

Aug 17 - Sept 6, 2024
Volume 34, Number 785



WRANGLER NEWS

Police and parents join forces to halt the alarming increase in death and injury among teens and young adults. Pages 10-11

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PAGE 3



HELLO, NEIGHBOR :-)

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Quicker access to popular fishing, skiing destinations **Collapsed roadway to Apache Lake due to reopen**

For the no-doubt thousands of Tempe and West Chandler boaters who have yearned for a return to the days when they could traverse the narrow, spectacular—and mind-bendingly terrifying—mountain trail to Apache Lake, Arizona's Department of Transportation has good news: The route is about to be open again.

"Good news," that is, unless your one and only previous trip prompted you to decide you'd never do it again. For the hardy adventurers who have had to detour through Globe to reach the popular but somewhat isolated fishing, skiing and boating site, ADOT says it's making rapid progress on a project to restore limited public access to several

miles of State Route 88, commonly known as the Apache Trail.

The project is making the unpaved roadway suitable, for now, for those traveling in high clearance four-wheel drive and utility task vehicles.

— Please turn to Page 4

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The \$4 million project, which is expected to be complete in September, addresses 5 miles of the roadway that were extensively damaged from flooding in 2019.

In addition to the current project, designated as interim, ADOT said it will continue to seek federal funding for more extensive upgrades, estimated to cost \$33.7 million, that would make the highway accessible to other vehicles and more resilient to storms.

Since the interim project began July 22 between mileposts 222 and 227, a contractor has worked to remove large boulders that blocked SR 88 on a steep section at Fish Creek Hill, which is 9 miles east of Tortilla Flat.

Crews have since broken up the boulders and used the material to fill eroded areas of the roadway and slope.

Other work underway now or in the coming weeks includes mitigating rockfall between Fish Creek Hill Overlook and Fish Creek, installing new signage and cleaning and repairing drainage

culverts.

ADOT emphasizes that the roadway will only be suitable for high clearance four-wheel drive vehicles as well as utility-task vehicles when this stretch reopens.

The roadway is not intended for travel in vehicles that lack four-wheel drive.

Before this project began, ADOT maintenance crews removed vegetation, filled in eroded roadway sections and cleaned out culverts.

Work in the project area requires U.S. Forest Service review and approval of any activity, as SR 88 follows an easement through federal land. The project also must meet all applicable state and federal environmental requirements.

These 5 miles of SR 88 have been closed between Fish Creek Hill Overlook and the Reavis Trailhead since flooding in 2019, which was made worse in areas by runoff from the Woodbury Fire scar.

ADOT reopened 1.7 miles west to the popular Reavis Trailhead in 2022. The original closure

point on the east side was at Apache Lake Marina at milepost 229.

While the area between mileposts 222-227 previously had been open to hikers, bicyclists and equestrians, no public access is allowed during the current project.

Traveling between the East Valley and Roosevelt Lake, Apache Trail was built during construction of Theodore Roosevelt Dam, which was completed in 1911. Prior to closing in 2019, the stretch between Tortilla Flat and Apache Lake was used by an average of 232 vehicles daily.

ADOT has performed extensive work since 2019 to restore access to and improve other damaged sections of SR 88 and made regular repairs when flooding has damaged areas that are open to traffic. Motorists can safely access Canyon Lake, Tortilla Flat and other points on the west side of the closure.

For more information on the SR 88, please visit azdot.gov/SR88ApacheTrail.

Grants provide a boost for Tempe arts, culture



Tempe has awarded \$187,000 in grants to nonprofit organizations and artist collectives that present arts and culture programming in the city.

Wavemaker Art grants were distributed to several nonprofit organizations, with Vibrant City endowments going artist collectives, cultural groups and arts organizations.

Another \$113,000 will be distributed this fall through additional grant categories, including another round for Vibrant City and Arts in Schools initiatives.

The funding is designated to help ignite what officials say is creative vibrancy and support capacity building for local organizations to grow

connections in the community.

“Supporting local artists...is a priority for the city, and we’re proud of this significant investment in the future of arts and culture in Tempe,” said Tempe Mayor Corey Woods.

“We invite all community members to get out and support the programming happening in venues throughout the city.”

The competitive review process was conducted by four independent panels comprised of representatives from the Tempe Arts and Culture Commission, African American Advisory Committee, Career Ready Tempe and Tempe Tourism, as well as Tempe residents, arts educators, students and practicing artists.

Projects will be presented in a variety of community spaces, including

theaters, plazas, community centers, parking lots and other spaces across the city. Grant recipients include:

Black Theatre Troupe, CAFÉ Flutes, CaZo Dance Theatre, Childsplay, Desert Dance Theatre, Desert Overture, Downtown Tempe Foundation, FABRIC Tempe, Grey Box Collective, Heart Heals AZ, Heartsy, Lights Camera Discover, Methods of Madness Dance Theater, Movement Source Dance Company, Musician Enrichment Foundation, Phoenix Funk Familia, Phoenix Gay Men’s Chorus, Phoenix Screenwriters Association, Rising Youth Theatre, Tetra String Quartet, The Bridge Initiative TheaterWorks, Third Space Dance Project, Yes And Productions

Vibrant City grants went to ARCS Arizona, MAC & Company and Wasted Ink Zine Distro.

Information: tempe.gov/ArtsGrants

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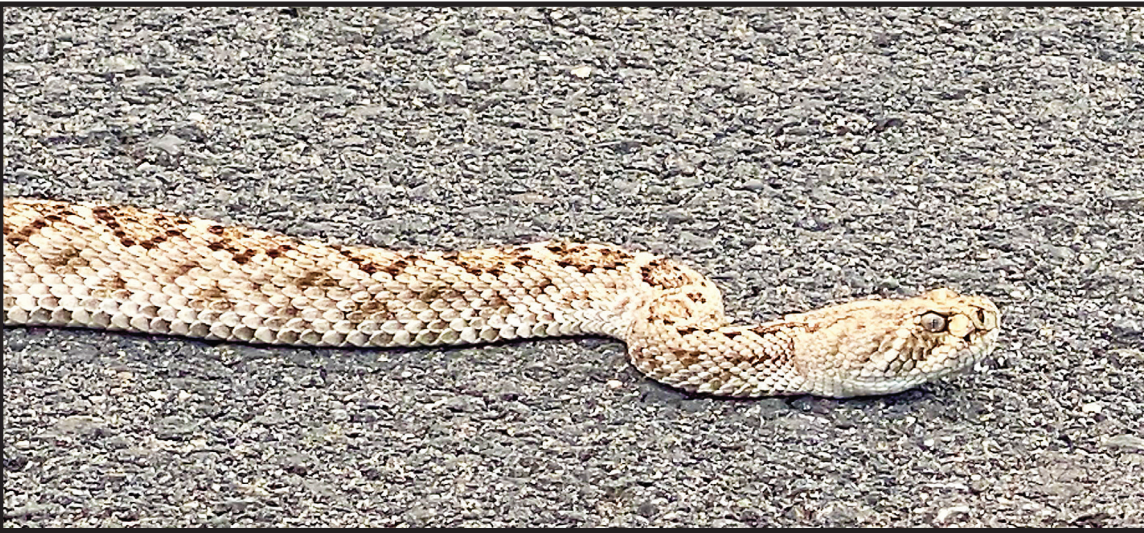
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Arizona's southern desert is a known habitat for Gila monsters (from left), desert tortoises and other desert dwellers.

