



> **Charley's Gone, But Friendships Forged**

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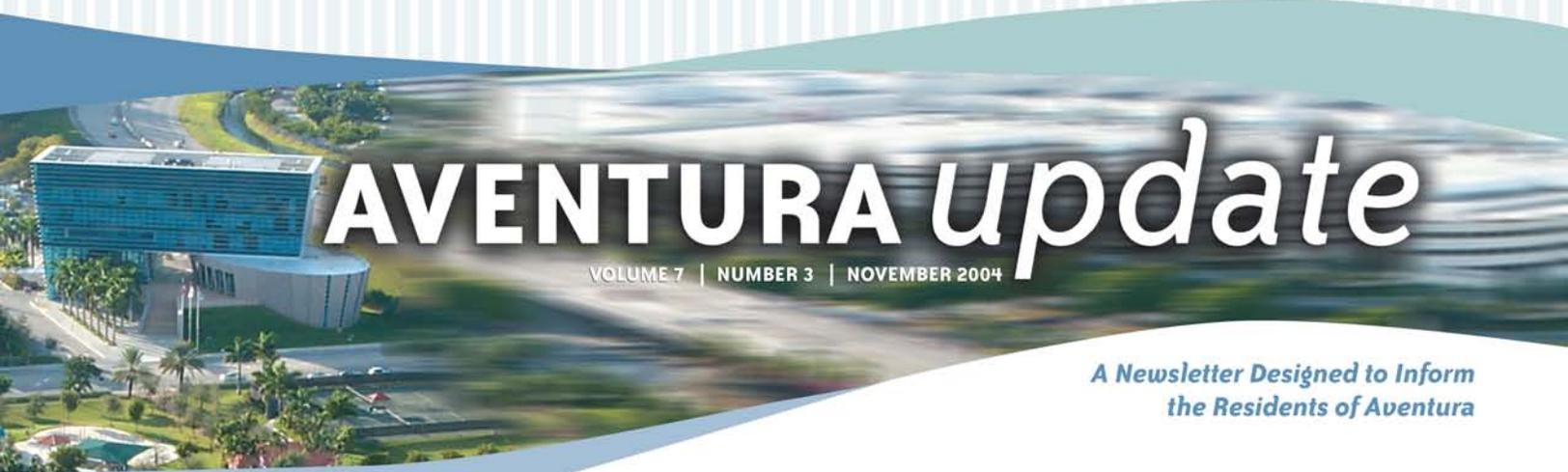
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VOLUME 7 | NUMBER 3 | NOVEMBER 2004

A Newsletter Designed to Inform the Residents of Aventura

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.



The City of Aventura Maintains Tax Rate and Increases Services

Recently the City Commission adopted the budget for the fiscal year beginning October 1, 2004. The budget reaffirms the City Commission's commitment to developing a strong financial base for the City while maintaining the lowest tax rate in Miami-Dade County. For the ninth year in a row, no property tax increase was required and the budget adopts the 1995 County UMSA millage rate of 2.2270.

Overall, the budget maintains the quality and level of services currently provided to the community. However, increases in services to the community are also included in the budget. This budget document and its related policies represent our continued commitment to excellence and to our residents.

The budget for 2004/05, including all funds, capital outlay and debt service, is \$39,423,830. This is \$1,802,723 less compared to the prior year. The decrease is attributed to the completion of major capital projects including the Charter Elementary School.

Over the past few years, major capital projects, facilities and beautification projects have been completed at a record setting pace. It is important that this budget along

with future budgets contain the necessary level of funding to maintain and protect these assets. The quality of life for our residents and businesses is dependent on preserving what has been built and continuing to support the high level of services which we provide to the community. The City's economic base continues to be strong, as witnessed by a 18% increase in the tax base. It allows the city to build a proper reserve fund to facilitate the preservation of our assets and keep taxes low in the future. Nationally these are still uncertain economic times. The budget reflects this uncertainty with a conservative approach that limits the number of new positions and continues to outsource services to the private sector. Mirroring national industry trends we will experience increases in both liability and health insurance premiums. In addition the increased cost of fuel for our vehicles has also had an impact on our budget. In spite of these limitations the budget does not contain a tax increase and continues to expand services to the community.

BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

> For the ninth year, no property tax increase. Adopts 1995 County UMSA millage rate of 2.2270.

Continued on p.2

GOVERNMENT ACCESS CHANNEL

Comcast Cable Company has announced that effective December 2, 2004 the City's Government Access Channel 33 is relocating to Channel 77. More information will be included in customers' bills informing them of the channel lineup changes. Residents who view the City's Government Access Channel on Channel 62 will remain unchanged. 🗣️



Founders Day Celebration. See page 7.

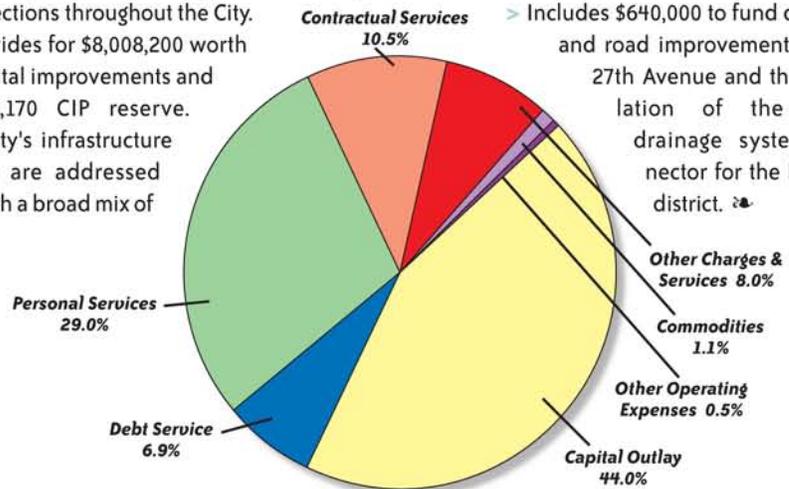
Continued from cover.

- > Provides funding to construct middle school wing of the Charter School scheduled to open in 2005 to serve the growing school age population.
- > Funds Phase I of the expanded Waterways Park project, which includes design costs and the relocation of overhead electrical lines to allow construction to take place in 2005 and provide more recreational and open space opportunities in the community.
- > Added 1 police officer and 1 detective position and reclassified two positions from Police Officer to Sergeant to address community growth.
- > Expanded recreational opportunities for all age groups at the community recreation center.
- > Continues to provide an expanded Citywide Shuttle Bus Service at no cost to the residents.
- > Traffic improvements are addressed from additional street lights and directional sign improvements to the NE 27th Avenue (formerly known as Jack Smith Boulevard) Improvements.
- > Proposes to improve traffic management by integrating video monitoring devices at key intersections throughout the City.
- > Provides for \$8,008,200 worth of capital improvements and \$9,335,170 CIP reserve. The City's infrastructure needs are addressed through a broad mix of

Capital Improvement projects, which will enhance the City's quality of life, and the attractiveness of the City.

- > Includes maintenance requirements for the Country Club Drive Jogging Path that consist of paving repairs, water fountain replacement and path beautification.
- > Continues Lease Book Program to address improvements to the book collections and business materials at the Northeast branch of the Miami-Dade Library system.
- > Continues to implement technology enhancements that develop our "Electronic Government" to allow the public to interact more easily and conveniently with the City and to automate City operations.
- > Special Events such as July 4th, Founders Day, Veterans Day, Arbor Day, as well as cultural programs and recreational activities are included.
- > Continues contracting most maintenance functions, engineering and inspection services to the private sector.
- > Provides funding for increased costs associated with maintaining newly landscaped areas.
- > Funds police equipment needs from laptop computers to new police vehicles in the amount of \$784,000.

