



# WRANGLER NEWS

JULY 23 - AUGUST 12, 2022 • VOL 32, NO 14



Our most vulnerable residents, often cast aside, get programs in new Tempe, Chandler budgets. PAGE 3



We give you candidate profiles of the two running for Chandler mayor and six for City Council. PAGES 16-17



Here's a smokin' opportunity to have fun and stay cool: Visit Hall of Flame Museum of Firefighting. PAGE 24



## GOOD TO BE BACK, BUDDY

Soon, school bells will ring again and there is plenty new and exciting on campuses around South Tempe and West Chandler. Our back-to-school special section, PAGES 10-23

— Wrangler News file photo by Billy Hardiman

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## Chandler, Tempe address needs of vulnerable residents in 2022-23 budgets

By Lee Shappell  
*Wrangler News Executive Editor*

Chandler and Tempe significantly increased funding for services that enhance basic human needs and services in their respective 2022-23 fiscal-year budgets, which became effective July 1.

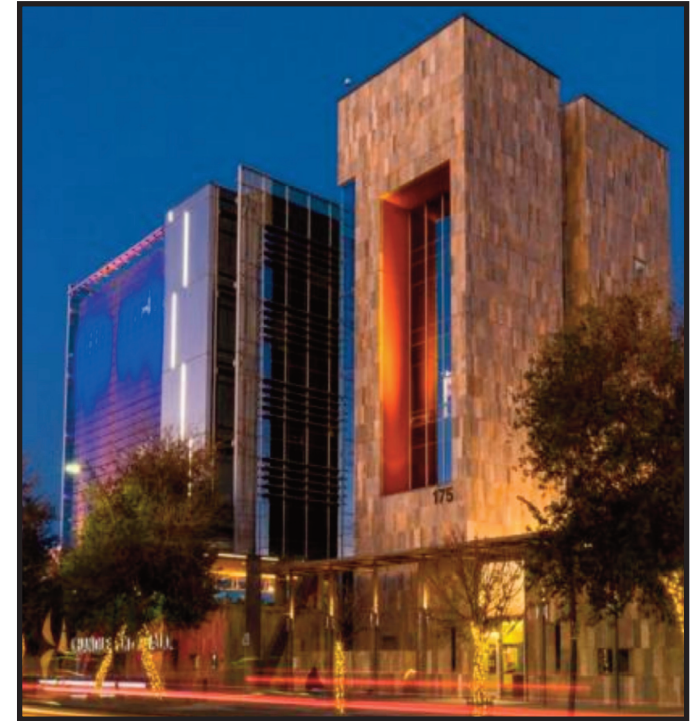
Chandler approved \$300,000, one time, to fully fund Operation Open Door in its Neighborhood Resources Department, allowing residents experienc-

ing homelessness to transition to temporary housing and providing flexibility for homeless navigators and law enforcement.

The city also is creating a Behavioral Health Unit within the Police Department that will have a sergeant and four officers and will place an embedded mental-health resource in its 911 center to divert calls to specialists when police officers are not needed.

Tempe approved a fourth full-time Crisis Intervention Specialist for its Human Services Mental Health Response Team, allowing it to provide response seven days a week, 10 hours a day, to relieve its officers from responding when they are not needed.

In all, Chandler's 2022-23 fiscal-year budget is \$1.353 billion, up from \$1.058 billion a year ago. The largest jump is in the Capital Improvements Program, which gets \$597 million, compared to \$377 million the year before, to complete several big-ticket projects that were sliced from lean budg-



Chandler created a Behavioral Health Unit in its new budget.

— BUDGETS, Page 4

## Tempe Council among most diverse after swearing in new members



(From left) New Tempe Council members Jennifer Adams, Arlene Chin and Berdetta Hodge

The newest members of Tempe City Council were sworn in at Council Chambers on July 1, giving the city one of the most diverse councils in the nation.

Incumbent Jennifer Adams is Tempe's first openly gay woman to be elected to the Council.

Adams, elected in 2018 with a focus on fiscal responsibility, empowering neighborhoods in the decision-making process, promoting local businesses and improving our city's infrastructure, was sworn in to another four-year term after her re-election.

She is the daughter of a former mayor in her native Nebraska and worked as a Tempe employee for 29 years.

Also sworn in to four-year terms were new Council members Arlene Chin and Berdetta Hodge.

With the new lineup, Tempe now has more women than men on City Council.

Chin is the first Asian American to sit on the panel.

Chin, who was appointed to fill an interim Council position in 2019, is a 45-year resident of Tempe. She is an administrator at the ASU Foundation and longtime community volunteer.

Hodge is the city's first African American female Council member.

She has been a Tempe resident for more than 40 years. She is a leader in Tempe charities and currently serves on

the Tempe Union High School District Governing Board.

"Tempe is known to be a city that welcomes diversity and inclusion," said former Tempe Mayor Neil Giuliano, the first directly-elected, openly gay mayor in the country.

"The results of this election are one more proof point to that. Right now, we are setting the example nationally that diverse cities are successful cities, and we are giving our children role models."

Adams, Chin and Hodge join Corey Woods, Tempe's first African American mayor; Doreen Garlid, the city's first Native American Council member; Randy Keating, who was 33 when elected to the Council, among the youngest Council members in Arizona; and Council member Joel Navarro, who is of Hispanic heritage.

## Budgets

From Page 3

ets during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Tempe's 2022-23 budget is lower, \$1.127 billion, compared to \$1.282 billion in 2021-22, largely because in 2021-22 Tempe made a \$343 million one-time payment to the Public Safety Personnel Retirement System to pay down its unfunded accrued liability for its Police and Fire retirement plans, according to Mark Day, the city's budget director. That expenditure was not necessary this fiscal year.

### Chandler steps up to help homeless

Riann Balch of Chandler's Neighborhood Resources Department says that with the new funding Operation Open Door will be able to continue providing non-congregate emergency shelter and bridge housing via motel-hotel rooms to homeless residents who are unable to use congregate shelters due to capacity limits or requirements.

"To date, the program has been funded solely through COVID-19 specific grant funds," Balch said. "The additional funds provided by the Chandler City Council will allow the city to . . . decrease unsheltered

homelessness, and increase returns to housing and stability through the end of fiscal year 2022-2023.

"In fiscal year 2020-2021, Operation Open Door served 110 households, and produced 79 percent positive exits. The program was initially implemented to respond to the need for persons experiencing homelessness to shelter-in-place during the (COVID-19) shutdown. Operations have continued in response to the growing numbers of unsheltered households. Homelessness is anticipated to continue to increase because of the national affordable-housing crisis and ongoing economic impacts of the pandemic."

Eligibility for Operation Open Door is based on familial status – including current custody of minor children; COVID-19 vulnerability; age and disability, and exit plan. Participants receive intensive case management from Chandler's Community Navigation team and food service through a partnership with the Salvation Army Chandler Corps. The goal for each household is to exit directly to permanent housing or to a longer-term program that provides a transition to permanency.

As a result of the pandemic, non-congregate shelter has been recognized nationally and internationally as a best practice in ending homelessness, Balch said. Non-congregate programs include accommodating partners and pets, a safe place to store be-

longings and a place to refrigerate food and medications that congregate shelters do not provide.

Chandler's new Police Department Behavioral Health Unit will receive focused training, according to Chandler Budget Manager Matt Dunbar.

"The embedded mental-health resource will allow for better responses to certain calls received in our 911 center, and allows for specially trained staff to be available as a resource when needed," Dunbar said.

Chandler is adding seven positions to its Police Department, including two sworn officers, two police investigative specialists, one communications technology supervisor, one business systems support analyst and one business systems support supervisor, as requested by Police Chief Sean Duggan.

Chandler took a deep dive into capital improvements in the new budget.

"However, many projects are those authorized by voters during the last bond election for funding approval, and we are able to start to make progress on these while meeting the funding requirements with no tax-rate increase to the secondary property-tax rate," Dunbar said. "The Capital Improvement Program in the current year is substantially larger than in years past for many reasons."

— BUDGETS, Page 6

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## Budgets

From Page 3

Among those CIP projects:

- Major arterial street projects, including Chandler Heights Road from McQueen to Val Vista Drive, and Lindsay Road from Ocotillo to Hunt Highway.

- Improvements for Tumbleweed Regional Park and Mesquite Groves Park.

- Major infrastructure investments in the Airpark area, including a Cooper Road extension, runway reconstruction and airfield lighting.

- Significant water and wastewater maintenance projects.

- Citywide street lighting conversion to LED.

Other Chandler budget highlights:

- Emphasizing multimodal transportation through funding for the Frye Road protected bike lane, design of the Ashley Trail/Paseo Trail connection and the Kyrene Branch and Highline Canal shared-use paths.

- Continue paying down the Public Safety Personnel Retirement System unfunded liability with a one-time payment of \$50 million.

While Chandler's budget increased, its property-tax rate actually decreased, by about a penny. Property valuations across the city increased (by about 1.5 percent), there was new property to tax (nearly 5.5 percent growth) and, explained Dunbar, the property tax is only a small percentage of total revenues collected by the city.

### Tempe mental-health team upgrade aids relationships, trust

In Tempe, \$88,000 to its Human Services Mental Health Response Team will upgrade staffing to facilitate coverage 10 hours a day, every day, which is important in developing relationships and trust, according to Tempe spokesperson Susie Steckner.

"We recognize that crises occur every day. Eventually, we hope to expand the program to achieve round-the-clock coverage," Steckner said.

Steckner added that the city's Mental Health Response Team – MyHRT – is intended to divert non-dangerous calls involving mental-health crises from Tempe Police to CARE 7, the city's crisis-response program. This results in targeted, tailored responses to these calls provided by experts in the behavioral-health field, according to Steckner.

The MyHRT team has the ability to directly connect those individuals and their family members to supportive services from CARE 7, Human Services or other Tempe departments and community agencies to provide immediate help and prevent future crises.

