# HAPPY NEW YEAR

ľ

Southwest Ranches Country Fair & Carnival see page 8

RECYCLE RIGHT see page <u>5</u> Wishing you a year filled with new hopes, new dreams, and new achievements.

.....

Mayor Breitkreuz, Vice Mayor Hartmann, Council and Staff

JANUARY 2025

WES

RANCHER

The Official Town Newsletter

# 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 YOUTUBE: Town of Southwest Ranches Official Channel • FACEBOOK: facebook@SWRGOV

ELECTED OFFICIALS		
Mayor Steve Breitkreuz	(954) 343-7462	sbreitkreuz@southwestranches.org
Vice Mayor Bob Hartmann	(954) 343-7447	bhartmann@southwestranches.org
Council Member Jim Allbritton	(954) 343-7461	jallbritton@southwestranches.org
Council Member Gary Jablonski	(954) 343-7456	gjablonski@southwestranches.org
Council Member David S. Kuczenski, Esq.	(954) 343-7472	dkuczenski@southwestranches.org
TOWN STAFF		
Russell Muñiz, Town Administrator	(954) 434-0008	rmuniz@southwestranches.org
Kathryn Sims, Deputy Town Administrator	(954) 343-7454	ksims@southwestranches.org
Danielle Caban, Executive Assistant to the Town Administrator	(954) 343-7474	dcaban@southwestranches.org
Debra M. Ruesga, <i>Town Clerk</i>	(954) 343-7451	druesga@southwestranches.org
Dan Stewart, Deputy Town Clerk	(954) 343-7443 (954) 343-7460	dstewart@southwestranches.org
Jennifer McCarty, <i>Records and Administrative Coordinator</i> Tom Holste, <i>General Services Manager</i>	(954) 343-7469 (954) 343-7476	jmccarty@southwestranches.org tholste@southwestranches.org
Hector Rodriguez, Administrative Assistant	(954) 434-0008	hrodriguez@southwestranches.org
Emil C. Lopez, <i>Town Financial Administrator</i>	(954) 343-7473	elopez@southwestranches.org
Christina Semeraro, <i>Town Procurement Officer</i>	(954) 343-7467	csemeraro@southwestranches.org
Rich Strum, Deputy Financial Administrator	(954) 343-7442	rstrum@southwestranches.org
Arianna Durbeej, <i>Senior Accountant</i>	(954) 343-7477	adurbeej@southwestranches.org
Keith Poliakoff, <i>Town Attorney</i>	(954) 909-0580	keith@govlawgroup.com
Rod Ley, Public Works Director	(954) 343-7444	rley@southwestranches.org
Emily McCord Aceti, Community Services Manager	(954) 343-7453	eaceti@southwestranches.org
	(954) 343-7460	skutz@southwestranches.org
Joyce Marques, Engineering Inspector	(954) 343-7441	jmarques@southwestranches.org
December Lauretano-Haines, Parks, Recreation & Open Space Director	(954) 343-7452 (954) 343-7468	dlauretano@southwestranches.org gceballos@southwestranches.org
Gilbert Ceballos, <i>Parks and Recreation Program Facilitator</i> Mayuli Betancourt, <i>Administrative Assistant</i>	(954) 343-7465	mbetancourt@southwestranches.org
TOWN SERVICES / BUILDING DEPARTMENT PERMITTING - (CAP GOVERNME) Simo Mansor, Building Official	<u>NT)</u> (954) 343-7448	M-F 8:30 am - 4:00 pm swrinspections@southwestranches.org
Derlin Guevara, Permit Technician	(954) 343-7446	swrinspections@southwestranches.org
Maria Perez, <i>Permit Technician</i>	(954) 343-7445	swrinspections@southwestranches.org
PLANNING		similapeerions(asourimestranenesiong
Jeff Katims	(954) 554-8894	jeff@completecities.net
ZONING/PERMITTING		Jentacompletectuesmee
Julio Medina, Community Development/Code Compliance Director	(954) 343-7458	zoninginfo@southwestranches.org
CODE COMPLIANCE	(331)3137130	zoninginio(asoutiwestranenes.org
Julio Medina, Community Development/Code Compliance Director	(954) 343-7458	jmedina@southwestranches.org
Manfred Velette, Assistant Code Compliance Director	(954) 343-7440	mvelette@southwestranches.org
Code Compliance Hotline	(954) 343-7449	
Concepcion Campos, Code Compliance Officer	(954) 343-7457	ccampos@southwestranches.org
Yirglhis Hernandez, Code Compliance Administrative Officer	(954) 343-7459	yhernandez@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	<u>911</u>	
Non-Emergency	(954) 764-4357 (HELP)	
Davie Police Department	(954) 693-8200	
Eddy Velazquez, <i>Detective</i>	(954) 693-8290	evelazquez@davie-fl.gov
Cheryl Danner, <i>Police Services Coordinator</i> Davie Fire Rescue Station 112	(954) 693-8352	cdanner@southwestranches.org
Volunteer Fire Rescue - Chief Bennett	(954) 952-4608 (954) 868-2057	
	(331) 333 2037	
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:
liner Discharge - Environmental Response Eine.	(334) 313-1433	http://www.broward.org/Environment/
		Resources / Pages / Enviro Complaint.aspx
OTHER		<b>3 1 1 1 1</b>
WATER DISTRICTS - CANALS		the second second second second second
Central Broward Water Control District	(954) 432-5110	www.centralbrowardwcd.org
<i>East of SW 148 Avenue (Volunteer)</i> South Broward Drainage District	(954) 680-3337	www.sbdd.org
West of SW 148 Avenue (Volunteer)		
2		



