MAIN STREET
FORT PIERCE

FOCUS

Volume 21, No. 12 July, 2026

The Official Monthly Newspaper of Main Street Fort Pierce

"Treasure on the Coast: Community is Gold"

Join us at the 32nd Annual Reverse Raffle, August 15th

Presenting Sponsor: Brenda & John Jacobs, see p5



CHRISTMAS IN JULY
DOWNTOWN FORT PIERCE SHOPPING SPREE see p9

PHOTO BY MARYANN KETCHAM

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Celebrating America's First 250 Years and Fort Pierce's First 125

by Donna Sizemore



As we look ahead to ***July 4th***, 2026, our nation's 250th Anniversary, we find ourselves standing at a remarkable moment in American history. A quarter of a millennium ago, the ideals of liberty, self-governance, and community responsibility took root—principles that continue to guide *Main Streets* across the country, including our own beloved Fort Pierce.

This milestone year is especially meaningful for us because Fort Pierce also celebrates its 125th anniversary in 2026. On February 2, 1901, our city was officially incorporated, taking its name from the Army post established here in 1838 during the Second Seminole War. From those early days on the *Indian River* to the vibrant, resilient community we are today, Fort Pierce has always been shaped by people who believed in building something lasting.

Main Streets across America share that same spirit. They are places where history is preserved, where local businesses grow, where neighbors gather, and where civic pride is lived out every day. As our nation marks 250 years, *Main Streets* remind us that America's story isn't written only in capitals or monuments—it's written in towns like ours, block by block, generation by generation.

Here in Fort Pierce, our *Main Street* has been the heart of community life for more than a century. It has witnessed our growth, our challenges, our celebrations, and our renewal. And as we honor both our city's 125 years and our nation's 250 years, we recognize how deeply connected these anniversaries are. They both speak to endurance, to shared purpose, and to the belief that strong communities are the foundation of a strong nation.

As we move through this historic year, ***Main Street Fort Pierce*** will continue championing the values that have always defined us—heritage, creativity, local enterprise, and community connection. Together, we will celebrate where we've been and look forward to where we are going.

Thank you for being part of this extraordinary moment in our city's and our nation's story. Your support, your involvement, and your pride in Fort Pierce, are what keep our ***Main Street Fort Pierce*** thriving.

MAIN STREET FORT PIERCE
MAIN STREET FOCUS FORT PIERCE
Volume 21, No. 12 July, 2026

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Calendar

Dine, Shop and Enjoy Beautiful, Historic, Downtown Fort Pierce!

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MONTHLY EVENTS

July 4, Saturday: *STARS OVER ST. LUCIE 2026* — 6 to 9:20 p.m.; celebrate the 250th anniversary of the United States of America and the 125th anniversary of Fort pierce at **Marina Square**; join ***Main Street Fort Pierce***, and the ***City of Fort Pierce*** on the waterfront.

July 17, Friday: *ARTWALK* — 5 to 8:00 p.m.; Various studios and shops open throughout the downtown area; artstlucie.org.

July 25, Saturday: *CHRISTMAS IN JULY SHOPPING SPREE* — starting at 10 a.m. at Notions & Potions, Downtown Fort Pierce; see page 9 for details.

WEEKLY EVENTS

The Peacock House Art Foundation: *EVENTS & CLASSES* — visit www.thepeacockhouseartfoundation.com for a monthly schedule and for class registrations.

Wednesdays: *Wednesday's Farmers Market* — rain or shine 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., Downtown Marina Square; 772-618-3778.

Saturdays: *The Jazz Market* — 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.; north side of the Downtown Fort Pierce Library; Jazz & Blues Society, 460-5299, jazzsociety.org.

Saturdays: *Ft. Pierce Farmer's Market* — 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.; Marina Square on Melody Lane; Market Manager, 940-1145.

LIVE MUSIC DOWNTOWN

Wine Down Wednesday
Fort Social in the Galleria on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of each month, 6 to 8 p.m.
TheFortSteakhouse.com

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facebook/Sailfish Brewing Company

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Tuesdays: *Jazz Jam at the Sunrise Black Box Theatre* — 7 to 10 p.m.; 460-5299; jazzsociety.org.

MANATEE CENTER

429-6266 • ManateeEducationCenter.org

DOWNTOWN FORT PIERCE LIBRARY

462-2787 • www.st-lucie.lib.fl.us/

SUNDAY DOWNTOWN CHURCH SERVICES

Common Ground Vineyard Church; 460-5414, commongroundvineyard.com.

First Church; 464-0440, firstchurchfp.org.

Fort Pierce Haitian United Methodist Church; 940-6728, haitianmethodist.org.

Notre-Dame Mission Catholic Church; 466-9617, notredamecc.com.

St. Andrews Episcopal Church *(founded 1893)*; 461-5009 mystandrews.org.

COMMUNITY INFORMATION

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772-465-0630 • backusmuseum.com

Bud Adams Gallery of Historical Photographs
772-462-1795 • 2nd Floor of P.P. Cobb Building

Fort Pierce Police Athletic League
772-370-6162 • fortpiercepal.com
Volunteers needed: 772-466-0606

Fort Pierce Jazz & Blues Society
772-460-5299 • jazzsociety.org

Fort Pierce RiverWalk Center
600 North Indian River Drive
772-489-6473 • cityoffortpierce.com

Heathcote Botanical Gardens
772-464-4672 • heathcotebotanicalgardens.org

National Navy UDT-SEAL Museum
772-595-5845 • navysealmuseum.org

St. Lucie County Marine Center
772-462-3474 • stlucieco.gov/marine_center

St. Lucie County Regional History Center
772-462-1795 • stlucieco.gov/history



PRESIDENT RONALD REAGAN OFFICIALLY DECLARED JULY AS NATIONAL ICE CREAM MONTH IN 1984.

JULY: NATIONAL ICE CREAM MONTH

JULY 1: SECOND SECOND HALF OF THE YEAR DAY
JULY 2: MADE IN THE USA DAY
JULY 4: FOURTH OF JULY
JULY 6: NATIONAL FRIED CHICKEN DAY
JULY 8: NATIONAL ICE CREAM SUNDAE DAY
JULY 10: NATIONAL KITTEN DAY
JULY 10: NATIONAL MOTORCYCLE DAY
JULY 12: ETCH A SKETCH DAY
JULY 14: NATIONAL MAC AND CHEESE DAY
JULY 15: NATIONAL HOT DOG DAY
JULY 19: NATIONAL ICE CREAM DAY
JULY 20: MOON DAY (APOLLO 11 LUNAR LANDING)
JULY 23: YADA YADA YADA DAY
JULY 24: AMELIA EARHART DAY
JULY 24: START OF NATIONAL FISHING MONTH
JULY 25: NATIONAL DAY OF THE COWBOY
JULY 25: NATIONAL HOT FUDGE SUNDAE DAY
JULY 27: BAGPIPE APPRECIATION DAY
JULY 28: BUFFALO SOLDIERS DAY
JULY 30: WORLD SNORKELING DAY

Strike Gold for Downtown Fort Pierce at the 32nd Annual Reverse Raffle



PHOTO BY MARYANN KETCHAM

Mark your calendars for one of downtown Fort Pierce's most anticipated nights of the year! ***Main Street Fort Pierce*** is excited to host the ***32nd Annual Reverse Raffle, Live & Silent Auction*** on Saturday, August 15, 2026, at the beautiful **Pelican Yacht Club**.

This year's theme, *"Treasure on the Coast: Community is Gold,"* celebrates the people who make downtown Fort Pierce shine—our local businesses, artists, entrepreneurs, volunteers, and community supporters. Together, they are the true treasures that keep our historic downtown vibrant, welcoming, and full of life.

The ***Reverse Raffle*** has become a beloved annual tradition because it offers more than just a chance to win exciting prizes. Unlike a traditional raffle, the ***Reverse Raffle*** builds suspense as ticket numbers are drawn and eliminated throughout the evening. As the list grows smaller, the excitement grows larger until one lucky ticket remains to claim the grand prize.

Guests will also enjoy a lively evening featuring a live auction, silent auction, entertainment, delicious food, and the opportunity to connect with fellow community members who share a passion for downtown Fort Pierce.

Every ticket purchased directly supports the mission of ***Main Street Fort Pierce***, a nonprofit organization that has spent more than three decades revitalizing and promoting our historic downtown. Through its efforts, ***Main Street Fort Pierce*** has helped breathe new life into treasured landmarks like **Historic City Hall** and the **Sunrise Theatre**, recruited and supported local businesses, and organized many of the community's favorite events.

From *Friday Fest* and ***Stars Over St. Lucie*** to ***Sights & Sounds on Second Street***, the annual Christmas Festival and Parade, and spectacular *Independence Day* and *New Year's Eve* fireworks, ***Main Street Fort Pierce*** continues to create experiences that bring residents and visitors together while strengthening the local economy.

By attending the ***Reverse Raffle***, you're doing more than enjoying a memorable evening—you are investing in the future of downtown Fort Pierce and helping ensure it remains a thriving destination for generations to come.

Don't miss your opportunity to be part of this exciting tradition. Purchase your ***Reverse Raffle*** tickets today by visiting www.mainstreetfortpierce.org and join us on August 15 for an unforgettable evening celebrating the gold found in our community.

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Mayor's Message 250 Years of America

by Linda Hudson, Mayor, City of Fort Pierce



Every year our country celebrates ***July 4th***, but this year marks our country's 250th birthday. While the founding fathers voted for Independence on July 2nd, the Declaration of Independence was officially adopted on July 4th and signed on August 2nd.

Where was Fort Pierce in these 250 years? In 1776, Florida was under British rule and would not become a part of the United States until 1821, when it became a territory. The military Fort Pierce was established in 1838 in the Second Seminole War and named for Lt. Col. Benjamin K. Pierce.

Not long after the *Florida East Coast Railroad* arrived in Fort Pierce in 1894, Fort Pierce incorporated as a city in 1901 and became the county seat of St. Lucie County when it was formed in 1905.

A large monument honoring those killed in the Great War still stands on the St. Lucie County Courthouse lawn. Fort Pierce and Florida enjoyed a land boom in the Roaring Twenties. Prohibition, which lasted from 1920 to 1933, would introduce the crimes of smuggling and bootlegging in Fort Pierce.

The land boom went bust in Fort Pierce and Florida after the 1926 and 1928 hurricanes, ahead of the Great Depression which began in 1929. When the United States entered World War II, the military established an underwater demolition training base on North and South Beaches. The precursor of Navy SEALs, these men would land on the beaches of Normandy on June 6, 1944.

Post-war Fort Pierce and St. Lucie County was primarily agricultural, dominated by citrus groves and cattle ranches. Early 21st Century has seen greatly reduced agricultural lands, and rapid population growth in Florida and St. Lucie County.

This year, Fort Pierce celebrates 125 years as a city and our nation celebrates 250 years. A patriotic boat parade will be sponsored by the **Fort Pierce Yacht Club** on July 4th. There will be no July *Friday Fest*, but join us Saturday, July 4th, for ***Stars Over St. Lucie***, 6 p.m., at **Marina Square**, with fireworks at 9 p.m. For more information, visit Main Street Fort Pierce | Fort Pierce, Florida.



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Christmas in July Brings Holiday Cheer and a Chance to Win a $1,300+ Downtown Fort Pierce Shopping Spree



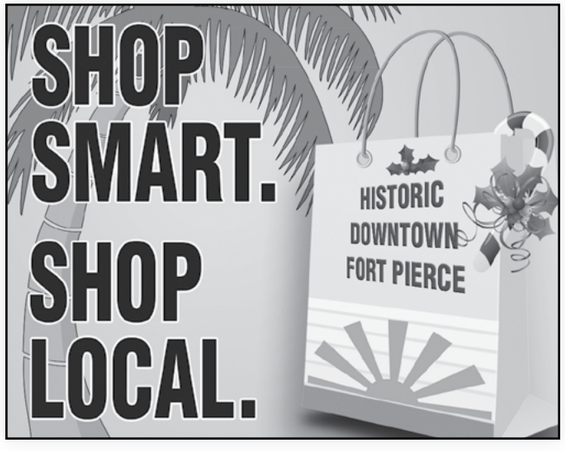
Who says you have to wait until December for holiday fun?

Downtown Fort Pierce is celebrating ***Christmas in July*** with a festive community event that combines shopping, dining, giveaways, and the chance to win a *Downtown Shopping Spree* valued at more than $1,300—and still growing!

The celebration kicks off at 10 a.m. on Saturday, July 25th at **Notions & Potions**, located at 116 N. 2nd Street, where participants can check in and receive their first raffle ticket. From there, the adventure begins.

Participants are encouraged to wear their favorite Ugly Christmas Shirt and visit downtown businesses, taking selfies with each participating store's logo in the background. Every qualifying selfie earns another entry into the grand prize drawing, making it easy to increase your chances of taking home the impressive shopping spree.

Several bonus opportunities will earn participants even more raffle tickets. Those who bring school supplies to **Legit Cuts Barber Shop** and snap a photo with their donation will receive two extra tickets, while a selfie at **I Am Activewear** earns an additional bonus entry.



Throughout the day, shoppers can also enjoy hourly raffles beginning at 1 p.m., with multiple giveaways taking place before the grand prize drawing at 6 p.m. Participants must return to **Notions & Potions** by 5:30 p.m. to show their selfies and receive their official raffle tickets. The grand prize winner does not need to be present to win.

Organizers note that anyone who is unable to take selfies can receive assistance, ensuring everyone has the opportunity to participate. The event is open to adults 18 years of age and older.

More than two dozen local businesses are helping make the event possible, including **Taco Dive**, **Last Dragon Tattoo**, **Cobb's Landing**, **Little Jim's Bridge**, **Sailfish Brewing Co.**, **Legit Cuts Barber Shop**, **2nd Street Bistro**, **Notions & Potions**, **Varsity Sport Shop**, **Fort Pierce City Marina**, **Taylor Creek Optical**, **2nd Street Art**, **Dunkin'**, **Havana George**, **Thirsty Turtle**, **Protein Harbor**, **Hippy Hut**, **Lorenzo's**, **Freedom Boat Club**, **Casa Azteca**, **Sunshine State of Mind Boutique**, **I Am Activewear**, **Southern Cottage on 2nd**, and many more.

Whether you're hoping to win the grand prize or simply enjoy a day exploring Downtown Fort Pierce, ***Christmas in July*** promises festive fun, community spirit, and plenty of reasons to support local businesses.

Gather your friends, throw on your ugliest Christmas shirt, and spend the day discovering everything Downtown Fort Pierce has to offer. Every stop could bring you one step closer to taking home the ultimate **Downtown Shopping Spree**.

