



# GALT MILE NEWS

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MARCH 2019

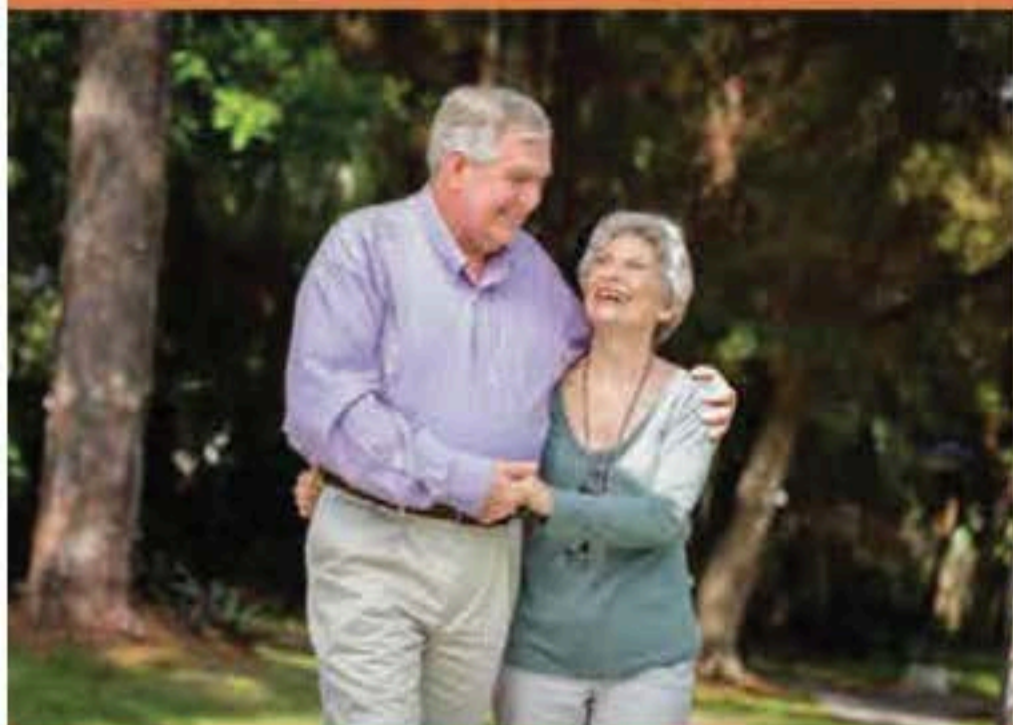
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# ELSS 2019 UPDATE:

## A NEW PLAN

Eric Berkowitz

Mirroring thousands of other Florida high-rise associations, Galt Mile homeowners voted overwhelmingly to opt-out of a full sprinkler system retrofit - in compliance with former State Senator Ellyn Bogdanoff's 2010 statutory opt-out amendment. For six years, the fire sprinkler associations and their minions in the Fire Marshals union (Florida Fire Marshals and Inspectors Association - or FFMIA) were prohibited from requiring a fire sprinkler retrofit in associations that opted out.

Six years after Ellyn Bogdanoff's 2010 Opt-Out legislation enabled thousands of high-rise associations to forgo retrofitting a \$multi-million fire sprinkler system, angry Fire Sprinkler association lobbyists hell bent on recovering the lost windfall dispatched an official from the Fire Marshal's union to solicit the Office of State Fire Marshal for a "friendly" interpretation of the Florida Fire Prevention Code (FFPC).

### Milking the Windfall

Many Fire Marshal union officials have been employed in executive positions by trade associations that promote the sale of fire sprinklers, including the American Fire Sprinkler Association and the National Fire Sprinkler Association. These trade groups also fund many of their events and activities.

The sprinkler associations had no intention of leaving a \$multi-billion windfall on the table, and with their support, in May of 2016, Fire Marshals Association President David Woodside petitioned an interpretation of the Florida Fire Prevention Code (FFPC) in the form of a Declaratory Statement. Deputy Chief Financial Officer Jay Etheridge interpreted the code to mean that high-rise associations that opted out of a fire sprinkler retrofit could be required to install an Engineered Life Safety System.

An Engineered Life Safety System (ELSS) is an undefined set of fire safety features that "might consist of a combination of any or all of the following systems:

1. Partial automatic sprinkler protection
2. Smoke detection alarms
3. Smoke control
4. Compartmentation or other approved systems, or both"

The FFPC also states that an ELSS "shall be developed by a registered professional engineer experienced in fire and life safety system design, shall be approved by the authority having jurisdiction."

By Statute, enforcement is at the discretion of the local fire marshal. Prior to the Declaratory Statement, Fire Marshals had approved various Engineered Life Safety Systems - with and without fire sprinklers.

Although the FFPC states that an ELSS must be designed by an engineer working for the property owner, local fire marshals with Statutory approval authority were encouraged to reject any ELSS that

doesn't include fire sprinklers - functionally usurping the engineers' design authority.

In the 2017 and 2018 legislative sessions, former Representative George Moraitis filed legislation to enable associations to opt-out of an ELSS as well. In 2017, the legislation was overwhelmingly approved in the House and Senate, but vetoed by Governor Scott. Although Moraitis was hesitant to refile in 2018 - an election year - since campaigning lawmakers are at the mercy of deep-pocketed special interests, House Speaker Richard Corcoran advised him to file the bill anyway, which he did.

Like the previous year, the House and Senate bills were each assigned to three vetting committees. Senator Tom Lee (R - Thonotsassa), a former Senate President, had announced his intention to run against Florida CFO (and State Fire Marshal) Jimmy Patronis. Lee also chaired the Senate Committee on Community Affairs; the Senate Bill's first committee stop. By stonewalling the bill, Lee planned to split the Fire Marshals' support for Patronis. The bill died on the calendar. After also considering a run for Congress, Lee ultimately decided to remain in the State Senate.

In a June 2018 post-session meeting with Rep. George Moraitis and Ellyn Bogdanoff, they advised inviting participation by the 4337 Florida high-rise associations that had legally opted out of the fire sprinkler retrofit, and are now under threat by local Fire Marshals to install an ELSS that contains fire sprinklers. Such an expansion could potentially inflate the active support base to roughly 4.5 million Florida residents. As a last resort, an expanded support base would also broaden access to the financial resources required to file a legal action against local fire marshals that exceeded their authority.

Florida Statute section 718.112 (2)(l) provides that, "notwithstanding chapter 633 or of any other code, statute, ordinance, administrative rule, or regulation, or any interpretation of the foregoing, an association, residential condominium, or unit owner is not obligated to retrofit the common elements, association property, or units of a residential condominium with a fire sprinkler system in a building that has been certified for occupancy by the applicable governmental entity if the unit owners have voted to forego such retrofitting by the affirmative vote of a majority of all voting interests in the affected condominium. The local authority having jurisdiction may not require completion of retrofitting with a fire sprinkler system before January 1, 2020. By December 31, 2016, a residential condominium association that is not in compliance with the requirements for a fire sprinkler system and has not voted to forego retrofitting of such a system must initiate an application for a building permit for the required installation with the local government having jurisdiction demonstrating that the association will become compliant by December 31, 2019."

Continued on page 5

While requiring an ELSS may not conflict with State Law, collusion by the fire marshals to reject any ELSS without a sprinkler system (that is not required by the Florida Fire Prevention Code) is a deliberate attempt to circumvent the Statute.

Litigation attorneys who specialize in this field also advised that since the code created by an unelected commercial enterprise was never approved by the Legislature, it also constitutes "the improper delegation of rulemaking authority"

There are several possible consequences to filing a legal action. It might block enforcement or preclude further collusion by the fire marshals and the fire sprinkler associations to reject any ELSS that lacks a sprinkler system. More importantly, it might also provide injunctive relief, and postpone the installation deadline. This would provide associations with sufficient time to repeatedly revisit a legislative solution – until an ELSS opt-out was enacted. However, given our upcoming opportunity to address this issue in the legislature, a legal action is not yet warranted.

The code currently provides for two deadlines. By December 31, 2016, associations were supposed to demonstrate that they are planning to install an ELSS. The deadline for installing an ELSS is December 31, 2019.

