



# Around the Ranch

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THE COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER OF LAKEWOOD RANCH

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 18, 2021



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## SOUTHEASTERN GUIDE DOGS

– Since 1982, this organization has been the premier source for guide dogs, service dogs, and companion dogs in the southeastern United States. Many of your neighbors in Lakewood Ranch volunteer their time and love to help make this a success. For more information, see pages 12-13.

Photo by Ernie Soller





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# IDA Designates Steve Zielinski To Be Interim Executive Director

By Ernie Soller,  
Community Correspondent

At the July meeting of the board of supervisors of the Inter-District Authority (IDA) of Lakewood Ranch, Finance Director Steve Zielinski was appointed interim executive director until a replacement for outgoing executive director Anne Ross can be hired.

This is not the first time that Zielinski has been tagged for this job, as he also served in the same position when former executive director Eva Rey resigned her position several years ago.

Zielinski will, as long as he serves as interim executive director, receive an additional salary amount equivalent to 10% of Ross's salary to compensate him for his added responsibilities.

Ross resigned her position, effective July 15, to take the position of executive director for the Stewardship District, which comprises those areas of Lakewood Ranch not part of the "original" districts: 1, 2, 4, 5, and 6. District 3, which constituted the business area around Market Street and University Parkway, was dissolved several years ago.

Ross was feted at a going-away party after the morning CDD board meetings on July 15 at the Town Hall.

Congratulations were given, gifts were presented, and various supervisors weighed in on how much they appreciated Ross's expertise and willingness to help solve problems. One supervisor noted that the supervisors were concerned that things might not go smoothly after Eva Rey left her position, but now that Anne Ross will no longer be the executive director for Lakewood Ranch, they feel that the bar has been raised once again, and whomever replaces Ross will have big shoes to fill.

## DISTRICT 1

It has been reported that several irrigation valves are leaking. District board chairman Alan Roth indicated that he would be willing to spend the money needed in the near future instead of later, to replace or repair these valves before they become a larger problem.

## DISTRICT 2

Operations director Paul Chetlain reported that water samples were taken from Lake Uihlein on May 13 and will be analyzed. A report should be forthcoming.

Attorney Andrew Cohen gave a report on bridges at the Legacy Golf Club. There are 12 bridges on the course, three of which are on CDD land. Supervisor Mike Finney's opinion was that if the CDD would be maintaining those bridges that are on CDD land, that the respective bridges should not be open to the public.

Supervisor Don Avolio brought up the idea that if residents are violating the soil moisture sensor program rules, those residents' irrigation water should be cut off for any "second-day" watering.

There was a discussion regarding the new technology recently installed at the gates to the Country Club. Residents have voiced a number of complaints, such as gates being up while a guard takes a break, and so on. Operations director Chetlain noted that there is a new system in place, and that there will be issues, but the system provides ways to fix those issues.

He stated that issues were not being ignored, but that more data is being collected so as to help improve the system as time goes on.

Regarding the paint scheme for Country Club gatehouses, chairman Pete Bokach noted that in his opinion, the gates should be painted in a color scheme which is consistent from one gate to another.

## DISTRICT 4

District 4 board chairman Mike Griffin noted that since



PHOTO BY ERNIE SOLLER

the district went to a program of slightly increasing CDD fees several years ago in order to provide for a "rainy day" reserve of money, it is now possible for the district to pay for expensive but necessary repairs without having to raise assessments in large amounts. The sidewalk project aimed at raising sidewalks near Greenbrook Boulevard and Lorraine Road – so that kids on their way to and from school in that area don't have to nego-

tiate flooded walkways – was paid for with these reserve funds.

## DISTRICT 5

The board approved their 2022 board meeting schedule.

After discussing the matter, there was no decision made as to a color scheme for the Country Club gatehouses.

## DISTRICT 6

The District 6 board cancelled their July meeting.

## August Programs at Chabad of Bradenton & Lakewood Ranch

Please note that all events will take place at the Chabad House or tent (outside Chabad at 5712 Lorraine Road) or at the virtual Chabad House at [chabadofbradenton.com/zoom](https://chabadofbradenton.com/zoom), unless otherwise written.

**Torah Studies**  
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**Tanya Class**  
**Thursdays, 9-9:30 a.m.**  
*At the virtual Chabad House*

Delve into the secrets of the soul with Rabbi Mendy at this weekly Tanya class. Admission is free.

**Grand Open House and Fun Family Day**  
**Sunday, Aug. 29, noon-2 p.m.**  
*At the Chabad House (outdoors)*

Join Chabad of Bradenton & Lakewood Ranch for a fun-filled day with family and friends, featuring a moon bounce, Kona Ice, petting zoo, kids' crafts and delicious barbecue. Open to the entire community. Suggested donation \$5 per person, or \$18 per family. Sponsor for \$180.

For more information on any of the ongoing events or to reserve, call Rabbi Mendy Bukiet at (941)752-3030, email [rabbim@chabadofbradenton.com](mailto:rabbim@chabadofbradenton.com), or visit the Chabad website at [chabadofbradenton.com](https://chabadofbradenton.com).



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# Preparing for a Brain Healthy and High Performing Brain at School Re-entry

By Stephanie Peabody, PsyD, HSPP, Neuropsychologist,  
Founder and Executive Director, Brain Health Initiative

It's August and that means kids across Florida's Suncoast are heading back to school. This can be an exciting — but also stressful — time for kids and families. In addition to new teachers, new classrooms, new classmates, and new routines, many students are actually attending school in person for the first time in more than a year. All of these factors combined have the potential to make the start of this school year even more stressful.



The BHI recommends creating a brain healthy environment to help provide your child with the right tools for learning and ease the transition back to school. You can start by encouraging your child to practice thoughts, behaviors, emotions, responses, and language that support the 12 protective factors of brain health.



## STRESS RESILIENCE.

Build your child's resilience by being a supportive parent. According to the Harvard Center on the Developing Child, children who are the most resilient have at least one stable and committed relationship with a supportive parent, caregiver, or other adult. These relationships provide the foundation that protect your child from developmental disruption and teach the necessary skills for planning, monitoring, and regulating behavior that enable him or her to adapt to adversity and thrive.



