



Week in Review

The Best of Bartow

Sept. 23 - 29, 2024

CITY OF BARTOW ANNOUNCES POLICE CHIEF FINALISTS

The City of Bartow has narrowed its search for a new Chief of Police from nearly 50 applicants to four highly qualified candidates. Those individuals will participate in an on-site interview process on October 7-9, which will include one-on-one meetings with the City Commissioners and three panel interviews with representatives from the community, external partners, members of the Bartow Police Department and City leadership. The finalists also will have an opportunity to interact with the public at a Community Meet & Greet from 6 -7pm Tuesday, October 8 at Mulligans Bar & Grill, 190 S. Herbert Dixon Blvd.

The City was assisted by SGR, an executive recruitment firm based in Texas, in conducting the search, which produced a strong field of candidates comprised of 49 law enforcement professionals from 17 states.

“I am proud to say that the Bartow Police Department is made up of men and women who exude professionalism, strive for greatness and pursue justice for all,” said City Manager Mike Herr.

“We believe in this team and are proud of them. As we turn the page, we are excited to introduce a new Chief of Police and trust that it will be the best chapter in the history of the Bartow Police Department ever written.”

THE FINALISTS:

Greg Goreck has served in Florida law enforcement for more than 30 years, most recently as Chief of Police for Haines City, FL. Prior to this, he held various positions at the Polk County Sheriff’s Department, including Captain of Support Operations, Captain of the Southeast District, and Lieutenant of Traffic Section. Goreck holds a master’s degree in business administration, a master’s in management, and a bachelor’s degree in organizational management. He also is a graduate of the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) Senior Management Institute for Police, which focuses on effective management practices and solutions for law enforcement executives, as well as from the Northwestern University School of Police Staff & Command and earned the designation of Certified Public Manager (CPM).



Javaro Sims has served in numerous capacities with the City of Delray Beach Police Department where he has worked since 1992, including as Police Chief from 2019 to 2022. Prior to that he served as Assistant Chief – Special Services Bureau and Captain of the Community Patrol Division, among other roles. Sims holds a master’s degree in criminal justice administration, a bachelor’s degree in physical education and parks and recreation and is a graduate of both the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) Senior Management Institute for Police and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) National Academy.

Steve Walker is currently serves as Deputy Chief of Police for the Bartow Police Department, as well as Captain of the Law Enforcement Division. Prior to joining the Bartow Police Department in 2022, Walker spent most of his career with the Lakeland Police Department, where starting in 1990, he served in roles that included Captain and Commanding Officer of multiple divisions, including Special Operations, Uniform Patrol, and Support Services. Walker has a master’s degree in criminal justice, and a bachelor’s degree in criminology. He is a graduate of the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) Senior Management Institute for Police, the University of Louisville Southern Police Institute Administrative Officers Course and has earned the designation of Certified Public Manager (CPM).



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POLICE CHIEF CANDIDATES, CONT.

Theresa Odum has served in various jurisdictions in Illinois for 33 years. Currently the Chief of Police for the Forest Preserve of Cook County (Illinois) Police Department, she has also served there as the Chief of Executive Protection. Prior to this, Odum was an Investigator for the Cook County State's Attorney's Office, Executive Protection Unit. Odum spent more than 25 years with the Chicago Police Department in many positions, including Sergeant. She holds a master's degree in police psychology and a bachelor's degree in law enforcement management, and has completed specialized training in Dignitary Protection, the Police Executive Role in the 21st Century, and Countermeasure Core Concepts.



BRIGHT IDEAS INITIATIVE KICK-OFF CELEBRATION HELD

Last Wednesday, the City of Bartow launched a Bright Ideas Innovation Program that will allow employees to have a voice in improving City operations. All staff were invited to the Kick-Off Celebration.

Spearheaded by City Manager Mike Herr, the program creates a framework for City staff to develop and submit ideas for review, feedback and adoption.

“The Bright Ideas initiative is intended to give our employees an opportunity to have a say in just how exceptional city government can be by providing ideas to reduce red tape in a process, reduce operating costs in our city budget or recommend a different approach to daily work that improves services to our citizens and businesses,” Herr explained.

“When employees are given an opportunity to unleash their talents good things will happen for our citizens and our work force morale will continuously improve as well.”

Bright Ideas must address one of the following areas – best practices, cost savings, equipment improvement, policy change, process improvement, safety consideration or technology enhancement. All employees are eligible to participate.

Ideas will be reviewed monthly by an employee advisory group, who will evaluate and make recommendations to the City Manager's Leadership Team. That Team will determine whether implementation of the Bright Idea is feasible, based upon resources and alignment with the City's mission and goals.

If the idea moves forward, the employee who submitted the Idea will assist in leading the implementation. Once put into practice, he or she will receive an innovation award ranging from \$100 to \$3000, based on financial impact, productivity improvement or intangible benefit. (See more pix on the City's Facebook page.)



HELENE HEROES

Five members of our City crew are providing mutual aid in Cedar Key in the aftermath of Hurricane Helene. Pictured are City of Bartow electric department employees Jimmy Lewis, Leslie Willis, Dustin Deese, Tony McDuffie, and Billy Leal; along with City of Ft. Meade employees Jose Cruz and Seth Fawley. The other photo, taken near Cedar Key, shows how high the water got at one of Central Florida Co-Ops electrical substations.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS...

SPORTS COMPLEX OPENING

Join the City and our Polk County partners in celebrating the opening of the newly renovated Bartow Sports Complex. At 9:30am on Friday Oct. 4, officials from the City of Bartow, Polk County and Visit Central Florida Sports will commemorate the completion of improvements that include four new fields, newly paved driveways, organized grass parking, batting cages and restrooms and more.



POLICE CHIEF CANDIDATE MEET & GREET

The public is invited to an informal Meet & Greet with candidates for the position of City of Bartow Chief of Police on Oct. 8 from 6-7PM at Mulligans Bar & Grill, located at the Bartow Golf Course, 190 S Herbert Dixon Blvd.

80TH ANNUAL COMMUNITY PARADE AND CARNIVAL

Held this year on Thursday, Oct. 24, the tradition kicks off with a parade starting at 4pm. The parade begins at Main St. and First Ave. (in front of the Chicken Shack), heads west on Main St, and then turns south on Broadway Ave, finishing near the Bartow Civic Center. A carnival will follow at Mosaic Park, 1865 S. Broadway Ave., with a moonwalk, food trucks, BINGO, and, of course, a costume contest.

HOMETOWN HEROES - A SALUTE TO THOSE WHO SERVED

Hosted by the Greater Bartow Chamber of Commerce, this luncheon will be held on Monday, Nov. 11, from 11:11AM - 1:30PM at the Bartow Civic Center. Local veterans can sign up by calling the Chamber at 863.533.7125.

HAZARDOUS WASTE COLLECTION DAY

This one-day event will take place at Bartow High School on Saturday, Oct. 26 from 8am - noon. Many household hazardous wastes, and electronics will be collected for disposal. In addition, tires will be collected at C. Wilson Equipment Co., 2301 US Highway 17 S. Limit of 24. Standard vehicle tires ONLY. For questions regarding tire collection, call Keep Polk County Beautiful at (863) 875-8911 For more information on the hazardous waste collection day, contact Polk County Waste & Recycling (863) 284-4319.



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