—Photos by Andrew Lwowski

For our Andrew Lwowski, hikes require a keen eye—and a good camera **Desert ventures prove to be reptilian ad-ventures**

Tucson will always hold a special place in my heart. Maybe it's because I spent two years of my life there while attending the University of Arizona. Maybe it's because of the Mexican food. Or maybe it's because of the ideal climate and desert.

Whichever it may be, I take a few trips to the Dirty T throughout the year. It's always been an escape, a place that makes it feel like

it's 2018 again and I can spend the day driving around and hiking with my friend, Ethan VenJohn, a UofA geoscience graduate who now works with the state of Arizona.

Being into photography and starting my career with landscape, Tucson has provided ample opportunities to explore and capture a variety of scenes from Sonoran Desert to the forest on Mount Lemmon.

Until recently, the one (or two) things that have eluded me over the years was the reptiles. More specifically, the Gila monster and the Arizona Desert Tortoise.

Ethan and I have dedicated days solely to find the two rarest reptiles in the state. We've hiked on and off trails, but the only time we've seen either was on Instagram when some lucky people happen to stumble onto

one without searching.

Well, that's sort of what happened to us. Both the Gila monster and Arizona Desert Tortoise are only active during the late spring and summer months. And only then are they active (outside of their dens) for very little time.

The Gila monster is said to be tucked away 98 percent of the time, while the tortoise is hidden roughly 95 percent.

It wasn't until three weeks ago when Ethan and I took a trip down, mainly for the food, but brought our cameras. We always explore the area around Saguaro National Park west, but with ominous clouds building on the east side, we opted for a new trail.

On the way we came across the Arizona Western Diamondback, soaking up heat from the asphalt on the road. This wasn't anything

new to us, but only 200 yards onto the trail, something else was — a Gila Monster. Walking along the path, we veered off to the right, Ethan stopped and said, "Oh, my gosh." There it was, the rarest of the desert critters, in its natural habitat. And, of course, we left our equipment in the car, so our phones had to suffice. It was a mere stroke of luck to walk off path at that very spot to stumble upon our find.

We continued further down the trail before heading back, but that experience brought us back to that same trail a week later.

This time we brought our gear. We veered off at the same point, only to find another Diamondback coiled up under the bush where we had seen the Gila monster, so we carried on down the path. After reading that tortoises dig burrows by washes, we gave a wash some

extra attention, but to no avail.

We spoke about the odds of seeing another Gila monster or a tortoise, which were slim. I was in the midst of explaining that we would never see one on the trail, but just as I was finishing my thought, we made a turn and my eyes saw the shell. My brain couldn't process as fast as my eyes, so I froze and after a second, I let out a 'No. Way.'"

Next to the small rocks that line the trail was a Mojave Desert Tortoise. I couldn't believe our luck or the fact that right as I was telling Ethan it won't happen on a trail, there it was. And this time we had our camera gear.

It was a special moment to see such a creature—built for the brutal elements and designed for rugged terrain. Within a week we had stumbled across the state's most coveted reptiles. A moment not to be forgotten.

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Find the Tempe activities, classes, locations and information you need with this quick guide.

Community Resource Guide Find the activities, classes, locations and information you need.

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Submit a service request – let us know about street lights that are out, graffiti, code violations and more – tempe.gov/311 or download the app
In case of emergency: Call 9-1-1.

Tempe Police non-emergency line – 480-350-8311

Business resources/Tempe Economic Development
tempe.gov/EconomicDevelopment

Building permits
[Tempe.gov/Building Safety](https://tempe.gov/BuildingSafety)

CARE & HOPE Line
Those experiencing homelessness can get help by calling 480-350-8004

City parks
tempe.gov/parks

Downtown Tempe/ Mill Avenue information
DowntownTempe.com

Give or get help from local nonprofit agencies
tempe.gov/nonprofits

Homeless Solutions
Report an encampment or a person in crisis
tempe.gov/EndingHomelessness

Neighborhood Association/HOA information
tempe.gov/neighborhoods

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tempe.gov

Recreation classes and leagues
tempe.gov/play

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tempe.gov/forum

Tempe Center for the Arts
TempeCenterfortheArts.com

Tempe Chamber of Commerce
TempeChamber.com

Tempe City Council
tempe.gov/elected

Tempe City Council meetings
tempe.gov/clerk

Tempe Fire Medical Rescue
tempe.gov/fire

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tempe.gov/museum

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Cover Story

Parents, police join forces vs teen death, injury related to drugs, alcohol

Statistics also show
increase in crashes by
those newly licensed

Tempe is taking a proactive approach to educate young drivers and their caregivers about the dangers of driving under the influence of drugs and alcohol.

On Thursday, Aug. 29, city groups will host what they're calling a Drive Sober: Youth Safety Summit at Tempe Center for the Arts.

The program runs 6:30-8:30 p.m. The workshop is free (registration required) and open to young drivers and their caregivers.

Attendees will have the opportunity to hear from spokespersons of the Mothers Against Drunk Driving organization about the risks and consequences of driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

This presentation is designed to provide potentially life-saving information and skills for young drivers.

According to program planners, the Drive Sober: Youth Safety Summit aims to educate young drivers and their caregivers on how to make responsible decisions behind the wheel.

The workshop will also include a Q&A session with experts able to answer questions presented by those attending.

In 2023, according to the group's documentation, Tempe had a total of 50 vehicle collisions resulting in serious injury or death.

Shockingly, they say, 30% of these were caused by impairment due to the use of alcohol or drugs.

As a result, 24 people lost their lives; another 34 were seriously injured.

City officials say Tempe is committed to a program being called Vision Zero, whose goal is to reduce the number of fatal and serious injury crashes to zero.

The planned safety informational program represents a collaboration between the city of Tempe, Tempe Police and Tempe Fire Medical Rescue, with support from Mothers Against Drunk Driving, the Arizona Department of Liquor License and Control, and Tempe Coalition.

According to those planning the program, Tempe is encouraging young drivers and their caregivers to attend the coming workshop to support efforts promoting safe driving practices.

Drive Sober: Youth Safety Summit

Educational workshop for young drivers and their families

You won't want to miss this captivating event!

