

SOUTHWEST RANCHER

The Official Town Newsletter

**THINK SMART
RECYCLE RIGHT!**

DID YOU KNOW?
plastic Easter eggs
are NOT recyclable.

HAPPY
EASTER

happy
Saint Patty's Day
"Wishing you a pot o' gold
and all the joy your heart
can hold."

MARCH 2024

In Touch

TOWN HALL: 13400 Griffin Road / Southwest Ranches, FL 33330 • **PHONE:** (954) 434-0008 • **FAX:** (954) 434-1490

TOWN HALL OFFICE HOURS: Monday - Friday / 8:30 am - 5:00 pm • **TOWN WEBSITE:** www.southwestranches.org

TOWN HALL TWITTER ACCOUNT: @SWR_Gov • **YOUTUBE:** Town of Southwest Ranches Official Channel • **FACEBOOK:** facebook@SWRGOV

ELECTED OFFICIALS

Mayor Steve Breitkreuz	(954) 343-7462	sbreitkreuz@southwestranches.org
Vice Mayor David S. Kuczenski, Esq.	(954) 343-7472	dkuczenski@southwestranches.org
Council Member Jim Allbritton	(954) 343-7461	jallbritton@southwestranches.org
Council Member Bob Hartmann	(954) 343-7447	bhartmann@southwestranches.org
Council Member Gary Jablonski	(954) 343-7456	gjablonski@southwestranches.org

TOWN STAFF

Russell Muñiz, <i>Town Administrator</i>	(954) 434-0008	rmuniz@southwestranches.org
Danielle Caban, <i>Executive Assistant to the Town Administrator</i>	(954) 343-7474	dcaban@southwestranches.org
Debra M. Ruesga, <i>Town Clerk</i>	(954) 343-7451	druesga@southwestranches.org
Dan Stewart, <i>Deputy Town Clerk</i>	(954) 343-7443	dstewart@southwestranches.org
Jennifer McCarty, <i>Records and Administrative Coordinator</i>	(954) 343-7469	jmccarty@southwestranches.org
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Angelica Arosemena, <i>Administrative Assistant</i>	(954) 434-0008	aarosemena@southwestranches.org
Emil C. Lopez, <i>Town Financial Administrator</i>	(954) 343-7473	elopez@southwestranches.org
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Arianna Durbreej, <i>Town Accountant</i>	(954) 343-7477	adurbreej@southwestranches.org
Keith Poliakoff, <i>Town Attorney</i>	(954) 909-0580	keith@govlawgroup.com
Rod Ley, <i>Public Works Director</i>	(954) 343-7444	rley@southwestranches.org
Emily McCord Aceti, <i>Community Services Manager</i>	(954) 343-7453	ecaceti@southwestranches.org
Susan Kutz, <i>Administrative Specialist, Newsletter Editor & Graphic Designer</i>	(954) 343-7460	skutz@southwestranches.org
Joyce Marques, <i>Engineering Inspector</i>	(954) 343 7441	jmarques@southwestranches.org
December Lauretano-Haines, <i>Parks, Recreation & Open Space Manager</i>	(954) 343-7452	dlauretano@southwestranches.org
Melinda Stringer, <i>Administrative Assistant</i>	(954) 343-7454	mstringer@southwestranches.org

TOWN SERVICES / BUILDING DEPARTMENT PERMITTING – (CAP GOVERNMENT)

Simo Mansor, <i>Building Official</i>	(954) 343-7448	M-F 8:30 am - 4:00 pm
Derlin Guevara, <i>Permit Technician</i>	(954) 343-7446	smansor@capfiol.com
Maria Perez, <i>Permit Technician</i>	(954) 343-7445	swrinspections@southwestranches.org

PLANNING

Jeff Katims	(954) 554-8894	jeff@completecities.net
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ZONING/PERMITTING

Julio Medina, <i>Community Development/Code Enforcement Director</i>	(954) 343-7458	zoninginfo@southwestranches.org
CODE		
Julio Medina, <i>Community Development/Code Enforcement Director</i>	(954) 343-7458	jmedina@southwestranches.org
Manfred Velette, <i>Assistant Code Enforcement Director</i>	(954) 343-7440	mvelette@southwestranches.org
Code Enforcement Hotline	(954) 343-7449	
Concepcion Campos, <i>Code Enforcement Officer</i>	(954) 343-7457	ccampos@southwestranches.org
Ruth Miranda, <i>Administrative Coordinator</i>	(954) 343-7459	rmiranda@southwestranches.org

WASTE/BULK/RECYCLING SERVICES

WM (Waste Management)	(954) 974-7500	
REFLECTIVE ADDRESS MARKERS – Chief Bennett	(954) 868-2057	lbennett@southwestranches.org
MOSQUITO CONTROL	(954) 765-4062	
LOST AND FOUND ANIMALS	(754) 224-0877	Facebook@SWRLostandFoundAnimals

PUBLIC SAFETY

EMERGENCY	911	
Non-Emergency	(954) 764-4357 (HELP)	
Davie Police Department	(954) 693-8200	
Eddie Velazquez, <i>Detective</i>	(954) 693-8290	evelazquez@davie-fl.gov
Cheryl Danner, <i>Police Services Coordinator</i>	(954) 693-8352	cdanner@southwestranches.org
Davie Fire Rescue Station 112	(954) 952-4608	
Volunteer Fire Rescue – Chief Bennett	(954) 868-2057	
TRAFFIC AND ROADWAY SERVICES		
Potholes and Signs Down – Public Works		publicworks@southwestranches.org
Illicit Discharge – Environmental Response Line:	(954) 519-1499	online complaint form at: http://www.broward.org/Environment/Resources/Pages/EnviroComplaint.aspx

OTHER

WATER DISTRICTS - CANALS

Central Broward Water Control District	(954) 432-5110	www.centralbrowardwcd.org
East of SW 148 Avenue (Volunteer)		
South Broward Drainage District	(954) 680-3337	www.sbddd.org
West of SW 148 Avenue (Volunteer)		

Mayor Steve Breitkreuz



The one thing that unites us here in the Ranches is our desire

to live out, and preserve for the next generation, our rural lifestyle. I want to commend Council Member Hartmann for his work, along with our Administration, to pull together a workshop focusing on this topic. It was very interesting to hear everyone's thoughts on this topic. There were recommendations on how to improve and enhance it as well as thoughts on the best way to protect it. While I will leave much of the details to Council Member Hartmann, I want to make two observations from the meeting.

