

Public-notice bill OK'd by Legislature boosts access to information

The Florida Legislature has approved legislation related to public notice of government activity.

In a statement, Florida Press Association President Dean Ridings called the measure potentially “the most sweeping legislation affecting public notices since the 1940s.”

Ridings said the bill, sponsored by Rep. Ritch Workman, R-Melbourne, “makes public notices even more effective — and ensures that Floridians who want to stay informed will have easy access to public notices in print and online. This law ensures that Floridians will be able to continue to access the notices in print, if that is what they prefer.”

In addition, users who read their newspapers online will be able to find their notices on their local newspaper’s website and aggregated at www.floridapublicnotices.com.

Public notices can be searched and read on the iPhone by downloading the Florida Public Notices app.

Among the provisions of the law, which awaits Gov. Rick Scott’s signature:

Newspapers will provide notices in print and online, and the notices will be available to the public without charge online.

Notices will be uploaded to www.floridapublicnotices.com, where they can be searched by county, notice type or other criteria, without charge to the public.

The public can request to be notified by email without charge when a new notice is published.

There also are provisions related to the rates charged government entities for publication of such notices.