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AVENTURA *update*

VOLUME 11 | NUMBER 1 | SPRING 2008

A Newsletter Designed to Inform the Residents of Aventura

Same Day Elections Will Save Aventura Taxpayers About \$70,000 Every Time We Vote

The Miami-Dade Elections Department has requested that the City of Aventura and other cities within the County move to Same Day Elections and we want you to know why.

According to the County, Miami-Dade is one of the only counties in Florida where its cities still hold “stand alone elections,” which means we vote for mayors and commissioners on different days than we vote for Presidents, Governors and Senators.

The Elections Department has concluded that these “stand alone elections” are decreasing voter turnout by forcing people to return to the voting booths multi-

ple times. They’re also costing the taxpayers millions of dollars in additional voting costs.

Before the County introduces new and even more expensive voting technology, they’ve asked all 35 cities, including Aventura, to move their City elections to the same day as National and State Elections by 2010.

In order to synchronize the city and county voting cycles and accomplish Same Day Elections, Aventura residents will have to vote to approve the moving

eight consecutive years, as set forth in the City Charter.

During the first week of April, you will receive a ballot to cast your vote on the issue of Same Day Elections. Ballots must be returned by April 22, 2008.

Voting **YES** for Same Day Elections will save Aventura taxpayers an estimated \$70,000 per election and make it easier to vote in all future elections.

Voted ballots may be dropped off at the Government Center during normal busi-

SAME DAY ELECTIONS WILL INCREASE VOTER TURNOUT AND DECREASE TAXPAYER COSTS.

of the elections from March of odd years to November of even years which will also extend one term of office of the current mayor and commission seats by approximately 1 ½ years. **This is a one time/one term adjustment.** All future commissioners will serve the regular 4 year term with a maximum of

ness hours and no later than 4:30 p.m. on April 22nd; mailed directly to the Elections Department or hand delivered to the Elections Department no later than 7 p.m. on April 22nd.

For more information please contact the City Clerk’s Office at 305-466-8901.



ACES New Middle School Leadership Speaker Series

A COMMITMENT TO COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

The City of Aventura's newsletter represents the City Commission's continued commitment to keep the community updated on important issues, including city government and services. This newsletter is published on a quarterly basis and your comments and suggestions are welcome.

MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to join with our community to make Aventura a city of the highest quality and a City of Excellence. We do this by providing RESPONSIVE, COST EFFECTIVE and INNOVATIVE local government services.

www.cityofaventura.com



This year, Aventura City of Excellence School, (ACES) began an exciting innovative Middle School Program called the Middle School Leadership Speaker Series.

The Leadership Series is designed to bring "Leading Entrepreneurs and Authors" to ACES in order to educate, motivate and inspire middle school students as they contemplate their future. There are several components to the program, which include family events, the Middle School Career Planning and Entrepreneurship courses and a partnership with Junior Achievement.

The family events provide a forum, in which ACES middle school students and parents can learn, discuss and share ideas. In October, Michael Yormark, President of Sunrise Sports and Entertainment and the Florida Panthers, spoke to ACES students and families about his own rags to riches story. Mr. Yormark discussed the importance of principles such as commitment, sacrifice and passion to overcome life's hurdles.

In November, ACES held an Author Book Signing Event for ACES middle school students and families. Co-Author Sarah Miller Caldicott, an MBA and great grandniece of Thomas Edison discussed her new book "Innovate Like Edison," which presents Edison's world-changing innovation methods – never previously documented.

In February, Pierluigi Gazzolo, President of MTV Networks Latin America spoke to ACES middle school students and families about his own career successes with well-known TV shows in the entertainment industry. MTVNLA is comprised of MTV, VH1, Nickelodeon, Nick at Nite and other exciting properties. Mr. Gazzolo's talk demonstrated how values play a central role in his organization's success.

Students also get an opportunity to experience classroom guest speakers. Tony Stromberg spoke with the ACES Career Planning and Entrepreneurship classes about the "Traits of Successful Entrepreneurs." Mr.

Stromberg, known for his impressive business background, retired and created an organization named Crossinggate as a means of giving back to the community. Mr. Stromberg discussed characteristics shared by successful entrepreneurs such as: passion, change, motivation, customer relationship management, setting goals and objectives.