- > Includes \$640,000 to fund drainage and road improvements on NE 27th Avenue and the installation of the south drainage system connector for the Hospital district. 🗣️



CATEGORY	PROPOSED AMOUNT	% OF BUDGET
Personal Services	\$11,452,547	29.0%
Contractual Services	4,125,750	10.5%
Other Charges & Services	3,139,119	8.0%
Commodities	447,544	1.1%
Other Operating Expenses	197,500	0.5%
Capital Outlay	17,343,370	44.0%
Debt Service	<u>2,718,000</u>	<u>6.9%</u>
TOTALS	\$39,423,830	100.0%

Charley's Gone, But Friendships Forged

Within 24 hours of Charley's devastating strike to the West Coast of Florida, Aventura Police Department deployed their first unit of officers to the ravaged area. Led by Sgt. Mike Bentolila, the unit included Officers Troy Vezina, Jason Williams, Joseph Craig, Bobby Myers, and Helen Morrison with canine, Scout. Accommodations were meager, as the team drove over in the Department's SWAT vehicle, which was utilized as their home-away-from-home. Upon their arrival, they were assigned to the hardest hit areas of Charlotte County, and ultimately responsible for securing the completely destroyed Port Charlotte Airport.



Just north, the Arcadia Police Department had sustained milder damage; however, almost every member of the Arcadia PD had either lost their home thanks to Charley, or sustained heavy damage. As they were trying to secure their "lives", Aventura teams didn't miss a beat by working 12 hour shifts to patrol streets, make necessary arrests, providing security, escorting volunteers bringing in ice, water and medical supplies, and working hand-in-hand with FDLE in assisting with an influx of gypsies, price gouging and looters.

Seven days later, a second group of officers left Aventura to relieve Bentolila's team. Under the guidance of Sgt. Andrew Smith and canine Cody, Officers Belinda Alvarez, John Ogden, Chris Goronitis, Jorge Alonso and Elricco Barnes completed the second team. One of the highlights of their tour of duty was meeting Governor Bush and receiving his thanks for a job well done. A Third unit was scheduled to deploy to Arcadia, however, Hurricane Frances' kept them home.



Back L-R: Capt. Matt Anderson, Arcadia PD; Ofc. Chris Goranitis, Aventura PD; Ofc. Tom Post, Indian Creek; Ofc. John Ogden, Aventura; Governor Jeb Bush; Sgt. Andy Smith & Ofc. Jorge Alonso, Aventura. Front L-R: Ofc. Belinda Alvarez, Aventura; Ofc. Hailey Webb, Arcadia; Ofc. Elricco Barnes, Aventura; Ofc. Thomas Guy, Palatka



GOVERNMENT CENTER DIRECTORY

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AVENTURA UPDATE



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> CITY ATTORNEY

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Guedes Cole & Boniske

> EDITOR

Judy Appelgren

Assistant to the City Manager

ACES Students Aid Hurricane Victims

Aventura City of Excellence School students showed great compassion, honor and a sense of responsibility by collecting and contributing goods to aid Hurricane Charley Victims. The hurricane drive was organized by one of our teachers, Ms. Phinn who felt that giving back to others is a very important aspect of our ACES Living Values Program. With the help of the Miami Dade Fire Department, the goods donated by ACES students were delivered to the victims in Punta Gorda.

ACES students and families acted quickly, effectively and honorably to help those that were affected by the hurricane.

Aventura City of Excellence School (ACES), established in 2003, currently serves 600 students grades Kindergarten through 5 as the first municipal-sponsored school in Miami-Dade County. ACES maintains low student-teacher ratio, state of the art facilities, and a progressive curriculum; including programs for gifted students, Exceptional Student Education (ESE), and English as a Second Language (ESOL). Beginning August 2005, ACES' campus will open a new middle school through Grade 8. For more information, visit the school's Web site at www.aventuracharter.org or call 305-466-1499. 📍



Students, parents, Miami-Dade firefighters and staff who helped load the truck heading to Punta Gorda.