Young drivers and their families will leave inspired, committing to safety on our roads. Great for Tempe Union High School District, Tempe Elementary School District and Kyrene School District students and those from surrounding areas. Register using the QR code below.

Date: Thursday, Aug. 29

Time: 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.

Location: Tempe Center for the Arts
700 W Rio Salado Parkway

- Presentation by MADD (Mothers Against Drunk Driving)
- Q&A Session

Register



to reduce underage drinking and drug use
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COMMENTARY

Tempe Fiber is a win for everyone



By Randy Keating

Sometimes government has to clear the path and make it easier for companies to do the right thing.

This is the case with Tempe Fiber, our new license for internet providers who want to install cable.

Internet access is vital to the education and prosperity of residents, from helping students do their homework to giving

people opportunities to apply for jobs. It's also an economic development tool.

This license is a giant leap for our community, which is so well known as a technology center.

Companies like GoDaddy, Insight and First Solar all have headquarters here, bringing jobs, opportunities and a need for good technology resources with them.

But some sections of Tempe do not currently have high-speed internet service – and never have – because they don't have the necessary fiber cable.

Typically, the areas that are underserved are in our less prosperous neighborhoods. This isn't fair. High-speed internet access everywhere in our city ensures equal access to opportunities for everyone.

The City of Tempe has been working on this solution since 2014, when we were among the first 34 cities chosen by Google to build a new fiber-optic network.

I've personally been working on this effort since I joined Council in 2016. I've walked in cable installation areas, talked with attorneys, met with cable company executives and with residents. This was not an easy project but it's been a passion for me.

I couldn't be prouder of our city staff, who came up with a creative solution to encourage better competition between companies, get better service for our residents and bring Google Fiber back to Tempe.

They came up with the idea of a new kind of license. My Council colleagues and I approved it on June 27.

Internet providers can now pay a yearly fee for each linear foot of right-of-way their facilities occupy, pay a yearly fee of 2% of their revenue for providing internet services, or negotiate an agreement to provide in-kind materials or services to the City of Tempe.

The license will also help ensure that Tempe's rights of way are disturbed less frequently for construction projects. The City will offer our schedule for road improvements so that cable installation projects are more convenient for the people who travel on our roads - and they will cost less.

The program is already working. Chaparral Village Mobile Home Park has not had quality cable ever before. Shortly after this license was approved by Council, Cox signed an agreement to begin cable installation at Chaparral Village this year. They will be the first part of our community to benefit from this new license and years of hard work.

I'm excited to welcome back Google Fiber, and to see even more people benefit from the access that our new license will bring. This is a game changer.

Councilmember Randy Keating has served on the Tempe City Council since 2016. Reach him at tempe.gov/Keating, at randy_keating@tempe.gov or 480-350-8798.

Coordinating construction key a for thriving city



By Angel Encinas

From navigating traffic cones, lane restrictions and planning an extra minute to get to your destination, construction in Chandler is on the rise.

The number and frequency of construction projects is an ongoing topic of my conversations with Chandler residents and businesses. I share your frustration and I see the impacts as I go on my morning run in downtown or head down Chandler Boulevard to Fashion Center.

Over the span of a year, there are hundreds of permitted projects across Chandler to improve streets, utilities and private developments. These projects are a necessary, but disruptive part of the lives of residents and businesses.

Small businesses are the lifeblood of our local economy. Those in the service and retail industries can get hit the hardest during construction, which is why it is key to shop and eat local. As a small business owner, I

know first-hand how important community support can be.

You may be thinking, “So what are you doing about it?”

We’re increasingly focusing on strategies to implement these projects more effectively, while minimizing impacts on businesses, residents, drivers, cyclists and pedestrians.

Coordinating Chandler’s construction activities is a multifaceted challenge that requires planning, effective communication, traffic monitoring and innovative construction processes.

While cities are pre-empted from preventing non-city utility work, we coordinate permitted construction activities within our right-of-way. City staff hold monthly coordination meetings with contractors, developers and other agencies to avoid overlapping projects.

Traffic control plans are reviewed and monitored to ensure they are implemented and maintained correctly. These plans are reviewed and signed by developers, designers and utility companies to verify this coordination has occurred.

There are financial penalties when cuts are made to roadways that have been paved within the first six years. A holiday moratorium prevents work surrounding major retailers from the week before Thanksgiving until after New Years Day. We’re also evaluating fee and permit options that offer incentives and penalties to expedite the removal of traffic barricades as construction activities are completed.

A traffic restrictions map at ChandlerAZ.gov details active construction work and we’ve partnered with Waze to display these activities on their app. Our traffic management center coordinates traffic signal timing and makes real-time adjustments. We monitor travel times between intersections and adjust locations where traffic flows are

noticeable decreased.

The good news is that some construction projects are nearing completion. Work in downtown along Boston St. is ahead of schedule and it will open in mid-August. The parking lot behind Serrano’s is reopened, while crews finish the lighting, landscaping and alley work. Construction along Chandler Boulevard and Dobson Road also progressing towards completion in September.

As Chandler continues to grow, these efforts will be crucial in maintaining the delicate balance between development and community well-being. As members of the City Council, we want to hear from residents and businesses. It’s as easy as an email to mayorandcouncil@chandleraz.gov to share your suggestions and insights.