Shortly after the Declaratory Statement was issued, Galt Mile association officials also met with Fort Lauderdale Fire Marshal Jeff Lucas, who didn't agree with the basis for the Declaratory Statement, observing "I would think if you opt out, then you opt out of all," and suggested that associations "pursue this issue with the State." As the local "authority having jurisdiction" only Lucas can decide enforcement issues. Lucas agreed to postpone enforcement of the December 31, 2016 deadline until the recent legislative session concluded, after which he suggested that affected associations "should at least begin looking into an ELSS."

On Wednesday, October 10, 2018, some Regency Tower residents met with Jeff Lucas to solicit his take on association options going forward. Lucas exclaimed that he will not violate associations that fail to meet the Statutory deadlines, which he characterized as unrealistic. However, Lucas lamented that until this controversy was settled in Tallahassee, his inspections would include an unthreatening inquiry into future compliance. Lucas pointed out that since it costs nothing, an association can solicit proposals from engineers with expertise in designing an ELSS – while fighting to overturn the code provision. Lucas added that Engineered Life Safety Systems were conceived to benefit visiting firefighters, and afford little protection for homeowners in otherwise code compliant buildings.

Repeating his former recommendation to fight this issue in Tallahassee, Lucas remarked, "With a new Governor, there is an excellent chance that an ELSS opt-out bill filed in 2019 will become State Law, and end this confusion." Addressing the nature of such a bill, Lucas added, "I would rather see this controversy ended than simply delayed for another few years." We agreed. Lucas has been a hands-on Fire Marshal – and we are lucky to have him.

#### FACTSS is Born

Since 2002, Galt Mile associations have served as the lynchpin of this fight to block a predatory retrofit mandate that was repeatedly opposed by Florida lawmakers, and rejected by every other State in the country. Following the Declaratory Statement, Florida association attorneys were



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Continued on page 6

swamped with angry client inquiries about opposing this unwarranted and avaricious levy on association homeowners. As observed by former legislator Elyn Bogdanoff, transferring this burden to a dedicated statewide organization would enable thousands of other impacted associations to add their voices – and resources – to ours.

On Friday, October 12, 2018, Galt Mile and Miami association officials met with Elyn Bogdanoff in preparation for the upcoming legislative session (March 5 – May 3), and fleshed out her plan for an expanded statewide support base. A newly formed 501(c)(6) corporation – better suited to statewide outreach than the neighborhood association – is retaining Elyn Bogdanoff (as a lobbyist) to enact an ELSS opt-out bill in 2019. Its governing board will include association leaders from across the state.

By late October, Broward and Miami-Dade Association officials had formed the “Florida Association of Condominiums to Support Self-Determination” or FACTSS. Shortly after creating an informational website ([www.factss.org](http://www.factss.org)), FACTSS officials and staffers embarked on a massive outreach campaign, primarily targeting the 4337 Florida high-rise associations that had legally opted out of the fire sprinkler retrofit by the 2016 deadline.

Their efforts were rewarded by scores of inquiries as associations from across the State sought membership and committed resources. A steering committee was formed to better represent participant jurisdictions. A December 29 message to members announced the creation of a “key government affairs team” and confirmed a mutual objective: providing association homeowners with the right to decide for themselves whether or not to forgo installing a costly ELSS containing fire sprinklers (despite that the Florida Fire Prevention Code does not require an ELSS to include fire sprinklers). On January 22, members received a second pre-legislative session update from GMCA and FACTSS official Pio Ieraci. The following report discloses how some of the players are poised to influence the planned legislation:

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## FACTSS UPDATE

### January 22, 2019

#### “Legislative Session”

***The State Legislature will formally convene on March 5 and end on May 3, 2019. The legislature meets for a 60-day session, unless called back into session by the governor. FACTSS’ government relations team, headed by Elyn Bogdanoff, is meeting with the House and Senate leadership, along with state representatives and senators, to educate them on the ELSS issue, solicit their support, and seek sponsors for both the House and Senate bills. Now that the new governor has been sworn-in and his staff in place, Elyn will be meeting with the governor’s staff and Governor DeSantis on the ELSS issue.***

***The House and Senate have finished appointing committee chairs and committee members. The House subcommittees of interest will be chaired by Representative Heather Fitzenhagen (House Business and Professions Subcommittee) and Representative Bob Rommel (House Civil Justice Subcommittee). Both are from the Southwest Florida area. Rep. Fitzenhagen has served in the Florida House since 2012 and is well versed in community association issues. Rep. Rommel was elected in 2016, replacing Senator Kathleen Passidomo (Passidomo filed the successful Senate bill in 2017).***

***During January and February, legislative committees are meeting, bills are being filed, and much preliminary work of the state legislature is done before the formal opening on March 5.***

***Pio Ieraci, President  
Galt Mile Community Association  
Fort Lauderdale***



Continued on page 16

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# EDITOR'S COMMENTARY:

## Heather Moraitis' JANUARY 2019 Newsletter

By Eric Berkowitz

*In her January 2019 Newsletter, District 1 City Commissioner Heather Moraitis allays concern about the departure of storied City Manager Lee Feldman and applauds a Commission decision to dodge the uncertainties that often plague an extended search for a competent replacement. By reaching into the City cupboard and promoting Assistant City Manager Chris Lagerbloom, Commissioners sidestepped the prospect of a months-long mistake-ridden learning curve as Lagerbloom hit the ground running. In a thinly veiled segue from her December message, Moraitis also offers a preparation primer for a March 12 Special Election soliciting voter approval for two 30-year general obligation bonds and a municipal election makeover.*

### Municipal Ballot Measures

*Via a proposed City Charter amendment, Fort Lauderdale's electorate will decide the fate of a \$100 million Police Bond (funding the replacement of a heavily eroded obsolete Police Headquarters) and a \$200 million Parks Bond to salvage aging infrastructure, expand recreational assets and create some new parks. Finally, voters will consider using the general elections as a template for municipal elections, morphing the 3-year March City elections into a 4-year November event, while scrubbing the need for primaries. The 3-year terms served by the current Mayor and City Commissioners would be extended by 8 months through November, 2020 - after which candidates elected to these seats would serve 4-year terms.*

*To harvest political capital for freezing the millage rate, previous administrations spent decades watching roads, sewers, structures and other critical infrastructure liquify, until backflowing drainage lines and 60-year old bursting water mains turned entire neighborhoods into salt-water ponds for weeks at a time. As such, the \$300 million we need to borrow for police and parks will be piled onto \$1.4 billion for infrastructure improvements, \$125 million for roads, seawalls and sidewalks - and a \$1 billion stormwater mortgage. Get used to the idea - local taxes and rates are going up. Of course, we can move inland - or sit idly by as the Federal Highway corridor becomes beachfront property.*

*Assuring constituents that Lagerbloom was the right man for the job, Moraitis describes an impressive list of accomplishments and major municipal projects driven by the former Assistant City Manager since his arrival in 2016. However, this is only the most recent chapter of Lagerbloom's Bio.*

### City Manager Chris Lagerbloom

*After earning a Bachelor of Science degree in criminal justice from Georgia State University and a Master of Public Administration degree from Columbus State University, Lagerbloom served in the Police Department in Alpharetta, Georgia, from 1995 through 2006, working his way up from Police Officer to Police Captain. When the City of Milton, Georgia was incorporated in 2006, Lagerbloom helped establish the inaugural City of Milton Public Safety Department while serving as the city's first Police and Fire Chief. After acting as Interim City Manager from 2007 - 2008, Lagerbloom officially took the reins as City Manager in 2009.*

### The Milton Test

*While the recessionary economy blistered neighboring towns and cities, Lagerbloom buoyed Milton by leveraging public-private partnerships. Building a progressive and dynamic city government from the ground up,*

*Lagerbloom implemented cutting edge service delivery, innovative problem solving, and results-driven operational strategies, saving \$millions for city taxpayers. It worked. In 2011, the Atlanta Business Chronicle ranked Milton as having the best quality of life in the metro area. The same year, Milton was awarded the No. 9 spot in the South for quality of life by The Business Journals. The National Council for Home Safety and Security - and Safewise - both named Milton the second safest city in Georgia. Milton is also a Certified Green Community; and a Certified City of Ethics.*

*Lagerbloom has staunchly supported Galt Mile efforts to quash the inequitable water and sewer rates that unfairly burden Multi-family homeowners in Fort Lauderdale. Although his resume doesn't feature 30 years of experience, Lagerbloom is "wicked smart", and is one of the few candidates who built an award-winning, thriving municipal government from scratch. In addition to the ballot question projects, Lagerbloom must now steer the city through a \$3 billion maze of tricky infrastructure and stormwater improvements. Read Commissioner Heather Moraitis' January 2019 newsletter elsewhere in this edition. - [editor]\**



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# *From the Desk of* Commissioner **HEATHER MORAITIS**

By Heather Moraitis

## **Fort Lauderdale is Moving Full Steam Ahead in 2019!**

It is truly an exciting time to be in Fort Lauderdale! We began the new year by welcoming Chris Lagerbloom as our new City Manager. Chris replaced Lee Feldman effective January 1st. We thank Lee for the excellent service he provided to our City, and we look forward to continuing our success under Chris' leadership.

