

# THE AVENTURA

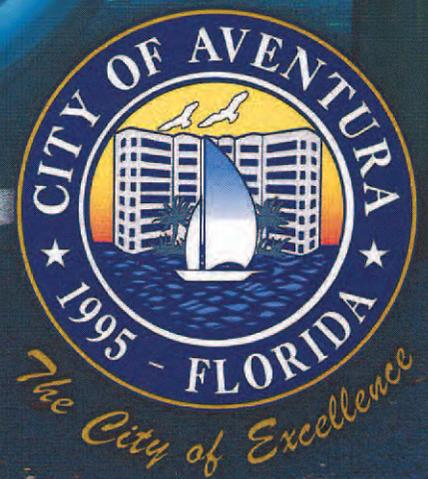
2011/2012 Sourcebook Sponsored By The City of Aventura

COMMUNITY  
EVENTS  
CALENDAR

GUIDE TO  
CITY LIVING

GOVERNMENT  
RESOURCES

2010  
ANNUAL  
REPORT



**TO THE RESIDENTS OF AVENTURA:**



I am pleased to present *THE AVENTURA* magazine to the community which includes an overview of the City's accomplishments this past year and information on municipal services. In addition, this document has been designed as a useful resource for City residents and visitors. Each year as we prepare this annual report to the citizens of Aventura, we reflect on and seek to communicate with you the achievements of the past and our plans for 2011.

Like most local governments across the country the City of Aventura has been feeling the impact of the prolonged economic recession. Over the past three years the City has experienced huge losses in property tax revenue. Between the economic recession that resulted in lower home values and voter-approved constitutional amendments that took effect two years ago, the City's taxable value has decreased from \$9.609 billion to \$7.245 billion. This represents a loss of 25% or \$4.1 million in tax revenue compared to the 2007 tax roll year. The economic recession has negatively affected many of the City's other revenue sources as well.

Based on property value decreases it was very clear that the budget could not be balanced without either utilizing reserves, cutting services or raising taxes. In light of the economic times our residents and businesses were facing, raising taxes was not an option the City Commission and I chose to consider. Because we outsource many of our services, we have a lower number of employees as compared to other cities. This model has served us well in dealing with the uncertain economic times. For these reasons, and most importantly to preserve the quality of life for our community, service levels were not reduced to balance the budget.

Therefore, based on these extraordinary times, the budget was balanced with funds from our reserves that the City very prudently set aside during better economic conditions. The budget process resulted in maintaining operating increases below the target amount and only utilizing approximately \$570,000 from the City's reserve funds to balance the budget. The City continues to enjoy the lowest tax rate at 1.7261 in the County.

We continue to explore alternatives in our continuing quest to reduce operating costs and remain prudent and conservative in our financial management of the City. This past year, taking advantage of lower interest rates, the City Commission took action to refinance outstanding debt that was originally issued in 1999. This resulted in a cost savings of \$1.7 million over the term of the loan. In addition, by implementing "green" initiatives throughout our organization and replacing equipment with more energy efficient ones, many departments have been able to reduce utility and operating costs.

During this past year, the City continued to focus on maintaining and protecting its infrastructure by completing several capital projects. New turning lanes were installed at both the intersections of Williams Island Road and Biscayne Boulevard and NE 191<sup>st</sup> Street and Biscayne Boulevard to improve traffic flow at these locations. The Exercise Path around Country Club Drive was upgraded and renovated for the convenience of our residents. A new tennis court and upgraded playground equipment was added to Founders Park. In our continued efforts to improve drainage around the City, projects were completed this past year along NE 191<sup>st</sup> Street, NE 29<sup>th</sup> Avenue and the area known as the Hospital District west of Biscayne Boulevard. Over 22,000 riders a month utilize the City's free shuttle bus service to travel to their destinations throughout the City.

The City's charter school completed a successful seventh year and scored an "A" on the School Performance Grade issued by the State of Florida. The school administration, staff, teachers, parents and students should be commended for a job well done. The total number of students attending the K-8<sup>th</sup> grades school increased to 972.

This past year, the City and the owners of Aventura Mall successfully renegotiated the Aventura Mall Police Services Agreement that was last amended in 2002. The new agreement increases the number of full-time police officers stationed at the Mall while limiting the impact on the overall police services provided to the City. The majority of the cost for this service is paid by the Mall. The Agreement serves to recognize both the City and the Mall's mutual concern for the safety of the Mall patrons and police service needs of the community.

I am proud to work with informed elected officials, a dedicated group of employees and involved citizens as we continually strive to improve our community.

These are challenging times for local governments to maintain quality services in light of revenue reductions caused by the downturn in the economy. However, we continue our commitment to provide a community residents can take pride in and others seek to emulate. I hope you enjoy reading about the progress of Aventura, the City of Excellence.

