



# Week in Review

March 3 - 10, 2025

The *Week in Review* is prepared and published by Laurie Hayes, Director of Communications, for the staff and residents of the City of Bartow, 450 N. Wilson Avenue, Bartow, Florida 33830



## City Celebrates Movement on New Facility

It's a project literally decades in the making... Last Thursday, the Public Works Department broke ground on a facility to house the Underground Utilities Division on the Water Plant property.

In the early 2000s, the City of Bartow started planning a new Public Works facility. Over the years, the preferred site was changed several times until City Manager Mike Herr asked all involved to go back to the drawing board. Construction Manager Kyle Thurmond, working with Public Works Director Billy Groover, developed a plan to house the Underground Utilities Division at the Water Plant property.

Upon approval, Chastain Skillman developed a site plan, and Kyle and Robin Casselman, Transmission / Collection System (TCS) Manager, came up with a design suitable for their operations. The building is currently out to bid.

To celebrate the project finally being underway, Mayor Pfeiffer, City leadership and staff, including those who have been waiting years to have a decent facility from which to work, gathered to celebrate the forward movement at the site located at 2500 Highway 17 North.



## Women's History Month is Underway

This past Saturday, March 8, was International Women's Day (IWD), an observance that has been around for more than 100 years, much like many of the issues impacting women's advancement.

Since 1911, IWD has belonged to all who care about women's equality. According to data from the World Economic Forum, at the current rate of progress, achieving full gender parity will take until 2158, roughly five generations from now.

Recognizing this, the 2025 theme for International Women's Day is "Accelerate Action," emphasizing the importance of taking swift and decisive steps to achieve gender equality, both in personal and professional spheres.

At their meeting last Monday, Mayor Pfeiffer and the Commission recognized the contributions of all women to the growth and strength of our Nation in countless recorded and unrecorded ways, noting that, despite these contributions, the role of women in history has been consistently overlooked and undervalued, in the literature, teaching and study of American history.

A proclamation declaring March as Women's History Month was presented to all women present at the meeting, including those who work for and serve the City.



## March is American Red Cross Month

March is recognized across the world as American Red Cross Month.

Since Clara Barton founded the American Red Cross more than 140 years ago, generation after generation has stepped up to deliver relief and care across our region, state, country and the world, bringing out the best of

humanity in times of crisis.

The volunteers and supporters of the American Red Cross of Central Florida are part of the larger organization that remains unwavering in their commitment to prevent and alleviate human suffering in the face of today's emergencies, shining a beacon of hope in people's darkest hours — whether it's delivering shelter, food and comfort during disasters; supporting service members, veterans and their families; saving lives with first aid, CPR, AED and other skills; or delivering international aid and reconnecting loved ones separated by global crises.

At last week's regular meeting, the Mayor and City Commission recognized the observance in honor of their remarkable service, and asked residents to support the humanitarian mission of the Red Cross. The proclamation was accepted accepted by Tina Sweeten, Executive Director, American Red Cross of Mid-Florida.



## New Officers Sworn In

It's been a busy month at the Bartow PD, and especially for new officers Imani Williams, Carlos Garcia and Andy Vera, Jr., who were sworn in to the Department last week. Officers Williams and Garcia recently completed the necessary training and certifications, while Officer Vera was previously certified as a law enforcement officer in New Jersey. Please join us in welcoming these officers to the Bartow family.

## Jones Graduates from FGFOA Leadership Class

Last Friday, Grants Administrator Sarah Jones graduated from the Florida Government Finance Officers Association Leadership Class of 2025 on Friday. Pictured is Sarah and the President, President-Elect and Secretary/Treasurer of FGFOA.



## Inaugural Blue Room Jazz Day Party Planned

March 15 marks the launch of the Luster African American Heritage Museum Inaugural Blue Room Jazz Day Party and Museum Tour Celebration, a joyous tribute to the universal language of music. The event will take place at the Luster African American Museum, 585 E. Summerlin St., from noon to 5pm.

The Blue Room was a Jim Crow era dance and concert venue that was located on the upper floor of Tom Burnett's Palm Theater Building at the corner of Wabash Avenue and

3rd St. in East Bartow. Back in the day, the Blue Room hosted many famous performers and celebrities including Cab Callaway, Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, Count Basie, Sam Cooke, B.B. King, Muddy Waters, Erskine Hawkins, The Platters, Ike & Tina Turner and James Brown.