Chris joined the City in 2016 and for the past three years has served as one of our Assistant City Managers. He has spearheaded a number of major projects including streamlining operations, improving technology, and enhancing service delivery in our Department of Sustainable Development; advancing the massive "Go Big, Go Fast!" water and wastewater infrastructure improvement project; working closely with the Police and Parks and Recreation departments on two bond referendums; and leading discussions with Broward County on the potential for a future shared City/County downtown governmental complex.

Having Chris in place ensures a seamless transition as we continue to work together to achieve our goals, fulfill our vision, and enhance quality of life for our neighbors. We congratulate Chris on his new role and wish him well as he begins this new and exciting chapter in his career.

Finally, as I mentioned last month, on Tuesday, March 12, a Special Election will take place for registered voters in the City of Fort Lauderdale. The ballot will include two bond proposals and changes to the City Charter. If approved, a public safety bond would allocate up to \$100 million to construct a new police headquarters; a parks bond would allocate up to \$200 million for major upgrades and improvements to our City parks; and Charter Amendments would move City elections from March to November beginning in 2020; eliminate primary elections; and increase the terms of the Mayor and Commissioners from three years to four years to coincide with the new election cycle.

Please be aware of the following important dates related to the Special Election. Voter registration for the March 12 Special Election closes on February 11. To register to vote, visit the Broward County Supervisor of Elections' website at [www.browardsoe.org](http://www.browardsoe.org) or call (954) 357-7050. If you prefer to vote by mail, you may request a vote-by-mail ballot from the Broward County Supervisor of Elections. The request may be made in person, by mail, by telephone, or online. The last day to request a vote-by-mail ballot is March 6. Again, for more information, visit [www.browardsoe.org](http://www.browardsoe.org).

### **Please Join Us for a Pre-Agenda Meeting:**

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# EDITOR'S COMMENTARY

## State Rep. Chip LaMarca's JANUARY 2019 Newsletter

By Eric Berkowitz

*\*In his January 2019 update, District 93 Florida House Representative Chip LaMarca provides an insider look at the second week of Statehouse Committee activity prior to the 2019 legislative session, citing four informative presentations. He opens with an economic snapshot from the Office of Economic & Demographic Research, reviews improvements to Florida Springs & the Everglades offered by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, and pulls together several missives from the Florida Department of Education (DOE). One addresses how PreK -12 schools are digging out of an educational black hole. The second DOE message discusses how the College System promotes career readiness through a litany of state-funded financial assistance programs. Read Representative Chip LaMarca's January 2019 Newsletter, elsewhere in this edition. – [editor]\**



## THE LaMarca Letter

to drop, decreasing to 3.3%, which is lower than the national unemployment rate of 3.7%.

I believe these statistics show why Florida's total GDP recently hit the \$1 trillion mark. In order to put that achievement in perspective, if Florida were a country it would have the 17th ranked economy in the world. In my view, cutting taxes, balancing our budget, and maintaining a strong environment for job creation, will keep Florida on the path of prosperity.

### **Agriculture & Natural Resources Subcommittee Presents on Water Quality Policies**

This week the Agriculture & Natural Resources Subcommittee met to discuss Florida's current environmental policies related to the Springs and Aquifer Protection Act, the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan, and the most recent update on Senate Bill 10 (2017), the Everglades Agricultural Area (EAA) Reservoir Project.

For the past several years, the frequency and intensity of harmful algae blooms in Florida have been increasing, especially in central and south Florida. Excess nutrients flowing into the state's water resources have fueled algal bloom. These events have negatively affected coastal estuaries, lakes, creeks, springs, wildlife, economies, health, and tourism. A disruption in Florida's water quality is a disruption in Florida's way of life.

We have been fighting to fix our water quality issues. The Florida Springs and Aquifer Protection Act was passed in 2016 to add additional measures to protect our Outstanding Florida Springs by addressing the quality and quantity of water in our springs and aquifers. This act created a systematic process for assessing all Outstanding Florida Springs, delineating priority focus areas, identifying pollution sources, and finally adopting basin management action plans for affected areas. Because of this act, 145 projects have been implemented across our state to protect and maintain our natural springs.

Another way we have fought to combat these issues is through the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP). CERP is an extensive plan, with 67 projects, that aims to restore, protect, and preserve Florida's water resources in central and south Florida. A handful of these projects are planned for completion within the next 5 years. In 2017, Senate Bill 10 expedited the EAA Reservoir Project to store water south of Lake Okeechobee. Once these projects are complete, Florida's water quality will see significant improvement.

Water quality and environmental issues are critical to sustaining Florida's great way of life. The Florida House is committed to addressing water quality issues and we will work hard to ensure the citizens of this state have pristine water systems for generations to come.

### **January 2019- Committee Weeks Begin**

This week Florida celebrated the inauguration of Governor DeSantis and Lt. Governor Nunez. The ceremonies shared a vision for a bolder Florida. The Florida House looks forward to working with the Governor, Lt. Governor, and Florida Senate in continuing our steadfast progress of lowering taxes, creating a favorable regulatory climate, providing the best education for our children, and protecting our unique and precious natural resources. By working together to accomplish these goals, I believe Florida will look forward to an even brighter future.

### **House Commerce Committee receives positive overview of Florida's Economy**

This week, the Commerce Committee received an overview of Florida's economy from the Office of Economic & Demographic Research.

The presentation highlighted many positives for Florida's economic environment. These highlights include that Florida's gross domestic product, or GDP, has been on the rise with posted growth of 4.0% in 2015, 3.2% in 2016, and 2.2% in 2017, and 4.5% in the second quarter of 2018. GDP is the sum of all goods and services produced over time and is used to indicate the health and size of an economy. Florida's GDP also continues to outpace the national average for economic growth. Florida's unemployment rate has also continued

Continued on page 11

#### House Committee Receives Overview on School Improvement

On Thursday, the PreK-12 Quality subcommittee, to which I have been appointed, received an overview of Florida's school improvement process from the Florida Department of Education (DOE). The presentation showed that changes to Florida's Differentiated Accountability system (DA) for low performing schools are working for Florida's students.

Education reforms adopted in 2017 require Florida school districts to respond quickly to schools that receive a D or F grade by implementing a turnaround plan in the first year after receiving the grade. Statistics presented to the subcommittee show that 68% of DA schools graded D or F in 2017 improved their grade in 2018, 94% of DA schools graded F in 2017 improved their grade in 2018, and 59% of the first-year turnaround DA schools improved their 2018 school grade to a C or better and exited DA. In the two years after HB 7069 reforms passed, the number of schools in DA have been cut in half.

These encouraging statistics lead me to believe that Florida's school improvement system is working. I look forward to supporting any measure that will further improve these numbers and will ensure that all children in Florida receive a high quality education.

#### Higher Education & Career Readiness Subcommittee talks Career and Technical Education and State Financial Aid Programs

On This week, the Higher Education & Career Readiness subcommittee heard presentations from the Florida Department of Education (DOE) on career and technical education in both the Florida College System and technical colleges/Centers as well as state financial aid programs.

