

The background of the magazine cover is a photograph of a double-decker train traveling on tracks. To the left of the train is a large, dark, cylindrical industrial tank. In the background, a bridge spans over the tracks. The sky is a mix of orange, pink, and purple, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The overall scene is industrial and urban.

Maricopa

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July 2020

GOVERNMENT

The plan to
overcome
the floodplain

OVERPASS ANNIVERSARY

How a \$55 million project
changed Maricopa overnight

BUSINESS

Philanthropic
entrepreneur
gives gift of
test kits

FAMILY

Physical and
mental health
during back-
to-school



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Now that we're realigned ...

After a uniquely challenging spring, summer came to Maricopa bearing even more questions about the future. But July in particular brings an opportunity for perspective, a look back on the effect of the \$55 million overpass project during the first anniversary of its opening.

On our cover is one perspective of how the midtown landscape has been changed. The grade separation has also affected residents and businesses, for better and worse, and this issue evaluates some of that consequence.

July also means school is just around the corner. It is bound to be a beginning unlike any other. In the coming weeks, schools will be training up faculty and staff for the new processes and protocols. At the forefront are the Health Services staff, examining all health threats, and psychological counselors, preparing families and staff. They spoke to us about the challenges ahead.



Also ahead is Arizona's monsoon season, with its inevitable dust storms and flash floods. On that note, we look at Maricopa's struggle with the floodplain and flood-zone designations. The City is back at it, trying to solve problems the floodplain causes for development. They hope they are onto something at last with its plans for the Santa Cruz Wash, and we examine what it could all mean.

This issue also has unusual questions for city council candidates, gardening tips for hot July, a look at an HOA dispute, a guide for fixing up the bathroom for seniors and much more.

Happy 244th Independence Day, and happy reading.

RAQUEL HENDRICKSON | Editor
Raquel@InMaricopa.com

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Publisher
SCOTT BARTLE

Associate Publisher
BOB MCGOVERN

Editor
RAQUEL HENDRICKSON

Writers
AL BRANDENBURG
RAQUEL HENDRICKSON
JOAN KOZOR
BOB MCGOVERN
DAYV MORGAN
KYLE NORBY
HARRIET PHELPS
MURRAY SIEGEL
RON SMITH

Photographers
RAQUEL HENDRICKSON
BOB MCGOVERN
VICTOR MORENO
KYLE NORBY
MERENZI YOUNG

Designer
CARL BEZUIDENHOUT

Advertising
JAIME HARRISON
VINCENT MANFREDI
VICTORIA PICENO
MICHELLE SORENSEN

Volume 15, Issue 7
InMaricopa
44400 W. Honeycutt Road, Suite 101
Maricopa, AZ 85138

520-568-0040 Tel • 520-568-0050 Fax

News@InMaricopa.com
Advertising@InMaricopa.com

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Contributors



BOB MCGOVERN
Arriving in Maricopa this spring, just in time for COVID-19 coverage, he is a 30-year journalism veteran from Pennsylvania.



MERENZI YOUNG
A mom and Marine Corps veteran, she specializes in family portraits and photographing children with disabilities.



AL BRANDENBURG
With a background in corporate and educational facilities, he now advocates for seniors and puts his green thumb to use.

ON THE COVER: An Amtrak train sits at the Maricopa station at sunrise. A new day dawned in the city when the overpass opened to carry traffic over the train tracks. Photo by Merenzi Young / Eye of Odin Studios

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History



Yes, Maricopa can flood

One of Maricopa's more memorable floods came in 1983, when Santa Cruz waters invaded most existing structures south of the tracks, including the elementary school and, shown here, First Baptist Church of Maricopa. Built in 1954, the church has kept its identifiable frame over the years, though the spire was added and the main entry altered since then. The '83 flood was caused by a broken dam at the Green Reservoir on the Santa Cruz River, and the Arizona National Guard was brought in to help.

