

WLRN/Miami Herald News Issues/Programs lists - Oct.-Dec. 2014.

Every week, WLRN provides award-winning reporting and discussion of issues and individuals of import and interest to our diverse and wide-ranging community. While bringing news of the nation and the world via our relationship with National Public Radio, another of our newsroom's missions is to explore and develop a sense of place and community among our listeners and web viewers via our content.

These mission supporting activities can be seen on two primary fronts: we produce and report news and feature stories from the Palm Beaches to Key West while also creating coverage and analysis of events and trends in Caribbean and Latin American countries.

On the second front, our staff brings national and state issues to the regional and local level for examination and improved understanding. For example, a look at affluence and affordability here vs. elsewhere in the U.S.; the cost of healthcare in terms of how our local hospitals price and operate; how same sex marriage policy and minority policing policies affect South Floridians; global warming and how one proactive community's experience of the 2014 King Tide differed from the previous year's; feeding the homeless; and much more.

Two hour-long locally sourced and produced programs that focus on community issues begin and end the work week. They are the Florida Roundup (TFR) and The Sunshine Economy (TSE).

In addition to these programs, WLRN has a dedicated Americas editor, a 23-year veteran of TIME and Newsweek magazines, who writes a web column and weekly broadcasts the Latin America Report. He is part of a team of reporters and editors at the Miami Herald, El Nuevo Herald and NPR covering a region whose cultural wealth, environmental complexity, vast agricultural output and massive emigration issues offer no shortage of important and fascinating stories.

The education front also is a dedicated beat at WLRN with StateImpact reporters in Tallahassee and Miami broadcasting and posting about education policy, issues, what works, and what's happening on the education front in one of the nation's most innovative states.

Special programming by WLRN provides a closer, deeper look at several key issues. This programming and these outreach efforts supplement our continuing coverage of important issues as well as our partnership with other media outlets, both not for profit and commercial. Additionally, WLRN's freelance contributors range from a professional based in Washington, D.C. to an intern at the local college campus.

Fourth quarter coverage at WLRN included:

POLITICS:

- Statewide Gubernatorial campaign coverage and debate programming
- Hour long programs devoted to examining each amendment on the state ballot
- A repeated look at the money in politics and its impact with business leaders' opinions
- A comparison of key issues and where the gubernatorial candidates stood on each
- Examining the attorney general's race; a key Congressional and a state Senate race
- Florida's role in shaping the national political landscape from immigration to educational testing, local presidential candidates and more

REGIONAL COVERAGE:

- Haiti: Baby Doc dies and Haiti's prime minister resigns
- Cuba & U.S. relations - preparing for entrepreneurship; the generations view Obama's policy; an interview with Miami author Vanessa Garcia. "The Cuban Spring," is her new play at the South Miami-Dade Cultural Arts Center, which takes an unflinching look at the divides – generational, spousal, racial – Cuban-American families experience today as they face what the play calls the island's "magnet."
- Nicaragua's Grand Canal project breaks ground and sparks protests in the same year Panama's canal celebrates its centennial
- An examination of local charitable giving and distribution (Miami lags in giving, Universities and not for profit hospitals account for about half of all monies disbursed)
- All Aboard Florida, a regional train service, rolls onward despite opposition (this item drew more web visitors than usual posts)
- Where South Florida's job growth comes from (construction and hospitality are tops, supporting sectors identified)

ARTS & CULTURE -

Reaching further north:

- Our Hearts the Arts outreach event in south Palm Beach County (Delray Bch)
- First Trivia event in south Palm Beach County (Boca Raton)

Coverage:

- Miami Book Fair International - partnering with O, Miami poetry festival and programming that event as well as noted author Judy Blume's appearance at the Fair
- An examination of how the regional art scene is growing northward (Delray)

- Art Basel and the money that flows from it and 3 other large international events
- *Treblinka's Last Witness* interview complements local documentary premiere
- Catholic Church - Latin Mass popularity draws younger worshippers
- The fight for same sex marriage in Florida and two of the movement's local activists
- Holiday foods from different traditions and cultures - a frontier FL Thanksgiving to a Cuban Nochebuena, a Nicaraguan feast, and Mexican hallacas with a little donkey, too

EDUCATION & MORE

- Common Core and Florida's educational testing policy
 - Reading competition and school debate team improves test scores
 - Florida fights U.S. education department over English language learners scores
 - Why emotional learning can be as important as intellectual education
 - The education year in review and what to expect in 2015
- I Can't Breathe protests in Miami surprise with their size and remain peaceful despite another local minority youth dying at police hands
 - Our year long coverage of Interstate 95 brings more stories: of words made up to describe the experience; the political landscape of I95; FDOT and the Traffic App partnership; and more

KEY MOMENTS:

WLRN Provides Statewide Special Gubernatorial Debate Coverage

WLRN took a leadership role during the debates by expanding our political coverage to reach public radio listeners around the state. With the second gubernatorial debate scheduled Oct. 15 in Broward County, WLRN coordinated, hosted and provided 3 hours of debate coverage to more than 10 Florida public radio stations.