The Florida College System and the technical colleges/centers in Florida provide postsecondary access to students of all ages and from all walks of life. In particular, students can pursue postsecondary certificates, industry certifications, and associate degrees that lead to high skill/high wage employment. The committee expressed a strong desire to strengthen workforce education opportunities for students, and I support the Governor's sentiment in his inaugural speech that career education is vital to the state's economy.

In addition, Florida offers many state-funded programs to increase access to postsecondary education. The financial aid programs do this by: rewarding Florida high school graduates for high academic achievement, providing funds to students who may not otherwise be able to afford postsecondary education, and offering student's opportunities to pursue careers in both technical and academic fields. A few of the state financial aid programs offered include the Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Programs, the Benacquisto Scholarship Program, Florida Student Assistance Grants, the Florida Work Experience Program, the Effective Access to Student Education Grant Program, and the Access to Better Learning and Education Grant.

I believe through these scholarships, Florida is able to give all students a pathway to achieve their goals and pursue higher education. I will proudly support any measure which ensures a bright future for Florida's next generation.

It is an honor to serve as your State Representative in Tallahassee for District 93. As always, if you have any questions, comments, or concerns, that my office may be of assistance to you please do not hesitate to reach out.

*Best Wishes,*

**CHIP LAMARCA**

**Representative Chip LaMarca  
Florida House District 93**

# INJURED?

- AUTO ACCIDENTS
- WRONGFUL DEATH
- SLIP & FALL
- WORKERS COMP.
- MEDICAL MALPRACTICE
- NURSING HOME NEGLECT



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# MARCH/APRIL

SUN	MON	TUE	WED
<b>3</b> Farmer's Market Sundays thru MAY 5) El Prado Park 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Info.: 561-714-2745  sea turtle nesting season  SunTrust Sunday Jazz Brunch Riverwalk 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Info.: 954-396-3622	<b>4</b> The Best of Times Senior Expo South County Civic Center 9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. Info.: 754-246-2874  Commissioner Heather Moraitis: Pre-Agenda Meeting Beach Community Center, 6 p.m. Info.: 954-828-5033	<b>5</b> Mardi gras  Fort Lauderdale City Commission Meeting City Hall, 6 p.m.	<b>6</b> Riverwalk Noon Tunes Performer(s): Pitbull of Blues (Rockin' Blues) Huizenga Plaza Noon to 1:30 p.m. Info.: 954-828-4755
<b>10</b> Jazz Picnic in the Park Performer: Blues Therapy & Jazz Ilene Lieberman Botanical Gardens 11 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. info.: 954-777-2042  Daylight Saving Time Starts  Las Olas Triathlon & Duathlon Fort Lauderdale Beach Park 7:30 a.m. Info.: 954-213-6699	<b>11</b> Terry Bradshaw Broward Center for the Performing Arts 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. Tix/Info.: www.ticketmaster.com	<b>12</b> BINGO (Jan - March) Galt Towers Social Room Info.: 954-563-7268  Light Up The Night The Addison Boca Raton 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Info.: 954-979-7124	<b>13</b> BINGO Regency South Party Room 7 p.m. Info.: 954-547-4063  Riverwalk Noon Tunes Performer(s): The Ferians (Irish Rock Band) Huizenga Plaza Noon to 1:30 p.m. Info.: 954-828-4755
<b>17</b> Asian Trade, Food Fair & Cultural Show South Florida Fairgrounds, WPB 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Info.: 561-876-2255  Saint Patrick's Day  Garden Festival & Bonsai Show Flamingo Gardens 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Info.: 954-473-2955	<b>18</b> Palm Beach Biz Tech Expo Palm Beach Airport Hilton 3 to 6 p.m. Info.: 954-838-9644  Commissioner Heather Moraitis: Pre-Agenda Meeting Beach Community Center, 6 p.m. Info.: 954-828-5033	<b>19</b> BINGO (Jan - March) Galt Towers Social Room Info.: 954-563-7268  Fort Lauderdale City Commission Meeting City Hall, 6 p.m.	<b>20</b> BINGO Regency South Party Room 7 p.m. Info.: 954-547-4063  Community Blood Drive Broward Health Medical Center, 3rd Floor Noon to 5 p.m. Info.: 954-355-5617
<b>24</b> Garneau Gran Fondo Bike Ride Gulfstream Park 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Info.: 786-636-8192  Show 'N' Shine Car Show 2019 Mills Pond Park 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Info.: 561-633-2778	<b>25</b> Deering Seafood Festival on the Bay Seafood Alley (along Biscayne Bay), Miami 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. Info.: 305-235-1668 ext. 253	<b>26</b> BINGO (Jan - March) Galt Towers Social Room Info.: 954-563-7268  Making a Wetter Florida a Better Florida Broward Center for the Performing Arts 2 to 3:30 p.m. Tix/Info.: www.ticketmaster.com	<b>27</b> BINGO Regency South Party Room 7 p.m. Info.: 954-547-4063  Riverwalk Noon Tunes Performer(s): Joey Gilmore Band (Blues) Huizenga Plaza Noon to 1:30 p.m. Info.: 954-828-4755
<b>31</b> WorldFest Coral Springs Sportsplex 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Info.: 954-344-1063  Sunrise Half Marathon and 5K Markham Park 7 to 10 a.m. Info.: www.sunrisehalf.com/contact	<b>1</b> The Best of Times Senior Expo Emma Lou Olson Civic Center 9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. Info.: 754-246-2874  Commissioner Heather Moraitis: Pre-Agenda Meeting Beach Community Center, 6 p.m. Info.: 954-828-5033	<b>2</b> Fort Lauderdale City Commission Meeting City Hall, 6 p.m.	<b>3</b> BINGO Regency South Party Room 7 p.m. Info.: 954-547-4063

MARCH 8: Music Under the Stars, Performer(s): Vinyl (Top 40), Pompano Beach Great Lawn, 7 to 9 p.m., Info.: 954-786-4111

MARCH 8-9: 4th Annual Yoga Expo, Broward County Convention Center, 12:30 to 6:30 p.m., Info.: theyogaexpo@gmail.com

MARCH 9: 13th Annual KID Duck Fest Derby, Esplanade Park, Noon to 4 p.m., Info.: 954-390-7654 x1295

MARCH 9: Evening on Antique Row 2019, South Dixie Highway in WPB, 6 to 11 p.m., Info.: 561-832-4164 x103

MARCH 9: The 25th Annual 9-Mile Music Festival, Virginia Key Beach Park (Key Biscayne), 1 p.m. to Midnight, Info.: 305-665-5379

MARCH 9-10: Delray Beach Wine & Seafood Festival, Old School Square in Delray, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., Info.: 561-274-4663

MARCH 9-10: 21st Annual ArtFest in the Pines, Charles E. Dodge City Center (Pembroke Pines), 10 a.m. to Sundown, Info.: 954-392-2122

MARCH 9-10: 27th Annual Florida Renaissance Festival, Quiet Waters Park, 10 a.m. to Sundown, 954-776-1642

MARCH 9-10: Dig The Beach Volleyball in Pompano Beach, 7 a.m. to 6 p.m., Info.: 561-241-3801

MARCH 10: Furry Fun Festival, The Sanctuary, Noon to 4 p.m., Info.: 954-270-5962

MARCH 10: St. Patrick's Day Parade and Festival in Downtown Hollywood, Festival: Noon to 6 p.m., Parade: 1 p.m., Info.: 954-921-3404

MARCH 14-17: Dania Beach Marine Flea Market, Mardi Gras Casino in Hallendale, Info.: 954-761-7073

APRIL 4: Big Dog Men's Invitational Golf Tournament, Fort Lauderdale Country Club, 11 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.; Shotgun Start: 12:30 p.m., Info.: 954-266-6816

# ONE SOURCE FOR COMMUNITY HAPPENINGS

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## THE FUN CONTINUES !

