

SOUTHWEST RANCHER

The Official Town Newsletter

Happy Valentine's Day

UPCOMING TOWN EVENTS

**LOVE MY PONY
FUN HORSE SHOW
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 14th
see page 8**

**SOFLO ChiliFest
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 28th
see page 9**

FEBRUARY 2026

IN TOUCH

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

TOWN HALL OFFICE HOURS: Monday - Thursday / 8:00 am - 5:30 pm • Friday 8:00 am - 4:00 inpm • **TOWN WEBSITE:** www.southwestranches.org

YOUTUBE: Town of Southwest Ranches Official Channel • **FACEBOOK:** [facebook@SWRGOV](https://facebook.com/SWRGOV) • **INSTAGRAM:** @townofswr

ELECTED OFFICIALS

Mayor Steve Breitkreuz	(954) 343-7462
Vice Mayor Gary Jablonski	(954) 343-7456
Council Member Jim Allbritton	(954) 343-7461
Council Member Bob Hartmann	(954) 343-7447
Council Member David S. Kuczenski, Esq.	(954) 343-7472

TOWN STAFF

Russell Muñiz, <i>Town Administrator</i>	(954) 434-0008
Kathryn Sims, <i>Deputy Town Administrator</i>	(954) 343-7454
Danielle Caban, <i>Executive Assistant to the Town Administrator</i>	(954) 343-7474
Anjali Seupaul, <i>Communications Coordinator</i>	(954) 343-7475
Debra M. Ruesga, <i>Town Clerk</i>	(954) 343-7451
Dan Stewart, <i>Deputy Town Clerk</i>	(954) 343-7443
Jennifer McCarty, <i>Records and Administrative Coordinator</i>	(954) 343-7469
Tom Holste, <i>General Services Manager</i>	(954) 343-7476
Hector Rodriguez, <i>Administrative Assistant</i>	(954) 434-0008
Emil C. Lopez, <i>Town Financial Administrator</i>	(954) 343-7473
Christina Semeraro, <i>Town Procurement Officer</i>	(954) 343-7467
Rich Strum, <i>Deputy Financial Administrator</i>	(954) 343-7442
Arianna Durbeej, <i>Senior Accountant</i>	(954) 343-7477
Keith Poliakoff, <i>Town Attorney</i>	(954) 909-0580
Rod Ley, <i>Public Works Director</i>	(954) 343-7444
Emily McCord Aceti, <i>Community Services Manager</i>	(954) 343-7453
Susan Kutz, <i>Public Works Project Coordinator, Newsletter Editor</i>	(954) 343-7460
Joyce Marques, <i>Engineering Inspector</i>	(954) 343-7441
December Lauretano-Haines, <i>Parks, Recreation & Forestry Director</i>	(954) 343-7452
Gilbert Ceballos, <i>Parks and Recreation Program Facilitator</i>	(954) 343-7468
Mayuli Betancourt, <i>Administrative Assistant</i>	(954) 343-7465

TOWN SERVICES / BUILDING DEPARTMENT PERMITTING – (CAP GOVERNMENT)

Simo Mansor, <i>Building Official</i>	(954) 343-7448
Jeremie Bennett, <i>Assistant Building Official</i>	(954) 343-7448
Derlin Guevara, <i>Permit Technician</i>	(954) 343-7446
Maria Perez, <i>Permit Technician</i>	(954) 343-7445

PLANNING

Jeff Katims	(954) 554-8894
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ZONING/PERMITTING

Julio Medina, <i>Community Development/Code Compliance Director</i>	(954) 343-7458
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CODE COMPLIANCE

Julio Medina, <i>Community Development/Code Compliance Director</i>	(954) 343-7458
Manfred Velette, <i>Assistant Code Compliance Director</i>	(954) 343-7440
Code Compliance Hotline	(954) 343-7449
Concepcion Campos, <i>Code Compliance Officer</i>	(954) 343-7457
Yirglhis Hernandez, <i>Code Compliance Officer</i>	(954) 343-7459
Ismail Rashid, <i>Code Compliance Officer</i>	(954) 358-2540

WASTE/BULK/RECYCLING SERVICES

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

PUBLIC SAFETY

EMERGENCY	911
Non-Emergency	(954) 764-4357 (HELP)
Davie Police Department	(954) 693-8200
Eddy Velazquez, <i>Detective</i>	(954) 693-8290
Carlos Grave de Peralta, <i>Police Civilian Coordinator</i>	(954) 693-8352
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	(954) 343-7441
Illicit Discharge - Environmental Response Line:	(954) 519-1499

OTHER

WATER DISTRICTS - CANALS	
Central Broward Water Control District	(954) 432-5110
<i>East of SW 148 Avenue (Volunteer)</i>	
South Broward Drainage District	(954) 680-3337
<i>West of SW 148 Avenue (Volunteer)</i>	