Angel Encinas is a member of the Chandler City Council



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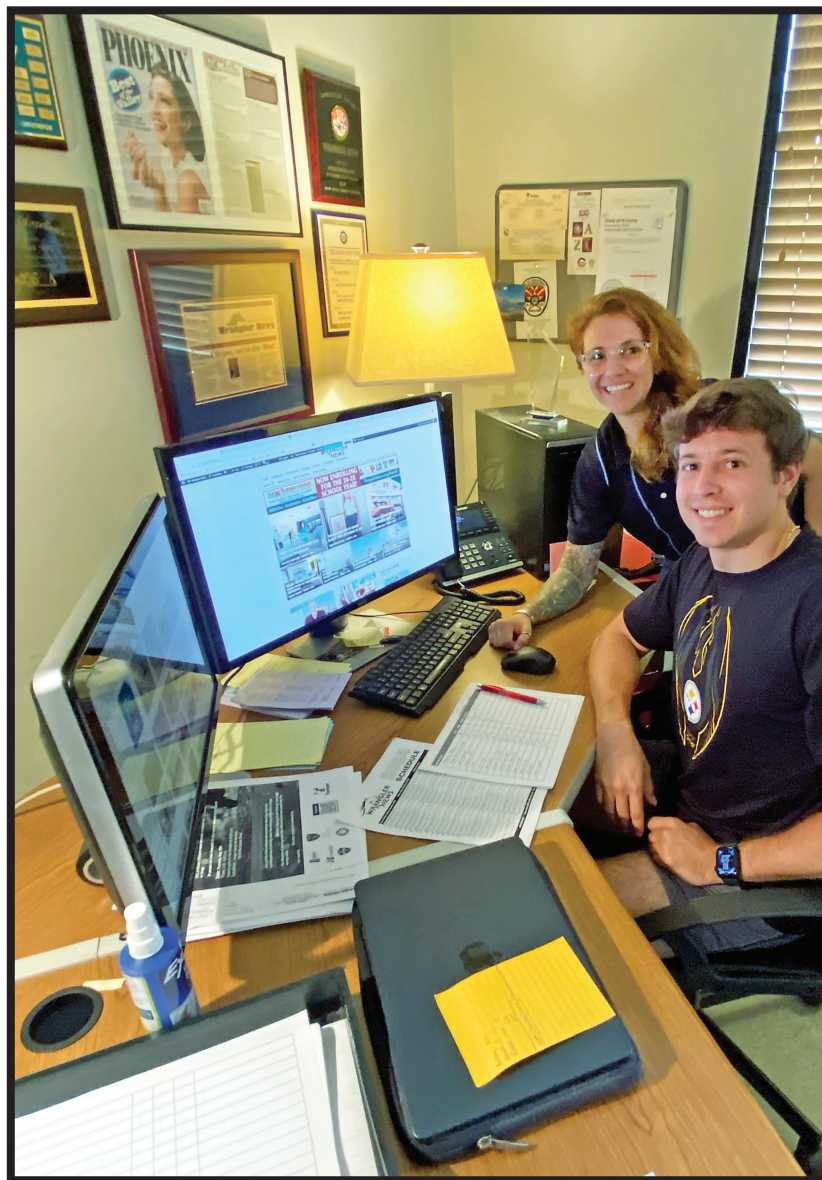
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Bright futures ahead

Staff updates lend added energy, direction

Andrew Lwowski with incoming
Associate Publisher Kathryn Baldanza

— Wrangler News photo



By Don Kirkland

Over the 3-plus decades of our existence as Wrangler News, quite a procession of talented contributors has passed through our portals.

Some have dropped by to visit in the months and years after their move to new opportunities; others we've managed to follow simply by seeing their names or spotting impressive evidence of their professional growth.

A common thread, however, among nearly all those who have come and gone has been the remarkable talent they have brought to the small, neighborhood focused newspaper that we take pride in producing.

Some names come readily to mind. Others pop into memory by the simple happenstance of seeing a byline in the stacks upon stacks of old issues. Either way, we are indeed privileged to have had so many fine writers, photographers, advertising specialists and others willing

to share their abilities with us for short or long periods of time.

Thus it is with no minor degree of disappointment that we soon will be losing Andrew Lwowski, who has risen through the ranks to our job of associate publisher, to which we appointed him several months ago.

Andrew has been offered an opportunity that will allow him to pursue new challenges that his hard work and professionalism have more than adequately prepared him for.

While Andrew has set a record of considerable achievement with us, we feel that our good fortune in attracting Kathryn Baldanza to succeed him will help us to bridge the gap between Andrew's departure and Katie's own determination to help Wrangler News grow to new levels.

While we'll indeed miss Andrew, we believe that Katie's history that includes her appointment as the first female ROTC battalion commander at Marcos

de Niza High School, followed soon thereafter by 12 years as a U.S. Army medic in one of our world's most dangerous battlefields, provide ample evidence that she'll do a great job in the (hopefully!) less rigorous environs of our little Warner Road newsroom.

While she's been with us for only a few days, Katie already has demonstrated what many will see as an infectious enthusiasm for taking Wrangler News to new heights.

As we get up and running with a new face and a new energy in our midst, we'd like you to drop by and meet Katie if you happen to be in our neighborhood.

We think you'll find her the perfect fit to help guide our publishing future. Finally, to Andrew, we're proud of you and will miss you. Best wishes to a valued colleague and friend.

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



Operation Center expands Tempe's ability to enhance resident safety **City, schools, parks can be monitored remotely**

Tempe's real time operation center has become a focal point of the city's efforts to ensure a safe living environment, especially children, teachers and other school staff.

That's one of the reasons for an upcoming panel discussion on Saturday, Aug. 17, from 9-11 a.m. at Tempe Council Chambers, 31 E. Fifth St., garden level.

Panelists include Tempe City Manager Rosa Inchausti; Chief Deputy City Manager Greg Ruiz; Tempe Police Chief Kenneth McCoy; Tempe Union High School District Asst. Superintendent Sean McDonald; and Tempe IT Director Jared Morris.

Councilmember Berdetta Hodge, who is hosting the program, said the program represents one outcome of an ongoing effort to identify and solve safety concerns.

"Our residents have told us that safety is a top priority," she said.

"We've listened and are taking action. Our city is doing so much to make our streets and our community safer. This is an excellent way to get an understanding

of it all." According to officials, Tempe is taking action in several ways to make roads safer for everyone, such as installing speed cameras, enhanced enforcement and operation center.

The facility opened last month.

The technology pools facilities cameras installed at hundreds of traffic, park and facilities around Tempe so that police staff can easily review footage to determine what happened in traffic incidents, keep officers and drivers safer during incidents, resolve crimes and tend to infrastructure needs, like graffiti removal or replacing landscaping.

Some Tempe schools have added external cameras to the network for greater safety.

This fall, speed and red light cameras will be installed at several Tempe intersections to help induce people to slow down. According to the U.S. Department of Transportation, cameras can reduce crashes by more than 50%.

A map designating camera locations can be viewed at tempe.gov/VisionZero.

Tempe is one of 45 cities across the nation to participate in Vision Zero, an effort to reduce or eliminate the number of serious and injuries caused by collisions.

City safety planners have targeted 14 intersections around the city for intensive traffic enforcement.

These intersections were chosen based on a statistical analysis of a higher propensity for collisions. Sites of the enforcement priorities can be viewed at tempe.gov/VisionZero.

For those attending the Aug. 17 program, breakfast will be provided. Tour times are 9 a.m., 9:30 a.m., 10 a.m. and 10:30 a.m.

Space is limited. To RSVP to cepan_d_alizadeh@tempe.gov or call 480-350-8597. tempe.gov/Hodge.



SPORTS



For Jordan Guy, ball really is life

Story and photos
by Andrew Lwowski

Like any journey, it's never linear. The path to success will grind you down, wear you out and, in some instances, make you question how bad you truly want it. In Jordan Guy's case, it was able to drag him across the country through half a dozen programs just to land him back in the city where he started. Guy, a class of 2017 Corona del Sol alumnus and West Chandler resident, was tested on his path to find his calling.

"It was really hard because I felt like I had done a lot of training, a lot of workouts and [been through] a lot of different, adverse situations that kind of felt like it was all for nothing," he said.