<p><b>7</b></p> <p>Impressions: the New Aesthetic Opening Reception Bonnet House 6 to 9 p.m. Tix/Info: 954-703-2614</p>	<p><b>8</b></p> <p>ORCHID FESTIVAL (Through 3/10) Fairchild Tropical Garden 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Info: 305-667-1651</p> <p>13th Street Craft Beer &amp; Wine Festival (Through 3/10) NE 13th St. from NE 6th Ave. to NE 9th Ave. 4 to 8 p.m. Info: 954-822-4727</p>	<p><b>9</b></p> <p>17th Annual Water Matters Day Tree Tops Park, Davie 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Info: 954-519-1270</p> <p>The 52nd Annual Scholarship Luncheon &amp; Fashion Show The Signature Grand, Davie 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. Info: 954-966-9673</p>
<p><b>14</b></p> <p>Palm Beach Book Festival (Through 3/16) PB Convention Center 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Info: 561-429-4008</p> <p>Pi Day</p> <p>Bonnet House Concerts Under the Stars Performer(s): Lynn University String Quartet Bonnet House 6:30 to 8 p.m. Info: 954-703-2614</p>	<p><b>15</b></p> <p>Wine, Culinary &amp; Spirits Celebration Museum of Discovery and Science Info: 954-713-0918</p> <p>Miami Reggae Festival North Beach Bandshell, Miami Beach 5 to 11 p.m. info: 305-900-5523</p>	<p><b>16</b></p> <p>Shamrock Run 4 Miller Huizenga Plaza 7 a.m. Info: 954-661-2732</p> <p>St. Patrick's Day Parade and Festival Huizenga Plaza &amp; along the Riverwalk Festival: 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Parade: Noon to 2 p.m. Info: 954-314-8699</p>
<p><b>21</b></p> <p>G.M.C.A. Advisory Board Meeting Nick's Italian Restaurant, 11 a.m.</p> <p>Purim</p> <p>Fort Lauderdale Food &amp; Wine Festival (Through 3/24) Locations/Info: 888-877-8499</p>	<p><b>22</b></p> <p>Sunset Kayak Tour Park and Ocean (3109 E sunrise Blvd.) 4:30 to 6:15 p.m. Info: <a href="https://fareharbor.com">https://fareharbor.com</a></p> <p>Buddy Guy Broward Center for the Performing Arts 8 p.m. Tix/Info: <a href="http://www.ticketmaster.com">www.ticketmaster.com</a></p>	<p><b>23</b></p> <p>2019 Florida AIDS Walk &amp; Music Festival South Beach Park, Ft. Laud Info: 954-22-3132</p> <p>3rd Annual Female Brew Fest Pegasus Park at Gulfstream Park 2 to 6 p.m. Info: <a href="mailto:femalebrewfest@gmail.com">femalebrewfest@gmail.com</a></p>
<p><b>28</b></p> <p>Palm Beach International Boat Show (Through 3/31) Info: 954-764-7642</p> <p>Bonnet House "The Veranda Sessions" Performer(s): Daniel Bennett Group Bonnet House 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Info: 954-703-2614</p>	<p><b>29</b></p> <p>Ft Lauderdale Collector Car Auction (Through 3/30) Broward County Convention Center Info: 519-352-4575</p> <p>Riverwalk Burger Battle X Huizenga Plaza 6:30 to 10 p.m. Info: 954-468-1541 Ext. 204</p>	<p><b>30</b></p> <p>Intergalactic Bead &amp; Jewelry Show (Through 3/31) South Florida Fair Grounds, WPB Info: 1-888-729-6904</p> <p>Dania Beach Arts and Seafood Celebration (Through 3/31) Frost Park, Dania Beach Info: 561-924-6801</p>
<p><b>4</b></p> <p>Mercedes-Benz Corporate Run Huizenga Park, 6:45 p.m. Info: 305-666-7223</p> <p>Bonnet House Concerts Under the Stars Performer(s): Dillard Jazz Ensemble Bonnet House 6:30 to 8 p.m. Info: 954-703-2614</p>	<p><b>5</b></p> <p>Las Olas Wine &amp; Food Festival Las Olas Blvd. 6:30 to 10:30 p.m. Info: 305-255-3500</p> <p>Boca Bacchanal Wine &amp; Food Festival (Through 4/6) Various locations in Boca Raton 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Info: 561-395-6766 ext 301</p>	<p><b>6</b></p> <p>Riverwalk Run Huizenga Plaza Info: 954-247-4551</p> <p>Doblin's Cancer Challenge Esplanade Park (400 SW 2nd St.) to Hard Rock Stadium (347 Don Shula Dr. in Miami Gardens) 6 a.m. Info: 305-943-6799</p>

APRIL 6-7

**12th Annual Orchid & Garden Festival at Bonnet House**  
Bonnet House  
9 a.m. to 4 p.m.  
Info: 954-563-5393

APRIL 6-7

**23rd Annual Plywood Regatta**  
Dania Beach Marina  
Sat: 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., Sun: 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.  
Info: 561-715-0247

APRIL 6-7

**Hatsume Fair**  
Morikami Museum and Japanese Gardens  
10 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
Info: 561-495-0233

APRIL 6-7

**3rd Annual Orchid & Plant Festival**  
Sawgrass Nature Center & Wildlife Hospital  
9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.  
Info: 954-752-9453

APRIL 7

**Brew at the Zoo 2019**  
Palm Beach Zoo, WPB  
5:30 to 9 p.m.  
Info: 561-547-9453

APRIL 12-14

**Rock the Ocean - Tortuga Music Festival**  
Fort Lauderdale Beach Park  
11 a.m. to 9 p.m.  
Info: 1-615-498-7548

APRIL 12-14

**57th Annual Delray Affair Arts & Craft Festival**  
The Intracoastal to NW 2nd Ave. in Downtown Delray Beach  
Info: 561-279-0907

**FOR A COMPLETE LISTING OF EVENTS, GO TO THE CALENDAR AT [WWW.GALTMILE.COM](http://WWW.GALTMILE.COM)**

First Saturday of Every Month: Beach Cleanup, Commercial Blvd. & the Beach LBTS (Meet at Pavilion), 9 to 9:30 a.m., Info: 954-776-1000

First Saturday of Every Month: North Beach Art Walk, 3280 NE 32nd St, 7 to 11 p.m., Info: 954-537-3370

Second Saturday of Every Month: Beach Sweep, Fort Lauderdale Beach Hub, 300 S. Fort Lauderdale Beach Blvd., 7 to 11 a.m., Info: 954-709-3197

Second Saturday of Every Month: Burlock Coast Farmer's Market, Burlock Coast at the The Ritz-Carlton, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Info: [myfortlauderdalebeach.com](http://myfortlauderdalebeach.com)

Second Tuesday of Every Month: Orchid Greenhouse Tours, Bonnet House, 11 a.m. to Noon, Info: 954-703-2606

Mondays: Food Trucks at ArtsPark, 5:30 to 10 p.m., Youngs Circle in Hollywood

Fridays (through May): Friday Night Music, El Mar Drive between Village Grille/Pump and 101 Ocean, 6:30 to 10:30 p.m., Info: [www.lbtsevents.com](http://www.lbtsevents.com)

Sundays: Tour-the River Ghost Tour, Stranahan House & Water Taxi, 7:30 p.m., Tix: 954-524-4736

Sundays: Las Olas Sunday Market, 333 East Las Olas Blvd. & SE 4th Ave., 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., Info: 954-426-8436

Sundays (through May): Farmer's Market at El Prado Park, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., Info: 561-714-2745

Saturdays: Saturday Night Under the South Florida Stars, Fox Astronomical Observatory at Markham Park, Sunset to Midnight, Info: 954-384-0442

Tuesday & Thursdays (Through April): Seaside Yoga and Meditation, El Prado Park, 7 to 8 a.m., Info: 954-850-7361 (weather permitting)

# EDITOR'S COMMENTARY:

## Lamar Fisher's JANUARY 2019 Newsletter

By Eric Berkowitz

*\*In his January 2019 Newsletter, District 4 Broward Commissioner Lamar Fisher opens by advocating for two bills floated in the legislature. One strengthens the current ban on texting while driving, while the other requires mandatory certification for Sober Homes. Fisher also supports a "Housing First" approach endorsed by the new Homeless Collaborative in their plan to end homelessness in Broward; describes how mooring buoys protect local reefs; offers a new "I Spy a Manatee" mobile app to help warn boaters where they must exercise extreme caution; reviews improvements in Fort Lauderdale / Hollywood International Airport that accommodate explosive passenger growth; and cites new vessels and itineraries at Port Everglades.*