# A MESSAGE FROM Mayor

Steve Breitkreuz

2024 is history, in the books, and 2025 is a blank canvas. I am excited for the promise of 2025. I hope that you and your family have plans for the coming year that will generate new special memories.

I did want to say a few words about the election results in November for our Town. I believe these results indicate that overall the Town is headed in the right direction. And honestly, that was very important to me. During the campaign I communicated that I want to preserve our rural lifestyle for the next generation. While that may sound like a campaign line, that lifestyle is actually the single reason why we moved our family to this area nearly 30 years ago, and it is the sole reason why I believe that spending my time, which would otherwise be spent in retirement, as Mayor of Southwest Ranches. So, seeing these election results, both related to the candidates, as well as the charter amendments, was very encouraging. And that reaffirmation is one of the reasons elections are so important.

Another reason is that elections and campaigns generate a lot of conversations and through those conversations, I have learned that we as a Town need to do better in several areas. I would like to briefly highlight three of those and let you know that I am dedicated to work on these areas for continued improvement. First, the potholes in our roads. I proposed a plan about 10 years ago to repave all our roads over an extended time period. This is now underway; however, it has taken longer than anticipated. We need to speed that project up so that we have fewer potholes to repair. Second, we need to reduce the time between when a pothole is reported and when it is repaired. I have already begun the conversations to have that addressed and I know that this is a priority for other members of the Council as well.

Second, Code Compliance and outstanding legal actions. I heard a very clear message from the community that while our enforcement of our codes is certainly not perfect, it is the correct balance between Proactive and Reactive, and our residents want to keep it that way. That was great to hear. I agree! However, I also heard that we want Code Compliance to be more responsive. That was important feedback. So, I believe that it makes sense to get Code Compliance additional help. Not to increase enforcement. but to provide better service to our residents and quicker responses to questions. Also, through their countless conversations with various residents. I believe that we need to have more discussions focused on resolving cases before they become true litigation. I have identified several of these cases and I am working to resolve them in an amicable way to assist and protect our residents and reduce our overall legal costs. And I would like to add that our legal counsel, Keith Poliakoff, has been instrumental in working towards this goal since I brought it up as a discussion item after the election.

Finally, Campaign Signs. I certainly heard this from the residents, but I absolutely felt the pain firsthand as well. The political signs were put up across our Town WAY too early and were out there WAY too long. We have a beautiful Town. Honestly, we couldn't be more fortunate. And of course, there is a need for political signs to get the word out. But I believe that having those signs out for a minimal amount of time, perhaps 60 days prior to the election, makes much more sense. This is a very tricky issue though, because political freedom of speech is a very closely guarded right. But let's see what we can do to preserve that freedom while limiting the amount of time that we have to see all these signs, including mine!

We are continuing our efforts on the relocation of the South Florida Wildlife Center to Southwest Ranches. What a perfect fit that will be when that project is completed!

