Editorial: Sugar’s ever-evolving deal
By Staff Reports
Saturday, November 22, 2008

This catches us by surprise.

Again and again.

The proposal for the state of Florida to step up its involvement in Everglades Restoration by purchasing a large part of the offending, polluting area takes yet further surprising turns.

The fact that a deal was even in the works surprised us in June. Even elected legislators who serve in and around the Clewiston area were caught off guard by the 300-square-mile, $1.75 billion initiative by Gov. Charlie Crist.

A few weeks later we were surprised to learn of a compromise, for $400 million less, for reduced holdings of U.S. Sugar Corp. and others in that area.

Then came word from U.S. Sugar that the company and a private partner from Illinois propose a biotech fuel plant in Clewiston would produce a gasoline substitute from sugar cane.

Surprised again.

At week’s end we learned of a bid from yet another private firm to buy all of U.S. Sugar outright.

Our questions include:

Is there going to be a bidding war that could backfire on taxpayers?

How is a fuel plant better for the environment — air and water — than the Big Sugar operations that we have to today?

What does Clewiston have to say?

The answers have to make sense to justify the state’s continued investor involvement.

© Naples News