The package included two WLRN hosted hour-long specials immediately prior to and following the most talked about debate between Governor Rick Scott and former Governor Charlie Crist.

That Oct. 15th debate in Broward County started with a strange standoff over a portable fan. <http://wlrn.org/post/what-just-happened-fangate-scott-crist-gubernatorial-debate>

WLRN's Vice President of News, Tom Hudson hosted both specials and debriefed debate moderator Elliott Rodriguez following the televised engagement. The entire

evening's coverage, including the notorious debate, remained available to the public on WLRN's website at <http://wlrn.org/florida-governors-race-2014>

6 Words Miami Event Partnering with O, Miami and the Book Fair

WLRN and O, Miami partnered to encourage and curate audience members contributions to telling a story about life here in 6 words. Award winning Herald photographer Carl Juste selected the winning entries and paired photos with the poems that were turned into oversized postcards. Banners of the winning entries surrounded the stage at Miami Book Fair International where WLRN emceed the event, introduced the winners and recorded their readings for later broadcast.

The Judy Blume Reality Tour & Miami Book Fair International

Noted children's book author Judy Blume wrote about residing on Miami Beach as a child. Her book kept many of the original place names and included childhood friends and teachers. WLRN contacted Blume and walked with her as she fused her past with our present. The recording of that interview aired on WLRN with a supporting slideshow of Blume's mid-century photographs of the area. WLRN further arranged for Blume to appear at the Miami Book Fair International to share her tour and discuss her book, Starring Sally J Freedman As Herself. The event also prompted a former childhood friend and a teacher to reunite with Blume.

Weekly News & Public Affairs Shows, Oct-Dec. First TFR, then TSE

The Florida Roundup (TFR) airs Fridays at noon TOM HUDSON, HOST

Each week a panel of journalists from South Florida and around the state discuss the week in news. Producers live blog the program. Listeners can join the conversation by:

Phone: (800) 743-WLRN or (800) 743-9576

Email: thefloridaroundup@wlrnnews.org

Post: on our Facebook page Tweet: @WLRN

10/3/14 - TFR - U.S. and Cuba in the '70s & the King Tide is coming

Documents released with a new book [Back Channel to Cuba](#) show the U.S. considered attacking Cuba in the mid-1970s after secret meetings trying to normalize U.S. Cuban relations failed after Cuba sent troops to Africa. We talk to the author William LeoGrande from American University.

Ahead of next week's King Tide, local efforts get some national attention.

10/10/14 - TFR - Governor & Attorney General Debates, King Tide & Baby Doc's Death

Florida Gov. Rick Scott and former Gov. Charlie Crist meet in their first of three debates Friday for Spanish-language media Telemundo. (Live Blog Florida Roundup: Governor Debates)

Candidates for Florida's Attorney General met in their only debate Monday as the U.S. Supreme Court clears the way to allow same-sex marriage.

Miami Beach stays dry as the King Tide rolls into South Florida.

Plus the death of a dictator in Haiti. Jean-Claude "Baby Doc" Duvalier won't get a state funeral but calls for justice after his death continue.

10/17/14 -TFR - 2nd Debate, Same Sex Marriage, Football & Police at FSU examined

Governor Rick Scott and former Governor Charlie Crist met for their second debate this week, but only after a delay over one candidate cooling down hot air.

Attorney General Pam Bondi wants the Florida Supreme Court to decide if same-sex couples can get married here.

And in college football, police and amateur athletes on campus are under scrutiny at FSU.

10/24/2014 - Political polls and Inmate abuse - Host Christine DiMattei

The debates between Rick Scott and Charlie Crist are over and early voting is underway. The newest Quinnipiac poll shows the candidates are tied - and gender divides within both support bases - and now Scott will use some of his own money in the campaign.

Another poll finds support for medical marijuana amendment fading and Pam Bondi leading the Attorney General race.

Voters are deciding on other key races. We'll discuss [Miami's congressional race](#) between Republican Carlos Curbelo and Democrat Joe Garcia, and Broward and Palm Beach counties' state Senate race between Ellyn Bogdanoff and Maria Sachs.

Also, allegations of inmate abuse has led to an independent audit of prison staff [use-of-force procedures](#).

Live Blog Florida Roundup: Let's Talk About Polls

11/07/2014 - Voting results, School bonds, Steroids from Miami to NY

The negative political ads are over. Gov. Rick Scott wins re-election. How did that spell victory for Republicans, including Carlos Curbelo's victory to the U.S. House?

A simple majority of Floridians voted for medical marijuana but that was *not* enough to become law. School leaders are celebrating the passage of an \$800 million school bond.