First, it was interesting, and the residents at the meeting also noted this observation and smiled a bit, there is a fine line that we are walking with code and how they enforce our ordinances. I believe that we have an excellent Code Department and very much appreciate all of Julio's and his Team's efforts. They have a really tough job! But the interesting observation is that to protect our Rural Lifestyle, some residents want code to be more proactive. However, to protect our Rural Lifestyle, some residents want less intrusion by code into our lives. Frankly I could see both points. I think the lesson here is that we as a Council need to think twice, maybe three times before implementing new ordinances. Any new ordinance needs to protect

our freedoms as well protect our residents from the abuse of those freedoms. But it was a great conversation.

The second observation is that we had a really great crowd out that evening. That tells me that we, as a Town, are still in good shape. I know that I can safely say that your Council is unanimous in its desire and efforts to preserve our Rural Lifestyle. However, it is even more dependent on the residents. It is you who provide the Council with the backing when other interests apply pressure on the Town to back off our stance. We have not backed off in the past, and I know this Council will not back off in the future. But future Councils will still need this strong resident support to continue our efforts.

Finally, I am looking for feedback from you on a potential proposal. One thought that I had to be proactive and promote our Rural Lifestyle was to provide a minimal financial incentive for non-Ag properties that have a working Ag structure on their property and are using it for an Ag use. If it is a true Ag property, then those properties are already getting a significant tax concession. However, many of us are not in the Ag business, but still enjoy the Ag lifestyle in one fashion or another. This potential change still needs a lot of work, but pro or con, I would very much like to hear your thoughts. If you have thoughts, concerns, recommendations on this topic, I would like to hear from you!

Thank you as always for the opportunity to serve our Town as your Mayor. Sincerely, it is a huge honor. Please feel free to contact me should you have any concerns or recommendations for improvements.

Steve
(954) 296-6018



CITATION REPORTS

FOR THE MONTH OF
JANUARY, 2024

District 1 yielded 7 citations and 3 hours and 52 mins of traffic enforcement.

District 2 yielded 5 citations and 9 hours and 3 mins of traffic enforcement.

District 3 yielded 42 citations and 10 hours and 2 mins of traffic enforcement.

District 4 yielded 122 citations and 19 hours and 34 mins of traffic enforcement.

Cherly Danner, Police Services Coordinator SWR
cdanner@southwestranches.org



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Vice Mayor David S. Kuczenski, Esq.



Howdy Ranchers,

Last month I began writing about the biggest threat to our rural lifestyle and our Town, the proposed

incinerator. The Council voted that the only acceptable solution is to promote Zero Waste. Zero Waste is not just one form of reducing solid waste; it refers to a goal to minimize materials that reach our landfills and reduce waste at the source. While single-use products are disposed in our landfills and harm the environment, Zero Waste living encourages us to be intentional about our daily consumption and consider how our decisions impact our planet.

One way that residents can help reduce our solid waste in landfills is composting. Composting is a controlled, aerobic (oxygen-required) process that converts organic materials into a nutrient-rich, biologically stable soil amendment or mulch through natural decomposition. Microorganisms feed on the materials added to the compost pile during the process. They use carbon and nitrogen to grow and reproduce, water to digest materials, and oxygen to breathe.

Compost is created by layering carbon-rich organic materials called "browns", like leaves, mulch, twigs, and paper, with nitrogen-rich materials called "greens", like fruits, vegetables, eggshells, and coffee grounds. Switching between browns and greens powers the microorganisms to eat away at the pile – but make sure to toss in double the amount of browns to greens.

As the food scraps and organic material start to break down, the temperature of the pile can rise up to 160 degrees. To speed up the process, turn the pile once a week. When it's finished, it will look dark and crumbly, and it shouldn't smell at all.

Key Benefits about composting:

- When you compost, you are returning nutrients to the soil, helping to maintain the balance in our environment.
- When you divert your food scraps away from landfills, you are reducing the production of Methane gas, a greenhouse gas 21x more potent than CO₂.

- You will be supporting local farmers and reducing the need to use herbicides and pesticides.

- Compost has the ability to store carbon, reducing the amount that is released into the atmosphere and preventing global warming.

- Compost can absorb water, reducing the risk of flooding.

- Composting is so rich in nutrients that it can rescue eroded land so it can become fertile again.

Diverting compostable material from garbage containers reduces the volume in our landfills, which are running out of space (the justification for building an incinerator). Additionally, composting takes nutrient-rich material, accelerates its breakdown, and returns it to nature, helping to grow trees, gardens, and crops.

To speak with a composting vendor, take a trip to our Southwest Ranches Farmers Market. A representative from Composting For Life Miami has been staffing a table to help educate the public.

As your Vice Mayor, I aim to preserve Southwest Ranches' unique rural lifestyle and minimize any changes to it. Together, let's protect and maintain what makes our community special. I also strive to return all phone calls within 24 to 48 hours. If you have questions or concerns, do not hesitate to contact me. As always, it has been an honor to serve as your voice on the Council.

Very Truly Yours,
David S. Kuczenski, Esq.
Council Member District 4



STAY IN TOUCH WITH ENGINEERING

Fill for horse stalls does not require a fill permit. In addition, a permit may not be required if a small amount of sand is required to replenish a horse arena. However the Town recommends that a property owner or leasee contact our office to assure that the type of work being performed falls under this criteria prior to performing the work. A phone call to us will help prevent a possible warning from Code Enforcement and double fees when it comes to acquiring the required permit.

Please call: (954) 434-0008 or
Email: jmarques@southwestranches.org



Whether you are a seasoned resident, a contractor or a fresh, out-of-the-oven newcomer, the Town of Southwest Ranches front desk has something for you!

You can obtain inspection forms, fill permit applications, event permits, reflective address marker applications, photo contest calendars, SWR stickers, a welcome packet for newcomers, a piece of candy, and a friendly smile plus information on Zoning, Engineering, Building and Solid Waste. To your surprise, you can even have a mini-therapeutic, stress-relieving encounter! More on that later. Let's talk about permits first...

