallahassee, Uber's 23 registered lobbyists pushed a far-reaching House bill (HB 817) that would, most importantly, take away regulatory power from local boards and reserve it to the state.

The idea was that Florida state lawmakers would be friendlier to Uber's concerns.

It has happened elsewhere. Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker, a Republican and likely presidential candidate, signed a bill into law last week that also creates statewide standards for ride-booking services.

But Uber's feelings for the Florida House bill got complicated when state Rep. Kathleen Peters, a Pinellas County Republican, tacked on an amendment requiring fingerprint-based background checks. Uber has opposed those because of cost.

Roger Chapin, spokesman for the Florida Taxicab Association, sent his own email Wednesday questioning Uber's desire for any kind of legislation.

"If the Legislature passes any law that devi-

ates from Uber's business model, will Uber follow the law then?" said Chapin, vice president of Mears Transportation, a Central Florida taxi and hired-car provider.

"I think we know the answer," he added. "If they spent half as much on compliance as they do on lobbyists and public relations, they could be legal throughout Florida."

The company has stepped up its marketing initiative, delivering puppies from animal shelters earlier this year and partnering with Goodwill this past weekend to pick up and deliver donations for free.

Contact Tribune reporter jrosica@tampatrib.com and 850-765-0807.



DAVID ALBERS/STAFF

Dr. Robert Abbiati, right, works with a patient and lead dental assistant Luna Johnson in Abbiati's Marco Island practice Wednesday.

DENTIST
from 1B

such places as the Bronx, South Central Los Angeles, Guatemala and Belize. "Even if your neighbor has a problem and I've never met them before, I will get them in. I put urgency on your dental care."

Abiatti said he also offers a professional whitening service for \$99, a price point he chose in an effort to be the cheapest around.

"It's a 30-minute, in-office treatment under the care of a dentist that comes with six weeks of take-home product for less than what they do it for at some of those mall kiosks," he said. "I called around to make sure I was the low-cost provider in Southwest

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Dr. Robert Abbiati, on his strategy for pricing professional tooth whitening at \$99

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Abiatti said he would like to expand his services even further in the future, but first he needs to find the space.

"I'm looking to grow substantially over the next

two years, with an in-house endodontist and additional hygienists, but to do that I need more square footage and it's really hard to find commercial real estate in Marco Island," he said.

Island Paradise Dental is at 1120 N. Collier Blvd., Marco Island. For more information, call 239-642-3233 or see www.islandparadisedental.com.

FLETCHER
from 1B

Naples Daily News for two years. The story was edited by Allen Bartlett.

The National Association of Real Estate Editor's journalism contest is open to any working journalist in the country

and is judged by the journalism faculty at E.W. Scripps School of Journalism at Ohio University.

The association was founded in 1929 and has more than 650 members nationwide. The association meets three times annually. The annual spring conference allows participants to interact with a dozen of the nation's leading real estate journalists.

THIS SUNDAY
with the
Naples Daily
NewsMakers

The numbers are coming in on the 2015 "season" and they're hitting records in Southwest Florida. How successful of a season was it in the hospitality industry, in the job market and what were some of the trends seen this season compared with those in the past? What lies ahead for the summer?

and your host **Allen Bartlett**
Editorial Page Editor, Naples Daily News

Sundays 10am on

Naples Daily NewsMakers puts leaders in Collier and Lee Counties in the hot seat and on the record.

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