

# WSMR Public Radio

## Florida Matters Public Affairs Show

### News Stories

Jan. 1 – March 31, 2026

#### **FLORIDA MATTERS – FIRST QUARTER, 2026**

Florida Matters Quarterly report Jan. 1- March 31, 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

March 31, 2026

[Are you ready to rocket? Plus, a lawsuit for the birds, Zested interest, strange Florida fiction](#)

By Wednesday night, astronauts may be rocketing out to the moon for the first time in 53 years. On “Live & Local,” we get the latest on the Artemis II mission. Plus, the Florida scrub jay faces a legal challenge, and we chat with The Zest’s Dalia Colón. (science, environment, food)

March 30, 2026

[Fighting for street-legal art, blue-night specials, a low-water mark, recipes lost and found](#)

Florida muralists are challenging the state over removed sidewalk artwork. Ideas to survive the drought. A culinary anthropologist's hobby. And a new social media segment on politics. (Art, politics, social media, environment)

Mar 26, 2026

[Birth plan on trial, tariffs on tap, SRQ flies through shutdown, Century Club equestrian](#)

A Florida woman says her own birth plan was overridden when a hospital sought legal intervention. The case was argued before a judge over Zoom – while she was in labor. (Health, women’s issues, government)

Mar 25, 2026

[HIV patients get temporary relief, school vaccines and protests, New College film, Betty Castor](#)

Gov. Ron DeSantis signed a measure to keep funding going for lifesaving medication. But the coverage runs out in July. Hence, the legal back-and-forth over the AIDS Drug Assistance Program continues. (Health, education, politics)

Mar 24, 2026

[Work to do in Tally, Tampa's gold medalist, questioning St. Pete's boom, Pilates pop-ups](#)

Despite passing a slate of high-profile bills, Florida lawmakers couldn't resolve some of their biggest disagreements. Where do things stand and what's up tap with special sessions planned for next month? (Politics, government, growth, health)

Mar 23, 2026

[Red-light cameras on trial, turning a new reef, sea for yourself, learning and living outdoors](#)

A recent court ruling is reigniting debate over red-light cameras in Florida. Critics say the fines unfairly target vehicle owners, while supporters argue they save lives. (Transportation, environment, education)

Mar 19, 2026

[Burdens of proof for voters, terror labels, power pole honor roll, a local centennial](#)

"Florida Matters Live & Local" takes a closer look at a pair of controversial bills heading to the governor's desk. One covers voter ID and the other allows the state to label what groups are terrorist organizations. (Civic engagement, politics)

Mar 18, 2026

[Data centers of attention, deportation distortions, Bulls chasing titles](#)

Why are plans for enormous AI data centers raising alarms with residents who may have to learn nearby? And Sheriff Grady Judd wants some "common sense" used when it comes to immigration enforcement. (Environment, technology, human rights, immigration)

Mar 18, 2026

[Travelers' turbulence, Rays the roof cost, Sun worshippers wanted](#)

Spring breakers are hitting the skies as fuel costs surge and economic uncertainty grows. Airline expert Darryl Jenkins warns he can't confidently predict where fares are headed. (Tourism, sports, economy)

Mar 16, 2026

[Spicing up the mayor's race, sports engineering, Legislative lookback, a real piece of quirk](#)

Anthony Gilbert is best known online as a food influencer exploring hidden culinary spots. Now he's bringing a full plate of ideas to local politics. We get a taste of his plans. (Politics, sports)

Mar 12, 2026

[Talking with Lt. Gov. Collins, Dalí news that will melt your clocks, Cocoa's Car-uso](#)

Lt. Gov. Jay Collins dials into “Florida Matters Live & Local” to talk about why he’s running for governor and review some of his legislative priorities. We’ll also hear about the Dalí Museum's expansion and an opera singer who sells cars. (Politics, arts, music, business)