Tempe also approved \$40,000 for a Fire Medical Rescue Mental Health and Wellness Program that addresses first-responder mental health and wellness. Tempe Fire Chief Greg Ruiz says that includes annual mental-health wellness coaching and resiliency-building sessions with a licensed mental-health provider. Training and education sessions will focus on nutrition, fitness, mindfulness, sleep, stress reduction and resiliency.

Ruiz pointed out that firefighters, EMTs and paramedics are subjected to many forms of mental trauma as they encounter high-stress incidents regularly. The effects, Ruiz says, can manifest into serious short-term and long-term anxiety, depression, stress, grief and sorrow. Firefighter suicide rates nationwide are at an all-time high, according to Ruiz.

Sustainability, especially provisions for electric-vehicle chargers and infrastructure overall, were given a big boost, to more than \$400 million. Included will be an operations center, street and park projects.

Also, Tempe approved implementation of the city manager's re-organization plan that includes one new assistant city manager position and reclassification of three existing positions.

The moves are estimated to have an annual budgetary impact of approximately \$414,000, according to Day, the city's budget director. That is within financial capacity parameters established as part of the city's five-year, long-range forecast.

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## OPINIONS

### Another exciting development as we aim Wrangler News to its digital future

By Don Kirkland

As any of you who are longtime readers may know, the newspaper you're holding in your hands is the product of writers, photographers and editors who believe passionately in the role local journalism plays in strengthening neighborhoods and helping to ensure our shared hope for community collaboration and growth.

For more than three decades, those of us living in Tempe and West Chandler have received bi-weekly delivery of Wrangler News to our driveway. And, as we've said before, that is not going to change.

On occasions when I'm asked why we work as hard as we do to produce Wrangler News, I suppose the "right" answer is that we seem to be creating content our readers enjoy, and which, through advertising revenue, gives us the ability to stay solvent.



Don Kirkland

Naturally, we want to think that those assumptions are correct. But the real answer, as we see it, is that our work represents a labor of love; it's a way to produce something *we* like, a pursuit

that enables us to look forward to coming to work every day, that sustains our passion for (hopefully) good journalism and serves a useful purpose in a world that has become increasingly complex and divided.

I'm refreshingly reminded of this view by our contributors, including our longtime photographer Billy Hardiman, who added his endorsement to a planned expansion of Wrangler News (I'll tell you about that shortly) for which he felt the passion within him would make him an even more energized contributor.

We are also thrilled with the overwhelming success, notably the 24,000 monthly page views on our website, wranglernews.com. There, you will also find a full PageFlip version of our print edition for those who do not receive it in their driveway.

We are heartened as well by the number of clicks directed to our advertisers' websites from the ads they place on our pages.

Another factor in our belief that we are, for the most part, doing at least some things right is the number of readers who ask to receive our emailed newsletter. As of late, that

number has grown by leaps and bounds, with at least three or four new subscribers signing on every week.

So, again, while promising that we'll keep on printing newspapers as we have these many years, we're going to expand our presence among the huge number of viewers of Facebook and Instagram.

It's obvious to all of us that those venues draw an audience that grows by the day, the hour, the minute.

As of this writing, we're in the process of developing our own strategies to achieve that goal, and we'll keep you up to date as we get closer to full launch.

In the meantime, we invite you to check out our existing Facebook presence and hope you'll feel free to send us ideas you'd like to see incorporated in our expanding digital initiative.

We want the readers of Wrangler News to view their community newspaper as a team effort.

And for you to be part of that team.

*Don Kirkland is the founder and publisher of Wrangler News.*

## As drought continues, Tempe' water conservation becomes more critical

By Jennifer Adams

In June, you may have seen the news about many Arizona cities enacting various stages of their Drought Preparedness Plans in response to worsening conditions on the Colorado River. Tempe and many cities around us understand how important it is to prepare for the future.

That is why we are implementing Stage 0 of our plan – also known as the "Watch" phase. Under Stage 0, we will be doing more community education so people are more aware of current and future drought conditions. We also are encouraging all Tempe water users to continue voluntary conservation measures.

Our city is in a unique position. We have a diverse water portfolio. We rely primarily on water from the Salt River Project (rather than Colorado River) to meet most of our water needs. However, Tempe recognizes the importance of planning for a future with less water.

Tempe residents have been very responsive to our water-conservation efforts for about 20 years and South Tempe residents have surely been a big part of that. These conservation efforts are so successful the

city has achieved a 10 percent reduction demand for potable water during that time – despite a 17 percent increase in population. In 2021 alone, Tempe estimates that about 410 million gallons were saved by our water-conservation program. If we can continue our culture of conservation, we can potentially avoid future water restrictions.

You can be a part of the solution. Take advantage of these resources for Tempe residents:

**WaterSmart portal:** Available to all Tempe water customers. This provides hourly and daily usage and water-saving tips. Sign up for leak and high-use alerts. I highly recommend this for everyone.

**Water consultations:** By phone, web or in person, you can meet with Water Conservation Specialists. They will come to your home, evaluate and make specific recommendations on ways to save water, improve plant health and reduce your utility bill. They can generate a water-conservation budget to show you how much you should be using.

**Rebates:** Whether you're in a single-family or multi-family residence, Tempe has multiple rebates that will help conserve water and save you money.

From landscape rebates to indoor-fixture changes, Tempe has rebates available.

**Workshops:** Taught by local experts, learn to cultivate sustainable landscapes that are water-wise and low-maintenance. Workshops are live, but you can watch previously recorded sessions on our webpage. There are many videos waiting for you in the online library – from tips on selecting trees and pruning shrubs to finding leaks and troubleshooting sprinkler repairs.

Tempe offers buckets of information (get it?!) about water conservation online. For more information on our Drought Preparedness Plan and Water Conservation Program, visit [tempe.gov/water](http://tempe.gov/water).

As always, I am here as a resource for any questions, ideas or feedback you have about our great city.

*Please connect with me anytime at [jennifer\\_adams@tempe.gov](mailto:jennifer_adams@tempe.gov) or 480-350-8835. You can find me on Facebook at JenniferAdamsTempe.*

*Jennifer Adams is in her second term on Tempe City Council and is vice mayor.*



# Arizona's students get a raw deal with expanded voucher eligibility

By Vince Roig and Paul J. Luna

**Y**es, the state Legislature added much-needed funding for our Arizona public schools, including \$50 million in fiscal year 2023 and ramping up to \$100 million in fiscal year 2025 toward the poverty weight, \$100 million for special education and \$12.5 million in additional funding for the Arizona Promise Program.

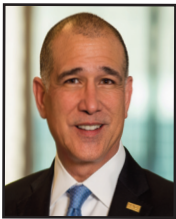


Vince Roig

That kind of investment is critically needed and much overdue.

But in brokering this deal, lawmakers also passed House Bill 2853 to expand vouchers to all 1.1 million K-12 students in Arizona and that will divert money toward private schools.

Gov. Doug Ducey quickly signed the bill into law.



Paul Luna

Make no mistake about it: Only an elite few will benefit from an unprecedented and unpopular expansion of these Education Savings Accounts, while more than 1 million Arizona public-school students will continue to attend some of the lowest-funded schools in the country.

For years, a bipartisan group of advocates across business and education has been pushing the Arizona Legislature to create a comprehensive solution to Arizona's P-20 education funding system—one that will address the critical needs of students

from early education to college and beyond.

Right now, the state should be focused on access, accountability and attainment, including specific actions such as:

Expanding access to quality early-learning environments.

Making rigorous coursework (such as Advanced Placement and dual enrollment) available to all students to prepare them for college.

Providing mentoring and other supports to ensure that once they are in college, students persist in attaining a two- or four-year degree.

Instead, the majority of legislators chose to greatly expand Education Savings Accounts that will help wealthy parents pay for tuition at expensive private schools and other extravagances that Arizona's neediest children will never be able to afford.

Until now, vouchers were limited. The law that Gov. Ducey signed will create universal access to ESAs. Starting this fall, high-income parents will be able to make deposits into savings accounts and withdraw money to pay for private-school tuition or a wide range of services and equipment, including tuition, iPads, equine therapy and one-on-one tutoring.

## No accountability

This new law does not hold parents accountable for how they spend their ESA withdrawals. The state will never know if \$300 million or more spent on ESAs will yield improved learning. By contrast, public-school students will continue to take annual assess-

ments and their schools will be graded on those results. Arizonans did not ask for this.

The Legislature created ESAs in 2011, but in 2018, after passing a new expansion, advocates gathered the signatures necessary to let voters decide. Voters roundly rejected this ESA expansion by 2 to 1.

Voters want the state to invest in public schools, not to create savings accounts for the rich to invest in their children.

Following our mission to support students furthest from opportunity, Helios Education Foundation has created a Five-Year Impact Plan to focus on the needs of Latino and low-income students in three key areas: third-grade reading, college-going and college completion.

Arizona's schools desperately need funding to accelerate the implementation of science, of reading instruction for teachers to improve student-literacy skills, and expand access to dual-enrollment programs so students will be able to earn college credits in high school and be ready to succeed in college.

These are what will give every Arizona student the tools needed for success in life.

Arizona lawmakers chose a different route. This new law only serves their political objectives at the expense of public schools.

Their "grand bargain" is a "big loser" for Arizona and its children.

*Vince Roig is founding chairman of Helios Education Foundation. Paul J. Luna is president and CEO of Helios.*

## We should take heed of the message and sheer beauty of documents written by our nation's forefathers

By Glynn Gilcrease

**T**he Declaration of Independence was pronounced by the Second Continental Congress of the United States on July 4, 1776, enacted during the American Revolution against Great Britain.

It explained why the 13 colonies considered themselves as 13 independent, sovereign states, no longer under British domination.

The declaration was signed by 56 of America's found-

ing fathers, formally explaining why the Congress voted to declare independence.