## NUTRITION.

Certain nutrients in foods have been shown to enhance brain health, optimize brain performance, and prevent brain illness, so make sure to provide healthy meals and snacks for your child. Try out some new fruits and vegetables or look for yogurt or cheese that is easy to pack for school. Nuts and seeds are also brain healthy but confirm that your school allows them, as many children have allergies. The key is to find brain healthy choices your child likes and will eat.



## PHYSICAL ACTIVITY.

Exercise is critical for the development of your child's bones, muscles, heart, and brain, as well as improving concentration and sleep. It is also an important part of playing and learning, helping to build relationships and learn about sharing. Plus, it's fun. In addition to organized activities at school, look for physical activities such as walking, biking, and swimming that can be fun for the whole family.



## SLEEP.

Getting your child on a good sleep schedule with good sleep habits is essential for concentration, learning, memory, and overall brain and physical development and health. Children need at least eight, and up to 12 hours of sleep every night, so bedtime needs to be based on what time your child needs to get up for school. And don't forget, screens (TV, phone, computer, tablet) emit a light that can "wake up the brain" and make sleeping harder, so make sure they are turned off an hour before bedtime.



## SOCIAL CONNECTION.

Returning to the classroom provides a boost for social connections that may have suffered during virtual classrooms. Strong social skills are linked to greater educational success and better success in life for the future. Encourage your child to build strong friendships now and they can have a brighter future.



## EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING.

Your child needs to feel safe, secure, and positive. As a parent you provide care, food, and shelter. School provides opportunities for growing, learning, and socializing. You can also promote your child's emotional well-being by making sure he or she feels loved, trusted, understood, and valued, and that they have a sense of control over what happens.



## MEANING AND PURPOSE.

Most children begin to talk about what they "want to be when they grow up" at an early age. Children find their purpose through what matters to them. As they grow, they must decide what they want to be in life and how they want to contribute to the world. You can help connect the dots between your child's interests and how it can lead to future success.



BRAIN FROM PAGE 8

**HOME, NATURE, AND ENVIRONMENT.**

Where you live, work, and play influences your brain health and physical health. Your child's surroundings can have a huge impact on their sense of well-being. For example, toxins, pollutants, lighting, noise, crowding, danger, and chaos, can all have a negative effect on a child's development. Your child's home, school, and community should provide an environment in which they feel safe to grow, learn, and explore.

**COGNITIVE STIMULATION:**

School is designed to provide cognitive stimulation for your child, and as an active and engaged parent you can support that development by encouraging your child to use the new skills that he or she is developing. Make sure books are available and suggest family activities that involve learning such as visits to museums, time spent in nature, visiting historical sites, or attending and participating in arts and cultural events.

**FUTURE PROTECTIVE FACTORS:**

Genetics and early childhood experiences shape the future brain and physical health of your child. Making sure your child has a safe environment, strong relationships, and positive experiences provides them with the building blocks for a long, happy, and brain healthy life.

**POSITIVE IMPACTS:**

Teaching your child to think positive can have a long-lasting impact on their life. Positive thoughts and emotions are linked with better health, longer life, and greater well-being. Feeling good and doing good with an attitude of gratitude can help your child have a positive self-image.

**GENERAL HEALTH:**

Returning to school in the age of COVID presents many challenges for parents. You are committed to protecting the health of your child, but you also know the importance of in-person learning and the social connections being established at school. There are a number of ways you can protect your child from being exposed to the coronavirus and optimizing overall health and well-being.

For more information about the Brain Health Initiative or to learn more about how you can become involved in brain health programming, or live a brain healthy lifestyle, please visit [brainhealthinitiative.org](http://brainhealthinitiative.org).

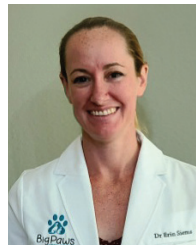
*The Brain Health Initiative (BHI) is a cutting-edge approach to protecting brain health, promoting brain performance, and preventing and fighting brain illness across the lifespan. The BHI is creating brain healthy communities, cultures that foster brain health protective factors and address risk factors, thereby improving brain health and optimizing brain performance outcomes for the Florida Suncoast region and beyond. Join the BE BRAIN HEALTHY movement, because brain health matters, and lifestyle makes a difference.*

**THE PET DOCTOR IS IN**

By Erin Siems, DVM

Oh, summer in Florida! The heat, the humidity, the mosquitos. While I detest those little flying blood suckers, the whine in my ear, the slight sting of a bite, the incessant itch that follows, I should feel lucky. At least I am not susceptible to heartworms, like my dogs and cats are.

While mosquitos are annoying to me, they can be deadly to my four-legged companions. You see, mosquitos carry microscopic heartworm babies, which they can inject into a dog or



cat's blood stream. These microscopic babies then develop into adult worms that live in the vessels in the heart and lungs. They can live 5-7 years, and grow to be 4 to 12 inches long, continually producing more heartworms during this time. Resembling strands of cooked spaghetti, these worms can bundle up in the heart and lungs and cause permanent damage.

In the early stages, there are typically no outward signs of heartworm disease. It is not until the worms cause irreversible damage that the pet starts to show signs. At this point, they will start to cough and may show exercise intolerance which can progress to being fatal if not treated. Treatment is expensive and difficult on our pets. This is why it is so important to PREVENT heartworm disease.

The good news is there are many effective preventions out there. The products range from chewable treats to topical medications given monthly, or a six-month or a yearly injection. All tend to be effective and safe and effective for most pets. Of course, not every product works for every pet. Your veterinarian is there to help you decide which product is best for your pet's needs.

*Dr. Erin Siems graduated from Ross University School of Veterinary Medicine in 2010, and has enjoyed working in both general practice and emergency care. She has been practicing in the Lakewood Ranch/Bradenton area for the past seven years. She enjoys general practice because it gives her the ability to build relationships with her patients and their families. Dr. Siems opened her own practice, Big Paws Animal Hospital in Lakewood Ranch, in May 2020. Email pet questions to [reception@BigPawsAnimalHospital.com](mailto:reception@BigPawsAnimalHospital.com).*

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# LAKEWOOD RANCH COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

**Building a true sense of community, through memorable events and social clubs.**



Some of you may have noticed by now that we've been making some changes around here at LWR Community Activities. Two of our most beloved programs, Barre, and Yoga in the Park, have now been joined by the increasingly popular Bolly X! Whereas Barre and Yoga would previously alternate Sundays, Bolly X is now part of the alternating schedule with all programs taking place at the beautiful Bob Gardner Community Park. Bolly X, the "Bollywood Workout," is a dance fitness class inspired by Bollywood rhythms featured in Indian films. Bolly X is completely free to Lakewood Ranch residents who are 18 years of age and older.