Though it isn't in the NBA, he now owns his own business, That Guy Training LLC, and coaches the game he has dedicated his life to.

Guy was with the Aztecs 2014-2017, playing

alongside some who went overseas to play professionally. Others went to premier universities, such as Arizona and Vanderbilt.

With aspirations to carve his own professional career, Guy started at Mesa Community College. However, a rolled ankle led to a broken ankle after a defective sole insert. That effectively ended his Thunderbird career.

And that would only be the first of a series of unfortunate deviations from his plan.

After taking three days to reflect, Guy received a call from Angres Thorpe, a coach from the University of Missouri, Kansas City — a Division I program. Thorpe admired Guy's work ethic and film, and after discussion, an offer to join the team.

Then, somewhat unexpectedly, the coaches from UMKC were fired, which took away Guy's offer. Shortly after, however, Thorpe landed at the

University of Buffalo, where Guy said he remained in contact. Thorpe made an effort to acquire him in New York, but an issue with a player's leasing contract prevented him from entering the transfer portal and from Guy finding a program.

Guy then landed at Benedictine University in Lisle, Ill., looking for his next opportunity. However, his time was cut short due to the COVID-19 pandemic. That convinced Guy to return home, where he continued to work and train. It was at The Lab, a gym in West Chandler, where a noble deed didn't go unnoticed.

"I was able to play in [The Lab] and work out," he said. "We had some private runs with some NBA guys, and one of them actually took a liking to me, as far as my skills. He saw that I had worked out and had helped a kid with shooting a little bit before. It was just like... helping, giving some tips.

"He had asked me, 'Am I a trainer?' I said, 'No, I'm a player, but I just helped him out a little bit.' He said, 'Would you mind putting me through a workout tomorrow?' I said, 'Sure, I can do that.' And so I put him through a workout. And then the next person asked for a workout. Then the next person asked..." Guy began to build his clientele through word of mouth while playing for Chandler-Gilbert Community College. He said he didn't have a site or Instagram account at the time.

"And there'd be times I went out with 20 guys and only one of them would give me \$5 to help me out," he recalled. "So, I was taking that, but I was running with it like that \$5 was worth 5,000 [dollars], you know. I love basketball. I love teaching basketball."

In 2021, Guy established his personal training business and now trains players from grade school to college to 80 years of age. His dedication, which includes up to 50-60 hours per week depending on the season, and his innovative approach allows him to coach full time and live comfortably.

Of those who train with Guy, is fellow Corona graduate and former Phoenix Suns guard Saben Lee.

Lee primarily trained with his father, Amp, who spent nine seasons in the NFL as a running back, but recently began training with Guy.

"Primarily shooting, shooting off the catch, shooting out the pick and roll, in isolation – just being able to create separation into my shot," he said. "I wouldn't just work it out with Jordan just because he's my friend," Lee said. "I take this seriously. At the end of the day, basketball pays my bills, so I'm very passionate about improving and working on my game. So, aside from him being my friend, I definitely trust his knowledge of the game. I'm very grateful."

Perhaps it was all part of the plan for Guy to find his calling back home near friends and family, but he knows it couldn't have been possible without his journey.

"Dealing with adversity, truly, it built me up to the man I am today," he said. "I realized now that if I didn't go through those situations of trial and tribulations, I wouldn't be anywhere near this position."



Padres' 'Trench Mob' is ready to eat

Story & photo by Andrew Lwowski



Any football coach or player will tell you games are won in the trenches. Both the run and pass games operate through the offensive line.

Offensive success lies heavily on the bond and strength of the unit, which is something the Marcos de Niza Padres and head coach Anthony Figueroa understand well. The Padres' big men leadership stems from past struggles, successes and most importantly, the tradition of leaving it better than they found it.

Figueroa and Padres' offensive and defensive line coach Joe Medina have established that standard and foundation. Though the Padres' 2023 roster relied heavily on seniors, they paved the way for the 2024 offensive line featuring all new starters.

"The entire senior offensive line last year, they left it better than they found it," Figueroa said. "Those linemen did an exceptional job of preparing these linemen for what to expect."

Figueroa is confident his new group will stand tall in the face of adversity this season and will bring the physicality. But for Nikolasi Tonga'uiha, Rusty Ulm, David Jones, Jessie Berberena and Brooks Ward, they're hungry. Sophomore center Jones said last year

was a building year for the line, soaking in experience and lessons.

"I feel like now, just learning from the (former) seniors and picking up from what they put down, I'm starting to build and capture a lot of stuff to mold it into this year," he said. "So, yeah, we lost a lot of guys, we were kind of senior heavy, but we're younger now, and we just want to eat. So we'll be tough and relentless."

Senior left tackle Ward said the unit is named "Trench Mob" affectionately for coach Medina, to whom the boys give credit for their growth and development. Becoming a close-knit unit over the offseason, Medina and the boys have found ways to bond through passion for football, video games and of course, food.

"We'll go out to eat, we'll go to lunch, dinner, whatever," Ward said. "[We'll] go get some wings and bond. [We'll] talk about, 'Hey, (on) this play, he does this,' – look at film, look at installs – offense and defense. We do everything together. We don't stop talking to each other."

"We look for the all-you-can-eat deals," junior right

tackle Tonga'uiha said.

Jones and Ward echoed with "wings," and began blurting out their favorite restaurants – Buffalo Wild Wings and ATL Wings. Tonga'uiha interjected with "Arby's has the all-you-can-eat wings plus ribs plus shrimp."

"Anything all-you-can-eat, we'll be there," Ward said emphatically.

However, wings and other protein-rich foods are not the only item on the menu. "Trench Mob" is hungry for pancakes – the result of a well-executed block which leaves the defender on his back.

The only way to get pancakes is through physicality – and a special play call.

"It's the guard-tackle pull, where the guard kicks out and tackle leads out," Tonga'uiha explained. "We just like it because it's one motion where you get that momentum where you can hit somebody."

"It feels like everybody can eat," Ward said.

"Everybody's getting a pancake or hit stick or laying somebody out," sophomore left guard Berberena added.

The insatiable appetite has powered the group

within the weight room as well. All five of the big men have surpassed their previous personal bests and now rep that weight for eight-to-10 reps, says Ward.

That growth has extended to the Padres' whole roster, thanks to support and leadership by the unit.

"[We're] working together – always building energy in the weightroom," Berberena said. "Always the first ones to get everybody hyped up, ready to go. Always pushing everyone to push more weight to do more and go for their best."

The offensive line believes they are the strongest part of the team, which bleeds into the Padre community. On campus, the boys are role models for the next generation and continue to inspire the strong tradition of Padre football.

A Marcos alumnus and Tempe resident, Figueroa ensures his boys uphold their standard on and off campus, too. When the boys go out to eat and visit various community establishments, he hears about it. It all boils down to gelling and becoming one unit.