The document has become a widely known statement of human rights, particularly the second sentence:

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."



Glynn Gilcrease

Many of these founding documents have relevance to challenges we face today. These passages offer us historical retrospective of the difficulties prominent in, for example, Abraham Lincoln's day that can be likened to the world's modern-day complexities.

The 16th president's writing was poetry, just the ele-

gance of it, the symmetry of it. There was nothing superfluous.

Donning a top hat, overcoat and Shenandoah beard, I often recite Lincoln's most-famous speeches, weaving in historical context to diverse audiences, among them elementary-school children, college students and Rotary Clubs.

While poring over Lincoln's works and other memorable writings from the early days of our great country, I am reminded of the authors' vision and foresight.

We all should take time to read, absorb and appreciate these national treasures.

*Waco, Texas transplant Glynn Gilcrease, 77, has been a Tempe trial attorney for a half century. He doubles during his off-hours as a professional Abraham Lincoln impressionist. He is a U.S. Marine Corps veteran.*



## BACK TO SCHOOL

# In theory, voucher law laudable; in practice, perhaps not so much

By Lee Shappell

Wangler News Executive Editor

Four years ago, Arizona voters said no to a school-voucher proposal that would significantly expand the current one. Resoundingly. Overwhelmingly. By 2 to 1.

Yet, during the 2022 Legislative session, Arizona Republican lawmakers were not moved by that. They defiantly passed one of the most sweeping universal voucher bills in the country. Gov. Doug Ducey, a strong proponent of school choice, signed it quickly on July 7 and tweeted, “The biggest school choice victory in U.S. history.”

Opponents of the sweeping new law hope to put it back in the hands of the

voters, who crushed a similar measure in 2018. Save Our Schools Arizona has launched a referendum campaign. If it collects more than 118,000 signatures by Sept. 24, voucher expansion would not become effective unless voters approve it in 2024.

If the law stands, parents would have free-reign to apply voucher money to their children’s education as they see fit, with no accountability. Those Arizona families that choose not to send their kids to public school would have the option to receive a voucher — an Empowerment Scholarship Account — worth just less than \$7,000 a year, for each child, to apply toward any means they select, including home schooling.



Some area schools resume as early as July 28 amid many issues under discussion.

The intention of Arizona’s existing voucher program is to give families mired in underperforming school districts and who lack the means to send their kids to a higher-performing private school the ability to do that. In theory, it could become a way to break cycles of poverty in families through better education.

In reality, the current law falls short. Many families still can’t afford private schools. Instead, vouchers are being used by affluent families, who already can afford private education, in turn di-

verting resources from district public schools.

Representatives of public-school districts in South Tempe and West Chandler — Tempe Union High, Tempe Elementary and Kyrene — still are digesting potential impacts the new voucher law.

“We’ve had conversations about what does this look like, but I think that at this point it’s too early for us to tell what impact it might have,” said Mike Minghine, assistant superintendent of

— VOUCHERS, Page 12

### 2023-23 SCHOOL CALENDARS

#### Kyrene

July 28 — First day of school.  
 Sept. 5 — Labor Day, no school.  
 Sept. 30 — Teachers day, no school.  
 Oct. 3-7 — Fall break, no school.  
 Oct. 10 — Staff development day, no school.  
 Nov. 11 — Veterans Day Holiday, no school.  
 Nov. 24-25 — Thanksgiving break, no school.  
 Dec. 23 — Teachers day, no school.  
 Dec. 26-Jan. 6 — Winter Break — no school.  
 Jan. 9 — Classes resume.  
 Jan. 16—Martin Luther King Jr. holiday, no school  
 Feb. 20. — Presidents’ Day, no school.  
 March 13-17 — Spring Break, no school.  
 March 20 — Teachers day, no school.  
 April 7 — Spring holiday, no school.  
 May 18 — Last day of school.

#### Tempe Elementary

Aug. 1 — First day of school.  
 Sept. 5 — Labor Day, no school.  
 Oct. 3-7 — Fall break, no school.  
 Nov. 11 — Veterans Day Holiday, no school.  
 Nov. 23-25 — Thanksgiving break, no school.  
 Dec. 26-Jan. 6 — Winter Break — no school.  
 Jan. 9 — Classes resume.  
 Jan. 16 — Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday, no school.  
 Feb. 20. — Presidents’ Day holiday, no school.  
 March 13-17 — Spring Break, no school.  
 April 7 — Spring holiday, no school.  
 May 18 — Last day of school.

#### TUHSD

Aug. 4 — First day of school.  
 Sept. 5 — Labor Day, no school.  
 Oct. 3-7 — Fall break, no school.  
 Oct. 10 — Teachers day, no school.  
 Nov. 11 — Veterans Day Holiday, no school.  
 Nov. 24-25 — Thanksgiving break, no school.  
 Dec. 23 — Teachers day, no school.  
 Dec. 23-Jan. 6 — Winter Break — no school.  
 Jan. 9 — Classes resume.  
 Jan. 16 — Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday, no school.  
 Feb. 20. — Presidents’ Day holiday, no school.  
 March 13-17 — Spring Break, no school.  
 March 20 — Teachers day, no school.  
 April 7 — Spring holiday, no school.  
 May 24 — Last day of school.

#### Valley Christian

Aug. 8 — First day of school.  
 Sept. 5 — Labor Day, no school.  
 Oct. 10-14 — Fall break.  
 Nov. 23-25 — Thanksgiving break, no school.  
 Dec. 17-Jan. 2 — Holiday Break — no school.  
 Jan. 3 — Classes resume.  
 Jan. 16—Martin Luther King Jr. holiday, no school  
 Feb. 20 — Presidents’ Day holiday, no school.  
 Feb. 21 — Faculty-staff day, no school  
 March 13-17 — Spring Break, no school.  
 April 7-10—Good Friday-Easter Monday, no school  
 May 25 — Last day of school.

## School security top of mind in S. Tempe, W. Chandler in wake of Uvalde massacre

By Lee Shappell  
Wrangler News Executive Editor

**Y**ou're a parent. You watch the news. You've seen what appears to be unfathomable malfeasance in response to the May 24 shooting at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas, where an 18-year-old, who apparently had once been bullied there, breached security, murdered 19 young students and two teachers, and wounded 17 others.

Earlier in the day, he'd shot his grandmother in the face at home. She lived.

Nearly 500 officers responded to the school. None made any attempt to take on the shooter for more than an hour while shots continued to ring out.

It's only the latest in so many that perhaps we're actually becoming numb to it. Columbine. Sandy Hook. Marjory Stoneman Douglas. Now Uvalde. Those are just the big ones. There are dozens more.

Could South Tempe or West Chandler be next?

While each shooting terrifies students, educators, parents and communities and resurrects debates about gun laws, our area school-safety teams are paying close attention, watching, learning and updating best practices in their best effort to not be next.

Our three public-school districts – Tempe Union High, Tempe Elementary and Kyrene – as well as West Chandler's private Valley Christian High aren't cocky but confident that they're in a good position.

They share a common strategy of being proactive rather than reactive to campus and student safety and security.

"We're not just school-district employees," said Mike Minghine, Tempe Elementary District assistant superintendent for administrative services. "We're parents, we're aunts, we're uncles. So it's very personal to all of us, and that incident does elevate how we approach it, especially going into this year."

In the Tempe Union High School District, of which Corona del Sol and Marcos de Niza high schools are members, the district works with FEMA, Homeland Security, Tempe and Phoenix police and other area law-enforcement agencies in hopes of stopping a potential deadly event before it becomes one.

"When you think of our core values of 'students first' and 'employees matter,' when you look at school safety, security and an orderly environment, those things have to be Job One for us," said Sean McDonald, TUHSD assistant superintendent of district opera-

tions. "If our staff, or students or families are feeling they're not in an environment that's going to be safe and secure and orderly, they're not going to be able to learn, and then we're not going to be able to meet our mission of excellence in teaching and learning."

TUHSD has hired day and night security officers to watch campuses. It conducts a 10-day training academy that includes de-escalation strategies for all security personnel. They do walkthroughs of all buildings to augment fencing, surveillance cameras and radios.

The district also has school-resource officers on its campuses, a source of controversy last year when some community members opposed continuing to have armed police officers on campus.

Case histories are studied. Drills are conducted.



"There are lots of things we would be able to see through our security officers and our surveillance cameras that would initiate a lockdown even before a suspect gets close," said McDonald, who went through a week-long FEMA training session in Pennsylvania.

"We're always evaluating and doing analyses. What are our strengths and weaknesses? What are the opportunities and what are the threats? We look at all of that often."

So do Kyrene security officials.

Like most school districts across Arizona, Kyrene has spent the summer fielding calls and emails from concerned families and staff in the wake of the tragedy in Uvalde.

Kyrene launched a new section on its website, [kyrene.org/safe](http://kyrene.org/safe), to give families and employees details about the district's Emergency Operations Plan, key personnel and campus security features. The information was shared in a July 8 presentation to the Kyrene Governing Board.

"The safety of students, staff and visitors is our highest priority," Kyrene Superintendent Laura Toenjes said. "Kyrene provides a safe environment for teaching and learning through continual training, secure facilities and a comprehensive Emergency Operations Plan."

Toenjes added that plans are reviewed and updated on a continual basis to adjust to evolving needs, and she spoke about the importance of supporting students' social and emotional well-being in addition to their physical safety.

Damian Nichols, Kyrene's executive director of emergency management, said that among the standard security features on Kyrene campuses are perimeter fencing with 360-degree virtual video, electronic-controlled locks and badge access, and controlled visitor access through single entry points and secure front lobbies.

Kyrene also focuses on cyber security, Nichols said. Cyber monitoring can pick up digital evidence of bullying, threats or warning signs of suicide.

"We have lots of tools in place," Nichols said. "We have artificial intelligence running in the background, but we also have human review."