Keith Pandeloglou  
Director of LWRCA

We also introduced three new volleyball programs in July, alongside our already existing Mid-Day Volleyball program. Adults who have a life-long love for the sport and those looking to dip their toe into something new enjoyed our intermediate and beginner volleyball courses.

Another program that has quickly become a resident favorite is Strength + Mobility + Balance. This program is designed for adults 55 years of age or older who are looking to focus on building up their strength, increase their mobility,



and target their balance. Seeing the ways in which our programming benefits Lakewood Ranch residents of all ages is truly the driving force behind all we do here at Community Activities.

Our team is also very passionate about inclusion and, as we've said before, truly having something for everyone of all skill levels and athletic backgrounds. One of the activities we offer for children is Kids Cornhole, which has been a great hit with varying ages and experience levels among the kids. As well as cornhole, we also offer inclusive play programs for children such as kickball, volleyball, yoga, and more! Visit the Lakewood Ranch app or MyLWR.com for a full list of all of the programs we host.

If you have an idea for a new parks program, we want to hear from you! Send us a note at [info@lwrca.org](mailto:info@lwrca.org) and we'll be glad to help. We love working with our LWR-based businesses! We are open to applications for the upcoming session of our Parks and Recreation program. If interested, submit our Park Partner Application. For a link to the application, send us



a note at [info@lwrca.org](mailto:info@lwrca.org).

Contact us at [info@lwrca.org](mailto:info@lwrca.org) to schedule an in-person, socially distanced pitch, or meet the LWRCA Parks team via Zoom. We can't wait to hear your ideas!

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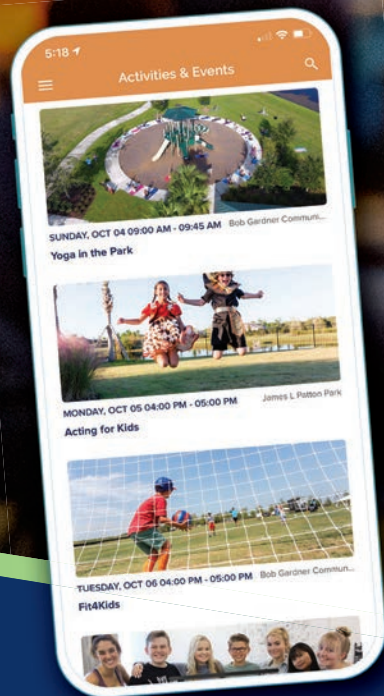


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# AROUND THE RANCH

## PUPPY LOVE – It's A Beautiful Thing!

By Ernie Soller,  
Community Correspondent

Charles Schulz, creator of the "Peanuts" comic strip, came up with a number of fun sayings over his years as a cartoonist. My favorite is probably "Happiness is a Warm Puppy."

After all, who dislikes puppies? They're warm, inquisitive, full of energy, and ready to play.

But puppies need training. And the puppies who are most in need of great training are those puppies who are destined for a life of assisting people.

Southeastern Guide Dogs has, since 1982, been the premier source for guide dogs, service dogs, and companion dogs in the southeastern United States. Over the years, Southeastern Guide Dogs has developed a breeding program in which Labrador retrievers, golden retrievers, and "goldadors" are bred to serve the needs of the blind, those who have served our country, and those who need a companion dog, such as kids who have lost a parent in the course of the parent's military service.

Southeastern's "guide dogs" enable people with a vision loss to gain independence. Their "service dogs" can give a veteran with PTSD the ability to function in a more normal way. (I witnessed a PTSD-afflicted veteran give a speech to a large crowd of people at a banquet several years ago. His service dog sat right next to him, and gently nudged the speaker's leg if there was any sign of anxiety. It was amazing!) And their "companion dogs" work with kids and teens who are experiencing vision loss or trauma in their lives.

But just how does Southeastern Guide Dogs deal with socializing and training all those puppies?

Well, here's where the "happiness is a warm puppy" thing comes in. In Lakewood Ranch, we have a group of puppy raisers and puppy sitters. Puppy raisers are people who love dogs, and who volunteer to work with Southeastern Guide Dogs to raise puppies who will become ideal guide, service, or companion dogs. They take the puppies into their own homes, and work to give them basic training and socialization skills. And they do this work with the knowledge that the puppy whom they are raising won't be "their" dog, but will become the perfect dog ... for someone else.

After a puppy's basic training, the puppy raiser returns the puppy to the main Southeastern Guide Dogs campus for

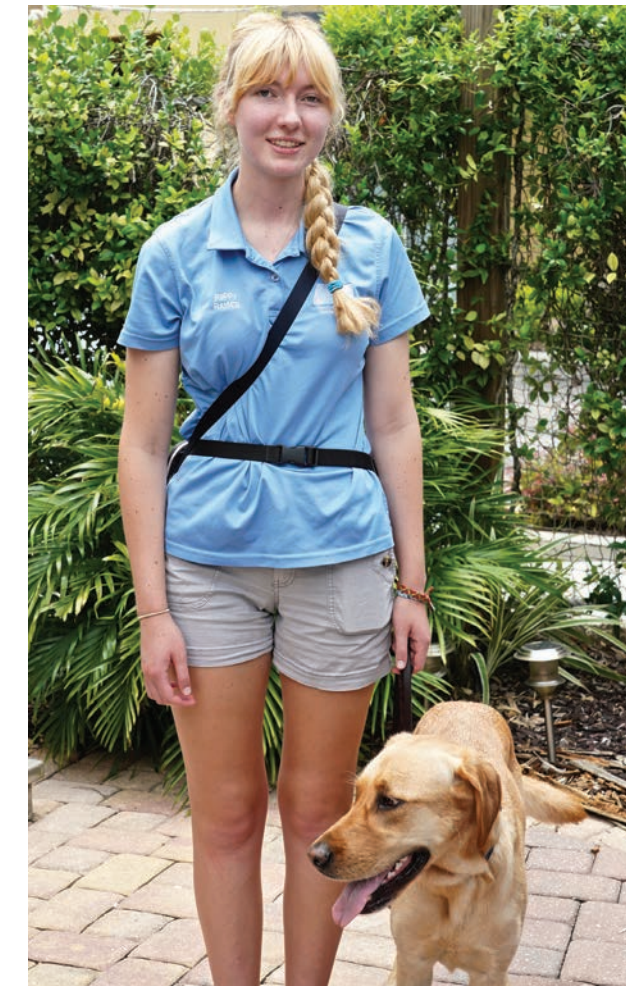
what the organization calls "going to college." At this point, the professional trainers take over to teach the dogs the skills they'll need to be guide, service, or companion dogs.