So, we have a lot to do based on the feedback from the campaign. But there is also much more that we are working on. We are continuing our efforts on a number of large projects such as work on the approvals and planning for the Fire Station / Public Safety Building which is slated to be built west of the current Fire Station location on Griffin. And finally, work is continuing on the effort to complete the transaction related to the development of the old CCA property. This development is aligned with the surrounding area and will help us tremendously as a Town. My goal is to use this transaction to lower our taxes even further.

Thank you for your trust and support in allowing me to serve as your Mayor for another 4 years. This is an honor that I never take for granted. As always, I am sincerely thankful for the trust that you have placed in me. It is truly a blessing and an honor.

Mayor Steve Breitkreuz 954-296-6018;

sbreitkreuz@southwestranches.org



# A MESSAGE

FROM

Council Member David S. Kuczenski, Esg.

Howdy Ranchers,

Let me begin by wishing everyone a Happy New Year. We have many events and projects coming in the near future, and I hope to see you at one or more of them. We will be continuing the fight against the proposed incinerator and fight against excessive speeding on our interior roads and keeping our neighborhoods safe for our children and our various animals.

Four years ago, or so, we had a contract agreement with Waste Pro for our solid waste collection. Waste Pro would have two men per truck to pick up our waste bins and various bags left along the road on trash day. After their contract ended, we contracted with WM (formerly known as Waste Management). When discussing the options for solid waste pick-up, we had a decision to make: (1) we could keep two men per truck, but the costs for the service were much higher, or (2) go with one man per truck and use automated pick-up of the bins. The second option was selected. This meant that all solid waste (except for bulk) had to be



placed in the designated bins. The truck has a hydraulic arm that lifts and dumps the bin.

# One thing I noticed since then, is moving 2 garbage bins at the same time could become a problem...

I often see our neighbors moving two bins at the same time with the neighbor moving each bin in each arm. I frequently see neighbors struggling to move both bins at the same time because one seems to go one way while the other moves in a different direction.

I came across a way to make it easier. There is a way to move both bins together while using one bin as the lifting bin and the other as the carried bin. This makes the move far easier than moving each bin in each hand. First, place your bins together one in front of the other (if you have one smaller than the other its best to put the smaller one in front). Then, take the lid from your first garbage bin and place it inside the lid of your second bin. Then, close the first trash can's lid in place with the second. Then, close the second bin's cover. You can use your foot to help stabilize the bins and push down on the second bin. The leverage of one bin in front of the other allows you to use the lift of the second bin, to lift the first bin. Then, you can move both at the same time with less effort. See the photo below to see how this is accomplished.

As Council Member for District 4, I aim to preserve Southwest Ranches' unique rural lifestyle. Together, let's protect and maintain what makes our community special. I strive to return all phone calls within 24 to 48 hours. My cell phone is 305-815-0990. 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 Front Cover Happy Holidays

Page 2 In-Touch Town Contact Info

Page 3 Mayor's Message

Page 4 Council Member's Message

Page 5 Council Member's Message, Recycle Right

Page 6 Prototype Barn, Crossword Puzzle, Photo Contest, Calendars

Page 7 Robin Bartleman's Message, Livestock Safety, Stay in Touch with Engineering, Happy Birthday Page 8-9 Upcoming Events

S

Page 10 Parks & Recreation

Page 11 Forestry & Natural

Resources - Repurposing a

Christmas Tree

Page 12 -13 Flood Safety:

**Know Your Risk** 

Page 14 Marty Kiar, Clerk's Corner

Page 15 January Town Calendar,

January School Calendar

Back Cover: Council and Districts, Address Markers, Household Hazardous Waste Event





# A MESSAGE FROM

Council Member Jim Allbritton

Here we are in 2025! Please join us at our Town's "Country Fair and Carnival" January 16th thru 20th. Be sure to buy your ride tickets early online and avoid the long ticket lines at the fairgrounds. Contact info: SWRCOUNTRYFAIR.COM.

The Pink Flamingos are migrating to Southwest Ranches again this year. If you find that they have chosen your yard to rest and feed in – please be sure to be kind and donate \$\$ generously to help make their migration a Big Success. Congratulations to the Town's *"December Holiday Lights Contest"* winners.

A great night out was enjoyed by all, with Santa and Ms. Claus delivering the awards...