Sincerely,

**Eric M. Soroka, ICMA-CM  
City Manager**



**DEAR CITY OF AVENTURA RESIDENTS:**



It is my pleasure as your Mayor to present the City's Annual Report for 2010. It has been six years since you elected me to the Office of Mayor. Much has been addressed during that period of time in response to your concerns and continues on an ongoing basis.

I am both pleased and proud of the fact that this past year the City's new Arts & Cultural Center opened on time and on budget. The 325 seat facility provides a variety of performing arts and cultural programming for all age groups. Over 18,000 people have attended the various performances at the Center since it opened last summer. The grand opening event last October featuring "An Evening with Patti LuPone," the two time Tony Award-winning performer was a huge success. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the members of the Arts & Cultural Center Advisory Board for their valuable input this past year. An additional benefit for our community is that the Center enabled our Charter School to expand drama and arts programming opportunities for our students. I invite you to participate in the Center's fundraising projects, "Walk of the Arts" and "Honor Roll" which gives residents and businesses a chance to support local cultural programs while becoming part of Aventura history.

In January of this year, the City was awarded the "Green City Certification" by the Florida Green Building Coalition for its outstanding efforts to promote and adopt "Green" initiatives throughout the departments of our government. The City held its second annual Go Green Symposium for our residents and condominium managers to learn how the City of Aventura is going green in its operations while discovering ways to establish or enhance their Go Green initiatives. The City recognizes those businesses and condominiums that developed and implemented programs to reduce energy consumption and encouraged more recycling at our Annual Arbor Day Celebration in May.

In response to the growing number of young families moving into the City of Aventura the Founders Park playground was completely upgraded with new modern and additional play equipment. Our youth athletic programs continue to grow with basketball, soccer, baseball, T-ball and flag football. This past year for the first time, Waterways Park played host to Aventura's own Little League along with Founders Park. I invite you to join one or more of the City's many recreation programs and activities.

The Aventura City of Excellence School obtained an "A" rating again from the State of Florida and has been recognized nationally for its character education programs. We are proud of its accomplishments.

These continue to be challenging and demanding economic times for everyone, including your City government. While we have tightened our belts like many to stretch your dollar, we have avoided financial peril through conservative revenue forecasting and budgeting. The City Commission spends a great deal of time ensuring that your tax dollars are spent wisely and are in the best interests of the entire community. These efforts have allowed the City to maintain the lowest tax rate in Miami-Dade County. Our priority continues to be providing quality government services and maintaining a sustainable community for our residents and businesses to enjoy.

As we begin 2011, I want to take this opportunity to thank the community for its valuable support during the past year as we addressed many difficult and important issues on behalf of the future of Aventura.

Sincerely,

*Susan Gottlieb*

**Susan Gottlieb, Mayor**



**Zev Auerbach  
Commissioner**



**Bob Diamond  
Commissioner**



**Teri Holzberg  
Commissioner**



**Billy Joel  
Commissioner**



**Michael Stern  
Commissioner**



**Luz Urbáez-Weinberg  
Commissioner**

**TO THE RESIDENTS OF AVENTURA:**



I am pleased to present *THE AVENTURA* magazine to the community which includes an overview of the City's accomplishments this past year and information on municipal services. In addition, this document has been designed as a useful resource for City residents and visitors. Each year as we prepare this annual report to the citizens of Aventura, we reflect on and seek to communicate with you the achievements of the past and our plans for 2011.

Like most local governments across the country the City of Aventura has been feeling the impact of the prolonged economic recession. Over the past three years the City has experienced huge losses in property tax revenue. Between the economic recession that resulted in lower home values and voter-approved constitutional amendments that took effect two years ago, the City's taxable value has decreased from \$9.609 billion to \$7.245 billion. This represents a loss of 25% or \$4.1 million in tax revenue compared to the 2007 tax roll year. The economic recession has negatively affected many of the City's other revenue sources as well.

Based on property value decreases it was very clear that the budget could not be balanced without either utilizing reserves, cutting services or raising taxes. In light of the economic times our residents and businesses were facing, raising taxes was not an option the City Commission and I chose to consider. Because we outsource many of our services, we have a lower number of employees as compared to other cities. This model has served us well in dealing with the uncertain economic times. For these reasons, and most importantly to preserve the quality of life for our community, service levels were not reduced to balance the budget.

Therefore, based on these extraordinary times, the budget was balanced with funds from our reserves that the City very prudently set aside during better economic conditions. The budget process resulted in maintaining operating increases below the target amount and only utilizing approximately \$570,000 from the City's reserve funds to balance the budget. The City continues to enjoy the lowest tax rate at 1.7261 in the County.

We continue to explore alternatives in our continuing quest to reduce operating costs and remain prudent and conservative in our financial management of the City. This past year, taking advantage of lower interest rates, the City Commission took action to refinance outstanding debt that was originally issued in 1999. This resulted in a cost savings of \$1.7 million over the term of the loan. In addition, by implementing "green" initiatives throughout our organization and replacing equipment with more energy efficient ones, many departments have been able to reduce utility and operating costs.