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dlauretano@southwestranches.org
gceballos@southwestranches.org
mbetancourt@southwestranches.org

M-F 8:30 am - 4:00 pm CLOSED 12 pm - 1pm
Simo.Mansor@BureauVeritas.com
Jeremie.Bennett@BureauVeritas.com
swrinspections@southwestranches.org
swrinspections@southwestranches.org

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lbennett@southwestranches.org

Facebook@SWRLostandFoundAnimals

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cgravedeperalta@southwestranches.org

publicworks@southwestranches.org
online complaint form at:
<http://www.broward.org/Environment/Resources/Pages/EnviroComplaint.aspx>

www.centralbrowardwcd.org

www.sbdd.org

A MESSAGE FROM

Mayor
Steve Breitkreuz



A key part of our rural lifestyle is our equestrian community and one of the areas where I think that there is room for improvement, is in developing our equestrian multi-use trails. By providing more and safer equestrian trails, I believe that our equestrian community will grow. Unfortunately, I don't believe that this has been our trend over the last several years, therefore, this is an area where more attention would be beneficial. I am hopeful that if we gather all of the interested parties, we can move forward in a positive way to develop a system of trails that will serve our equestrian riders for generations to come.

The first step in making progress is to develop a master plan for how we would like to see the equestrian trail coming together in the future. Currently, we do have the beginnings of a plan, but it does not encompass the entire town. I believe that we need a more comprehensive review. I understand that there are portions of the town that do not lend themselves to trails. Also, we have physical challenges such as I-75, splitting the east and west sides of the town.



In the past, we have had Town Boards look at this plan, with limited results. So, I think that we need a new approach. I would like to see a series of workshops where we can gather thoughts and proposals from equestrian groups such as the South Florida Trail Riders, equestrian professionals, our Civic Associations as well as interested HOAs, and other interested parties. We can then gather the interest level and feasibility for taking on this task and developing the plan. Assuming we had sufficient interest, we would then review the current plan, as it is today. Make recommendations regarding trails that are currently in place, but which have little benefit as well as a view in to where trails should be placed to maximize both use and safety.



Assuming that we could come up with this plan, we would then put the elements in place to facilitate this becoming a reality. Hopefully over time, we would be able to gather the easements of willing property owners so that we could develop this trail. Also, this would allow us to release easements on properties where we just don't see the benefit of having a trail in that location.

I would very much like to hear your feedback on moving forward with this effort. This will need to be a team effort. I welcome general feedback or specific feedback. Also, as we move forward, if you would like to be a part of these workshops, I would love to hear from you. We will certainly send out a general notice of the meetings, but if you have a specific interest, please let me know and I will be sure that you are personally notified via email, or text, whichever you would prefer.

My email and phone number are shown below. I look forward to hearing from you! We have a very special and unique town. Preserving and promoting our equestrian community within our Town is key to the overall effort of preserving our rural lifestyle.

It is an honor to serve as your mayor. If I can ever be of service, please feel free to contact me.

Mayor Steve Breitkreuz – 954-296-6018; sbreitkreuz@southwestbranches.org; X@SteveBreitkreuz

A MESSAGE FROM



Vice Mayor
Gary Jablonski

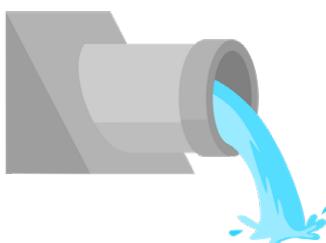
As we begin the new year, I would like to share news about our public works projects that are ongoing throughout our Town. Which are as follows:



1. Construction of the Florida Dept. of Environmental Protection (FDEP) funded **Country Estates drainage project** commenced in January and the contractor has 120 days from the notice to proceed to complete construction. This project was funded with a grant from FDEP for \$355,000 with a Town match of \$110,535.

2. FDEP funded **SW 63rd Street and 185th Way drainage project** is complete, and grant reimbursements are under way. FDEP grant funding is \$479,306 with a Town match of \$315,200.

3. FDEP funded **SW 164th Terrace Drainage project** is complete, and grant reimbursement is underway. DEP grant funding is \$793,166 plus \$1,209,989 from the American Rescue Plan with a Town match of \$100,000.



4. **Holatee Trail and Luray Road Drainage project** permitting is in process.

5. **SW 185th Way and 57th Ct. Drainage project** is currently being surveyed and designed. A public meeting to discuss the project was held at the January 20th Drainage Board meeting.

6. **Southwest Meadows Sanctuary Wetlands** is

undergoing permitting and is funded by the Federal Government for \$600,000, with an estimated Town match of \$150,000.