I will be looking to reinstate the Safety and Traffic committee. I know they will be working hard to come up with more great ideas to present to the Town Council, as they have for the past two years, on slowing down the traffic and safety tips on how to keep our properties safe. We will be celebrating our Town's "25th Birthday" on June 7th. Ms. Susan Kutz, at Town Hall, is chairing the Birthday committee, if anyone would like to donate or be a sponsor please touch base with her. I have heard there will be a parade, great food, games for the kids, a possible huge water slide and a definite Carousel. Mark your calendars and join us for this Great Town Event!

As I have mentioned before, this next 4 years promises to be a very busy and productive time, and I am Honored and Proud to be a part of this Town Council during this period.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at; 954-343-7461 or 305-903-7043, jallbritton@southwestranches.org

### **RECYCLE RIGHT HOW TO IMPROVE & INCREASE** YOUR RECYCLING **NEVER PLASTIC BAGS** • DO NOT PUT YOUR RECYCLABLES IN PLASTIC **ESEH BAGS OR PUT ANY LOOSE PLASTIC BAGS IN THE** RECYCLING • NO PLASTIC FILM OR WRAPPINGS OR DRY **CLEANING BAGS** • NO PLASTIC CUPS, UTENSILS AND PLATES • NO PAPER OR CARDBOARD WITH LIOUID OR NOT RECYCLE **FOOD WASTE** NO BATTERIES • NO STYROFOAM PRODUCTS, EGG CARTONS **AND TRAYS** NO MARGARINE AND BUTTER TUBS, YOGURT **CUPS, PLASTIC HANGERS** NO GLASS PRODUCTS: LIGHT BULBS, MIRRORS, **GLASS COOKWARE OR BAKEWARE, OR CERAMICS** NO WIRE COAT HANGERS • NO GARBAGE OR FOOD WASTE NO GAS TANKS NO ROCKS, DIRT, BUILDING DEBRIS NO GARDEN HOSES • NO HOLIDAY LIGHTS OR DECORATIONS 0 • NO TEXTILES: CLOTHES, SHOES, BEDDING, **PILLOWS, ETC.** https://www.wm.com/us/en/recycle-right/recycling-101

## LET'S HELP REDUCE **PLASTIC WASTE** Try to use cloth Use reusable **Pay attention** bags rather than bottles or and put your plastic bags to help cups for plastic waste maintain the beverages on in the correct environment. By the go. reducing the use of recycling plastics, we can container. help to reduce waste.

- ACROSS 1. An evergreen 4. Spawning area of salmon 8. Questioning exclamation 11. Room within a harem Potpourri 13. Circular course 14. Edible 16. Braver 17. A charge
- Frenzied woman 19. Alexandre
- -, author of "The Three Musketeers" 22. Large
- violin-like instrument 23. Primordial
- giant in Norse myth 24. Apportion 25. Cut off

- 28. Government broadcaster
- Citrus fruit 29
- 30. Bullfight
- call
- 31. Beetle 32. Prayer
- ending
- 33. Leer
- 34. Happen
- 36. Eskimo boat
- Dowry
- 39. Atmosphere
- Egg-shaped 41. Refirement
- income
- 45. Romance tale
- South 46.
- African mountain



47. Mineral



3

2

20

38

11

14

19

23

28

31

37

40

45

48



41

46

49

D

In furtherance of the Town's goal of preserving its rural lifestyle, the Town Council has given residents a simpler mechanism to build a barn that is in compliance with Florida statutory requirements. As such, the Town contracted with an architect who agreed to create a prototype barn drawing, in compliance with the Florida Building Code, which can be permitted for residents throughout the Town. The plans are for a three stall barn with a tack room.

A Town resident looking to build a barn can simply purchase a predrafted architectural plan from the Town, which they then can submit, at a reduced cost, and on an expedited basis, to get a permitted barn that will be in compliance with both state and local regulations.

Please call or email Emily Aceti for more information: eaceti@southwestranches.org.



(954) 343-7452

2025 PHOTO CONTEST CALENDARS ARE HERE AT TOWN HALL Do Not Miss out, WE HAVE A LIMITED

42

47

50

43

See solution on page 14

44



## NATIONAL HUMAN TRAFFICKING AWARNESS MONTH

January is National Human Trafficking Awareness Month, a time dedicated to shedding light on one of the most pervasive and devastating issues affecting communities worldwide. Human trafficking is a crime that exploits millions of individuals, often behind closed doors and out of

public view. During this month, we pause to recognize the signs, promote prevention, and take meaningful steps toward prevention and support for victims.