During this past year, the City continued to focus on maintaining and protecting its infrastructure by completing several capital projects. New turning lanes were installed at both the intersections of Williams Island Road and Biscayne Boulevard and NE 191<sup>st</sup> Street and Biscayne Boulevard to improve traffic flow at these locations. The Exercise Path around Country Club Drive was upgraded and renovated for the convenience of our residents. A new tennis court and upgraded playground equipment was added to Founders Park. In our continued efforts to improve drainage around the City, projects were completed this past year along NE 191<sup>st</sup> Street, NE 29<sup>th</sup> Avenue and the area known as the Hospital District west of Biscayne Boulevard. Over 22,000 riders a month utilize the City's free shuttle bus service to travel to their destinations throughout the City.

The City's charter school completed a successful seventh year and scored an "A" on the School Performance Grade issued by the State of Florida. The school administration, staff, teachers, parents and students should be commended for a job well done. The total number of students attending the K- 8<sup>th</sup> grades school increased to 972.

This past year, the City and the owners of Aventura Mall successfully renegotiated the Aventura Mall Police Services Agreement that was last amended in 2002. The new agreement increases the number of full-time police officers stationed at the Mall while limiting the impact on the overall police services provided to the City. The majority of the cost for this service is paid by the Mall. The Agreement serves to recognize both the City and the Mall's mutual concern for the safety of the Mall patrons and police service needs of the community.

I am proud to work with informed elected officials, a dedicated group of employees and involved citizens as we continually strive to improve our community.

These are challenging times for local governments to maintain quality services in light of revenue reductions caused by the downturn in the economy. However, we continue our commitment to provide a community residents can take pride in and others seek to emulate. I hope you enjoy reading about the progress of Aventura, the City of Excellence.

Sincerely,

**Eric M. Soroka, ICMA-CM  
City Manager**



**ORGANIZATIONAL CHART**



THE AVENTURA:  
**CITY**

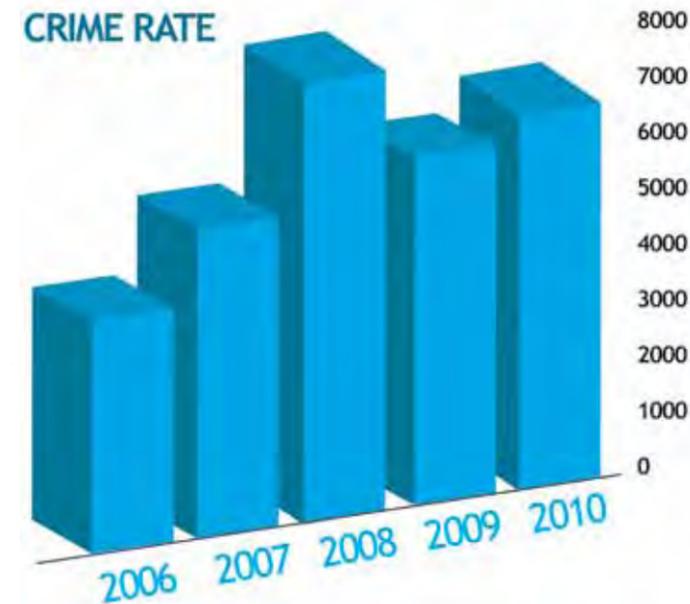


The Aventura Police Department's commitment to its Mission Statement has allowed it to be recognized as an outstanding police department within the law enforcement community in Miami-Dade County. The men and women, both sworn and civilian, have done an outstanding job in the performance of their duties.

In the 2010-2011 FY the Aventura Police Department implemented many programs geared towards crime suppression and training. This agency purchased two License Plate Reader (LPR) systems that have been mounted on patrol vehicles. Each device can "read" license tags as the vehicle moves through traffic. The information is wirelessly transmitted to a server where the tag is run in the FDLE system. The system will alert the officer if the tag comes back stolen or there is a message in the system on the tag. This system has been used to recover many reported stolen vehicles.

YEAR	TOTAL CRIMES	VIOLENT CRIMES	POPULATION	CRIME RATE	% OF CHANGE
2005	1646	35	29451	5589.0	-14.8%
2006	1797	60	29451	6101.0	+9.2%
2007	1965	77	29451	6600.0	+8.1%
2008	2363	68	29475	8020.0	+2.25%
2009	2195	68	30027	7310.0	-8.9%
2010	2271	55	30333	7486.0	+2.4%

The police department also purchased new handguns for all officers. The department updated firearms that were in excess of twelve years old. Each officer had to participate in a firearms training class and qualify with the new firearm prior to being carried for duty use. In conjunction with the purchase of the new firearms the department also increased officer training in the areas of: defensive tactics, firearms, both handguns and rifles, as well as less than lethal weapons. All officers were required to participate and successfully complete this training.