Plus, New York Yankees star [Alex Rodriguez confesses](#) to the feds that he used steroids from Coral Gables clinic Biogenesis.

Live Blog Florida Roundup: Great Scott

11/14/2014 - How Florida shapes the political scene, Feeding the Homeless, School Testing

NBC's Meet the Press moderator [Chuck Todd](#) joins us to talk about the changing political landscape nationally and Florida's role in shaping it, including President Obama's expected action on [immigration reform](#).

Also, the fight over [feeding the homeless in Fort Lauderdale](#) is gaining nationwide attention. How unique are the rules there regarding helping the homeless? And we explore the [amount of testing in Florida schools](#). The issue is being revisited by teachers and parents.

Live Blog Florida Roundup: New Political Landscape

Thanksgiving holiday break

12/05/2014 - hosts [Christine DiMattei](#) and [Tim Padgett](#)

Gay Marriage And Miami-Dade Human Rights Ordinance

A federal appeals court ruled that Florida's stay on a gay-marriage ban case will be lifted on Jan. 5, 2015, and couples could begin walking down the aisle the next day. But will it go to the U.S. Supreme Court? Also, Miami-Dade voted this week to make it illegal to discriminate against transgender people.

U.S. And Cuba Relations

In Coral Gables, Jeb Bush criticized Pres. Obama's softening stance on Cuba and his views for tougher standards on the communist island. Was it a sign to a presidential run? We'll discuss the meaning behind it as well as the fifth anniversary to Alan Gross' detention in Cuba.

Art Basel

It's Art Basel week, and the events have moved beyond Miami Beach. We made a Twitter bot asking for your impression of the works on display. We're joined by Rolando Chang Barrero, a founder of Boynton Beach Arts District.

Live Blog Florida Roundup: Art Week In Miami

12/12/2014 - Police under scrutiny and the community protests

Update: Due to many calls and comments, this entire edition of the Florida Roundup discussed renewed police scrutiny. The planned topics of new chiefs at the Florida Department of Corrections and at the Department of Children and Families, as well as the planned discussion about private emails, were not covered. Police protests consumed the entire show due to a wealth of calls and an impressively insightful guest, Don Horn.

POLICE PROTESTS

South Florida demonstrators marched against police-related violence last weekend. More protests are planned after a street artist died running from police and getting hit by an unmarked Miami squad car.

Join Tom Hudson with Chief Assistant State Attorney Don Horn, and reporters Chuck Rabin and Julie Brown from the Miami Herald.

Live Blog Florida Roundup - police scrutiny

12/19/2014

U.S.-Cuba Relations

Alan Gross landed on U.S. soil this week after five years in prison in Cuba. It was part of a prisoner swap between the U.S. and Cuba that unraveled to be the beginning of a new diplomatic relationship. President Obama announced coming changes that affect South Florida families with ties to the island. Is this a new beginning or a false start in relations between the U.S. and Cuba? The future of the trade embargo will receive more scrutiny in the weeks ahead.

Jeb Bush

Earlier this month, former Florida Governor Jeb Bush spoke in Coral Gables about Cuba relations and making the embargo stronger. He announced Tuesday that he will "actively explore the possibility of running for president," just a day before Obama's announcement about the communist island. What's Bush's campaign strategy now?

Haiti

Another Caribbean country is struggling with a political crisis. Haiti's prime minister Laurent Lamothe resigned under pressure and more unrest as the public rallies to speed up elections.

Live Blog Florida Roundup: Eyes On Cuba

12/26/2014

Note: This is a pre-recorded episode of the Florida Roundup.

We look back at the year that was 2014. The year ends with the biggest change in U.S. - Cuba relations in almost two generations.

ELECTIONS

It was governor versus governor on the ballot between Gov. Rick Scott and former Gov. Charlie Crist, but the race was not an enthusiastic one -- a fan threatened to end one of their debates before it began. The redistricting process was brought under scrutiny. After the votes were counted, Floridians rejected a medical marijuana amendment but agreed to spend more on the environment.

IMMIGRANTS

The issue of immigration reform took a lot of attention this year. Since last fall, more than 50,000 unaccompanied minors have crossed the border, about double from a year ago. Pres. Obama announced executive action on immigration. In education, Gov. Scott signed a bill that provided in-state tuition rates for Florida's undocumented immigrants.

CHILD DEATHS

Following the Miami Herald's investigation into more than 400 child deaths, legislators passed a reform bill for the Department of Children and Families. But hurdles remain.

THE SUNSHINE ECONOMY (TSE)

The Sunshine Economy takes a fresh look at the key industries transforming South Florida into a regional powerhouse. From investments in healthcare, storm preparedness, international trade, real estate and technology based start-ups, tune in to learn more about one of the worlds most vibrant and diverse economies. Airs at 9 am and 7 pm Mondays

NEW: Following a multi-media training session in October, The Sunshine Economy web presence improved to contain more show content and more significant graphic [graphical?] support.