Guillermo Friele, owner of Aventura's Finest Hand Car Wash spoke to the Career Planning and Entrepreneurship students as well. Mr. Friele, a well respected International and Aventura businessman discussed his passion for cars, racing and family. His desire to make the customer happy and be the best in his field is what has led to his successful enterprises.

Junior Achievement Volunteer Jeff Levinson, Sr. Vice President, Wealth Management of

BNY Mellon Bank delivered a series of in-class seminars that gave students an understanding of what it takes to start an entrepreneurial company. Students chose a product, sold stock to raise capital, developed a marketing plan, and worked diligently to ensure their companies were profitable. Both companies "Got Bags" (ACES school bags) and "Press or Stress" (ACES yo-yo stress balls), decided to donate profits to the Children's Caring Cancer Center.

Junior Achievement Volunteer George Allen and the Entrepreneurship Class are in the process of planning their next business venture. Regardless of the products they sell, Mr. Allen assures us that the bottom line will be "integrity" and giving back to our community. 🐾



Two New Park Projects to Open Soon

The new Waterways Park located on NE 213th Street is scheduled for completion in late April 2008. The 7 acre site includes a multipurpose sports field, playground, basketball court, fitness trail, parking and

restroom facilities. The relocated Dog Park at the former 1-acre Waterways park site is currently under construction and is scheduled to open in May 2008. 🐾



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AVENTURA UPDATE



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MYAVENTURA IS FOR YOU!

MyAventura is a central place on the City's web site where residents and visitors can submit requests for service; search through a database of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ); and subscribe to email publications in the Message Center.

MyAventura streamlines the process for customer service as access was previously delivered through different systems. Now you can search for answers using keywords and track requests online. This interactive system allows residents and area businesses to communicate more readily than traditional phone calls and visits to the Government Center.

The Message Center lists categories of email publications which the City periodically broadcasts. The Message Center allows users to subscribe only to the publications they wish at any time. Click on the Message Center button from our home page at www.cityofaventura.com.

Community Happenings



SWEETHEART PIANO CONCERT

Aventura residents enjoyed the sweet sounds of pianist Jeannette Claudine Romeu at the Sweetheart Piano Concert on Sunday, Feb 10, 2008. Jeannette Claudine Romeu and her musical family of five generations played a beautifully harmonic Cuban-Latin Jazz performance to an audience of 200 residents at the Aventura Government Center.

SPLASHPAD OPENS FOR SPRING AT FOUNDERS PARK

Spring has arrived with the opening of the SplashPad located at Founders Park on March 9, 2008. The SplashPad, an interactive water playground, provides endless hours of outdoor fun to families and children of all ages for the entire summer. The children love to play throughout the different water rotations as it is choreographed from the Drizzle Drop, Pop Jets, Trio of Fun and the most popular feature, the Sloppy Jalopy. The SplashPad is free to all Aventura residents. The non-resident fee is \$10.00 per person.

ARBOR DAY CELEBRATION

The City of Aventura celebrates its 11th consecutive year as a Tree City USA at the annual Arbor Day Celebration. On Friday, April 18, 2008, 10 AM at the Aventura City of Excellence School, winners of the Beautification Recognition "Property of Excellence" Program and the inaugural "Go Green Recognition Award" will be announced. The Property of



Excellence awards recognize those condominiums and businesses that put forth the efforts to create cleaner and greener landscapes. The Go Green Recognition program awards those individuals and condominiums who take the initiative to preserve our environment. The criterion for the Go Green Recognition covers eight categories of environmental initiatives including recycling, education, and water conservation measures.

WATERWAYS PARK

The newly expanded Waterways Park will provide seven acres of multi-use recreation and athletic facilities. The new Waterways Park will have lighted multi-purpose athletic fields, parking, restrooms, a large covered shelter and playground, full court basketball, exercise path, and a staffed welcome center. The existing Waterways Park site is being renovated as the City's dog park for residents. Both parks are scheduled to open in the spring.

SENIOR PROM

The 2008 Senior Prom is scheduled for Saturday, May 17, 2008 at 7 PM. Seniors dance the night away to live entertainment. This year's entertainment will be provided by Frank Hubbell's 10 Piece Big Band. This annual event provides a fun, interactive, social setting for seniors in the City. Admission is complimentary with light refreshments and coffee being served. It will be held at the Aventura Community Recreation Center located at 3375 NE 188 Street.