The Department supports children and community programs such as the DARE Program, Red Ribbon Week, National Night Out, Annual Food Drive, Bicycle Safety Rodeos, security surveys for businesses and residences through the Crime Prevention Unit under the Special Services Division. The Department also conducted a holiday toy drive, in conjunction with the Salvation Army, in which the Aventura Police supplied over 200 toys for needy children.

With the start of the 2010-2011 FY year the Department was budgeted for 83 sworn employees and 29 civilians. The crime rate for January – December 2010 showed an overall increase of 2.4 percent.

# AVENTURA CITY OF EXCELLENCE SCHOOL (ACES)



**A**ventura City of Excellence School, (ACES) the first municipally-run charter school in Miami-Dade County serves nearly 1,000 students in Kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

ACES continues to lead the way in educational excellence with a challenging core curriculum complemented by “whole child” approach. Students are engaged with a curriculum that supports their interests and individual development. Part of that development includes character education and community involvement by parents and students.

**In 2010, ACES reached several major achievements:**

- Earned an “A” rating for the sixth consecutive year.
- Started its own National Junior Honor Society chapter for Middle School.
- Held its first Alumni Lunch where 8<sup>th</sup> Graders asked questions about High School to the Alumni panel.
- Students chose and conducted several successful community outreach events. In April, Becca’s Closet Prom Dress Drive collected prom dresses helping make a difference for local South Florida girls. As part of International Peace Day, ACES prepared 560 Peace Day gift boxes filled with essential personal items for distribution by the Good Samaritan program to needy children around the world.
- Participated as one of ten Florida Elementary Schools in an International Space Station life science experiment: Butterflies in Space.
- ACES earned first place in the school wide testing category “Middlementary Math Competition.” In Team competition, the 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Team placed second and 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Team placed fifth along with ACES students who placed in individual competitions.

ACES’ well-rounded formula for success has led it to remain one of the top schools in the country by providing a safe learning environment, a talented teaching staff dedicated to best practices and a responsive leadership team that fosters the school’s culture of excellence.



Students have an opportunity to enroll in gifted classes at the elementary level and high school courses at the middle school level. In 2010, students explored their interests and talents through a variety of unique programs. Middle school students had a choice of

elective courses such as art, drama, dance, journalism, TV production, guitar and physical education/health. Elementary students attended an assortment of special classes such as art, music, physical education, dance, media, technology, and Spanish. School-sponsored extracurricular activities were expanded for athletics and the boys travel basketball team won the Dunk Basketball Charter League Championship for its third consecutive winning season. Other intramural sports offered included volleyball, soccer, flag football, and tennis. In addition to clubs, ACES students participated in Student Government Association, National Junior Honor Society and chorus. ACES students also participated in City of Aventura’s Founder’s Day, Veterans Day, and Arbor Day events.

Aventura City of Excellence School continues to reach new heights in academic achievement, and community involvement. ACES creates a foundation of success and an unparalleled experience for its students.

**AVENTURA CITY OF EXCELLENCE SCHOOL**  
 305.466.1499  
[aventuracharter.org](http://aventuracharter.org)

# OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK



The City Clerk serves as the City's corporate secretary. The clerk is the official records keeper and custodian of the City seal. The City Clerk is a constitutional officer appointed by and reports to the City Commission.



In 2010, the City Clerk's Office prepared: 42 sets of minutes and 52 public notices; published 24 legal advertisements; drafted six ordinances and 30 resolutions; responded to 1488 lien requests; and prepared 399 welcome letters to new residents.

*Residents are encouraged to attend City Commission meetings, which are held in the Government Center Commission Chamber on the Plaza Level at 19200 West Country Club Drive. To confirm all meeting dates, times and locations, please contact the City Clerk's Office at (305) 466.8901 or visit the City's website at [www.cityofaventura.com](http://www.cityofaventura.com)*

Responsibilities of the City Clerk include:

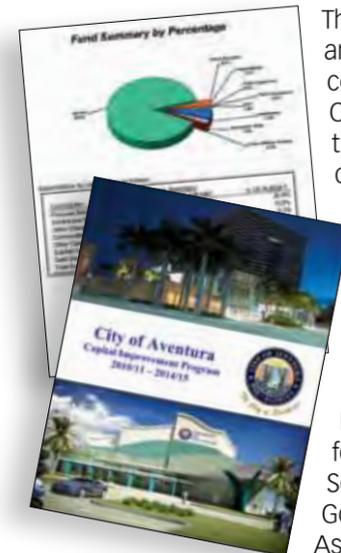
- Recording the meeting minutes and all official actions of the City Commission and its Advisory Boards.
- Attesting to and maintaining custody of all records of the City including ordinances, resolutions, contracts, and deeds etc.
- Publishing and distributing public notices, as required by law.
- Administering the publication and supplementing of the City Code of Ordinances. Serving as the municipal Supervisor of Elections, conducting all City elections in accordance with city, county and state laws.
- Establishing and coordinating the City's records management program in compliance with Florida state law.
- Responding to public records requests and lien searches. Scheduling code enforcement hearings and providing clerical support to Special Master.
- Providing clerical support to Commissioners and assisting the City Manager with special projects.
- Administering oaths and providing full notary public services.

