WSMR Public Radio

Florida Matters Public Affairs Show

News Stories

July 1 – Sept. 30, 2026

FLORIDA MATTERS – THIRD QUARTER, 2026
Florida Matters Quarterly report July 1- Sept. 30, 2026
Time aired: Daily at noon – 1 p.m. on WUSF 89.7 FM; Sundays at 6:30 p.m. on WSMR 89.1 FM

Insight from the WUSF reporters behind 'The Cost of Power' series, and taking charge of AI
September 30, 2026
If you compare your electric bill from last month to one from a few years ago, you'd probably see a jump. Our three-part investigation digs into why. The reporters tell us how they dug. (Business, economy, cost of living, utilities)

Kathy Castor converses on cost of housing, and how student-athletes can play it safe
September 29, 2026
The congresswoman talks about a bipartisan bill to bring about more affordable housing and lower mortgage rates. Also, how do student-athletes focus on sports and academics while staying healthy? (Politics, government, sports, higher education, affordable housing)

The debate over debates in Florida elections, and learning campaign finance loopholes
September 28, 2026
For the first time in 50 years, there may be no debate between the leading candidates in the race for Florida governor. (Politics, government, finance)

Parents trapped in a temporary foster care 'side door,' and Florida hunting prep

September 24, 2026
We learn more about a Tampa Bay Times investigation that found a "side door" in the foster care system that can leave parents struggling to reunite with their children. (Child care, foster care, government, hunting)

Poring over the Amendment 3 property tax measure, and a dengue update
Sep 23, 2026
One thing all Florida voters will get to decide on Nov. 3: Whether to reduce property taxes. On this episode, we examine the possible effect on fire rescue services and community growth planning. (Growth, planning, taxes, politics, healthcare)

A good day to walk or bike (and not drive), and Florida's fascinating role in film
Sep 22, 2026
Biking and walking advocates in Tampa are gathering this weekend to spread the word about going car-free. And before L.A. became America's movie-making hub, our state was "Hollywood East." (Transportation, business, government)

Pinellas County School District weighs closures and mergers, more on FWC surveillance
Sep 21, 2026
The school district may have to close a number of campuses and merge others. District officials have difficult choices confronting them amid concerns for students, staff and teachers. (K-12 education, environment, law and order)

Fired over a social media post, and a local club owner's fight over concert fees
Sep 17, 2026
As our staff focuses on WUSF's annual fall pledge drive this week, "Florida Matters Live & Local" is presenting some of our favorite interviews from the past few months. (Social media, business, entertainment)

Hospital association CEO ties property taxes to healthcare, and PlayStation's disc-continuation
Sep 16, 2026
As our staff focuses on WUSF's annual fall pledge drive this week, "Florida Matters Live & Local" is presenting some of our favorite interviews from the past few months. (Healthcare, popular culture)

What is a love bug? Here's an expert with many flying facts to give
Sep 15, 2026
As our staff focuses on WUSF's annual fall pledge drive this week, "Florida Matters Live & Local" is presenting some of our favorite interviews from the past few months. (Environment, healthcare)

A collective sign from teachers unions, homes built with 3D printing, winning by the sword
Sep 14, 2026

As our staff focuses on WUSF's annual fall pledge drive this week, "Florida Matters Live & Local" is presenting some of our favorite interviews from the past few months. (Business, education, government)

Kids left in limbo by closing of juvenile justice facility, and following political money
Sep 10, 2026
The sudden shutdown of Hillsborough's juvenile detention center has reportedly left judges, lawyers and officials confused about where to house the youths who were placed there. (Law and order, prisons, politics)

25 years later: How 9/11 changed the country, the skies and the future
Sep 9, 2026
Journalists, an aviation executive, a robotics rescue expert, a college professor — and several deeply affected callers — share their experiences from the day and describe what has changed for them since. (Law and order, history, transportation)

As cyclosporiasis wanes, does lettuce still make you nervous? And where are the hurricanes?
Sep 8, 2026
It appears the outbreak is settling down. So, what should you know about leafy greens? How safe are they to eat? And how did the parasite get into the food supply in the first place? (Healthcare, agriculture, extreme weather)

The Clancy trial and understanding postpartum psychosis, plus inside the art of cosplay
Sep 3, 2026
The Lindsay Clancy case in Massachusetts has sparked conversations about perinatal mood disorders. Many of us are trying to learn more about postpartum psychosis. A local expert is here to oblige. (Mental health, popular culture)

Why cats are crowding shelters, and when environmental worry overwhelms
Sep 2, 2026
Animal shelters in Tampa Bay have too many pets and not enough space. What's leading to the overcapacity — especially for cats? (Animals, environment)