Mar 11, 2026

[AG candidate José Javier Rodríguez, ICE and H-1B visas, a World Cup love letter](#)

Former state lawmaker José Javier Rodríguez wants to be Florida’s Attorney General. He faces steep odds in a very red state. On “Live & Local,” he makes his pitch. (Politics, law and order, immigration, sports)

Mar 10, 2026

[Playing us for fuel, chilly reaction to H-1B freeze, getting away Scot-free](#)

In just a week, gas prices have shot up to almost \$4 for a gallon for regular unleaded. "Live & Local" takes a closer look at what’s driving up the cost and how you are dealing with it. (Transportation, economy, immigration)

Mar 9, 2026

[A Juul casket, Councilor Naya Young, educational mermaids, cram job at the Capitol](#)

Hillsborough schools are rolling out smart sensors that detect vape clouds, the Legislature's last week, meeting a Tampa City Council member and taking a dive at an aquarium in Lecanto. (Education, health, politics)

Mar 5, 2026

[Jolt for Lakeland residents, bill deletion, response to Welch, risky med cuts, women take field](#)

Lakeland residents face higher electric bills, while a Senate bill transferring USF Sarasota-Manatee land to New College vanishes — leaving both energy costs and campus plans in uncertainty. (Economy, health, women’s sports)

Mar 4, 2026

[St. Pete mayor looks ahead, nonprofits and citizenship checks, Jackson House rebirth](#)

"Florida Matters Live & Local" sits down with Mayor Ken Welch, examines how immigration verification rules would reshape local services in Manatee County, and explores efforts to restore a historic Tampa landmark. (Local politics, immigration, history)

Mar 3, 2026

[Lessons in school change, Tampa's role in Iran, a new teen curfew, postpartum psychosis](#)

"Live & Local" jumps into four controversial issues: school closures in Pinellas, war planning at MacDill, the new teen curfew in Palmetto and treatment gaps for maternal mental health. (Education, military, teen issues, mental health)

Mar 2, 2026

[The Iran attack's many layers, fight for student journalists, Legislature at the stretch](#)

University of South Florida Middle East specialist Arman Mahmoudian weighs in on the bombings in Iran and retaliatory strikes. (World affairs, politics, journalism)

Feb 26, 2026

[Buildings with a pinkish hue, solving cold cases, a very fast learner](#)

"Florida Matters: Live & Local" brings you stories of art, justice and hometown pride this week. (Art, justice, LGBTQ)

Feb 25, 2026

[A conversation with USF's new president, and a look at kitchen-table economics](#)

So what goes on during the workday of a university president during his second week on campus? Moez Limayem is here to talk about the challenges ahead. (Higher education, economics)

Feb 24, 2026

[Fresh approach to hunger, urchin care for reefs, growth reality check, prison to prevention](#)

From expanding fresh food access and restoring reef ecosystems to measuring regional growth and mentoring youth, "Florida Matters Live & Local" explores solutions shaping Tampa Bay's future. (Food, environment, growth, incarceration)

Feb 23, 2026

[Swiftie Lit 101, Tampa Bay eyes on Iran, Black History Month reprises](#)

From "Folklore" to "Tortured Poets," USF students can take a classical look at Taylor Swift's lyrics. "Florida Matters Live & Local" signs up for a closer look. (Popular music, black history, world affairs)

Feb 19, 2026

[Tigers in their town, fair days in Hardee, sweet strawberries](#)

Florida hosts 15 baseball teams for spring training, but no town has been "all in" and for so long as Lakeland, where the Detroit Tigers have stuck around since 1934. (Spring training, agriculture)

Feb 18, 2026

['Ought to be' an e-bike law, down on the freezing farm, an NFL journey goes full circle](#)

The death of a classmate in an e-bike accident leads teens to help draft a bill on helmet safety with a state representative. Plus, how growers dealt with the recent cold and a new career for a former Baltimore Raven. (Transportation, agriculture, sports)