U.S. law defines Human Trafficking as the act of stealing freedom for profit, whether it is commercial sex acts or labor against one's own will. This crime is a multi-billion-dollar criminal industry that denies freedom to 24.9 million people around the world, and yet many are unaware of it. Human trafficking can happen to anybody but some can be more at risk, such as people with substance abuse issues, mental health concerns, and children. Traffickers can range from business owners, members of a gang, families of victims, intimate partners, etc.

As a parent, I know how vulnerable children can be online, which can make them an easy target. If you are a parent make sure to take measures to prevent them from becoming potential victims of trafficking. First, keep track of your child's social media accounts and online interactions. Second, speak regularly with your children about the risk of online predators. Third, limit their time spent online, particularly on social media platforms. Fourth, teach your child about the tactics traffickers can often use, such as flattery, promises of gifts, and opportunities that appear too good to be true.

Here are some signs to look out for according to the **National Human Trafficking Hotline**:

• A would-be employer refuses to give workers a signed contract or asks them to sign a contract in a language they can't read.

• A would-be employer collects fees from a potential worker for the "opportunity" to work in a particular job.

• Someone you know is newly showered with gifts or money or otherwise becomes involved in an overwhelming, fast-moving, and asymmetric romantic relationship.

• Someone you know is a frequent runaway and may be staying with someone who is not their parent or guardian.

• Someone you know is developing a relationship that seems too close with someone they know solely on social media.

 Someone you know lives with a parent or guardian and shows signs of abuse.

• Someone you know is offered a job opportunity that seems too good to be true.

• Someone you know is recruited for an opportunity that requires them to move far away, but their prospective employer avoids providing details.

By staying vigilant, we can better protect our children and loved ones from the dangers of human trafficking.

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.



## STAY IN TOUCH WITH ENGINEERING

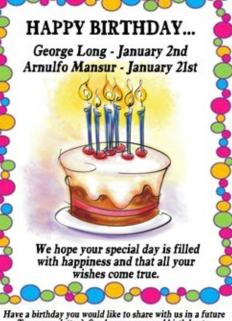
Fill for horse stalls does not require a fill permit. In addition, a permit may not be required if a small amount of sand is required to replenish a horse arena. However the Town recommends that a property owner or leasee contact our office to assure that the type of work being performed falls under 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

# LIVESTOCK AREA

With New Year's Eve coming up please be mindful of our neighbors with livestock. Please do not use fireworks that would cause undue harm or stress to our friends with animals.

Be a good neighbor.



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



# \*Southwest Ranches\* COUNTRY FAIR



DAILY HOURS Thursday: 1/16: 5-10 p.m. Friday: 1/17: 5-10:30 p.m. Saturday: 1/18: 1-10:30 p.m. Sunday: 1/19: 1-10:30 p.m. Monday: 1/20: 12-6 p.m.

16290 Griffin Rd, Southwest Ranches, FL 33331 - Corner of Griffin Rd and Dykes Rd





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

All levels welcome!

<u>Neat schooling attire</u> or show clothes <u>acceptable,</u> safety helmets <u>required</u>

> Registration equired at Show

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



ontact: December Lauretano-Haines 954-343-7452 dlauretano@southwestranches.org



# Public Meeting

## **Comprehensive Vulnerability Assessment**

The Town of Southwest Ranches is hosting a public meeting to discuss its Vulnerability Assessment, which evaluates the community's risks during flooding events.

The public is invited to attend the presentation, ask questions, and provide input, ensuring their voices are heard and their concerns are considered in the Town's efforts to build a more resilient future.