7. **The Dykes Road U-Turn and Turn lanes grants** are from the Florida Department of Transportation for \$405,990, and Broward County for \$587,890. This will vastly improve traffic on Dykes Road by adding a designated U turn lane at the Circle S entrance area and four left and right turn lanes on the roads further south. There is a Town match of \$195,963.

8. **The Southwest Meadows Sanctuary Pavilion Restrooms, Parking and Passive Recreational Fields** should be completed by the end of January. That was funded by the American Rescue Act Plan and FRDAP grant of \$200,000. There is an estimated Town match of \$200,000.

9. **The Town was awarded two firefighting grants.** One for \$5866 for Cancer Decontamination Equipment from the Division of State Fire Marshal and \$51,380 for Extraction tools for our new Vehicle from the same division. The Town match for both is \$2,405.

10. **New Park entranceway signs for five of our parks**, the Town is developing "Request for Proposals" from qualified contractors to fabricate and install. As you can see, we have a lot going on across our Town that most residents are not aware of. I will be periodically writing about new and existing projects as they come to light. In the meantime, it should be noted that the greater majority of the funds for all these projects are predominately funded by outside sources not our residents. We have a fantastic staff that seeks every available Grant Dollars for our Town, which is one of the reasons why we have the third lowest milage rate in Broward County.

It is my Privilege to Serve You, Gary



Front Cover: Happy Valentines' Day

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Page 11: Highlights of Events in the Ranches, Town Talk, Turn Waste into Gold, Register Now i9 Sports

Page 12: Robin Bartleman, Recycle Right, Trash Talk

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Page 15: February Town Calendar, Proper Recycling, Farmers Market

Back Cover: Council and Districts, School Calendar, HHW Event, Follow us on Social Media



A MESSAGE FROM

**Council Member
Bob Hartmann**



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE: FLORIDA'S PROPERTY TAX REFORM EFFORTS



Florida lawmakers are entering a pivotal period as they consider major changes to the state's property-tax system. Multiple constitutional amendments aimed at reducing or eliminating certain property taxes on homesteaded properties are progressing through the Legislature, with several proposals ready for potential placement on the November 2026 ballot. These reforms could greatly impact homeowners across the state—and especially here in Southwest Ranches.

WHERE THINGS STAND IN TALLAHASSEE

Legislative Activity

- The Florida House has advanced several constitutional amendments focused on reducing or eliminating non-school property taxes on primary residences.
- Additional proposals expand homestead exemptions and restrict local governments from cutting law-enforcement budgets.
- All amendments must still pass the House Ways & Means Committee, the full House and Senate, and then secure 60% voter approval in 2026.

Governor's Position

- Governor Ron DeSantis continues to advocate for eliminating property taxes on homesteaded homes.
- He has emphasized the need for a 2026 ballot measure but acknowledges the complexity of replacing local revenue streams that fund essential services.

WHY 2026 MATTERS

- Lawmakers are debating whether to present voters with a single comprehensive amendment or multiple options.
- Cities and counties statewide are conducting financial impact assessments as they prepare for potential revenue changes.

KEY PROPOSALS UNDER CONSIDERATION

- Elimination of non-school property taxes for homesteaded properties
- Expansion of homestead exemptions
- Structural changes to assessment and taxation methods
- Restrictions on local budget reductions for public safety

POTENTIAL FISCAL IMPACT

Legislative estimates suggest that full or partial elimination of property taxes could reduce local government revenue by up to \$18 billion annually, prompting concerns about long-term funding for essential services.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR SOUTHWEST RANCHES

1. Possible Effects on Local Services

Southwest Ranches operates with a lean municipal structure and relies heavily on contracted services for law enforcement, fire protection, and public works. Reduced property-tax revenue at the county or municipal level could lead to:

- o Renegotiated service contracts
- o Adjusted service levels or elimination of some public services
- o Exploration of alternative revenue sources

2. Significant Potential Savings for Homesteaded Homeowners

Southwest Ranches is home to many large-parcel homesteads. If non-school property taxes are reduced or eliminated, residents could see substantial savings—particularly those with higher-value acreage.

3. Unique Considerations for Agricultural and Equestrian Properties

Many properties in our town benefit from agricultural classifications that already reduce taxable value. How these classifications interact with new statewide exemptions will depend on the final language of any constitutional amendment.

4. Planning Uncertainty

Until the Legislature finalizes its proposals and voters weigh in, long-term planning for both residents and local government will involve a degree of uncertainty. The balance between tax relief and maintaining essential services will be a central issue.

LOOKING AHEAD

The next 18 months will be critical as lawmakers refine proposals and prepare for the 2026 ballot. Residents of Southwest Ranches are encouraged to stay informed and engaged as these discussions continue. Our community's rural character, equestrian and agricultural heritage, and unique service model mean that statewide tax reforms could have a particularly meaningful impact here.

STAY CONNECTED

For future updates, council financial meetings, and additional resources, please continue to follow official Town of Southwest Ranches communications and my upcoming legislative briefings.

