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October 7 - 11, 2026

The ***Week in Review*** is prepared and published by Laurie Hayes, Director of Communications, for the staff and residents of the City of Bartow, 680 E Main St., Bartow, Florida 33830

Bartow Electric Crews Assisting in Area Affected by Hurricane Isaias



Members of the Bartow Electric team are currently working in the panhandle for CHELCO cooperative as a result of Hurricane Isaias. CHELCO is headquartered in DeFuniak Springs and serves customers in the counties of Okaloosa, Walton, Holmes, and Santa Rosa. The team departed Bartow at approximately 1:30 pm on Oct. 10 and includes the following personnel:

- Adam Vickers – Electric Lead Line Supervisor
- Billy Leal – Lineworker Technician
- Bryce Culvahouse – Apprentice Lineworker IV
- Caden Dunlap – Apprentice Lineworker III
- Seth Lamb – Apprentice Lineworker II
- Johnny Aycock – Apprentice Lineworker I
- Anthony Franz – Meter Apprentice I

Also traveling with the crew is Kenny Holt, Journeyman Lineworker and Klin Hernandez, Apprentice Lineworker from the City of Ft. Meade. They are some of the 700 linemen working to assist the 45,000 customers affected by the storm.

Thus far they have restored power to thousands of customers in the rural unincorporated communities of Holt and Baker, FL located in Okaloosa County and will continue to make an impact over the next few days.

October is National Arts & Humanities Month

The arts and cultural programs in the City of Bartow contribute to the economic vitality of Bartow by supporting local businesses, fostering tourism, and encouraging community development in our city as well as inspiring imagination, sparking dialogue, preserving heritage, and strengthening civic pride by all who live, work and visit.



Every year, the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, along with the nation's 4,500 plus local arts agencies, issue official proclamations designating October as National Arts and Humanities Month. In our county, the Polk Arts & Cultural Alliance celebrates the observance with their Polk Art & Culture Hall of Fame and Annual Awards Ceremony, held on Oct. 6.

A proclamation declaring National Arts and Humanities Month was accepted by Marialaura Leslie, executive director of Polk Arts & Cultural Alliance and Michell Githens, president of the Board of Directors for Polk Arts & Cultural Alliance.



Breast Cancer Awareness Month Observed

Breast Cancer Awareness Month is an opportunity to unite all citizens in our community to prevent breast cancer

deaths through increased education and encouraging regular screening. People of every country, race, ethnic group, and income level are affected by this disease, with more than 220,000 women in the United States diagnosed with breast cancer and more than 40,000 deaths attributed to the disease each year.

While considerable progress has been made in the fight against breast cancer, it remains the most diagnosed cancer and the second leading cause of death among America women. Statistics show a woman in the US today has a 1 in 8 chance of developing breast cancer in her lifetime and a 1 in 39 chance of dying from breast cancer.

During Breast Cancer Awareness Month, the City reaffirms its commitment to support breast cancer research and to educate citizens about its risk factors, detection, and treatment. The City also recognizes breast cancer survivors, those battling the disease, their families and friends who are a tireless source of love and encouragement and applauds the efforts of our medical professionals and researchers working to find a cure for this deadly disease.

A proclamation for Breast Cancer Awareness Month was accepted by Ashley Lloyd, Director, Breast Cancer Foundation of Central Florida and friends and supporters at the Oct. 5 Commission meeting.

SUID Prevention Encouraged

Sudden Unexpected Infant Death (SUID), one of the leading causes of death in infants (0-364 days), is often associated with preventable unsafe infant sleep practices and environments. SUID is heartbreaking, and can happen in any family regardless of income, education, or community.

Babies should always be put to sleep on their backs, alone in their own crib or bassinet; with no bumpers, pillows, quilts, comforters, or other soft surfaces in the crib and no one under the influence of drugs, alcohol, or smoking should not be resting with the baby.

Local and national agencies such as the Polk Safe Sleep Task Force, Children's Home Society, Florida Department of Health in Polk County, Healthy Start Coalition, Safe Kids Suncoast Coalition, and their partnering agencies strive to educate Polk County residents on safe sleep practices. Recognizing that infant unsafe sleeping is a public health issue across our area and the county, the City Commission declared October as Safe Sleep Awareness Month at their last meeting.

The proclamation was accepted by Jada Williams of Healthy Start & The Safe Sleep Taskforce of Polk, Highland & Hardee Counties, Inc.



Let's Talk in October

The Healthy Start Coalition of Hardee, Highlands, and Polk Counties believes that parents are the first and most influential source of sexual education for children and adolescents. Let's Talk Month is a National Campaign designated in October to encourage family education and open communication about sexuality and family values.

Let's Talk Month recognizes how important a strong and healthy partnership between the family and the community is in helping adolescents develop responsible and uplifting attitudes toward sexuality. Community agencies and religious organizations are leaders in this effort by providing educational programs, resources and information to children, as well as parents, recognizing that clear and accurate education about sexuality will prepare today's adolescents to educate their own children.

By working together, parents and their communities can provide the information and support necessary to prepare today's young people for their future endeavors as responsible adults and nurturing parents of tomorrow.

The Let's Talk Awareness Month proclamation was accepted by Tonya Akwetey, Associate Director of Healthy Start Coalition of Polk, Highland & Hardee Counties.

Final Community Meeting on Impact of Amendment 3 Slated for Oct. 15



Amendment 3 is a proposed constitutional amendment appearing on the Nov. 3 ballot. If approved by at least 60% of voters, it will increase homestead exemptions for homeowners who use their property as a primary residence in Florida.

Based on current estimates, the City will lose approximately \$2.08 million in the first year and about \$3.43 million annually once the proposed changes are fully implemented. In Year 5, this amount increases to \$5.08 million. The amendment reduces revenue, but the cost of providing services does not change.

To educate citizens on what Amendment 3 means for our City and for residents, the City has been hosting community meetings. The final **Community Meeting** will be held at Carver Recreation Center, 520 Herbert Dixon Blvd., at 6pm on Thursday, Oct. 15. Make your decision with all the information, not just soundbites. And whatever your choice, be sure to vote on Nov. 3.

* The meeting at the Civic Center was recorded for viewing on the City's YouTube Channel. Links and more info is available on the city website here: <https://www.cityofbartow.net/567/Property-Tax-Reform>

Unity Cup Tournament to Benefit Bartow Golf Course

The Bartow Golf Course is hosting a two-day Unity Cup Tournament to bring golfers together to play with a purpose!



The entry fee is \$100 per person or \$200 per team and will take place Nov. 7 and 8. Day 1 is Best Ball and Day 2 is Scramble, for a total of 36 holes, plus BBQ pork buffet with handheld desserts on Sunday.

The tournament is for men and women ages 16 and older. The proceeds will support continued improvements to Bartow Golf Course, including amenities, programs, and overall golfer experience. For more information, contact the Pro Shop at 863-533-9183.



Water Restrictions Extended Through March 2027

Southwest Florida Water Management District announced last week that they will extend the Modified Phase III “Extreme” Water Shortage restrictions through March 2027 in the region that includes Polk County and Bartow.

[Click here for a full list of the restrictions.](#)

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