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# THE Who's Who

IN BUILDING & CONSTRUCTION

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## LEADERS OF THE LAND

South Florida land developer  
dedicated to community  
and environment

*Bergeron Land Development Inc.*

INSIDE:  
YOUR FALL  
REGIONAL  
**BUYERS'  
GUIDE!**





Ronald Bergeron Sr. (middle) and his two sons, Ronald "J.R." Bergeron Jr. (left) and Lonnie Bergeron, lead the family-owned and operated Bergeron companies. The Bergeron family's principles on philanthropy and community, doing the right thing for clients, and promoting a positive work culture for employees form the bedrock of their business practices.

# LEADERS OF THE LAND

**South Florida Land Developer Dedicated to Clients,  
Community and Environment**

**by Makayla Schultz**

**F**or five decades, the name Bergeron Land Development Inc. has been synonymous with hard work and family values in the land development industry. Ronald "Alligator" Bergeron Sr. founded the company in 1962 and later incorporated it in 1965. Bergeron, a cattle rancher whose skill at wrestling alligators earned him his lifelong nickname, grew the company from its humble beginnings as a one-tractor

operation into one of the largest site development and roadway contracting firms in Florida—expanding communities, increasing commerce and improving commutes for travelers, while simultaneously protecting the state's fragile ecosystems.

Overseeing what has expanded into a family of companies specializing in land development, emergency services and real estate, 73-year-old CEO

Bergeron Sr. still comes to work every day, his longtime motto of "reputation before money" driving his team to maintain enduring relationships with clients. His sons Ronald "J.R." Bergeron Jr. and Lonnie Bergeron share their father's high-quality work ethic and help him manage the family-run operation.

J.R. Bergeron, the elder of the two sons, is President of Bergeron Land Development, a heavy highway civil

COURTESY OF ROBERT STOLPE

**"There's no greater accomplishment than being someone's mentor."**

*- Brian Thomason, Vice President, Bergeron Land Development Inc. & Bergeron Emergency Services Inc.*

roadway construction and site development contractor based in Fort Lauderdale, and Founder and President of Bergeron Emergency Services Inc., established in 1992, which dispatches heavy construction equipment to natural disaster zones nationwide. Lonnie Bergeron oversees real estate leasing and manages the 54 income-producing properties under Bergeron Properties and Investments Corp., founded in 1989.



**Brian Thomason, Vice President of Bergeron Land Development and Bergeron Emergency Services**

The companies' reputation for excellence in the industry begins with "leadership by example," explains Brian Thomason, Vice President of both Bergeron Land Development and Bergeron Emergency Services. "We don't ask our employees to do anything that we haven't done or can't do ourselves, whether it's running a backhoe, a dozer, or anything else."

In hopes of passing on their success to future generations in the industry, Thomason and many others in leadership actively seek opportunities to mentor their project managers and team members. "There's no greater

accomplishment than being someone's mentor. When I have project managers who are really excelling...you cannot put a price on that."

### **A HIGH-ACHIEVER: BERGERON LAND DEVELOPMENT**

A serious commitment to enrich expanding communities and protect fragile ecosystems has paid off with numerous awards for Bergeron Land Development over the years. This year, the company was named a US Builders Review Best of 2016 Honoree, and ranked 85th on

Engineering News-Record's (ENR) 2016 Southeast Top Contractors list. The ENR list contained only nine other South Florida contractors, and grades both public and privately held general contractors according to their construction contracting-specific revenues. J.R. Bergeron expresses his hope to excel at an even greater level in the future: "At Bergeron, we focus on doing the right thing for our clients and that means meeting deadlines, meeting budgets, and exceeding expectations. Making this coveted list is just the icing on the cake and we look forward to placing even higher in 2017."

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Founder & President of Bergeron Emergency Services Inc.*





**Bergeron Land Development employees during safety training.** The roadway construction company received the 2016 Safety Award for Superior Achievement from the Florida Transportation Builder's Association (FTBA) based on its outstanding safety record in 2015.

The roadway construction company also received the 2016 Safety Award for Superior Achievement from the Florida Transportation Builders' Association (FTBA) based on its outstanding safety record in 2015. According to OSHA logs reviewed by the FTBA, last year the firm had 177 employees log more than 245,264 hours—with only one reported injury.

An example of a recent project-based achievement is the Miami Beach Pump Station, completed in 2015, which stands out as one of Bergeron Land Development's many endeavors to anticipate and minimize the effects of natural disasters. In an effort to battle rising sea levels, flooding, and diminishing underground utilities, the company teamed up with the city of Miami Beach to undertake approximately \$34.6 million in design-build efforts. The project scope included elevating roadways and sidewalks as much as three feet, raising sea walls, and installing four pump stations capable of pumping more than 80 million gallons of water per day.

The Miami Beach Pump Station project was named a semi-finalist in the 2016 Construction Impact Awards. A total of 147 projects were nominated for these coveted awards, part of the I Build America movement, which is dedicated to showcasing the importance of three things: construction in modern life, creating pride in the industry, and enabling the general public to recognize that value. Also, the project was honored as the 2016 Project of the Year (Category III) by the Cuban-American Association of Civil Engineers, an award

given annually to a \$25 million to \$100 million engineering project in which civil engineering is a main component.