If you have any questions about this information, concerns about town issues, or if you'd just like to chat, please call me anytime. With appreciation, **Bob 954-801-1758**

(continued on page 10)

The most magical time of the year in Southwest Ranches 2025 December Holiday Lights Contest

We invite all residents to join us again next year and be part of this special event. Your participation is what makes it truly memorable, and we hope to see even more neighbors take part next year.



Pictures Courtesy of Bob Hartmann

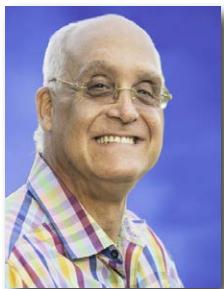


STAY IN TOUCH WITH ENGINEERING

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

A MESSAGE FROM



Council Member
David S. Kuczenski, ESQ.

Howdy Southwest Ranchers,

Happy February. February comes from the Latin word “februa,” meaning “to cleanse,” named after the Roman festival of purification (Februalia) held during this month for spiritual washing and atonement, originally marking the end of the Roman year before January and February were added.

One of the services the Town contracts for our residents is pick up of bulk trash. Generally, pick-ups are scheduled for every two weeks.

As a precursor, many ask what exactly constitutes bulk trash. The items that qualify as bulk trash include, but are not limited to, large appliances (refrigerator doors must be removed with Freon free sticker visible), white goods, couches, chairs, mattresses, tables, carpets and padding, and vegetation debris. Bulk waste does not include contractor (yard maintenance companies) collected waste, and household hazardous waste (paint, motor oils, pesticides, pool chemicals, fluorescent light tubes and batteries). These items cause contamination of our groundwater and are collected at quarterly drop-off events discussed later.



Bulk trash must be placed separate from regular garbage and must be generated from the residents at the home from where it is collected. Bulk trash must be placed curbside in a neat and orderly manner for safe collection by an overhead grapple truck. Pursuant to the Town Code, you are required to leave your bulk in front of your own home and not across the street; however, one exception to this rule applies only to residents who live along Stirling Road in Sunshine Ranches. Only the residents along Stirling Road in Sunshine Ranches may leave their bulk on the opposite side of Stirling Road if they obtain consent from that property owner first.

Loose items must be placed in a bag, box, carton, or crate that can be safely lifted without breaking and be no more than four (4) feet in length and weigh NO MORE than 50 pounds. Glass items must be in a rigid taped container. ***The bulk waste contractor will not pick up horse manure.***

Bulk waste cannot be placed out earlier than the weekend before your scheduled collection day and no later than 7 am on collection day.

Pursuant to the Town’s contracted rate with the vendor, residents are permitted a maximum of 12 cubic yards of bulk waste to place out for collection. ***Bulk piles that EXCEED 12 cubic yards will be tagged and not collected unless you call WM at (954) 974-7500 to schedule a pick up at an additional cost.*** As an alternative, you can reduce the material to 12 cubic yards or less, and call WM to reschedule service within three (3) business days at no charge.



Hazardous waste is not Bulk waste. Do not place these items out for bulk pick-up. The Town hosts the Hazardous Materials collection at the Rolling Oaks Barn every three months. Residents only need to show proof of residency and the workers will remove the items from your vehicle. Household Hazardous Waste includes paint, aerosol cans, batteries, tires (without rims), BBQ and camping size cleaners, small propane tanks, garden chemicals, latex / oil based paint containers, pesticides, pool chlorine, computers, computer cables, keyboards, mice, adapters, monitors, printers, radios, stereo components, televisions and similar materials.

As your Council Member from District 4, my goal is 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***

UPCOMING EVENTS

English
Hunter
Cross Rails
Short Stirrups
Western
Speed and Fun
Classes
(limit 15 entries per class)

All levels welcome!

Neat schooling attire or show clothes acceptable, safety helmets required

Registration required at Show



Southwest Ranches Presents
16th Annual
Love My Pony
Fun Horse Show
Saturday, February 14, 2026



FREE Horse show for youth up to Age 18

Sunshine Ranches Equestrian Park

**5840 SW 148 Avenue
Southwest Ranches, FL 33330**

8:00 am Registration

Classes Begin at 9:00 am

Contact: December Lauretano-Haines

954-343-7452

dlauretano@southwestranches.org

WINGS OVER THE RANCHES

Wings Over the Ranches: Birding Tours "Where Nature Takes Flight—Right in Your Backyard"

Southwest Ranches sits on the edge of the Everglades, one of the most biodiverse ecosystems in North America. Our Town is a part of the seasonal corridor used by migratory birds and is a year-round home for native species.