Kyrene's safety and security personnel includes an emergency-management team, school-resource officers, retired law-enforcement officers and a volunteer group that conducts security patrols, checks equipment and provides onsite support for active events.

Kyrene works with a half-dozen law-enforcement agencies to develop school-security plans and to coordinate emergency responses. Leaders and key staff on every Kyrene campus receive training in active incidents, Stop the Bleed, CPR and other life-saving skills.

Providing a safe learning environment is top of mind, according to Tempe Elementary's Minghine. He said that staff receives ongoing training and knows procedures for emergency responses, lockouts, lockdowns, evacuations and sheltering in place.

"One of the things we're making sure to do is incorporate the social and emotional components," Minghine said. "We have a district crisis-response team. We provide counseling. We're also mindful of communication to families to keep them up to date."

At Valley Christian High, Principal Josh LeSage says that campus security "was in a good place" when he arrived two years ago.

"Yet from Day One, we've made enhancements and improvements to multiple layers throughout the campus to enhance what was already there," LeSage said. "We have not taken any drastic measures as a result of what happened in Uvalde, because we feel like our campus was already extraordinarily safe and secure. But we are having conversations about how we can make it even safer and more secure."

"As a Christian school, our first priority is to pray for those families impacted. We believe absolutely 100 percent that the creator of the universe is on the other end of the line. We talk to him, and we do believe that the Christian community has a responsibility to support those families and those communities in whatever way we can, not only through prayer but pragmatically, as well."

## Vouchers

From Page 10

administrative services at Tempe Elementary. “We would look at enrollment. Does it increase or decrease?”

Then we come back to the table and look at factors that impacted us and have conversations around that.”

Sean McDonald, assistant superintendent operations at Tempe Union High School District, echoed that.

“We just don’t know what that looks like yet,” McDonald said of the new voucher law. “Our focus is to provide quality programming for our kids in education. If we do that, there’s no reason to go anywhere else.

“We focus on what we can internally, which is what’s best for kids: quality programming, quality athletics and activities, a clean, safe environment for those coming to us. Give them that and they won’t want to leave.”

The principal at Valley Christian High School, a private religious institution in West Chandler, favors measures that are pro school choice. Private schools like Valley Christian could, potentially, see a boon from the voucher law.

“We are 100 percent supportive of school-choice options, whatever those look like,” said Josh LeSage, principal at Valley Christian High.

“We just believe at Valley Christian that someone’s bank account should not determine their destiny, so we are ardent supporters of school choice.

“We also understand that not everybody feels that way, and we respect that, but we are unapologetically supportive of school-choice options.”

A statement released by the Goldwater Institute argues the program will not hurt public schools because an ESA costs considerably less than the roughly \$11,000 in taxpayer-financed state funding per student in public schools.

“The ESA program simply ensures that each student’s funding follows the student, just like it already

does each time a student leaves a public school for a different public school using the state’s open-enrollment option,” the Goldwater Institute said in a statement.

Nearly 12,000 students are enrolled in the current voucher program. Under the new law, all 1.1 million Arizona students could use it. Considering just the 35,000 students now in private schools and homeschooling, if they all used it, it would set the state back about \$200 million a year.

Legislators attempted to mitigate opposition to the voucher bill by adding more than \$1 billion to public schools in 2023 plus an ongoing \$526 million.

Democratic state Senator Christine Marsh is among those still uncomfortable with the lack of financial transparency and lack of educational transparency in the new voucher law.

“I’d like to know how many families that earn maybe a million dollars a year are getting voucher money versus how many families earning maybe \$30,000 or \$40,000 a year are getting voucher money,” Marsh told Channel 12 News.

# THE FUTURE IS BRIGHT...YELLOW

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# Kyrene School District Welcomes You to the 2022-23 School Year!

*The first day of school is Thursday, July 28.*

## Meet the Teacher Nights

**Monday, July 25:**

- Middle Schools
- Kyrene Traditional Academy grades 6-8

**Tuesday, July 26:**

- Elementary Schools
- Kyrene Digital Academy
- Kyrene de las Manitas Innovation Academy grades preK-5

Kyrene's annual "Meet the Teacher" events serve as the official kickoff of the new year, giving families an opportunity to meet teachers and get acquainted with individual schools. Each school will provide families with times and additional details.

## Back-to-School Information

For information about family communications, supply lists, school lunches, school start/end times, health and safety strategies, before/after school activities and more, visit our website below.

[www.kyrene.org/BacktoSchool](http://www.kyrene.org/BacktoSchool) • 480-541-1000



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- Arts Integration, International Baccalaureate, Leadership, Traditional, Dual Language, Computer Science, SPARK and Digital Academy
- After-school classes and activities offered at most schools

## KYRENE DISTRICT: Museum grant is music to students' ears

**K**yrene School District students have been granted free access to explore the Musical Instrument Museum's collection, which showcases instruments from around the world, courtesy of a \$26,000 grant from the Scottsdale-based museum.

The grant funds MIM field-trip admissions for as many as 2,000 students plus staff and chaperones, and funds district-wide access to MIM's Virtual Education Programs during the coming school year. The only remaining costs are for buses to transport students.

MIM is home to more than 8,000 musical instruments from at least 200 countries.

"Thanks to the Musical Instrument Museum, we can offer students a unique way to expand their global awareness and explore cultures from around the world," said Julie Hackmann, visual and performing arts coordinator at Kyrene.

"That global perspective will be extremely valuable to students in the future, not just in their education but in their future careers."

Beginning in August, teachers also can host in-classroom field trips for students through MIM's Virtual Educational Programs, a unique way to explore cultures, create music and visit MIM's galleries without leaving the classroom.



### Portrait of Kyrene Kid to guide '23 planning

During the summer, Kyrene launched a vision for its students that will shape decision making and the foundation upon which the district's next strategic plan is built.

Portrait of a Kyrene Kid is a model of competencies each student should possess when they finish eighth grade in the district.

It expects students moving on from Kyrene to be adaptable learners, collaborators, communicators, community contributors, critical thinkers, problem solvers and self advocates.

The portrait culminates a year-long effort to engage hundreds of stakeholders, including current and former students, staff, district leaders, Governing Board and local businesses. Each group participated in activities to identify skills and attributes necessary to be successful. They imagined not only what students will need to succeed in high school, but also in college, in the next-generation workplace and in their future communities.

"I am grateful to our Kyrene community for the time, effort, introspection and imagination that went into the development of this portrait," said Superintendent Laura Toenjes. "It is of the utmost importance that we prepare our students for the classrooms and careers of tomorrow. The pace of change in our world is only increasing, and it is incumbent upon us to equip students with the skills necessary not only to keep up with rapid change but to stay ahead of it."

All Kyrene families and staff also were asked to participate in a visioning survey last February. The results helped shape the portrait and will be used as a reference when mapping the district's next five years. The Governing Board will launch its next strategic plan in January, 2023. Portrait of a Kyrene Kid is the first step, a cornerstone of the plan.

— KYRENE, Page 21

## TEMPE ELEMENTARY: Gifted learning program opening at Arredondo

ASPIRE Academy at Arredondo, a new learning option for gifted students, will open with a self-contained fourth-grade classroom for the 2022-23 school year, according to Tempe Elementary School District officials.

"It's definitely a program we're proud to grow and promote," said Mike Minghine, Tempe Elementary District assistant superintendent of administrative services. "We'll start with a new fourth-grade classroom this school year, and then look at it and assess how we want to continue to provide those educational pathways that meet the needs of our very diverse student population."

In addition, Tempe Elementary will expand talent-development opportunities in all schools to increase identification of students who qualify for gifted services, including underrepresented populations.

"We are passionate about being able to meet learners where they are at and challenge them to meet their full potential," said Tracy Harvester, the district's executive director of teaching and learning.

"Adding this program and expanding our gifted services is exciting because it will enable us to better serve our students and families."

The National Association for Gifted Children states that gifted students, who exist in every demographic, require modifications to their educational experience to learn and realize their potential. Being able to offer a gifted program with trained gifted teachers provides another opportunity to support learners and meet their educational needs.

Since 1976, Tempe Elementary has provided award-winning programs for ongoing discovery, enrichment and accelerated-learning opportunities for gifted students.

This school year, 1,300 students are served by Tempe Elementary's gifted services.

"The gifted program in Tempe provided the opportunity for my children to grow academically, socially and emotionally with experienced and caring teachers guiding them along the way," said Tempe Elementary parent Spice Lussier. "The gifted program allowed my



kids to develop a love of learning, the value of curiosity and the confidence to pursue their passions. Our family is forever grateful."

This expansion of gifted services can provide an educational pathway for gifted learners from elementary school, through middle school at Tempe Elementary's nationally recognized ASPIRE Academy at Connolly and even high school.

Students enrolled in ASPIRE Academy at Arredondo will take part in project-based learning,

— TEMPE ELEMENTARY, Page 21



# CHANDLER ELECTIONS



## Mobile-voting technology earns thumbs-up in Chandler pilot trial *System not likely to be implemented for years*

**By Nicole Greason**

*Special for Wrangler News*

Will Chandler ever have mobile voting in future elections?

With current voting options being assailed by Republican leaders in the Arizona Legislature – most notably early balloting via mail – it appears to be a long shot at the moment.

But who knows? Chandler moved forward with an evaluation of a mobile-voting system and it learned several important lessons from its mock election using blockchain technology for mobile voting.

“We accomplished what we set out to accomplish. We learned how it would work administratively, how it would work for city elections and how it would work for our citizens,” said Dana DeLong, Chandler city clerk.

“I think the pilot went really well.”

In August 2021, the city contracted with Voatz, Inc. to conduct the Mobile Voting Pilot Program. Voatz uses an app with smartphone security, remote identity verification, biometrics and blockchain to secure voter information and votes. Blockchain technology stores information securely and electronically in a digital format.