10/06/2014 Where Money In Florida's Gubernatorial Race Is Coming From

Close to \$50 million has been spent buying airtime in Florida through the end of September by Florida's gubernatorial candidates and their political parties.

According to the Center for Public Integrity at least half of the ad money spent in Florida has been spent on negative ads like these: [video clip embedded] And the response: [video clip embedded] So far, much of the ad money has been spent not by the candidates themselves but by their political parties.

Business Leaders Comment: How does the tone at the top of the ticket impact business?

Victor Mendelson, co-president of aerospace parts manufacturer Heico, says it's the attitude that matters. "If we feel like there's sort of an anti-business climate, that there's a psychological

penalty for investing and making money, then maybe we're less likely to pull the trigger on a new facility or a piece of equipment." Mendelson adds that applied to both political parties.

Instead of pro-business or anti-business political rhetoric, Spirit Airlines CEO Ben Baldanza would rather hear pro-competitive messages. Yes, this is from the boss at the airline that pioneered unbundling of airfares and charges for carry-on luggage. "The best thing that the government can do to be both pro-consumer and pro-business," he says, "is to create an environment where competition is encouraged and competition is rewarded and information is shared and open."

Early voting begins Oct. 20. In the meantime, the political ad barrage and spending likely will pick up its pace.

10/13 Affluence & Affordability: See South Florida's Wealthiest

Just over two dozen people in South Florida hold more than \$100 billion in wealth. These 25 individuals make up South Florida's Wealthiest, a list from the Miami Herald, compiled by Global Governance Advisors, an executive pay consulting group. You can see the list below, or [here](#).

There's a voyeuristic quality of these kinds of "richest" lists.

Hedge fund manager and activist shareholder Carl Icahn tops this list. He lives here part time, as do many of those on top of the list. Their wealth is imported into South Florida.

But there are familiar names of people who created and grew their fortunes here: Carnival Cruise line's chairman (and Miami Heat owner) Micky Arison, pharmaceutical innovator Dr. Phillip Frost, Wayne Huizenga, Jorge Perez and Norman Braman. They are familiar names to most South Floridians either because of their sports ownerships, public philanthropy or consumer-facing businesses.

The list is a snapshot of wealth in South Florida. Luis Navas, managing partner of Global Governance Advisors says the list indicates how the regional economy attracts and grows a diverse source of wealth.

"If you look at California, which also has a high density of wealth, more than half of that comes from one industry: technology. Where I think people historically thought of Florida as very

dependent on tourism, I think the fact that it is very well diversified in terms of where that wealth is coming from is a huge positive."

South Florida also has an affordability challenge. The Miami Foundation's 2014 Our Miami survey finds while the cost of living here is below that of other major metropolitan areas, the cost burden of living in South Florida is high. While the cost of living takes into account the cost of many items, the cost burden looks at housing and transportation. Those two costs raise the cost burden of living and working in South Florida to above that of living and working in New York, Chicago and even San Francisco.

These gauges show the percent of income residents pay in these areas for housing and transportation, according to [this group](#).

The Miami Foundation President and CEO Javier Soto says, "As Miami evolves the affordability issue is becoming more and more obvious as an obstacle to overcome if we are going to continue on an upwards trajectory as a community."

WLRN's Sunshine Economy looked at the biggest metropolitan areas with at least one million people working and the median hourly wage paid in those areas. The data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics is revealing. In San Francisco, half the workforce makes almost \$25 an hour. In Miami, it's less than \$15 an hour. Hit the down arrow on the chart below to see how Miami compares. And the only area with at least one million workers with a median hourly wage below Miami? Orlando.

Beyond economics, what's the impact of the gap between those on the South Florida's Wealthiest list and those making the median hourly wage? Soto, the president and CEO at The Miami Foundation says, "Increasingly not only in Miami but nationally people feel like the system is designed to benefit others who are very well off. When you have that type of view of the world I think you're less likely to be hopeful that you can bridge that gap. And therefore less likely to plug into the system and be a participant in it."

10/20 - Marijuana - Medicine, Money & Amendment 2

John Demott has been growing palm trees, hibiscus flowers, ferns and any number of plants from the rocky South Dade County soil for more than 40 years. He never traveled to Tallahassee for a Florida legislative hearing until this spring, when Florida lawmakers were considering legalizing a certain kind of marijuana for a limited number of diseases.

Lawmakers did approve the bill and Gov. Rick Scott signed it into law in June, making growing pot legal in Florida, but with lots of rules.

While many of those rules continue to take shape, Florida voters will decide if they want to expand the legal pot business before one even takes root. Amendment Two on this election's ballot asks if voters want to allow doctors to recommend marijuana for their patients suffering from nine diseases, ranging from cancer and glaucoma to HIV/AIDS and ALS. Here's the 74-word ballot summary and the much longer 1,200-plus-word amendment that would be added to Florida's constitution if approved.