Maricopa Historical Society

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Raquel Hendrickson

The North Santa Cruz Wash is typically dry but becomes of vital importance during wet days. The City of Maricopa would like to make it even more of a collection point for floodwaters.

Maricopa Flood Control District Board members (from left) Scott Kelly, Brad Hinton and Dan Frank oversee the district's place in that plan.



Raquel Hendrickson

Fixing the flooding

City moving forward with floodplain plan

By Raquel Hendrickson

During the past decade, the City of Maricopa has leaned on three far-reaching, collaborative, highly expensive projects with hopes of transformation.

One, the grade-separation of State Route 347 at the Union Pacific tracks, was completed last year. Another, the improvement of SR 347 from Maricopa to Interstate 10, is more reliant on other entities like Arizona Department of Transportation, Gila River Indian Community, Maricopa Association of Governments and Arizona Supreme Court.

The last, though less talked about, may have a broader impact on economic development. That is the North Santa Cruz Wash Regional Flood Control Project.

"This has been an on-again, off-again project for over a decade," City Manager Rick Horst said. "When I got here, it kind of stalled out. So, I kind of re-energized the process. It's really convoluted to explain."

The plan is now at an important stage as the City awaits cooperation from Gila Riva Indian Community before it takes the concept to the federal level.

The City has big plans for commercial development around City Hall. That land is currently leased as agricultural acreage until it can be moved out of the floodplain.

A primary portion of federally established flood zones lies between White and Parker Road on the west, Fuqua Road on the east, Farrell Road to the south and Smith-Enke Road to the north.

If all goes as planned, the project would draw flow from existing channels and accommodate so-called 100-year floodwaters in a new collective system. That would allow 11.2 square miles of property to be removed from the flood zone designation. Those acres could then be developed as the City thought it would be at the turn of the century.

Back then, developers had plans to channelize the Santa Cruz to solve the problems of being in the floodplain. But in 2014, the Federal Emergency Management Agency analyzed the Santa Cruz watershed. Its report changed everything.

"So, the City's regional project had to take a step back after that data came out and reanalyze," said Brad Hinton, a member of the Maricopa Flood Control District Board who has also worked for the City and for El Dorado Holdings.

He said the new study showed a different flood pattern that took in much more land than originally thought. The FEMA conclusion drew acres poised for development into the Special Flood Hazard Area map.

That had financial consequences for landowners, like mandatory flood insurance if they wanted to build on or improve their site or if they wanted to get a loan on property in the zone.

"Now it breaks to the west through existing development," Hinton said. "The City has more skin in the game. Now, rather than just channelize the Northern Santa Cruz alignment, it involves improving the Santa Rosa channel as well."

MARICOPA FLOODS

With the Santa Cruz, Santa Rosa and Vekol washes at hand, Maricopa is familiar with high water. The monsoon season in particular often sees roadways deep in runoff. It doesn't even have to rain in Maricopa to bring stormwaters through the washes.

The Santa Cruz River has a northbound flow. It collects stormwaters from the southern mountains and sends them up through the washes in Maricopa and Hidden Valley and on to Gila River Indian Community.

Major floods over the years have damaged property and stifled movement, even covered railroad tracks, playing a factor in the removal of the train route between Maricopa and Phoenix.

Maricopa historian Patricia Brock noted impactful floods in 1890, 1891 and 1905.

Economic and Community Development

City of Maricopa

Economic and Community Development is a committed team that works to make Maricopa a prosperous community by actively engaging citizens to foster a thriving city. You may have questions about the development process. Fortunately, you are not on your own in the City of Maricopa - each project is assigned a personal Project Liaison to coordinate staff processes, aid entrepreneurs, and help ensure a smooth ascension of your venture. Not only is Maricopa open for business - there is no better community in Arizona for business.