The mock election was conducted soon after the city’s Nov. 2, 2021 Special Bond Election and lasted for three weeks. Votes from the mock election were tabulated in early December.

The pilot program allowed two types of Chandler residents, registered voters as well as 13-to-17-year-olds, to download the Voatz app onto their mobile phones and vote on five bond ques-

tions and two questions gauging voters’ interest in mobile voting in the future. A provisional ballot was configured for non-city residents – including city employees – in the pilot.

Remote voters downloaded the Voatz app onto their phones and voted their mock-election ballot after successfully completing ID verification.

The Voatz platform produces a corresponding machine-readable paper ballot for every electronic submission. At the end of the voting period, city election officials could access the password-protected digital ballot lockbox via a web portal, print the ballots and tabulate them.

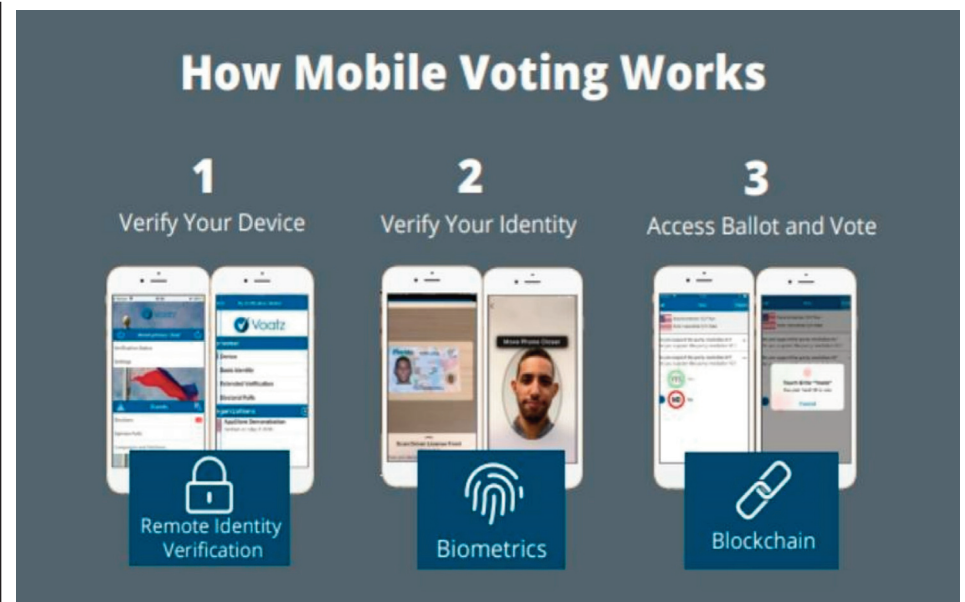
According to an ensuing city clerk’s report to the Chandler mayor and City Council, objectives of the mock election were to gauge community preference for mobile voting in future elections, provide voters an innovative way to vote, and allow city staff to gain experience with a mobile voting app, including voter verification, audit reporting and analyzing the feasibility of using mobile voting in future city elections.

DeLong said 203 voters participated in the pilot.

The five bond questions on the mock-election ballot passed by nearly the same percentage as they did in the real election.

On the question of whether they would use blockchain technology to cast ballots if given the option in future Chandler elections, 187 said yes and 14 said no.

When asked to choose their preferred method for casting a ballot if provided more options in future elections,



voters in the mock election put casting a ballot by blockchain technology at the top of their list, followed by mailing in a ballot via the U.S. Postal Service, dropping off a ballot at a voting center and voting through an in-person ballot.

In a post mock-election survey, some respondents said that while mobile voting with blockchain technology was convenient, they still had questions about its security.

Chandler will have ample time to consider the usability and security of mobile voting with blockchain technology. The city contracts with Maricopa County to run its elections. The county currently does not use blockchain for elections.

However, according to DeLong, the mock election was a fruitful exercise in learning about the use of blockchain technology in elections for a city that bills itself as a technology innovator.

DeLong said blockchain technology offers a “very seamless” way to administer an election that “from my perspective seemed very secure.”

“If the county ever decided to use this technology, we would be ready to move forward,” she said. “We would know how it works and how to talk about it with voters.”

Mobile voting with blockchain technology would not completely replace other voting methods, such as mail-in ballots and in-person voting at polling places, DeLong said, calling it “another tool for elections.”

“I feel fortunate we were able to go through this and be the first in Arizona to try it,” she said. “It was a great experience for us to be in the first wave of trying this form of technology for an election.”

**See mayor and council profiles on Pages 16-17**

# WHO'S IN THE RUNNING?

*Chandler's primary election for mayor and three City Council seats is Aug. 2. Here is a look at the candidates and their platforms. Information on where and when to vote: [chandleraz.gov/elections](http://chandleraz.gov/elections).*

## Angel Encinas City Council

My name is Angel Encinas and I am your hometown candidate for Chandler City Council. Raised in the heart of downtown, where I live to this day, I am uniquely suited to know the issues our city faces. I am an owner of an immigration consulting firm as well as a realtor. Both give me a reach into our community on several levels. I am a product of Chandler public schools and hold a degree in Business from ASU with a minor in sustainability.

Reinvesting in our traditional neighborhoods, increasing public safety, and small-business protection and support are my top issues. I am also adamant about greater transparency and community involvement in the decision-making process, particularly as we reach build out.

It is critical our city involves the citizens in development decisions that will invariably affect their quality of life. Decisions about density and how spaces in Chandler are unutilized must be done through consensus.

Further, providing our public-safety departments with the resources to protect that quality of life is critical. And I am proud to have the full endorsement of both Fire and Police.

Removing superfluous and outdated regulations and ordinances on our small businesses will also be a priority. Incentivizing growth through low tax rates and increased opportunity zones focused on repurposing and revitalizing underperforming and blighted areas will spark economic growth and our tax base.

I bring new ideas and greater representation to our city. As a true Son of Chandler, where I have spent my entire life, my top priority is Chandler and our citizens!

*Campaign website: [www.angelforchandler.com](http://www.angelforchandler.com).*

## Darla Gonzalez City Council

I was told 18 years ago Chandler would be a great place to raise my family. That was 100 percent correct. We moved here sight unseen, from Oregon, and we still live in the same house. We became rooted and we learned to love the downtown area, the parks, the swimming pools and all the things offered by Chandler.

We had many opportunities to move. We looked at other areas in Maricopa County, but the crime rates were too high, or the schools were poorly rated, or the taxes were too high.

According to the FBI crime stats, Chandler is one of the safest cities in the nation. I love that our city council is aggressively recruiting new police officers to replace retirees and adding new divisions, such as a mental-health unit. If crime is low, people will move here. If schools are performing, people will move here. If we have a lively downtown area and places to shop locally, people will move here. We have so many great opportunities for work in Chandler, both big and small companies. People thrive in Chandler.

As I talked to thousands of residents, I learned that, like me, they love the city. They love the parks, they want to enjoy their lives with their families and create long-lasting memories. They want to feel safe. They want to connect with their neighbors. Chandler residents are very diverse coming from all parts of the world. I love that people are friendly and work together to make Chandler the great city it is.

*Campaign website: [darlaforchandler.com](http://darlaforchandler.com).*

## Cody Hannah City Council

My name is Cody Hannah, I'm 24 years old and I'm a working class, LGBT+ student and political activist affiliated with the Arizona Green Party, but running as an official write-in candidate in the nonpartisan City Council election.

We need a new generation of leadership in government with fresh ideas and perspectives. We cannot afford more of the same. Status-quo politics that are owned by corporations, lobbyists and the ultra-wealthy are causing severe harm to people, planet and peace. If we want radical change in our government that puts our interests ahead of corporate profits, we need to vote for it.

I am an advocate for bold climate action, expansive and reliable public transit with complete streets, social justice and human rights, as well as universal access to the necessities of a decent life such as housing, education, health care, employment and basic income.

I am running to give a political voice to a younger, more diverse, and more progressive generation of Chandler residents. I believe that Chandler belongs to all of us; and as such, we should all feel represented -- both in identity and in policy goals -- in our city's government. As the youngest candidate running and one of the only two openly LGBT+ candidates, I believe that I can provide a fresh, unique and historically underrepresented perspective if elected. This campaign is about building the beginnings of a localized, grassroots movement of Chandler residents to organize and reclaim their power, and to demand the policies that working families, our economy and our environment needs to survive and thrive for future generations.

*Campaign website: [codyforchandler.wordpress.com](http://codyforchandler.wordpress.com).*

## Kevin Hartke Mayor

I have served as Chandler's Mayor since 2019. Previous service includes nine years on City Council, seven years on boards and commissions and 37 years serving as a pastor and community leader. Currently, I serve on seven regional boards focusing on good governance, transportation and economic development. I have been married to Lynne for 40 years, have four kids, four grandkids and a rescue dog named Mollie.

Important issues facing Chandler over the next two years include:

1. Hiring across the city including police.
2. Water.
3. Transportation.

**Hiring:** Recently we completed a classification and compensation study. This will help us be competitive in hiring across the city that will help us continue to serve our community. For police, we have hired about 30 officers this past year and will continue to hire more because of anticipated retirements. I recently approved our 2022-23 budget that adds a mental-health unit that will help with calls where this specialty is essential.

**Water:** We have been preparing for a drought for the past three decades. I will be leading messaging for water conservation and pushing out our advanced metering water-conservation program that will allow residents to monitor their own water use in real time. I continue to watch drought conditions and will make appropriate decisions necessary.

**Transportation:** With the Governor's veto of a Maricopa County regional transportation plan that I have been working on since 2017, I will be increasing my efforts to get this plan to voters before the current Prop. 400 expires in a few years. Regional transportation and infrastructure are critical to Chandler and the Valley.