Join Vice Mayor Bob Hartmann for tours designed to highlight the ecological richness of our parks and provide a first-hand look at the multiple species visiting or calling Southwest Ranches Home

Bob is a seasoned Audubon birding expert with decades of experience leading tours across Florida's wetlands. Bob blends storytelling, science, and humor to make every walk memorable.

Each tour spans a variety of park terrains — from walkways to marsh trails — so be sure to wear sturdy footwear and don't forget the bug spray!

For details, please visit <https://www.southwestranches.org/departments/parks-recreation-and-open-space/birding/>

When: Saturdays, 8:00 AM – 10:30 AM

o Mar 14, 2026 Country Estates Park

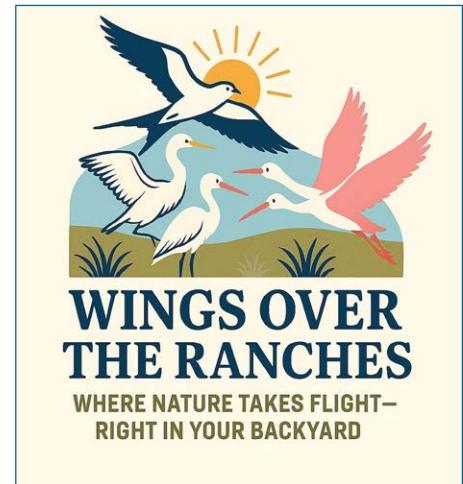
o Aug 15, 2026 Southwest Meadows Sanctuary & Calusa Corners (Park here)

· Cost: Free with registration. Use this link to sign up:

www.southwestranches.org/wings-over-the-ranches-application

· Group Size: Limited to 15 participants, 18 years and up, per tour

· What to Bring: Binoculars, water, sun protection, and curiosity!



UPCOMING EVENTS



Benefiting Aster Knight Parks Foundation
THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS



CHILI COOKOFF & CAR SHOW
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 28th 10 am thru 4 pm
ROLLING OAKS PARK 17630 sw 56th St SW Ranches
Food•Specialty Vendors•Kids Zone
info@SoFloChilifest.com



INTERNATIONAL DAY OF ZERO WASTE: SOUTHWEST RANCHES TAKES ACTION

On March 29, Southwest Ranches will celebrate the International Day of Zero Waste at Southwest Meadows Preserve, to do our part in the global movement to tackle the 2.1–2.3 billion tons of waste generated annually. This is more than an event—it's our commitment to protect health, environment, and rural character.

NEW THIS YEAR: COMMUNITY THING SWAP

To further reduce waste, this year's event will feature a "thing swap"—a community exchange where residents can bring gently used items and trade them for something new-to-you. The thing swap encourages reuse, keeps valuable goods out of landfills, and helps neighbors connect while supporting a circular economy.

OUR LOCAL LEADERSHIP:

- The Town Council has proclaimed "Zero Waste Month," showing our dedication to sustainable practices.
- The Zero Waste Advisory Board, with residents and students, leads education and action on waste reduction, recycling, and resource recovery.
- We've adopted the zero-waste hierarchy, focusing on prevention, reuse, and repair before disposal.
- Town leaders advocate for zero waste at the county level, pushing for policies that protect public health and support Florida's recycling goals.

WHY IT MATTERS:

Zero waste isn't just about less trash—it's about safeguarding Southwest Ranches' unique character and ensuring a resilient future. By reducing landfill use and pollution, we protect our land, support local jobs, and set an example for other communities.

Join us on March 29 to learn practical steps you can take—at home and in our town—to make zero waste a reality. Bring something to swap and stay connected for updates and resources from the Town of Southwest Ranches.

RECYCLING BINS: MAKE A POSITIVE IMPACT—FOR FREE!

Did you know you can help Southwest Ranches reach its zero-waste goals simply by recycling more? While there's an annual fee for extra garbage bins, the town is thrilled to support your efforts by providing additional recycling bins, those green bins with yellow lids, at absolutely no charge!



We recently requested an extra recycling bin because our household now recycles and composts two to three times as much as the garbage we send to the landfill. Every extra recycling bin means more materials kept out of landfills, less pollution, and a cleaner, greener community for everyone.

READY TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE? HERE'S HOW YOU CAN HELP:

- Request your free recycling bin: Contact the Town of Southwest Ranches Public Works department to order an additional recycling bin for your home.
- Sort your recyclables: Make sure to separate paper, cardboard, plastics, metals, and glass from your regular trash.
- Compost food scraps: Either join the town's free composting program or as my family does, set up a small compost bin for fruit and vegetable waste to further reduce landfill contributions.

Let's work together to protect our environment and preserve the unique character of Southwest Ranches. Small changes add up. If you need it, request your free recycling bin and be part of our zero-waste movement!