Don't take it from us, ask a developer that is currently working in Maricopa - like Damon Norris, Director of Operations at A+ Charter Schools:

"The City of Maricopa's new Project Liaison program has truly been a positive for A+ Charter Schools. Our Liaison has tirelessly worked to help the project move along almost flawlessly. The program makes it feel like you have another team member at city hall to help pull everything together from the start to the finish line. Currently, we are wrapping up our campus in Maricopa, and without this program and our liaison working with our team on the ground we would have never been able to expedite the build like we have been able to. A+ Charter Schools is excited to be one of the first successful projects under this new city program!"

Contractors, developers, and small business owners have been utilizing existing virtual services and our liaison program to ensure that their projects continue on schedule. To view projects happening around town, all of which have a personal liaison, visit www.WhatsNewMaricopa.com



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MARICOPA, ARIZONA

Sweeping floods in 1946 and 1949 “caused great destruction and left them stranded for long periods of time.”

In 1983, a dam broke on the Santa Cruz River, sending a wall of water into Maricopa, again closing roads and inundating homes and businesses. Brock reported the height of the railroad tracks kept most of the water on the south side.

In 1990, it was a breach in the Smith Wash south of town that brought floodwaters into Maricopa again. Arizona felt the heavy rains that soaked the nation in 1993, resulting in more high water for Maricopa.

MITIGATION EFFORTS

The Maricopa Flood Control District and Pinal County Flood Control District maintain miles of channels. The Maricopa FCD has an elected board and is responsible for repairing damage and clearing vegetation that could prevent the flow of floodwaters.

It reviews plans by homeowners’ associations that may impact the Santa Cruz or Santa Rosa washes.

The Pinal County FCD has dozens of projects and studies ongoing, two of which directly impact Maricopa. A feasibility study with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has analyzed 80 stream miles of the Lower Santa Cruz River in search of a regional solution to flooding.

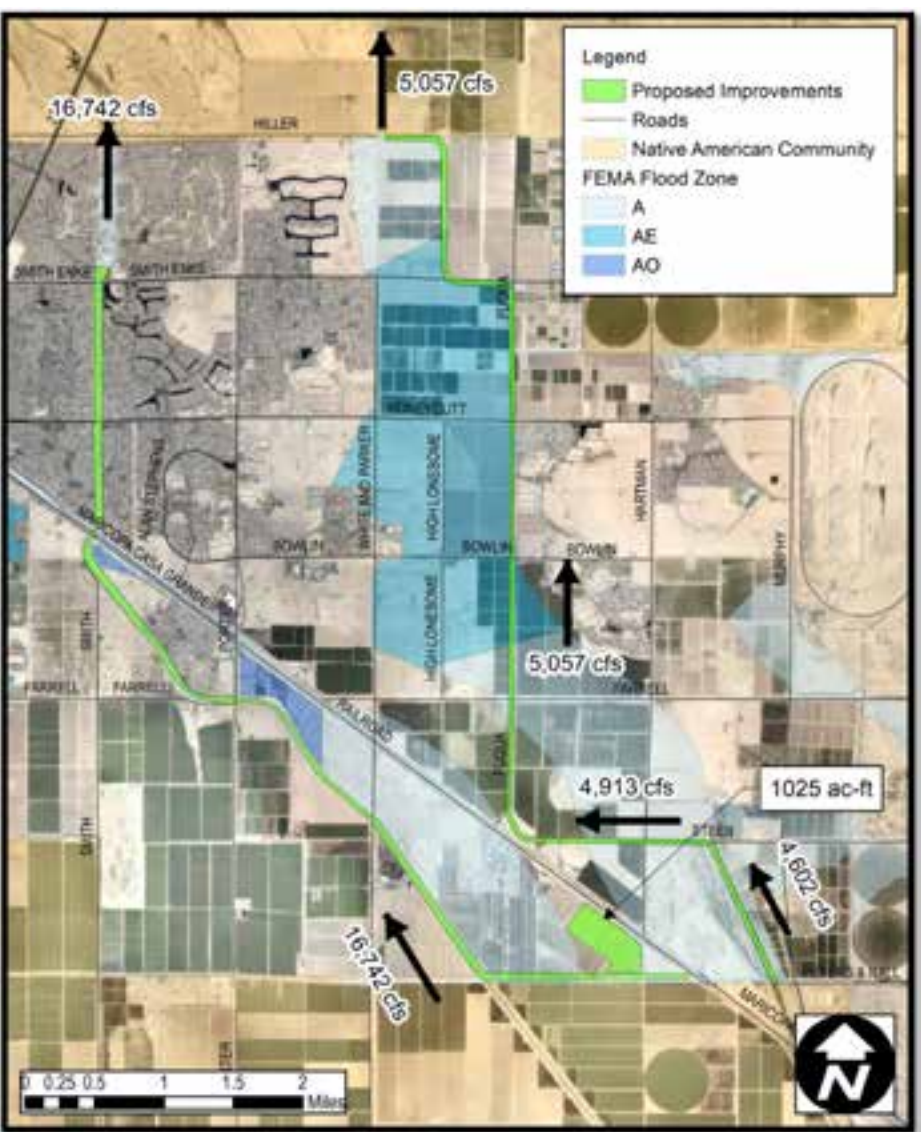
Though actually in District 3, the Russell Road Industrial Area project is attached to Maricopa. The project is studying drainage problems at Ak-Chin Regional Airport and the Saddleback Farms Subdivision.