"We're going to eat," Ward said.

Added Berberena: "Everyone's going to think that new line, they can't compete. We're not skipping a beat; we're coming in better, stronger and faster."

"We put the work in so we want to show it," senior right guard Ulm said.

Figueroa said he's excited about what this special unit can do and as always, the goal is to reach 14 games. But it all comes down to trusting the process and carrying on the tradition.

"When things get heated and when it gets emotional and things are not going our way, we're going to lean on all of the relationships that we have," Figueroa said. "You're not going to see those fingers being pointed."

"I think winning is going to be a byproduct of doing all of those other things the right way, that if we're honest with ourselves, and we're putting in the work and we're pulling ourselves into everything that we're doing, I think you're going to see the results that you deserve on a Friday night."

ASU golfer Rahm misses bid for Olympics gold

For ASU grad Jon Rahm, the path to an Olympics gold medal looked like a literal perfect shot.

But when his turn on the back nine missed its mark, all bets were off.

The hopes of bringing home a win for his native Spain were diverted.

Far different from the success story he could boast after winning the coveted green jacket during the 87th Masters last year in Augusta, rewriting history books in the process. That was when Rahm surged past LIVs' Brooks Koepka to capture his first Masters win at only 28 years old.

Rahm also reclaimed his official World Rank No.1 spot in the process. In fact, it was the first time that the former champion, Scottie Scheffler, slips the jacket onto the man who is replacing him.

Wrote Wrangler News contributor Andrew Lwowski at the time:

It was an absolutely incredible feat by the Spaniard after four-putting on the opening hole of the tournament, then trailing by four shots entering the next day.

Only two other players had accomplished that, one being fellow Spaniard Seve Ballesteros in 1983. His win marked his sixth in his last 12 starts on the PGA TOUR and DP World Tour.

It was also his 11th TOUR title and second major, the other being the 2021 U.S. Open champion.

Rahm was said to be the only European player to win both the U.S. Open and Masters. Already during the 2022-23 season, Rahm had four wins, setting a new record for himself.

However, Rahm's success on the PGA TOUR was to no one's surprise.

During his freshman year at ASU, he led the nation in birdies (165) while defeating the then-NCAA Champion and current PGA pro Max Homa by three strokes.

The nation took notice when Rahm, still a junior at ASU, tied for fifth at the Waste Management Phoenix Open, notching himself as the first amateur to place top-five since Chris Wood in 2008.

His senior year was no different, with him winning the Jack Nicklaus Player of the Year Award while also capping his collegiate career ranked no.1 by the World Amateur Golf Rankings.



SPORTS NOTEBOOK

with Alex Zener

Open-enrollment poses issues for students seeking sports eligibility

With the fall sports season just around the corner, it's interesting to note how the open-enrollment law, first signed by then Gov. Fife Symington and evolved over the years, will impact high school football.

The original 1994 ruling allowed students to attend a public school outside their neighborhood district boundaries but with certain eligibility rules which were updated in 2016.

That transfer rule, still used, made athletes ineligible for the first half of the season, the first time they transferred to another AIA school and, on subsequent transfers, they would be ineligible for an entire year.

Although transfers have been part of the Arizona high school sports landscape for 30 years, high school transfers have become more widespread since the NCAA transfer portal impacted the number of college scholarships available for the high school athlete.

High school athletes, especially

the top tier ones, feel they will get exposure to college recruiters if they transfer to a more successful program or a higher ranked high school.

In addition to being recruited for a college scholarship, a number of football or basketball players have dreams about playing in the NFL or NBA one of these days. They often feel if they can get in front of college recruiters, they can show what they



can do on the football field or basketball court to make their dreams come true further down the line.

Over the years, Corona has benefited

from and been impacted by the transfer rule, but the Aztec football team may feel the brunt of this law when the season officially starts.

Arizona high school football transfers are the most prevalent because the teams have the greatest number of players out of the rest of high school sports.

In addition, with the current AIA rules, if a football player who wants to transfer is ruled ineligible for the first half of the season, that amounts to just the first five games.

In order to avoid sitting out at all,

athletes and their families can file a hardship case to be considered by the Arizona Interscholastic Association for an exception.

Although not meant to be a routine occurrence, if a hardship is granted, the athlete will be allowed to play at the beginning of the season.

The student athlete and his or her family must meet with a hardship committee in an attempt to prove that the move to a new school is not motivated for athletic reasons but that the move is beyond their control such as a parent changing jobs.

The 2024 AIA hardship committee recently received 51 hardship football transfer cases, according to James Dean, assistant executive director, from athletes and their families who plan to prove their case is one of the exceptions and should be approved.

Over the past two years, since Covid wreaked havoc by changing the transfer portal rules for college athletes, there have been many more transfers from all parts of Arizona.

Most football athletes will file for a hardship exception to the rule, but if they can't win they're willing to sit half the season. Usually, they'll be allowed to play when it counts the most and have a chance to hold up a state championship trophy at the end of the season.

The Aztecs had two of their top football players from the 2023 season transfer and not stay to play under

the Friday night lights for Corona in 2024.

Corona's leading receiver last season, **Raiden Vines-Bright**, transferred to IMG Academy, a sports education school in Bradenton, Florida.

Vines-Bright averaged 111.4 yds a game, catching 59 passes and scoring nine receiving touchdowns.

Vines-Bright has already committed to play at the University of Washington next fall after receiving 21 scholarship offers, according to 247Sports.

In addition to ASU and UofA, he received offers from Florida, Notre Dame, USC, Michigan, Texas A&M, and Alabama.

The second player, who would have had an outstanding impact on Corona's football team is wide receiver and cornerback **Jai Jones**.

Jones was listed as No. 5 on the Arizona Republic's Top 10 impact high school football transfers for 2024 season.

The 6-ft-2, 175-pound, sophomore wide receiver transferred to Chandler.

Jones is touted by the Arizona Republic as a "highly recruited sophomore, who played varsity as a freshman with great hands, speed, skills. He should be a game changer for the Wolves."

At Corona, Jones, in 2023, played

in all 11 games catching 35 passes for a total of 306 yds and one touchdown. His longest reception was 70 yds.

Jones also returned 33 kickoffs yds., for a total of 330 all-purpose yds. while playing offense.

Jones already has offers from five schools including California, Idaho, NAU, Oregon and UTEP.

Not all of Corona's leading football players from last season are transferring.

Sophomore strong safety **Jamar Patterson** is listed on the 2024 roster as is senior middle linebacker **Keane Abril** and senior defensive end **Jacob Leon**.

Abril, in nine games, had 48 total tackles, 15 solo and 33 assists, for a total of 48 tackles or 5.3 tackles a game.

Patterson, in nine games last season, was credited with 15 solo and 29 assists for 44 total tackles or an average of 4.9 tackles a game. He also had one interception and one kickoff return.