The Rays' next steps, Hope Florida's money trail, and an alternate Haslam's plan
Sep 1, 2026
After years of proposals, political fights and false starts, the Rays finally have approvals for a new stadium. Now what? And what happened to plans for a pop-up concert in support of a closed bookstore? (Sports, local government, business, literature)

Flock critics share their concerns, and earthquake help for Colombia and Venezuela
Aug 31, 2026

The backlash is growing against Flock automatic license plate readers. Our panel of experts expresses concerns about the technology. (Technology, law and order, surveillance, world affairs)

Wanted: a new generation of truck drivers. And every generation gets an 'Odyssey'
Aug 27, 2026
Ever look at a big rig and think, "That sure looks fun"? We meet a newly graduated driver from a local trucker school and hear why America needs more licensed operators. (Transportation, popular culture)

Florida's shadowy immigration database, and remembering the Buffalo Soldiers
Aug 26, 2026
State and local police have been collecting information about people they suspect of being in the country without legal documentation – and filing it in a database. (Immigration, law and order, government, Black history)

A county rethinks park funding, the appeal of going old-school, the latest on sloth deaths
Aug 25, 2026
Pinellas had recommended cutting funding for Weedon Island and Shell Key, state-owned preserves that the county leases and operates. But there has been a reprieve. (Parks, environment, local government)

A school board's partisan pendulum swings, and multitasking food trucks
Aug 24, 2026
For four years, Sarasota County has been ground zero for culture wars in public schools. Will that change after last week's elections flipped the conservative majority? (K-12 education, politics, food)

Scrubbing climate science from textbooks, and Tampa Theatre turns back the clock
Aug 20, 2026
Gov. Ron DeSantis signed a law two years ago removing references to "climate change" from statutes. Now, a WUSF investigation shows how textbook authors were asked to do the same. (Science, education, politics, history)

Breaking down primary night's winners and losers, and Hillsborough schools get an A
Aug 19, 2026
It's time to follow up on Tuesday night's election results. Did any change your calculus for the November general election? (Politics, K-12 education)

Class acts: Rethinking school success for teens under stress, and a head start in hospitality
Aug 18, 2026

Teens have a lot on their plates these days. With all this pressure, how can they balance grades and self-confidence? Award-winning teacher Daniel J. Evans has written a book packed with tips. (K-12 education, tourism)

Vindman challenges political headwinds, and USF nursing school's major expansion
Aug 17, 2026
In Florida, Democrats running for statewide office face uphill battles in a GOP-dominated state. Alex Vindman talks about why he can buck the trend. But first, he has to survive Tuesday's primary. (Politics, healthcare, higher education)

Spotting Big Tech and AI in local politics. Also, a college turns trash into treasure
Aug 13, 2026
Attack ads have always been part of politics. But with artificial intelligence, a new front has opened in the battle for votes. On top of that, Silicon Valley is pouring megabucks into Florida campaigns. (Technology, politics, higher education)

Why the 'Flock Blocker' opposes these cameras, and an iconic game room pulls the plug
Aug 12, 2026
What in the heck is a Flock camera? Depending on whom you ask, it’s a crime-fighting tool or a symbol of creepy surveillance. Meet the “Flock Blocker,” who believes the latter and protests against them. (Technology, surveillance, law and order, popular culture)

A new identity for a longtime Tampa shopping mecca, and get ready for 813 Day
Aug 11, 2026
Big changes are finally coming to Tampa’s WestShore Plaza. A new owner has bought the 60-year-old mall with plans to redevelop it into a mixed-use space. (Business)

Building a ballpark while solving an infrastructure dilemma, and Florida oranges show some juice
Aug 10, 2026
City councilman Bill Carlson says he has a “win-win-win” stadium plan that can benefit Tampa and Rays fans and won’t use sales taxes or increase property taxes. (Sports, local government, agriculture)

Breaking down what’s new for the school year, and improv takes center stage in Ybor
Aug 6, 2026
Classes begin next week around the Tampa Bay area, and with them come news related to lunches, screen time, teacher shortages and more. (K-12 education, entertainment)

Challenges facing Florida’s corrections system: At the top and inside the walls
Aug 5, 2026
We spend the hour talking about Florida’s prison system, beginning with recently retired Secretary Ricky Dixon. Then, the mental scars suffered by incarcerated women, and college classes behind bars bring hope. (Incarceration, politics, mental health)

New guidance on kids and psychotropics, and a red flag over FWC surveillance
Aug 4, 2026
Florida health officials are urging doctors to reconsider prescribing psychotropic meds for kids. Could this affect how kids are treated for mental health issues? (Health care, mental health, surveillance)

Police chases: Finding a balance between speed and safety. Also, assembling a voter guide
Aug 3, 2026
When should police pursue a fleeing vehicle? When should they call it off? We talk to an expert in law enforcement training after the recent death of a teen during a high-speed chase. (Law and order)