10/27/2014 Amendment 1 - Paying to Protect Florida By the Acre and the Gallon

Almost three and a half million acres of Florida are under the state's care. The federal government is responsible for another three million acres. County and local governments plus special districts such as water conservation and management areas have 3.4 million acres under their control.

From city and state parks to libraries, wildlife areas and the Everglades close to 10 million acres of Florida are public lands. That's about one in every four acres of Florida.

Here's a map showing federal lands throughout the state and state-controlled lands in South Florida. (The cluster of spots in the Keys is due to each key in the [National Key Deer Refuge](#) being accounted for.)

Amendment 1 this election would guarantee state funding for more land and to restore and manage lands already under state control. Instead of an annual springtime debate during the legislature's budget process, Amendment 1 would commit a third of Florida's real estate documentary stamp tax revenues to protect the state's environment. [Here's the ballot summary](#) and proposed constitutional language:

For decades, the real estate documentary stamp tax money has been earmarked for affordable housing, economic development, transportation and environmental uses. The state's general fund also got a slice of the tax revenue. But when the housing collapse hit Florida and the Great Recession took hold, lawmakers carved out a greater chunk of the revenue for general purposes.

Affordable housing and environmental programs went without. As the state's economy has improved and the state budget has grown again, some of that funding has been restored.

Amendment 1 would constitutionally require the state to fund its Land Acquisition Trust Fund with 33 percent of the revenue from real estate documentary stamp taxes. Supporters contend it would amount to less than one percent of the state's budget. They're correct. However, opponents point out the money would be guaranteed whereas money for affordable housing, while coming from the same source, would not. That includes funds for affordable housing in South Florida.

"After the recession when the legislature started sweeping the funding out it went down to almost zero for probably three or four years," said Ralph Stone, director of housing finance and community development for Broward County. "This most recent year its back up to one half of what it used to be."

Before the recession, Broward County would receive about \$15 million for home buying programs, rental assistance, home improvement and making houses handicapped accessible. This budget brought about \$7 million. While there is no organized opposition to Amendment 1, housing advocates voice support for environmental funding but they say it should be the legislature that decides the dollars, not the state constitution.

The proposed amendment would ensure "we don't have a Toledo, Ohio. We don't have a California," said Everglades Foundation CEO Eric Eikenberg. He's referring to three days this past August when Toledo warned residents not to drink, boil or bathe in its water supply. An algae bloom in Lake Erie contaminated the water. California, meantime, has been hit by drought conditions and water restrictions.

"If we can ensure we have the proper amount of water and quality of water it's beneficial not just for the ecosystem or not just for the habitat or the wildlife but its for our economy," argues Eikenberg. He's familiar with the budget battles in Tallahassee. Eikenberg served as the chief of staff for Gov. Charlie Crist when Crist was a Republican.

Listen 0:46 *Everglades Foundation CEO Eric Eikenberg describes his vision of Florida's environment in 2033, the end of guaranteed funding if Amendment 1 is approved by Florida voters in 2014.*

Veteran real estate developer Don Peebles agrees that Florida's economy and environment are linked. "I think that it's very important that the state invest in a comprehensive plan preserving some of the nature habitat that makes Florida such an attractive place to live and visit." Peebles supports Amendment 1 and doesn't think the guaranteed money for land preservation would drive up land prices.

David Hart is the executive vice president of governmental affairs for the Florida Chamber of Commerce. He said, "Imagine if every group that didn't get the funding they thought their programs should get during the Great Recession and took the course of Amendment 1 and tried to get their special program funded through constitutional mandate." Hart contends that strategy would tie the hands of legislators during tight economic times as they have to balance the state's budget each year.

11/03/2014 Election Eve in Florida

The finger-pointing and mudslinging almost is over. There is an end to the negative ads. Floridians will choose their next governor and it's safe to say that man already has served as governor. And he has served as a Republican.

It seems like after almost a year of campaigning, it's an understatement to call it a unique election season, even by Florida's standards. [Voters witnessed fangate](#). President Clinton returned to the Florida campaign trail. Possible future Republican presidential candidate New Jersey Governor Chris Christie has visited. Fellow rumored GOP 2016 White House contender and former Florida Governor Jeb Bush made campaign stops.

But let's talk about the money. The Center for Public Integrity estimates about \$80 million has been spent on television advertising in this governor's race. Most of it has come from the political parties and most of the ads have been negative. Just listen:

Listen 0:24 *A sampling of the negative ads in the 2014 Florida governor's race.*

Then there's the economy. Governor Rick Scott and former Governor Charlie Crist have sparred regularly over job creation over the past four years of Scott's administration and the previous four years when Crist was governor. Here they are during their third gubernatorial debate on CNN:

Listen 1:05 *Governor Scott and former Governor Crist trade barbs over jobs during their CNN gubernatorial debate.*

They may argue over who gets credit and who gets blame for the Florida job market, but the data doesn't attribute changes to any politician. That's for voters to decide.