July 4th a Bang

Independence Day in Aventura was complete with fun in the sun, water games and patriotic activities at Founders Park; a live outdoor concert at the Community Recreation Center; and the best fireworks extravaganza around. Aventura's July 4th Celebration went off with a bang! There were activities for all ages and a variety of fun foods served throughout the day from vendors and local community groups. The smiles were contagious from morning until evening when the fireworks show exploded, viewed from anywhere along Country Club Drive. If you missed Independence Day in Aventura, make sure to visit next year on July 4th for another excellent event. 📍

Gates are Open at Veterans Park



On June 18, 2004 the City of Aventura dedicated a brand new park. Veterans Park is located at 18375 NE 31 Avenue and has separate areas for both children and pets. There is a large covered playground for the youth of the community and even play equipment for doggies! The dedication ceremony was inspiring as local Veterans groups dedicated wreaths while residents immediately began using the facility. Local businesses were present to provide information on various services including animal care, grooming and training and there were light refreshments that followed the dedication ceremony for everyone, both residents and their pets. Veterans Park is open seven days a week, from 8 AM until 30 minutes prior to sunset. For more information on Veterans Park, directions or general park policies, please contact the Community Services Department at 305-466-8930 or 305-466-8932, e-mail rosenbergi@cityofaventura.com or visit the internet at www.cityofaventura.com.



CITY INFORMATION AT YOUR FINGERTIPS



Register for City Speak, an on-line service that allows you to receive e-mail notification about the topics and events that interest you. To register for fast access to City activities, look for the City Speak logo at www.cityofaventura.com.

CITY TO UNVEIL IMPROVED WEBSITE

The City is getting ready to introduce a new design for our City Website. The City of Aventura's online home will launch a fresh, new look for the City's Ninth Anniversary in November. As part of our commitment to bring Aventura the highest quality of government services, we have redesigned our site giving instant access to the information you need to live, work and play in the City of Excellence.

As our City grows and progresses, we continue efforts to provide cost-effective and innovative services. The new website will bring together our best E-Government services coupled with general information, forms, calendars, newsletters, pictures, and more. You will find Departments with one click from any page and the latest news and current information specific to the area you are visiting.

The City of Aventura created this new design with your needs in mind so watch for its debut.



Founders Day Celebration. See next page.

Aventura Government 101 A Citizen's Academy

On December 1, 2004, the City of Aventura will present its newest program, Aventura Government 101 - A Citizen's Academy. This Academy, presented in six sessions over a two-month period, is designed to provide a learning forum for citizens to become more familiar with City of Aventura Government, improve communications between citizens and government, as well as foster citizen involvement.

The Academy is provided free of charge by City Administration as a service to the community and will be held at various City facilities. Participants will be selected on a first-come first-served basis. The class will be limited to 30 participants and is open to residents only. Each session will be two to three hours in length. On completion of the Academy, graduates will be recognized at a City Commission meeting.

Week 1 will be presented by the City's Constitutional Officers, the City Manager, City Clerk and City Attorney, outlining details of the City's administration. Week 2 features the Police Department. Week 3 details programs and services offered by the City through the Community Services Department. Week 4 is an overview of the services of the Community Development Department, including planning, building, zoning and code enforcement. Week 5 features the Finance Support Services Department, including the budget, purchasing, human resources, information technology and public communications, i.e. website, cable television, radio and other public access. The Charter School operation will be presented in Week 6. Tours of Government Center, the Police Department, Community Recreation Center and Charter School will be included. The Academy will conclude with graduation recognition at the February 2005 Commission Meeting.

The course will be offered once a year. Interested parties who would like to apply for next year's Citizen's Academy should complete an Academy application which is available at Government Center or can be downloaded from the City's website, www.cityofaventura.com. A detailed course outline is also available on the website

Questions should be directed to the Office of the City Clerk, 305-466-8901. ☎

Aventura Police to Begin Operation "Don't Cross the Line"

The Aventura Police Department will begin traffic enforcement operation "Don't Cross the Line". The program is modeled after New York City's "Don't Block the Box" program instituted in 1999 by Mayor Rudy Giuliani. The program will target rude drivers who block intersections and cause traffic to snarl in the middle of the intersection. The Aventura City Commission passed a resolution at the September meeting supporting the program.

