



Week in Review

April 28 - May 18, 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



Celebrating Public Works Week

The many services provided by the City's Public Works Department are essential to the daily lives of all Bartow

residents - ensuring the effective operation of water, sewer, streets and highways, public buildings and solid waste collection. The health, safety and comfort of our community are deeply dependent upon the quality and reliability of these vital facilities and services. The planning, design, construction and overall effectiveness of public works infrastructure are a direct result of the dedication and expertise of our public works professionals.

This week we celebrate Public Works Week, because, too often, the positive impact of the work of our public works team goes unnoticed. This is because when everything runs smoothly, their presence, by design, is invisible.

National Police Week Observed

There are more than 800,000 law enforcement officers serving communities throughout the United States, including the dedicated members of the Bartow Police Department. Since the first recorded line-of-duty death in 1786, over 23,000 US law enforcement officers in have made the ultimate sacrifice. The names of those committed public servants are inscribed on the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial in Washington, DC.



This spring, 345 additional names are being added to the Memorial, including 148 officers who lost their lives in 2024 - a 25 percent increase from the previous year.

Bartow has lost two officers in the line of duty. In 1886, Town Marshal Silas Campbell was shot and killed while attempting to arrest two intoxicated individuals and in 1954, Officer A.G. Bush, Bartow's first motorcycle patrolman and a World War II veteran, died from injuries sustained in a patrol crash.

May 15 marked Peace Officers Memorial Day which honors fallen officers and is observed annually during National Police Week. That week and always, we honor the courageous men and women serving in law enforcement and memorialize those who sacrificed their lives in the line of duty. A proclamation designating last week as National Police Week was presented to **Bartow Police Department** Chief Stephen Walker and some of his officers at the last Commission meeting.

Hurricane Season Begins June 1

Never too early to prepare

Hurricane Season officially starts on June 1, but it's never too early to start preparing.

City staff from the Fire Department and the **City of Bartow Parks, Recreation & Cultural Arts** recently partnered with the Red Cross

to host a "no notice" shelter exercise in the event of sudden and life threatening flooding in the City.



The 2025 Atlantic hurricane season is predicted to be above average, with forecasts suggesting a higher number of named storms, hurricanes, and major hurricanes than the 30-year average.



Polk Co. Historical Marker Unveiled

Last Friday morning, the City was honored to unveil a new historical marker installed in Civic Plaza as part of the Polk County Historical Marker program, which recognizes and encourages the preservation of local history. The program is sponsored by the Polk County Historical Commission, through the **Polk County Government Florida** Board of County Commissioners.

The ceremony included a welcome by Bartow Mayor Tanya Tucker and remarks by Denise Bohde, Chair of the Historical Marker Committee, Polk County Historical Commission, and William Lloyd Harris, Historian with the Polk County Historical Commission, as well as Representative Jennifer Kincart Jonsson.

Also in attendance were Commissioner Trish Pfeiffer, City Manager Mike Herr, Myrtice Young, Historical Preservation Manager at Polk County BoCC, Tommy Griffin and Gabrielle Fazekas, Field Representatives for Congressman Scott Franklin, Robert Kincart, CEO of A-C-T Environmental & Infrastructure, Inc., and lifelong Bartow resident and former publisher of The Polk County Democrat SL Frisbie, as well as other City staff and esteemed residents and friends of the City.

The two-sided marker is located at the park at 200 East Davidson Road and reads as follows: "Settlement of the City of Bartow began in 1850 with the arrival of James D. and Eliza W. Green. In 1851, the Blount family, led by patriarch Readding Blount, settled near the site and eventually purchased the Green homestead. This site would become the homestead for members of the Blount extended family and twelve enslaved persons forming the earliest pioneer community at what was then known as Peas Creek.

The Third Seminole War (1855-1858) brought renewed uncertainty to the growing community. Families sought safety in numbers prompting the construction of a block house at the Blount family homestead, leading to the area being known as Fort Blount.

On July 1, 1882, twenty-two male residents of the community, both black and white, voted to incorporate the City of Bartow. These residents adopted a city seal to include the Latin phrase, 'Rus In Irbe,' which was later rewritten to 'Urbs In Rure' meaning 'town in the country.'

1882 Incorporation Voters:

F.F. Beville, S.C. Cochran, W.P. Ferrell, J.F. Gatlin, C.C. Gresham, G.A. Hanson, D.K. Hodges, D. Hughes, J. Humphries, P. Johnson, J.M. Lewis, L. Lytle, T. Mimms, P. Moore, S. Newman, T.C. Pearce, W.H. Pearce, E.S. Roden, G.W. Smith, J. Snoddy, T. Tucker, F. Wilson.

During the American Civil War, the post office at Fort Blount was named Bartow in recognition of war veteran Francis S. Bartow (C.S.A). In 1866, wealthy cattle baron, Jacob Summerlin donated 120 acres of his land in Bartow for public use. Summerlin's land grant included 40 acres for a courthouse, establishing Bartow as the seat of government for Polk County."