# Date: Tuesday, January 21, 2025 Time: 7:00 PM

Location: Town Hall – Southwest Ranches 13400 Griffin Road Southwest Ranches, FL 33330

# SAVE THE DATE

PLEASE JOIN US AS WE CELEBRATE THE TOWN OF SOUTHWEST RANCHES 25TH ANNIVERSARY - SATURDAY JUNE 7TH, 2025

THE CELEBRATION WILL BEGIN WITH A PARADE STARTING 10:00 AM SHARP ON MATHER BOULEVARD AND SW 63RD MANOR (AVOCADO MANOR) IN ROLLING OAKS



FESTIVITIES IMMEDIATELY FOLLOW FROM 11:00 ~ 3:00 PM - AT ROLLING OAKS PARK 17630 SW 56TH STREET - SOUTHWEST RANCHES

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE PARADE PLEASE EMAIL LAURIE MORSE Lauriemorse63@gmail.com



### ROLLING OAKS PARK 17630 SW 56th st SW RANCHES SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 22nd

10am THRU 4pm CHILI COOKOFF CAR AND TRUCK SHOW

KID ZONE • FOOD TRUCKS • SPECIALTY VENDORS





## PROGRAMS START November 5th **Rolling Oaks Park**

# **PARKS & RECREATION**

PROGRAMS START October 15th **Country Estates Park** 



The Town of Southwest Ranches and





PROUDLY PRESENT

# SPORTS! FUN!

SOCCER & FLAG FOOTBALL

NEW LOCATION-SOUTHWEST RANCHES COUNTRY ESTATES PARK

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

### Register Online: i9sports.com 954-437-0089

nized programs for boys and girls ages 3-15.

Age appropriate instruction for each div

· Coaches background checked and certified. · All skill levels welcome. No tryouts

· One day per weak! Practice held be

lant game Sibling discounts available.

. The earlier you register, the more you savel

# The Way Youth Sports Should Be

SATURDAY PROGRAMS THE FUN BEGINS OCTOBER 2024!

Helping Kids Succeed in Life Through Sports\*

# register online: i9sports.com (954) 437-0089

# FORESTRY & NATURAL RESOURCES

# **Repurposing a Christmas Tree**

(Adapted from: https://gardenbetty.com/repurpose-old-christmas-tree/)



**Compost your Christmas tree** If you didn't go with a potted living Christmas tree for the holidays, the most obvious way to give new life to an old tree is to add it to your compost pile. But instead of

tossing tree parts into your compost bin all at once, there's a better way to take advantage of all that organic matter. First, cut the tree into smaller chunks and gather them into a pile in your yard. Let the pile sit until the pine needles have fallen off and the branches are dry and brittle. Then, use these brown materials as a carbon source for your compost bin, as needed. Why do it this way? Because in winter, brown materials are

harder to come by but you're still producing vegetable scraps from the kitchen. By saving the pine needles and branches from your dead Christmas tree, you can add brown and green materials in



the proper 2:1 ratio to your compost all season long. This helps the compost break down faster and keeps the pile from smelling bad or turning sludgy (a common problem in winter).



### Mulch perennial beds

Cut off the boughs and layer them on your perennial garden beds as a natural mulch to protect the roots and prevent frost heaving. The branches are an excellent alternative to straw or wood chips, and will break down slowly over winter, adding nutrients to the soil for spring. Pine needles - Contrary to popular belief, do not acidify your soil.

### Chip the wood for garden paths and beds

If you own a woodchipper, (or rent one!) run the trunk and branches through a chipper to create your own organic mulch. No more buying it by the bag or hoping a landscaper will drop



off a free load of chips in your driveway! Wood chips are one of the best choices to fill in garden paths, smother weeds, and mulch your beds In fact, a thick layer of wood chips (up to 6 inches deep) is

an effective for killing weeds than a sheet of plastic. Wood chips block sunlight while still allowing water and air to circulate through, so the soil food web stays intact.

### Turn your tree into a wildlife habitat

Nurture the mini ecosystem in your yard by turning your old tree into a wildlife habitat. Simply drag it outside to an outof-the-way spot in your garden on its side. The branches help attract and protect birds, squirrels, chipmunks, snakes, and other wildlife that might otherwise have a hard time finding shelter - keeping the local wildlife from making themselves at home in your attic, garage, or basement.

### Use branches as simple supports for plants

Strip the sturdiest branches of their needles and cut them into various lengths to use as plant stakes. They're handy for supporting houseplants, vegetable seedlings, and young plants in the garden. Useful for protecting tomatoes and other seedlings from dreaded cutworm damage in spring. Placing a small stick against the stem keeps them from wrapping itself around the stem and chewing on your plant.



**Use your old tree as firewood** Your Christmas tree is great fuel for an outdoor fire pit. Use the twigs and needles as kindling and cut the trunk into logs for burning. If you

want to burn your tree in an indoor fireplace make sure it's properly seasoned first.

