



# Week in Review

Sept. 24 - Oct. 8, 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, 680 E Main St., Bartow, Florida 33830

## Bartow Lauds Two CPM Graduates

The Certified Public Manager® (CPM) program is a nationally recognized leadership development initiative designed for public managers and supervisors. Offered in 42 states and through the federal government, the program provides 31 days of classroom instruction combined with homework and exams. Instruction is structured into eight four-day courses, generally scheduled every two to three months, allowing participants to complete the program within two years.



Coursework and assignments require application of concepts to both the individual and the participant's organization. Levels 1–4 address core leadership and management skills, focusing on personal effectiveness, team leadership, and organizational improvement. Levels 5–8 emphasize the broader understanding of complex organizations, large systems, and policy development.

The City of Bartow celebrated its most recent Certified Public Manager (CPM) graduates at Monday's Commission meeting. Congrats to Sgt. Heather Vance, Bartow Police Department and Director Tray Towles, Code Compliance & Neighborhood Services for their successful completion of this rigorous program.

## Connecting with Residents through City "Speed Dating"

*Event part of Florida City Week*



In celebration of Florida City Week, the City of Bartow will host a "City Speed Dating" event on Tuesday, Oct. 21 from 6 to 7:30 pm at Front Page Brewery, 190 S. Florida Ave. Rather than romance, the purpose of the gathering is to connect residents with

information and build relationships between City leadership and the community in an informal setting.

In addition to City Manager Mike Herr, directors and managers from various departments will be on-hand to answer questions and share information one-on-one with attendees. Among the services represented will be Sanitation / Recycling, Water / Wastewater, Building and Planning, Code Enforcement, Electric, Parks & Recreation, the Bartow Golf Course, the Bartow Public Library, the Community Redevelopment Agency, Public Works, Customer Service, Police, Fire and Human Resources.

While The Front Page will not be open for food or beverage sales, light refreshments will be available. In addition, attendees will receive a raffle ticket for each city representative with whom they interact. Prizes include gift certificates and merchandise from by local businesses. The drawing will be held at the conclusion of the event, but participants do not need to be present to win. City departments also will offer small giveaways.

As in actual speed dating, conversations are meant to be civil, not confrontational. Participants are encouraged to come prepared with questions about City services or governance - or just an interest in the process. Some questions may require follow-up.

### **Florida City Week**

Held annually in October, Florida City Week is a weeklong event spearheaded by the Florida League of Cities that encourages the state's cities to celebrate, showcase, and engage citizens in the work of municipal government.

The City of Bartow also will host Bartow High School Government students in the Commission Chambers at City Hall on Wednesday, Oct. 22 at 9:30am as part of the observance. After a welcome from Mayor Tanya Tucker, the students will hear about City history from Myrtice Young with the Polk County History Center, learn about voter registration from Randy Barnes of the Polk County Voters League and participate in a mock Commission meeting led by City Attorney Sean Parker.

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## **Mayor Tucker Participates in Mayor's Roundtable**

Last month, Polk Vision hosted Polk County Board of County Commissioners Chair Rick Wilson and

12 mayors from across Polk County, including Bartow Mayor Tanya Tucker, for the 15th Annual Mayors Roundtable. It was a great event full of insightful discussion about growth management, the impacts of state policy, water, constituent engagement, and so much more.

*Photo from Polk Vision's Facebook page.*



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## **Public Power Week Recognized in the City**

This week marks Public Power Week - a celebration of our electric utility and our customers.

Bartow Electric is one of 2,000 public power



utilities across the nation, all serving one purpose: building strong communities.

Public Power means less disruption and more reliability. Customers of public power utilities like Bartow Electric have more time with the lights on, with the average customer experiencing 72 fewer minutes not worrying about outages than customers of private utilities. That translates to 25.6 million hours with power that would have been lost if served by a different utility type.