### TEXTING THE CITY MORGUE

*At the December 11, 2018 Broward County Commission meeting, Fisher sought peer approval of two bills filed in the upcoming 2019 legislative session in Tallahassee, sponsoring a resolution supportive of a law that strengthens tepid regulations governing texting-while-driving and a resolution promoting a bill mandating the certification of sober homes.*

*Citing the 3000 deaths due to driver distracted accidents in 2011, the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) had issued a December 13, 2011 alert directing all states to enact restrictions on the non-emergency use of portable electronic devices while driving. 2012 Florida House Speaker Dean Cannon (whose campaign contributors included AT&T and T-Mobile) announced that he would not tolerate "government regulating private behavior" and systematically scuttled such bills filed during the 2012 session.*

*One popular bill, House Bill 299, was frozen in the Transportation and Highway Safety Subcommittee and held through Sine Die, ostensibly because it infringed on personal freedom. When asked why they would protect such a dangerous activity, the hostage-takers took refuge in constitutional equanimity, complaining that it unfairly singled out "Texting While Driving" for criminalization while ignoring comparable distractions such as using a cell phone. With the departure of Cannon, proponents would try again.*

*During the 2013 legislative session, the approval of incoming House Speaker Will Weatherford was solicited as Senator Nancy Detert, (R-Venice) filed Senate Bill 52 in the other chamber, now with the support of AT&T and Verizon. A watered-down version of the NTSB restrictions, her successful bill made texting while driving a secondary non-criminal infraction, meaning motorists could be ticketed only if pulled over for another reason. Violators would pay a \$30 fine – unless they were checking a map or the weather (one of several exemptions). Since then, attempts to plug the elephantine loopholes have been derailed.*

*Senate Bill 76 filed in 2019 by Senator Wilton Simpson, R-Spring Hill, would impose a broader ban on use of cell phones by drivers and provide for enforcement as a primary offense. Drivers would be permitted to communicate hands-free on wireless devices and allowed to use handheld devices for such pur-*

*poses as getting safety-related information or for navigation.*

### RECOVERY: REDEMPTION & RACKETS

*Over the past few decades, Recovery has grown from a niche business into a \$billion South Florida industry, as local treatment centers offering an opportunity to clean up on a subtropical beach drew addicts from across the planet. Many decide to remain here after their rehab. The Recovery industry's explosive local growth was first fueled by homegrown addicts, pill mill clientele and later those who moved on to cheap and plentiful heroin after the DEA, FBI, and local cops closed the pill pipeline outlets*

*Most of South Florida's treatment programs and Sober Homes are well-managed facilities that reclaimed countless broken lives. While conceived to provide structure, rules and a supportive community to newly recovering addicts, Sober Homes run by unscrupulous operators brokered their tenants to insurance-hungry treatment centers for kickbacks, while offering free rent, manicures, mopeds, cash, free cigarettes and other perks (including drugs) to attract insured tenants they could barter for payoffs.*

*Crooked Sober Homes place "standing orders" for near-daily drug screens and send each urine sample to a laboratory that kicks back half of the \$5000 fee charged to the insurance for each test. They also order unnecessary DNA and allergy tests that cost thousands more. When drug abuse in a Sober Home is rampant, samples taken from employees are submitted for lab tests under the names of patients. Minutes-long counseling sessions are billed at \$1800.*

### RELAPSE WINDFALLS

*Scam operators that buy or rent multifamily properties or a cluster of single-family homes in a depressed residential neighborhood, and turn the residences into Sober Homes, will typically reserve one for a cooperative drug dealer. "You have what are so-called 'sober homes' next to houses that sell drugs," observed Sgt. Ed McCabe of the Delray Beach Police Department.*

*Palm Beach State Attorney Dave Aronberg summarized why Recovery scammers don't consider relapse a setback, but an indispensable income stream, exclaiming "The incentive is to keep them in this relapse system, this gravy train that doesn't end until the person leaves in a body bag or an ambulance. There's no money in sobriety." Since a relapse will trigger a new round of benefits for patients who graduate from a treatment center to a Sober Home, falling off the wagon can double – or triple – the insurance payout. To realize additional kickbacks, mercenary Sober Home managers will allow or provide drugs to their tenants, who are then brokered back to the high-bidding treatment center for another \$30,000 round of rehabilitation. When their insurance runs out, those who aren't pimped out are dumped on the front lawn.*

*Unfortunately, shooting galleries masquerading as "Sober Homes" are notoriously difficult to evict or otherwise regulate, as corrupt landlords are shielded by well-intended federal disability laws. Recovering addicts are protected by the Americans with Disabilities Act, and the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in 1999 that it is illegal to craft zoning laws that discriminate against disabled groups.*

Continued on page 15

**The federal Fair Housing Act bars housing discrimination against the disabled, also trumping local zoning laws that would otherwise bar businesses from residential neighborhoods. Although enacted to protect legitimate recovery facilities from malicious local regulations, as an unintended consequence, the federal laws also shield fraud factories implicated in the overdose deaths of their own patients.**

#### **REGULATORY BLACK HOLE**

**Attempts by cities to regulate Sober Homes have been systematically dismissed in Federal court, after which each municipality was successfully sued for discrimination by the targeted Sober Home. The City of Boca Raton spent \$1.3 million in a losing effort to ban sober homes.**

**While the Feds jailed venal Sober Home operators for insurance fraud or running recovery brothels, regulatory efforts by State and local governments have proven impotent. New Ordinances in Delray Beach, Boynton Beach and Fort Lauderdale are limited to mandating the separation by a standard city block of Sober Homes with 4 to 10 recovering residents - not exactly a game-changer.**

**In 2015, Florida lawmakers enacted a bill establishing a voluntary certification program for the state's sober homes. To help recovery candidates or concerned family members distinguish legitimate recovery residences from hell-holes, sober homes that seek certification by the Florida Association of Recovery Residences (FARR) must meet 37 standards (i.e. staff training, site inspections) before they are included in a list of approved facilities. Legitimate facilities signed on. However, given the voluntary nature of this program - it was business as usual for the fraud mills.**

#### **FLORIDA STATUTES VS. FEDERAL LAWS**

**Two years later, Senate Bill 788 by Jeff Clemens (D - Lake Worth) and House Bill 807 by Bill Hagar (R - Delray Beach) tiptoed around the Federal Laws. The resulting statute bans false advertising used to lure new patients, forces sober home telemarketers to register with the state, clarifies existing laws that make kickbacks illegal and requires background screenings for owners, directors and clinical supervisors of treatment centers that refer patients to Sober Homes. It also makes patient brokering a crime punishable under the state's "Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organization Act", or RICO. Like its Federal namesake, RICO empowers law enforcement to crack down on crimes by organized groups.**

**The 2019 bill referenced by Fisher - Senate Bill 102 by Senator Lauren Book (D - Plantation), will require certification by Sober Homes and their administrators. Along with its companion bill in the Statehouse, House Bill 103 by former Broward Commissioner Kristin Jacobs (D - Coconut Creek), the legislation also delimits drug-testing procedures and requirements; provides training for owners, managers, and staff; sets substance use protocols, a relapse policy and rules for residents.**

**If the legislation is successful, bad players will drag it into court, where it will once again be tested against the two federal laws. As such, the legislation may need federal help to survive. Along with former Senator Bill Nelson, Senator Marco Rubio has been advocating for the regulation of Sober Homes, as has Congresswoman Lois Frankel. Despite having actively blocked State and local efforts to close the pill mills, newly elected Senator Rick Scott is likely to perform as directed by his handlers, and therefore an unknown quantity. Read Commissioner Lamar Fisher's January 2019 Newsletter elsewhere in this edition. - [editor]\***



## **BROWARD COMMISSIONER LAMAR FISHER**

### **JANUARY 2019 UPDATE**

By Lamar Fisher

Dear Residents,

It is an honor and privilege to have been elected to be your voice and to represent you, the citizens of our coastal communities from Deerfield Beach to Fort Lauderdale. As your County Commissioner I look forward to continuing to improve resident's quality of life by focusing on several key issues in our community. Here are some recent headlines from around the county:

#### **Texting While Driving Resolution**

According to the National Highway Safety Administration, on average, sending or reading a text message takes a person's eyes off the road for 5 seconds, which, driving at a speed of 55 miles per hour, is the equivalent of driving the length of a football field with one's eyes closed. In December 2018, I sponsored a resolution in support of House Bill 45 and Senate Bill 76, which seek to prevent crashes related to the wireless communication devices while driving, improve roadway safety, and reduce injuries, deaths and property damage resulting from cellphone use. Currently, Florida has a ban on texting while driving that can only be enforced as a secondary offence when a law enforcement officer stops a motorist on a suspected violation of a primary offense of the uniform traffic laws. I am pleased that with my colleagues support we can show our support for strengthening road safety in our community and preventing injury and death by prohibiting the use wireless communication devices while driving.