*Campaign website: [kevinhartke.com](http://kevinhartke.com).*





Angel Encinas



Darla Gonzalez



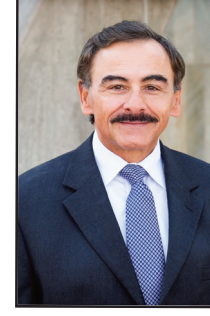
Cody Hannah



Kevin Hartke



Ruth Jones



Matt Orlando



Jane Poston



Farhana Shifa

## Ruth Jones Mayor

As the mother of 6 children, I am no stranger to hard work. I also have the work experience that uniquely qualifies me for this job. My integrity and dedication to the citizens who live here has given me the focus to see the future of Chandler. Our city has serious challenges ahead and we need to face them together.

First is our police force. For years they have been neglected and forgotten. We have the financial resources to hire and increase wages and incentives that will ensure that we have a strong police force. We need more police in our schools with programs like DARE that will start relationships that keep our children safe. It will not happen overnight, but a strong hiring plan will begin on day one.

Next is the growing homeless population. Our numbers show this group grew by more than 76 percent this year, which is more than double Maricopa County's increase. We need programs that require accountability from the people we help and metrics to ensure that we are on the right path. You give a man dignity when you give him a choice.

We need a mayor who is listening to our citizens, someone who can understand the needs of our families and find solutions. I will bring a vision for Chandler, not only seeing what we need right now, but planning for our future. I see us as a strong family-oriented community, where our children are safe and business can thrive. There is work ahead but I am ready.

Campaign website: [Ruthjones4chandler.com](http://Ruthjones4chandler.com).

## Matt Orlando City Council

I would like to continue to utilize my experience, leadership and knowledge gained from 20 years' service as your Councilmember, 30 years military service and 35 years working at high-tech companies to ensure a better Chandler.

My goals are to continue to have top-notch public safety; enhance our quality of life in neighborhoods and sound economic developments.

Last year, I led the effort to hire 29 police officers and fire fighters. This year, we will hire additional police personnel, five of whom will be assigned full time to a behavior-health unit to help those in need and attempt to de-escalate situations. I will continue to work with our schools to hire public-safety resources.

I will continue our strategy to encourage more diverse and affordable/workforce housing. I look forward to expanding our outreach to preserve and revitalize our neighborhoods and putting additional resources into our parks and recreational programs. We need to ensure that development projects align with our neighborhoods' concerns; find lasting solutions for homelessness, drug addiction and mental-health issues.

I look forward to continuing to diversify Chandler's economic base, supporting local businesses in expansion efforts, continuing to partner with the business community to redevelop failed/vacant retail corners and continuing to have sound fiscal policies.

As your Councilmember, I have demonstrated and proved that I have the ability to ask challenging questions and make tough decisions. I have served when Chandler was the fastest-growing city in the nation, during the recession and through the COVID pandemic. In all of those challenging times, we came out stronger and better.

Campaign website: [mattorlando.com](http://mattorlando.com).

## Jane Poston City Council

Jane Poston owns J2 Media, a 22-year video production and communications company, in partnership with her husband, Jason. Together, they have raised a family and built their business in Chandler, while devoting time to supporting their community through service. As a small-business owner, who grew up in the East Valley, Jane has experienced the enormous growth of Arizona, and managed and grown her successful small business through prosperity and national crisis.

The most critical issues facing the city are public-safety hiring, quality jobs and maintaining the quality-of-life services that the city is known for (water, transportation, parks and recreation facilities).

While Chandler is a safe city, we must ensure that public safety has the staffing, training and resources they need. The staffing shortages didn't happen overnight, and the solution won't either. Chandler needs a well-considered plan to attract qualified, professional staff. Recruitment and retention are a priority.

Chandler's reputation as a premier community is closely tied to the well-being of the business community and attracting high-quality jobs for our families. This is foundational to maintaining the quality-of-life services that attract businesses and residents.

I believe in the value and power of partnerships, and that our community succeeds by leveraging each other's strengths. This means diverse ideas, backgrounds and opinions contribute to our success. You'll find that embodied in the diverse people supporting and contributing to the success of my campaign.

I will work closely with colleagues on the Council, our residents and city staff to address these issues.

Campaign website: [janeposton.com](http://janeposton.com).

## Farhana Shifa City Council

Farhana Shifa is a small-business owner, project manager, artist and teacher. Most importantly, a mother of two daughters. Her husband served in the U.S. Navy. She loves Chandler because it represents the American values of faith, family and freedom.

Her top three priorities:

**Keep Chandler safe:** Support for law enforcement and school resource officers; maintain safe roads, continue Chandler's standing among safest U.S. cities.

**Keep Chandler affordable:** Preserve Chandler's low tax rates; maintain AAA Bond rating for lower interest rate; wise use of tax dollars.

**Keep Chandler economically sound:** Foster continued growth of technology companies; encourage small businesses – the heart and soul of our community.

Her working experiences in countries like Bangladesh, India and United Kingdom made her compassionate to understand diverse needs of the people.

She successfully advocated to the City Council for the Veteran's Commission. Supported local artists through her work on the Arts Commission. Served on the organizing community for the Chandler Asian Festival. Promoted International Mother Language Day celebration and International Book Collection Initiative in our City Library. Initiated civic-engagement workshops for students and organized Emancipation Proclamation Observation Day. Through the Lions Clubs International provided helps to the community. Most of her works were to empower the people and secure a better future for our children.

Any key issues, I intend to bring all stakeholders together and have an open dialog before proceeding with the decision-making process. This city is beautiful and one of the best cities in the nation, because of you. I would like to be your voice and serve Chandler with a servant's heart.

Campaign website: [FarhanaShifaforChandler.com](http://FarhanaShifaforChandler.com).

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Neighborhoods



Supporting Local Businesses, Good Jobs,  
and Economic Development



Protecting Our  
Quality of Life

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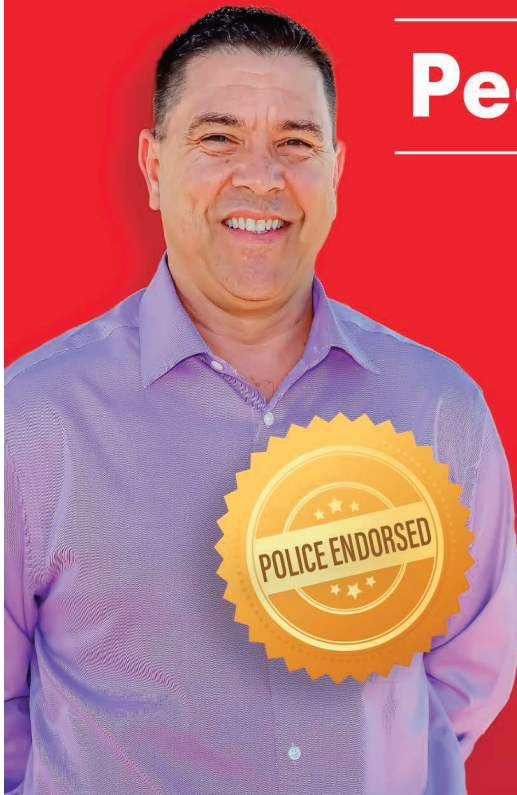
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## Kyrene

From Page 14

### Leadership retention high

Kyrene has a nearly 100 percent retention rate among principals and department directors heading into the new school year.

Only one Kyrene principal, Lisa Connor at Kyrene de los Niños is leaving her position — but she did not leave the district. She is the new district director of school effectiveness, supporting all schools.



Olivia Parry

Olivia Parry, who was Niños assistant principal for 10 years, succeeds Connor. Parry, a former Kyrene student, has been involved with the district for three decades.

She earned her undergraduate degree in special education from Arizona State and master's in educational leadership from Northern Arizona. She began her Kyrene career teaching students

with learning and emotional disabilities.

"Kyrene de los Niños captured my heart 10 years ago," Parry said. "Leading a school I love is invigorating. I'm excited to continue to inspire growth so all

students and staff can experience success."

Kyrene has hired only one outside candidate for school principal or department director in the last four years.

Superintendent Laura Toenjes says creating pathways for professional growth is key in the district's retention strategies.

"That Kyrene continues to find the best candidates among our own ranks, year after year, is no accident," Toenjes said.

"It is a testament to our commitment to professional growth for educators, support staff and all future leaders. We hire the best people, and we want to keep the best people, so they can then lead the next generation of Team Kyrene."

Kyrene Aspiring Leaders Academy has prepared teachers to be principals and assistant principals. Now, Kyrene is expanding KALA to non-teaching staff to create a training program for those interested in becoming leaders beyond the school building.

KALA was established in 2011 to provide opportunities for advancement. The academy is a free, two-year program.

Areas of study for the General Leadership Track will include organizational strategy, workplace culture, leadership styles, meeting facilitation, capacity building, problem solving and conceptual thinking, along with practical training in hiring, finance and policy.

## Tempe Elementary

From Page 14



community-based partnerships, collaboration with like-minded peers, art activities embedded into the curriculum and social-emotional skill development, as well as diverse extra curricular opportunities that are available to all Arrendondo students.

### Pay raises aid teacher recruiting, retention

Minghine anticipates that all teaching vacancies will be filled by the start of the school year.

"That is tied to student enrollment, of course," he said. "Our practice is to look at our enrollment and address any staffing needs based on enrollment. But we're looking pretty good right now."

Teacher recruiting no longer is just a seasonal effort. "We recruit throughout the year," he said. "People can go to our website, [tempeschools.org](http://tempeschools.org). We're always looking for good people." Ten percent pay raises, that get teachers to the \$50,000 mark, no doubt aided recruitment.

"I'll tell you right now, I was grinning ear to ear when we were able to share that publicly, that our board had approved a 10 percent increase to our staff -10 percent for all staff throughout the district, not just teachers," Minghine said. "I'm really proud of our district for the commitment and the equity of the 10 percent for all staff. Everyone was able to benefit. Coming out of the last couple of years (during COVID-19), that put a lot of wind into people. That just does wonders for morale and helps the retention process."