Initially three intersections along Biscayne Boulevard will be patrolled by police: at Williams Island Boulevard, Miami Gardens Drive and Northeast 187th Street.

The Florida Department of Transportation has agreed to assist the program by installing "Do Not Block Intersection Signs" on the signal mast arms at the locations targeted by the Police.

Violators who get caught blocking an intersection will face a fine of \$115.00 and 3 points on their drivers license. If you're uncertain about making it through an intersection before the light turns red, DON'T CROSS THE LINE. ☎

Aventura Founders Day 2004 Celebration

*David Clayton-Thomas and Blood Sweat & Tears
Concert Tickets On Sale Now!*

The 9th annual Founders Day will be a hit on Sunday, November 14, 2004. Gates open at 4 PM at Founders Park for the concert of the year starring David Clayton-Thomas and Blood Sweat & Tears. Join your neighbors and enjoy platinum hits that include "Spinning Wheel", "You've Made Me So Very Happy", "God Bless the Child", "And When I Die", "Hi De Ho" and scores of others from this legendary band. The concert opens with Star Search's National Semi-Finalist Catherine Cue taking the stage at 4:45 PM, followed by "The Santana Tribute Band" who will play contemporary Latin and pop hits, complete with dancers to get you on your feet!

Tickets are now on sale at the Community Recreation Center (3375 NE 188 Street), Founders Park (3105 NE 190 Street) or the Aventura Government Center (19200 W. Country Club Drive). Tickets cost \$5.00 each, and in exchange Aventura residents will receive five Founders Bucks per ticket for the first six tickets purchased. Founders Bucks may be used to purchase food from any vendor present throughout Founders Day.

...AND THERE IS MORE!

In addition to a fantastic concert, Founders Day includes an all-day array of activities, entertainment and excitement. The Aventura Star Talent Competition Finals will be held at the Community Recreation Center from 10 AM – 1 PM. Talent ranges in ages from 5 through senior and includes both individual and group categories. The Finals are free and open to the public. At Founders Park Bayside from 1 – 4 PM you will enjoy great family fun including a giant 24' super slide and sport speed cage with radar; entertainment including a dazzling display from the Little Theatre School for the Performing Arts; interactive games; arts & crafts projects; purple people painters; Toddler Town including carousel, interactive toddler time, inflatable play center and pirate ship; and an entertainment tent complete with bingo, comedy and more!

For more information on the 9th Annual Founders Day, please call 305-466-8930 or 305-466-3883. For up-to-date information on other City programs and activities, visit the City's website at www.cityofaventura.com.

Register for City Speak, an on-line service that allows you to receive e-mail notification about the topics and events that interest you. To register for fast access to City activities, look for the City Speak logo at www.cityofaventura.com.



STATE CASUALTY INSURANCE PREMIUMS

The City of Aventura and its Police Officers need your help in obtaining their fair share of State Casualty Insurance Premiums Tax. We are asking that you verify that all casualty insurance policies, those on your vehicles and home, include the correct address, including the City of Aventura. This will insure that the State pays to the City of Aventura Police Officers' Retirement Plan (Plan) a portion of the statewide tax on casualty insurance policies.

This will not result in an increase in the cost of your insurance policies or taxes paid on those policies. The State collects a tax on all insurance policies issued on property or persons in the State of Florida. By including the correct address on auto and homeowners policies, the State will simply pay to the Plan a portion of that State tax. If you continue to have your address on these policies show any address other than City of Aventura, the tax which should be used to support the Plan will be kept by the State or be incorrectly paid to North Miami Beach or Miami.

You can assist the City and its Police Officers by assuring that the address is correct on your insurance policies. This will insure that the Plan receives its fair share of the tax dollars resulting in lower contributions being required by Police Officers and the City in the future. If you have questions, please call the City's Finance Support Services Department at (305) 466-8920.