**CITY CLERK & COMMISSION**  
**305.466.8901**

# FINANCE DEPARTMENT



The Finance Department provides overall financial and administrative support to the City's other operating departments. The primary functions of Finance include accounting, budgetary control, purchasing, risk management, payroll, cash management and debt administration.



The department's is to establish and maintain effective internal controls that safeguard the City's assets and maintain the City's strong financial condition by conducting the City's business operations in a fiscally responsible manner.

In March 2010, Finance issued the City's Comprehensive Annual Financial Report ("CAFR") for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2009. The Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada ("GFOA") awarded a Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting to the City of Aventura for its CAFR for the 2009 fiscal year. This was the 14<sup>th</sup> consecutive year that the City has achieved this prestigious award. In order to be awarded a Certificate of Achievement, a government must publish an easily readable and efficiently organized CAFR. This report must satisfy both generally accepted accounting principles and applicable legal requirements.

Additionally, Finance's responsibilities include:

- Providing administrative, operational and financial assistance to the City Manager and staff
- Providing Accounting, Accounts Payable, Payroll, Budget, Grant Monitoring and Revenue Collection functions
- Monitoring/projecting the City's fund balances
- Preparing/assisting with all financial reports – including the CAFR, the Aventura City of Excellence School Special Purpose Financial Report and the Annual Budget
- Providing cash/investment and debt management
- Monitoring/developing financial strategies that ensure fiscal solvency and financial statement integrity through the maintenance of proper internal controls
- Monitoring and implementing reporting requirements recommended by the State Auditor General, GFOA and GASB

Due to the current economic and favorable interest rate environment, in September of 2010, the City issued a partial advance refunding of the original 1999 F M L C Loan with a Bank of America Bank Loan that resulted in more than \$1.1M NPV savings over the life of the loan.



The mission of the Community Services Department is to provide the residents of Aventura with the highest quality recreation, special events, facilities and public works services reflecting the City's standards of excellence. The Department also provides facility maintenance and manages the Aventura Express shuttle bus. Supporting these responsibilities, the department has many opportunities to champion the City's Go Green efforts.

For the thirteenth consecutive year, the City was named a "Tree City USA" by the National Arbor Day Foundation. As a part of our Annual Arbor Day event, the City of Aventura recognized eight condominiums and businesses for its 3rd annual GO GREEN Recognition Award Program. The program recognizes residents and businesses that are acting to protect our environment and contributing to a sustainable community.

The Community Services Department held several events throughout the year. Halloween Harvest attracts over 2,500 children and their parents as they enjoy activities in safe environment. In November, the annual Founders Day Celebration at Founders Park was attended by over 3,700 residents. This event features family entertainment, the "Aventura Star" resident talent show and demonstrations from the Community Recreation Center and ACES clubs.

Youth athletics programs expanded with the inaugural season of the Aventura Little League. The Little League offers baseball and t-ball with games at Founders and Waterways Parks.

Over 700 children participated in Youth Athletics programs during 2010 including such as tennis, soccer, basketball and flag football. Adult athletic programs included softball leagues and tennis.

The Aventura Community Recreation Center offers a complete and balanced program of recreation activities. Last year, over 700 children registered in the 2010 Summer Camp programs including Sports Camp and Travel Camp.

Over 3,400 seniors participated in activities ranging from Mahjong to wellness lectures at the Community Recreation Center. Another 400 seniors enjoyed trips to fine art museums, historical destinations, and theater shows in the Cultural Arts, Theater and Leisure program.

The Community Services Department consists of two major operating Divisions: Public Works and Parks and Recreation.

The Public Works Division is responsible for:

- Maintaining all City landscaping, streets, right-of-ways, storm water drainage, decorative street lighting, banners and informational signage, public buildings and schools.
- Issuing Public Works permits to utilities performing improvements in the public right-of-ways and reviews engineering plans.
- Managing and maintaining all City owned buildings and facilities.
- Acting as a liaison to public utility service providers and response to citizen concerns.
- Mapping resources with an automated GIS computer system providing accurate zoning, land parcels, and infrastructure information.

The Parks and Recreation Division is responsible for:

- Community Recreation Center programming.
- Operating Founders Park, Founders Park SplashPad, Waterways Park, Waterways Dog Park and Veterans Park.
- Youth and adult athletic leagues and fitness programs.
- Special events such as Founders Day, Arbor Day, and Veterans Day programs fostering community pride and spirit.
- Cultural Arts, Theater and Leisure senior program that offers trips to the theater, museums, historical places, and area restaurants.

