

# Didn't find your subject?

For a complete listing of speaker presentations and hot topics for the month, visit our Speakers Bureau on the Web at [www.scgov.net](http://www.scgov.net)

# Inquire. Learn. Engage.

## Sarasota County Speakers Bureau

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Are you looking for a speaker to liven up a meeting, offer tips for better living or cut through confusion surrounding a community issue? The Sarasota County Speakers Bureau offers timely, informative and entertaining presentations to community groups, clubs and schools on topics ranging from disaster preparedness to recycling to civic participation. In fact, we offer a variety of topics that can be tailored to any audience.

### Requesting a speaker

Unless otherwise noted, requests for Sarasota County speakers at your meeting or event should be made by filling out an online request form at [www.scgov.net](http://www.scgov.net) or contacting the Sarasota County Call Center at 941-861-5000. Include information about the date, time and location of the presentation, as well as contact information (phone and email address) of a representative of your organization.

### Speaker request guidelines

For speakers who are under the auspices of the Sarasota County Commission, please submit requests four weeks in advance of a scheduled meeting, conference or event to ensure enough time for scheduling.

Include the name and contact information of a host or representative who will be in attendance at the meeting or event.

Please confirm with the speaker a week prior to the presentation date by phone or email and include the arrival and presentation time, date, length of presentation and question-and-answer session, introduction or biographical information, audiovisual needs, the expected number of audience members and directions, if necessary.

### The view from the top

Need a birds-eye view of a hot topic? Sarasota County's top elected and appointed leaders can illuminate policy decisions and strategic plans. To book a commissioner or top administrator, call 941-861-5000.

### How we communicate

How does Sarasota County keep citizens informed? You may be surprised to learn that the county has its own television studio, in-house print shop and team of writers, designers, webmasters and media relations specialists to keep you in the know. For more information, call 941-861-5000 or visit the website, [www.scgov.net](http://www.scgov.net).



How can I conserve energy and water in my home?

What's the best way to plan for a hurricane? How

would I start a book club? Where can my kids learn

about fire safety? How does the county assess the value

of my home? Where is The Legacy Trail?

Is my well water safe to drink? How can I

stretch my food dollars? What was life

like in Florida 100 years ago? How

can I become an elections poll worker? Where

are the SCAT bus routes?

What would I plant in a butterfly garden? What's the best

way to prevent crime in my neighborhood? Where can I

find affordable health care? What's my

ecological footprint? What animals are protected in

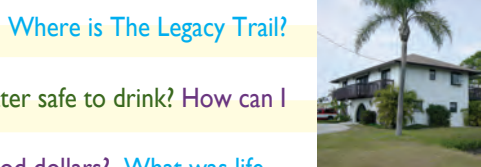
Sarasota? How can I grow herbs and flowers in my

garden? Where can I learn more about my elected

officials? How can I prevent identity theft? Is there an

environmentally friendly way to control insects?

What is the tourist tax, and how is it spent?



## We've made it easier

to schedule a speaker by listing all of our topics and a speaker request form online at [www.scgov.net](http://www.scgov.net). We also accept requests for speakers through our Sarasota County Call Center at 941-861-5000. Once we receive a request, our staff will respond quickly to ensure that you're able to engage the speaker best suited to your subject. Few people are aware of the far-reaching impact county government has on their day-to-day lives, from the navigability of roadways on the morning commute to the quality of tap water in the glass on the nightstand. We've produced a 5-minute video overview of our services, which is available in DVD format for use in conjunction with speaker appearances. The video also can be viewed on Sarasota County's YouTube channel, [www.youtube.com/sarasotacounty](http://www.youtube.com/sarasotacounty).

## Constitutional Officers

### Requesting a constitutional officer to speak

Sarasota County's five constitutional officers are elected by voters and oversee their own divisions of county government. To schedule an elected officer as a speaker, contact his or her office directly.

