



In Case You Missed It...

In Case You Missed It... by Gary Phillips Republican Club of Solivita

8/3/2026

Featured Speaker is Sheriff Grady Judd, with James Ring speaking on the accomplishments of our new District 18 Congressmen Scott Franklin.

Peter Thompson, Chair of the Republican Club of Solivita, began the meeting by educating the audience in obtaining Sample Ballots. These ballots are specific to Republican or Non-Party Affiliates (NPA) individuals. He also reminded the attendees that School Board and Judges WILL BE ELECTED in the Primaries on August 18th.

He also talked about how he educates Candidates to discuss what their future actions are going to be and not repeat their Biography. Brian Haas of the Florida States Attorney General for the 10th Judicial circuit will speak on 1/20/2027.

We have currently 2950 Registered Republicans and 2900 Democrats with 1700 Non-Party Affiliates (NPA's) in Solivita. He stressed that we must Go to Vote to make sure Republican conservatives get into office. Solivita averages about 3400 votes for our Republican candidates (thank you NPA's for your correct votes). Early voting begins at the Community Fitness Center on Marigold 8/8 and runs to 8/15 each day beginning at 9 AM and closing at 6 PM.

We are no longer the largest chartered Republican Club in Florida we are now one of the largest in Florida. The Ocala Republican Club in the Del Webb – Stone Creek community has over 1200 members. Peter and that president have struck up a conversation to share ideas going forward.

A special welcome to candidates Jon Albert and Omar Arroyo for attending tonight's event. Jon is running for District 48 State Representative with Governor DeSantis' endorsement and Omar is slated to replace retiring Martha Santiago as Polk County Commissioner.

Peter then introduced Grady Judd. He received a standing ovation. Grady is a Privacy Advocate; his officers do not wear body cameras. That policy was made when officers with cameras had to inform loved ones that their family member has died in an accident, the cameras were recording the worst time for human emotions such as shock, and grief. Also, these films now become part of the public record and can be reviewed over and over.

Grady began to discuss License Plate Readers and why they are not body cameras. They do what the deputies do to look for cars, report locations and allow the deputies to do their job. They read cars not people. He then told a Story—There recently was a Chevy involved in an incident, a tag reader got a hit on a certain street, the deputies blocked the car, asked the driver to step out, he refused. They then opened the door and tazed him without any effect. The Driver reached into the back seat, withdrew a handgun (which was later found to have been stolen). The driver was shot and killed. On the front window was a tag indicating he was an UBER Driver - BEWARE. License Plate Readers help solve crimes.

Red light cameras—issue tickets not just report offenders. He believes deputies should write tickets face to face and not let AI dictate who offends. Speed Cameras in school zones seem like a clever idea but are only money grabs. 60% of the money that comes from those tickets goes to the vendor, he feels that 15% should be profit to company and 85% go towards programs in that school.

School Bus Cameras - there are 250 buses in Polk County. When schools are in session the populations of all the schools in Polk Co would establish the largest city in the county. When a bus stops within a raised or grassy meridian no ticket is issued but if it stops on a painted meridian a ticket can be issued. Sometimes only ten feet is the difference between the two. Forty percent of these types of tickets are money grabs.

Polk County has grown by 150,000 people in past 5 years. It is estimated that by 2035 Polk Co will have 1 million residents. They are predicting that it may occur sooner, possibly by 2030. He was happy to report that the Crime Rate is the lowest than it has been in 5 years. In fact, crime is down 36% from 2025. (Thank you Sheriff Judd and your officers.)

Sheriff Grady invited anyone interested in touring the new District Station on Marigold, just contact the station for arrangements. They have a community room for meetings (size unknown). Major Larry Davis is over the NE and Ridge Districts. He made a pitch that the Civilian Patrol program is always looking for volunteers.

Martha Santiago, current Polk County Commissioner, is retiring and she has requested that her friend Omar Arroyo take her place. He is running unopposed and has been endorsed by Sheriff Grady Judd. Omar was previous Mayor of Haines City, a trained carpenter, businessman.

Commissioners quarrel between themselves, but they work well with the Sheriff department, both recognize their job is to serve. County Commissioners give the tools and the Sheriff and his officers do the job. Which leads us to Amendment 3. Property Tax Relief. The House and Senate of Florida passed bills to put the amendment on the ballot for this fall without even vetting the fiscal impact of the bill should it pass impacts City, County and State programs and services. He feels that the fiscal impact on counties, especially the smaller ones, will be overwhelming. Therefore, he encourages everyone to vote NO in the Primaries and then contact our State representatives and have them do a full vetting of what the will mean to every government agency in every county. If passed it will reduce the budget by 50%, impacting on park, recreation, storm services, police, fire fighters and road repairs.

Relationship to ICE — ICE is doing their lawful job, enforcing laws, and getting rid of illegals. They are removing the worst first. CIC and ICE have shared access now it used to be separate. ICE must be notified within 48 hours of detainment; we are cooperating with ICE. Need an ice agent in each station to notify when they come in for pick up.

CONGRESSMAN SCOTT FRANKLIN

With the new re-districting we are now included in District 18 and our new Representative is Scott Franklin. We had James Ring, his campaign manager and spokesperson to introduce us to Congressman Franklin.

Congressman Scott Franklin - Served in Army Equivalent to NCIS. Was in Lakeland Police Department as a Sergeant. Representative Franklin is on Ballot for November election. He is running in Florida District 18 for U.S. Congress. If we have any issues dealing with federal programs or services - contact his office for assistance. (i.e Veterans issues, Medicare, Social Security and more). His website is Franklin.house.gov. He and his team will read and respond to constituent correspondence. Follow him on his newsletter – “Ready Room”.

James can be reached by email at James.ring@mail.house.gov. His Telephone is 863-777-0071. Faith Sebright, is James' partner and her email is faith.sebright@mail.house.gov.

As James said - Let's turn Congress to a balanced budget not a continuing resolution.
End of Event.



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