2010 COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT ATTENDANCE SUMMARY	
<b>PARK AND COMMUNITY RECREATION CENTER ATTENDANCE</b>	
Founders Park, including the SplashPad	112,560
Waterways Park	53,097
Waterways Dog Park	20,498
Community Recreation Center Programs, Classes, and activities	78,778
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>264,933</b>
<b>ACTIVITY/PROGRAM ATTENDANCE</b>	
Special Events; Arbor Day, Senior Prom, July 4 <sup>th</sup> Fireworks, Halloween, Founders Day, Veterans Day	23,698
Winter/Spring/Summer Camps	902
Teacher Planning Days (8)	238
Cultural Arts Theatre and Leisure Program	408
Athletics; Tennis, Softball, T-ball, Basketball, Soccer, Flag football, Little League Baseball	981
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>26,227</b>

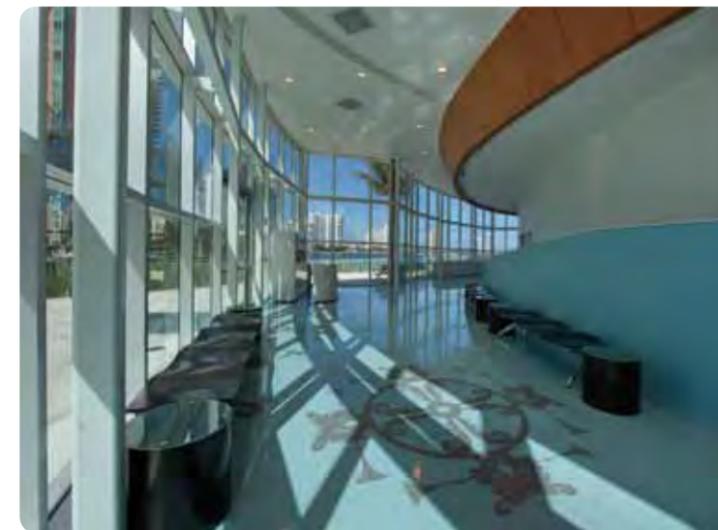
# AVENTURA ARTS & CULTURAL CENTER



The 324 seat Aventura Arts & Cultural Center (AACC) opened its doors, on time and within budget, on June 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2010. In October, a community open house called, Curtain Up featured a number of local arts groups, children's activities, live entertainment and guided tours of the facility. Its success has turned it into an annual event. On October 23, 2010, the Aventura Arts & Cultural Center held its grand opening with a reception and performance by, Broadway Star, Patti LuPone.



To meet part of its educational objectives, the AACC has partnered with the Broward Center for the Performing Arts Center to offer four educational programs (Smart Stage Matinees) as part of the curriculum for the Aventura City of Excellence School.



The center also hosts student assemblies, and school concerts.

The AACC hosts diverse programs, including contemporary dance, ballet, Latin and traditional jazz, classical and contemporary music, as well as family shows. For the new season, 2011/12, we can look forward to expanding the programming and continuing to build our audience.

For upcoming show information, please visit the Aventura Arts & Cultural Center website: [aventuracenter.org](http://aventuracenter.org). The Box Office at the Aventura Arts & Cultural Center is open Tuesday – Saturday from 12:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m., and 1.5 hours prior to performances.

## AVENTURA ARTS & CULTURAL CENTER

**General Information:**  
305.466.8002

**Facility Rental:**  
305.466.8005

**Tickets:**  
877.311.7469 (SHOW)

# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



The Department of Community Development is responsible for managing the City's development, planning and code compliance. Some of these functions include planning and zoning, development review, building plan review and inspection, code enforcement, economic development and local business taxes. The department is organized to provide "one-stop" customer service at a centralized location with several dedicated divisions handling specialized areas. Those divisions are: Building, Local Business Tax Receipt, Planning and Zoning and Code Compliance.



of life for the community. Standards are set to preserve neighborhood integrity, enforce appropriate building dimensions, including height, and limit the intensity of future development. The Plan is reviewed to be consistent with current development patterns. At times an amendment is needed to minimize potential negative impact from development the City's infrastructure and quality of life.

An amendment to the Comprehensive Plan was adopted by the City Commission in 2010 to incorporate potable water supply concurrency standards. This amendment strengthens

In 2010, the Building Division continues to provide accessible service. Charged with enforcing the Florida Building Code, this division must review plans, issue permits and inspect all new construction and renovations in the City. Last year, the Building Division issued 4,130 building permits and performed 6,963 inspections. Building permits generated approximately \$1,303,630 in revenue.

the link between land use planning and potable water supply. The change requires that developers fulfill level of service standards for new developments. This amendment has now become part of the City's Land Development Regulations.

The Local Business Tax Receipt Division issued 2,884 local business tax receipts generating approximately \$674,300 in revenue.

The Code Compliance Division continues to be seen around the community, verifying legal operations of businesses with local business tax receipts and assuring construction projects have obtained the necessary building permits. Code Compliance Officers also enforce other City codes such as the property maintenance ordinance and noise and signage regulations. The Code Compliance Division issued 134 warnings and violations warnings last year and collected approximately \$21,545 in fines. Code Compliance also works with the City's Special Master to conduct hearings related to the City's Intersection Safety program. In 2010, 33,346 notices of violation were issued under the program.