By showcasing these performers, the Blue Room became an unofficial part of the Chitlin' Circuit, a collection of performance venues throughout the southern, eastern and upper Midwest areas of the United States that provided commercial and cultural acceptance for Black entertainers during the era of racial segregation in the United States through the 1960s.

The Blue Room Jazz Day Party and Museum Tour is FREE, and all are welcome. It will feature Polk County Historical Commissioner William Lloyd Harris, Mount Gilboa Youth Choir, Bishop & Brothers Marching Warriors, St. James Men, a DJ, live music, children's activities and food and retail vendors.

At last Monday's City Commission meeting, Mayor Pfeiffer and the rest of the Commission proclaimed March 15 as BLUE ROOM JAZZ PARTY DAY & MUSEUM TOUR DAY and urged all residents and visitors to take this opportunity to note the significant role that Bartow's Blue Room played in the history of our City. The proclamation was presented to Charles Luster, Founder of the museum.

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## Women in Bartow's History

Thanks to Polk County Government for posting this mini history lesson on a very important figure in Bartow's past...

"Mary Agnes Groover Holland was born on July 31, 1896, to Dr. William R. Groover and Mary Knowles Groover at Fort White, Florida. She attended Florida State College for Women in Tallahassee and married Spessard L. Holland of Bartow in 1919.

During World War II, Mary served as first lady of Florida. While in office, Mary championed many projects, including the Women's Army Corps, Victory Gardens and Plane Spotting. When Governor Holland was elected to the United States Senate, Mrs. Holland joined the Senate Ladies Red Cross.



Mary Holland was passionate about community and supported the development of the first Civic Center in Bartow and the green space named in her honor, Mary Holland Park."



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## Golfing for a Cause at the Bartow Golf Course

There was a lot of golf - and good vibes - at the Bartow Golf Course over the weekend. The Golf Course hosted the Polk County Builder's Association on Friday, an event which maxed out at 122 golfers. And on Saturday, the course once again was the site of the "Cancer Can't

Tucker Us Out" Tournament.

Gerald Tucker, who works in our Pro Shop, started the tournament 23 years ago, when his second wife was diagnosed with breast cancer. (His first wife was also diagnosed with breast cancer and lost her battle.) Over 23 years, he has raised over \$500,000 for cancer families. All the signs around the first tee are in remembrance of people who had cancer.

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## Help Keep Bartow Beautiful at the Great American Clean-Up Event

Join Bartow's Solid Waste Department and Keep Polk County Beautiful for their annual Great American Clean-Up Event on April 26 from 8am - noon.



Volunteers who pre-register will receive a t-shirt and a ticket to Bok Tower Gardens. Youth needing community service hours for graduation can earn four hours by helping to organize the event. Lunch will be provided at Mary Holland Park after the Clean-Up.

Community and civic associations, school and youth groups, families and friends, businesses, sports teams and others are encouraged to organize their members and participate. To sign up, request a packet via email at [solidwaste@cityofbartow.net](mailto:solidwaste@cityofbartow.net) or pick up a packet at 2060 E. Highway 60. Questions? Call 863.534.0181.

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**Reminder:** *The next City Commission meeting will be held at 6pm on Monday, March 17 at the Bartow Civic Center, 2250 S. Floral Ave. The Commission is expected to vote on whether or not the City will continue to add fluoride to the City's water at this meeting.*

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## Bright Ideas Innovation Sessions Continue

Last year, the City launched a Bright Ideas Innovation Program. Spearheaded by City Manager Mike Herr, the program creates a framework for every member of the City staff to develop and submit ideas for review, feedback and adoption.

The City is hosting Bright Ideas Innovation Sessions for City staff to share more about the program and offer assistance in submitting an idea either in writing or online. One took place last week and two more are scheduled for March 19 from 9 - 11am or 2 - 4pm in the

Gause Room at the Carver Recreation Center and on March 28 from 9 - 11am or 2 - 4pm in the PRCA Conference Room at the Civic Center.



## 13th Annual Blarney Duathlon to be held March 15

City of Bartow Parks & Recreation once again will host the Annual Blarney Duathlon / 5K on Saturday, March 15. Now in its 13th year, the duathlon consists of a 1 mile run, an 11 mile Bike ride and a 3 mile run. A 5K race will be held at the same time. Discounted entry fees are available on a sliding scale through March 9. Register at [tinyurl.com/bartow0blarney](http://tinyurl.com/bartow0blarney).

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