Main Street Fort Pierce Golf Tournament 2026 Thank You!

Thank you to everyone who participated in the ***Main Street Fort Pierce Spring Golf Scramble*** on May 16, 2026, at **Gator Trace Golf & Country Club**. We appreciate your support and hope you enjoyed a great day on the course.

A special thank you goes to our presenting sponsor, **John Jacobs Construction**, for helping make this event possible.

We would also like to thank our Par and Putting Green sponsors for their support: **Diamond Defense**, **Agler Kitchen, Bath & Floors**, **Nelson Family Farms**, and **Pelican Yacht Club**. Thank you to **Lott Insurance** for helping us add the opportunity to win $10,000!

Congratulations to this year's winners:

- 1st Place – **Rains Insurance**
- 2nd Place – **Bradley Team**
- 3rd Place – **Holmes Realty Ventures**
- Highest Score – **Bopp Team**
- Best Dressed – **Twin Palms Team**

Together with Golf Co-Chairs, Rich Ziarkowski and Kathy Perona, we appreciate the many volunteer hours dedicated to making the tournament a true "player's" event.

We're already looking forward to next year's tournament, which will be held on May 15, 2027. We hope to see you there!

— — Golf Tournament Sponsors & Donors — —

Presenting Sponsor: John Jacobs Construction

— — Par & Putting Green Sponsors — —

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JaNova Naturals | Kame | Legit Cuts Barber Shop
Maier Gourmet Popcorn | Manatee Bar & Grill
Champion Turf Club St. James | Gator Trace Golf & Country Club
Indian Hills Golf Course | Jensen Beach Golf Club
PGA Club at PGA Village | Savannah Club
Summer Crush | The Saints at Port St. Lucie Golf Course



Rains Insurance Team, 1st Place



Bradley Team, 2nd Place

The *A.E. Backus Museum* Offers Free Admission for Active Military Personnel and Their Families this Summer as a *Blue Star Museum*

The **A.E. Backus Museum** will participate in ***Blue Star Museums***, a collaboration among the *National Endowment for the Arts*, *Blue Star Families*, the *Department of Defense* and museums across the United States to offer free admission to the nation's active duty military personnel and their families, starting on Armed Services Day, May 16, 2026 and continuing through Labor Day, September 7, 2026. To obtain free access, visit the front desk with relevant ID. A list of participating museums nationwide is available at www.arts.gov/blue-star-museums-map.

Blue Star families can enjoy access to the special exhibition ***Through the Eye of the Camera*** (May 15 to June 19), as well as the permanent collection and display of works by A.E. Backus and of the *Florida Highwaymen* painters during regular season schedule and summer hours.

"The **Backus Museum** is proud to participate in this national program to honor the service of the military with increased access for family members," said J. Marshall Adams, Executive Director. "The artists at the core of our mission served their country in wartime and peace — Bean Backus during the second World War, and later several of the younger *Highwaymen* painters also served their country in the armed forces. Today as a ***Blue Star Museum***, we are pleased to thank our military families for their service, and share with them the cultural treasures of our community."

Blue Star Museums include art, science and history museums, children's museums, zoos, gardens, lighthouses and more, and exist in all 50 states, as well as the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Each year, the program begins on Armed Forces Day in mid-May and ends on Labor Day at the beginning of September.

The free admission program is available for those currently serving in the United States Military — Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, Marine Corps, Navy, and Space Force, members of the Reserves, National Guard, U.S. Public Health Commissioned Corps, NOAA Commissioned Corps and up to five family members. Qualified members must show a Geneva Convention common access card (CAC), Next Generation Uniformed Services (Real) ID card, or DD Form 1173 ID card (dependent ID), DD Form 1173-1 ID card for entrance into a participating Blue Star Museum.

About the A.E. Backus Museum & Gallery: Since its founding in 1960 and the first day the doors opened in 1961, the **A.E. Backus Museum & Gallery** has been a center and catalyst for creativity and culture in our region. The Museum houses the nation's largest public presentation of artwork by Florida's pre-eminent painter, A.E. "Bean" Backus (1906–1990), and also continues its more than sixty-year tradition of exhibiting and celebrating the paintings of the original *Florida Highwaymen*, who got their start here. In addition, the Museum organizes and hosts changing exhibitions from artists of regional, national and international acclaim.

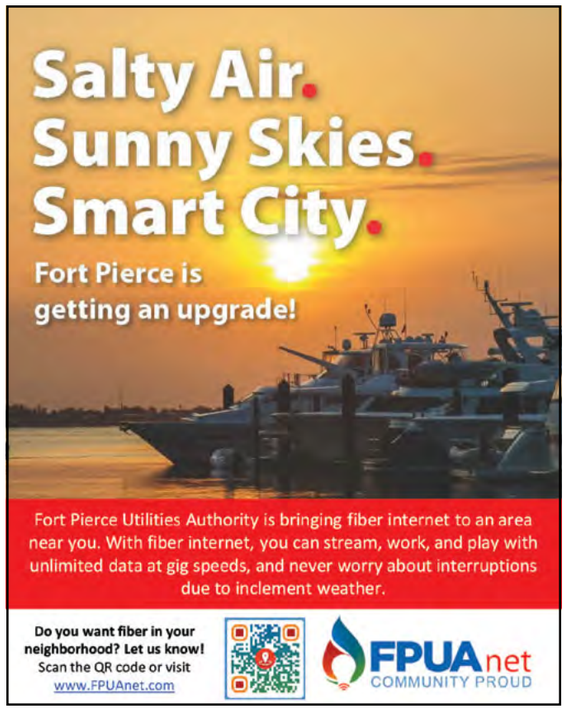
Hours: Wednesday – Saturday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Sunday, 12 Noon to 4 p.m. through June 19; Summer hours Saturday 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Sunday, 12 Noon to 4 p.m. through August 9. Admission is $5 per person; AARP, AAA, and Veterans with appropriate ID receive a $2 discount. Students with school ID, children under 18, active duty military, and current members are always free. Additionally, the **A.E. Backus Museum** offers $1 admission to individuals and families presenting a SNAP Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) card as part of the *Museums for All* access program, to encourage individuals of all backgrounds to visit museums regularly and build lifelong museum habits. All visitors are asked to follow the latest public health guidance for the safety and comfort of guests, staff, and volunteers.













FPUA Partners With St. Lucie Cultural Alliance to Transform Utility Box into Public Art



Residents and visitors strolling through downtown Fort Pierce may notice a vibrant new addition at **111 Orange Avenue**. Thanks to a partnership between ***Fort Pierce Utilities Authority*** (**FPUA**) and the *St. Lucie Cultural Alliance*, a utility box has been transformed into a striking work of public art celebrating the natural beauty of Florida.

Located adjacent to **The Vault Art Gallery**, the utility box now features a colorful depiction of a bird-of-paradise plant, bringing an otherwise ordinary piece of infrastructure to life while enhancing the visual character of downtown Fort Pierce.

The project began when the *St. Lucie Cultural Alliance* issued a public call for artists, inviting creatives from across the region to submit original designs for consideration. Following a review process, local artist Debra Marler's piece was selected as the final artwork, which was installed as a full utility box wrap.

"Public art has the power to create a stronger sense of place and community," said Rachel Tennant, Director of Public Affairs and Sustainability at **FPUA**. "We're proud to partner with the *St. Lucie Cultural Alliance* to support local artists while contributing to the beauty and vibrancy of downtown Fort Pierce."

Utility box wraps have become an increasingly popular way for communities to integrate art into public spaces, turning functional infrastructure into engaging visual landmarks. The project aligns with **FPUA's** commitment to enhancing quality of life throughout the community while supporting initiatives that celebrate local culture and creativity.

For the *St. Lucie Cultural Alliance*, the partnership represents another opportunity to showcase local artistic talent and expand public access to the arts.

"Projects like this help bring art beyond gallery walls and into the everyday lives of residents and visitors," said Maddie Williams, Executive Director *St. Lucie Cultural Alliance*. "We appreciate **FPUA's** willingness to support creative efforts that strengthen our community."

The completed wrap serves as both a canvas for local art and a reminder that public infrastructure can contribute to the character and identity of a community.

As downtown Fort Pierce continues to evolve as a destination for arts, culture, and community events, partnerships like this demonstrate how organizations can work together to create welcoming and visually engaging public spaces for everyone to enjoy.

The utility box wrap is located at **111 Orange Avenue** in downtown Fort Pierce, adjacent to **The Vault Art Gallery and Cultural Center**.



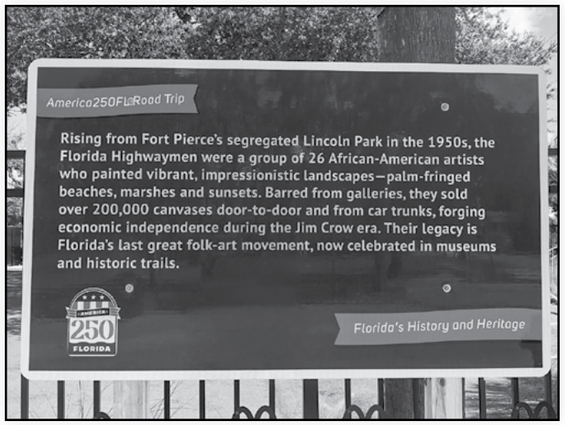
Fort Pierce's *Highwaymen Museum* Featured Stop on America 250 Road Trip

The *City of Fort Pierce* is excited to announce that the **Florida Highwaymen Museum** has been selected as a featured stop on the ***America 250 Road Trip***, a nationwide initiative leading up to the United States' 250th anniversary on July 4, 2026.

This national recognition highlights the enduring legacy of the *Original Florida Highwaymen* and places Fort Pierce among destinations that tell the story of America's people, culture, and history.

As the only museum in the nation dedicated to all 26 *Original Florida Highwaymen* artists—and the only place where visitors can view a painting from each artist in one location—the museum preserves a uniquely American story of resilience, entrepreneurship, and artistic innovation.

The designation also shines a spotlight on St. Lucie County, home to both the *Florida Highwaymen* and renowned author

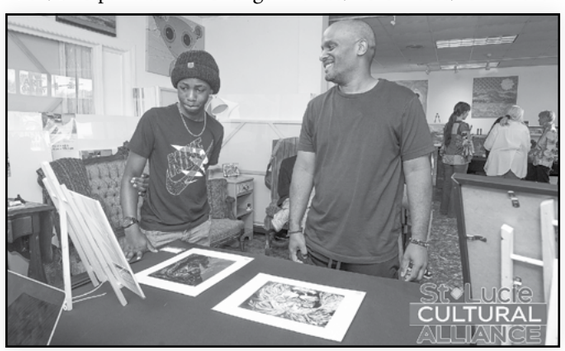


Zora Neale Hurston. Visitors can explore the **Florida Highwaymen Museum** and the nearby ***Zora Neale Hurston Dust Tracks Heritage Trail***, experiencing two influential cultural legacies in one destination.

St. Lucie Cultural Alliance Downtown Events

Life Drawing Class—2nd Friday (every month); call 410-553-1374 to sign up or email 1Voice@innervoicesoutervision.com; 5–8 p.m. at 111 Orange Avenue, Fort Pierce, lower level.

Art Walk—US of Art: Reflection on 250 Years (Free); July 17th, 5–8 p.m. at 111 Orange Avenue, Fort Pierce, lower level.



Saturday Art Day—$35; 10 a.m., 5–18 years old; 11:30 a.m.; 5–18 years old; 12:30 p.m., advanced and teens at 111 Orange Avenue, lower level; www.saturdayartday.com.



Celebrate America with the Fort Pierce Downtown Farmers Market

The month of July always brings an air of excitement to downtown Fort Pierce. The streets are decorated with flags. Residents prepare for the annual fireworks show to commemorate the signing of the Declaration of Independence on the ***4th of July***. It is a time to reflect on how far our nation has come over the last 250 years. It's a time to think about what we want our country to exemplify to the world over the next centuries. It's also a time to remember how much our downtown area has grown over that same time frame.



This year our grand city marked 125 years since its founding — half as old as our whole nation. Like our country, we've seen an evolution of growth, reduction, rebirth and revitalization. It's interesting to note that our beloved Farmers Market has been a part of that history for just over 1/5 of that time. Started in 1997 through the St. Lucie UF/IFAS Extension Service working with a handful of community leaders, their vision is still going strong today — like our city and like our nation. These things we count on to make our lives more full, more organized or more cohesive were all started by a group of like-minded people coming together to grow a new idea.

This month, we might take a moment to reflect on the power of community at all levels. We know that no idea, no matter how perfect it seems, comes to fruition with perfection. Ideas are tested, they're proven or disproven, and they evolve. But if the core idea is solid, it can handle the changes and get better over time. The power of the people can do that.

The people from our community who came together to start the ***Downtown Fort Pierce Farmers Market*** have almost all (hi Glynda) moved on. Good people have filled their shoes to give our market leadership and direction. In fact, allow us to recognize this month that the driving force from Extension who got this market started, Anita Neal, retired last month from the University of Florida. Over her 30 year career, Anita made a lasting impact in St. Lucie County through her Extension work, and ultimately to a large part of south Florida through her leadership.

The market vendors have seen an evolution as well — some with the market for decades. Some vendors have outgrown the market or branched out to other venues. New vendors join almost monthly as well, ready to see if their idea for an agriculture product will gain the support of our market community. Through it all, the market has retained its original idea of bringing fresh, local produce and ag products to the community while providing an outlet for local farmers' various items. We thank our growing market community for supporting this idea.

So, as we wax patriotic for our country's big anniversary this year, don't forget the other good ideas in our lives. Join us on the morning of ***July 4th*** for a special giveaway from the market to recognize this 250th ***July 4th***. Then keep coming back every Saturday to the ***Downtown Fort Pierce Farmers Market*** — it's a *Saturday morning tradition*.





What was Florida Like During the Ice Age?

by John D. Pinsof, Ph.D., Scientist in Residence, The Manatee Center

When I hear mention of the Ice Age, I immediately conjure up an image of a majestic woolly mammoth rearing up its 13-foot-long tusks and trumpeting with a good amount of proboscidean attitude. I consider myself fortunate in that my childhood visits to The Field Museum in Chicago and fascination with dinosaur skeletons led me on a path to becoming an actual paleontologist. My interests in graduate school focused upon fossils of the Ice Age across North America, which prompted me to study two sides of the same coin: the animals themselves and the climatology, oceanography, and glacial geology of the continent. This article addresses what actually comprises an Ice Age and what North America and specifically Florida was experiencing during that time.