Leon had one quarterback sack and 16 tackles.

The Aztecs first game is Aug. 30 at Casa Grande followed by a game Sept. 6 at Apple Valley, Calif.

Marcos de Niza football

The Padres first football game is scheduled for Aug. 30 at Yuma Catholic where Marcos will start a new

quarterback but return three players who had an impact on the team's success last season.

The starting quarterback has not been named but the only player listed as a quarterback on the roster is senior **David Haynes**.

Returning on offense should be the leading rusher on the team, senior **Antoine Anderson** who led the team in rushing last season averaging 55.3 yds. a game with six rushing touchdowns and one receiving touchdown.

Also returning should be senior running back/wide receiver **Jamari Turner** who averaged 66.8 receiving yards a game.

On defense, the Padres have returning on their roster senior **Julian Jones** playing tight end and linebacker for Marcos.

Jones was second on the team in tackles with 7.3 tackles a game. He also is recorded as causing three fumbles and recovering one fumble.

Up next, the Padres were scheduled to play at home against McClintock on Sept. 6 and at home against Fountain Hills on Sept. 12.



DIVERSIONS

More DIVERSIONS on Page 26



Hard to go wrong with 'My Penguin Friend'

By MV Moorhead

It's hard to go wrong with penguins. They've been amusing us for a long time, not just in zoos but in movies like George Miller's mad animated musical epic *Happy Feet* and its sequel, and *Surf's Up*, and the crack team of penguins in the *Madagascar* franchise,

FILM FARE

and *Mr. Popper's Penguins*, and the 2005 French documentary *March of the Penguins*, back though the exploding penguin and the giant penguin in *Monty Python*, not to mention

Chilly Willy and *Bugs Bunny's* friend "Playboy Penguin," who wept tiny ice cubes when he was sad.

It's also hard to go wrong with Jean Reno. Best known as menacing killers in Luc Besson films like *La Femme Nikita* and *The Professional*, the rugged-looking French actor projects

an air of effortless authority. So *My Penguin Friend*, which has both Jean Reno and a jaunty, spirited penguin in starring roles, starts out with certain advantages. And it ends up needing both of them.

This family film is, to use its opening titles, “Inspired by a True Story.” In 2011, a man named Joao Pereira de Souza living on Ilha Grande, off the coast of Brazil, found a weakened, oil-slicked Magellanic penguin outside his house along the beach. He cleaned the poor flightless castaway up, fed him some sardines, and soon became friends with him. Dubbed “Dindim”—a grandchild’s mispronunciation of the Portuguese word for penguin—the bird disappeared back into the Atlantic some months later. But he returned for many years thereafter, to hang out for the winter with Joao along his migratory route.

This fictionalized retelling of the story, directed by David Schurmann from a script by Kristen Lazarian and Paulina Lagudi Ulrich, starts off on the wrong foot with a tragic episode that seemed entirely gratuitous to me. And in its second half, it follows Dindim’s encounters

with researchers at his other home in Patagonia. These scenes feel very strained, with dialogue so stilted I



Moorhead

began to wonder if it had been written by AI. And the movie’s final stretch, which attempts to generate some danger and suspense, feels extremely half-hearted.

In between all this, however, we get to see Jean Reno, looking scruffy and soulful and beaky-faced as Joao, tenderly interacting with a penguin. That can carry a movie a long way. Reno seems to be enjoying playing a childlike sweetness here, as Joao proclaims that Dindim “comes and goes as he pleases” and is “not my pet...he’s my friend.” The other humans in the film, including Adriana Barraza as Joao’s wife, are all attractive, even when the dialogue coming out of them seems canned.

The movie is visually impressive, too. Dindim was played by several different penguins, and presumably his adventures, particularly underwater, have been at least partly enhanced by CGI, but it’s pretty effective and seamless; he comes across as a character. And the scenery, both in

windswept Patagonia and idyllic-looking Ilha Grande, is breathtaking.

So it will be a matter of personal calculation for you to decide if a penguin, a bona fide international movie star and gorgeous settings overcome feeble kid-movie devices enough to make *My Penguin Friend* worth your time. For me, it was; the penguin tipped the scale the farthest.

My Penguin Friend is rated PG and plays at Harkins Chandler Fashion 20 and other multiplexes Valleywide.

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We're currently recruiting for experienced, energetic people who might want to add their sports writing or photo abilities to our ongoing production needs.

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editor@wranglernews.com



more DIVERSIONS



Observations on one of filmdom's sensitive topics . . . by MV Moorhead

ASU grad thrives as an 'actor advocate'

Acting on stage or film sometimes involves getting physically intimate with a person with whom you aren't intimate in real life; sometimes, indeed, they are

complete strangers.

In most cases, this is just one of the peculiarities of the work, and actors get used to it.

But there are also many cases where the practice is abused, or the performers' feelings are ignored.

That's where Alli St. John comes in.



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In most cases, this is just one of the peculiarities of the work, and actors get used to it.

But there are also many cases where the practice is abused, or the performers' feelings are ignored.

That's where Alli St. John comes in.

St. John does credit to her alma mater Arizona State University. A graduate of ASU with an MFA in Theater for Youth and Community, St. John landed a job with the prestigious Guthrie Theater in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

"I oversee our summer camp program," St. John says. Her experience at ASU and in theaters around the Valley has more than prepared her for this position.

The Cleveland native came to pe after undergraduate studies at Baldwin Wallace

University in Berea, Ohio. In her time here "I worked with Childsplay, taught summer camps, went into classrooms," St. John recalls. "I started acting as a child, so I am a product of Theater for Youth."

But she also works under another title that is a newer addition to the list of theatrical professions: Intimacy Director.

Her work as an "Intimacy Director and Safety Captain" goes back as far as a production of *The Crucible* at ASU in 2019, and *Barefoot in the Park* at Mesa Encore Theatre in 2021.

"I'm an actor advocate," St. John explains. "I'm there to help with any kissing or other simulated activity onstage."

The position is needed, says St. John, because "generally the theater industry has a long history of actor abuse...

"Actors feel like they have no autonomy."

To help counter feelings of this

sort, St. John will "lead consent and intimacy workshop[s] for cast members, attend rehearsals to gain insight on character work and blocking, collaborate with directors, choreographers, fight directors and actors to create intimacy choreography, choreograph moments of intimacy, attend preview performances to ensure choreography is safely executed and offer notes."

Her goal in all this, she says, is to ensure that "if there's an actor expressing a boundary, that they are heard, and that they are working in a safe environment."

As for her own career goals, St. John says, "Long term, I'd like to direct theater for youth, and continue working as an intimacy director.

"I like my administrative work, but I want to be the rehearsal room."

MV Moorhead is a regular contributor to Wrangler News and longtime film critic for Phoenix New Times.