Feb 17, 2026

[Protecting our wildways, Capital earmarking, online threats, punky-glory in Gainesville](#)

Polk County recently rejected a planned truck refueling stop near a key wildlife corridor crossing over Interstate 4. It's a pretty big deal for animal and environmental advocates. (Environment, online issues)

Feb 16, 2026

[Counties coping with potential cuts, grading Florida's gun laws, in a shriveled state](#)

With the elimination of property taxes still on tap in Tallahassee, a study shows billions of dollars in potential losses, with some counties standing to lose more than others. (Politics, growth, gun control, economy)

Feb 12, 2026

[Sarasota's Super conductor, saving the Everglades, measles go viral, adore !\[\]\(e2376d476d06eb31946dc01a69a4403a\_img.jpg\) explore](#)

The Sarasota Orchestra's music director had the time of his life during Bad Bunny's Spanish-language Super Bowl halftime, plus segments on Everglades preservation, measles and Valentine's Day fun. (Culture, sports, environment)

Feb 11, 2026

[New College, Phillippi Creek, 2 launch stories, campus hunger, raptor rescues](#)

A couple of college challenges are in the spotlight. We get an update on the New College-USF controversy and learn about the growing concern of student food insecurity. (Higher education, environment, space, food issues)

Feb 10, 2026

[A look at the Gas Plant District's past and future, student walkouts, trail praisers](#)

It's hard to have a conversation about what a place can be without talking about the way it was. Such is the case with the current Tropicana Field site. (History, politics, sports)

Feb 9, 2026

[English-only testing, touching base in Tally, a Was pause, shaping Tampa's Black story](#)

Will the state's English-only driver's tests make roads safer? We look into the rule change on "Florida Matters Live & Local." (Immigration, music, black history)

Feb 5, 2026

[Death penalty in focus, 'granny flats,' Bad Bunny's halftime, Super Bowl yummys](#)

The conversation starters for "Florida Matters Live & Local" include Florida's execution pace and some Super Bowl talk that has nothing to do with Seahawks and Patriots. (Law and order, sports, music)

Feb 4, 2026

[Welcoming Mayor Castor, cold hands and green thumbs, Tampa Bay's 'Timeline'](#)

Tampa Mayor Jane Castor sits down for a wide-ranging conversation, tackling everything from the Rays stadium talks and public safety to immigration, transportation, and the city's future. (Immigration, transportation, growth issues, sports)

Feb 3, 2026

[The smoking alarm, cleaning up beads, Ybor City safety, capybaras and friends](#)

From Florida's failing tobacco policies to giant rodents munching lettuce, we cover the state's public health challenges, community cleanups, street safety, and a cafe that's more about animal education than lattes. (Health, law and order, environment)

Feb 2, 2026

[Shooting for the moon, inside lawmaking, an app for that, sweet tradition](#)

You may not have noticed, but NASA is about to launch a crewed mission to the moon. Let's catch up on the latest Artemis mission, which could lift off as soon as this weekend. (Space, food)

Jan 29, 2026

[Charters and closures, both sides of the tax, glacial recognition, Tampa's gold star](#)

Florida lawmakers have big choices to make: How to handle charter takeovers through the Schools of Hope program and what to do with property taxes. (Education, politics)

Jan 28, 2026

[Understanding grief attacks, looking up at heroes, Ybor safety, Black romance on silver screens](#)

It's more than just depression. It's exponential bereavement that can feel like a panic attack, bringing deep sadness and a feeling of losing control. Let's learn about grief attacks. (Mental health, law and order, black history)

Jan 27, 2026

[Twin Cities' toll on Floridians, and a treasured tradition](#)

On "Florida Matters Live & Local," we discuss how immigration raids in Minneapolis have captured national attention — stirring questions and fears around the country — including the Tampa Bay area. (Immigration, law and order, politics)