First, let's review the term Ice Age. The earth experienced three major cold periods over the past billion years. The first occurred some 750 million years ago (mya) and is referred to as Snowball Earth as most of the planet was covered by ice. The second occurred in the present-day southern continents just before the rise of the dinosaurs. The third, the Pleistocene Epoch, occurred most recently in the geologic record beginning 1.8 mya and concluding 10 thousand years ago. It is the Pleistocene glaciation that you and I are most familiar with.

Information on Pleistocene climate comes mainly from examining ice cores drilled from polar ice caps and other large glaciers. The relative ratio of oxygen isotopes in the ice core is a reliable proxy for determining the temperature when that layer of ice formed. Also, air bubbles trapped within the ice provide valuable information on the mixture of gasses that were present in the atmosphere. Collectively, thousands of worldwide ice cores allowed scientists to reconstruct the sequence of events during the Pleistocene, which culminated in four major continental glaciations over the past 500 thousand years.

In parts of the upper Midwest, the continental ice sheet was over a mile thick. The vast amount of ice needed to grow continental glaciers came from falling snow that never melted, thus accumulating foot by foot into great thickness over time. All the precipitation that formed this snow originated from water evaporated from the ocean. Therefore, when the earth is in a cold cycle, glaciers form and sea level falls as water is removed. Conversely, when the glaciers melt during a warm cycle, the water returns to the ocean and sea level rises. It is interesting to note that the Great Lakes are meltwater puddles from the last ice sheet.

None of the four glaciations reached further south than southern Illinois so Florida was spared from being locked in ice. Nonetheless, Florida was indirectly affected by the glaciations. During cold (glacial) periods, sea level dropped about 300 feet, thereby increasing the land area of Florida to roughly twice its present size. Fossil evidence suggests that glacial Florida was more-or-less similar to it is today but with fewer wetlands. The climate was cooler and dryer but not severely cold enough to exclude alligators and turtles. Large animals such as mammoths, mastodonts, giant ground sloths, saber-tooth cats, and dire wolves inhabited Florida at that time along with more familiar animals like deer, horses, beavers, bears, and manatees. About 10,000 years ago, the climate entered into another warm cycle, called an interglacial, when melting continental ice sheet again refilled the ocean. This climate shift caused the extinction of many of the larger species not only in Florida but worldwide as well. Technically, the planet is still in an interglacial phase — who knows when the next continental glacier will reform?

Learn more about the ecology of the *Indian River Lagoon* and its inhabitants at The Manatee Center located at 480 Indian River Drive in downtown Fort Pierce or find us online at www.ManateeEducationCenter.org.



Columbian Mammoth Jaw (Mammuthus columbi)
From Aucilla River, Florida
Photo Credit: Kristen Grace/Florida Museum
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208 Avenue A	**K & K II**	772-971-1934
131 N. 2nd St.	**Christine Coke**	772-252-4501
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URBAN GARDEN INSIGHTS

Hidden Nature Trail Restored by UF/IFAS Master Gardener Volunteers in St. Lucie County

Lisa Dietderich, Master Gardener Volunteer; Sara MacDonald, Urban Horticulture Agent, UF/IFAS Extension St. Lucie County

What was once an overgrown and neglected woodland trail has been transformed into a thriving educational garden thanks to the dedication of *UF/IFAS Master Gardener Volunteers* in St. Lucie County.

Located on the west side of the UF/IFAS Extension St. Lucie County, the *Nature Trail Demonstration Garden* features winding paths, native and ornamental plantings, a gazebo, picnic area, spillway, and shaded woodland spaces designed to showcase Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ principles in a peaceful natural setting.

Originally established before 1995, the Trail was created to highlight the beauty and sustainability of Florida-friendly landscapes while giving residents ideas for environmentally responsible gardening. Following years of neglect after the COVID-19 pandemic, restoration efforts began in 2023 to reclaim the space for education, conservation, and community enjoyment.



Led by Master Gardener Volunteer Mark Lewis, along with volunteers Lisa Dietderich, Veronica Dillingham, and Karen Wolkowski, the team spent countless hours removing invasive plants, restoring pathways, reclaiming planting beds, mulching, pruning, and enhancing wildlife habitat throughout the Trail.

Today, the garden serves as a living classroom for visitors of all ages. Educational signs and QR codes connect guests directly to UF/IFAS EDIS publications where they can learn about native plants, pollinator-friendly landscaping, invasive species, and Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ practices.

Visitors can explore a variety of native and adapted plants, including coontie, firebush, porterweed, bromeliads, cabbage palms, and Florida salvia — all selected to support pollinators and wildlife while requiring minimal irrigation and maintenance.

The project also emphasizes sustainable gardening practices by avoiding herbicides and pesticides, composting yard waste, and managing invasive species by hand to help protect pollinators and nearby waterways.

The *Nature Trail* has become a valuable community resource for local gardeners, school groups, 4-H youth, naturalists, and residents interested in learning more about Florida ecosystems and sustainable landscaping.

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Notes from the Garden: Community Garden July Update

by Martha Cross

First Church Community Garden celebrates some cool stuff happening during the hot summertime. The Garden team continues experimenting with a number of planting methods and prospective crops in the aquaponic troughs. Lettuces of several kinds are thriving even in the high temps of July. That means that delicate and nutritious leafy salads will still be part of the harvest moving out into the community. Distributing fresh and delicious produce to neighbors remains the ***Community Garden*** focus.



Through planting, harvesting, and gleaning from local surplus crops, the ***Community Garden*** team has distributed over 6,500 lbs. of fresh food. Scaling up availability through trial and innovation is allowing the Garden to flourish throughout the year. The substantial Hoop House will be up and operational by the end of this month, thanks to the generous support of both church and community. Even though summer is a tough traditional growing season in Florida, the ***Community Garden*** is implementing all means available to test its limits, and to keep our feeding partners supplied with the best that can be offered. As more community members learn about, and are inspired by, this work, the Garden generates hope and enthusiasm for taking care of both our environment and our neighbors. Visitors from *Salvation Army*, *Ocean Village*, and *First Church Summer Camp* are helping to share the excitement of serving neighbors.



At **First Church**, and at the ***Community Garden***, we are wishing Downtown and ***Main Street Fort Pierce*** some gentle rains to cool and refresh during the heat of July.





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Fishing, swimming, boating, snorkeling, and exploring the spoil islands are great ways to enjoy The Treasure Coast during our hot summer months. We are surrounded by some of the best waters in Florida with the *Indian River Lagoon*, the *Fort Pierce Inlet*, and the *Atlantic Ocean* which offers bountiful inshore and offshore reefs. As our slice of paradise heats up, remember it's cool to fish!

Bottom fishing is my favorite plan this time of year and a great strategy for all local anglers in July. Snapper and grouper of good size are being caught fairly consistently offshore. Live sardines or pinfish will give best results but frozen will work too, if live bait is too hard to find. It's very important to keep your bait on bottom with just enough weight depending on the current. Mangroves, lanes, and muttons are put on deck almost daily and the red snapper are plentiful, too. Although the 39-day red snapper season was closed by a federal injunction before it even began, these fish are routinely caught off our coast so we know the red snapper population has notably increased in recent years. Here's hoping we get part of the proposed new season back as soon as possible.

The two-day Florida spiny lobster mini-season is this month as well, July 29–30, so watch out for more boat traffic and divers in the water. If diving isn't your thing, just trade some scales for tails and enjoy the freshest seafood feast around!

The *2026 Lionfish Challenge* is underway. This free FWC tournament goes all summer from May 22 to September 14 and is open to all ages. The primary goal is to encourage and reward the removal of lionfish from Florida waters. Lionfish are venomous, predators considered to be a major invasive species in the Atlantic with a very significant impact on local fisheries and coral reefs. More information to participate can be found at reefrangers.myfwc.com.

The *Fishy Photo of the Month* highlights salty angler Ben Lewis with a fin-tastic mangrove snapper!

The hot summer days of July will fly by when you make time for cool adventures on the water. Keep in touch with our great local bait and tackle shops like my homebase, the historic **Little Jim Bait & Tackle** and **DeBrooks Fishing Corner**, as they have all your tackle needs covered. Just a reminder, **Little Jim** will cook-your-catch and serve it with a smile. Wishing everyone a fun and safe Fourth of July as we celebrate America and our freedom to keep *Pullin Drag!*

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Yet there is still so much more to be done! We need you to become involved in our continued planning for the area. Become a member and support ***Main Street Fort Pierce*** financially. We rely on the participation and the voluntary annual dues from our members to accomplish our goals and complete our projects.
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2026 Events

Aug. 7	*Friday Fest*
Aug. 15	*32nd Annual Reverse Raffle "Treasure On The Coast – Community Is Gold"*
Sept. 4	*Friday Fest*
Sept. 18	*Coffee with the Mayor*
Oct. 2	*Friday Fest*
Oct. 16	*Coffee with the Mayor*
Oct. 17	*Ghost Walk History Immersion Day Tour (World War II & Beyond)*
Oct. 21–22	*Ghost Walk History Immersion Evening Tours (Presettlement – FL Land Boom)*
Nov. 6	*Friday Fest*
Nov. 12	*GPS Platts/Backus House Art Show*
Nov. 20	*Coffee with the Mayor*
Nov. 28	*Shop Small Saturday, Downtown Fort Pierce*
Dec. 4	*Friday Fest*
Dec. 6	*Sights & Sounds on Second Holiday Parade*

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

It Has Been a Privilege to Serve

by Donna Sizemore



After serving two two-year terms as President of ***Main Street Fort Pierce***, I wanted to share that I'll be stepping down from this role and transitioning to Past President.

As a Fort Pierce native, it has truly been an honor to serve this community in a position that means so much to me. ***Main Street Fort Pierce*** is dedicated to preserving the character, history, and energy of our downtown, and I'm incredibly grateful for the opportunity to be part of that mission alongside so many passionate residents, business owners, volunteers, community partners, and supporters.

I especially want to thank our ***Main Street*** Board members for their support, guidance, and commitment over the past four years. Your dedication, teamwork, and countless volunteer hours have made all of our accomplishments possible, and I'm so grateful to have served alongside each of you.

I'm proud of everything we've accomplished together and excited about the future of ***Main Street Fort Pierce***.

It's also my pleasure to introduce our new President, Richard Ziarkowski, known to many as "Z." Richard brings a lifetime of leadership and public service to this role. A U.S. Army veteran and retired Captain with the *St. Lucie County Sheriff's Office*, he served our community for more than 31 years with professionalism, integrity, and dedication. He continues to serve as an Active Reserve Captain and remains actively involved in numerous local organizations, demonstrating his ongoing commitment to Fort Pierce and St. Lucie County. His experience, passion for service, and love for our community make him an outstanding choice to lead ***Main Street Fort Pierce*** into its next chapter.

Thank you to everyone who has supported ***Main Street Fort Pierce*** and to everyone who has placed their trust in me over the years. It has been a privilege to serve, and I look forward to continuing to support this organization and our downtown in my new role as Past President.

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Volume 22, No. 1 August, 2026

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Calendar

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MONTHLY EVENTS

August 7 Friday: *FRIDAY FEST AT MARINA SQUARE* — 5:30 to 8:30 p.m.; **Live Music**; Please remove all vehicles from the permitted Friday Fest road closure area (Marina Way & Melody Lane) by 2:00 p.m.; *Facebook*–Main Street Fort Pierce, 466-3880; mainstreetfortpierce.org.

August 15, Saturday: *32ND ANNUAL REVERSE RAFFLE & SILENT AUCTION — Treasure on the Coast, Community is Gold;* 6:00 p.m.; **Pelican Yacht Club**.

August 21, Friday: *ARTWALK* — 5 to 8:00 p.m.; Various studios and shops open throughout the downtown area; artstlucie.org.

WEEKLY EVENTS

The Peacock House Art Foundation: *EVENTS & CLASSES* — visit www.thepeacockhouseartfoundation.com for a monthly schedule and for class registrations.

Wednesdays: *Wednesday's Farmers Market* — rain or shine 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., Downtown Marina Square; 772-618-3778.

Saturdays: *The Jazz Market* — 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.; north side of the Downtown Fort Pierce Library; Jazz & Blues Society, 460-5299, jazzsociety.org.

Saturdays: *Ft. Pierce Farmer's Market* — 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.; Marina Square on Melody Lane; Market Manager, 940-1145.

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cobbs-landing.com

Bottom's Up Public House
facebook.com/bottomsuppublichouse

SUNRISE THEATRE & SUNRISE BLACK BOX

772-461-4775 • sunrisetheatre.com

Tuesdays: *Jazz Jam at the Sunrise Black Box Theatre* — 7 to 10 p.m.; 460-5299; jazzsociety.org.

MANATEE CENTER

429-6266 • ManateeEducationCenter.org

DOWNTOWN FORT PIERCE LIBRARY

462-2787 • www.st-lucie.lib.fl.us/

SUNDAY DOWNTOWN CHURCH SERVICES

Common Ground Vineyard Church; 460-5414, commongroundvineyard.com.

First Church; 464-0440, firstchurchfp.org.

Fort Pierce Haitian United Methodist Church; 940-6728, haitianmethodist.org.

Notre-Dame Mission Catholic Church; 466-9617, notredamecc.com.

St. Andrews Episcopal Church *(founded 1893)*; 461-5009 mystandrews.org.

COMMUNITY INFORMATION

A.E. Backus Museum
772-465-0630 • backusmuseum.com

Bud Adams Gallery of Historical Photographs
772-462-1795 • 2nd Floor of P.P. Cobb Building

Fort Pierce Police Athletic League
772-370-6162 • fortpiercepal.com
Volunteers needed: 772-466-0606

Fort Pierce Jazz & Blues Society
772-460-5299 • jazzsociety.org

Fort Pierce RiverWalk Center
600 North Indian River Drive
772-489-6473 • cityoffortpierce.com

Heathcote Botanical Gardens
772-464-4672 • heathcotebotanicalgardens.org

National Navy UDT-SEAL Museum
772-595-5845 • navysealmuseum.org

St. Lucie County Marine Center
772-462-3474 • stlucieco.gov/marine_center

St. Lucie County Regional History Center
772-462-1795 • stlucieco.gov/history



AUGUST: **AMERICAN ARTIST APPRECIATION MONTH**

AUGUST 1: SANDCASTLE DAY

AUGUST 2: NATIONAL COLORING BOOK DAY

AUGUST 2: NATIONAL ICE CREAM SANDWICH DAY

AUGUST 4: NATIONAL CHOCOLATE CHIP COOKIE DAY

AUGUST 4: U.S. COAST GUARD BIRTHDAY

AUGUST 8: NATIONAL FROZEN CUSTARD DAY

AUGUST 9: NATIONAL BOWLING DAY

AUGUST 10: NATIONAL S'MORES DAY

AUGUST 14: NATIONAL CREAMSICLE DAY

AUGUST 14: WORLD LIZARD DAY

AUGUST 15: WORLD HONEY BEE DAY

AUGUST 16: NATIONAL AIRBORNE DAY

AUGUST 17: NATIONAL THRIFT SHOP DAY

AUGUST 19: NATIONAL PHOTOGRAPHY DAY

AUGUST 20: NATIONAL BACON LOVERS DAY

AUGUST 25: NATIONAL BANANA SPLIT DAY

AUGUST 26: NATIONAL DOG DAY

AUGUST 27: NATIONAL BURGER DAY

AUGUST 30: NATIONAL BEACH DAY

AUGUST 30: SLINKY DAY

Announcing the *Indian River Lagoon 2027 Photo Contest*

The *Indian River Lagoon National Estuary Program* is seeking lagoon-related photographs for publication in its *2027 Indian River Lagoon Calendar*.