Puppy sitters assist the raisers in providing a "break" for the puppy raiser when that individual needs to be out of town, has a family obligation, or has a personal need to take time off from puppy raising. In Guide Dog lingo, the puppy "goes on vacation" with the puppy sitter.

And to give guidance and provide communication for the puppy raisers and puppy sitters, there are other volunteers who function as area coordinators.

Recently, I was given the opportunity to meet some of these Lakewood Ranch puppy people, and was given a demonstration of just how successful they are in raising and training their puppies. We met on a steamy afternoon at the Fish Hole on Lakewood Ranch Main Street, and did a walk-through of that Lakewood Ranch fun spot. There were dogs all over the place, with their human teachers.

But here's what happened: nothing ... other than a bunch of puppies and people out for a leisurely walk through the Fish Hole. There were no doggy stand-offs, no bad behavior, just a lot of fun for both dogs and their raisers and sitters.



PHOTOS BY ERNIE SOLLER

After our jaunt through the Fish Hole, the group then walked calmly across the street to McGrath's Irish Pub, where the dogs and their people stood or sat around in the lobby, with people coming and going, calmly watching the world go by. Again, I was impressed by the calm demeanor of the dogs. Here they were, in a restaurant, with food smells wafting through the air, and not one dog acted out in any way.

Obviously, these Lakewood Ranch puppy raisers are doing a great job!

Puppy raisers who joined us for this afternoon activity (along with the names of their puppies) included Jeanne Heere and Andre, Alex Jeanroy and Mason (aka "chukker pup" – Mason was the 2020 Sarasota Polo mascot puppy!), Michele Ferguson with Ferris, Sandy Wilkey with Felix, Theresa Will and Grant, and Kathy Ryan with Melvin. Chelsea Aldrich's dog was ill, but she came to help out anyway.

Interesting note: I drove down to Lakewood Ranch Main Street a few days after the puppy event, and witnessed volunteers working with their dogs in the Main Street shopping

area. If you see some of these terrific folks, say "hi" for me!

So, how do people get involved, to volunteer to be a puppy raiser or puppy sitter? It takes training. Southeastern Guide Dogs provides that training to its volunteers, and does so very successfully, as I witnessed at Main Street. Volunteers are not just given a puppy and told: "good luck."

First of all, a Southeastern Guide dog volunteer puppy raiser should live near a group of local puppy raisers, so that they can train for their new role with the group. An exception may be made for someone with previous experience, either with Southeastern, or another similar organization.

As a member of a puppy raiser group, the new volunteer experiences the benefits of having a locally based team ready to help, to answer questions and give quality suggestions to the new member. There are twice-a-month meetings where the new puppy raiser gets together with the group to practice obedience and commands, in addition to going out into the world with their puppy. Depending on your group, you'll attend a six-week "puppy kindergarten" and coaching sessions.

So why do people get involved as volunteer puppy raisers with Southeastern Guide Dogs? One woman, Kathy Ryan, told me that she had worked at Pet Paradise, but had no dog of her own. She saw an ad for Southeastern, applied, and received her first puppy to raise in 2020. Lakewood Rancher Sandy Wilkey told of the idea of getting a "retirement job" after leaving corporate America when she met a puppy raiser at Publix, and decided that being a puppy raiser was a great fit for her retirement. Chelsea Aldrich, a student at University of South Florida, got into volunteering at Southeastern through her older sister, who became a Gold Award puppy raiser. Chelsea will get a new puppy to raise in the fall.

Alex Jeanroy, a Concession resident, started volunteering at Southeastern Guide Dogs in 2018, and became an area coordinator in 2019. She refers to her role, and the role of other area coordinators, as the "middle management" sector of the Southeastern volunteers.

So think about becoming a puppy raiser! As the Southeastern Guide Dogs website notes: "You don't have to be perfect. All you need is an abundance of love."

To learn more about Southeastern Guide Dogs, and how you can volunteer or, for that matter, donate to the organization or sponsor a puppy, contact them by phone at: (941)729-5665, or check out their website at [www.guide-dogs.org](http://www.guide-dogs.org).

And remember, "happiness is a warm puppy," and more happiness results from the work of these dedicated, puppy-loving volunteers.



# Country Club District Supervisors Get an Irrigation Status Report

By Ernie Soller,  
Community Correspondent

One of the more contentious utility services in the United States has, for a long time, been about water.

Remember some of the old Western movies you saw as a kid? Farmers were often fighting with cattlemen to be able to use the local water supply (usually a creek or river) in order to be able to water their fields, while the ranchers wanted unlimited use of the same water for their livestock. Things usually got pretty ugly on the big screen, with threats and gunplay, before whichever group was wearing the white hats triumphed.

Well, things are a lot more civilized around these parts, pardner. The Lakewood Ranch Country Club folks know where their irrigation water comes from, and their water supplier, Braden River Utilities (BRU), does its best to make sure that water for irrigation is available, sufficient, and delivered at a cost which, so far, has not been totally prohibitive.

Fortunately, the people who live in Country Club districts 2 and 5, which use irrigation water from Braden River Utilities, a subsidiary of Schroeder-Manatee Ranch (District 6 has a different system) have long been active in trying to make sure that their irrigation water is of good quality, that the pressure is sufficient to provide proper irrigation coverage, and that they are being charged fairly for the service.

Beginning with Steve Ayers several years ago and continuing with Don Avolio, who got involved with irrigation even prior to his joining the District 2 board of supervisors, resident volunteers have worked to make sure that irrigation is happening and the system is working properly.