It seems like after almost a year of campaigning it's an understatement to call it a unique election season. Even by Florida standards.

Next, education. Governor Scott and Governor Crist have used their education policies to appeal to their political bases. Governor Scott has spoken about Florida's own state standards instead of using the federal government's Common Core, though there is plenty of overlap. Governor Crist has campaigned on less testing. Governor Scott trumpets his 2014-2015 education spending as the most in state history. Governor Crist is quick to point out spending per pupil was higher when he was in office.

Listen 0:27 *Gov. Scott and former Gov. Crist on education from their second gubernatorial debate.*

Public education per K-12 student in Florida under both governors remains below the national average, though.

How about the environment? Both governors have acted on Everglades clean-up. Governor Scott settled a longstanding lawsuit over restoration. Governor Crist forged a land deal to buy sugar fields and return them to a natural state.

Listen 0:59 *Gov. Scott and former Gov. Crist discuss what they have done to restore and protect the Everglades during one of their three gubernatorial debates.*

And what about housing? The housing collapse may have been four years ago, but Florida remains the number one state for home foreclosures, according to market research firm RealtyTrac. Some 40,000 homes in Miami are in some stage of foreclosure: default, auction or bank-owned. It's more than 12,000 in Fort Lauderdale and 8700 in West Palm Beach.

Here's what the foreclosure activity in Florida looks like today according to market research firm RealtyTrac:

Neither candidate has talked about housing. In a search of transcripts of all three of the gubernatorial debates, the word housing appears only four times. Once by a panelist in a question, and three times by Governor Scott in variations of these:

Listen 0:08 *Housing did not come up in any of the three debates between Gov. Scott and former Gov. Crist, except for Scott's reference of his upbringing in public housing.*

The polls open at 7 a.m. Tuesday and close at 7 p.m. Tuesday. Who will you vote for?

11/10/2014 Work & Wages in South Florida

Lionel Lightbourne has been a social worker in Liberty City for four years. He says he is a "fish in water" with his chosen profession. He speaks with passion about empowering families and children in need.

If he were single, he says his income would put him just above the poverty line. "But together with my wife," he says, "we will actually be in the middle class."

Florida's average middle class worker isn't getting paid any more money than workers 10 years ago. The average Floridian's annual pay remains below the national average. And the average annual pay in the four South Florida counties remains below the state average.

All this comes from federal government data crunched by the [University of Florida's Bureau of Economic and Business Research](#). Lining up the past decade of annual pay and comparing South Florida to the entire state and the rest of the nation looks like this:

The national wage is on top. Monroe County's average pay is on the bottom. The average pay in Miami-Dade, Broward and Palm Beach counties is within about \$2,500 of each other. Adjusted for inflation, the average worker has not gotten a raise in 10 years.

Christ McCarty, director of UF's Bureau of Economic and Business Research, says this is not unique to Florida.

"There have been some increases in pay but it tends to be among higher-paid workers. If you have the benefit of being in one of those occupations where you tended to get paid a high wage

you probably do have a better wage than you did 10 years ago. Otherwise it is the same or worse."

Floridians heard a lot about the rebounding job market during this fall's election. Governor Scott built his successful re-election campaign around his motto of "Let's Keep Working." Election night he made this pledge in his victory speech:

Listen 0:20 *On election night 2014, as Governor Rick Scott celebrates his re-election, he pledges Florida job growth will eclipse that of Texas's.*

Andy Haraldson left his good-paying job in a growing industry to return to the classroom. Since 2009, Haraldson had been driving semi trucks for a Delray Beach-based farm. He would leave South Florida loaded with fresh cut vegetables bound for Buffalo, NY, or other points north. In the summer, he would turn around and bring back a load of northern-grown produce. In the winter he would delivery rolls of a paper to a printing plant in Boynton Beach.

Within a couple of years he reports he was making around \$60,000, a 30-percent jump from when he got back in the trucking and transportation industry at the height of the Great Recession. Along with his wife's salary as a consultant, their household income was in the six figures.

But then Haraldson quit. He wound up back in school, both as an adjunct at a local community college and as a master's student. He hopes to finish his second master's degree in 2015. Then he wants to get an assistant professorship at a local college or university. Here's how he explains his prospects:

Listen 0:49 *Former truck driver Andy Haraldson hopes to complete his second master's degree and use it to secure a full-time tenured job on a college campus.*

Haraldson left one industry with steady job growth and growing pay (transportation) in South Florida for another occupation that has continued to demand workers (education). As Florida's population has grown so has its employment base. That's to be expected, especially in a service-oriented economy like Florida's. The highest job growth rates year over year consistently are construction and leisure/hospitality.