Five broad categories of photos will be accepted:

- Working and Playing on the Lagoon
- Lagoon Plants and Animals
- Scenic
- Living Lagoon-Friendly
- Volunteering to Help the Lagoon

All contest entries must be received or postmarked by August 21, 2026. Find complete Entry Requirements and Contest Rules on our homepage: onelagoon.org.

The following guidelines will be considered by the judging panel when choosing photographs for inclusion in the calendar:

1. All images must have been taken within the *Indian River Lagoon* watershed, including its tributaries, from High Bridge Rd. in Volusia County to Jupiter Inlet in Palm Beach County.

2. A total of three entries may be submitted per photographer.

3. All images must feature some aspect of the *Indian River Lagoon* or its watershed. Coastal beach photos, surfing photos, etc., are not eligible.

4. All images must be in landscape (horizontal) format.

5. All digital images must be of publication quality.

City Hall Public Art Display Opportunity – *Calling All Artists!*

The *City of Fort Pierce* is inviting professional artists and artist teams to submit proposals for a permanent outdoor sculpture to be installed at the front entrance of **Fort Pierce City Hall**, located at 100 N. U.S. Highway 1.

This public art opportunity is part of the City's ongoing commitment to enhancing public spaces while celebrating Fort Pierce's unique identity, history, and culture. Located along one of the City's most highly visible corridors, this artwork will serve as a welcoming landmark for residents and visitors alike.

The selected sculpture should demonstrate artistic excellence, create a strong sense of arrival, engage viewers from multiple vantage points, and be designed to withstand Florida's coastal climate.

Project Details

- Location: **Fort Pierce City Hall**, 100 N. U.S. Highway 1, Fort Pierce, FL 34950
- Project Budget: Up to $50,000
- Artwork Type: Permanent Outdoor Sculpture
- Submission Period: July 16, 2026 – August 16, 2026

Professional artists and artist teams with experience in designing and installing large-scale, permanent public art are encouraged to apply.

Submission Requirements

Applications must be submitted through the CaFÉ (Call for Entry) online system and include:

- Letter of Interest
- Artist Resume
- Portfolio of Previous Work
- Preliminary Concept Statement
- Proposed Project Timeline
- Professional References
- Artist Website and/or Social Media Links
- Maintenance and Protection Plan
- Comprehensive Project Budget

Selection Criteria

- Submissions will be evaluated based on:
- Artistic Excellence and Originality
- Technical Feasibility
- Durability and Public Safety
- Long-term Maintenance Considerations
- Reflection of Fort Pierce's Community Identity
- Ability to Complete the Project within the Established Budget and Timeline

Proposals must be submitted through the CaFÉ online application portal: https://opportunities.wearecreativewest.org/opportunity/17647/CAFE.

For more information, contact: Audria V. Moore, Special Projects Coordinator, 772-467-3184, amoore@cityoffortpierce.com.

MAIN STREET FORT PIERCE

PHOTOS BY LEAH JOHNSON











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Mayor's Message Fort Pierce Centennials in 2026

by Linda Hudson, Mayor, City of Fort Pierce



What's it like to be 100 years old? Ask these Fort Pierce organizations and businesses.

Fort Pierce Sunrise Kiwanis celebrates 100 years fostering volunteerism and civic engagement, bringing together individuals, businesses, and community partners to make a lasting impact through programs, events and initiatives. One recent outstanding example is the community-built *Kids Park at Jaycee Park*, spearheaded by this century old club.

Fort Pierce Elk's Lodge 1520 celebrates a century of service, charity, patriotism, and brotherly love. Organized in 1926, this lodge met first in the old Masonic Temple on Avenue A and later at the then newly built **Arcade Building**. In 1930, they would have a lodge of their own on South 5th Street, which still stands today, although enlarged and renovated over the years.

St. Anastasia Catholic School opened 100 years ago on Orange Avenue with 52 students and three Dominican Sisters from Michigan. In 1960, ***St. Anastasia*** elementary expanded and moved to its current location on 33rd Street, while the high school remained at 10th and Orange.

Sweet's Jewelers, located at 200 Ave. A, was founded by Adolph and Lillian Sweet, immigrants from Russian Poland. Over the years, **Sweet's** has earned a reputation for thoughtful service and reliable workmanship.



The **Arcade Building** was built in 1926 at the corner of U.S. Highway 1 and Orange Avenue. Ranchland, selling western wear, was an anchor tenant. Canaday's Drug Store was a soda shop as well as a pharmacy. Today, businesses like the **Pot Belli Deli**, **Mel Liebman's Clock Shop**, **Island Girl Pilates**, **House of Orchids**, **Joanne's Nutrition World and Wellness Center**, and many others, are located there.

In 2026, Fort Pierce celebrates its 125th anniversary. We are proud of our city's long-standing businesses like **East Coast Lumber and Supply**, serving Fort Pierce since 1902, and buildings, like the **1909 Boston House**, now a fine dining establishment, with a beautiful view overlooking the *Indian River Lagoon*.

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City of Fort Pierce *Gold Hammer Award* Nominations Are Now Open



The *City of Fort Pierce* is excited to announce that nominations are now being accepted for the prestigious ***Gold Hammer Awards***. Mayor Linda Hudson invites residents and business owners to participate by recognizing those in the community who have made significant improvements to their properties through new construction or rehabilitation efforts.

The ***Gold Hammer Awards*** celebrate the dedication and commitment of individuals who have enhanced the beauty and value of their homes or businesses, contributing to the overall vibrancy of the Fort Pierce community.

Winners of the ***Gold Hammer Awards*** will be announced during the upcoming ***Coffee with the Mayor*** event, scheduled for Friday, September 18, 2026, at 8:00 a.m. at the **Fort Pierce Yacht Club** located at 700 N. Indian River Dr. in Fort Pierce. Nominations are open until Tuesday, September 1, 2026. Submissions can be made easily through the online nomination form at *Gold Hammer Award Application*.

For more information regarding the ***Gold Hammer Awards*** or the nomination process, please visit Gold Hammer & Neighborhood Gem | Fort Pierce, FL – Official website or contact the City Clerk's Office at 772.467.3065.

City of Fort Pierce to Launch Home Purchase Assistance and Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Programs

The *City of Fort Pierce Grants Administration Division* announces that applications for the *Home Purchase Assistance Program* and the *Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program* will open on Thursday, October 1, 2026, at 8:00 a.m. Applications will be accepted until all available funding has been expended.

For Fiscal Year 2026–2027, the City has allocated $322,514 in *State Housing Initiatives Partnership* (SHIP) funding to assist income-eligible residents with purchasing a home or rehabilitating owner-occupied homes located within the Fort Pierce city limits.

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Applications will be processed on a first submitted, first qualified, first served basis, subject to funding availability. Program guidelines, eligibility requirements, and a list of required application documents are available on the City's Grants Administration webpage at https://shorturl.at/ETF3Q.

Mandatory Orientation Requirement

All applicants are required to attend one mandatory orientation session before submitting an application.

Home Purchase Assistance Program Orientation: https://shorturl.at/K2Mtr.

- September 3, 2026 | • September 17, 2026

Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program Orientation: https://shorturl.at/lzjpt.

- September 8, 2026 | • September 22, 2026

Registration is required to attend an orientation. Please Note: applications will not be reviewed without proof of attendance at one of the required orientation sessions.

For additional information about the *Home Purchase Assistance Program* or the *Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program*, please contact the City of Fort Pierce Grants Administration Division at (772) 467-3161 or GrantsAdministration@cityoffortpierce.com.

Volunteers Remove Abandoned Boat During Indian River Lagoon Cleanup

by Gemma Zigman

Each summer, volunteers at the **Manatee Center** play an important role in advancing our mission to gather, learn, commune, and conserve the *Indian River Lagoon*. Through educational programs, daily operations at our volunteer-run center, and environmental stewardship projects, these volunteers help connect residents and visitors with one of the Treasure Coast's most important natural resources.



One of the highlights of this summer's volunteer season was *Community Action Day*. In conjunction with the quarterly *Keep Fort Pierce Beautiful* clean up, volunteers focused their efforts along the River Walk and boat launch areas, removing litter from the shoreline, mangroves, and rocky edges of the *Indian River Lagoon*.

The morning was hands-on work — volunteers worked in small groups, moving through mangroves and along the rocks to gather a wide range of marine debris. Volunteer Mia G.-C. said, "The rocks had so much trash in them, it was like they were being used as trash cans."

Among the most notable finds was an abandoned dinghy shored up just below the River Walk. The boat had been spotted weeks earlier and had clearly remained in place since then, evidenced by the buildup of seagrass and a weathered, hole-ridden fiberglass hull. It took about ten volunteers working together to free the 350-pound vessel from the shoreline and move it for disposal. Mia also said, "It felt good helping the community and removing something that big. It's not every day you help get an abandoned boat off the shoreline."

Not all of the debris collected was so large. Using scissors and careful hands, volunteers cut away fishing line that had been tangled around vegetation along the shoreline.

Fishing line and other plastic debris pose a serious risk to wildlife in the lagoon. Manatees in particular are known to ingest plastic and fishing line, and necropsy findings have documented stomach contents that include fishing line and plastic bags. Once ingested or entangled, these materials can cause internal injury, blockages, or infection. Even small amounts of discarded line can persist in the environment for years, making removal an important part of protecting lagoon habitat.

The work done during this event reflects the broader role of volunteers at the **Manatee Center**. Their efforts support daily operations, educational programming, and hands-on conservation work across the facility and shoreline.

We extend our sincere thanks to this year's summer volunteer cohort for their time and commitment, as well as our dedicated local docents who serve year-round. They have shown that every task, large or small, contributes to the health of the *Indian River Lagoon*.

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Explore Utility Careers at FPUA's 3rd Annual Youth Career Event

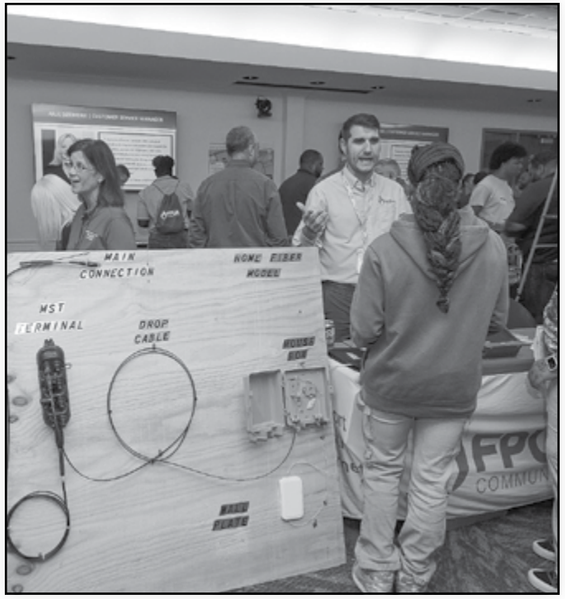
Students, parents, and young adults interested in exploring local, rewarding career opportunities are invited to Fort Pierce Utilities Authority's 3rd Annual Youth Career Event on Wednesday, September 2, 2026, from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. at FPUA's Mainland Water Reclamation & Reuse Facility, located at 4515 Energy Lane, Fort Pierce. The event is free to attend and is hosted by FPUA's citizen-led Utility Advisory Committee.

The event highlights the wide variety of careers that keep essential utility services running every day. Guests will have the opportunity to meet FPUA employees, participate in hands-on activities, visit interactive booths, and hear directly from utility professionals about their career paths. Participants will learn how different careers are reached through college degrees, technical education, internships, apprenticeships, certifications, and/or on-the-job training, providing valuable insight into the many pathways available within the utility industry.

This year's event will be held at FPUA's new Mainland Water Reclamation & Reuse Facility, one of the region's most advanced pieces of public infrastructure. Officially dedicated in January 2026, the state-of-the-art facility represents a major investment in environmental stewardship, resiliency, and the future of utility service in Fort Pierce. Hosting the career event at the facility gives attendees the unique opportunity to experience a modern utility workplace while learning about careers in water reclamation, electric, natural gas, engineering, environmental science, information technology, customer service, skilled trades, and many other professions that support a municipal utility.

The citizen-led Utility Advisory Committee hosts the Youth Career Event each year as part of its ongoing effort to help local students discover meaningful career opportunities close to home, at FPUA. The committee's annual work plan specifically identifies increasing awareness of utility careers as one of its community outreach priorities.

Whether you're beginning to think about your future career, considering technical training, or simply curious about how essential utility services operate, FPUA's Youth Career Event offers an engaging opportunity to explore careers that make a lasting impact on the community.



EVENT DETAILS

What: 3rd Annual FPUA Youth Career Event
When: Wednesday, September 2, 2026
Time: 4:00–6:00 p.m.
Where: Mainland Water Reclamation & Reuse Facility, 4515 Energy Lane, Fort Pierce
Admission: Free and open to students, families, and young adults interested in utility careers.



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PHOTOS BY MARK KRANCER

Fresh and exciting projects continue to make the Downtown area even more inviting and attractive to visitors. See listings for available **office**, **retail**, and **restaurant** space below.

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124 2nd St., 101 N US Hwy 1, 415 Avenue A **Brian Stone** | 772-370-4777
111 Orange Avenue | **Ryan Andrew** | 772-932-1444
208 Avenue A | **K & K II** | 772-971-1934
131 N. 2nd St. | **Christine Coke** | 772-252-4501
210 N. 2nd St. | **Ledarius Mack** | 786-529-8881
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Coral Gables, FL 33134 | P: 305-442-1471

Fort Pierce Yacht Club Celebrates America's 250th Anniversary

by Michele March, Fort Pierce Yacht Club











The ***Fort Pierce Yacht Club*** celebrated *Independence Day* in spectacular fashion as it hosted the *16th Annual Patriotic Boat Parade & Blessing of the Fleet*, an Official America250 event commemorating the nation's 250th Anniversary.

