

South Florida 100

Our panel of 100 influential leaders discusses the most important issues affecting you.

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The top stories last week



David Armstrong Jr., president, Broward College
Recently released national job numbers from the Labor Department show an increased pace of hiring. Here in Florida, indicators suggest a strengthening economy. The state's higher education institutions are crucial in making sure that those rejoining the workforce or improving their job skills have the knowledge to match new economic opportunities. At Broward College, for example, we offer degrees in high-demand, high-growth areas — advanced manufacturing, supply chain management and information technology, to name a few. As economic opportunities for Floridians expand, public higher education must remain dedicated to making sure the workforce is prepared for new opportunity.



Barbara Sharief, mayor, Broward County
Homelessness is a real issue here in South Florida we have been fighting this for quite some time now. As of late it seems as if people are utilizing the unfortunate circumstances that occurred in the City of Fort Lauderdale for personal publicity. For those who are legitimately helping the homeless for unselfish reasons like Arnold Abbott, I thank you, for the rest please stop. Homeless individuals and families need solid solutions to their problems. We, as a community, must actively participate to develop those solutions.



Linda Carter, president, Community Foundation of Broward
Recent debate about feeding the homeless has drawn attention to its complexity. Now is the time to think bigger than handouts and to look at public/private partnerships to address the root causes of homelessness. Studies report 60 percent of Broward's homeless suffer from mental illness and/or substance abuse. And, housing costs and lack of employment, rank high on the list of contributing factors. Feeding is just the beginning — as a community, we must consider important wrap-around programs as well.



Howard Finkelstein, chief public defender, Broward County
Fort Lauderdale came up with a winning combination. First the city commission enacted bad laws that basically criminalize being homeless. These laws hurt the most vulnerable and powerless population in the city. Then they arrested a 90-year-old man and a minister trying to feed the homeless. Then they arrested the homeless for being homeless and denied them their constitutional right to counsel. No defense attorney, no one to challenge the bad laws. It was ingenious really. Diabolical. They got away with it for years. Now the world is watching and the city has been exposed. It's about time.



Rabbi Sheldon Harr, Temple Kol Ami Emanu-El "The Hunger Games" should be not be a "game" in our community or anywhere else in this country of ours. While there are legitimate arguments to be made on the tactical and physical side of this matter of feeding the hungry and homeless, there ought to be no acceptable argument to allow people in America to be on the precipice of starvation. In the meantime, the ordinances regarding these matters should be set aside, while at the same time discussions leading to a reasonable and meaningful conclusion can take place.



Richard Clark, CEO, Clark Leadership Consulting
Messaging is both an art and a science. Creating damaging international media attention and editorial comment like we have witnessed associated with feeding the homeless is most unfortunate and may have been avoided. Today, even homeless veterans who had better shelter and regular meals while risking their lives for America are victims of this situation. The common goal here is to help our fellow man. Let's leverage our resources to address this issue, rewarding those committed to help and facilitate the manner in which best serves our total community, including and not forgetting those less fortunate.



Pastor D.H. Dawkins Sr., Praise Tabernacle International
Your scope and perception are directly influenced by the profession and purpose you serve. As a leader in the religious arena, the passing of Dr. Myles Munroe, his wife, daughter and six other passengers on that fatal flight to the Bahamas

this week was a shock. However, among hundreds of Munroe's profound quotes, the one that stands out to me is most befitting: "The people who have impacted the world didn't live long. Martin Luther King. John F. Kennedy. These people who impact the world were not old people, but they lived so effectively that we cannot erase them from history."



Harry Dressler, mayor, Tamarac
President Obama has asked Congress for \$6.2BN to fight the outbreak of Ebola in the U.S. and West Africa. However, if recent presidential administrations had invested more into basic biomedical research over the last twenty years, rather than keep it flat, the request would be unnecessary because we might not be facing the scourge of Ebola today. The request is equal to 17% of the total research budgets for the National Institutes of Health and National Science Foundation, the primary agencies for medical and related research, total \$36.2 billion in fiscal year 2014. Prevention is better than the cure.



Dr. Bernardo Fernandez, CEO, Baptist Health Medical Group
When it comes to health, most of us focus on our bodies but overlook our brain. In honor of Alzheimer's Awareness Month, start enhancing your brain health. The Alzheimer's Association recommends staying physically, socially and mentally active. Mental stimulation actually strengthens brain cells and the connections between them. Other tips include eating a low-fat, low cholesterol diet with plenty of fruits, vegetables and foods like salmon that are high in omega-3. Drink water instead of alcohol and avoid smoking. Get sufficient rest and manage your stress. These simple steps could enhance the quality and longevity of your life.



Hava Leipzig Holzhauer, regional director, Florida Anti-Defamation League
This week, we marked the 76th anniversary of Kristallnacht, the "Night of Broken Glass." Simultaneously, pop artist Nicki Minaj released a video incorporating Nazi-themed imagery. The abuse of Nazi imagery is deeply offensive to Jews and all those who can recall the atrocities of Hitler's Final Solution. Minaj later apologized, and ADL commended her for renouncing the Nazi imagery. As we commemorate the 76th anniversary of Kristallnacht, we are grateful for the many educators, organizations, high-profile individuals, and others who provide context and clarity as to why it is important that we never trivialize the Holocaust.