There's a common misconception that pine shouldn't be burned indoors because it creates excessive creosote buildup, but pine is perfectly acceptable (though not the most efficient) as firewood, as long as it's been seasoned. (So, save the wood to use next winter.)









• 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/rapid-notify/ 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 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 and provide your address and zip code.



### **Elevation Certificate Information**

Elevation certificates for buildings are on file and may be obtained by visiting http:// southwestranches.org/departments/townengineering/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 floodplain 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 could

also get flood hazard information for your property by calling (954) 434-0008 and providing your address and zip code.

### **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.

The Town provides mapping information about how deep flood waters can be anticipated in given areas of the community. Maps illustrating building and ground elevations are also available. These maps are available on the Town's website. 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@swranches.org.

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



BRIEF LEGISLATION FROM THE NOVEMBER 21, 2024 LOCAL PLANNING AGENCY MEETING:

• Adopted Resolution LPA 2025 - 001 recommending adopting the 5-year schedule of Capital Improvements for FYs 2025-2029.

BRIEF LEGISLATION FROM THE NOVEMBER 21, 2024 TOWN COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING:

• Adopted Resolution 2025-011 appointing Council Member Hartmann as the Vice Mayor.

• Adopted Resolution 2025-012 authenticating the Electorate's Approval of the Town's Five Charter Amendments from the 2024 Election.

• Adopted Resolution 2025-013 approving the water services agreement with the City of Cooper City to 13201 Luray Road.

• Adopted Resolution 2025-014 approving the water services agreement with the City of Cooper City to 5451 SW 124 Avenue.

• Adopted Resolution 2025-015 accepting the bid recommendation for Premier Air to furnish and install 3 HVAC units at the SWR Volunteer Fire Department.

• Adopted Resolution 2025-016 approving the purchase order to RadarSign for the purchase of 12 flashing speed limit signs.

• Adopted Resolution 2025-017 approving an agreement with Kailas Corp. for the construction of the Green Meadows Drainage Improvement Project.

• Adopted Resolution 2025-018 approving a contract extension to the Professional Surveying Services agreement with Craven Thompson and Associates.

• Adopted Resolution 2025-019 approving a contract extension to the Professional Engineering Services agreement with Craven Thompson and Associates.



## DOES MY HOMESTEAD EXEMPTION AUTOMATICALLY RENEW?

After your initial application for Homestead Exemption has been approved, it automatically renews each year unless there is a change of ownership or eligible use of your homesteaded property. Each January, our office mails a Homestead Renewal Notice and "Change Card" to all Homesteaded properties. Florida law requires the property owner to notify the Property Appraiser of any change which may affect homestead eligibility. This "Change Card" provides an easy way to communicate these important changes to our office.

If there are NO changes to the use and/or ownership of your property, simply keep the card as your receipt that your Homestead Exemption has automatically renewed for another year. However, if there are changes, please mark the Change Card accordingly when you receive it and return it to our office.

If your name is not printed in the "Homesteaded Owners" section on this card, it means you are not protected by Homestead Exemption at this property. You may be on title to your property, but not receiving Homestead Exemption. If you are eligible for Homestead Exemption on this property, but your name is not listed in the Homesteaded owner section of the renewal you must complete your own Homestead Exemption application. Please click here to apply for 2025 Homestead Exemption.

If you are a co-owner, surviving spouse, trust beneficiary or otherwise believe you are eligible for this exemption, you must file your own Homestead Exemption application to receive the benefit. If you have any questions relating to the death of the owner, the Change Card or need assistance in filing for Homestead or other tax-saving exemptions, please visit our website at web.bcpa.net or contact our Customer Service Department at 954-357-6830.

## WHERE DID MY PORTABILITY SAVINGS GO?

A portability deduction is only posted to your property record page in the first year you receive your new Homestead Exemption. The portability savings from the first year form the basis of your new Save Our Homes value on a going forward basis and -- in subsequent years -- will rise or fall based upon market just value changes and the 3% cap, as your new Save Our Homes value has incorporated your portability savings. When our website is updated to display subsequent year property values, your portability deduction is no longer shown independently because it is already factored into your new Assessed/Save Our Homes value.