The event brought together boaters from across the Treasure Coast for a festive procession through the Fort Pierce Inlet. Vessels of all sizes were decked out in patriotic red, white, and blue decorations, creating a memorable display of American pride along the waterfront. Even Santa Claus made a surprise appearance aboard The Red Baron, adding a fun "Christmas in July" twist to the celebration.

This year's parade featured 56 decorated boats, personal watercraft, and other vessels, joined by 8 eFoil/Foil Assist riders who thrilled spectators as they led the parade. In all, 64 participants took part in the patriotic procession.

The parade began in the *Turning Basin* near **Derecktor Shipyards** before traveling east toward *Jetty Park*. On the return trip, participants received a special *Blessing of the Fleet* from Father Robert Goodrich of **Holy Family** in Port St. Lucie, who offered prayers for safe seas and God's blessing over the boating community from the vessel *Liquid Courage*.

The ***Fort Pierce Yacht Club*** extends its sincere appreciation to everyone who helped make the event a success, including the participating captains and crews, **Fin&Foil** for organizing the eFoil/Foil Assist riders, Father Robert Goodrich for the meaningful blessing, Jacqueline William-Donaldson for her beautiful rendition of the National Anthem, Ryan March of **Livin' Salty** for capturing the event through photography, and the many public safety agencies and volunteers who ensured a safe and enjoyable celebration. Special thanks go to the *St. Lucie County Sheriff's Office*, *Florida Fish & Wildlife*, *City of Fort Pierce Code Enforcement*, **TowBoatUS**, and the *U.S. Coast Guard* for their support.

The ***Fort Pierce Yacht Club*** thanks everyone who participated, volunteered, and cheered from shore for making this year's parade a memorable tribute to America's birthday and looks forward to welcoming the boating community back next year.

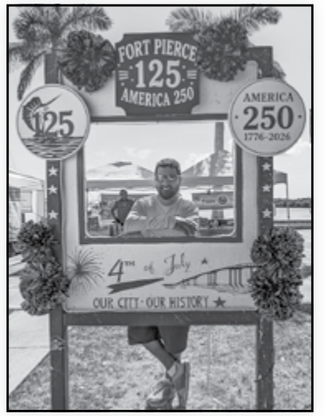
Photography by Ryan March/Livin' Salty for the Fort Pierce Yacht Club





Fuel for Your Summer Fun at the Downtown Fort Pierce Farmers Market

Whew! This is the time of year us locals start feeling a tad jealous of those snowbirds who escaped the heat months ago. We're here just taking advantage of all the ocean breezes, shady spots and watersports we can find. While we do that, we want some refreshing and healthy items to consume too. For the kind of things that help fuel our fun-packed, over-heated Florida summers, your **Downtown Fort Pierce Farmers Market** has all you need.



Since we all know this is the time of year when you avoid being outdoors at midday, our Market has adjusted its hours accordingly. Although we still get started at 8 a.m. on the dot, our vendors are closing up shop at noon instead of 1 p.m. until the slightly cooler temperatures of Florida fall return. They didn't want to be out in the hot sun any more than you do, so, we think it's working out just fine. You may not have even noticed that we started doing this in May.



As for refreshing summer foods, the **Downtown Fort Pierce Farmers Market** has so much to offer during and after your shopping adventure. To keep you hydrated while you browse, you can pick up a cold pressed juice from **Holly's Melon Shoppe**, fresh squeezed lemonjuice from the **Lemonade Shake-Ups**, or fresh fruit smoothies from **Seaside Smoothies**. **Fresh Fusion Juice Bar** has a combination of these products along with some of the most inviting acai bowls you've ever seen. Several of our vendors also offer bottled water for a buck or two at their booths too. In addition, many of our vendors set out a bowl of water for the four-legged visitors shopping with their people.

The tasty treats that satisfy during these dog days of summer abound at the Market as well. Those amazing little **Cider Doughnuts** hit just right for a light breakfast snack. **Palm City Crêpes** serves up fancy fruit-filled crêpes that are light and delicious. However hot it is though, the scent of those sauteed onions and peppers from **Chef Kevin's Yum Yums** will lure you in.

This time of year, the market has all the good foods you'll enjoy while not overheating the kitchen at meal time. Pick up all the items you need for a fun charcuterie tray to pick at — gourmet cheeses from **The Cheese Shoppe**, quality oils and vinegars from **Olive Branch Markets**, fancy breads to dip from **Importico's Bakery**, fresh seafood from **Local Seas East Fisheries**, hummus from **Mediterranean Delight**, and juicy watermelon from **The Friend's Produce**. As always, the options are just too numerous to list — you just must come see for yourself.

The **Downtown Fort Pierce Farmers Market** has everything you need to beat the Florida heat so you can stay refreshed and refilled during these hot summer months. Browse all the goodness under the shade of the palms throughout the whole year too because after all, us locals can tell you, *it's a Saturday morning tradition.*

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PHOTOS BY MARYANN KETCHAM




















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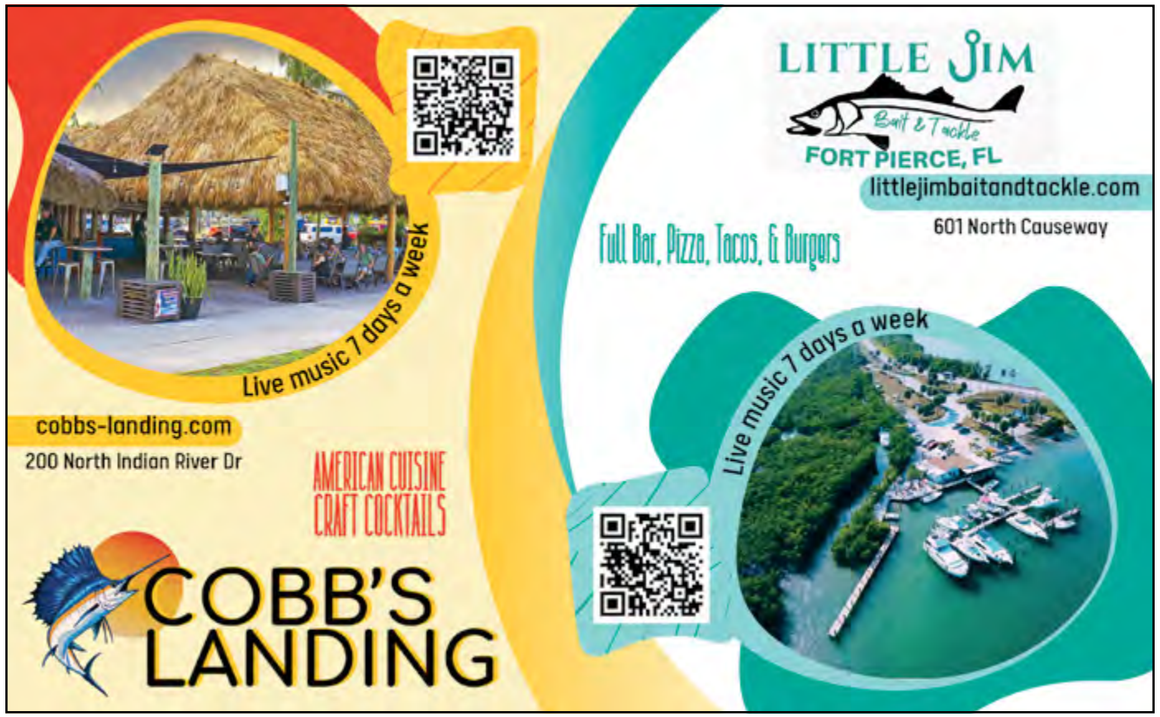
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URBAN GARDEN INSIGHTS

Help Put St. Lucie County on the Pollinator Map

by Sara MacDonald, UF/IFAS Extension St. Lucie County

Have you ever wondered how many bees, butterflies, flies, and other pollinators visit the flowers in your yard? This August, you have an opportunity to help answer that question while contributing to an important regional community science project.

The *Great Southeast Pollinator Census* returns on August 21–22, 2026, inviting people of all ages to spend just 15 minutes observing pollinators in their own gardens, neighborhoods, parks, schools, or community spaces. Whether you're an experienced gardener or simply curious about the insects visiting your flowers, everyone is encouraged to participate.

The *Great Southeast Pollinator Census* began in Georgia as a citizen science initiative to collect valuable information about pollinator activity across the Southeast. Florida joined the effort in 2024, and participation continues to grow each year as thousands of volunteers contribute observations that help researchers, educators, and conservation professionals better understand pollinator populations.

Pollinators are essential to both agriculture and natural ecosystems. More than one-third of the food we eat depends on animal pollination, and pollinators play a critical role in the reproduction of many flowering plants. Their work supports wildlife, strengthens biodiversity, and helps maintain healthy landscapes. Yet many pollinator species face challenges from habitat loss, pests, diseases, and changing environmental conditions. Community science projects like the *Great Southeast Pollinator Census* provide valuable information while increasing public awareness of the importance of protecting these beneficial insects.

Participating is simple. Choose a single flowering plant, observe it for 15 minutes, and record every insect that lands on the blooms. Participants categorize visitors into easy-to-recognize groups such as honey bees, bumble bees, carpenter bees, small bees, butterflies and moths, wasps, flies, and other insects. You do not need to identify insects to species, making the census accessible for beginners and families alike.

To help residents prepare, ***UF/IFAS Extension St. Lucie County*** will host a free educational webinar on August 20, 2026. During the webinar, participants will learn how to identify common pollinators, complete the census, and submit their observations. The training is suitable for gardeners, teachers, Master Gardener Volunteers, youth groups, and anyone interested in learning more about Florida's pollinators.

Last year, our focus in St. Lucie County was building a foundation of trained volunteers to support the census. This year, we hope to greatly expand participation throughout the county. Every observation, whether from a backyard flower bed, school garden, community garden, or local park, helps create a more complete picture of pollinator activity in our region.

You can complete one or multiple 15-minute counts during the two census days, making it an easy activity to enjoy with family, friends, or neighbors. It's also an excellent opportunity for schools, community organizations, and businesses to participate together while learning about the insects that help sustain our environment. This August, we encourage everyone in St. Lucie County to join us in becoming community scientists. Together, we can help protect pollinators!!!

For more information, pollinator identification guides, and census materials, visit the *Great Southeast Pollinator Census* website at gsepc.org. Registration information for the August 20, 2026, webinar will be available through the ***UF/IFAS Extension St. Lucie County*** on Eventbrite. Please check our Facebook page or just give us a call (772) 462-1660!!

For more resources and guidance, contact the Master Gardener Volunteer Help Desk at the Morningside Library, 2410 SE Morningside Blvd., Port St. Lucie. Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 1:00–3:00 p.m. Phone: 772-337-5654. Email: slmg@ifas.ufl.edu.

Notes from the Garden: In Stewardship to the Community

by Martha Cross





First Church Community Garden experienced a summer of record heat — and record innovation. While the raised planting beds are mostly under wraps, awaiting cooler temps, the Garden is thriving in other areas. The aquaponic beds remain cool enough to let basil and lettuces thrive. Varieties of peppers from mild to hot, and hotter, occupy their perfect spot behind the big hoop house. Sweet potato summer harvest was successful, and new starts have been planted for next harvest in late fall.

The *Community Garden's* mission is to provide fresh food to our neighbors. This focus allows **First Church** to operate the Garden with a primary goal of service. The Garden team is "all business" when it comes to operations, efficiency, quality product, and stewardship of resources. But the *Community Garden* is not a commercial garden enterprise. It is a stewardship enterprise. The joy comes from sharing first class veggies with those neighbors who may not have access or resources. The Garden welcomes visitors and can schedule a tour for interested community partners. Come be inspired!

Kids from **First Church** *Summer Camps* were inspired as they visited the Garden as part of science-based activities. Next Generations Director, Zaneta Cooper, guided dozens of campers through amazing sessions in art, music, story and science. Visiting the nearby Garden was a great way for campers to see people helping people. So wonderful to make a connection to "where our food comes from."

As this school year begins, **First Church** will again have a team working with its partner school, *Frances K Sweet Elementary*, in the school garden and in the classrooms. *Sweet Boutique, Reading Buddies* and *Field Trip Partners,* are a few of the ways **First Church** and FKS work together for kids.

The *Community Garden* is quickly becoming a cycle of nature and habitat site. It includes a garden of pollinator plants and a recycling compost station. This summer a bat house and two Mason Bee homes were added. Bats help reduce the mosquito population, and Mason Bees are great pollinators that don't have a stinger. Great additions to a wonderful space! To these new cohabitors we say: "Welcome to your new homes, friends!"

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Bountiful Waters

by Captain Bo Samuel, Pullin Drag Charters

We know that August is typically a very busy month on our beautiful Treasure Coast waters and this year should be no exception. While local fishing is still hot, the lobster divers are coming to town! Spiny lobster season opens on August 6th so local divers and many from around the state will be trying their best to catch some tasty Florida "bugs." I always say if your sport is fishing but you love eating lobster, just trade some scales for tails and enjoy a special feast from our bountiful waters.

We are still finding plenty of threadfins and pilchards in the area and that's keeping the offshore fishing on fire. The kingfish bite has been fairly consistent using a slow troll at about 50-90 feet with frequent sailfish hookups, too. Sailfish are a highly prized game fish. They are considered to be the fastest swimmers in the sea and known for acrobatic jumps and challenging battles, so hooking one of these salty trophies will make your day. Be sure to keep them in the water and revive after a long fight as part of best survival practices. Some great mahi have been caught as well including some personal bests so for those mahi maniacs, now's the time to get out and catch yours.

Mangrove and muttons are still chewing on either shrimp and live or cut bait and we've landed some impressive red groupers and gag groupers lately. Be aware when bottom fishing that sharks like snapper and grouper, too, especially when you're doing all the work! I tell my anglers to be quick on the reel and quick to pull on deck. Sorry to say, there is still no word on reinstating the red snapper season that was closed before it even began and the reds are definitely out there.

The *Fishy Photo of the Month* highlights Eric Paul of **Pelican Seafood Company** with a very pretty gag grouper on a recent trip.