"We just can't forever rely on people moving to Florida and building homes for them," says UF's McCarty. He, Dick Clark of the Fort Lauderdale Chamber of Commerce's Council of Economic Advisors, and others point to biotechnology, technology and medical tourism as industries for

Florida to develop a more diverse job market. And those fields traditionally have been at the higher end of the income scale.

"Where we get more competition is in the higher-end industries," says Clark, "like biotech, manufacturing and even in some of the service sectors where talent is particularly hard to find as that industry grows."

That war on talent, Clark contends, is driving up incomes in those fields. Those industries remain small contributors to the employment opportunities in South Florida.

11/17/2014 The Power of Price: Healthcare

Does this sound like a top health care CEO?

Listen 0:08

Or this?

Listen 0:08

Those are the comments of Baptist Health South Florida CEO Brian Keeley. Baptist Health is the largest faith-based non-profit health system in South Florida. It delivers \$2 billion of healthcare to South Florida through seven hospitals, more than a dozen urgent care centers and various other specialty health centers. The Baptist business has more than 1,700 beds and serves more than 1 million patients per year. Keeley has been with Baptist for more than 30 years.

He doesn't defend the upward spiral of higher health costs. He acknowledges the confounding and complicated pricing of health care. He's a big proponent of qualitative rankings - not simply price differences - between providers.

WLRN and the Miami Herald explored the power of price in health care in this series, examining the complexity, secrecy and cost of a health care system under strain.

Here's how Floridians get their health care coverage according to the Kaiser Family Foundation:
[graphic]

The price hikes of medical care have slowed down. That's good news for patients. However, medical care costs continue rising much faster than overall inflation. Even in the most recent years where medical costs have risen at their slowest rates in years, they still have been rising at about twice the pace of inflation without medical costs.

"We have an extremely complex and convoluted system of pricing. I would challenge anybody to tell me that they fully understand it," said Baptist Health South Florida CEO Brian Keeley.

Keeley said Baptist's charge list includes more than 100,000 different charges. The different payers for health care such as Medicare, Medicaid, managed care companies and others have different methods of payment adding to the confusion for patients. This led Baptist to opening a Central Pricing Office in 2001, he said "to help consumers understand what is their out-of-pocket cost? How much are they going to have to pay out of their own pocket to have a procedure?"

While Baptist's Central Pricing Office also gives a discounted price to uninsured patients, it will not disclose the entire charge of a procedure. An insured patient may be able to know what a treatment will cost them based upon their insurance plan's deductible and co-pays but the price negotiated between the hospital and the insurance carrier remains secret, often behind non-disclosure agreements. Access to those negotiated prices is what insurance premiums provide the insured.

"That's not unusual," said Keeley. "When you look at the Boeing's of the world, do they show all their pricing to all their subcontractors and vendors? Obviously they don't." He continued, "There's never a discussion 'Let's increase the premiums.' There's never that discussion."

Here's what the average company-based health insurance plan cost employees and their employers in 2012 according to the Kaiser Family Foundation: [graphic]

11/24/2014 Books, Basel and Boats: The Business of Big Events

South Florida knows how to throw a party. And it better, considering how important hospitality is to the regional economy. From conferences and conventions to fairs and festivals, the event

business picks up as temperatures up north drop. Some are for out-of-towners exclusively, others celebrate South Florida for South Floridians.

To get a sense of the economics and local emotions involved, The Sunshine Economy spoke with the driving forces behind four big events that dot the South Florida map.

[Click through the slides in the webpost below the interactive map to read, see and hear more about our biggest bashes.]

Big events may garner a lot of attention and bring with them plenty of community pride, but University of South Florida Economics Professor Philip Porter is skeptical about any claims a single event makes about bringing an economic boon to town.

"One of the problems that happens is when an event is isolated, there's no pressure for the community to respond to that." He argues the frequency of events is more important than the event's impact on economic activity -- such as new businesses starting up, existing businesses expanding and new job creation. "If you have a series of events that occur every week or every day then the community builds new hotels. They need to build new restaurants to handle the tourist traffic and that employs people and the impact can be fairly substantial."

Under his analysis, Porter says, a Super Bowl or a national political convention is "no more important than a girls' 16-and-under AAU volleyball tournament." Though, clearly, what is different is the community pride in the big events and the attention high profile events receive, especially from out-of-town media. Porter acknowledges the media attention, for a place like South Florida and its variety of big events, can be valuable.

12/08/2014 Art and the Sunshine Economy

There are plenty of ways to measure the meaning of art: aesthetic value, emotion resonance, ticket sales, auction price, jobs. South Florida's art economy is young but growing.

Communities have invested hundreds of millions of public dollars in performing arts centers and museums, cultural programs and outreach efforts. The arts are embedded in the promise of South Florida marketed to visitors. And increasingly, South Florida artists are appearing on the world's stage.