The Pinal County and Maricopa entities disagree about the status and condition of the Santa Rosa levee, which is just south of the Union Pacific Railroad tracks. The City of Maricopa’s plan might make the “discrepancy of opinion” on the levee go away.

“The county doesn’t have proper records of the inspections when it was built,” Hinton said. “And then there have been some utility crossings that they think have cut into the integrity of the liner. “They have maybe some valid reasons to raise some concerns, but I think we’ve mitigated it by doing our additional testing.”

Dan Frank, president of the Maricopa FCD board, said the City’s design potentially could remove the levee designation.

“That gets the county and FEMA, and its requirements to report to them and do certain maintenance things, kind of off our back,” Frank said.



The design concept for the North Santa Cruz Wash Regional Flood Control Project is more than a decade in the making.

NORTH SANTA CRUZ WASH REGIONAL FLOOD CONTROL PROJECT

“There is a large percentage of property within the current city limits that is within the floodplain,” Horst said. “We are working to try to mitigate that, in other words, to bring that property to where it can actually be developed.”

The recommended system for channelizing the Santa Cruz and Santa Rosa washes includes “interceptor/collection system, conveyance, detention and outlet systems.”

The Santa Cruz system would begin at Peters and Nall Road/Murphy Road and flow northwest to Steen Road, collecting from a South Side channel and traveling west along Steen before turning north at Fuqua Road.

Flows would also be collected from Farrell Road to Fuqua and taken north toward the Gila River Indian Community boundary.

The recommended system for the Santa Rosa Wash “includes a proposed interceptor channel that will collect flow at the Peters and Nall Road alignment west of the UPRR,” according to the executive summary. An interceptor channel will tie into the existing Santa Rosa channel just west of Fuqua Road.

“I think what’s ingenious about this is we’re not having to build a lot of infrastructure,” Horst said. “We’re able to use the Santa Cruz Wash to carry a lot of this load. It’s already a natural channel and will save us a lot of money even though it seems like an expensive project.”

The rough estimate is \$60 million.

“In essence, this will take approximately 11.2 square miles of property out of the floodplain. So, that’s a lot of acres,” he said. “And that acreage, once we bring it out of the floodplain, we will be able to ultimately develop it. If we develop it according to the current city pattern we’re following, that would be about \$1.4 billion of new development opportunity.

“Of course, that won’t happen overnight, but it won’t happen at all if we don’t get it out of the floodplain.”

And even if the plan does not change the designation of the Santa Rosa levee, Hinton said the project “is going to help address and maybe do improvements to the levee to get the county and FEMA comfortable with it.”