The Planning and Zoning Division processes all land development applications, including site plans, rezoning, variances and comprehensive plan amendments. Last year, 12 land development applications were reviewed and processed.

The City's Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Regulations provide a cohesive blueprint for development and redevelopment within the City. These plans and regulations address strategies for accommodating growth while maintaining quality

The Code Compliance Division continued working throughout the year with property owners to clean up vacant properties and bring them into compliance with the City's property maintenance ordinance.

# INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY



The Information Technology Department provides a secure, stable and high-tech computing environment for the City staff. The computing environment includes software, computer hardware, network infrastructure and telephone systems.

The department performs software support and maintenance for a mix of programs including general office work, specialized business applications and email with spam control. Information Technology works closely with City departments to identify, select and implement cost-effective technology solutions enabling staff to deliver reliable customer service.

The Information Technology Department supported 165 desktop computers, 90 laptops and 30 servers throughout the City. Help desk services are provided 24/7 for City Departments especially during emergencies.

In 2010, the City of Aventura continued with network innovations to increase operational effectiveness. Upgrades were made to existing software and computer equipment while embracing new technological advances where appropriate.

Information Technology's 2010 completed projects included:

- Economical and energy efficient Voice over IP telephone system
- Outsourced email for increase availability and redundancy

- Established use of touch screen tablet computers (iPads) for the City Commission to use during meetings

- Designed and implemented network infrastructure and phone system at the Aventura Arts & Cultural Center

- Facilitated the secure availability of Aventura Police Department data into the Regional Law Enforcement Exchange (R-LEX). The R-LEX shares law enforcement data between Florida agencies.

As part of the citywide Go Green initiative, Information Technology contributed to these efforts with a server virtualization project. This project allowed the City to reduce the number of physical servers by 11 while increasing the total number of servers supporting computer operations. Virtualization reduced the electrical and air conditioning requirements in the data center resulting in lower energy use and costs.

Information Technology continued to provide web development services streamlining internal business processes. This included development and maintenance of the City's website, [cityofaventura.com](http://cityofaventura.com); the Aventura City of Excellence School's website, [aventuracharter.org](http://aventuracharter.org); the Aventura Arts and Cultural Center's website, [aventuracenter.org](http://aventuracenter.org) and an intranet. The intranet gives internal access to City employees to be able to download forms, policy documents and use internal web based applications. The department also offers internal training for software and related issues such as email, viruses and security.

The City Commission supports an accessible government and encourages community participation on many levels. The City of Aventura shares information, news and progress reports using traditional and innovative ways for greater reach in the community.

In 2010, the City produced several publications online and in print. Communication efforts were planned and designed to reduce printing for lower environmental impact and cost. However, the need to share valuable information on government services never changes.

The City enjoyed great success in 2010 with its use of social media. Twitter followers reached nearly 900 before the end of the year. Twitter has been useful for communicating timely information about game cancellations or the announcement of the opening of the City's newest playground at Founders Park. The City's online messages (known as 'tweets') inform residents, visitors and businesses about upcoming events, meetings and general information about the City. The latest tweet is simultaneously posted on the City's website home page providing greater access to the information.

The City expanded the use of Twitter to a separate feed for the Aventura Arts & Cultural Center so that patrons can follow the latest news on shows and ticket sales.

The City's websites have benefitted from social media as well with the use of the City of Aventura and Aventura

City of Excellence School's (ACES) Flickr photo streams. Photos from special events are uploaded to the stream, allowing easy publishing of photo slide shows.

The City still relies on traditional communications through radio, TV and face-to-face meetings. The Information radio station (1650 AM) presents information on local traffic, special events and recreational activities.

The City's cable channel (AVTV) remained an important avenue of communication to City residents. The City acquired professional voiceovers to add interest and information throughout the regular broadcast of the informational slides. AVTV broadcasts on Comcast cable channel 77. Special events and city announcements are shown 24/7. AVTV's diverse programming includes a satellite feed from The Florida Channel, monthly presentations of special events and Commission meetings.

The City Manager meets with new businesses on a regular basis through Meet Your City Manager meetings. The City Commission meets monthly and encourages community participation at these meetings.

*Regularly held on the first Tuesday of the month, City Commission Meetings begin at 6pm in the Commission Chambers of the Aventura Government Center, 19200 West Country Club Drive.*

## EGOVERNMENT

The City of Aventura is committed to its mission of innovation in the delivery of services to the community. Online services bring convenience and increased accessibility to meet customer needs. The City is continually looking for new ways to improve services for all who live, work and play in Aventura.