The Sunshine Economy spoke with several people at the intersection of art and commerce to hear how the region is creating art as its own economic stimulus. Hear from them below.

Adrienne Arsht

Photo: Adrienne Arsht sits in the Ziff Ballet Opera House, one of two performance halls at the center bearing her name.

Credit Tom Hudson / WLRN

Listen 0:59 *Hear from Adrienne Arsht, who donated \$30 million to the performing arts center in Miami in 2008.*

Howard Herring

Photo: New World Symphony President and CEO Howard Herring.

Credit Tom Hudson / WLRN

Listen 1:13 *Hear from Howard Herring, whose New World Symphony moved from the Lincoln Theater to its own building in Miami Beach as it expanded its efforts to attract new audiences.*

John Richard

Photo: Here is John Richard at the Arsht Center's new restaurant, BRAVA!, which opened in November.

Credit Tom Hudson / WLRN

Listen 0:27 *John Richard was hired as president and CEO at the Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts in October, 2008. It was during the depths of the real estate crash and Great Recession.*

Lindsey Scott and Linda Boone

Photo: The shop is part of the West Palm Beach Arts and Entertainment District, an effort by the city to encourage and attract an arts economy to its downtown.

Credit Tom Hudson / WLRN

Listen 0:44 *Linda Boone and Lindsey Scott, the mother daughter team of Habatat Galleries.*

Clemente Mimun

Photo Artist and landlord Clemente Mimun inside the vacant space behind the building he owns in West Palm Beach's Arts and Entertainment District.

Credit Tom Hudson / WLRN

Listen 0:38 *Clemente Mimun plans on converting his building to live-work space for artists. He pledges to keep the rent steady.*

Paul Fisher

Photo: Gallery owner Paul Fisher stands beside "Sleeping Idol" by Serge Strosberg. Strosberg was the featured artist at the grand opening of Fisher's gallery in West Palm Beach's Arts and Entertainment District in November. Fisher says he sold five works during the opening party.

Credit Tom Hudson

Listen 1:27 *Paul Fisher talks about artist Serge Strosberg's "Sleeping Idol" (above).*

West Palm Beach Development Authority

Photo Day and night scenes of the Evernia Street Parking Garage stairwells. When they needed repainting the West Palm Beach Downtown Development Authority partnered with muralists to paint seven floors of scenes.

Credit Tom Hudson & courtesy of Carey O'Donnell

Listen 0:41

West Palm Beach Downtown Development Authority executive director Raphael Clemente describes how muralists painted the Evernia Street garage stairwells.

12/15/2014 Not For Profit But For A Cause

Alonzo Mourning likes to tell the story about a deflated basketball on the desk of his Georgetown coach John Thompson.

He calls that deflated basketball from his collegiate years a "powerful statement because many of us as young athletes think that basketball is it."

Mourning told the story during his enshrinement in the NBA Hall of Fame in August of 2014. It is a story he uses to illustrate his desire to give back.

Mourning's kidney replacement surgery, subsequent comeback and winning of the 2006 NBA Championship cemented his reputation as a hard worker, tough competitor and compassionate leader. His nonprofit is among many groups in South Florida working on community issues, but he knows he has one advantage many don't -- him.

"It's an amen moment," said Mourning Family Foundation President Bill Diggs. "A lot of people like celebrity and want to sit and be with number 33."

Listen 0:33 *Alonzo Mourning and seven to nine pounds of air.*

According to Mourning, he's experiencing more potential donors for his foundation from the Northeast, as those companies do more business in South Florida. "Not only my name as a professional athlete but also my credibility in this community will allow me to have their ear and show them how they can have a significant impact on this new community they've moved into."

That community has a ways to go regarding the nonprofit industry, though. According to the National Center for Charitable Statistics, the Miami metropolitan area ranks in the lower half across most nonprofit groups by revenue among the biggest 100 cities. Here are the gauges (ranked 1 to 100 on per capita revenue for these nonprofit groups, so the lower the number equals more community giving):

"The nonprofit sector is not as robust in the Miami area as it is elsewhere in the country," said Tom Pollak, program director for the Urban League's National Center for Charitable Statistics. Pollak's data shows revenue by nonprofits focused on international issues is much stronger in South Florida than other areas, which makes sense considering the significant foreign-born population here.

In the past year, \$23 billion has been provided to nonprofit groups in South Florida, from Palm Beach to the Florida Keys. While the three major counties are home to roughly the same number of nonprofits, the revenues generated by those agencies are dominated in Miami-Dade County.

The revenue is far from evenly distributed. The \$23 billion generated annually by South Florida nonprofits includes two big groups of institutions not normally thought of as charities - universities and not for profit hospitals and health systems. Nonprofit higher education and hospitals account for 45 percent of revenues collected by nonprofits, according to the National Center for Charitable Statistics. Here's how the revenue breaks down across 11 types of nonprofits (does not include religious congregational giving): [graphic].