The City Commission recognized Electric Utilities Director Michael Poucher and his team for their efforts to keep the lights (and all

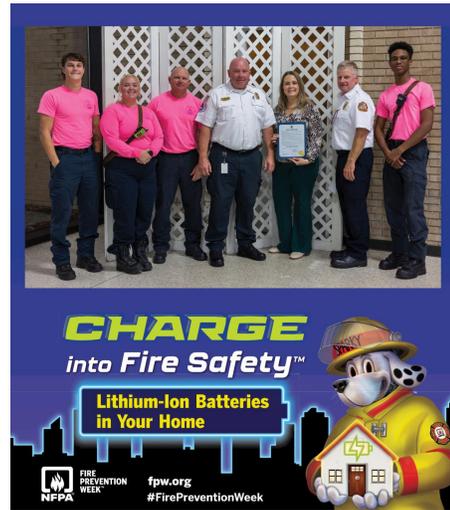
our other electronics) on each and every day with a proclamation at their last meeting.

## CHARGE into Fire Safety

The Bartow Fire Department is teaming up with **National Fire Protection Association (NFPA)** to promote this year's Fire Prevention Week, October 5- 11, with a theme of Charge Into Fire Safety: Lithium-Ion Batteries in Your Home.

Deputy Fire Chief Byron Moore brought some members of his team to the City Commission meeting on Monday to deliver that safety message and receive a proclamation designating the week.

Help us spread the word about making smart choices when it comes to buying, charging, and recycling lithium-ion batteries—because the wrong move can lead to a fire.



## Electric Department Assists with Egg Drop

Hooray for the Electric Utilities and Fire Departments for making a recent early release day a truly memorable one for the science / engineering classes at Bartow Middle School, when the students participated in an “egg drop” challenge.

Students designed projects that would hold an egg. Those projects (approximately 60 total) were dropped one at a time from the electric department's bucket truck at a height of 30 ft. The goal was to see if the raw egg would survive the fall without breaking, and many did!

The Fire Department also was on-hand with one of their vehicles for the students to explore.

*Thanks to PRC Communications Intern Noelia Velasquez for the*

*photos.*

## Coming Together to

# Make an IMPACT

Nearly 200 volunteers made a huge IMPACT on our City last month when they came together for the Bartow Community Redevelopment Agency / Keep Polk County Beautiful, Inc. IMPACT Clean Up.



At the last Commission meeting, the CRA recognized the community development partners that brought the IMPACT project to fruition. These included Keep Polk County Beautiful, Mt. Gilboa, Liberty Link 360 Foundation, and St. James AME, all of which contributed to the project's success.

The CRA's IMPACT program is designed to Inspire meaningful projects and community transformation by empowering groups and organizations to beautify neighborhoods and public spaces through volunteer-led projects.



## Arts & Culture Celebrated

Arts and culture enrich the lives of all who live, work, and visit the City of Bartow by inspiring imagination, sparking dialogue, preserving heritage, and strengthening civic pride.

Programs and destinations such as the Bloomin' Arts Festival, the Chalk Walk, the Bartow Art Guild, the Mayor's Art Club, as well as the Bartow Public

Library, host of murals and the LB Brown House among others, contribute to the City's vitality, economic and otherwise, by supporting local businesses, fostering tourism, and encouraging community development.

During this month of October, National Arts and Humanities Month, the Polk Arts & Cultural Alliance will hold the 2025 Polk Art & Culture Hall of Fame and Annual Awards Ceremony at the Bartow Civic Center. Part of that program will entail inducting longtime Bartow business and community members John and Terry Frost into the Hall of Fame Class of 2025.

At their last commission meeting, Bartow recognized the Alliance and used the occasion as an opportunity to highlight the talent, diversity, and creative spirit that define Bartow, while also encouraging continued public and private support for cultural initiatives.

## Free Hazardous Waste, Electronics and Tire Collection Day Set

The City's Solid Waste division is teaming up with **Polk County Government Florida** to help residents dispose of household hazardous waste and electronics.



From 8am until noon on Saturday, Oct. 25, you can bring chemicals like automotive fluids, paints, solvents and more to Bartow Senior High School for safe disposal. (Enter from E Georgia St.) Up to five electronics per household - TVs, stereos, printers, etc. - also will be accepted.

Acceptable materials include, but are not limited to:

- Auto and Boat Batteries
- Household Batteries
- Fuel and Gas Cylinders
- Filters, Used Oil and Antifreeze

- Pesticides
- Mercury and Fluorescent Lights
- Flares
- Paint
- Used Cooking Oil

After you drop off your hazardous household waste, get rid of those old tires that have been cluttering your space at C Wilson Equipment Co., 2301 US Highway 17S - also from 8am until noon. With thanks to our friends at Keep Polk Beautiful!