Please be mindful that when submitting payments for permits, separate payments are required for each department: Zoning Engineering and Building. All checks are made out to the Town of Southwest Ranches. Remember to write the permit number on the checks. Also, if you fill out an inspection form in person before 3:00 pm, it will usually be scheduled for the following day.

Now, regarding the stress-relieving encounter...yes, you read correctly. The Town has its very own mascot, Floki. Floki is a two-year old Pomchi, a Pomeranian and Chihuahua wonderful mix. He goes to work every day and some residents who know him ask for him whenever they visit. Studies have shown that petting a dog helps to lower the stress hormone, cortisol and your blood pressure! So, next time you visit, feel free to visit Floki. You will get your questions answered, your permits taken care of, and you may even leave a little bit "sweeter," both from the candy and from Floki's sugar!





"FINANCE ACADEMY"

Truth in Millage (TRIM) establishes the statutory requirements that all taxing authorities levying millage must follow, including all notices and budget hearing requirements.

The millage rate is one-tenth of a percent, which equates to \$1 in taxes for every \$1,000 in home value.

The Town's TRIM notice associated to your property, can be viewed at Broward County Property Appraiser's website (www.bcpa.net). Click "property search" feature and enter your home information (e.g., name, address, etc.).

"HOW TO DO BUSINESS WITH THE TOWN"

The Town welcomes participation from all vendors qualified to do business with the Town. Please visit the Procurement page on the Town's website and complete the Vendor Application.



BRIEF LEGISLATION FROM THE JANUARY 11, 2024 TOWN COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING:

- Adopted Resolution 2024-029 approving the second modification to the agreement with the Town Financial Administrator.
- Adopted Resolution 2024-030 amending the Town's Charter Officer's retirement contributions from 12% to 15%.

BRIEF LEGISLATION FROM THE JANUARY 25, 2024 TOWN COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING:

- Adopted Ordinance 2024-004 amending the indoor and outdoor assembly regulations in the Unified Land Development Code.
- Adopted Resolution 2024-024 approving the first amendment to the agreement with C Danner LLC for police civilian coordinator services.
- Adopted Resolution 2024-025 approving a water service agreement with the City of Sunrise for 5556 Hancock Road.
- Adopted Resolution 2024-026 approving a water service agreement with the City of Sunrise for 14100 Stirling Road.
- Adopted Resolution 2024-027 approving the creation of the Zero Waste Advisory Board.
- Adopted Resolution 2024-028 approving the reinstatement of the Public Safety and Traffic Committee.

To view these approved items in their entirety please visit the Town Clerk's Department page on the Town website and click on the Resolutions and/or Ordinances link.

FOR THE WELL-BEING OF OUR PLANET REDUCING OUR ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT BY COMPOSTING OUR FOOD SCRAPS

• WHAT IS COMPOST? Compost is the sustainable, recycled, nutrient rich soil amendment product of decomposed organic waste. Simply put, compost is actually what you get when organic material (like food scraps, leaves, and animal products) decomposes properly. It's a nutrient rich, dirt-like material that can be used to enrich soil and nourish growth.

• WHAT IS COMPOSTING? Composting is the process by which organic material - yard scraps, food scraps, etc. - is made into soil, rather than thrown in the trash and eventually sent to a landfill. By doing so, we are able to create more nutrient-rich soil and reduce our reliance on landfills, which are quickly filling up and emitting greenhouse gases that contribute to global warming.

• WHY SHOULD I COMPOST? Diverting compostable material places less pressure on our landfills, which are slowly running out of space. By contrast, composting takes nutrient-rich material, accelerates its breakdown, returns it to nature, helping to grow trees, gardens, and crops. By composting your food scraps, you'll be reducing your carbon foot and the frequency or your trash pickups— helping save our planet and your wallet!

• CONTAMINATION. Any unwanted/ non-compostable materials are considered contaminants. They can be burdensome to remove and can lower the value of the finished compost product. Physical contaminants of most concern are the Big Three: Plastics (including plastic bags), glass and produce stickers.

To avoid contaminating your compost, make sure you become familiar with the food waste we accept (see list attachment). Please note that this excludes any type of animal protein.

For example, as of December of 2023, Compost for Life has diverted 2,342,226 lbs of food scraps from landfills. To put it in simpler terms, this is equivalent to CO2 emissions from: 1,035,264 LBS OF COAL BURNED - 105,400-GAL OF GAS - 118 HOMES' ENERGY USE FOR A YEAR.



If you have any questions about composting right, feel free to ask Compost for Life via email at information@compostforlifemiami.com. You can now become part of our composting community initiative in Southwest Ranches and nearby West Broward communities. You'll be helping to achieve our goal of reducing environmental impact by diverting food waste from landfills and recycling into high quality soil to create a sustainable cycle. The organic material will be turned back into soil at a local farm where it is processed for 4 - 6 months. The finished compost can be used for gardening and/or landscaping.

Industrial scale composting is a zero-waste method of diverting organic material away from landfills and incinerators. If this is done in Broward County, approximately 30-40% and possibly more organic material can help the County avoid having to build a new trash incinerator and/or reduce the size of an existing incinerator which would have less impact on the environment and ultimately on human health.

TO HELP IN THE GRASS ROOTS EFFORT TO OPPOSE ANY NEW INCINERATORS BEING BUILT ANYWHERE NEAR OR ADJACENT TO SOUTHWEST RANCHES OR ANYWHERE IN SOUTH FLORIDA, YOU CAN JOIN OUR GRASS ROOTS COMMUNITY, ZERO WASTE BROWARD TASK FORCE BY ATTENDING THE NEXT MEETING ON MARCH 13TH AT 7PM AT SOUTHWEST RANCHES TOWN HALL, BY EMAILING zerowastebrowardtf@gmail.com, AND JOINING FACEBOOK GROUP <https://facebook.com/groups/browardcleanair>



NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES AWARENESS MONTH

This month marks National Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month. The purpose of this month is to recognize the great works of Americans with developmental disabilities that affect their physical, learning, language, or behavior abilities. It also reminds the nation of our commitment to our disabled citizens by providing them with equal dignity, respect, and access to opportunity.