CULTURAL ARTS, THEATER, & LEISURE PROGRAM

The Cultural Arts, Theater and Leisure Program includes trips to theatrical shows, historical places, art museums, area restaurants and concerts.

Monthly trips include roundtrip transportation, admission, and usually lunch or dinner. The program fosters friendships and socialization to the residents who often participate in several of the trips during the season. The Spring-Summer Program offers trips such as a cruise on SeaEscape, Laffing Matterz Comedy Show, The Actors' Playhouse, and Sawgrass Outlet Mall. Call 305-466-8930 for more information.

YOUTH ATHLETICS

The Youth Athletics Program offers a wide variety of opportunities for all age groups in a safe environment. The programs are dedicated to teaching skills in each sport as well as promoting team spirit, teamwork, and socialization. Programs offered throughout

the year include Boys and Girls Soccer, Tennis, Basketball, Boys and Girls T-Ball/Softball, and Flag Football.

The Youth Tennis Program at Founders Park offers the Tiny Tots Tennis Program and Junior Tennis Program. The Tiny Tots sessions are designed for children ages three - five and the Junior Tennis sessions for ages six through twelve. The Tiny Tots Tennis program offers participants an introduction to the foundation of tennis while learning teamwork and interactive skills. The Junior Tennis Program focuses on the basic skills and incorporates those skills into game and match play.

Boys Youth Soccer and Girls Youth Soccer programs are offered for ages 4 - 14. Both the Boys and Girls Leagues promote active, social and non-competitive play while fostering positive self esteem and accomplishment.

Boys and Girls T-Ball/Softball Leagues for children ages 5-14 learn everything from

pitching, hitting to fielding with an emphasis on character development, and fun.

For more information on Youth Athletics, visit www.cityofaventura.com or call Founders Park at 305-466-8556.

SPRING CAMP

This year Spring Camp gets a sweet theme: "Welcome to Wonkaville." Kids ages 5-12 will enter into a world of pure imagination as they make their own candy, eat ice cream, swim and watch the Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory movie. Spring Camp begins March 31 and ends April 4.

SUMMER CAMP

This summer children will travel through time at the City of Aventura Summer Camp. Camp is divided into two groups for children ages 5-8 and 9-12. In 2008, campers will experience the world from past, present and future time periods. Watch for details and updates on registration in coming weeks.

MORGAN PRESSEL

THE LADIES OF THE LPGA ARE BACK IN SOUTH FLORIDA

The ladies are back. Come see true grace under pressure as the LPGA makes its return to South Florida. The stunning courses of Fairmont Turnberry Isle Resort & Club promise a full field of the world's top players and a week of non-stop Pro-Am action.

PAULA CREAMER **SUZANN PETTERJEN** **NATALIE GULBIS** **ANNIKA SORENSTAM** **CRISTIE KERR**

STANFORD

International Pro-Am

FAIRMONT TURNBERRY ISLE RESORT & CLUB

April 21st-27th / 2008

For Tickets Call 888-471-7472 or www.stanfordinternationalproam.com

Local Flooding Facts

Flooding is an act of nature that respects no boundary lines. In the City of Aventura, flooding is generally caused by heavy rainfall that occurs in short periods of time, as is common during summer thunderstorms, tropical storms and hurricanes. The City is vulnerable to flooding from storm water runoff and coastal storm surges. Due to this flood risk, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has designated most of the City as a Special Flood Hazard Area on the Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM). This map designates areas susceptible to the 100-year flood and for safety purposes, establishes minimum elevations for construction.

A 100-year flood is the equivalent of 10 or more inches of rain within 24 hours. A 100-year flood has a 1% chance of occurring in any given year. However, it can occur more than once in a given year or in successive years. The potential for loss and damage in the City of Aventura during a heavy storm or hurricane does exist. Residents and property owners should be aware of this potential risk and be prepared to deal with flooding when it occurs.

FLOODPLAINS ARE ESSENTIAL

Although flooding is a nuisance, floodplains are an essential part of the natural cycle in South Florida. The Everglades, which is one expansive floodplain, and the Biscayne Aquifer which lies underneath, are South Florida's only source of drinking water. They need large quantities of water to be replenished. Occasional floods are, and always have been, essential sources of fresh water to replenish the Biscayne Aquifer.