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## Lighting the Park for Breast Cancer and Domestic Violence Awareness Months

Breast Cancer Awareness Month is an international health campaign observed during the month of October to promote screening and reduce the risk of the disease, which affects 2.3 million women worldwide. The campaign celebrates its 40th anniversary in 2025.

According to the **American Cancer Society's** Cancer Facts & Figures 2025 report, approximately 1 in 8 women in the US will be diagnosed with invasive

breast cancer during their lifetime, and 1 in 43 will die from the disease.

With its pink theme color, the observance seeks to:

- support people diagnosed with breast cancer, including those with metastatic breast cancer
- educate people about breast cancer risk factors
- encourage women to go for regular breast cancer screening starting at age 40 or earlier, depending on personal breast cancer risk
- raise money for breast cancer research

To aid in this effort, **City of Bartow Parks, Recreation & Cultural Arts** crews have painted the iconic pink Breast Cancer Awareness ribbon in Fort Blount Park and tinted the lights in the park purple, to also commemorate Domestic Violence Awareness Month, a national campaign held every October to raise recognition and support for survivors of domestic violence. The 2025 theme for this observance is "With Survivors, Always," emphasizing partnership and solidarity with survivors.

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## Happy Retirement Falco!

After 8 years of faithful service to the Bartow Police Department and City residents alongside Cpl. Adam Anderson, K9 Falco is officially retiring. From community demonstrations to catching bad guys, he has done it all. Enjoy your well-deserved retirement, Falco!



## Celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month Continues

To continue the celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month, the City extended a proclamation recognizing the observance to Ana Rivera, President / Founder of the Puerto Rican/Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of Polk County



(PR/HCCPC).

PR/HCCPC is an organization with members in the small Hispanic and non-Hispanic business community located in Polk County, plus other surrounding counties in the state of Florida.

In addition to businesses, PR/HCCPC works closely with local Puerto Rican, Hispanic and non-Hispanic members of the educational, cultural, advocacy groups, religious, legislative branches, etc.

Ana proudly displays pieces of Puerto Rican art created by local artists in the background.

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## Golf Course Improves Cart Paths

Exciting things are happening at Bartow Golf Course! The course currently is improving the cart paths to make golfers' rounds smoother, safer, and more enjoyable.

Thanks to our local golfers for your patience as we work to make Bartow's favorite course even better for our community of golfers.



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## CRA Issues Call for Artists

The City of Bartow Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) invites qualified artists to submit proposals for the design and installation of murals on two public restroom exterior walls, as part of the CRA's ongoing efforts to promote public art and strengthen our community identity.

Artists may submit proposals for one or both projects, which will transform two ordinary spaces into vibrant landmarks for the City of Bartow and CRA

District. Themes should reflect a diverse community, honoring the history and vibrancy of our City.

The project is open to all professional artists (individuals or teams) with a minimum of five years of experience from Polk, Pinellas, Hillsborough, Osceola and Orange Counties. [More information on the projects and how to apply is available here.](#) The deadline for applications is Oct. 31.

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## Planning & Zoning Meeting on Oct. 27

The Planning & Zoning Commission will hold its next meeting at 5:30pm on Oct. 27 at the Bartow Civic Center, 2250 S Floral Ave.

Among the topics to be discussed and voted upon will

be the annexation and rezoning requests in regards to projects known as Emilie East and West.

These items were postponed from the last P&Z Commission meeting in response to requests from both the applicant/developer and the City's Planning Director Bob Wieggers to ensure that both parties are prepared as possible for the review of these projects.



In addition to simply needing more time, there also were issues surrounding a scheduled absence by one of the Planning and Zoning Commission members and a potential conflict of interest that would require a recusal by another, leaving only three of the five members in a position to vote.

In a statement release earlier this week, City Manager Mike Herr said, "The City's goal is to always ensure that every applicant is treated equally and fairly. Because of the importance of these items, we believe that the projects should be heard by more than three members."

Herr noted that the City has and will continue to follow the process set forth by the Florida Statutes and the City's Comprehensive Plan and Land Development regulations when dealing with these and all projects. He encouraged citizens to attend and participate in the upcoming public hearings for Emilie East and West and during any public hearings at future City Commission meetings. Agendas for these meetings will be posted on the City's website at [cityofbartow.net](http://cityofbartow.net).

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