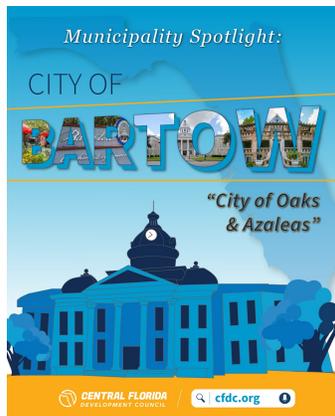




# Week in Review

March 17 - 30, 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



## CFDC Shines Spotlight on Bartow

The Central Florida Development Council published a feature on the recent economic development in the City, accomplished in partnership with the Bartow EDC. [You can read the article here.](#)

## Electric Department Crews Participate in Annual Training

Our City crews always are striving to improve their skills and be ready for any situation. Last week, the team at the Electric Department participated in their annual bucket truck rescue training and hurtman rescue training. These sessions are crucial for ensuring that our employees are prepared to respond effectively in the event that a coworker gets injured while working in the field. (See below for more about Bartow Electric's training.)



## City Hires New Customer Service Manager

A warm Bartow welcome to our new Customer Service Manager Shaun Gelissen. Shaun comes to Bartow after 15 years in the insurance industry. He has a bachelor's in Business Administration



From Florida Southern College and has lived in Bartow the last seven and a half years with his wife and four children. When he's not working or attending to family, Shaun notes that he is a big soccer fan - especially Orlando City.

Shaun already is making big changes. Last week, Customer Service began accepting utility payments from customers via cash, money order, check or credit. And positioned one of his reps at the circular desk in the lobby of City Hall to help direct visitors to the services or information they need. (See story below.) Welcome Shaun!

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## Baby Rave!

There's something to RAVE about at the Bartow Library. The Library is hosting a Baby Rave this Saturday, April 5, at 10am!

Tiny dancers (up to age 4) and their caregivers are invited to groove and move to some baby-friendly beats. There will be glow sticks, lights, and all the fun vibes!



*Caden Dunlap climbing to start the Phase Swap 100 Amp Disconnect event*



*Leslie Willis on the Pole Top Pin Insulator Changeout*

# Florida Public Power Lineman's Competition



*Many thanks to Sandra Poucher, wife of Electric Utilities Director Michael Poucher, for the article and photos.*

Earlier this month, linemen from the Bartow Electric Department competed in the 2025 Florida Lineman Competition at the World Equestrian Center in Ocala.

Returning after a 20-year hiatus, the City of Bartow fielded two apprentice linemen, Caden Dunlap and Leslie Willis, to experience the challenge and comradery of their first "rodeo." Journeyman Lineman Dustin Deese attended as one of the

judges.

Teams from utilities across the state competed in activities such as Faulted Cable Swap, Phase Change - Open Close 100 Amp Disconnect, Pole Top Pin Insulator Changeout and Hurtman Rescue, where teams demonstrate speed while safely lowering an unconscious, injured worker (using a 165-pound mannequin) from the top of the pole. If the injured person is not breathing, brain damage can occur in as few as four minutes. The competition involved both physical and mental challenges and included a mandatory test for apprentices.

According to the Florida Municipal Electric Association, "The Florida Lineman Competition is a competitive event in which utility lineworkers work as teams, demonstrating their skills and knowledge in a fun and safe environment." Competitors volunteer, polishing their skills on their own time. Winners have a chance to compete nationally and even internationally.

The event encourages individual and team safety while performing various job skills and procedures, enhancing team communication, emphasizing the correct and safe methods of performing power line job procedures and providing opportunities for individuals from all segments of the industry to attend and participate.

A large part of these events is the cooperation between utilities. The "Mutual Aid Event" requires apprentices from three different utilities to form a team to accomplish a given task. In the event of a storm or other disaster, these competitors already know the linemen at the host utility and work together the power back on as soon and as safely as possible.



## Sondra Lozada Ensuring a Warm Welcome at City Hall

Beginning this morning, Customer Service Representative Sondra Lozada's smiling face is greeting people as they enter the lobby of City Hall. Sandy is there to help direct folks to the department they need and answer questions as well as to accept utility payments (except cash - that is only accepted at the windows in the rear of the building). Notes Customer Service Manager Shaun Gelissen,

"Sandy is very customer service focused and is great with our residents."

## 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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