### CITY WEBSITES:

[cityofaventura.com](http://cityofaventura.com)  
[aventuracharter.org](http://aventuracharter.org)  
[aventuracenter.org](http://aventuracenter.org)

The City of Aventura provides several eGovernment services through its websites:

- **Online Registration System** – Register for recreational activities, classes and programs.
- **ePermits** – Check building permits & request inspection appointments.
- **MyAventura** – Make service requests, check FAQs, message center subscriptions, search knowledgebase.
- **Public Records** – Online document research repository.
- **Download Forms** – Library of electronic forms that can be downloaded and printed.
- **Online Ticket Purchase** – Tickets for shows and events at the Arts & Cultural Center.

## KEEP IN TOUCH

### ON THE INTERNET

**cityofaventura.com:** The official website for the City of Aventura. This is the home to all government information, resources, forms and eGovernment features.

**aventuracharter.org:** The website for Aventura City of Excellence School. The K-8 school has everything online for parents and students including a Google calendar to stay updated on events at ACES.

**aventuracenter.org:** The online home for the Aventura Arts & Cultural Center. Find info on the latest shows and buy tickets online. There's even a place to donate and purchase a personalized paver or Honor Roll plaque.

### ON THE TUBE

**Comcast Channel 77** is the City's Information Channel (AVTV). It runs listings of events, programs and resources for residents 24/7. Dynamic programming provided by The Florida Channel offers educational shows about Florida history and news from the Florida legislature. Presentations of meetings and City events are also broadcasted.

### ON THE AIRWAVES

**1650 AM** on your car radio will get you to the City of Aventura Information Radio. The community station provides traffic alerts, recreational programs and public safety messages.

### ON THE GO

Keep the City of Aventura with you wherever you roam. Follow on Twitter using your mobile phone or by texting follow **cityofaventura** to **40404**.

Prefer an iPad? Use Twitter to follow **@cityofaventura**. The tweets keep you informed about the City.

If you're a fan of the Aventura Arts & Cultural Center follow it on Twitter **@aventuracenter.org**.

The City's **Flickr photostreams** tells the story of the City of Excellence. A vibrant community that has so much to offer residents, businesses and visitors. View photo slideshows of the City's special events and recreational programs.



▶ Two programs to choose from include...

**Acting Up**  
[AGES 6 - 11]  
Broadway Revue

**Broadway Bound**  
[AGES 9 - 14]  
Once Upon A Mattress  
Cats



▶ **SESSION ONE**  
JUNE 27 - JULY 22, 2011

▶ **SESSION TWO**  
JULY 25 - AUG 19, 2011

**AVENTURA  
ARTS &  
CULTURAL  
CENTER**  
AVENTURA, FLORIDA The City of Excellence



Additional Summer Camp and Show Information at  
[www.BrowardCenter.org/summercamp2011](http://www.BrowardCenter.org/summercamp2011)

# BUDGET PRIORITIES/GOALS



The following represents the pre-established priorities and goals that provided a framework for the preparation of the 2010/2011 Budget Plan:

- Avoid increasing the property tax rate in light of the economic times our residents and businesses are experiencing by utilizing reserve funds to bridge the revenue gap.
- In response to decreased property tax revenues, limit increases in operating costs to 4%, while maintaining current service levels and programs.
- Fund year round operating requirements for the Aventura Arts & Cultural Center.
- Continue to adopt Go Green initiatives in order to save energy, conserve precious natural resources and reduce City's impact on climate change. These initiatives over time will also reduce our annual operating cost and impacts on the environment.
- Provide funding to maintain landscaped areas infrastructure to continue to provide a high-quality maintenance program.
- Continue to utilize technology to improve productivity and lower costs of providing services.
- Implement and fund the pay-as-you-go Capital Improvement Program to address the City's infrastructure needs.

# BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS



**Some of the major points emphasized, in the proposed budget, are as follows:**

- For the fifteenth year, there was no property tax increase. By adopting last year's millage rate, which is less than the roll back rate, most residents with lower property assessments will see a reduction in their City taxes.
- Total expenditures in all funds decreased by 7.3%.
- The operating cost increases were held to 3.0% without reducing current service levels or laying off employees.
- For the first time in the City's history, approximately \$570,000 was utilized from the City's reserve funds to balance the budget due to reduction in property tax assessments.
- Funds first full year of operations for the Aventura Arts & Cultural Center which will be utilized to host a variety of performing arts and cultural programs for all age groups.
- Includes \$491,200 for improvements to Founders Park including replacing playground equipment, sun covers and adding a hard surface tennis court.
- Funds \$505,000 to resurface NE 29<sup>th</sup> Avenue, NE 187<sup>th</sup> Street and NE 34<sup>th</sup> Avenue.
- 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.
- Continues contracting most maintenance functions, engineering, plan review and inspection services, as well as the operation of the new Aventura Arts & Cultural Center to the private sector.
- Funds police equipment needs from laptop computers to new police vehicles in the amount of \$852,000.
- Includes \$200,000 to upgrade the City's drainage system.
- Continues to adopt Go Green initiatives in order to save energy, conserve natural resources and reduce impact on climate change.