**Clerk of the Circuit Court** – Clerk of the Circuit Court and County Comptroller Karen E. Rushing's authority as an elected constitutional officer includes responsibilities as Clerk to the County and Circuit courts, County Recorder, Ex-Officio Clerk and Accountant to the Board of County Commissioners, Custodian of County Funds and County Auditor. To schedule Karen Rushing or a Clerk of the Circuit Court speaker, contact Sheryl Higginbotham at 941-861-7606 or email [shiggin@scgov.net](mailto:shiggin@scgov.net)

**Property Appraiser's Office** – Property Appraiser Bill Furst, an elected constitutional officer, is responsible for assessing all real and taxable personal property values in Sarasota County. He does not set tax rates. The Property Appraiser's Office sends out the annual TRIM (truth in millage) notices with assessed values and proposed taxes. Contact Bill Furst at 941-861-8270.

**Sheriff's Office** – Tom Knight is the elected sheriff of Sarasota County, responsible for law enforcement and investigations, the jail, crime prevention and animal services. Contact Wendy Rose at 941-861-4927 or [wrose@scgov.net](mailto:wrose@scgov.net).

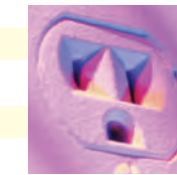
**Tax Collector's Office** – Barbara Ford-Coates is responsible for implementing Florida law in the collection of property taxes (real estate and tangible), tourist development taxes, business taxes, the issuing of titles and registrations for vehicles, vessels and manufactured homes, drivers' licenses, and hunting and fishing licenses. To schedule Barbara Ford-Coates as a speaker, contact Rana Melhem at [RMelhem@SarasotaTaxCollector.com](mailto:RMelhem@SarasotaTaxCollector.com) or 941-861-8430.

**Supervisor of Elections Office** – Supervisor of Elections Kathy Dent administers all federal, state, county, municipal and special district elections in Sarasota County. The office manages voter registration records and outreach, trains poll workers, maintains elections equipment and advises and qualifies candidates for local office. To schedule a presentation, call 941-861-8606 or visit [www.sarasotavotes.com](http://www.sarasotavotes.com) and scroll down the left-side menu to "Contact Us" and then "Request a Speaker" and fill out a speaker request form online.

# Speaker subjects

Sarasota County's speakers are experts in their fields who are eager to share their knowledge in the community.

Here's a brief overview of some of the topics that you can hear about from our talented staff and partners.



## Budget and financial planning

How is the county budget like your business or household budget? How is it different?

The county's Office of Financial Planning prepares the annual county budget, which serves as a policy document on spending priorities, as a revenue and spending plan, as a guide to operations and as a public information document about county revenues and expenditures.



Financial planning also manages the county's buildings and equipment capital assets and directs safety and risk management operations. It keeps the public informed about county financial operations and revenue through monthly economic reports and a Financial Transparency website. Budget and financial planning topics include:

- the county budget cycle and budget preparation
- how property taxes are calculated
- county financial transparency information

## Help for small business owners

Sarasota County is helping connect small business owners with county departments to get questions answered and to get help with regulation and permitting requirements.

Sarasota County wants to make it easy for small businesses – and those that want to relocate here – to do business with Sarasota County. The goal is to save business owners time and effort.

Speakers can explain what Sarasota County is doing to:

- provide economic incentives to expand and diversify the county's job base
- streamline the county's review processes and improve its service to small businesses
- help small businesses with regulation and permitting requirements and get answers to their questions

## Emergency response and education

Responding to medical and fire emergencies and natural disasters is one of the most critical functions of local government.