#### **Sober Homes Resolution**

In December, I also sponsored a resolution supporting Senate Bill 102, which creates a mandatory certification program for recovery residences, also known as sober homes, in Florida. In 2017, Broward County treated 1,642 cases of opioid overdoses and continues to see a dramatic number of opioid-related deaths.

Continued on page 18

On February 5, 2019, Statehouse Representative Michael Grieco (D -Miami Beach), filed House Bill 647, entitled "Community Association Fire and Life Safety Systems". On February 13, the bill was referred for review to the House Business & Professions Subcommittee, the House Commerce Committee and the House Government Operations & Technology Appropriations Subcommittee.

The salient provision includes the right to opt-out of any obligation "to retrofit a fire sprinkler system or other engineered life safety system... if the unit owners have voted to forego such retrofitting by the affirmative vote of two-thirds of all voting interests in the affected condominium." An identical provision addresses Cooperative Associations. On February 18, 2019, Senator Jason Pizzo (D - Miami-Dade) filed Senate Bill 1152, a companion bill in the other chamber. Game on.

For associations that fail to opt-out, the December 31, 2016 deadline for initiating an application for an ELSS building permit would be extended to December 31, 2019. The current December 31, 2019 ELSS installation deadline would be revised to achieve completion before January 1, 2023. Associations that lack common area fire sprinklers would be required to post a sign or symbol to alert visiting firefighters.

#### Post Script

This isn't about fire safety - although it should be. It's about the right of association homeowners to collectively decide for themselves how to effectively protect their home and loved ones - a right enjoyed by every other Florida homeowner - while blocking a mercenary campaign by fire sprinkler associations to usurp that decision for the sole purpose of realizing a windfall at our expense. Florida is the only state in the country that requires condominium homeowners to retrofit fully compliant homes with Fire Sprinklers or an ELSS.

Why were these special interests only able to unjustifiably mandate the purchase of their products in Florida? In every other State, law-

makers review new requirements before approving their incorporation into State building and Fire Safety codes. In Florida, Fire Sprinkler associations that represent corporate juggernauts like Tyco and United Technologies only need the cooperation of a key mid-level bureaucrat to circumvent legislative oversight. FACTSS' secondary objectives include illuminating - and then closing this regulatory slop sink. Galt Mile associations have passed every annual fire-safety inspection since their respective inceptions. Of course, anything can happen - either during a legislative session - or in a courtroom, but given the unjust and costly alternative, both the neighborhood association and FACTSS will continue striving with our neighbors and affected associations statewide to achieve the final objective - while remaining in compliance and working closely with our local Fire Marshal.

With the bills in play, Bogdanoff will issue regular detailed reports of their progress, vetting committee amendments, prospective obstacles in each chamber - and what we can do to help. Stay tuned...

#### Beating Back a Scam

Unless this scam is blocked by our lawmakers in Tallahassee (or in court), one of the costliest rip-offs in Florida history will deep-fry the family budgets of association homeowners across the State, including those of almost a million elderly retirees on fixed incomes. If you live in an association threatened with a \$million assessment because the Fire Sprinkler associations circumvented State Law by engineering a skewed interpretation of an unvetted Fire Code provision, you have an opportunity to reclaim a right enjoyed by every other Florida homeowner - to decide how to best protect your home and family. If your local Fire Marshal has ordered the retrofitting of an ELSS containing fire sprinklers - despite a legal sprinkler opt-out vote taken by the owners - or threatened to "Red Tag" your home, please review your options on the FACTSS website - factss.org. You can also call at 1-800-808-8615. Given the alternative, this is a no-brainer. •

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Currently, Florida law provides only for a voluntary certification program for sober homes. Senate Bill 102 creates a mandatory certification program, which would promote uniform regulation and accountability. The regulation of recovery residences is necessary to create a consistent standard of operation that provides uniform and safe procedures, promotes accountability and lessens abuse. This resolution also gained the support of my colleagues and I'm pleased that we can demonstrate unity on this very important issue.

#### **Homelessness: Home for the Holidays Initiative**

In our community we see homelessness almost every day and in Broward County with housing costs rising and wages staying stagnant it is imperative that we find sensible solutions and assist individuals experiencing homelessness or on the verge of becoming homeless.

This past year the County embarked on a mission to end homelessness as we know it in our community by creating the Homelessness Collaborative with the assistance of the City of Fort Lauderdale, United Way of Broward County, the Broward Business Council on Homelessness and the Broward Homeless Continuum of Care. Beginning with the encampment in downtown, Fort Lauderdale, members created a comprehensive plan for helping individuals in the encampment find a path to safe, stable, permanent housing, with supportive services as needed. Recognizing and adopting the national best practice of "Housing first" on November 26th, 2018 the collaborative began to implement its plan. In the first day, 18 individuals experiencing homelessness left the encampment voluntarily, and nine tents were taken down with owner consent. By 4 p.m. Thursday, November 29, all 41 of the tents had been taken down and all 80 individuals relocated temporarily to nearby motels while individual housing plans were being finalized. Every pre-identified resident of the encampment who wanted services was offered services. Some individuals reunited with family members out of state, some were eligible for rapid rehousing, and others were eligible for permanent supportive housing. While this first step was a great success and major milestone in ending homelessness in Broward County, it is by no means the final chapter.

Housing teams continue to move clients forward in the path to permanent housing. Outreach teams continue to address the needs not only of those who formerly stayed in the encampment, but also those who were not previously identified as residents of the encampment, who came to the encampment seeking services, and those experiencing homelessness in Broward County every day. There are at least 2,300 individuals experi-

encing homelessness in Broward County, according to the January 2018 Point-in-Time count. My hope is that we continue this journey to ending homelessness in Broward County and continue to collaborate with cities and the business community in order to provide the needed resources to assisting all individuals experiencing homelessness in Broward County.

Broward County is gearing up for the 2019 Point-In-Time Homeless Count. Volunteers are needed to conduct a survey of the homeless in our community. Collection of the data will begin from the night of Wednesday, January 23rd through Saturday, January 26, 2019. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Shira Fowlkes at [pitvolunteers@brhpc.org](mailto:pitvolunteers@brhpc.org) or for additional information visit the Broward County Point-In-Time Homeless Count website.

#### **Environmental**

- **Mooring Buoys:** Broward County was recently chosen as a grant recipient by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission to support the installation of ten mooring buoys in District 4. The installation of these buoys will help protect Broward's prized reefs by providing a way for boaters to secure their vessels at a fixed location over the natural coral reef and allow fishers and divers to enjoy our reefs without harmful effects from potential anchor damage. The installations are offshore of Deerfield Beach and Hillsboro Beach. Additionally, this investment will assist the program by also maintaining a fixed number of buoys and relocation existing ones.

- **Manatees:** Manatee season is in full effect in South Florida and runs through March 31 as hundreds of manatees move south into the warm waters of Broward County. Unfortunately, the Florida manatee is listed as "threatened" by the US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS). In order to assist the community, become more aware of these beautiful creatures in our water ways Broward County encourages residents and visitors to report manatee sightings to the County's Environmental Planning and Community Resilience Division by using the 'I Spy a Manatee' mobile app. The app can be used to report manatees and their activities and view manatee protection and boating safety zones in Broward County.