A number of things came to light over the last few years. One was the fact that with districts 1, 2, 4, and 5 all receiving their irrigation water from BRU, and with all of the districts being of similar size in acreage, districts 2 and 5 were apparently paying more for their water than districts 1 and 4. In 2019, BRU installed meters, at a cost of around \$500,000, to determine exactly how much irrigation water was being used by each district, instead of billing all the districts as a whole. This resulted in an increase in irrigation cost for districts 1 and 4 of approximately 30%, after the meters were installed.

In any case, BRU has invested large amounts of money to make sure that the community has sufficient irrigation water. Many residents remember seeing large water pipes being installed along State Road 70 to enable BRU to pipe reclaimed water from the City of Bradenton's water plant to Lakewood Ranch. This project alone cost BRU millions. The upside of all this expense is that BRU owns the line from the City of Bradenton to Lakewood Ranch, and doesn't have to share it with any other utility.

The lack of rainwater in May, along with questions about the water quality, prompted districts 2 and 5 to request an update on irrigation water from BRU. Per district 2 supervisor Avolio,

districts 2 and 5 together used 52.8 million gallons of irrigation water in May!

In June, Bob Simons, of BRU, came down to the Town Hall to give the district 2 and 5 supervisors a report on everything irrigation.

He noted that in recent years irrigation usage has, in general, come down. This is due to a number of factors, including the installation of soil moisture sensors, which help control how much water is used to irrigate a particular residential lot, and increased public awareness of irrigation issues. Residents are learning to shut off or curtail their irrigation if and when they leave for the summer. A few years ago, it was not uncommon to see sprinkler systems running during the summer – in the middle of a rain-storm – but this has become less of an issue.

One item Simons covered was the huge increase in irrigation water usage in May of this year. In most years, May is the month during which the Florida “rainy season” usually starts. But this year it didn't.

During the usual “dry months” (January, February and March) of this year, irrigation usage in districts 1,2,4, and 5 wasn't overly high, averaging 78 million gallons. But then in April, it went up to 93 million gallons, and in May skyrocketed to 115 million gallons used. BRU currently gets 3.8 million gallons of reclaimed water per day from the City of Bradenton. In May, it used all 3.8 million gallons! Because of this huge increase in usage, problems came to light at Braden River.

For one thing, BRU – assuming that the summer rains have started – normally can use the advent of the rainy season to do maintenance on their system. They can clean out filters, for example, which collect a number of contaminants.

**Three contaminants are the prime culprits:**

- **Filament algae**, which comes from inside the pipes, and feeds off the nutrients in the reclaimed water. This can be flushed out with well water, which kills the algae.

- **Snail growth in the system.** Snails grow from microscopic larvae which, if left untreated can turn into larger, hard-shelled animals which then clog the system. Here again, flushing the system will get rid of the snails.

- **Calcium sulfate contamination**, which comes into the water as a dissolved solid, and if and when it has a chance to dry, turns into a solid mass.

When usage is overly high, it is difficult to flush out the system to get rid of contaminants, as happened in May. BRU is looking at finding a compound that will help to decontaminate the system without prohibitively raising the cost. They have looked into chlorination, for example, but found that this method was too expensive.

One other thing that BRU is doing to “even out” the system is to request that the State of Florida allow BRU to inject unused water from ponds back into the ground during the wet season, so that when the dry periods come, that water can be made available for use in irrigation.

**What else can be done to lower irrigation water usage?**

There has been talk among supervisors about the idea of totally turning off the system of a district during the rainy season. This might help, but it may irritate homeowners who may want to make a change in their landscaping that might require additional watering if they are not able to turn on their system. Other solutions may come over time.

## COVID VACCINATION, TESTING AVAILABLE



The Florida Department of Health in Manatee County (DOH-Manatee) urges members of the public who have not been vaccinated against COVID-19 to consider doing so as soon as possible.

DOH-Manatee continues to offer a one-stop shop for COVID-19 vaccination and testing, located at the Palmetto Bus Station, 1802 Eighth Ave. W., in Palmetto. The site operates 9 a.m.-4 p.m. weekdays. Vaccinations (Moderna) and testing (including both PCR and rapid testing) are free of charge.

The DOH and Manatee County are also offering free testing from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., seven days a week, at the Bradenton Area Convention Center, One Haben Blvd., Palmetto. Rapid testing will be provided; PCR testing will be given only to symptomatic patients who are negative on the rapid test.

Both sites are walk-up; no appointment necessary. Visitors to both sites are asked to bring proof of Florida residency (driver's license, utility bill with Florida address, etc.). Anyone under 18 years of age must be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

For more information call (941) 242-6646.



# Lakewood Ranch Is The Best-Selling Community In The Nation

Lakewood Ranch is the best-selling community in the U.S., according to national real estate consulting firm RCLCO's 2021 mid-year survey. The Ranch secured 1,535 new home sales through the end of June of 2021, beating last year's numbers by 83 percent. Although Lakewood Ranch has been the best-selling multi-generational master-planned community in the U.S. for the past three years, the 2021 mid-year report marks the first time it's ranked No. 1 overall.

Lakewood Ranch was primed to meet the increased number of relocations spurred by the pandemic, according to Laura Cole, executive vice president of LWR Communities. "The Ranch's maturity, locational assets, and multi-generational appeal drew buyers and their extended families (and friends) from all corners of the U.S.," Cole said. "Five new villages opened during the pandemic, offering greater home choices at all price points with outstanding amenities and access to open space and trails — key criteria sought by buyers fleeing more urban locations.

"Buyers say they are looking to move close to family and friends, downsizing, or accelerating retirement. Year-over-year, we experienced the largest sales gains in the Entry/First Move-up segment (84% growth over prior year) which generally leans towards millennials. The Empty Nest/Active Adult market jumped by 71% during this period, and Second Home Move-up/Luxury buyers increased by 57%."

Lakewood Ranch's first place position put it among the top-selling master-planned communities (MPCs) in the country for 10 consecutive years. Rex Jensen, president and CEO of Schroeder-Manatee Ranch, Inc., developer of Lakewood Ranch, said that planning and execution continue to keep the community — which has been owned and guided by the same family since its inception over 25 years ago — at the top.

"Lakewood Ranch has been a perennial pack leader by delivering the features which epitomize top selling MPCs: consumer centric homes, well integrated natural areas, abundant amenities and a vast array of lifestyle offerings," Jensen said.