Today, I stand as your State representative, but before, I spent the majority of my working life in the Florida education system as a special education teacher, an assistant principal, and as a school board member. Through these experiences, I was able to learn more about how to help our children receive the best education we can provide for them. One issue plaguing our schools is lack of access to an equal quality education for our special needs students. At the end of the summer, a mother came to visit me at the district office, sharing how difficult it was to find a preschool that would meet the needs of her son, Logan. Logan required patience and empathy that many schools weren't able to provide. She then explained to me that even after finding a school for her son that agreed to account for her son's way of learning, he was kicked out. From there he was sent from school to school with no one able to accommodate him. When he was finally placed in a district school, his mother was elated but hit

another roadblock. This school did not provide after-care and struggled to find one that could provide education to her son. Everyone deserves a right to education, yet often we see students with disabilities, such as Logan, struggling to find an education. This is what inspired HB 847: School Readiness Program.

Our bill will require that teachers who work with students with special needs to receive 10 more hours of training in order to better account for the needs of their students. As of now, they receive the same amount of training despite having students with different needs. This is how students such as Logan end up getting kicked out of their schools, as the teachers aren't given the training to provide quality education. We will also expand IEPs to students with behavioral issues if they receive confirmation from a psychiatrist that they would in fact benefit from this type of education. Acting as a corrector for their behavior on a more individual level, as many of these students may be more reactive as they do not respond to the style of learning in the mainstream education system. It is easy to see this as its own incident, but this is the story of most parents with children who have developmental disabilities. In fact, the expulsion rate for students in K-12 with special needs disabilities is 3 times higher than the national average. I find this to be unacceptable.

To conclude this bill is transformative and will allow our students and families access to the resources they deserve to have a better start in the education system and early identification helps to remove the risk of later life issues, such as problems in school or maintaining employment, mental health problems, or substance use problems, according to the CDC. This is important for their futures to set them up for success, so all of society can grow and we can keep our promises to our constituents.

It is an honor to serve you and we are here to assist with any issues or concerns you may have. I welcome ideas and suggestions. Feel free to contact me anytime at robin.bartleman@myfloridahouse.gov or our office at (954) 424-6828. You can also reach me on my personal cell at (954) 668-3662.

LOOKING FOR LIMPKINS

(<https://www.audubon.org/field-guide/bird/limpkin>)



Looking like something between a crane and a rail, this odd wading bird has no close relatives. It is widespread in the American tropics but enters our area only in Florida and southern Georgia -- only where it can satisfy its dietary requirement for apple snails, as well as insects, crustaceans, worms, frogs, lizards. Mostly solitary, Limpkins may be overlooked as they stalk about in marshes and swamps; they draw attention with their piercing banshee wails, often heard at dawn or at night.

RURAL PUBLIC ARTS & DESIGN BOARD PRESENTS



Susan Kutz Staff Liaison, Robert Sirota Board Member, David S. Kuczenski, Esq. Council Liaison, Laura Warren Artist, Laurie Morse Board Member, Rose Allbritton Chair, Sage Cimetta Vice Chair and Barbara Gonzalez Board Member not pictured.

Laura Warren was honored for her beautiful mural on the wall at Founders Park in Southwest Ranches, depicting our beautiful Florida scenery and wildlife.

Robert Sirota of the Rural Public Arts Board suggested the idea, and knowing Laura is an artist, I asked her if she would be interested. She said she would, and she submitted her ideas, and of course our board unanimously decided to support the project.

After some time and a generous monetary donation by the Sunshine Ranches HOA to help fund the project, she was able to complete this project as planned.

Despite the Florida heat and a few unwanted visitors, numerous changes, and additions (artists creative genius!) our beautiful mural came to life!

She received a plaque for her beautiful work and a rendering of the work which was framed by Council Member Gary Jablonski is now on display at Southwest Ranches Town Hall.

Thank you again Laura for enhancing the beauty of our Town !!



SHOW YOUR TOWN SPIRIT

SWR stickers are made for residents by the Country Estates Homeowners Association. Sticker's are \$1 each and are available at Town Hall, 13400 Griffin Rd.



PLANTING GUIDE FOR SOUTH FLORIDA VEGETABLES

Website: www.broward.org/parks/extension/urbanhorticulture
A SERVICE OF THE BROWARD COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

MAYORS
MONARCH
PLEDGE

POLLINATOR
PARTNERSHIP
Protect their lives. Preserve ours.

MAY: Black-Eyed Peas, Sweet Potatoes, Watermelon.

JUNE: Cassava, Chayote, Cherry Tomatoes, Chinese Yams, Malanga, Pigeon Peas, Pumpkin, Sweet Potatoes.

SOIL PREPARATION: If your soil pH is between 5.5 and 7.0, no adjustment in pH needs to be made. However, in South Florida the pH ranges from 7.0 to 8.5 and you will need to improve your soil and its pH by bringing in topsoil or a soil mix, or by applying liberal amounts of organic material to the soil already present. Spade or plow the plot at least 3-4 weeks before planting. Then rework the soil into a fine firm, seedbed at planting time.

ADDING ORGANIC MATTER: Various forms of organics such as animal manure, rotted leaves, compost, and cover crops should be thoroughly mixed into the soil well in advance of planting, preferably at least a month. Fertilizers Use a balanced time-release fertilizer such as 8-8-8 or 15-15-15. If the pH is above 6.3, micronutrients will be necessary. Fertilize at planting, when the plants flower, and when the fruit is medium sized. The fertilizer can be either broadcasted (spread by throwing) over the plot, or a line of fertil-



izer can be laid 2-3 inches on both sides of the plant row (banding). Follow the directions on the fertilizer label and consult Florida Vegetable Gardening Guide1 SP 103 publication for more specific instructions.

GARDEN PLACEMENT • Full sun (6 hours of sun per day) • Convenient to the house • Level ground • Good soil • Well-drained area • Clear of trees and shrubs • Close to a water source.

Gardens may be planted year- round in Florida, but fall is the preferred season in South Florida. Garden placement is very important. Use the following key points to place your vegetable garden to increase your gardening success.