On the other end, the City still must get GRIC on board, because all that re-directed flow won’t necessarily end up where they would like it. It is yet another project that must please local, county, state, federal and tribal entities to move forward.

The project 10 years in the making is only at the design level.

“Right now, the design concept report has been reviewed, and it has gone back into the

county and the city for a second review and approval,” Hinton said. “After that, we’ll move forward with the 30% design, which is the CLOMR package.”

A Conditional Letter of Map Revision (CLOMR) is FEMA’s input on a project that will cause hydrologic or hydraulic changes. Maricopa is close to starting that process, but FEMA takes its time with these proposals.

“Projections are that we have a year-and-a-half process before we’re close to having FEMA’s approval,” Hinton said. “It’s a year-and-a-half to two-year construction process, too, though. It’s a big job.”

Optimistically, if FEMA and GRIC cooperate, it would be 18 months before any construction begins. GRIC is not an outlier. A GRIC engineer is part of the stakeholder meetings, and the sovereign nation knows it is an important player in a plan that could change Maricopa. Like FEMA, it has a long process in place and authorities to go through.

WHERE’S THE MONEY?

The elephant in the room is the funding.

In this case, having so many entities

involved could become an advantage. All have different resources and connections. The city and the county are looking at various funding possibilities, and the flood control district sees options, too.

“That’s where the district could be involved,” Frank said. “We could look at the district’s ability to levy a tax or increase its levy.”

Is that likely?

“It’s hard to say,” Frank said.

That’s not a matter of the district doing a favor; it is affected by the City’s decisions. Maricopa FCD has easements through most of the channel. Maintenance agreements must be worked out, and that is a district specialty.

The City’s Capital Improvement Budget comes from taxes, fees and grants. With a COVID-caused slowdown expected, priorities could shift during the long process for approval. But Horst doesn’t mind spending \$60 million to net \$1 billion or more.

Hinton credits Horst with movement on the plan, calling him a “breath of fresh air in dealing with the City.”

“I think the project has moved in a positive direction,” he said.

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- ✓Zoning Code Rewrite Task Force
- ✓Subdivision Ordinance Committee ✓General Plan Update
- ✓2040 Vision ✓2020 Census Committee
- ✓Pinal County Board of Adjustment

MY PROPOSED COUNCIL FOCUS

- ➔ INFRASTRUCTURE: Water, flood control, internet bandwidth, and roads, especially needed SR-347 fixes
- ➔ SENIOR and FAMILY ISSUES: Fixed income households, taxes, adding more community parks, practice fields, and programs, enhancing our city's medical capabilities, supporting the new veterans center/senior center, and support for aging in place
- ➔ 2020 CENSUS FOLLOW-UP: Focused grant-writing effort to make sure our city gets all benefits possible

Check out the links below for more information about these and other topics.

MaricopaVoteForBob.com

VOTE for BOB



InMaricopa asks the candidates

In an effort to show voters another side of the six candidates for city council, InMaricopa asked them to complete the following survey:























	NANCY SMITH	JULIA GUSSE	LINETTE CAROSELLI	ANDRE LAFOND	AMBER LIERMANN	BOB MARSH
What year did you move to Maricopa?	2003	2005	2013	2014	2004	2010
I live in the _____ neighborhood.	Homestead	Senita	Glennwilde	Rancho El Dorado	Alterra	Desert Cedars
What is your governing philosophy in seven words or less?	Delivering high quality services, being fiscally responsible	I pride myself on being a good listener and responsive to the needs of the community.	Political authority must be based on consent.	Proactive Smart Quality Investment	Unity, community, service, responsibility.	Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.
Describe Maricopa in just one word.	Community	Home	Thriving	Oasis	Prosperous	Home
Describe 2020 (so far) in one word	Chaotic	Turmoil	Unpredictable	Ugh!	Historical	Darwinian
My vote for president will go to _____.	Trump	No response	No response	The person I believe will serve our nation the best	Trump	Not DJT this time, too many bad decisions... Joe is not my fave, but ...
The last book I read was ...						
My favorite Constitutional amendment is ...	Freedom in choice of religion	14th Amendment	13th-15th	The 1st. So much of our nation is protected and enshrined in this single paragraph	1st Amendment	1st Amendment
My last Amazon purchase was ...	Rockets	A birthday gift card, no returns this way	Internet booster	A microwave	A guitar for my daughter	A dusk-to-dawn LED light bulb
My favorite movie is ...						
Do you support a medical marijuana dispensary in the city?	No	No	No response	Yes	No	Yes
Maricopa or Copa?	Maricopa	Maricopa	No response	Maricopa	Maricopa	Maricopa
Favorite place to vacation in Arizona?	Tubac 	Sedona 	My home 	Pinetop 	Prescott Valley 	Sedona 
Source of inspiration?	Jesus	Women leaders and the veterans I work with	My mother and grandmother	My wife Kaylie	Youth	My wife Cynthia
Favorite food?	Pizza	Dim Sum	Soul food & Italian	Steak, rare plus, with garlic herb butter	Mexican	Anything on the grill
You're on a desert island with one playlist. Who or what is it?	Barbra Streisand 	Purple Rain by Prince 	'80s & '90s	The Rat Pack: Live at the Sands 	Worship music	Hotel California, the Eagles 

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VOTE
2020

Voting Precincts

30 Maricopa

Desert Wind Middle School
35565 W. Honeycutt Road

31 Stanfield

First Baptist Church
615 S. Stanfield Road

54 Thunderbird Farms

Thunderbird Fire District
Community Building
12356 N. Ralston Road

67 Hidden Valley

Pinal County Public Works
43910 W. Meadowview Road

73 Santa Rosa

Santa Rosa Elementary
School
21400 N. Santa Rosa Drive

74 El Dorado

Pima Butte Elementary
School
42202 W. Rancho El Dorado
Parkway

77 Ak-Chin Community

Ak-Chin Service Center
48227 W. Farrell Road

78 Maricopa Meadows

Maricopa Community Church
44977 W. Hathaway Ave.

79 Maricopa Fiesta

Villages at Rancho El Dorado
20991 N. Butterfield Parkway

80 Province

Global Water Center
22590 N. Powers Parkway

90 Senita Precinct

Maricopa Unified School
District Office
44150 W. Maricopa-Casa
Grande Hwy.