There is no doubt Lakewood Ranch is seeing a "pursuit of quality of life," Cole said. "Buyers



PHOTO BY JULIO AGUILAR

across the demographic and geographic spectrum are attracted to the qualities and conveniences of our established community with the added benefit of resort-level amenities in their neighborhood. Lakewood Ranch has three town centers, five neighborhood shopping centers, the award-winning Lakewood Ranch Medical Center, A-Rated schools, over 120 miles of trails, a parks and recreation program, 60+ clubs, the Premier Sports Campus, Sarasota Polo Club, and more than 1,400 businesses."

Waterside Place, The Ranch's newest town center — and its first in Sarasota County — will open this fall with a wide array of shopping, dining, and wellness opportunities. The Farmers' Market at Lakewood Ranch will make Waterside Place its permanent home later this fall, and numerous events, sports leagues, and musical performances are scheduled throughout each month.

The robust sales have caused heightened demand, and Ranch builders are working to increase availability. Two new villages, Star Farms and Sweetwater, will be added to the 21 new home villages by year-end. There remain plenty of opportunities to buy in Lakewood Ranch.

"As the market has become more competitive," Cole continued, "we feel it is essential to recognize the pressures confronting buyers and help them navigate options in the for-sale or rental space."

RCLCO has been ranking master-planned communities since 1994; for more information, visit [www.rclco.com](http://www.rclco.com).

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# Lakewood Ranch CERT Talks About Hurricanes – And You!

By Ernie Soller,  
Community Correspondent

In late July, representatives from Lakewood Ranch's Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) gave a presentation to the public at the Town Hall on the subject of hurricanes, how and what to do to prepare for them, whether and when to evacuate, along with a request for volunteers to help our community CERT crew continue to function in case of a disaster here in Lakewood Ranch.

Jim Emanuelson, current president of Lakewood Ranch's CERT, started off the meeting talking about his organization as "neighbors helping neighbors." CERT gets involved when first responders are overloaded, such as immediately after a disaster hits, and law enforcement, firefighters and other professional emergency responders are stretched to their limits.

In Lakewood Ranch, the CERT team deals with the aftermath of a disaster in what is known as phase 1 – the "original" portion of Lakewood Ranch, otherwise known as districts 1, 2, 4, 5, and 6. Other CERT organizations are located in surrounding areas such as Waterlefe, and Greenfield Plantation, but they all participate under the direction of FEMA, the Manatee County Emergency Management office, and East Manatee Fire/Rescue.

The first item on CERT's agenda is to educate our residents about preparedness, and what to do before, during, and after a disaster occurs in our community. Then, when a disaster does happen, CERT mobilizes to respond to it.

Board member Pat Knowles talked about the type of disasters that can happen in our area. Obviously, hurricanes are a major aspect of living in South Florida, and even with all the weather agencies tracking these storms, they remain very unpredictable. They can be forecast to be heading for a particular area and may take a turn and go somewhere else. And not only do hurricanes bring a lot of wind and water (Think of all the flooding that happened in the wake of Hurricane Elsa, which didn't do a whole lot of damage to structures in our area), but their wind motion can produce tornadoes. Knowles noted that there is a "tornado alley" that runs from Tampa to Orlando. It might not be as big as the one in the Midwest, but tornadoes do happen with more frequency in that area.

Knowles outlined wind damage: Category 1, (74-95 mph); Category 2, (96-110 mph); Category 3 (111-129 mph), which makes it a major



PHOTO BY ERNIE SOLLER

storm; Category 4 (130-156 mph), considered a disastrous storm; up to Category 5 (winds above 157mph), which is an absolutely devastating storm (Think: Katrina).

Tornadoes are rated on the Fujita Scale: an F-0 tornado is between 40 and 72 mph, with some damage to buildings and trees, up to an F-5 with winds from 261-318 mph. An F-5 tornado will lift houses off their foundations, pick up and move cars, etc.

In the case of hurricanes, a major effect is flooding. A hurricane can push large amounts of water in various directions, depending on how the winds move. During Hurricane Irma in 2017, the water in Tampa Bay was pushed out to sea, leaving some coastal areas with little or no water, while areas to the east were heavily flooded. When Hurricane Michael hit Mexico Beach in 2018, the storm surge was 19 feet! A flood of one foot in height can move a vehicle. Even in Lakewood Ranch, where much of the community is at a somewhat higher elevation, there are areas that are prone to flooding.

Knowles noted that El Nino conditions help to prevent hurricanes. On the other hand, La Nina conditions help to create more severe storms. Unfortunately, 2021 is a La Nina year. We've already had five named storms. Peak time occurs around the 10th of September.

Knowles noted that the so-called "spaghetti models," at five days out, are only about 20% accurate. When hurricanes move toward the western Caribbean, toward the Gulf of Mexico, and pass over Hispaniola, Cuba and the Florida straits, they are weakened by the mountains of those islands and the different water conditions in the strait, which is a good thing for us.

Hurricanes use high water temperatures as "fuel" for growth and intensity. In February, the water temperature in the Gulf may be only 60-65 degrees, while in September, it reaches 90-95 degrees – increasing chances that a hurricane will be more intense.

Now, here's the big question: do you go – or stay?

That may depend on several factors. If landfall in your area is imminent, it may be too late to go somewhere else. If the storm is coming up the gulf coast of Florida, going means traveling north or east, depending on how big the storm is, and whether it will be covering the entire state, or just a part of the coastline. And if you are evacuating, so are a lot of folks who live north and east of Lakewood Ranch. If you go north, you'll be sharing I-75 with all the people from St. Pete and Tampa who are trying to get away. This will mean extremely heavy traffic, and a lot of very slow going—that is, assuming that you can find sufficient gas for your trip. Remember, in preparation for Hurricane Irma, between six and eight million people headed north from Southwest Florida, which happens to be the most difficult place in the United States to get away from in case of a major hurricane.

If you are going to evacuate, plan on leaving at least five days prior to the expected landfall in your area! Oh, and make sure that you notify your friends and relatives as to your evacuation. You need to tell them where you're going, how you're going to get there, your expected departure time and expected arrival time. That way, they won't be calling the Manatee or Sarasota County Sheriff's Office to find out if you're still around. Make sure that you have enough

money – say a thousand dollars in cash, preferably in small bills, to make purchases, as gas stations, mini-marts, etc. may not have power to operate ATMs.