A FRIENDLY REMINDER FROM THE DAVIE POLICE DEPARTMENT

Hi Friends, Residents, and Business Owners! This is a reminder of some safety tips.

Please continue to notify the Davie Police Department if you see anything suspicious:

**Non-emergency
(954) 693-8200
Emergency 911**

Please keep your property and homes safe. Lock all your doors and remove keys and fobs from your vehicles. Please remove your mail from your mailbox in a timely manner. If you will be out of town, you can contact the US Postal Service and request your mail not be delivered until you return. Please visit USPS Hold Mail Service to submit a request online. You will need to sign in to or create a USPS.com account to begin an online USPS Hold Mail request. You can enter an online USPS Hold Mail request up to 30 days in advance of the start date or as early as the next scheduled delivery day.

Stay safe and watch out for each other!

All the best, Cheryl Danner Police Service Coordinator



A Special Recognition

At the February 22, 2024, Town Council Meeting recognized resident and owner of PHI Construction, George Morris who is much more than a resident, local business owner, and Town Advisory Board Member. He was acknowledged for his love of the town, which includes many Town construction projects, generosity in the donation of his time for his services, experience and leadership within the Town that has positively impacted residents, staff, Council, and visitors.

George, we thank you for your selfless service that has benefited residents.



- **Do not walk through flowing water.** If you must walk in standing water, use a pole or stick to ensure the depth of the water ahead.
- **Do not drive through a flooded area.** Do not drive around road barriers; the road may be washed out.
- **Stay away from power lines and electrical wires.** Electrical current travels through water. If possible, report downed powerlines to FPL. Do not use appliances or motors that are wet unless they have been taken apart, cleaned and dried.
- **Look out for animals, especially snakes.** Small animals that have been flooded out of their habitat may take shelter in your home.
- **Look before you step.** After a flood, the ground and floors can be covered with debris. Surfaces that have been covered with mud can be very slippery.
- **Be alert for gas leaks.** If your house is serviced by gas, do not smoke, use candles or open flames unless you know the gas has not built up. Make arrangements to turn off your electricity and gas.

To sign up to be notified via voice message, text and email for important public safety information during a storm visit <http://southwestranches.org> and Broward.org/Emergency/Pages/AlertBroward.aspx.



Financial Assistance Advice

If your home or business is damaged by a flood, you may be required to meet certain building requirements to reduce further flood damage by coming into compliance with local, state, and federal criteria. To help with these costs, financial assistance such as grants, loans, rebates and the NFIP's Increased Cost of Compliance Coverage may be available.

For assistance regarding financial assistance options, please contact the Town's Engineering Department at (954) 434-0008, Broward County's Mitigation Coordinator at (954) 831-3900 or visit Disasterassistance.gov.



National Flood Insurance Program Changes

In accordance with 2014 Homeowner Flood Insurance Affordability Act, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is continuing to gradually phase out flood insurance premium subsidies on certain policyholders. The changes have and will have the greatest impact on properties located within a Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA) that were built prior to the adoption of Broward County's first FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) on October 26, 1972, or prior to December 31, 1974, without elevation certificate information. For more information on the National Flood Insurance Program changes visit FEMA.gov/flood-insurance-reform.



Get a Flood Insurance Policy

Replacing household contents damaged by floods could place a significant financial burden on a homeowner or renter without flood insurance. Just a few inches of water from a flood can cause tens of thousands of dollars in damage. Homeowner's insurance policies do not generally cover damage from floods. However, because the Town of Southwest Ranches participates in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), you can purchase a separate flood insurance policy from an insurance agent and benefit from the premium discount available to all Southwest Ranches residents. Flood insurance is backed by the federal government and is available to everyone, even for properties that have been flooded previously. Please note that unless there is a special condition of the mortgage, there normally is a 30-day waiting period between the time flood insurance is purchased and the time coverage is in force. Though all home and business owners in these areas with mortgages from federally regulated or insured lenders are required to buy flood insurance, all residents should consider flood insurance to protect against significant financial losses.

If your property is in the SFHA and you have a mortgage from a federally regulated or insured lender, flood insurance is required. Even if you do not have a mortgage and you live in the SFHA or you live outside of the SFHA, all property owners and renters should carefully consider the benefits of flood insurance to protect against significant financial losses from floods. For more information visit the following sites: Floodsmart.gov and FEMA.gov/national-flood-insurance-program.

If you would like to know if your property is in a SFHA you can use the interactive map viewer. Visit <http://southwestranches.org/departments/town-engineering/flood-insurance-information/> and select Flood Maps. You can also call (954) 434-0008, provide your address and zip code, and Town staff will assist you in determining SFHA information specific to your property.



Elevation Certificate Information

Elevation certificates for buildings are on file and may be obtained by visiting <http://southwestranches.org/departments/town-engineering/flood-insurance-information/>.



Water Quality and Flood Control Effects of Drainage Systems

The success of the drainage system in your neighborhood depends on proper maintenance of the system. The swales that are commonly located between your yard and street are part of the neighborhood's storm water management system.

Gutters, storm drain pipes, lakes, wetlands, swales and canals should be kept free of debris. It is against Town Code to dump trash in waters. The drainage system may provide both water quality and flood control benefits. Lakes, wetlands, swales and canals filter pollutants from runoff or allow pollutants to settle out. Check with the Town's Engineering Department before paving, regrading or altering swales.



Protect Property from Flooding

Losses due to floods can be reduced by implementing property protection measures. Furniture, appliances, clothing, and other movable items can be elevated within the structure or relocated away from potential flooding if time permits. You should also make an itemized inventory of your belongings including costs, dates of purchase and serial numbers.

There are several ways to protect a building from flood damage if feasible. One way is to make sure your lot is graded in a manner that will direct runoff away from your building. Another approach is to make your walls waterproof and place watertight closures over the doorways. This method is not recommended if water will rise to a depth of two feet or greater. A third approach is to raise the house above flood levels. Prior to making these modifications, consult with a certified contractor.



Build Responsibly

Strict regulations govern substantial improvements to structures in the flood plain. According to NFIP, "substantial improvement" means the cost of any repair, reconstruction, or improvement of a structure which equals or exceeds 50 percent of the market value of the structure either before the improvement is started or if the structure has been damaged and is being restored.