Be safe on the water with an eye out for divers wrangling lobsters by watching for dive flags and buoys. Your support of



captainbofishing@gmail.com | 772-971-6661

our local bait and tackle shops like **DeBrooks Fishing Corner** and my homebase, the historic **Little Jim Bait & Tackle**, is greatly appreciated. Tell them Captain Bo sent ya! There's still some time to take a kid fishing before school starts back so give me a shout and we'll make a fishy summertime memory. If the boat's not at the dock, you know where I'll be … on the water *Pullin Drag!*

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Main Street Fort Pierce wants to invite you to become a part of the renaissance of our Historic Downtown area. Over the past twenty-six years, we have worked to repair streets and sidewalks, upgrade storefronts, renovated the **Sunrise Theatre**, **Old City Hall** and the **Platts Backus House**, sponsor charrettes to design a downtown "Master Plan," built the **Manatee Observation and Education Center** and so much more! Annually, ***Main Street Fort Pierce*** sponsors over 30 events — *most which are free of charge.*
Yet there is still so much more to be done! We need you to be involved in our continued planning for the area. Become a member and support ***Main Street Fort Pierce*** financially. We rely on the participation and the voluntary annual dues from our members to accomplish our goals and complete our projects.
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This event is hosted by FPUA's citizen-led Utility Advisory Committee.

Youth Career Event

Hands-On Activities • Meet & Greet Utility Professionals • Interactive Booths

Join us for the 3rd Annual Youth Career Event to engage with FPUA employees and community partners while exploring career paths in the utility industry. Hear directly from industry professionals about their career journeys and gain insight into the education, internship, or on-the-job training that led them to their current roles.









You're Invited

Wednesday, September 2, 2026

4:00-6:00 PM

4515 Energy Lane
Fort Pierce, FL 34981

FPUA's mission is to provide our customers with economical, reliable, and friendly service in a continuous effort to enhance the quality of life in our community.

MAIN STREET FORT PIERCE

Focus

Volume 22, No. 2 September, 2026

The Official Monthly Newspaper of Main Street Fort Pierce



See p8

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Coffee
WITH THE MAYOR



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Mayor Linda Hudson invites you to join her for Community News, Special Announcements, Complimentary Steamworks Coffeebar coffee, Al's Family Farms, Breakfast Treats, and more!

Friday, September 18th, at 8:00 a.m.
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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Let Me Introduce Myself…

by Rich Ziarkowski



My name is Rich "Z" Ziarkowski, and I am truly honored and excited to have been elected President of ***Main Street Fort Pierce***. It is a privilege to have the opportunity to serve an organization that is so passionate about preserving, promoting, and enhancing our beautiful downtown. Having called St. Lucie County home for many years, I couldn't be more excited to continue serving this amazing community in a new and meaningful way.

Public service has been the foundation of my entire adult life. I proudly served in the United States Army during Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm before beginning a 31-year career with the *St. Lucie County Sheriff's Office* and I retired as a Captain in 2025. Throughout my military and law enforcement careers, I learned that the greatest accomplishments come from people working together with a shared purpose. Leadership, teamwork, integrity, and building lasting relationships are values I will continue to bring to ***Main Street Fort Pierce***.

Downtown Fort Pierce is more than a destination—it is the heart and soul of our community. It is where our history comes alive, local businesses thrive, neighbors become friends, and unforgettable memories are made. ***Main Street Fort Pierce*** plays an essential role in protecting our rich heritage while embracing new opportunities that will help our downtown continue to grow and flourish.

As President, I am excited to work alongside our outstanding board members, dedicated volunteers, business owners, community partners, city leaders, and residents. Together, we can build on the incredible momentum already underway, welcome fresh ideas, support our local businesses, and create events and experiences that bring people together and showcase everything that makes Fort Pierce special.

I am incredibly grateful for the trust you have placed in me. I look forward to meeting more of our members, hearing your ideas, and working side-by-side with all of you to make an already great downtown even better. The future of ***Main Street Fort Pierce*** is bright, and I can't wait to see what we accomplish together.

> *"Main Street Fort Pierce plays an essential role in protecting our rich heritage while embracing new opportunities that will help our downtown continue to grow and flourish."*

MAIN STREET FORT PIERCE
MAIN STREET FOCUS FORT PIERCE

Volume 22, No. 2 September, 2026

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Calendar

Dine, Shop and Enjoy Beautiful, Historic, Downtown Fort Pierce!

Get the DISTRX app for all the latest downtown specials and events!

MONTHLY EVENTS

September 4 Friday: *FRIDAY FEST AT MARINA SQUARE* — 5:30 to 8:30 p.m.; **Music by Purrbox**; Please remove all vehicles from the permitted Friday Fest road closure area (Marina Way & Melody Lane) by 2:00 p.m.; *Facebook*–Main Street Fort Pierce, 466-3880; mainstreetfortpierce.org.

September 11, Friday: *CITY OF FORT PIERCE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF SEPTEMBER 11TH REMEMBRANCE CEREMONY AND MEMORIAL SERVICE* — 9:45 to 11 a.m.; Veteran's Memorial Park; 772-742-9835.

September 18, Friday: *COFFEE WITH THE MAYOR* — 8:00 a.m. at the **Fort Pierce Yacht Club,** 700 N. Indian River Dr.; *Sponsor* – **Visit St. Lucie**; Facebook–Main Street Fort Pierce, 466-3880; mainstreetfortpierce.org.

September 18, Friday: *ARTWALK* — 5 to 8:00 p.m.; Various studios and shops open throughout the downtown area; artstlucie.org.

SAVE THE DATE — October 3, Saturday: *OKTOBERFEST IN DOWNTOWN FORT PIERCE* — 12 to 10:00 p.m.; see page 11 for details.

WEEKLY EVENTS

The Peacock House Art Foundation: *EVENTS & CLASSES* — visit www.thepeacockhouseartfoundation.com for a monthly schedule and for class registrations.

Wednesdays: *Wednesday's Farmers Market* — rain or shine 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., Downtown Marina Square; 772-618-3778.

Saturdays: *The Jazz Market* — 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.; north side of the Downtown Fort Pierce Library; Jazz & Blues Society, 460-5299, jazzsociety.org.

Saturdays: *Ft. Pierce Farmer's Market* — 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.; Marina Square on Melody Lane; Market Manager, 940-1145.

LIVE MUSIC DOWNTOWN

Wine Down Wednesday
Fort Social in the Galleria on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of each month, 6 to 8 p.m.

TheFortSteakhouse.com

Sailfish Brewing Company
facebook/Sailfish Brewing Company

Pierced Cider
Facebook @piercedcider

Cobbs Landing
cobbs-landing.com

Bottom's Up Public House
facebook.com/bottomsuppublichouse

SUNRISE THEATRE & SUNRISE BLACK BOX

772-461-4775 • sunrisetheatre.com

Tuesdays: *Jazz Jam at the Sunrise Black Box Theatre* — 7 to 10 p.m.; 460-5299; jazzsociety.org.

MANATEE CENTER

429-6266 • ManateeEducationCenter.org

DOWNTOWN FORT PIERCE LIBRARY

462-2787 • www.st-lucie.lib.fl.us/

SUNDAY DOWNTOWN CHURCH SERVICES

Common Ground Vineyard Church; 460-5414, commongroundvineyard.com.

First Church; 464-0440, firstchurchfp.org.

Fort Pierce Haitian United Methodist Church; 940-6728, haitianmethodist.org.

Notre-Dame Mission Catholic Church; 466-9617, notredamecc.com.

St. Andrews Episcopal Church *(founded 1893)*; 461-5009 mystandrews.org.

COMMUNITY INFORMATION

A.E. Backus Museum
772-465-0630 • backusmuseum.com

Bud Adams Gallery of Historical Photographs
772-462-1795 • 2nd Floor of P.P. Cobb Building

Fort Pierce Police Athletic League
772-370-6162 • fortpiercepal.com
Volunteers needed: 772-466-0606

Fort Pierce Jazz & Blues Society
772-460-5299 • jazzsociety.org

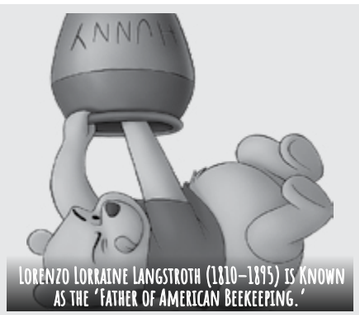
Fort Pierce RiverWalk Center
600 North Indian River Drive
772-489-6473 • cityoffortpierce.com

Heathcote Botanical Gardens
772-464-4672 • heathcotebotanicalgardens.org

National Navy UDT-SEAL Museum
772-595-5845 • navysealmuseum.org

St. Lucie County Marine Center
772-462-3474 • stlucieco.gov/marine_center

St. Lucie County Regional History Center
772-462-1795 • stlucieco.gov/history



September: **National Honey Month**
September 2: Labor Day
September 4: Doodle Day
September 5: International Bacon Day
September 5: Cheese Pizza Day
September 7: Beer Lovers Day
September 9: National When Pigs Fly Day
➔ **September 11: Patriot Day**
September 12: Chocolate Milkshake Day
September 13: Grandparents Day
September 14: Coloring Day
September 16: Play-Doh Day
September 17: Constitution Day
September 18: Cheeseburger Day
September 18: U.S. Air Force Day
September 19: Internat'l Coastal Cleanup Day
September 22: Ice Cream Cone Day
September 25: Native American Day
September 26: Key Lime Pie Day
September 28: Ask a Stupid Question Day
September 29: Police Remembrance Day

Mayor's Message Main Street Enhances City Pride

by Linda Hudson, Mayor, City of Fort Pierce



What would happen if ***Main Street Fort Pierce*** (**MSFP**) did not have our support?

Main Street Fort Pierce depends on volunteer and financial support from its members, events and the *City of Fort Pierce*.

What do we get in return? ***Coffee With The Mayor*** returns September 18, 2026, and is hosted monthly by **MSFP** through May. Held at 8 a.m. at the **Fort Pierce Yacht Club**, this free, hour-long program allows community organizations and businesses to promote their events and milestones.

Friday Fest, the Treasure Coast region's longest running street party, is hosted monthly by **MSFP** on the first Friday of each month at the waterfront.

Ghosts of Fort Pierce Past, walking tours held in October, tells the history of Fort Pierce through pioneer characters, portrayed by an army of **MSFP** volunteers.

Sights and Sounds on Second Street kicks off the Christmas season on December 6th. This parade is a year long in the making and is cosponsored by the *Fort Pierce Sunrise Kiwanis* and **MSFP**.

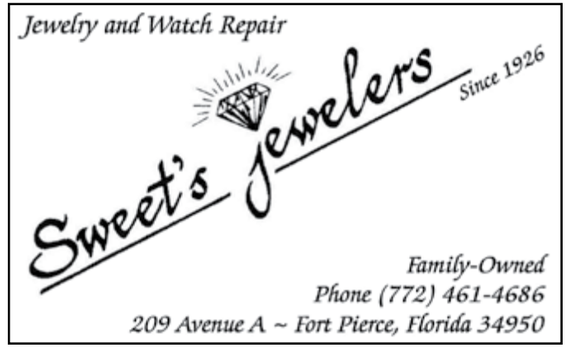
MSFP produces fireworks and festivals for New Year's Eve and July 4th.

Main Street Fort Pierce was founded in 1988 and has been working to revitalize and enhance the downtown Fort Pierce district and waterfront area ever since. ***Main Street Fort Pierce, Inc***. brings development, activities, recognition and an improved economy to the historic downtown area through a variety of methods. The organization coordinates downtown improvements, creates a positive image to attract customers and investors, rekindles community pride, enhances the visual quality of the downtown environment, and attracts strategic additions to the economic mix.



Amendment 3 concerning property tax on the November 3 ballot, if approved by 60% of the voters, will prevent the ability of our city to financially support this and similar value-added organizations, as well as severely impact vital city services. Please understand the implications of your vote on this important amendment before voting. Visit ***Main Street Fort Pierce*** | Fort Pierce, Florida for more information.













If you are looking to open or expand your business,

Downtown Fort Pierce is the place to be!







PHOTOS BY MARK KRANCER

Fresh and exciting projects continue to make the Downtown area even more inviting and attractive to visitors. See listings for available **office**, **retail**, and **restaurant** space below.

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124 2nd St., 101 N US Hwy 1, 415 Avenue A	**Brian Stone**	772-370-4777
111 Orange Avenue	**Ryan Andrew**	772-932-1444
208 Avenue A	**K & K II**	772-971-1934
131 N. 2nd St.	**Christine Coke**	772-252-4501
210 N. 2nd St.	**Ledarius Mack**	786-529-8881
200 N Hwy 1, 300 S 6th St.	**Pierce Harbor Realty**	772-801-0750

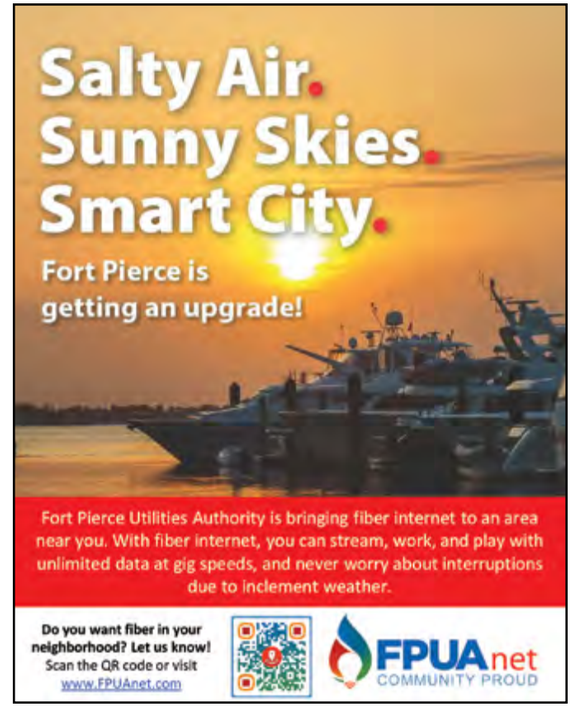
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The *23rd Annual Ghosts of Fort Pierce Past Historic Walking Tours* Tell the Stories of Fort Pierce Throughout Time

Each year, the stories of the past come alive for new generations during the annual ***Ghosts of Fort Pierce's Past Historic Walking Tours***. This is the public's chance to travel through time and step into the stories of the people who walked the shores and sidewalks before us. ***Main Street Fort Pierce*** has organized this event for 23 years and is very thankful for the many organizations and volunteers that make this unique community event possible.

This year, each tour will cover a certain period in Fort Pierce's past. The guided tours will give attendees a glimpse into the lives of those that lived during those time periods. Volunteer guides will lead tour groups along routes containing seven or eight stops. At each tour stop entertaining stories are told by volunteer costumed actors and/or actresses as ghosts of actual people from the past. Here are the 2026 tours and the scheduled stops (stops may be subject to change prior to the event):

WPA, WWII & the Artists that Captured Florida
Saturday, October 17th
Covers 1935 – 1960s

Tours leave every 15 minutes starting at 12:00 p.m. The last tour leaves at 1:45 p.m. Stops include: *The Highwaymen*, The **Arcade Building**/Taylor Soda Shop, WWII in Fort Pierce, Zora Neale Hurston, **Historic Post Office Building**/Postmaster Paine, Mary Ann Carroll, Alto Adams Courthouse & Cattle Families.



