



# Week in Review

Aug. 5 - 11, 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

## Water Professionals Month Observed

Hot on the heels of their heroic efforts to quickly and efficiently make repairs to a leak at the Water Plant earlier this month, our water and wastewater teams are being celebrated in Bartow during Florida Professionals Month.



Water industry professionals throughout the state and here in Bartow dedicate themselves to the production and distribution of safe drinking water, as well as the proper collection, treatment, reuse and disposal of wastewater and storm water, all while protecting our state's natural resources.

The work done by these men and women is so critical that there is a Florida Statute designating water professionals as Essential First Responders. August is celebrated in our state as Florida Water Professionals Month to recognize their constant efforts to protect our health and environment.

## Clifton Paul Lewis Day Celebrated on August 5



Louisiana native Clifton Paul Lewis, affectionately known as Clif, moved to Bartow in 1989 following a successful 28-year employment with Bell Atlantic Corporation. His distinguished career includes leadership roles in telecommunications, community outreach, and community development, serving as Director of Community Outreach at the Polk County Opportunity Council and as Community Development Coordinator for the City of Bartow where he served as Community Development

Coordinator from 1998 until his retirement in 2015.

Mr. Lewis also has demonstrated extraordinary commitment to community service, holding numerous local leadership and board positions including the Central Florida Development Council, Habitat for Humanity of East Polk County, the City of Bartow Charter Review Committee and Community Redevelopment Agency, Mid Florida Center for Mental Health, the American Cancer Society and many more.

In addition, Mr. Lewis has played a pivotal role in the preservation and recognition of the L. B. Brown House Museum, a historic landmark built in 1892 by former slave Lawrence Bernard Brown, listed on the National Register of Historic Places and honored in the Smithsonian Museum of African American History and Culture. Mr. Lewis continues to serve as Director and Curator of the site and as President of the Neighborhood Improvement Corporation of Bartow, Inc., tirelessly working to revitalize the West and East Bartow neighborhoods.

Mr. Lewis is a proud United States Army Veteran, having served as an Army Signal Corps High-Speed Radio and Crypto Operator from 1961 to 1963, including a tour in Korea. Among his many awards and accolades, he is most proud of receiving the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution's Medal of Honor.

He is a devoted family man, married to Vendarae Washington Lewis, and is the proud father of four children and grandfather to eight. Mr. Lewis' unwavering commitment to faith, family and community exemplifies the highest ideals of citizenship, inspiring others through his actions grounded in love, forgiveness and compassion, and fostering progress and unity for current and future generations of Bartow residents.

At their most recent meeting, Mayor Tucker and the Commission acknowledged Mr. Lewis' enduring legacy that has enriched the lives of countless individuals and strengthened the fabric of our community and proclaimed August 5, as CLIFTON PAUL LEWIS DAY in the City of Bartow. In doing so, they urged all citizens to join in recognizing and honoring Mr. Lewis as a cherished community leader and commend his lifelong devotion to the betterment of Bartow and its citizens.

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## Deputy City Manager David Wright Retires

The City bade a fond farewell to Deputy City Manager David Wright on Friday as he celebrated his retirement after almost 32 years.

Friends, colleagues and past retirees gathered at City Hall last Friday to wish David well as he embarks on a new chapter - that hopefully is filled with travel, time with family and beer!



## Breast Feeding Awareness Month

Breast Feeding Awareness Month, observed in August, recognizes that human milk feeding is the biological norm for infant feeding and a proven primary prevention strategy that builds a foundation for lifelong health and wellness.

The American Academy of Pediatrics and World Health Organization recommend exclusive breastfeeding for about the first six months of life, with continued breastfeeding while introducing complementary foods for two years or as longer as mutually desired by the mother and child.

At their Aug. 4 meeting, the Mayor and City Commission recognized the observance in Bartow. The proclamation was accepted by Amy Beascochea, **Healthy Start Coalition of Hardee, Highlands & Polk Counties, Inc.**

## Bartow Public Library's Summer Reading Recap

As kids throughout the City go back to school, there's no question that many staved off the summer slump and may even have improved their reading skills over their break - if the Library's summer reading stats are any indication. In addition to giving away more than 300 books and hosting some incredible performers, artists and musicians, the Library reports that:

- 577 people completed the Wicked "Hero of Your Story Challenge"
- 2517 people attended a youth or teen program
- 561,293 minutes read



## Tax Holidays on Hurricane and Back-to-School Supplies

Beginning Aug.1, Florida began to permanently waive sales tax on some hurricane and health and safety supplies including certain batteries, carbon monoxide systems and fire extinguishers, bug spray and sunscreen, portable gas cans and generators and tarps. Because - reminder - we are just around the corner from peak hurricane season. Note that flashlights, lanterns and pet supplies, which previously were included in temporary disaster prep sales tax holidays are not part of the new tax exemptions.

We also are in the midst of Florida's Back-to-School Sales Tax Holiday, which will be in effect through Sunday, August 31.

This includes tax exemptions for school supplies costing \$50 or less, clothing, footwear and backpacks priced at \$100 or less, and personal computers and accessories (flash drives, printers and headphones) costing \$1500 or less. *Pro tip - you don't have to be a student to score some new fashion or tech sans tax.*

## Business Expo to Include CoB Procurement Staff

The City's Procurement staff will be participating in a Vendor Day Business Expo on Wednesday, Aug. 20 from 9am to 2 pm in Room LTB 1100 at Polk State College, 3425 Winter Lake Rd. in Lakeland.



This in-person event is designed to connect businesses, government agencies and local entrepreneurs to promote procurement opportunities and economic growth throughout Polk County and beyond.

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