Please be advised that any new development or improvement on a property will be subject to current Town regulations and may also be subject to state and federal regulations. Please contact the Southwest Ranches Building Code Services Division at (954) 434-0008 for specific information and to report unpermitted construction activities.



Flood Risk Specialist Available to Assist Residents

The Town of Southwest Ranches wants to ensure that residents who have questions about flood risks, flood insurance, and retrofitting techniques, get answers in a timely manner. The Town Engineer is available to assist in the following areas: 1) Flood Insurance; 2) Flood Zone interpretation including base flood elevation and/or flood depth; 3) Additional FIRM information; 4) Problems not shown on FIRM; 5) Special flood related hazards; 6) Historical flood-related data; 7) Natural flood-plain functions; and 8) Property protection measures. Please call the Engineering Department at (954) 434-0008 and ask to speak to the Town Engineer. You may also schedule a site visit to review flooding, drainage, and

storm sewer problems, and to obtain advice on retrofitting techniques to provide additional protection. Go to <http://southwestranches.org/departments/town-engineering/flood-insurance-information/> for additional information.



Local Flood Hazards

Floods resulting from prolonged, heavy rainfall can occur in rivers and canals that drain inland areas into the Atlantic Ocean when waterway capacities are exceeded. Flooding from heavy rainfall occurs in low-lying areas and areas near rivers and canals.

The severe flooding that occurred as a result of the exceedingly wet summers and the hurricanes of 1947 was the basis for creating what is now the South Florida Water Management District. South Florida's five-month rainy season brings more than two-thirds of the region's annual rainfall. The rainy season can also bring flooding, which may occur when large amounts of rain fall over a short period of time or from a single heavy storm, tropical system or hurricane.

Since portions of Southwest Ranches have been designated as a Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA) by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), it is advisable to check the interactive map viewer to see the location of your property with respect to the SFHA. Visit <http://southwestranches.org/departments/town-engineering/flood-insurance-information/> and select Flood Maps. You can also call (954) 434-0008, provide your address and zip code, and Town staff will assist you in determining SFHA information specific to your property.



Protect Natural Floodplain Functions

Although much of the natural flood plain system in South Florida has been altered and is frequently over-drained, efforts are being made to enhance many historical wetlands and canals to restore them to a more natural state. These flood plain and wetland areas buffer flood flows, remove pollutants from our surface waters, recharge groundwater and create diverse habitat systems for plants and animals. The Southwest Ranches Comprehensive Plan includes policies pertaining to flood plains and wetlands. The plan provides for protection and creation of surface waters, protection and wetlands preservation.



Map Services

Maps are an effective method of communicating information about flood hazards. Residents and businesses that are aware of potential flood hazards can take steps to avoid problems and reduce exposure to flooding. Therefore, the Town offers complementary maps to supplement and clarify the Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) with information on additional hazards, flooding outside mapped areas, development regulations that affect floodplain properties, flood insurance, natural floodplain functions, and property protection measures.


A GIS mapping application for Southwest Ranches that is publicly available includes information you will need for a flood insurance policy including whether your property is in a SFHA, the community number, panel number and suffix, FIRM date, FIRM zone, base flood elevation and the elevation datum used. Additional FIRM information is also available showing areas of concern such as whether your property is located within a floodway.

The Town has mapped local drainage problem areas within the Town. In addition, the Town has a map providing information about past floods that have occurred. If you live in one of these areas, we would like to have a discussion with you regarding potential remedies.

A GIS mapping application for Southwest Ranches that is publicly available includes layers related to natural floodplain functions, specifically wetlands and fish and wildlife habitat. The map includes Broward County's wetland data to provide a comprehensive picture of where wetlands are located within the Town.

To view these interactive maps, please visit the Town's website. For more information regarding the flood maps and the Town's floodplain management program or if you would like assistance reading the maps, please call Town Hall at (954) 434-0008 or email rley@southwestranches.org.

Source: Broward County Flood News, Summer 2018, Volume 24, Issue 1



MARTY KIAR
BROWARD COUNTY PROPERTY APPRAISER

2024 Homestead Exemption/Save Our Homes Cap Set by the State

The Florida Department of Revenue has set the 2024 Save Our Homes (SOH) cap at 3%. This SOH assessment cap limits increases to the Assessed/SOH Value for properties receiving Homestead Exemption to no more than 3% per year or the increase in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) regardless of increases to the just value of the property. This cap results in considerable property tax savings over time for properties with Homestead Exemption. It is important to remember this is not a cap on the actual taxes, but rather a cap on the amount the Assessed/SOH Value of the property may increase annually. Properties without Homestead Exemption receive the benefit of a 10% cap on the Assessed/SOH Value beginning the year after the property is reassessed at just value.


Important: The Save Our Homes cap begins the year after you receive Homestead Exemption. This cap does not cover new construction or construction that was not taxed before the "Save Our Homes" limit applied to a particular property. **When buying/acquiring real estate, do not assume the property taxes will remain the same as the current owner's taxes. Under Florida law, a change in ownership will reset the assessed value of the property to full market value, which could result in higher property taxes.** To help property owners better prepare, our office offers a New Homebuyer's Tax Estimator on our website at <https://web.bcpa.net/bcpaclient/#/Tax-Estimator>.

Late Filing Exemption Deadline - September 18, 2024



Your Homestead Exemption automatically renews each year provided there is no change in the ownership or use of the property. If you are already receiving Homestead Exemption on your current home, you do not need to reapply. If you have not yet applied for your 2024 Homestead Exemption, Low-Income Senior Exemption, or any other exemption, you can still late file until September 18, 2024. To apply for any of these exemptions, please visit <https://web.bcpa.net/bcpaclient/#/Homestead>. Once the September statutory "late filing" deadline has closed, we cannot accept any more 2024 exemption applications regardless of any good cause reason for missing the late filing deadline. Property owners who moved to a new home in 2024 can pre-file for tax year 2025 at https://bcpa.net/homesteadonline_with_portability/web/index.aspx.

If my office can ever be of assistance to you, please do not hesitate to contact me directly at 954-357-6830 by email at martykiar@bcpa.net.