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## TUHSD: Excitement in the air as employees receive raises for '22-'23

The Tempe Union High School District, which includes Marcos de Niza and Corona del Sol high schools in South Tempe and West Chandler, has met the challenges of teacher hiring and expects to open the new school year fully staffed, district officials say.

"We're in pretty good shape," said Megan Sterling, TUHSD executive director of community relations.

Sterling said the district anticipates enrollment being level to slightly lower than a year ago, "but a lot of that shakes out in the first few weeks of school, so time will tell."

Sterling acknowledged that recruiting teachers remains a challenge.

"It's not like there's a huge pipeline of people waiting to get into education, and we're seeing that across the Valley," she said. "Two-and-a-half years of COVID stressors along with people thinking they might want to go try something different have created challenges in hiring and retention.

"We offered recruitment stipends this year to all incoming teachers. It's been very positive. On the whole, we feel lucky to be where we're at. This will be one of largest groups of new teachers in memory, about 135."

Teachers are not the only ones getting raises. All employees in every category will see an increase.

"There is excitement in the air. I'm seeing teachers

planning like I've never seen them planning before," said Sean McDonald, TUHSD assistant superintendent of district operations.

Sterling attributes that to the lifting of the dark cloud of COVID-19 for the first time in two years.

"Everybody's excited. Everybody just wants to get back to what they know how to do, whether it's running a school, or running a classroom or coaching a game," she said. "The past two years have been so unique for a variety of reasons. We all just want to get back to foundational stuff and do what's best for the kids."

### CORONA DEL SOL: 2 key leaders join staff

Kim Saad has been named assistant principal of academics and Brian Fleming is new assistant principal of athletics.

Saad returns to TUHSD where she previously served 20 years as a teacher, department chair, assistant principal of activities and assistant principal of academics.

Most recently, Saad has been at Carl Hayden High. She also was an assistant principal in Queen Creek Unified for five years.

Saad earned her bachelor's from the University of Arizona, master's in teaching English as a second language and master's in education leadership from Ari-

zona State.

Fleming, an educator for 27 years, has been a teacher, drop-out coordinator, dean of students, assistant principal of athletics and assistant principal of activities.

He has coached multiple sports, including football, golf, basketball and baseball, has been part of eight state championships and has won more than 300 games as a head varsity basketball coach.

**Corona notes:** Freshman orientation and other details online: [Facebook.com/CoronaDelSolHS/photos/4759912287443354](https://www.facebook.com/CoronaDelSolHS/photos/4759912287443354). The school district encourages all families and students to attend events appropriate to their grade/interest and to become engaged.

### MARCOS DE NIZA: Brent Brown new principal

Brent Brown, who has a long and distinguished career with Tempe Union High School District, returns to his Padres roots as principal at Marcos de Niza High. Brown joined Tempe Union in August, 1995, as a Spanish teacher and assistant track and field coach at Marcos.

During 16 years at the school, Brown was drop-out prevention coordinator, head track coach, summer-school principal, assistant principal of activities and

## VALLEY CHRISTIAN: Campus a whirlwind of new buildings, programs

Principal Josh LeSage says there is a lot to be excited about at Valley Christian High School as the new school year begins.

First, he says, VC, a private religious school, which in recent years augmented its high school with creation of K-6 and grades 7-8 campuses, got "a fantastic donation" from Colorado Christian University.

"So we have converted our traditional library into a student union," LeSage said. "We're going to have a coffee shop in it and brand new furniture."

The space became available because Valley Christian has converted its traditional library into an all-digital library.

"That's been a really big deal," LeSage said.

Valley Christian will move into the ground floor of a new two-story, multi-million-dollar STEM building for 2022-23. The second story will be ready next school year, according to LeSage.

"We're proud of our expansion and growth in

STEM," LeSage said. "There are lots of exciting things happening in our STEM program. Our robotics team for the first time last year competed in big robots and went to the world championships in Houston, so we have added lots of cool tools for that."

Valley Christian is flirting with 500 students in the high school, grades 9 through 12, for the first time.

"We'll have the biggest enrollment the school's ever had, so that's really exciting," LeSage said. "We hope to hit 500."

Last year, VC converted all of its English courses in ninth and 10 grades to pre-Advanced Placement, a precursor AP, to prepare all students for the rigorous advanced program. This year, it is converting all freshman and sophomore math to pre-AP.

The school late last school year got a new track for its track and field team. It will have use of it for a full season for the first time this school year.

A new parking lot adjacent to the softball field on

Galveston just off 56th Street will be a welcome addition this year, as well, LeSage said.

There's more to come.

This year, VC received a \$3 million gift toward \$16 million needed to build Trinity Theatre at Valley Impact Center, a large gathering space on the school's high school campus that will be well-equipped to produce worship and performing-arts events. LeSage said there is no timetable yet for construction.

"That donation will allow us to really move forward with that, but we still need some more money," he said.

LeSage added that the school is "very competitive" with area public-school districts in salary and benefits packages for teachers, a key to expecting full staffing when doors open late this month.

"Valley Christian has many seasoned teachers who've been with us for a long time, which speaks to the fact that we take good care of them," he said.



**Brent Brown**

assistant principal of academics.

Brown was principal at Corona del Sol for five years starting in May, 2011. He then transferred to the TUHSD district office in the Teaching and Learning Department as director of instructional services. In spring, 2020, that position morphed into director of federal programs.

He is from Idaho and earned his bachelor's from Brigham Young and

master's from University of Phoenix.

**Football stadium gets artificial turf**

Construction began in May on an artificial-turf surface in the football stadium, which also will be used by the boys' and girls' soccer teams.

The project is part of a district-wide initiative to replace all grass fields with artificial turf, considered safer for student athletes and more environmentally conscious.

The new field is expected to be dedicated in early September.

**Marcos notes :** Freshman orientation and other details are available online: [instagram.com/p/Cf7A4yVvHM4/?utm\\_source=ig\\_web\\_copy\\_link](https://www.instagram.com/p/Cf7A4yVvHM4/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link).

The school district encourages all families and students to attend events appropriate to their grade/interest and to become engaged.



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## DIVERSIONS

### A HOT IDEA FOR A SCORCHING DAY

# Hall of Flame offers look at firefighting in air-conditioned comfort

By M.V. Moorhead  
*Special for Wrangler News*

Many a schoolkid from the Kyrene Corridor can remember going on a field trip to the Hall of Flame Museum of Firefighting in Phoenix.

But if you haven't been there in a few years—maybe since you chaperoned a school trip, or maybe even since you were a student, yourself—it might be time for you to revisit the world's largest museum of firefighting history, at Galvan Parkway and Van Buren Street near the Phoenix Zoo.

In recent years, the Hall of Flame has enhanced its world-class collection of fire trucks and other firefighting artifacts with new exhibits and displays. In the middle of summer, it's a perfect indoor, air-conditioned treat for young and old.

New on display in Gallery 1 is a beautiful 1926 Ford Model T Chief's Car. Believed to have belonged to a volunteer firefighter in Yakima, Wash., it was acquired and restored in the mid-1970s by retired Fire Chief Lee Madson of the Angle Lake/King County Fire Department in Washington, who used it as



School tours are a common scene at the Hall of Flame Museum of Firefighting near the East Valley.

a parade vehicle. It was donated to the Hall of Flame by Madson's sons, John and Mike, both firefighters in SeaTac, Wash.

Made by the Ford Motor Company from 1908 to 1927, the Model T was among the earliest widely affordable mass-produced automobiles. Many Model Ts were adapted for various uses by fire departments, often in collaboration with fire-truck manufacturers

like American LaFrance or Howe. The Hall of Flame also displays a 1921 Model T with a Howe pump. Built for the U.S. Army, it later served the community of Germantown, Ill., into the 1950s.

The Hall of Flame has also added an exhibit showcasing a fine specimen of the Morgan Hood, among the first suc-

— FIRE, Page 26

## FILM FARE: Tough guy 'Thor' scenes surprisingly emotionally substantive

By M.V. Moorhead  
*Wrangler News Film Critic*

Embodied once again by the jovial Chris Hemsworth, Marvel's version of the Norse deity must make a big personal adjustment in *Thor: Love and Thunder*. The thunder god's beloved hammer Mjolnir, which formerly only he could wield, is now responding to his ex-girlfriend Jane Foster (Natalie Portman). Thor is now in a relationship with a perfectly nice battle axe, Stormbreaker, but he can't forget his old hammer, and the sight of his ex effortlessly swinging it takes getting used to.

Thor and Jane, along with their pals Valkyrie (Tessa Thompson) and rock man Korg (director/co-



writer Taika Waititi), must here work together to rescue a group of children abducted from New Asgard, a

rather bougie beach town and tourist destination, into dark dimensions. The kidnapper is Gorr the God-Butcher (Christian Bale) a rasping, chalky-skinned, spectral figure whose religious disillusionment early on has led to his desire to, you know, butcher all the gods. Thor's appeal to Zeus (Russell Crowe) for help reveals a distinct lack of cross-cultural amity in the Olympian, who comes across like a tacky billionaire showman of the new school.

As in 2017's delightful *Thor: Ragnarok*, Waititi plays this material for goofy laughs; there are cosmic gags here worthy of Melies. It's very silly, but unlike *Ragnarok*, it isn't only silliness. Bale's Gorr is

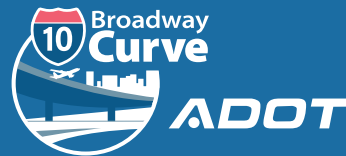
— FILM, Page 28





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## Fire

From Page 24

successful apparatus for breathing in a smoke-filled environment.

Patented in 1916, it was the creation of African American inventor Garrett Augustus Morgan, a native of Paris, Ky., who spent most of his life in the Cleveland area.