Together, we make the difference. Let's keep Southwest Ranches strong and protect our lifestyle. I am always here to help! If you have any questions about this information, concerns about town issues, or if you'd just like to chat, please call me anytime. With appreciation, **Bob 954-801-1758**

HIGHLIGHTS OF EVENTS IN THE RANCHES



THANK YOU •

The Rural Public Arts and Design Advisory Board along with Santa and Mrs. Claus would like to give a heartfelt thank you to Chief Bennett and his team for supporting the December Holiday Lights Contest every year for their unwavering commitment to making the contest a truly exciting event. The success and spirit of the contest brings joy and happiness to all ages.



2025
DECEMBER HOLIDAY LIGHTS CONTEST

The Rural Public Arts and Design Advisory Board would like to thank all residents who added their magical touch to their homes for this event. Every home was beautiful. We look forward to seeing you again next year. Thank you



TOWN
TALK *a way to stay in touch with the town*

Would you like to receive emails about what is happening in the town?

Send your email address to: Druesga@southwestranches.org



TURN WASTE INTO Gold

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN BECOMING A PART OF OUR RESIDENTIAL COMPOST PILOT PROGRAM?

Sign up on the Town's website at <https://www.southwestranches.org/> under Hot Topics.

START YOUR HOME COMPOSTING JOURNEY WITH SOUTHWEST RANCHES.



THE TOWN OF SOUTHWEST RANCHES

i9 SPORTS
i9sports.com

REGISTER NOW

SOCER & FLAG FOOTBALL
SATURDAY/SUNDAY LEAGUES
COUNTRY ESTATES FISHING HOLE PARK

\$30 DISCOUNT FOR SOUTHWEST RANCHES RESIDENTS: PROMO CODE: SWK

Register Online: i9sports.com
954-437-0089

• Organized programs for boys and girls ages 3-12;
• Age appropriate instruction for each division;
• Coaches background checked and certified;
• All skill levels welcome. No tryouts;
• One game per week. Practice held before game;
• Sibling discounts available;
• The earlier you register, the more you save!

The Way Youth Sports Should Be®

SEE WEBSITE FOR UPCOMING SEASON DETAILS

Helping Kids Succeed in Life Through Sports®



HB 729: Protective Injunctions and Protective Orders

On February 16, 2025, I remember an Amber Alert was issued for four-year-old Seraphina Gingles. While the alert was later canceled, the truth that emerged that evening was devastating. Seraphina was found alive, but her mother, Mary Gingles, her grandfather, David Ponzer, and their neighbor, Andrew Ferrin were murdered. The killings were allegedly carried out by Mary's estranged husband, despite the fact that a judge had already determined he was dangerous and had ordered him to surrender his firearms under a domestic violence injunction. That order was never enforced. Mary had done everything the system asked of her: she sought protection, she went to court, and she trusted the law to keep her family safe. The system failed her, with irreversible consequences.

In the wake of this tragedy, I filed HB 729 which is designed to ensure that this kind of failure does not happen again. While Florida law currently allows judges to order abusers to surrender firearms, there is no clear, mandatory process requiring law enforcement to collect those weapons or document what was collected. As a result, these injunctions often rely on abusers to voluntarily surrender their firearms, leaving survivors vulnerable.

The bill ensures when a final domestic violence injunction is issued and a judge determines that a person is too dangerous to have weapons, law enforcement will collect all firearms, ammunition, and concealed carry licenses, issue a detailed receipt, and file proof with the court within 72 hours. If there is reason to believe weapons are being

hidden, officers may seek a search warrant to seize them. HB 729 also strengthens consequences for repeat offenders. Currently, perpetrators have three chances, before violating a court protection order is elevated from a misdemeanor to a felony. Under this bill, a second violation would become a felony, reflecting the serious risk posed by abusers who ignore court orders.

According to the Department of Children and Families, 217 Floridians lost their lives from domestic violence homicide in 2020, representing 20% of all homicides in our state. HB 729 closes a dangerous loophole and affirms that court-ordered protection must be real, enforced, and lifesaving. If you or someone you know is a victim of domestic violence, please reach out to the resources below; in an emergency, always dial 911.

- Women in Distress - widbroward.org or 24/7 Crisis Line 954-761-1133
 - Women in Distress provides free counseling, support services, and emergency shelter assistance for survivors, available in English, Spanish, Creole, and Portuguese.
- National Domestic Violence Hotline - 1-800-799-7233 or text "Start" to 88788
 - Provides a hotline that offers confidential support, crisis intervention, essential tools, education, and referral services.
- Florida Department of Children and Families Domestic Violence Hotline 1-800-500-1119 or myflfamilies.com/services/abuse/domestic-violence/get-help
 - Provides support, safety planning, information, and referrals to local certified domestic violence centers for immediate access to services.

Please feel free to contact me anytime at Robin.Bartleman@flhouse.gov, our office at (954) 872-1770, or on my personal cell at (954) 668-3662.