Kathleen Cannon, president, United Way of Broward County
This week, United Way of Broward County joined more than 30 United Ways in Florida to release the ALICE Report. ALICE stands for Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed. This population makes up 47 percent of residents in Broward County. They are working hard, but continue to struggle to afford the basic needs of food, transportation, child care and health care. United Way has programs in place to prevent this population from falling into poverty — free tax preparation on board our Mobile Resource Center, Mission United, which assists veterans in getting back on their feet, and more.



Lois Frankel, member, U.S. House of Representatives
As we honored our nation's Veterans, I introduced bipartisan legislation that will allow the establishment of veteran student centers on college campuses in order to ease the transition from military to student life. Following the President's announcement of a landmark agreement with China to limit greenhouse gases — placing new restrictions on carbon emissions starting in 2025 — the House voted to authorize the construction of the Keystone XL pipeline. I joined those voting against the bill because it allows the project to go forward without receiving environmental review.

Looking ahead to this week



Katy Sorenson, president, Good Government Initiative, University of Miami
A United Way study has found that 49 percent of Floridians are barely making it financially — struggling to meet basic needs. With our low-paying service economy, our low level of education and our minimum wage of \$8.05 an hour, people are struggling to get affordable housing, access to early education for their kids, food and transportation. One of the biggest costs is health care, and that's where the legislature could help without lifting a finger. By taking the federal money available through the Affordable Care Act, nearly a million people could access Medicaid. It's time to put people before politics.



Archbishop Thomas Wenski, Archdiocese of Miami
The new Congress must reduce our nation's unsustainable deficits while avoiding the damaging policy of sequestration; but as it does so it should pursue ways that protect the poor and vulnerable and promote human life and dignity. A "circle of protection" should be drawn around the many programs that serve poor and vulnerable people at home and abroad. A central moral measure of any budget proposal is how it affects "the least of these" (Matthew 25). The needs of those who are hungry and homeless, without work or in poverty should come first.



Richard Barkett, CEO, Greater Fort Lauderdale REALTORS
Existing-home sales are expected to be higher next year, and prices will remain at a healthier level of growth that benefits both buyers and sellers, according to an economic forecast during the 2014 Realtors' Conference & Expo. Broward home sales this year got off to a slow start, but have recently shown stronger growth behind improvements in inventory, slower price gains and pent-up demand. The improving job market has consumers feeling more confident, and the rebound in home prices is building household wealth for homeowners and giving them the ability to sell after waiting the last few years. Better times ahead.



Patty Asseff, president, Broward League of Cities
I am proud of the efforts our community is making to meet the serious problem of homelessness. Recently, the Broward County Homeless Continuum of Care was selected to participate in Zero: 2016, a national campaign to end veteran and chronic homelessness. The call to action has been taken up by our cities and a dedicated group of local partners in Broward County, including public housing authorities, veterans' affairs and non-profits to do whatever it takes to end chronic and veteran homelessness in the next two years. Difficult as it may be, we now have the goal. Let's make it happen.



Claudette Bruck, commissioner, Coral Springs
Feeding the homeless is the talk of the town. I don't think anyone disagrees with the need to provide support to the homeless. The city is simply trying to do so in an orderly and safe manner.



Walter "Skip" Campbell, mayor, Coral Springs
My friend, Fort Lauderdale Mayor Jack Seiler, has taken a beating this week. The old saying that "You are damned if you do, damned if you don't," surely applies here. I don't see this story dying too soon.



Thomas Shea, president, Right Management
Good news for consumers. Prepare for a full-on retail industry battle, with Walmart, Target, Best Buy and other retailers announcing their strategies for what is quickly becoming Black Friday Week. With U.S. retailers depending on the holiday shopping season for about 20 percent of annual revenues, many are launching pre-Thanksgiving sales, cutting online shipping costs, opening on the actual holiday, and stretching major promotions through Cyber Monday. As Amazon continues raising the bar for faster, easier and cheaper shopping, consumers will see the benefits of innovation and tough competition.



Dr. Michael Dennis, chairman, Florida Atlantic University Schmidt College of Medicine
The American people have every right to expect positive action from the newly restructured Congress and the President. Frustration with gridlock was at the core of the recent election results. One issue which deserves wide support would be to examine the over \$2 trillion of profits held overseas by U.S. corporations to avoid paying taxes that could be used to support domestic programs. According to Audit Analysis, many companies based here use this method: for example, GE, Microsoft, Pfizer, Merck, and Apple. To encourage their return the funds could be "repatriated" with a slightly reduced tax rate below the current 35 percent. Couldn't that make a huge difference?



Barry Johnson, president, Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce
In the weeks going forward there will be interest and news coverage of Russia's plans to reportedly fly long-range bomber flights across the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean, too close for comfort to U.S. shores. This is a flashback to the Cold War days and will certainly bring a strain to already tenuous relations between Washington and Russia.



Earl Maucker, commissioner, Lighthouse Point; former editor, Sun Sentinel
Broward School Superintendent Robert Runcie and the school board are in a post-election euphoria over the successful \$800 million bond issue. Congratulations are in order for all who worked to get the job done. But now, the hard part begins. Officials need to start right now to implement their plan of accountability and transparency. Expect competition to be fierce for the millions of dollars available. You can bet the lawyers and lobbyists will be first in line. Taxpayers deserve to know exactly where and how every dollar will be spent.