Edgartown Frontier Days Tour, Wednesday, October 21
Covers 1870s – 1920

Tours leave every 15 minutes starting at 5:30 p.m. The last tour leaves at 7:15 p.m. Stops include: Dr. & Clara Platts, *Fort Pierce Women's Club*, A.E."Beanie" Backus, Will Tucker, Edgartown Fishermen, Edgartown neighbors, Annie Hogg, Harry Hill, Henry Flagler & Billy Bowlegs.

Cantown Frontier Days Tour, Wednesday, October 21
Covers 1870s – 1920

Tours leave every 15 minutes starting at 5:30 p.m. The last tour leaves at 7:15 p.m. Stops include: **P.P. Cobb**, Steamboat Captain Bravo, Nuns of St. Anastasia, the Ashley Gang, Sheriff Carlton & downtown shootout, Fee Family & Fort Pierce Bank, Charles & Elizabeth McCarty & the murder that shocked Fort Pierce.

FL Land Boom Tour, Thursday, October 22
Covers 1920s – Early 1930s

Tours leave every 15 minutes starting at 5:30 p.m. The last tour leaves at 7:15 p.m. Stops include: Hattie Chamberlin, Binney Family & St. Lucie Bank, **Sunrise Theatre**, William Hatcher, SLC Historic Courthouse, Governor Dan McCarty & Family, **The Boston House**.

The Untamed Coast Tour, Thursday, October 22
Covers 1700s – 1850s

Tours leave every 15 minutes starting at 5:30 p.m. The last tour leaves at 7:15 p.m. Stops include: D.A.R. & Cora Stickney Harper, 1715 Fleet & Spanish Rule, Treasure Coast Pirates, Captain Kirle, Jonathan Dickenson & Ais Indigenous people, James Hutchinson & Hutchinson Island, Polly Parker & the Seminole Indians, Lt. Col. Benjamin Pierce & Fort Pierce.

Tickets are $15 per person and will be available starting in September on www.mainstreetfortpierce.org. To inquire about signing up to be a volunteer ghost or guide and/or to purchase tour stop sponsorship signs ($100 each), please send an email request to joanne@mainstreetfortpierce.org.

The 2026 Ghost Walk is dedicated to the **Memory of Andy Brady**, a cherished volunteer and longtime member of the community. Andy also shared his passion for history and service through his work at the Navy SEAL Museum in Fort Pierce. His kindness, dedication, and love for our community will not be forgotten.
We are honored to celebrate his memory during this year's Ghost Walk.



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FPUA's Inaugural Organization-Wide Internship Program Concludes

Fort Pierce Utilities Authority's *2026 Summer Internship Program* concluded Friday, August 14, marking the completion of **FPUA's** first organization-wide internship cohort. Since the program began May 26, five interns have worked alongside **FPUA** employees, contributed to real projects and gained a firsthand look at the wide range of careers that support a community-owned utility.

This year's interns were Jude Charles and Joseph Feliciano, *Electric & Gas Engineering* interns; Jamari Tullis, *Manatee Center Digital Media Generalist* intern; Joshua Cimino, *Public Affairs and Sustainability Communications & Digital Storytelling* intern; and Eden Glover, *Accounting and Finance* intern.

Throughout the summer, the interns took on assignments tied directly to **FPUA's** work in the community. Joseph and Jude helped design and survey new locations for powerlines as part of efforts to create additional system redundancy and strengthen the electric grid. Their work gave them practical experience with the planning and engineering that support reliable electric service.

Eden worked with **FPUA's** Finance team as it developed the annual budget for the 2026–2027 fiscal year. In the process, she learned about the coordination required to balance priorities across **FPUA's** five utility services and the departments that support them.

Jamari and Joshua supported public communications by creating social media content, documenting events and designing graphics for both internal and external audiences. Their work included communications for **FPUA** and the **Manatee Center**, giving them experience in visual storytelling, community outreach and the day-to-day communications needs of a public utility.

The internship experience extended beyond each intern's departmental responsibilities. The cohort began with an orientation covering **FPUA's** mission, history, organizational structure and five utility services. The interns also completed new-hire orientation, safety and *Sunshine Law* training; participated in **FPUA's** quarterly community cleanup; attended a *St. Lucie Mets* game; and completed a workshop on delivering professional presentations.

They also spent time learning about utility operations outside their assigned departments. During a visit with **FPUA's** *Electric Transmission & Distribution* team, the interns participated in a bucket truck safety demonstration and learned directly from employees about the training, skill and attention to safety required to maintain the electric system.



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FPUA developed the organization-wide program to give interns a cohesive professional experience while building connections with potential future utility employees. Through hands-on training, mentorship, real-world projects and shared activities, the program introduces participants to utility careers while helping them develop practical skills, industry knowledge and professional confidence.

The structure also benefits **FPUA**. Interns bring new perspectives and enthusiasm to their departments while learning from experienced employees whose knowledge is essential to the continued success of the utility. By creating opportunities for emerging professionals to explore careers in engineering, finance, communications and other fields, **FPUA** is helping develop a future talent pipeline for the utility industry and the Fort Pierce community.

The interns gathered Thursday, August 13, for a program wrap-up featuring presentations about their departments, projects and accomplishments, followed by lunch. The internship



program officially concluded the following day, Friday, August 14.

As **FPUA's** inaugural organization-wide internship class completes its summer experience, the program reflects the utility's commitment to investing in future leaders and introducing a new generation to the meaningful work of serving the community.

Oktoberfest Returns to Downtown Fort Pierce for a Full Day of Beer, Food, Music and Fall Fun

Break out the lederhosen and get ready to raise a stein! **Sailfish Brewing Company** and **2nd Street Bistro** are bringing ***Oktoberfest*** back to Downtown Fort Pierce on Saturday, October 3, from 12–10 p.m.

This annual block party brings a little Bavarian spirit to 2nd Street with a full day of cold beer, great food, local vendors, live entertainment and plenty of Oktoberfest fun for the whole family.

Guests can spend the afternoon browsing tons of local vendors, enjoying Oktoberfest-inspired food and beer, and joining in festival games and activities throughout the day. Families are welcome, with plenty happening for kids and adults alike.

As the sun goes down, the celebration keeps going with live music from East Harbor from 6–9 p.m., bringing high-energy music to the heart of Downtown Fort Pierce.

Whether you come for the beer, the brats, the shopping, the music—or just an excuse to celebrate fall Florida-style—***Oktoberfest*** is the place to be.

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FPYC Foundation Makes a Big Summer Splash in Fort Pierce

by Robynn Holland, FPYC Community Liaison

This past spring, the FPYC Foundation, the charitable arm of the Fort Pierce Yacht Club, raised $47,000 through its annual Members Giving Campaign. Thanks to the generosity of FPYC members, local summer programs serving children and youth, as well as programs unique to the Fort Pierce community, received meaningful support. $40,000 was distributed in May and recipients were: **ENDIT!**, **Florida Atlantic University**, **Florida Highwaymen Museum**, ***Fort Pierce Police Department Courageous Kids Program***, ***Fort Pierce Police Department Explorers Program***, **The Manatee Center**, ***Notre Dame Catholic Church Food Kitchen***, ***Project Lift – Fort Pierce***, ***Stella Maris Environmental Research – Wesley Island Eco Camp***, **St. Lucie Boys and Girls Club**, and ***Treasure Coast Youth Sailing Foundation***. Joint award: **Fort Pierce Police Department** – ***Treasure Coast Youth Sailing Foundation*** and ***Courageous Kids Program***. The ***Fort Pierce Yacht Club Trim a Tree*** program will be awarded in December, 2026.







While the ***FPYC Foundation*** may not cover the full cost of every program, it provides essential support by helping community partners create meaningful summer experiences. The programs below are examples of how **FPYC** members, through the Foundation, are making a positive impact in Fort Pierce.

Treasure Coast Youth Sailing Foundation
by Forest Blanton

The ***Treasure Coast Youth Sailing Foundation*** (TCYSF) completed its seven-week summer sailing camp on July 31. Over those seven weeks, the camp hosted about 100 student attendees from across St. Lucie County. Students learned the basics of reading the wind, rigging and adjusting sails, safety and capsize recovery, sailboat racing, teamwork, and leadership. The TCYSF received $11,500 in May from the ***FPYC Foundation***, (Included was $5,000 for the ***FPPD Courageous Kids Program*** and recently received two additional donations from the ***FPYC Foundation***, bringing the total to $12,720.26.

Stella Maris Environmental Research
Summer Program by Ashley Britt Chelberg

The ***Fort Pierce Yacht Club Foundation's*** 2026 $5,000 grant made a meaningful contribution to *Wesley's Island Eco Camp* by helping expand opportunities for youth while investing in the next generation of environmental leaders.

This summer, campers explored the Indian River Lagoon through hands-on marine science, learning by doing rather than merely observing. Participants conducted scientific investigations, seined for marine life, paddleboarded and snorkeled local waters, explored barrier island habitats, and discovered the incredible diversity of Florida's coastal ecosystems. Throughout the summer, campers encountered bonnethead sharks, juvenile sea turtles, seahorses, spotted eagle rays, sea stars, mantis shrimp, lightning whelks, and many other fascinating marine species.

The ***FPYC Foundation's*** support specifically helped strengthen three key areas of our program:

1. *Internship Development & Mentorship*

The Foundation's investment helped expand our internship development program by providing meaningful training and field experience for four summer interns.

2. *Camp Scholarships*

Grant funding helped provide financial assistance so youth who might not otherwise have had the opportunity could participate in *Wesley's Island Eco Camp* and experience immersive marine science and outdoor education.

3. *Water Safety*



Funding also supported water safety instruction and equipment, enabling campers to safely participate in lagoon-based activities including paddleboarding, snorkeling, and field exploration.

Boys & Girls Clubs
by Gaby Simpson

Thanks to the generous support of the ***FPYC Foundation***, 47 *Boys & Girls Clubs of St. Lucie County* members, ages 6 to 16, participated in St. Lucie County's swimming program this summer. Through 140 recorded lesson visits, youth from the Chuck Hill, Infinity, Garden Terrace, and Percy Peek Clubhouses strengthened essential water-safety skills, including floating, kicking, safe pool entry and exit, and beginner swim strokes, while becoming more confident and comfortable in the water. For the second consecutive year, teens were intentionally included, ensuring older youth also had access to potentially lifesaving instruction.

Project Lift – Fort Pierce

FPYC helped sponsor the 2026 Project Lift Great American Raft Race on Thursday, July 30. Past Commodore Forest Blanton placed second in the adult races, and everyone enjoyed a fun and successful day on the water. Special thanks go to Past Commodores Charlie Hayek and Forest Blanton for helping bring **FPYC** into this event when it first began several years ago. We also extend our appreciation to Rashard Alston of ***Project Lift*** for organizing such a successful day, and to the *Fort Pierce Police Department* for its outstanding support of this community event.

Courageous Kids by Lt. John Fasanello FPPD

The *Fort Pierce Police Department* is extremely grateful for the continued support of the **Fort Pierce Yacht Club**. *Courageous Kids and RICH House* participants had an amazing time this summer sailing with the TCYSF. Throughout the program, many of these children learned valuable skills both on and off the water that they may never have had the opportunity to experience without the generous scholarships provided by the ***FPYC Foundation***.

E.N.D. It by Sonia and Skip Dupree

This summer, **E.N.D. It** (Everybody's Not Doing It) served 44 middle and high school students through its eight-week *Teen Arts-Based Summer Experience*. The program combines performing arts, visual arts, life skills, leadership development, and prevention education to help young people build confidence, character, and positive decision-making skills. The summer culminated in two performances of Disney's *The Little Mermaid Jr.* at the McAlpin Fine Arts Center, where nearly 600 community members came out to celebrate and support the students' hard work.

Highwaymen Museum
by Doretha Hair Truesdell

This summer has been a season of extraordinary momentum, inspiration, and growing national recognition for the *City of Fort Pierce* **Florida Highwaymen Museum**. As visitors from across the nation walked through our doors, they discovered not only the breathtaking artwork of the *Florida Highwaymen*, but also the powerful story of perseverance, creativity, and determination that forever changed Florida's cultural landscape. One of the defining moments of the season was a visit from PBS, whose interest in sharing the Museum's story affirms that the legacy of the *Florida Highwaymen* continues to inspire audiences far beyond our community. The Museum was also selected as a featured stop on the *America 250 Road Trip*.

Equally inspiring has been the steadfast partnership of the ***FPYC Foundation***, whose generosity has made a meaningful and lasting difference in the Museum's growth. Its support has strengthened our ability to educate, preserve, and celebrate this uniquely American story while creating unforgettable experiences for visitors of all ages. Together, these partnerships — including the *City of Fort Pierce* and the *Fort Pierce Redevelopment Agency* — are ensuring that the legacy of the *Florida Highwaymen* is not only remembered but continues to inspire future generations.

Together, these programs show the lasting impact of **FPYC** members' generosity. From sailing and swimming to environmental education, the arts, youth mentoring, and cultural preservation, the ***FPYC Foundation's*** support helped create meaningful summer experiences across Fort Pierce. Most importantly, it strengthened the partnerships that make our community stronger—one child, one program, and one shared opportunity at a time.

Discovering the Lagoon – Seine Nets to Sea Cows





This summer, the **Manatee Center** became a true destination for discovery, adventure, and unforgettable fun. With more than 1,000 children joining us from across the community, our programs were buzzing with energy, curiosity, and hands-on exploration from start to finish.

Campers didn't just learn about manatees, they stepped into their world.

Through immersive, age-appropriate activities, children explored the wonders of the *Indian River Lagoon*, one of the most biologically diverse estuaries in North America. From the shoreline to shallow waters, every day brought new opportunities to connect with nature and uncover what makes this ecosystem so unique, and so important to protect.

Our programs blended fun with learning, aligning with STEM principles that encourage curiosity, critical thinking, and real-world environmental awareness. Campers dove into topics like habitats, watersheds, ecosystems, and species interactions, not through textbooks, but through exciting, hands-on experiences that made science come alive.

One of the biggest highlights? Getting up close with the incredible wildlife that calls the lagoon home. With nets in hand and excitement in the air, campers had the chance to catch and identify just a handful of the more than 2,200 species living in these waters. Seahorses, pipefish, comb jellies, juvenile mahi, arrow crabs, pinfish, starfish, flounder and more, each discovery sparked awe and curiosity. More importantly, children learned how these fascinating creatures fit into the food web and why their habitats are vital for survival.