Can you guess how much waste we create every minute in Broward County?
(the answer is at the bottom of this page)

Recycling Right Makes a Difference.
browardrecycles.org

YES! Recycle:

- Aluminum cans
- Cardboard boxes
- Paper
- Plastic bottles

NO! Don't recycle:

- Plastic bags
- Wires and cords
- Foam containers
- Diapers

SOLID WASTE AUTHORITY
OF BROWARD COUNTY
Plan smart. Recycle more. Waste less.



ANSWER: 20,000 pounds per minute...and most of it goes to the landfill or waste-to-energy facility.



TRASH TALK: ZERO WASTE ADVISORY BOARD EDITION

- If your recycle can is overflowing, residents are able to request a 2nd recycle can for free. Please contact Susan Kutz at Town Hall at (954) 343-7460
- District Recycling Contest will begin in the near future
- Watch for dates to come for Saturday tours being scheduled at the new WM Recycling Center in March and April
- Mark your calendar to join us as the Town celebrates International Day of Zero Waste on March 29th at the Southwest Meadows Sanctuary Park. Including a "Thing Swap" and bring old sneakers to be recycled/re-used
- Jessica Hartmann, one of our next generation leaders, has been elected Vice-Chair of the Zero Waste Advisory Board, joining Harold Gubnitsky (Chair), Debbie Green (Secretary), Rose Allbritton (Board Member), and Linda Flack (Board Member)



FORESTRY AND NATURAL RESOURCES



YOUR FEBRUARY GARDEN RED, RED, RED

When we think of February, we think of Valentines Day and the color red. Why not extend this to your South Florida garden and bring some “love” to your pollinators. Here are some suggestions:



FIREBUSH

(*HAMELIA PATENS VAR. PATENS*)

Firebush is a hardy, fast-growing and showy evergreen shrub to small tree. It typically blooms in spring through fall but can bloom year-round in warmer climates. Its nectar-filled flowers vary in length, attracting both butterflies and hummingbirds. Its berries are plentiful and are eaten by a variety of birds and small mammals.



CORAL HONEYSUCKLE

(*LONICERA SEMPERVIRENS*)

Coral honeysuckle is a native vine beloved by hummingbirds. They are fast-growing, low-maintenance, and semi-evergreen, meaning most of their leaves will remain year-round, even in cold climates. They flower with bright red tubular flowers continuously in the spring and summer. Plant this vine on a sunny or part-sunny trellis and watch it return decades of beauty.

CARDINAL FLOWER

(*LOBELIA CARDINALIS*)

Cardinal flowers are highly attractive to various pollinators, particularly ruby-throated hummingbirds. These vibrant red flowers bloom from mid to late summer, making them a crucial food source during this period. In addition to hummingbirds, cardinal flowers also attract butterflies, bees, and other wildlife, enhancing biodiversity in gardens and natural habitats.



PENTAS

(*PENTAS LANCEOLATA*)

Also called “Old-Fashioned Red Penta” or “Ruby Glow Red Penta” this non-native but Florida-friendly, perennial, evergreen, small flowering shrub is the hardiest of the pentas for Florida gardens. It makes a great addition to a butterfly and pollinator garden as it blooms all year (and in the winter months) making it a year-round nectar source year-round for many pollinators including Monarch butterflies and hummingbirds.



BRIEF LEGISLATION FROM THE DECEMBER 11, 2025 TOWN COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING

- Adopted Ordinance 2026-001 adopting the Five-Year Schedule CIE Fiscal Years 2026-2030.
- Adopted Resolution 2026-011 approving an Agreement with the City of Pembroke Pines for Water Services for the former CCA Property.
- Adopted Resolution 2026-012 approving a Purchase Order with Carnahan Proctor for the SW 185th Way and SW 57th Court Drainage Project.
- Adopted Resolution 2026-013 approving an Agreement with the State of Florida Department of Transportation to Receive Funds for the Design and Construction of Turn Lanes on Dykes Road.
- Adopted Resolution 2026-014 extending the Term of the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Board.
- Adopted Resolution 2026-015 extending the Term of the Drainage and Infrastructure Advisory Board.
- Adopted Resolution 2026-016 extending the Term of the Fire Advisory Board.
- Adopted Resolution 2026-017 extending the Term of the Parks, Recreation, Forestry, and Natural Resources Advisory Board.
- Adopted Resolution 2026-018 extending the Term of the Rural Public Arts and Design Advisory Board.
- Adopted Resolution 2026-019 extending the Term of the Schools and Education Advisory Board.
- Adopted Resolution 2026-020 extending the Term of the Zero Waste Advisory Board.
- Adopted Resolution 2026-021 reinstating the Public Safety and Traffic Advisory 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.