City Launches SeeClickFix

On May 1, the City of Bartow launched SeeClickFix, a new tool to empower residents to report quality-of-life issues and request services. The portal is available from the City's website and allows Bartow residents to make service requests with photos, location information and other details directly to the City's Customer Service department. In addition, the platform provides Bartow officials with a centralized system to manage issues from creation to resolution — engaging residents throughout the process.

The software detects duplicate requests, so that if a resident begins to submit information about a problem that already is in the system, it will confirm that the issue is being addressed and allow the resident to follow the existing request.

The technology also makes it easy for community members to view, comment on and follow issues submitted by their neighbors. Residents can even create their own "watch areas" to receive notifications about all the reports in their community, enabling them to follow the progress of all service requests, not just the ones they submit.

Since its launch, there have been seven requests made with all resolved or in progress. Commented one resident, who reported a damaged sidewalk, "You guys work fast! I appreciate the attention and work you are doing. Thank you, thank you!"

For more information, or to submit a service request, follow the link: <https://www.cityofbartow.net/525/SeeClickFix>

Arbor Day Celebrated

in the City

In 1872, J. Sterling Morton, a Nebraska newspaper editor and politician who served as President Grover Cleveland's secretary of agriculture, proposed that a special day be set aside for the planting of trees in his home state. That idea became the basis for Arbor Day, which is now observed throughout the world.

Trees can reduce the erosion of our precious topsoil by wind and water, lower our heating and cooling costs, clean the air, produce oxygen and provide habitat for wildlife, as well as being a renewable resource.

In Bartow – the City of Oaks and Azaleas - trees increase property values, enhance the economic vitality of business areas and beautify our community.

At their last meeting, the Mayor and Commissioners encouraged the planting of trees and recognized April 25 as Arbor Day in the City. To celebrate, **City of Bartow Parks, Recreation & Cultural Arts** staff accepted the proclamation, and, late last month, planted a Liberty Oak at May Holland Park.



Fire Dept. Visits Head Start

The Bartow Fire Department partnered with the **Polk County Fire Rescue's** Public Education Division to teach Fire Safety awareness to a group of young children graduating from the East Coast Migrant Head Start Program.

During the apparatus presentation, Bartow Fire Department personnel John Young, Justin Jones and Kenny Miles showcased the equipment from Engine 2, including personal protective gear, and allowed the children to explore the firetruck's cab. The presentation ended with stickers and fire helmets for the classes.

Stephens Elem. Students Get Lesson from Solid Waste Crew

Solid Waste Manager Michael Davis and members of his team recently visited Stephens Elementary School to talk about the importance of recycling. The students all were ready to pitch in!



Stormwater Improvements Begin Today

As part of a stormwater improvement project being funded by the City of Bartow Public Works department, Ajax Paving will be removing and replacing storm drains over the next couple of weeks. The construction project began today, with completion to expected in two weeks.

E Ethelene St and W Lucille St will be closed at the ends of N Park Ave. No business entrances will be affected. Temporary one lane traffic flagging will occur in the area but will be discontinued at the end of each day.

Every effort will be made to minimize interruption of day-to-day activities while the work is being done. We appreciate your patience with this project to improve our city.

Application Period for Organization Funding Now Open

The City of Bartow is accepting Organization Funding requests for Fiscal Year 2025 - '26 from nonprofits, tax exempt entities and community-based organizations.

Applicants must offer a service that augments one provided by the City or provide a necessary service that the City does not currently offer. To be considered for funding, both Nonprofit Organizations and Community Partners must submit an application.



A training session will be held at 10am on Tuesday, May 13 at City Hall, 450 N Wilson Ave., to answer any questions related to the application process and provide guidance on the presentation process.

Completed applications and supporting documentation MUST be submitted by June 16. Note that submission of applications does not guarantee funding.

More information and a link to the application are available here.

Clerks Week Celebrated

The week of May 4-10 was the 56th annual observance of Municipal Clerks Week.

In the City of Bartow and municipalities throughout the world, the office of the Municipal Clerk, the oldest among public servants, is a time honored and vital part of local government. The office of the Municipal Clerk serves as the information center on functions of local government and community and has pledged to be ever mindful of their neutrality and impartiality, rendering equal service to all.

At the last City Commission meeting, the Mayor and Commissioners recognized the contributions of Bartow City Clerk Jacki Poole, Assistant City Clerks Donna Donaldson and Kaylee Russell and proclaimed that week as Municipal Clerks Week.



Best in the Biz?

Can we do it again? Help the Bartow Golf Course retain the title of "Best Golf Course," by once again nominating our hometown course in *The Ledger's* Central Florida Community Choice Awards. **Cast your vote here.**

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