Tempe Arts + Culture Connections



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TempeCenterfortheArts.com



Closing Art Reception

6 to 7 p.m.
Tuesday, Aug. 27
Connections Café at Tempe Public Library

“Outside In: From Studio to the Neighborhood” presents the art of Rachel Slick and Timothy Schirack who have designed unique art pieces for Tempe neighborhoods: Alameda Meadows, McClintock & Santo Tomas.

tempe.gov/PublicArt



La Voz de la Experiencia / The Voice of Experience

6:30 to 8:30 p.m.
Tuesday, Sept. 17
Tempe History Museum

Hear shared personal experiences related to César Chavez’s Farm Labor Movement as panelists share historical notes believed to be significant and connected to the Valley and Arizona.

tempe.gov/MuseumEvents



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Tempe Chamber hosts 2023 Sun Devil Football Kickoff Luncheon at Sun Devil Stadium

Celebrating its 23rd year, the Tempe Chamber of Commerce and ASU Alumni are proud to partner with the entire ASU Sun Devil Football organization to help celebrate the start of the 2023 season with the Sun Devil Football kickoff luncheon, presented by San Tan Ford! The event will be Friday, August 25th and will be held at the San Tan Ford Club inside Sun Devil Stadium!

With views of the field and "A" mountain, this venue will make you feel like you are part of the game! Highlights include emcee Tim Healey giving his insights into the upcoming year, an interview with starting players, and Coach Kenny Dillingham. You'll also hear from the leadership of the ASU Alumni Association and ASU Athletics.

This event is open to the public. Registration is now open at www.tempechamber.org

Please contact david@tempechamber.org for sponsorship



Friday, August 23
www.tempechamber.org 2024



Smoke-free Parks

Several Tempe parks will now be smoke-free zones in an effort to encourage healthy communities, reduce litter and enhance experiences at the city's highest-density green spaces.

While smoking is already prohibited in the city's preserves and recreation facilities, this will be the first step in what could be a larger effort to eliminate smoking and e-cigarette use at all of the city's parks.

Tempe is joining several other Arizona cities that have restricted smoking in parks, including Phoenix, Goodyear and Flagstaff. Tempe was the first city in Arizona to ban indoor smoking in [2002](#) and the first to ban indoor e-cigarette use in [2014](#). Find answers to frequently asked questions at tempe.gov/SmokeFreeParks.

Sparky's Touchdown Tailgate — Fun for the whole family!

You don't need to be a Sun Devil to enjoy the free, family-friendly tailgates happening before every ASU home football game this year. Sparky's Touchdown Tailgate, located on College Avenue and Sixth Street, is open to everyone. The tailgates feature live entertainment, food trucks, a beer garden, giveaways and more! Festivities begin two and a half hours before kickoff.

Check out these two parties:

Saturday, Aug. 31 – Tailgate starts at 5 p.m.
Saturday, Sept. 7 – Tailgate starts at 5 p.m. This is the annual City of Tempe Game with discount tickets and fun on-field activities.

Visit thesundevils.com/sports/football/schedule/2024

Breakfast with Berdetta — Real Time Operation Center

The City of Tempe seeks to keep all community members safe, especially children, teachers and

school staff. Join Councilmember Berdetta Hodge for a panel discussion and a visit to the new Tempe Real Time Operations Center.

The event takes place Saturday, Aug. 17, 9 to 11 a.m. at Tempe Council Chambers, 31 E. Fifth St. Panelists include: Tempe City Manager Rosa Inchausti, Chief Deputy City Manager Greg Ruiz, Tempe Police Chief Kenneth McCoy, Tempe Union High School District Asst. Superintendent Sean McDonald and Tempe IT Director Jared Morris

Limited space is available for the tour. RSVP to cepand_alizadeh@tempe.gov.

September is Library Card Sign-up Month

Free everything! Tempe Public Library hosts a massive collection of more than 220,000 magazines, music, movies and – of course – books – and you get access them all for free! A world of information is available in the digital library, from eBooks and videos to homework help and more. Sign up for a free library card online or at the library this September. Plus, download the library's app on the App Store or Google Play and get instant access to explore the library's catalog, check out upcoming events and reserve a study room. Learn more at tempepubliclibrary.org.

Healing Field Tribute

Healing Field tribute is Sept. 7 - 11 Tempe will honor the victims of the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks with a display of patriotism and unity at the annual Healing Field tribute at Tempe Beach Park. The free event runs Saturday, Sept. 7, through Wednesday, Sept. 11.

A Freedom Concert will be held on Saturday, Sept. 7, from 6:30-9 p.m., and a Tunnel to Towers 5K Run/Walk will be on Sept. 8 at 7:30 a.m. On Sept. 11, there will be two ceremonies held, one at 5:46 a.m. when the first plane hit the first tower and another at 7 p.m. Volunteers are invited to assist in standing up and down the flags on Sept. 7



and 12 at 6 a.m. Healing Field is presented by the Exchange Club of Tempe. For more information, visit tempehealingfield.org.

Public Meetings for Bond Election

Registered Tempe voters will have the opportunity to decide whether to fund public safety and road improvements, quality-of-life enhancements in Tempe neighborhoods and new affordable housing.

Voting takes place in conjunction with the Nov. 5 Statewide General Election.

Included in the bond is funding to restore the pavement of every street in Tempe, provide funds for critical infrastructure projects like water lines, improve neighborhood parks and increase the supply of affordable housing.

Get additional information about the bond questions at tempe.gov/election or attend a public meeting.

Four meetings are available. All are free and open to everyone.

- Sept. 18 at noon (virtual) and 7 p.m. at Kiwanis Recreation Center, 6111 S. All America Way
- Sept. 13 at 6 p.m. at North Tempe Multi-Generational Center, 1555 N. Bridalwreath St.
- Sept. 24 at 6 p.m. at Tempe Public Library, 3500 S. Rural Road

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AND WEST CHANDLER ENDEAVORS**

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Your Home Sold at Your Price or We will Pay the Difference . . . Guaranteed*

Updated/Cul-de-Sac Lot
\$849,000



\$874,450
Alisanos - S. Tempe



4 BIG REASONS TO CALL CAROL & VIKKI

1. Your Home will Sell for More Money
2. We Sell Homes Faster
3. We Have Buyers in Waiting
4. Your Home is SOLD with Our Guarantees

Sell your home hassle-free with confidence, confidentiality and while offering you Top Dollar and access to our design team

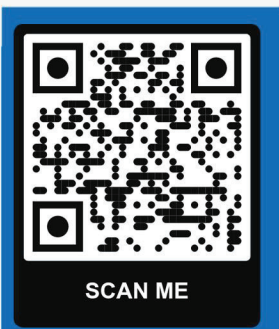


Carol Royse

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GUARANTEED REALTY™
Our Name is Our Promise