If you have prepared your home to withstand high winds and flying debris, you have a whole-house generator, and the storm is not a major one, you may just want to shelter in place – stay in your home, with all the food, batteries, candles, water, etc. which you have stored for just this sort of emergency.

You did plan for all this, didn't you? You went and stocked up on non-perishable food, water (a gallon/day per person – minimum – and the same amount for any pets. Figure on double that amount for a lot of heat and humidity), batteries, flashlights, a weather alert radio, bedding for everyone, a first aid kit, something to entertain your family while you wait out the storm.

If your answer to this question was no, then you might just find yourself headed for a local shelter. Manatee County has a number of them, but space is very limited, and it won't be the Ritz. Manatee County is approaching 400,000 in population, and its shelters can only hold less than a tenth of that number. You may also find that your pet is not welcome in some shelters, so check these things out beforehand. If you do go to a shelter, you'll need a "go bag" with bedding, food, water, snacks, cash, a first aid kit, hygiene items, a flashlight, your medications, and whatever else you may need.

One way or another, you'll need a family emergency plan, and you can download one from the FEMA website.

When the storm passes, that's when CERT moves into high gear, and per Margaret Davis, recruiting manager of LWR CERT, you too can become a part of their effort of neighbors helping neighbors—even if a curfew has been declared. There is no membership fee, only a commitment to become trained to help others. You'll receive not only training, but a kit and backpack full of items such as first aid supplies, a communication radio, a helmet, gloves and goggles.

You'll attend four basic training sessions and brush up your skills annually. The commitment is 10 hours/year — not a whole lot for the opportunity to help your neighbors when a disaster strikes.

Check out becoming a member of CERT! Their website is: [www.lwrcert.org](http://www.lwrcert.org). When a disaster happens, your neighbors may need CERT. It takes a village – and you!





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## THE UNASSUMING WINE BROS.



# French Rosé... All Summer Day

It's summertime – which means sun, beach, pools, BBQ, and all-around laid-back, easy living. To ensure we can thoroughly beat the heat and maximize our own moderately charming poolside manner, we have decided to take drastic action: ceding the selection of this month's wine selections to our wives. With that, this month, we bring you – courtesy of our better halves – affordable French rosé.

We are The Unassuming Wine Bros (UWB) – Patrick and Vigo – two regular guys who love everything about wine, including writing about it. Our goal is to explore the nuances of wine, share our adventures with you, and have a little fun along the way.

Contrary to popular belief, not all French rosés are the same – and not all hail from Provence. French rosé is made from many different grape varietals, and France has many regions where rosé flourishes. This month, we explore three other rosés, made with three different grape compositions from three different French wine regions, to celebrate this month's wine diversity.

**Rating system:** – ratings are given on a 1-5 scale, with five being the highest

## 2020 D'AUTREFOIS ROSÉ DE PINOT NOIR, PAYS D'OC, FRANCE

\$13.99 U.S., ABV 12.5%

**Vigo:** I've said it many times: I enjoy drinking rosé wines, especially poolside. Rosés are the rom-com of wines: fun, breezy, refreshing, and meant to be enjoyed. However, many mass-produced rosés are not meant for enjoyment but mixed with soft drinks and chugged down, not savored. The 2020 D'Autrefois Pinot Noir rosé is no such wine. Although the 2020 D'Autrefois Rosé de Pinot Noir is inexpensive, this rosé stands on its own with its beautiful pale pink color and aroma of roses, strawberries, and cherries. Its flavor profile is citrus fruits and strawberries that are well-balanced in their acidity, which isn't a surprise since it's made with 100% pinot noir grapes. Will this well-made wine win any awards? That's hard to say. However, I can say it's well-balanced and fun to drink.

**Vigo's rating:**

**Patrick:** I enjoyed the 2020 D'Autrefois Pinot Noir Rosé as well. This selection was medium-bodied and nicely balanced with strawberry, watermelon, and citrus on the palate. The fruit was balanced with a nice acidity, leading it to a crisp and pronounced finish. The fruit and acidity were well-matched here, which made for an easy-drinking selection. Hard to complain about this one for \$14.

**Patrick's rating:**

## 2020 GUY MOUSSET CÔTES DU RHÔNE ROSÉ, CÔTES DU RHÔNE, FRANCE

\$18.99 U.S., ABV 13.5%

**Vigo:** We've moved north from Pays d' Oc to the Rhone Valley and from pinot noir to grenache grapes for our following selection. The 2020 Guy Mousset Côtes du Rhône Rosé is more complex than the one trick pony 2020 D'Autrefois Pinot Noir Rosé.



2020 D'Autrefois



2020 Guy Mousset



2020 Olema

It can be enjoyed poolside but also with a savory helping of barbecue pork, grilled salmon, or tuna. This ability to switch from poolside to table pairing can be attributed to this rosé being 100% grenache – which typically profiles more spice and herbal characteristics than the pinot noir grape. With the aroma of citrus and strawberries and a flavor profile of ripe peaches and cherries, this slightly acidic, pale pink in color wine is a great go-to when friends come over for a family pool and barbecue party.

**Vigo's rating:**

**Patrick:** The 2020 Guy Mousset Côtes du Rhône Rosé was my favorite of this month's selections. It was slightly sour, with notes of watermelon and strawberry that gave way to the mild, creamy vanilla mid-palate and ended with a long finish. This wine was complex, layered, and very enjoyable – worth picking up a bottle. I will have this one again for sure.

**Patrick's rating:**

## 2020 OLEMA ROSÉ COTES DE PROVENCE, PROVENCE, FRANCE

\$16.99 U.S., ABV 13%

**Vigo:** This highly-rated French beauty is as lovely as Brigitte Bardot and as complex as a Latin telenovela. The Olema 2020 Rosé has a pale pink and gold color, and its aroma is of apricots, roses, and creamy lemons. On the palate, the taste of strawberries, peaches, melons, citrus, and tart apples fill your mouth. The 2020 Olema Rosé is a blend of shiraz, mourvedre, carignan, cinsault, and grenache grapes, which should be no wonder why so many beautiful flavors are present in this rosé. If you like your rosés on the dry side, I recommend the 2020 Olema Rosé Cotes De Provence.