Take care,



Marty Kiar, JD, CFA

 MartyKiarBCPA
 @MartyKiarBCPA

Congratulations!

MEET YOUR NEW TOWN ADMINISTRATOR AND NEW TOWN CLERK



The Town celebrated the promotions of Town Administrator Russell Muñiz and Town Clerk Debra Ruesga at the Charter Officer Swearing-in Ceremony, held January 25, 2024.

Russell Muñiz was appointed Town Administrator in December of 2023. He joined the Town in March 2014 as the Town Clerk and was appointed Assistant Town Administrator in January 2015. He has been serving South Florida municipalities since 1995; previously serving Davie and Pembroke Pines.



Debra Ruesga was appointed Town Clerk in December of 2023, after joining the Town as Deputy Town Clerk in January of 2020. She has been in public service since 2000, having previously worked for the City of Pembroke Pines as well as the City of Coral Springs.

Congratulations to you both. We thank you for your service to the Town and look forward to your future contributions.

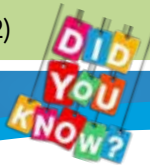
**HAPPY
90th BIRTHDAY!**



*To our longtime resident **BOB PARKER**
We hope this birthday brings you joy, laughter and love – all things you deserve.*



by: Public Works (Part 2)



Where the water **FLOWS** after it leaves your neighborhood

1. Neighborhood Canals

Community drainage systems store excess water in local lakes, ponds, swales and streets. Some standing water is expected after heavy rains.

Excess water slowly drains to community lakes or ponds through street and yard storm drains.

Rainwater then flows through underground pipes to the next link in the flood control chain: the local canals.

2. Local Canals (Secondary)

Local canals are maintained and operated by cities, counties or local drainage districts and include canals, pump stations and storage areas.

These canals receive water from neighborhoods and store excess water or move it to the larger-capacity regional flood control system.

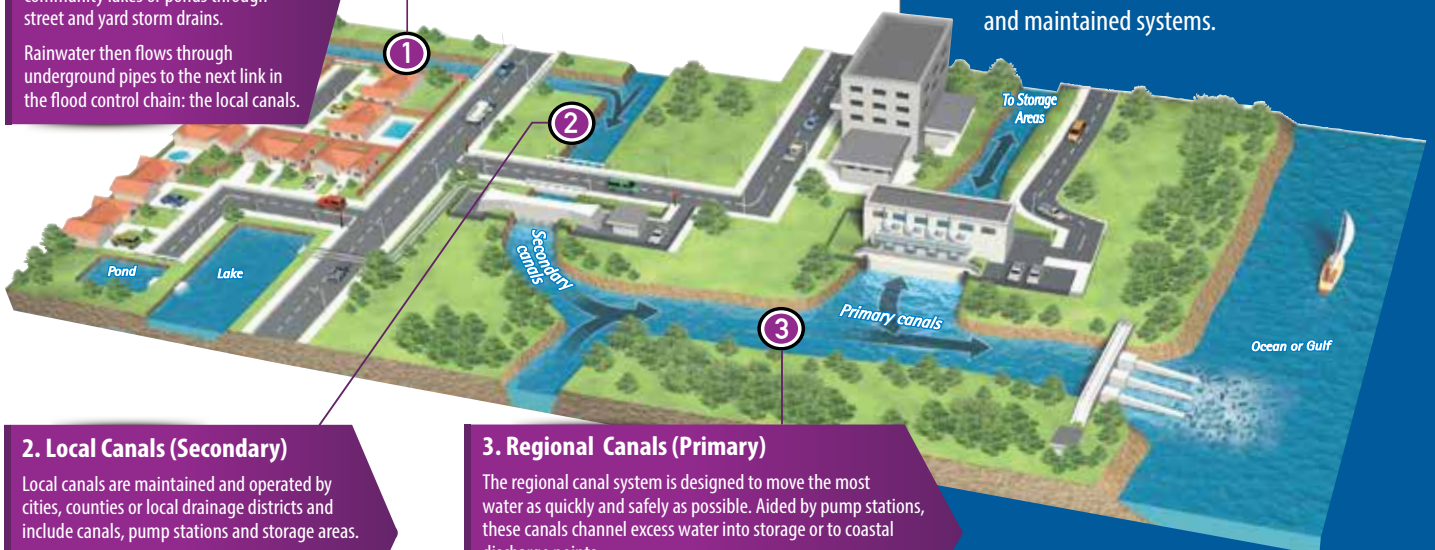
3. Regional Canals (Primary)

The regional canal system is designed to move the most water as quickly and safely as possible. Aided by pump stations, these canals channel excess water into storage or to coastal discharge points.

In areas not served by the water management system, natural rivers and other waterways serve as drainage outlets.

The South Florida Water Management District operates the regional water management system of canals, levees, water control structures and storage areas. The system connects to local drainage districts & thousands of neighborhood systems. These interconnected systems must work together to achieve maximum drainage of excess rainwater.

► Heavy rainfall in a short period of time may result in flooding, even with well-engineered and maintained systems.



Learn more at
sfwmd.gov/rainyseason



PHOTO BY: Robin Ditzian
"Chilling in the stall, a happy girl and a foal." (From the 2024 Photo Contest Calendar)