100 Desert Cedars

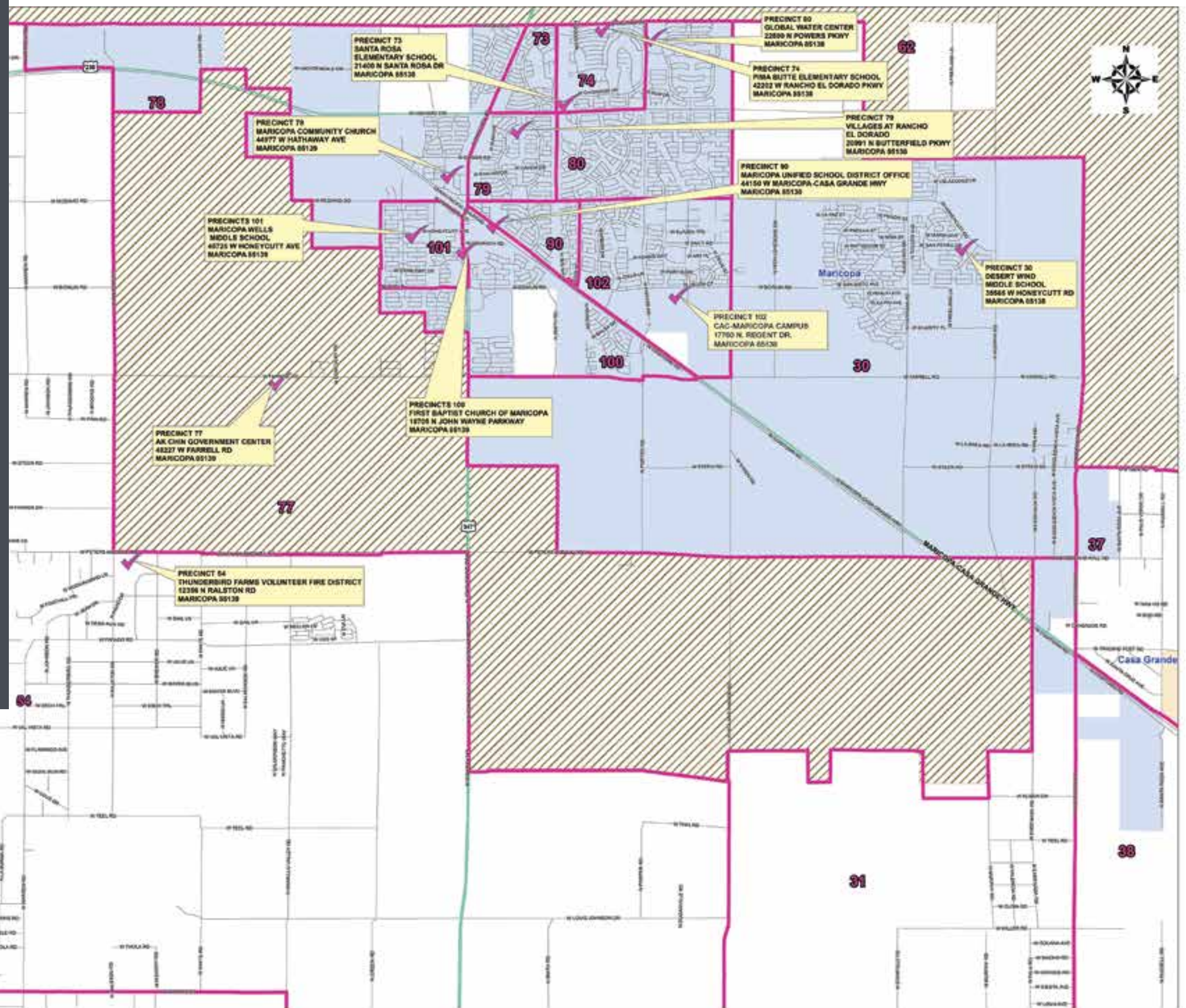
First Baptist Church
of Maricopa
18705 N. John Wayne
Parkway

101 Alterra North

Maricopa Wells Middle
School
45725 W. Honeycutt Ave.

102 Maricopa Wells

CAC-Maricopa Campus
17760 N. Regent Dr.



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Patient care: the highest priority

By Dr. C. Jon Beecroft, Maricopa Foot and Ankle

My patients frequently ask how COVID-19 has changed medicine. My answer to patients may not be what they want to hear: I am not sure how things will change exactly but they will be changing.

As I pondered the question of change, I also thought about what is staying the same.

Trusting one's physician is becoming more and more important given the plethora of misinformation available. It is hard to know where to get trustworthy information regarding health.

At Maricopa Foot and Ankle, we work daily to keep the trust of the community we serve. We work hard to stay up with the newest technology and procedures to improve patients' health.

As much as we want to get everyone in immediately, it is not always possible. Emergencies, trauma, severe pain and infections will get highest priority. However,

we will do our best to help each patient get in as quickly as possible. This can save a lot on money and time. We often hear of patients going to the Emergency Room, only to be told they need to see a specialist. One can bypass the ER and come directly to the specialist. A quick call to the office can often direct the patient to the best path based on their specific ailment.

At Maricopa Foot and Ankle, we understand the importance of communication. We make it easy to contact the physicians and the office. We know that getting the right information and avoiding the runaround is important. We do all we can to help.