Morgan's hood employed a long, filtered hose, which ran below the level of the smoke, allowing the wearer to draw oxygen from near the floor.

Because of Morgan's race, he initially found it dif-

icult to sell his invention. This changed to some degree after he and his brother used the hoods to recover the victims of an industrial accident, who were trapped behind a cave-in in a construction tunnel below Lake Erie.

His hood eventually was used by hundreds of American fire companies as well as the U.S. Navy.

In the 1920s, Morgan received a patent for a three-stage traffic signal.

Finally, since one of the main missions of the Hall of Flame is to be a fun place for kids, it's worth noting that the 1951 American LaFrance truck that's available for kids to climb on has been enhanced with working red lights by Federal Signal that flash when

you press a button on the dashboard. It adds quite a lot of fun to playing on the truck.

The Hall of Flame, at 6101 E. Van Buren St. in Phoenix, is open 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Tuesday through Saturday.

It is closed Sundays and Mondays.

Admission is \$17 for adults, \$15 for kids 6-17 as well as seniors 62 and older, \$10 for kids 3-5, and free for kids 3 and younger.

More information: [hallofflame.org](http://hallofflame.org) or 602-275-3473.



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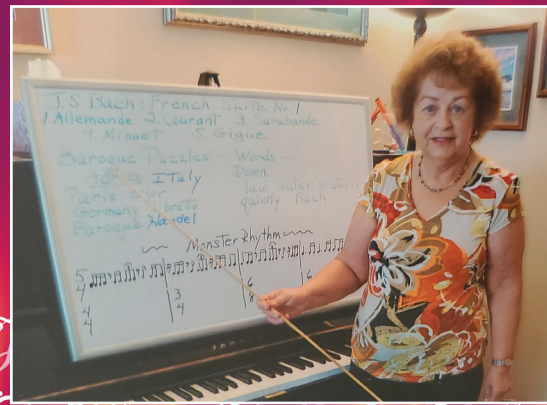
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## Film

From Page 24

genuinely creepy, and the scenes in which the characters are faced with loss and love are emotionally substantive.

*Love and Thunder* has an airbrushed-van rock-n-roll sensibility that Waititi doesn't mock; borderline-campy as the movie is, its use of "Sweet Child of Mine" can bring a tear to the eye.

### 'Gabby Giffords Won't Back Down'

Music is central to *Gabby Giffords Won't Back Down*, a documentary directed by Julie Cohen and Betsy West about the former Congresswoman from Arizona's 8th District. Shot by a deranged gunman outside a supermarket in Tucson in 2011, at a massacre in which six people were killed, Giffords, the main target of the attack, received a critical brain injury resulting in aphasia, greatly inhibiting her speech.

But she could still sing, and that was one of the ways by which therapists helped her on her slow, exhausting road to reclaim her ability to

communicate. Tunes from "And She Was" by Talking Heads to Tom Petty's "Won't Back Down" to "Que Sera, Sera" to Bowie's "Space Oddity"—in reference, of course, to her husband, former astronaut and current U.S. Senator Mark Kelly—are used on the soundtrack to move the narrative forward, both to poignant and lighthearted effect. But more importantly, there's a sense of exhilaration and liberation when Giffords, who strains to find the simplest spoken words, cuts loose freely in song.

The movie packs an infuriating punch, because it shows how much vibrancy and radiant ease Giffords lost to her injury. She's one of the countless casualties of this country's gun insanity that should each, in and of themselves, have been enough to spur reform. But it's also inspiring to see how little, in the face of what she's suffered, she seems to have lost to bitterness and rage, and how much of her spirit and fierce charisma she's won back.

*Thor: Love and Thunder* and *Gabby Giffords Won't Back Down* are both rated PG-13; both plays at Harkins Tempe Marketplace, Harkins Arizona Mills and other multiplexes Valley-wide.

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# SPORTS

## Despite difficult season, Marcos de Niza places 3 on All-City baseball

By Alex Zener  
Sports Notebook

**M**arcos de Niza High, at 8-17, had a tough year on the diamond. Still, three Padres players received All-City honor during the annual Tempe All-City Association Spring Sports Awards banquet.

**Rosalino Valenzuela**, a senior known as "Lino" to his teammates and coaches, was recognized for his play in the infield and his hitting. He was second on the team with a batting average of .349 and third in on-base percentage

at .453.

Valenzuela played in all 22 games for the Padres and was a tri-captain. His eight doubles led the team. He ranked second on the squad with 12 RBI and .455 slugging percentage.

**Noah Heyn**, a junior infielder who was named All-City, led Marcos in numerous categories, including batting average (.420), on-base percentage (.491) and RBI (16) and slugging percentage (.660), powered by his four triples and four doubles.

Heyn also made three appearances on the pitcher's mound, working five innings, including one start.

**John Paul McIntyre**, a sophomore and the Padres' youngest All-City selection, played in all 22 games, pitching in 21 innings and posting a 2.00 earned-run average.

McIntyre also led the team in runs (18) and hits (23), was second in dou-

bles (four) and triples (two), third in RBI (10) and slugging percentage (.455), and appears to be a Padres' star of the future.

## McClintock well-represented on All-City lists

Seven McClintock High athletes were recognized for All-City in spring sports.

From the Chargers' girls track and field team, senior **Renaja Dickerson** (400 meters) and sophomore **Cloe Bolen** (javelin throw) made it.

Dickerson placed sixth at state in the 400 meters, where in a preliminary race she broke 1 minute for the first time (59.62 seconds).

Bolen took 12th at state in the javelin throw with a toss of 101 feet, 2 inches.

Three members of the Chargers' boys track team and field team were honored.

**Prince Conteh**, a senior, was recognized for his performance in the sprints. He won the state championship at 100 meters in 10.78 seconds, and earned two more gold medals with legs on the state championship 4x100-meter and the 4x400 relays.

Another sprinter, junior **Avaunt Ortiz**, was state champion at 200 meters (personal-best 21.50) and ran on both state-championship relay teams.

All-City recognition also went to Chargers' middle-distance runner **Tyler Schierenberg**, a senior. In the state-championship meet, he placed sixth in a personal-record time of 1:54.24. He was fourth in the 1,600 in 4:21.71, another personal record.

In boys tennis, McClintock's doubles pair of senior **Zachary Daniels** and sophomore **Jackson Fischer** made All-City. Entering the state championship as the No. 4 seed, Daniels and Fischer won three matches before falling in the state semifinals to No. 1 Tucson Catalina Foothills.

## Tempe High pitcher feted

**Luis Amaya Renteria**, a junior pitcher for Tempe High, was named All-City. Renteria, who also plays shortstop and third base, had an eye-popping 1.26 ERA in six appearances on the mound. In 33 innings, he allowed 24 hits and 24 runs.

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## Tempe moves forward with plans for major makeover of Rolling Hills Golf Course

Significant improvements may be coming to Tempe's Rolling Hills Golf Course, and the city is reaching out to the public for input on the plan.

Tempe City Council unanimously authorized negotiating with Valley-based Grass Clippings, which was selected from respondents to a request for proposal, to remake and manage Rolling Hills as part of the city's commitment to improved community-based golf.

The city also put out an RFP to cultivate business

interest in funding improvements and operations at the other city course, Ken McDonald. Course Co. was authorized to begin negotiations for management of Ken McDonald. Those negotiations are still ongoing.

### Proposed design

Tempe would continue to own Rolling Hills. Grass Clippings would lease the property and manage operations.

Grass Clippings says its mission is to modernize golf by highlighting the fun aspects of the game.

An integral part of Grass Clippings' vision for Rolling Hills is to implement nighttime golf, until about 11 p.m., thereby increasing the number of tee times by nearly 50 percent. The revamped practice facility also would be lighted.

An overview of the Rolling Hills project details and site plan can be found on the Grass Clippings website, [grassclippings.com/pages/grass-clippings-at-rolling-hills](http://grassclippings.com/pages/grass-clippings-at-rolling-hills).

The proposal includes a revamped golf course by Jackson Kahn Design, which designed Scottsdale National and Monterey Peninsula; 400-yard lighted practice facility with driving range, short-game and putting green; community gathering place; Baja-inspired food and beverage operations and family-activity lawn, which would be an extension of the restaurant patio.

There would be a director of instruction to provide junior and adult development programs.

The site plan reduces the turf area by 35 percent and reduces the golf footprint by 15 acres, jointly focusing on sustainable use of water and creating other recreational possibilities.

To give feedback on the plan on an online survey, which is open to the public through July 31: [tempe.gov/government/communication-and-media-relations/tempe-forum](http://tempe.gov/government/communication-and-media-relations/tempe-forum).

More information: [tempe.gov/golfimprovements](http://tempe.gov/golfimprovements).

## Prop 470 YES OR NO



There's an election on Tuesday, Aug. 2, and Chandler voters will cast a ballot for Prop 470, asking voters to continue the Local Alternative Expenditure Limitation, also known as Home Rule.

The Home Rule Option allows a city to make its own decisions about how to spend its tax revenues. If it doesn't pass, the City would have to cut more than \$216 million from its budget impacting public safety, street maintenance, recreation programs and planned capital improvement projects.

Remember, Prop 470 is NOT a tax increase.

El martes 2 de agosto se llevará a cabo una elección, y los electores de Chandler emitirán su voto con respecto a la Proposición 470, la cual les pide a los electores que continúe la Alternativa Local al Límite de Gastos, también conocida como la Opción de la Regla de Autogobierno.

La Opción de la Regla de Autogobierno permite a una ciudad tomar sus propias decisiones con respecto a cómo gasta sus ingresos fiscales. Si no es aprobada, la Ciudad tendría que recortar más de \$216 millones de dólares de su presupuesto, impactando a la seguridad pública, el mantenimiento de calles, programas de recreación y proyectos planificados de mejoramiento capital.

Recuerde que la Proposición 470 NO es un aumento a los impuestos.



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