#### **Broward County Economic Engines Update**

- **FLL** - Broward County's Fort Lauderdale International Airport continues its transformation in order to accommodate the growing number of visitors flying through our airport year after year. In 2019, more improvements are coming to Terminal 4 including U.S. Customs and Border Protection functionality, advanced baggage handling system equipment, a new "meet and greet" area and additional passenger queuing space. Work is underway now on the final phase of the U.S. Customs Federal Inspection Services (FIS) Facility Project slated for substantial completion by September 2019. By next fall, we'll be able to operate all 12 international gates in Concourse G and process more than 1,800 passengers per hour.

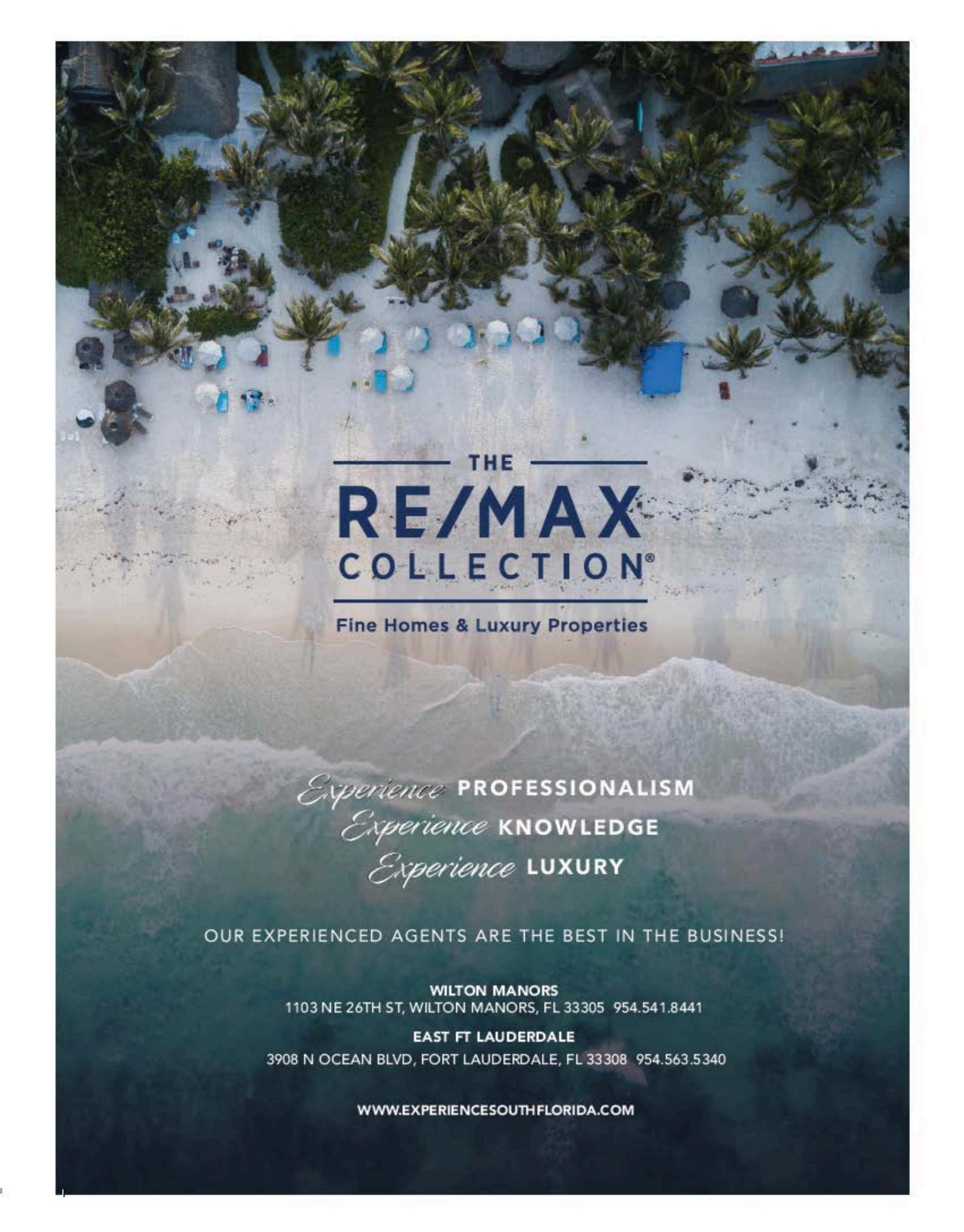
For more information on all the exciting new things at FLL please visit Broward County Airports.

- **PEV** - Broward County's Port Everglades recently welcomed Holland America Line's newest cruise ship, Nieuw Statendam. The Port will welcome 10 Holland America cruise ships and on February 2nd the Port will have the honor of being the host Port for the Nieuw Statendam's official naming ceremony. Additionally, the Celebrity Edge a 2,918- cruise ship and the newest ship to join Celebrity Cruises' fleet, arrived at her new home in Port Everglades at Celebrity's new Terminal 25. Celebrity Edge will sail on seven-night itineraries to the Eastern and Western Caribbean.

For more information on Broward County's Port Everglades please visit Broward County's Port Everglades.

The Resident's Guide to Government provides a convenient resource to help people stay connected to their local government. It includes contact information for County officials and Federal, State and local agencies. Visitors can subscribe to E-news and social media sites. Please sign up at [www.Broward.org/Commission/District4](http://www.Broward.org/Commission/District4) to receive email updates from our office. You can also follow me on Twitter and like my Facebook page.

If there is anything that we can do to assist you with your vision for a better Broward, please do not hesitate to contact our office at 954-357-7004 or by email at [LFisher@broward.org](mailto:LFisher@broward.org).



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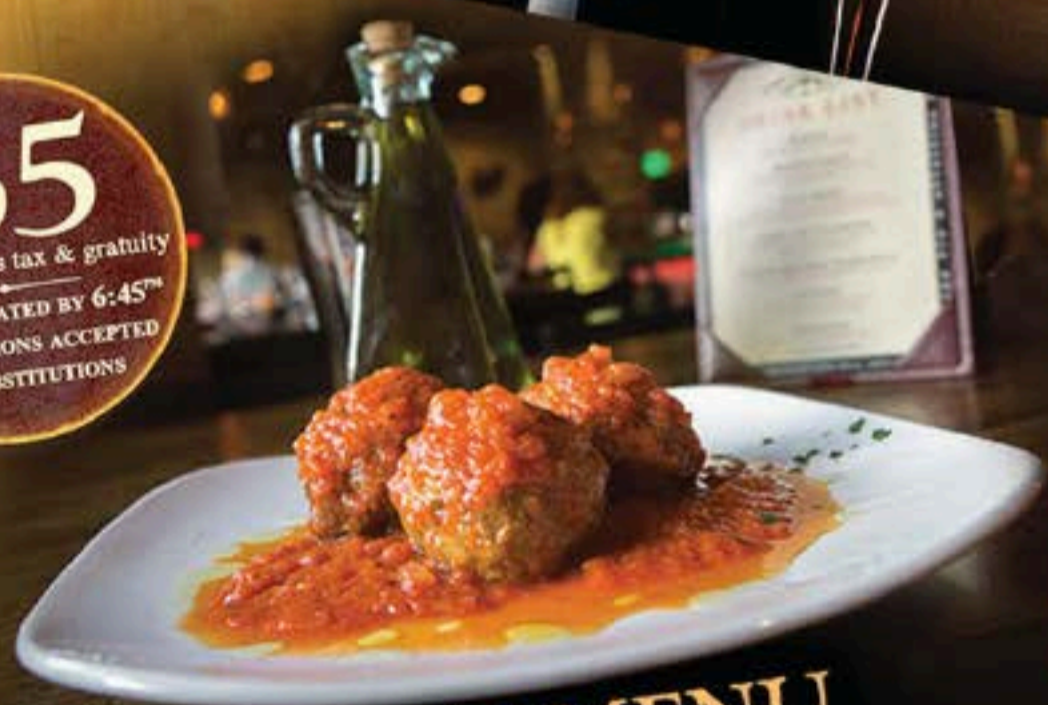


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