How 3D printing is revolutionizing home construction, and Tampa's luxury boom
Jul 30, 2026
A 3D printer can spit out almost anything these days. But how about a house? A local firm is using the technology to construct a three-bedroom home in East Tampa. How exactly does this work? (Technology, business)

Daylight saving time all the time? Plus, a youngster who has a way with swords
Jul 29, 2026
Lawmakers want to make the time change permanent. A sleep specialist explains how that could affect you and your health. Plus, the tie between property taxes and healthcare. (Healthcare, politics)

How the Fishback decision affects the governor’s race, and school supplies’ skyrocketing costs
Jul 28, 2026
James Fishback will remain on the ballot after a judge rules in his favor in a state residency challenge by opponent Lt. Gov. Jay Collins. What does it means for the GOP primary and governor’s race? (Politics, education, affordability)

Charlie Crist makes his case for St. Petersburg, and two Florida executions in one day
Jul 27, 2026
The former Florida governor details his platform, policy positions and perspective on the challenges facing the city he calls a "jewel." (Politics, incarceration)

Want to bike from Tampa Bay to Titusville? A 250-trail is nearly complete
Jul 23, 2026
This week, “Florida Matters Live & Local” is revisiting some of our best conversations from the year. (Alternate transportation)

A guide to the weird, wild and obscure parts of Tampa
Jul 22, 2026

“Florida Matters Live & Local” is revisiting that and some other great conversations from the year. (Travel, popular culture)

Life after prison, and the cost of mass incarceration
Jul 21, 2026
“Florida Matters Live & Local” is revisiting that and some other great conversations from the year. (Incarceration)

Why Tampa makes merry over a fictional pirate each year
Jul 20, 2026
This week, “Florida Matters Live & Local” is revisiting some of our best conversations from the year. (History, popular culture, tourism)

Seeking Arcadia answers, making every splash safer, green burials, heads of the class
Jul 16, 2026
Residents in Arcadia woke to reports of ICE agents heading to their neighborhood. Our immigration reporter explains what happened, what authorities confirmed and how the operation affected the community. (Immigration, law and order, environment)

Groveland Four restitution, Stop WOKE stalled, girls that wanna rock, the art of anonymity
Jul 15, 2026
In 1949, four young African Americans were falsely accused of raping a white teen in Lake County. The Groveland Four, as they became known, were posthumously exonerated in 2021. But can justice delayed ever be served? (Black history, criminal justice, music)

Environmental update, star rescue, pooling your resources, making the grade (plus)
Jul 14, 2026
From a proposed Polk County data center to an invasive pest threatening crops, environmental challenges are mounting across Florida. Let’s get some details on those environmental stories. (Technology, popular culture, agriculture, environment)

A late entry in the governor’s race, getting oysters back in bed, stories of the FBI
Jul 13, 2026
State Rep. Dotie Joseph says she didn’t have a run for governor on her bingo card. Yet, here she is in a crowded field vying against David Jolly for the Democratic nomination. (Politics, environment, marine science, law and order)

Meet a snake charmer, breaking down the Surfside report, game over for PlayStation, dog beach
Jul 9, 2026
It’s time for the Florida Python Challenge, when novices and pros traipse the Everglades to hunt for the invasive species. Last year's winner talks about what goes on during the event. (Hunting, development, popular culture, animals)

Flood-fix rainchecks, targeting spiked drinks, red-faced over a red card, teen game-changers
Jul 8, 2026
Gov. Ron DeSantis vetoed $810 million from the state budget. A large portion of that involved water infrastructure and flood mitigation. How will that decision affect residents? (Politics, environment, extreme weather, popular culture)

PTSA bridges a gap, a 'woods to table' chef, TPS ruling aftermath, tapping into dance
Jul 7, 2026
Public transportation is a big problem in the area, but the Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority is trying to make it a little easier to get across the bay – especially if you need to catch a flight in Tampa. (Transportation, mass transit, dance)

Inflation and foster care, earthquake update, new angle on property taxes, NIL hope and water
Jul 6, 2026
As prices rise, the math of living just isn't adding up for many Florida families. Now comes word of a connection between housing costs and foster children being kept from their parents. (Affordability, healthcare, government, sports)

America at 250: Reflecting on fractured unity, having a blast (safely), speaking in tongs
Jul 2, 2026
The United States is about to turn 250. For many Florida families, it means food, fun and fireworks. For others, it can be time to reflect on history — where we were and where we are going. (History, entertainment, food)

Feeling the heat over ICE, Fluori-da a year later, it's like a sauna out here, hail to the chef
Jul 1, 2026
Florida has embraced the Trump administration's aggressive stance on immigration enforcement. But what happens when residents push back and ask local elected leaders to take a stand against it? (Immigration, law and order, health, extreme weather, food)