FLOODPLAIN DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS

Developers wishing to build in designated floodplain areas (including the City of Aventura) must use proper design techniques and structural requirements to ensure that new developments are flood proof. City officials must review all new developments in the City of Aventura to ensure the designs meet the City's Floodplain Development Regulations in order to receive a permit for construction. The City has adopted Floodplain Development Regulations that require that all new construction have a lowest floor elevation 12" above the base flood elevation or 18" above the crown of the road, whichever is highest.

Before beginning a project, check with the Community Development Department for all codes and regulations that apply to your property.

SPECIAL FLOOD HAZARD AREA DISCLOSURE

It is a requirement in Miami-Dade County that any purchase of improved real estate located in a Special Flood Hazard Area or Coastal Flood

Hazard Area include a full disclosure to the buyer that the property lies in either of those zones. This requirement alerts potential buyers to the threat of flooding in the area, so they can make an informed purchasing decision.

IMPROVEMENTS TO PROPERTY IN FLOOD HAZARD AREAS

For properties located in Special Flood Hazard Areas, it is required that improvements to properties be done in a manner which meets the current Floodplain Development Regulations. This requirement applies to:

- Any structure which has incurred damage estimated at more than 50% of its market value
- Any structure where improvements are planned where the cost of improvements is more than 50% of its market value
- Any combination of the above two

FLOOD PROTECTION METHODS

When constructing a new or improved structure in a floodplain area, any combination of these methods may be employed to reduce the flooding potential. These methods must be approved by the City, and must not negatively impact surrounding properties.

■ **RELOCATION:** Perhaps the only technique for completely preventing future flood damage. This method involves moving a house out of a flood area to a new location where there is no threat of flooding.

■ **ELEVATION:** This method consists of raising a house on an elevated support structure to place it above future floodwaters.

■ **LEVEES:** Also known as a berm, this is a method of creating a barrier of compacted soil to keep the water away from a property.

■ **FLOODWALLS:** Similar to a levee, floodwalls are designed to keep the water away from the house but are constructed of permanent materials such as concrete.



photo © G. Mathieson/FEMA

■ **CLOSURES:** Used in conjunction with other techniques such as floodwalls and levees, closures provide protection for gaps that are open for frequent usage such as sidewalks and driveways.

FLOOD MITIGATION STEPS

Even if you are not doing major improvements to your property, there are steps you can take to make your property more flood-proof, including:

- Grading your property to facilitate stormwater run-off
- Elevating major appliances such as air-conditioning units and water heaters to prevent damage during flooding
- Using flood-proofing materials such as paints and sealants
- Checking sewer trap valves to prevent backup flooding
- Cleaning gutters and storm drains around your property to permit free flow of water
- Keeping a stockpile of sandbags and construction materials available

FLOOD INSURANCE

One of the best ways to protect your investment is to insure it. **Standard homeowners insurance and windstorm policies DO NOT cover losses from flooding (rising waters)!** The Flood Disaster Protection Act of 1973 requires the purchase of flood insurance as a condition of receiving any federally related loan for purchase or construction of any building or mobile home located in any Special Flood Hazard Area.

The City of Aventura is a participant in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), which is administered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Federally guaranteed flood insurance is available to City residents in AE Flood Zones at a discount of 15% because of the City's

participation. NFIP policies are sold through licensed insurance agents and companies. You should buy flood insurance before the storm season, as there a 30-day waiting period before coverage takes effect.

Federal flood insurance can protect homes, businesses and belongings from damage caused by flooding, including:

■ **STRUCTURAL ELEMENTS:** such as walls, floors, equipment and fixtures.

■ **CONTENTS:** such as furniture, appliances and carpeting

■ **PERSONAL ITEMS:** such as clothing, stereos and televisions

You do not have to live in a special flood hazard area or a Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) designated flood zone to purchase flood insurance. In fact, if you live in a low-risk area, you may be eligible for a low-cost preferred risk policy. Even if you rent, do not have a mortgage or do not live in a Special Flood Hazard Area, you should still purchase flood insurance!

FLOOD WARNINGS

The Miami-Dade Office of Emergency Management and the National Weather Service issue flood, hurricane and severe weather warnings.