MARCH

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
25	26	27	28	29	1 • Farmers' Market 16290 Griffin Rd. 10am - 3:00pm
3 • Country Estates HOA Meeting - Grace Baptist Church 19200 Griffin Rd. 7pm SWR Parks Foundation Meeting - Town Hall 7pm	4 • CODE Hearing - Town Hall 9am • BCPA Office - Town Hall 10:30am - 12:30pm • Zero Waste Advisory Board Meeting - Town Hall 7pm	5	6	7 • Public Safety & Traffic Committee - Town Hall 7pm	8 Unity in Diversity 5K Run - Rolling Oaks Barn 7:30am • Farmers' Market 16290 Griffin Rd. 10am - 3:00pm
BULK ZONE 1	BULK ZONE 2	BULK ZONE 3	BULK ZONE 4	BULK ZONE 5	BULK ZONE 6
10 	11 • Schools & Education Advisory Board Meeting - Rolling Oaks Barn 7pm	12 • Parks, Recreation, Forestry & Natural Resources Advisory Board Meeting - Town Hall 7pm	13 • Zero Waste Broward Task Force Meeting - Town Hall 7 pm	14 • TOWN COUNCIL MEETING - Town Hall 7pm	15 • Farmers' Market 16290 Griffin Rd. 10am - 3:00pm
BULK ZONE 7	BULK ZONE 8	BULK ZONE 9	BULK ZONE 10	BULK ZONE 11	BULK ZONE 12
17 	18 • Rural Public Arts & Design Board Meeting - Town Hall 7pm	19 • Spring Begins • Drainage & Infrastructure Advisory Board Meeting - Town Hall 7pm	20 • Fire Advisory Board Meeting - Town Hall 7pm	21 • Comprehensive Plan Advisory Board Meeting - Town Hall 7pm	22 • Farmers' Market 16290 Griffin Rd. 10am - 3:00pm
BULK ZONE 1	BULK ZONE 2	BULK ZONE 3	BULK ZONE 4	BULK ZONE 5	BULK ZONE 6
24 • Palm Sunday	25 • Mid-Town Civic Association Meeting 7pm ZOOM	26 • Rolling Oaks Civic Association Meeting - Rolling Oaks Barn 17630 SW 56th St. 7pm	27 • Flow Mobile DMV Services - Town Hall 10 - 2:00pm (by appointment only) • Sunshine Ranches HOA Meeting - ZOOM 7pm	28 • TOWN COUNCIL MEETING - Town Hall 7pm	29 • Good Friday • Farmers' Market 16290 Griffin Rd. 10am - 3:00pm
BULK ZONE 7	BULK ZONE 8	BULK ZONE 9	BULK ZONE 10	BULK ZONE 11	BULK ZONE 12
31 	1	2	3	4	5
					6

HAPPY BIRTHDAY...

Ava Salazar - March 5th
Daylani Shannon - March 8th
Jamie Ure Jr. - March 16th
Tom Wallace Jr. - March 30th
Marcelo and Thiago - Happy 1st birthday



We hope your special day is filled with happiness and that all your wishes come true.

Have a birthday you would like to share with us in a future Town newsletter? Send your name and birthday to:
Skutz@southwestranches.org

Happy Saint Patrick's Day
Broward County School Calendar

MARCH

M	T	W	T	F
				1
4	5	6	7	8
11	12	13	14	15
18	19	20	21	22
25	26	27	28	29

Thursday, March 21st -
Early Release Day
Friday, March 22nd -
Employee Planning (no school for students)
Monday, March 25th thru 28th -
Schools Closed
Friday, March 29th -
School and Administrative Offices Closed

Are you recycling RIGHT?



Dinosaurs may be extinct but cardboard can live forever as new products when you recycle your boxes.



Town of Southwest Ranches
13400 Griffin Road
Southwest Ranches, FL 33330

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PERMIT
#622



TIME SENSITIVE MATERIAL!!!

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YouTube:
Town of Southwest Ranches
Official Channel

Twitter:
@SWR_Gov

CLICK ON QR CODE TO VISIT US AT
WWW.SOUTHWESTRANCHES.ORG



HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE, ELECTRONICS & BULK DROP OFF EVENT

Saturday, April 27th, 2024 . 8:00am to 2:00pm
Location: Rolling Oaks Barn - 17630 SW 56th St., Southwest Ranches, 33331
Document shredding from 10-1pm . prescription drug drop off 10-2pm

This service is provided for Town residents only. Proof of residency is required.

NOTE: Event may be cancelled due to rain, excessive winds or other hazardous conditions as determined by the Town.

ACCEPTABLE HHW ITEMS	ELECTRONICS RECYCLING	UNACCEPTABLE ITEMS
Aerosol Cans Antifreeze/Coolant/Paint Batteries & Auto Batteries BBQ & Camp Size Propane Cleaners Fluorescent Tubes/Bulbs Garden Chemicals Latex/Oil-Based Paint Pesticides Pool Chlorine Tires (Up to 4 tires per household no rims) Used Oil & Filters	Computers, Cables DVD Players, Key Boards, Mice, Adapters, Monitors, Printers/Scanners, Radios, Stereo Components, TVs, Tape Players, VCRs	Appliances Asbestos Explosives or Ammunition Medical/Infectious Waste Non-Residential Waste

For more information call Town Hall (954) 434-0008

lights camera... action!

The Town of Southwest Ranches
Rural Public Arts & Design Advisory Board presents...

12th Annual Photo Contest

GET YOUR CAMERA READY...
New theme will be in next months newsletter

- One photo per person in household.
- Provide a photo caption with entry form (74 characters)
- No previous photos will be accepted.
- Photos must be at least 8 x 10 (landscape).
- Photos must be in a large format (300 DPI resolution).
- To be considered, all entries must be submitted with the Town's Entry Form.
- Email your photo to: Skutz@southwestranches.org.

Southwest Ranches Presents
Open Play Chess

Saturday, March 30, 2024
10:00 am to 2:00 pm

FREE meet up
for players of all ages and skill levels—
beginners welcome

Southwest Ranches Town Hall
13400 Griffin Road
Southwest Ranches, FL 33330

Contact: December Lauretano-Haines
954-343-1452
dlauretano@southwestranches.org

Town Council

Legend
Council Districts
District 1
District 2
District 3
District 4
Town Boundary

Council Member Bob Hartmann District 1
Council Member Gary Jablonski District 2
Steve Breitkreuz Mayor
Council Member Jim Allbritton District 3
Council Member David Kuczenski District 4

The Town of Southwest Ranches does not guarantee the accuracy or completeness of this data, and the data are available for limited purposes. The Town of Southwest Ranches neither provides nor is responsible for any services, products, and activities. If you are not able to access any of the content of this website please contact Board Plans at board@southwestranches.org or 954-434-0008 so that we can provide a solution or provide the information in an accessible format. If you use computer technology (such as a screen reader, etc.) and have difficulty accessing this information, please identify the specific information or material you seek access to, the website address of the material with which you request access or assistance, the problem you experienced, and your contact information so that the Town may provide you with the necessary assistance. Please contact our office if there is any additional information that you can provide.

Map is Not to Scale
Date: 12/22/2022
PR Florida Technical Consultants