AUTOMATIC RENEWAL FOR THE LIMITED-INCOME SENIOR EXEMPTION

Property owners receiving the Limited-Income Senior Exemption do not need to reapply for this exemption annually. After the initial Senior Exemption application approval, this exemption automatically renews each year unless the senior notifies our office that they have exceeded the current year's income requirement for this exemption. People who received the Senior Exemption in 2025, whose income does not exceed the limit and are still living at the same address do not need to send in a renewal card to continue receiving this exemption.

My office will mail the 2026 Senior Exemption Renewal Cards to all exemption recipients later this month.

• If your 2025 adjusted household gross income did not exceed the amount stated on the card, you DO NOT need to do anything to continue receiving this valuable exemption for 2026. Your exemption will automatically be renewed at your homesteaded property.

• If your 2025 adjusted household gross income did exceed the amount stated on the card, you must return the card to our office stating that you no longer qualify to receive the Senior Exemption for this tax year.

If you did not receive the Senior Exemption for 2025 and believe you may qualify, please visit our website at web.bcpa.net – click on “Exemptions & Classifications” – to apply for the Senior Exemption and any other tax-saving exemptions online.

The deadline to apply for any 2026 exemption is September 18, 2026.

If my office can ever be of assistance to you, please call us at 954-357-6830 or email me directly at martykiar@bcpa.net.

Take care,

Marty Kiar, JD, CFA



Southwest Ranches Volunteer Fire Rescue Awarded Grant to Strengthen Life Saving Capabilities

The Southwest Ranches Volunteer Fire Rescue Department has taken a major step forward in enhancing emergency response capabilities thanks to a \$51,380 award from the Florida Firefighter Assistance Program. The grant will fund the purchase of a new set of battery powered extrication tools, commonly known as the “Jaws of Life,” for Attack Truck 82. This equipment includes a spreader, cutter, and telescoping ram, all meeting the rigorous NFPA performance standards.



PHOTO BY: Robin Ditzian
"You've been FLOCKED!"

February 2026

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
• Farmers' Market 16290 Griffin Rd. 11 - 4pm	• Country Estates HOA Meeting - Grace Baptist Church 19200 Griffin Rd. 7pm • SWR Parks Foundation Meeting Town Hall 7pm	• CODE HEARING Town Hall 9am • BCPA Office - Town Hall 10:30 - 12:30pm • Zero Waste Advisory Board - Town Hall 7pm Monthly Southwest Ranches Food Festival - Meadows Sanctuary Park 16020 Griffin Road 4-9pm		• Public Safety & Traffic Committee - Town Hall 7pm		• Farmers' Market 16290 Griffin Rd. 10 - 3pm
BULK ZONE 7	BULK ZONE 8	BULK ZONE 9	BULK ZONE 10	BULK ZONE 11	BULK ZONE 12	
• Farmers' Market 16290 Griffin Rd. 11 - 4pm	• Schools & Education Advisory Board -Town Hall 7pm	• Parks, Recreation Forestry & Natural Resources Advisory Board Meeting - Town Hall 7pm	• Zero Waste Broward Task Force Meeting - Town Hall 7pm	• TOWN COUNCIL MEETING - Town Hall 7pm		• 16th Annual Love My Pony Fun Horse Show Equestrian Park 5840 SW 148 Ave. Southwest Ranches 8 am • Farmers' Market 16290 Griffin Rd. 10 - 3pm
BULK ZONE 1	BULK ZONE 2	BULK ZONE 3	BULK ZONE 4	BULK ZONE 5	BULK ZONE 6	
• Farmers' Market 16290 Griffin Rd. 11 - 4pm	President's Day TOWN HALL CLOSED	• Drainage & Infrastructure Advisory Board Meeting - Town Hall 7pm	• Fire Advisory Board Meeting - Town Hall 7pm	• Comprehensive Plan Advisory Board Meeting - Town Hall 7pm		• Farmers' Market 16290 Griffin Rd. 10 - 3pm
BULK ZONE 7	BULK ZONE 8	BULK ZONE 9	BULK ZONE 10	BULK ZONE 11	BULK ZONE 12	
• Farmers' Market 16290 Griffin Rd. 11 - 4pm		• Rolling Oaks Civic Association Meeting - Rolling Oaks Barn 17630 SW 56th St 7pm	• FLOW DMV EVENT - Town Hall 10 - 2pm <u>appointment only</u> • Sunshine Ranches HOA ZOOM 7pm	• TOWN COUNCIL MEETING - Town Hall 7pm		• SoFlo Chili Fest - Chili Cookoff, Car & Truck Show - Rolling Oaks Barn 17630 SW 56th St 7pm Southwest Ranches 10 - 4pm • Farmers' Market 16290 Griffin Rd.10 - 3pm
BULK ZONE 1	BULK ZONE 2	BULK ZONE 3	BULK ZONE 4	BULK ZONE 5	BULK ZONE 6	





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

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