## BEYOND LAND DEVELOPMENT: BERGERON EMERGENCY SERVICES

Despite all efforts, some disasters cannot be averted. But when those disasters strike, the Bergeron Land Development team calls on its partners at Bergeron Emergency Services, enabling



**An aerial shot of the Miami Beach Pump Station project.** In an effort to battle rising sea levels, flooding, and diminishing underground utilities, Bergeron Land Development teamed up with the city of Miami Beach to undertake approximately \$34.6 million in design-build efforts.

COURTESY OF MARTHA PEREZ (TOP); SMITH AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHY (BOTTOM)





**Bergeron Emergency Services provided debris management services in South Florida after the 2005 Atlantic hurricane season. Since its founding in 1992, the company has dispatched heavy construction equipment to natural disaster zones nationwide to speed along recovery efforts.**

speedy disaster recovery and debris management following both natural and man-made disasters.

Thomason, who was a firefighter for more than 15 years before making a career switch to the land development industry, sees Bergeron's work in emergency services as a kind of public service in the private sector. "Firefighters run into burning buildings as people are running out; at Bergeron Emergency Services, we go in as people are evacuating. We help them protect their assets and their families, and move equipped personnel in to help speed along recovery efforts."

He gives a glimpse of the nonstop dedication required in the emergency services industry by adding, "Bergeron Emergency Services has contracts all throughout the southeast. I could lay my head down tonight in Florida, but be on an airplane at any given time tomorrow to where a disaster strikes. The clock is always ticking."

For example, in 2009, following a massive ice storm in Kentucky, Bergeron Emergency Services assisted the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet in four separate districts covering five separate counties in two separate time zones, handling over 1.6 million cubic yards of debris in less than 110 days.

## BERGERON GIVES BACK

The 20th Annual Ranch Roam, a fundraising event sponsored by the Bergeron family for the Boys & Girls Clubs of Broward

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County (BGCBC), took place in March this year. This event underscores the Bergerons' longtime commitment to make a difference by promoting the welfare of others. Held annually at Bergeron Sr.'s Green Glades Ranch in Weston, Florida, the Wild West-themed Ranch Roam has raised almost \$20 million for BGCBC. This year, a record-breaking 1,500 people were in attendance, making it the most largely attended charity event in all of Florida. Guests were treated to an evening of Western shootouts, alligator wrestling, mechanical bull riding, and more.

The Bergeron family's philanthropy goes far beyond one event for one organization. They have donated to more than 25 charities over the years, including the Boy Scouts of America, Relay for Life (the signature fundraising event for the American Cancer Society), and the Susan B. Anthony Recovery Center, a residential and outpatient addiction treatment center in South Florida for pregnant women and mothers with children. Illustrating Bergeron's dedication to supporting members of the building and construction trade is its support





The 20th Annual Ranch Roam charity fundraising event benefitting the Boys & Girls Clubs of Broward County

**"I strongly believe in and support the values and the positive work culture that our company offers."**

**- Brian Thomason**

of Construction Angels, a not-for-profit organization that provides grief counseling and financial support to surviving construction family members who have lost loved ones due to construction-related fatalities.

Bergeron Land Development also seeks to give back to Florida as a whole by preserving the wonder of the Everglades. The company exerts environmental responsibility in its development efforts to prevent further damage to Florida's natural tropical wetlands, and to reverse the damage already done by the ever-rising water levels drowning out the area's natural diversity. These construction practices are a testament to the idea that the stereotypical contradiction between

land development and environmental conservation does not have to exist. Bergeron Sr., an official wildlife commissioner appointed by the governor of Florida, is particularly dedicated to this cause and has even been ranked as one of the 19 best environmentalists in South Florida by the Broward-Palm Beach New Times newspaper, for his legacy of balancing development and conservation.

## A LEGACY IN LEADERSHIP

Bergeron Land Development's commitment to working "within its wheelhouse" of proven skills helps to ensure its future as a leading land developer in Florida, says Thomason.

Employees dedicate themselves to managing projects in a way that upholds and furthers a reputation for excellence, enabling the company to win significant design-build projects again and again. As one of those employees, Thomason states, "I strongly believe in and support the values and the positive work culture that our company offers. Its outreach to not only the community, but also to its employees, speaks volumes. That's really the story to be told."

The Bergeron family's principles form the bedrock upon which the business has stood for half a century. Undoubtedly, their leadership in environmental stewardship and generosity will continue to gain recognition and respect. 🐾

*Author Bio: Makayla Schultz is a contributing author located in Siloam Springs, Ark.*



The Bergeron family at the Green Glades Ranch in Weston, Fla., where the family hosts its annual Wild West-themed Ranch Roam, a charity fundraising event that underscores a longtime commitment to make a difference by promoting the welfare of others.

COURTESY OF JABREU PHOTOGRAPHY (TOP); ROBERT STOLPE PHOTOGRAPHY (BOTTOM)