

September

BONITA SPRINGS DOWNTOWN
ALLIANCE NEWSLETTER



DOWNTOWN TALK

President's Message: September 2026

Welcome to what is typically the slowest month of the year for most of us, but that also means that season is just around the corner. It's a great time to make any changes, or spruce things up before life gets even busier!

Congratulations Alex and Ben, who officially opened Hide.A.Wai mojito bar! I was there the other night and I had the chance to talk to quite a few locals, who are so happy to see what our downtown is blossoming into.

A big thanks to our hospitality committee for all the work it put into Riverfest. This was its first year back from a nine-year hiatus and we were able to raise thousands of dollars, which will be split between three nonprofits, including Friends of BERT. **Ceremony Brewing will host a check presentation for the funds raised at Riverfest on Thursday, September 10th at 6:30 p.m., and the public is invited to attend.**

The hospitality committee is now putting its efforts to our downtown Halloween events. Thank you to the City of Bonita Springs for taking over the road closure aspect of the event. Start planning now and buy lots of candy. (Candy is already for sale at Costco and Sam's Club.) The committee will also start planning its annual Halloween pub crawl, so stay tuned for more info.

I don't know about everyone else, but I am still flying high from the overwhelming support the BERT referendum received from Bonita voters.

There is still so much to do and everyone needs to stay engaged. The property will transfer to Trust for Public Lands where they will break it up into the three segments and transfer it to the individual municipalities. Seminole Gulf Railway has up to two years to remove the rails before any construction can begin. During that time, the city will conduct a study of current conditions and start the planning and design phase. Public meetings will be held for input. There will be opportunities for businesses, foundations, and individuals to fund some of the amenities along the trail. It's a very exciting time, but in reality, we are still three to four-plus years away from being able to enjoy the trail.

This month we are welcoming Matt Caldwell, our Lee County Property Appraiser, as our speaker with Newrez Mortgage as our sponsor. Matt will let us know everything the Property Appraiser's office does for Bonita Springs. He will also provide insight into the proposed property tax amendment, which will be on the November ballot. Matt is an amazing source of knowledge in our local county and state government and will be available to answer your questions. Thank you to Newrez and Councilman Nigel Fullick for sponsoring this month's meeting. We have secured sponsorships for the remaining meetings this year, but are looking for next year's sponsors starting with our January 2027 meeting.

Remember that our meetings are always on the 4th Tuesday of the month. September has five Tuesdays, so it will seem like it came early. I hope to see you all there on **September 22nd!**

Thanks!
Mike



**Tuesday, September 22nd
Is the next BSDA Meeting at
Shangri-La Springs at 5:30 p.m.**

**Speaker: Lee County Property Appraiser Matt
Caldwell**

Sponsor: Newrez

Interested in sponsoring a meeting? Email

Mike Gibson at bsdaprez@gmail.com

Please RSVP for the BSDA Meeting to:
lee@shangrilasprings.com

**September's Speaker:
Lee County Property Appraiser
Matt Caldwell**



Matt Caldwell is a 7th generation Florida native, whose family came to Micanopy in 1826. Matt was born in Gainesville but grew up in Lee County where he met his wife, Yvonne. They live there today, where they raise their daughter, Ava. In his private life, Matt is a deacon at their church, Gulf Coast Church of Christ and spends time focused on his timber and cattle business. He also enjoys the outdoor lifestyle that Florida offers: fishing, golfing, kayaking, hunting, and camping, to name a few.

After attending local schools in Lee County, Matt received his Associate's Degree from Edison College, a Bachelor of Arts in History from Florida Gulf Coast University, and a Master of Science in Forestry Resources and Conservation with a concentration in Geomatics from the University of Florida. While an undergraduate, he began his career as a real estate appraiser, ultimately joining the firm of Maxwell, Hendry, Simmons in 2004. He has attained the highest state certification in his field and is qualified as an expert witness in multiple state and federal courts.

From 2019 to 2020, Matt was a partner in TM Strategic Consulting until he was elected to serve as the Lee County Property Appraiser, following the retirement of 40-year incumbent Ken Wilkinson. As the author of numerous Constitutional Amendments, including Save Our Homes, Working Waterfronts, and Portability, Wilkinson set a standard of excellence for public service. Matt is proud to continue Ken's legacy as an advocate for the taxpayer; using the platform as a Constitutional Officer to support good government at the local, state, and federal levels.

September's Sponsor: Newrez Southwest Florida Branch



Newrez LLC is a publicly traded mortgage bank that served over 4.2 million customers nationwide in 2025. The Newrez Southwest Florida Mortgage Group under Nigel Fullick and Gerry Teeven has operated out of Bonita Springs since 2003, with 6 offices from Marco Island to Fort Myers.

Newrez is ranked the 5th largest mortgage originator, 2nd largest FHA lender and non-bank VA lender and, with over \$852 billion in loans and the 3rd largest mortgage servicer in the United States. For information **call 239-495-4101** or email **nfullick@newrez.com** OR; **gteeven@newrez.com**.

Thank You to Everyone Who Attended Our August Meeting







Upcoming Events


FUNDRAISING

»» *Support* ««

LITERACY COUNCIL GULF COAST

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 10
3PM-10PM



10%
DONATION NIGHT
for **Literacy Council Gulf Coast** .
Present this flyer at the Ft. Myers location and Texas Roadhouse will donate **10%** of your total food purchases to **Literacy Council Gulf Coast** !

239-561-7427
8021 DANI DRIVE
FORT MYERS, FL

Labor Day-City Closed

September 7th

Shangri-La Springs 100 year Proclamation

September 9th 4-5 p.m. at Shangri-La Springs

Riverfest Check Presentation

September 10th 6:30 p.m. at Ceremony Brewing

Bonita Springs YMCA Charity Golf Scramble

September 25th 7:30 a.m. at Vasari Country Club

Save The Date for

Trick-Or-Treat Down Old 41



Halloween is just around the corner, which means **Trick-Or-Treat Down Old-41** is back on **Saturday, October 31st from 5-8 p.m.**

This year the city will have an official road closure from Dean Street to Wilson street.

All downtown businesses are encouraged to participate. Stay tuned for more information!

Do You Have an Upcoming Event?

We invite BSDA members to send us an email with the event details and/or a graphic **by the 15th of each month** to be featured in the **following month's email.**

The deadline to submit events and graphics for the September reminder is September 15th.

Please email emma@trishleonard.com with your event information or any questions you may have regarding the newsletter.

TLC Marketing & Creative Services is proud to produce the BSDA monthly Newsletter. If you would like to have a professionally designed newsletter or e-mail campaign, contact TLC Marketing & Creative Services, Inc.
(239) 405-8115.

[Click here to view the website.](#)

NOT A BSDA MEMBER? - CLICK BELOW

The annual Membership period is from September 30th - October
1st

JOIN OR RENEW AT:

<https://bonitadowntownalliance.com/membership/>

Join Today!

BSDA is a community-driven organization that brings together businesses, nonprofits, and local residents dedicated to the growth, promotion, and preservation of Old Downtown Bonita Springs, maintaining its unique old Florida charm.

Bonita Springs Downtown Alliance Inc. is organized exclusively as a business league.
We are a Florida nonprofit corporation and IRS 501(c)6 organization with Federal tax FEIN ID #81-1385933.

Bonita Springs Downtown Alliance
PO Box 367553
Bonita Springs, FL 33936 US

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