In the case of a hurricane, an Evacuation Order will be given by the Mayor of Miami-Dade County and will be broadcast on local TV and radio stations. **The City of Aventura is located in an Evacuation Zone for any storm of Category 2 force or greater.** This means all residents are required to leave the City when an Evacuation Order for a Category 2 storm is given. Aventura condominiums and property managers will also be notified of the Evacuation Order by a fax from the Office of the City Manager.

Residents should stay tuned to the local TV and radio stations for updates on storms, and should evacuate as soon as an Evacuation Order is issued.

TV STATIONS

- WFOR—Ch. 4
- WTVJ—Ch. 6
- WSVN—Ch. 7
- WPLG—Ch. 10
- WLTV—Ch. 23 *Spanish*
- WSCV—Ch. 51 *Spanish*

RADIO STATIONS

- WIOD—610 AM
- WINZ—940 AM
- WFTL—1400 AM
- WAQI—710 AM *Spanish*
- WCQM—92 FM *Spanish*

FLOOD SAFETY TIPS

These are important tips you can follow when flooding threatens, whether you are staying in your home or evacuating.

BEFORE THE FLOOD:

- Learn and practice the safest route from your home or business to high ground in case you must evacuate.
- Listen to local news for Evacuation Orders and shelter openings. Evacuate immediately once an order is given.
- Turn off water, gas and electric service to your home and plug drains with large corks to prevent sewer backup.
- Keep a disaster kit on hand with a portable radio, flashlight, and emergency cooking equipment, drinking water, batteries, first aid supplies, money, canned foods and sturdy shoes.
- Develop and practice an emergency communication plan with your family. Designate an out-of-state friend or relative to serve as the “family contact.”
- Fill your car with gas and move it to the highest point on your property.
- Flood-proof your home by utilizing the improvement and mitigation steps outlined in this article.
- Buy flood insurance to cover the value of your home and its contents.
- Take pictures or videos of your home and valuables and keep them in a safe, dry place with your insurance policy.

DURING THE FLOOD:

- Keep a battery-powered radio tuned to a local station for emergency information. Follow instructions for your area.
- Elevate valuables or move them to higher floors.
- Do not drive, walk or play in flooded areas. Strong currents, broken objects, wild animals and raw sewage pose serious health and safety threats. Wear sturdy shoes.
- Stay away from downed power lines. A downed power line in a puddle of water may electrify the entire puddle.

AFTER THE FLOOD:

- Before entering a building, check for structural damage.
- Inspect for fire, electrical or gas hazards and submerged appliances **before** turning utilities back on.
- If you smell gas in or around your home, call your utility supplier immediately.
- Use bottled water **only**, until tapwater has been declared safe for consumption by officials.
- Dispose of everything, including food, that has come in contact with flood waters. The flood waters could be contaminated with raw sewage and poisonous chemicals.

FLOOD ZONE INFORMATION



Local flood zone information is located at the Northeast (Aventura) Branch of the Miami-Dade Public Library and at the City of Aventura's Community Development Department. The Community Development Department can provide you with detailed information from the Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) including:

- Whether your property is located in a Special Flood Hazard Area
- The community number
- The panel number and suffix
- The date of the FIRM's index
- The FIRM zone
- The base flood elevation

For surveyors, architects and engineers, the City has the latest form of elevation certificates available to you for completion.

For lenders, insurance agents and real estate agents, elevation certificates are kept on file for all buildings permitted by the City.

For more information, or to receive a Flood Insurance Rate Map determination for your property, contact the Community Development Department at (305) 466-8940.

CITY COMMISSION MEETINGS

Commission Meetings are held
at 6:00 pm:

Aventura Government Center
Commission Chambers
19200 West Country Club Drive

**Next Meeting,
April 8, 2008 at 6pm**

For information on upcoming
Commission meetings and work-
shops and to confirm all meeting
dates, times and locations,
please contact the City Clerk's
Office at (305) 466-8901.

Watch for These Upcoming Events!



- March 9 SplashPad Opens for Spring/Summer Season
- March 24Registration for Activities, Camps, Classes,
Athletics and Cultural Arts Theater & Leisure Program
- March 31 Spring Camp Begins
- April 12 Boys & Girls Youth T-Ball/Softball Begins
- April 18 Arbor Day
- May 17 Senior Prom
- June 9 Summer Camp begins

For event details, visit www.cityofaventura.com



AVENTURA *update*

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