Jan 26, 2026

[Drilling instruction, a Capitol update, novels from the sin bin, kicking ice in Tampa](#)

Florida leaders from both parties are urging President Trump to keep the offshore drilling moratorium in place, warning of risks to the Gulf's environment, wildlife and coastal communities. (Government, politics, environment)

Jan 22, 2026

[Rough seas for port proposal? Plus, avoiding immigration scams and a long to-do list](#)

An idea for a cruise terminal near the Skyway is drawing early resistance as environmental groups question whether the promised benefits outweigh the risks to one of Tampa Bay's most fragile coastal areas. (Growth, environment, politics)

Jan 21, 2026

[Sarasota schools, immigration and fear; Hillsborough College will play ball with Rays](#)

Sarasota's school board vote to reaffirm cooperation with ICE sparked intense debate over student safety and learning, while Hillsborough College and the Rays take a step forward on a stadium plan. (Education, immigration, sports)

Jan 20, 2026

[Renner makes his case, fallout of data dousing, digging in the past, a teacher to remember](#)

Former House Speaker Paul Renner is running for the Republican nomination to be Florida's governor. He talks about his plans with "Florida Matters Live & Local" host Matthew Peddie. (Politics, economy, education)

Jan 19, 2026

[On MLK Day: Reflecting on Black pioneers who carried the dream](#)

"Florida Matters Live & Local" spends the hour looking at the lives and legacies of lawmakers John Lewis and Arthenia Joyner, author Zora Neale Hurston, and the enduring words of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. (Black history)

Jan 15, 2026

[The Rays and Tampa, Plant City's No. 1 advocate, fair sharing, celebrating MLK](#)

The Rays may be closer than ever to a new stadium in Tampa as Hillsborough College explores renovating its North Dale Mabry Campus into a mixed-use development. We catch you up. (Sports, black history)

Jan 14, 2026

[Keeping St. Armands above water, another view on State of the State, art without a home](#)

Sarasota has the money to improve coastal flooding protection. However, the funding comes with questions about what improvements can be made and will they solve the problem as sea levels rise. (Environment, climate change, politics, art)

Jan 13, 2026

[Instant analysis of Gov. DeSantis' State of the State address](#)

The conversation features insights from longtime local political journalist William March, PolitiFact Florida government reporter Sam Putterman and WUSF politics/environment reporter Steve Newborn. (Politics, government, health, environment)

Jan 12, 2026

[ACA clock is ticking, drop in international students, USF athletics success](#)

A high-stakes debate in Congress will likely determine whether Affordable Care Act premiums stay affordable. Will there be a resolution before this year's final enrollment deadline on Thursday? (Health, education, sports)

Jan 8, 2026

[Sky's the limit for airport boss, recalling Tampa lunch counter sit-ins, musicians band together](#)

We learn plenty from Tampa International Airport CEO Michael Stephens during a special interview on "Florida Matters Live & Local." Also, a bit of local history you may not know about. (Transportation, history, music)

Jan 7, 2026

[Behind our Everglades report, Rauschenberg's Florida, bird's-eye views, snow and tell](#)

From a decades-old environmental clash to a centennial art celebration, a quirky state bird debate and a frosty escape, "Florida Matters Live & Local" guests touch on our state's history, culture and more. (Environment, Your Florida, history)

Jan 6, 2026

[Protecting endangered wildlife, a literary legacy, sculpture culture, surviving in sync](#)

On "Florida Matters Live & Local" with guest host Cathy Carter, changes to the Endangered Species Act, the enduring wit of Mark Twain, massive soaring artwork and a dragon boat team of breast cancer survivors. (Environment, literature, arts, health)

Jan 5, 2026

[Freedom and stability are within Venezuelans' grip, SOS for RSV, a memoir of survival](#)

Freedoms, fevers and family secrets lead "Florida Matters Live & Local" into the new year, with discussions on Venezuela, children's health and a revealing family memoir. (Health, international issues, mental health)