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

Take care,

Marty Kiar, JD, CFA

• Adopted Resolution 2025-020 approving the first amendment to the use agreement with the Cioli Group, LLC, for the SWR Community Farmer's Market.

• Adopted Resolution 2025-021 approving the Town Holiday Schedule for calendar year 2025.

• Adopted Resolution 2025-022 approving the Town Council Meeting Schedule for calendar year 2025.

• Adopted Resolution 2025-023 approving a year end Budget Adjustment for the fiscal year 2023-2024 Budget.

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.

# CROSSWORD SOLUTION

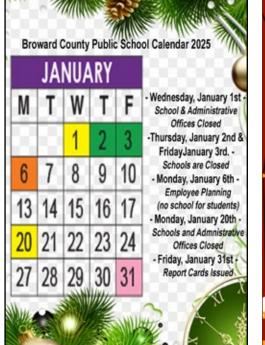
MartyKiarBCPA

@MartyKiarBCPA



SEE PAGE 6

PHOTO BY: Veronica Coll "Happy Horses, Happy Life from the 2025-26 town photo contest			0	lany	ary	2025
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
•		New Year's Eve Town Hall Closed	Town Hall Closed	2 Hanukkah ends	3 BULK ZONE 11	• Farmers' Market 16290 Griffin Rd. 10am - 3:00pm BULK ZONE 12
• Farmers' Market 16290 Griffin Rd. 10am - 3:00pm	Country Estates HOA Meeting Grace Baptist Church <u>19200 Griffin Rd. 7pm</u> SWR Parks Foundation Meeting Town Hall 7pm	• Broward County Property Appraiser Office 10:30 - 12:30pm Town Hall • Zero Waste Advisory Board Town Hall - 7pm	8	9	10	• HHW Event 8-2 • Shred-A-Thon 8-2 • Drug Drop Off 10-2 Rolling Oaks Park <u>17630 SW 56 St.</u> • Farmers' Market 16290 Griffin Rd. 10am - 3:00pm
2145-	BULK ZONE 1	BULK ZONE 2	BULK ZONE 3	BULK ZONE 4	BULK ZONE 5	BULK ZONE 6
• Farmers' Market 16290 Griffin Rd. 10am - 3:00pm	• Schools and Education Advisory Board Meeting - Town Hall 7 pm	14 • Parks, Recreation Forestry & Natural Resources Advisory Board Meeting - Town Hall 7pm	• Fire Advisory Board Meeting - Town Hall 7pm	16 <u>• Carnival 5-10 pm</u> • Comprehensive Plan Advisory Board Meeting • Town Hall 7pm	• Carnival 5-10:30 pm	18 <u>Carnival 1-10:30 pm</u> MONTHLY OPEN PLAY CHESS <u>10am-2pm Town Hall</u>
	BULK ZONE 7	BULK ZONE 8	<b>BULK ZONE 9</b>	<b>BULK ZONE 10</b>	BULK ZONE 11	BULK ZONE 12
29 • Carnival 5-10 pm	20 • Martin Luther King Jr. Day • Town Hall Closed • Carnival 12-6 pm	21 • Drainage & Infrastructure Advisory Board Meeting - Town Hall 7pm	22	• TOWN COUNCIL MEETING • Town Hall 7pm	24	• 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
26 • Farmers' Market 16290 Griffin Rd. 10am - 3:00pm	27	28 • Rolling Oaks Civic Association Meeting • Rolling Oaks Barn 17630 SW 56th St. 7pm	• Sunshine Ranches HOA Meeting - ZOOM 7 - 9pm	30	31	ute .
	BULK ZONE 7	BULK ZONE 8	<b>BULK ZONE 9</b>	<b>BULK ZONE 10</b>	BULK ZONE 11	







Want to stay in touch and receive information on TOWN EVENTS?

Send your email address to: druesga@southwestranches.org





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



Printed on Recycled Paper

## TIME SENSITIVE MATERIAL!!!

# facebook

Facebook: facebook@SWRGOV YouTube: Town of Southwest Ranches Official Channel

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



PE Florida Technical Consultants



The New of Statistics Earlies does and guarantee the accuracy or samplificence of the data, and the factor approach. The Twe of Earlies Education statis is a provide that is a reserving work of the accuracy or analytic of the control of the notice phase control fload. Here of the accuracy or analytic of the accuracy or analytic of the accuracy or analytic of the accuracy of the a