Emergency Services staff members also are dedicated to spreading the word about personal safety, prevention and preparedness. Speakers are available on the following topics:



- safeguarding homes, businesses, family members, pets and people with special needs before a hurricane strikes
- how first responders operate
- fire safety measures and fire station tours
- beach and pool safety tips, including riptide and red tide precautions
- tours of the 911 center with tips for special populations



## Hot topics in health

Get the facts – not the hype – on health subjects ranging from personal wellness to healthcare access to food safety. The Health and Human Services speakers bureau presentations are tailored to groups of 50 or more, and can be arranged by calling the Health Promotion Office at 941-861-2969. The following is just a sampling of the array of health topics:

- affordable health care options and local clinics
- drinking water and wells
- food safety issues
- healthcare practice management
- HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs)
- minimizing high-risk behaviors in children
- mold and indoor air quality
- pandemic influenza
- substance abuse and mental health issues in Sarasota County
- tobacco – how youths are targeted by the tobacco industry
- tobacco use and current trends in Sarasota County
- veterans – helping veterans connect to needed services



**Wellness** topics are offered through a partnership with the Sarasota County Wellness Coalition, a network of community members and organizations working together to prevent obesity and promote healthy lifestyle choices as listed below:

- cardiovascular disease and diabetes prevention
- childhood obesity/keeping children active
- exercise and incorporating physical activity into everyday living
- healthy habits for families
- nutrition/healthy eating
- school system wellness
- weight-loss methods, techniques and strategies
- workplace wellness

For more information, visit [www.sarasotawellness.org](http://www.sarasotawellness.org).

## Libraries

Each of the eight libraries in the Sarasota County Library System offers tours and services, or a group can request a speaker on many popular topics such as:



- youth and family activities
- literacy and "The Thirty Million Word Gap"
- talks for business or general audiences
- how to start a book discussion group
- the virtual library including our website and online resources
- What's new in the public libraries?

## Natural Resources

Vital and successful communities have a high quality of life and quality natural resources. Natural Resources speakers can share with you the best ways to have both, and also how to discover all natural Sarasota has to offer. Speakers can provide presentations on local wildlife and habitats, recreational opportunities, energy and resource conservation and an array of other topics. A brief glimpse is provided below:

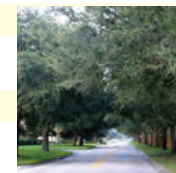


- beach nourishment and shoreline conditions
- Environmentally Sensitive Lands Protection Program
- reducing your ecological footprint
- waterway and inlet management
- nature-based recreational opportunities
- conservation and management tips
- Florida Scrub-jays, sea turtles, manatees and other notable species
- non-native and invasive plants and animals
- air and water quality
- prescribed burning

## Neighborhood Services

Neighborhood Services oversees neighborhood grants, neighborhood planning and the Neighborhood University program, including Civics 101. Staff encourages civic participation and neighborhood involvement. Among the topics:

- civic participation in Sarasota County
- county government overview
- improving and strengthening your neighborhood



## Parks and Recreation

From beaches to birdwatching, paddling and playgrounds, Sarasota County Parks and Recreation manages thousands of acres of Sarasota's treasured outdoor public spaces. Learn more about the county parks and hear the stories you won't read in the news. Among the many topics:



- What's new in Parks and Recreation?
- The Legacy Trail
- master rowing plan at Nathan Benderson Park
- parks in your backyard
- improvement plans for Siesta and Turtle beaches

## Sarasota County Area Transit (SCAT)

Regional public transportation is the wave of the future in the Tampa Bay region, but it will take some years to achieve. Get ahead of the curve by learning about the ins and outs of your local service.



- the variety of SCAT services and how to use them
- Google Transit Trip Planner
- Express bus service
- SCAT's Intelligent Transportation System (ITS)

## Sarasota County Extension services – home, garden and life skills

It's the best of both worlds – going back to school, but without the test anxiety. The University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS) is a federal-state-county partnership dedicated to developing knowledge in agriculture, human and natural resources and the life sciences, and making that information accessible. The agency offers numerous community classes, which can be shortened to speaker presentations. Listed below are just a few of the subjects:

- composting and recycling yard waste
- green home – energy and water efficiency, universal design and more
- container gardening
- drought-resistant landscaping
- landscaping for homeowners
- why landscapes fail
- wildlife landscaping
- nutrition and healthy living
- alternative pest control for homeowners
- pest management from ants to termites
- shark encounters – know before you go
- sustainable agriculture and local foods
- urban wildlife



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