Beyond the excitement, campers gained a deeper understanding of the lagoon's delicate balance. They explored the concept of keystone species and discovered how even the smallest organisms can play a critical role in keeping an ecosystem healthy. These powerful lessons are ones they'll carry with them long after summer ends.





We are incredibly grateful to the *St. Lucie County Chamber of Commerce* and *St. Lucie County Children's Services* for supporting the ***Summer Camp Passport Program***, helping ensure that as many children as possible could experience the magic of the **Manatee Center**.

While summer may be winding down, the adventure doesn't stop here. The **Manatee Center** offers engaging educational programs year-round for schools and groups, both on-site and off-site, bringing the lagoon experience directly into classrooms or welcoming students back for more exploration.

Ready to keep the adventure going? Call 772-429-6266 or visit www.manateecenter.org to book your program today. Because at the **Manatee Center**, learning isn't just educational, it's a gentle-giant adventure.

Note: We will be closed for Seasonal Closure September 6 and will re-open October 6, 2026; 480 N. Indian River Dr. in Fort Pierce; (772) 429-6266

A Call to Action From your Downtown Fort Pierce Farmers Market

Our long-standing and lovable market has become a staple for so many of us. We visit regularly, see the same vendors for our favorite products and sometimes barely notice the music in the background of it all. Just like a long relationship, it is easy to start taking such consistency for granted.

Let's take a moment to reflect on why the **Downtown Fort Pierce Farmers Market** is part of our lives, shall we? Perhaps in doing so, we can shine up that relationship, see it in a new light. Maybe we can even get so excited about it again that we want to share our appreciation with others. If, through this article you are so moved to do so, please do! You can drop a message or a photo on our social media pages. On Facebook, we're at FortPierceFarmersMarket. On Instagram, we're at ftpiercefarmersmarket (each are just a little different).

Plus, we have a website where you can find a calendar of events. This helps when you want to know what the name of that great band you heard was so you can follow them to their next venue. Our website also has info about each of our vendors with links to connect directly with many of them. You might recognize some of the people in our photo gallery and learn a little bit about our almost three decades of history in downtown Ft. Pierce. Our website is fortpiercefarmersmarket.com.

Returning to the call to action, an invitation to share thoughts and memories of your market experiences. This is a great way for potential new visitors to learn about what they're missing. Its also a way for potential vendors to see how their product would fit amongst the shoppers and other vendors. Too, it helps the Market Manager and Board of Directors to know what's working in the relationship.



It can be tough to be the first voice, so here's my start: As a shopper, I appreciate the wide variety of products available at our **Downtown Fort Pierce Farmers Market**. I don't frequent every vendor just because some things are not to the taste of my household, but I appreciate that they're there. I love that I can chat with any vendor, learn more about what they offer, and share that with others. I have been swayed by samples — not going to lie — to spend more than I budgeted. And most of all, I have to give big props to those vendors who come year round, rain or shine, set up and break down their booth and keep smiling the whole time.

There you go, now its your turn. If you are so moved, please share via social media, word of mouth, or a banner hanging from a bridge (just kidding on that last one) why you and others like you make the **Downtown Fort Pierce Farmers Market** a *Saturday morning tradition.*

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Tony Roma's Baby Back Ribs
by Sue Dannahower

One of my favorite comfort-food meals is Tony Roma's Baby Back Ribs. I slow-cook them in the oven until they're fall-off-the-bone tender, then finish with a rich, barbecue sauce. When I'm short on time or just want a different flavor, I use my favorite prepared barbecue sauce instead. I serve them with baked beans and corn on the cob for a satisfying meal that's always a favorite with family and friends.

Ribs

4 racks baby back pork ribs

Barbecue Sauce

1 cup ketchup
1 cup vinegar
½ cup dark corn syrup
2 teaspoons sugar
½ teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon garlic powder
¼ teaspoon onion powder
¼ teaspoon Tabasco® pepper sauce

Instructions

1 Prepare the sauce: In a medium saucepan, combine the ketchup, vinegar, dark corn syrup, sugar, salt, garlic powder, onion powder, and Tabasco sauce. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat, stirring occasionally.

2 Reduce the heat and simmer for about 30 minutes, or until the sauce has thickened.

3 Preheat the oven to 300°F.

4 Generously coat both sides of each rack of ribs with the barbecue sauce.

5 Wrap each rack tightly in heavy duty aluminum foil and place on a baking sheet.

6 Bake for 2 to 2½ hours, or until the ribs are tender.

7 Carefully remove the ribs from the foil and brush generously with additional barbecue sauce.

8 Grill over a hot barbecue for 2–4 minutes per side, just until lightly caramelized and slightly charred.

Serves 8 to 10.



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GOLF TOURNAMENT 2026 THANK YOU!

Thank you to everyone who participated in the ***Main Street Fort Pierce Spring Golf Scramble*** on May 16, 2026, at **Gator Trace Golf & Country Club**. We appreciate your support and hope you enjoyed a great day on the course.

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URBAN GARDEN INSIGHTS

Back-to-School Gardening Projects

by Glenda Springer, Master Gardener Volunteer; Sara MacDonald, Urban Horticulture Extension Agent, UF/IFAS Extension St. Lucie County

Hands-on gardening teaches science, patience, and fun in every seed…

As backpacks come out of storage and pencil boxes get refilled, it's the perfect moment to bring a little green into the back-to-school routine. Gardening isn't just a summer activity; it's one of the best hands-on science lessons a kid can get, and you don't need a big backyard to do it. Even a windowsill, a balcony, or a corner of a classroom can become a living laboratory.

Here are a few simple, urban-friendly projects that turn everyday spaces into science lessons about plant biology and sustainability.

1. The Windowsill Bean Diary

Nothing beats a classic for a reason. Soak a few dried beans overnight, then tuck them between a damp paper towel and the inside wall of a clear plastic cup or jar. Set it on a sunny windowsill and check in every day.

The science: Because the beans are visible through the glass, kids get a front-row seat to germination, watching the seed coat split, the root push downward, and the shoot reach up. It's a simple, vivid way to talk about what a seed actually needs to grow: water, warmth, and light. Keep a diary: Have kids sketch or photograph the bean each day and jot down a sentence about what changed. It's science journaling disguised as doodling.

2. Herb Pots from Recycled Containers

Yogurt cups, egg cartons, and cut-off milk jugs make great starter pots for herbs like basil, mint, or chives, all of which thrive in small containers and grow quickly enough to hold a kid's attention.

The science: This is a natural entry point for talking about sustainability, reusing containers that would otherwise be trash, and discussing why reducing waste matters. It also introduces the idea of a plant's life cycle in a short, satisfying timeframe, since herbs can be ready to snip and taste within a few weeks. Bonus: Let kids label their pots and track growth with a simple ruler, turning it into a measurement and data-tracking exercise too.

3. A Mini Compost Jar

A clear jar with fruit and vegetable scraps, dried leaves, and a little soil, with holes poked in the lid for air, lets kids watch decomposition happen in real time over a few weeks.

The science: This project makes an invisible process visible. Kids can observe how decomposers like bacteria and fungi break matter down, and connect it to bigger ideas about nutrient cycles and reducing household waste. It's an easy jumping-off point for talking about why composting matters, even in an apartment.

4. Sunlight Investigators

Using two identical seedlings, one placed in full sun and one in a shaded spot, kids can run their own experiment on what plants need to thrive.

The science: This project turns kids into real investigators, teaching the basics of a controlled experiment: same plant, same water, same soil, only one variable changed. Watching the results unfold over one to two weeks builds an intuitive understanding of photosynthesis and plant needs.

5. A Pollinator-Friendly Balcony Box

Even a small planter box with a few flowering plants like marigolds or zinnias can attract bees and butterflies to an apartment balcony or fire escape.

The science: This is a great way to introduce pollination and its role in growing food, and to talk about why urban green spaces matter for local ecosystems, even tiny ones.

Growing Together in Our Community

These simple projects echo the work happening right here in Fort Pierce. The *UF/IFAS Urban Horticulture Program* is partnering with Frances K. Sweet Elementary Magnet School and **First United Methodist Church** of Fort Pierce through the *Harvesting Hope & Seeding Solutions* community garden initiative. Together, we're supporting garden development, native plant selection, and pollinator education, providing horticultural expertise and kid-friendly learning materials that help students explore science, sustainability, and the joy of growing plants.

Notes from the Garden:
Back-to-School & Fall Garden Planting

by Martha Cross





In the ***First Church Community Garden***, preparation is more than "half the battle." The hard work done in preparing the garden beds is the "hottest," "stickiest," "dirtiest" job of the year. The Garden soil was turned by hand in each bed. Molasses and chicken manure were incorporated and then watered down. After that, using long plastic sheeting and pins, the raised beds are covered and will "cook" until late this month. As the Garden beds wait, seeds will be started in trays and by the beginning of October the planting begins. All this hard work is done to ensure that the Garden can produce abundantly. **First Church** is so grateful to be able to experiment, learn, and use best practices, as the ***Community Garden*** grows. Helping to feed neighbors with the best quality produce really does take a year round effort. August and September are definitely filled with the hard work of "preparation".

As the community settles in for September, and all the newness it brings, students and teachers have settled into the new school year. ***First Church Community Garden*** welcomes back our *Key Club* volunteers from *Lincoln Park*, who help out on Saturday mornings. Our young gardeners at *FKS Elementary* are also ready to begin work on their campus raised garden beds. Mentors from ***First Church Community Garden*** will be active helpers, along with FKS staff.

The partnership between **First Church** and *FKS Elementary School* provides a fabulous and fun opportunity for church members and friends to get students ready for this new school year. More than 70 backpacks were delivered before school began. Filled with sets of school uniforms, school supplies, personal supplies and other essentials, each bag was delivered with a note of encouragement and love. **First Church** and FKS principle, Dr. Makeda Broom has worked together over the last four years to support these awesome students and their families. The church congregation looks forward to a new year of operating the "Sweet Boutique," serving as "Reading Buddies," sharing weekly "Game Day," and delivering "Harvesting Hope" for weekend nutrition.

Have a great September!

… continued from previous page

Why It's Worth the Mess

These projects don't require a yard, a green thumb, or a big budget, just a little patience and a windowsill or balcony. Along the way, kids pick up real scientific habits: observing closely, tracking change over time, asking why, and testing ideas. And there's a quieter lesson too, one that's easy to overlook in a fast-paced school year: growth takes time, and that's okay.

So as the new school year kicks off, consider swapping one screen-time slot for seed-time. The lesson plan writes itself, one sprout at a time.

For more resources and guidance, contact the Master Gardener Volunteer Help Desk at the **Morningside Library**, 2410 SE Morningside Blvd., Port St. Lucie. Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 1:00–3:00 p.m. Phone: 772-337-5654. Email: slmg@ifas.ufl.edu.

Happy Snook Season!

by Captain Bo Samuel, Pullin Drag Charters

When September rolls around, area anglers are thinking of one thing…SNOOK! The second open season of the year for the elusive snook runs from September 1 through December 14th and anglers are allowed to keep one of these trophy sportfish per person per day. This means that snook is back on the family dinner menu. Often called linesiders due to the distinctive black lateral line that extends to the tail, snook remain a highly prized and highly targeted fish.

My favorite live bait for hooking a snook are pilchards, threadfins, croakers, and mojarra but they are aggressive enough to hit artificials as well. We target snook around areas with fast moving currents like bridges, docks, jetties, and mangroves and, as always, the Fort Pierce Inlet is a favorite linesider destination. Keep the drag tight as these wiley fish are smart enough to try to break the line on any nearby structure. If you are lucky enough to get one in the keeper slot range of 28 inches to 32 inches, you will definitely enjoy some bragging rights and a very excellent dinner.

Offshore fishing remains strong with a consistent kingfish bite and productive bottom fishing, too. I use pilchards or threadfins on a slow troll for the best chance of putting kings on deck but be prepared as these big mackerel can pull 100 to 200 feet of drag during a fight. Snapper are chewing on the 50-90 foot reefs with some nice mangroves and muttons being reported. We have been catching some great red snapper as well but since the season never officially opened because of a federal injunction, unfortunately they have to be thrown back to the sea.



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The *Fishy Photo of the Month* shows a great haul with Ben Lewis and Eric Paul. Fun fishing at it's best!

Summer may be winding down but the fishing is still hot. Give me a shout to get on our snook charter schedule and catch your own salty groceries. Remember the best fish stories can be found at **DeBrooks Fishing Center** and my home base, the historic **Little Jim Bait & Tackle**, along with bait, tackle, rules and regulations. **Little Jim** will also Cook-Your-Catch with the best fish tacos in the Fort! If you see my mom wish her a happy birthday this month! Happy Labor Day, wave the flag, and never stop *Pullin Drag!*

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A Church in a Brewery?

by Tommy Neiman



Yes! **Sailfish Brewing Company** in downtown Fort Pierce will be the home of a new church called **Sunrise City Chapel**. I am excited to be the pastor of this new church and am so grateful to Taylor Hacker and Gabe Atkinson at **Sailfish Brewing Company** for opening their doors to us on Sunday mornings. I'm hoping this will be a great boost to our area, especially newcomers and visitors, who will see how God has blessed us with such a beautiful area here in downtown Fort Pierce.

Okay, so now you're probably wondering, "Who is Tommy Neiman?" This pastor guy who would start a church in a brewery?

Well, a little bit about me. I am a lifelong Fort Pierce resident. My father also grew up in Fort Pierce and discovered the Spanish shipwreck that helped lead to our region becoming known as the "Treasure Coast." I graduated from Fort Pierce Westwood High School and Indian River State College (IRSC) and spent a 30-year career serving our community as a firefighter/paramedic with the *St. Lucie County Fire District*. I was ordained as a pastor in 1997 and have served for the last 15 years as the *Fire District's* chaplain. I also serve in that capacity with the *Fort Pierce Police Department* and have worked with the *New York Mets* during spring training for many years as their players/coaches chaplain.

I have been blessed to write two nationally released books, served at Ground Zero during 9/11, and was honored by Governor Jeb Bush as *Florida Firefighter of the Year* in 2003.

Our services will include music, time to meet and connect with others, and a Bible-based message. I promise not to preach too long—but I do promise it will be meaningful!

I would encourage you to visit the **Sunrise City Chapel** website at SunriseCityChapel.org for information about this new church and yours truly—a guy who is starting a church in a brewery!

Our kick-off Sunday will be September 6th at 9:45. Hope to see you there!

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Sunrise City Chapel

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KICK-OFF SUNDAY

SEPTEMBER 6TH | 9:45 AM

MEETING AT

SAILFISH

130 North 2nd Street
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SCAN TO LEARN MORE!

SunriseCityChapel.com | Find us on Facebook!