**Vigo's rating:**

**Patrick:** I found the 2020 Olema Rosé blend to be smooth

and fun to drink. This offering had notes of apricot, peach, mild strawberry, and citrus. Even though it was light-bodied, it showed a subtle creaminess. While this wine was my least favorite of the three, it was still flavorful and worth trying. This might be one of those scenarios where all were solid performers, but one had to be last. This bottle lacked the finish of the other two, but this blend's nuanced fruit profile made up for it.

**Patrick's rating:**

**Vigo's overall impression:** Really, how could I not enjoy classic French rosés – especially when all I had to do was taste and write about them? Although I think that anytime is the right time for rosé, enjoying a young fresh rosé by the beach or pool on a summer day is what makes the rosé so enjoyable. Big thanks to our in-house supermodel sommeliers for making some excellent selections.

**Patrick's overall impression:** The wives did well this month, as all of these wines were pretty good! I thought these three samples showed the nuances of French rosés, as each was different from the others yet still very enjoyable on its own at the same time. I don't drink a lot of rosé, so breaking down this month's wines was a bit more arduous assignment. However, I sampled with an open mind and found I enjoyed exploring this refreshing and flavorful wine. To me, despite the clear pecking order, I would recommend each of these selections. Try them and let us know what you think.

### ATTENTION FANS AND READERS:

Like our Facebook page "The Unassuming Wine Bros," follow us on Instagram @theunassumingwinebros, or email us at vigo-andpatrick@gmail.com. Let us know what you think about this article, these bottles, or suggestions for upcoming articles.



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## HEALTH OF WEALTH

# Inheritance

By Huldah Mathis,  
Northwestern Mutual



Imagine that you came into an unexpected inheritance. It wasn't necessarily a life-changing amount, but it was an amount that caused you to pause and rethink some strategies, at a minimum. Should you save or invest it? Is it ok to buy that dream car? How does someone even think about this? For many people, this is an occasion that comes with a lot of emotion too.

Every life situation is going to have a different answer to those questions. Sometimes those windfalls are needed to simply bring finances back in order. Other times there is freedom to think long-term with those dollars. Some of the inspiring things I have watched clients do over the years as these life events materialize include:

- Taking the whole family on a cruise before their kids started getting married and having their own lives and families
- Funding Florida prepaid in full for a three-year-old child
- Setting up a charitable fund for a young child who would later get to pick the particular charities that would benefit from



their grandmother's generosity

While these are some of the success stories of legacies fulfilled, there are also some things that can keep transfers from happening smoothly, or even at all. Here are a few questions related to beneficiary designations that could help you avoid them:

Have you reviewed all accounts and insurance policies to be certain that beneficiary designations haven't been left blank anywhere?

Has there been any change in family dynamics (death of a family member, child becoming an adult, marriage or divorce of a beneficiary) that would warrant a beneficiary update?

Is there a need to create a trust if you don't feel like you have an appropriate individual to designate as a beneficiary?

Have you updated your overall estate planning documents with an attorney (especially if they were originally drafted while you lived in another state)?

As always, I would love to hear from you if you have learned firsthand a powerful lesson about inheritance or if your life has been changed by someone's legacy!

*Huldah C. Mathis is an agent of NM and registered representative of the NMIS based in Sarasota. To contact her, please call (941) 957-4518, email [huldah.mathis@nm.com](mailto:huldah.mathis@nm.com), or visit [huldahmathis.nm.com](http://huldahmathis.nm.com).*



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# Farewell ... And Welcome to Your New Job!

By Ernie Soller,  
Community Correspondent

The Lakewood Ranch IDA's executive director, Anne Ross, left her position in the middle of July.

Since November of 2015, Ross has been the person who has managed to deal with maintaining the delicate balance of the numerous entities managed by the staff of the Lakewood Ranch Town Hall.

Ross has been a hands-on leader for the community, and has often been seen at community events, such as the ever-popular Lakewood Ranch shred day.

Ross, however, with her background as a civil engineer, didn't go far ... or even out of Lakewood Ranch. Ross was named executive director of Lakewood Ranch's Stewardship District.

This larger area includes essentially all of the developed areas of Lakewood Ranch OUTSIDE the bounds of the "original" five districts – areas such as Waterside, Country Club East, Central Park, Esplanade, Indigo, Azario, and so on.

Here's what is happening:

For years, Community Development Districts 1 (Summerfield/Riverwalk), 2(Country Club/Edgewater), 4 (Greenbrook Village), 5 (Country Club), and 6 (Country Club) have formed what might be called the original area of Lakewood Ranch, also known as "phase one," portions of which date back to the 1990s.

These CDDs each have their own boards of supervisors, responsible to the residents of their respective districts. Each district board is composed of resident representatives elected by the residents of the district.

These districts are also represented on the board of supervisors of the Inter-District Authority, which takes care of the "business end" of local government, including finances and operations, human resources, purchasing of equipment such as service vehicles, the hiring of computer service technicians, etc.

The supervisors are elected at normal election times, and the names of the supervisors appear on the ballot just like the names of candidates for state offices such as state senator and state representative, governor, county commissioner, etc. They are subject to the same laws as govern the conduct of state officials, including provisions of Florida's Sunshine Law, which prohibits public business from being conducted in a non-public manner.

The governance of the Stewardship District has, until now, been handled by the developer of Lakewood Ranch, Schroeder-Manatee Ranch, which currently controls the five-member board of supervisors. However, with the population of the Stewardship District growing at a rapid rate, the number of registered voters within the bounds of the Stewardship District has reached a point (approximately 10,000 registered voters), at

which the turnover from developer control to resident control is happening soon.

Rather than establish a whole new set of small community development districts, the Stewardship District will become its own CDD, and will eventually be controlled by a five-member board of elected resident representatives. Ross will be responsible for establishing the structure of the Stewardship District going forward.

As the first executive director of the Stewardship District, Ross's office will be initially located at the Schroeder-Manatee Ranch headquarters building on Covenant Way, just east of Lorraine Road.

Eventually, she expects that she will have a staff and separate office facilities, probably at a different location, as the area of the Stewardship District continues to expand.

As far as the hiring of a staff and assignment of their duties, Ross expects that for the present, much of the work needed to operate the new district will be performed by outside contractors, until such a time comes that full-time staff positions are needed to manage the infrastructure of the new district.

The Lakewood Ranch Town Hall will temporarily be headed by finance director Steve Zielinski, who will be the interim executive director until a replacement for Ross is found.

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