In the office, there are several modalities used to diagnose problems. We use X-rays and ultrasound as diagnostic tools. This saves a lot of time as we can take radiographs of the foot and ankle in a matter of minutes. In addition, each physician is highly

trained to read and understand the X-rays. We also have ultrasound visualization. This assists in diagnosing and treating quickly. Again, we read the ultrasound ourselves, which allows a quick and accurate diagnosis and treatment plan.

Finally, we give every patient the time they need during their appointment. Patients tend to improve when they participate in their treatment plan. We will educate and work together to solve the problem and find a solution. Talking, listening, and understanding together is one of the keys to a good outcome.

As Bob Dylan sang, "The times they are a-changin'." However, some things do stay the same. Getting patients in quickly, ease of contacting the office or physician, using modern tools to diagnose and communicating together to improve treatment. Patient care is always the highest priority, and we are here for you. That will never change.

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SPONSORED CONTENT

Maricopa businessman set to deliver 2 million COVID test kits

By Raquel Hendrickson

A multi-million-dollar company started out of a house in Maricopa is working to give away COVID-19 test kits in Arizona and California.

Damien Carter, 38, is CEO of VET Logistics, a trucking company based in Phoenix. A resident of The Villages, Carter said his intent is to deliver 2 million PCR (polymerase chain reaction) and rapid test kits for free to communities that need them, preferably low-income areas.

Carter said the deal, involving qMetrix Group, RHEA Inc. and AnyPlaceMDBox, started as a \$100 million contract. He asked suppliers to exchange half that amount for COVID test kits in what may be the largest personal donation of kits.

"Basically, VET Logistics purchased those kits to distribute," Carter said.

Willie Sneller, CEO of qMetrix Group, said his logistics company is acquiring the test kits from China 500,000 at a time.

"We are providing one of the few CDC-, EUA-approved rapid test kits available today," Sneller said from his office in Iowa.

He said his relationship with Carter came about because one of his representatives was acquainted with Damien's father Ken (of "Coach Carter" fame) in California. Damien had co-founded VET Logistics with fellow Maricopan Ronald Mcanelly.

"He's an amazing man," Sneller said of Damien Carter. "He works very hard communicating. He is working on a very, very worthy effort."

Carter's first target for test-kit distribution was his hometown of Richmond, Calif. There and in Arizona, he was in contact with the governor's office to explain his intentions and



Damien Carter

coordinate the effort.

"That trickled down to the county health department. Once it gets there, I drop them off," Carter said. "I would hope and I'm trying to have faith people will do the right thing and help people in those low-income areas."

Sneller said his company was honored to be a partner in Carter's "benevolent effort to help communities that are in dire need of the rapid test kits for the COVID-19 antibody test."



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Construction, other development around town

Maricopa Animal Hospital, being constructed at 20035 N. John Wayne Parkway, received its commercial permit. The 3,998-square-foot structure, being constructed by TWC Design Build, is valued at \$1.2 million. It also was permitted for onsite improvements.

PHT Property Holdings is putting in a 4,344-square-foot shell building at 41664 W. Smith-Enke Road. The project, under contractor Anson L. Call Builders, is valued at \$586,397. It will include an audiologist's office, which received a permit for commercial tenant improvement.

Subway, 21116 N. John Wayne Parkway, Suite B6, pulled a permit for major electrical work involving the removal of table lights and ceiling fans.

The construction site of the **county complex**, 19975 N. Wilson Ave., received a permit for temporary power for a state-approved modular.

Meritage Homes is putting in two commercial shade structures at 22870 N. Chase Drive in The Lakes at Rancho El Dorado.

In its continuing effort to transform an area of the Heritage District, the **City of Maricopa** pulled a demolition permit for a structure at 44491 W. Stagecoach Lane.

New and pending structures received permits for sprinkler systems, including **Iconic Tire** and **Riliberto's**, neighboring businesses at 19945 N. John Wayne Parkway.

Richmond American Homes received a temporary use permit for a model home complex on Daniel Drive in The Lakes.

Construction began on **Bahama Buck's** on the east end of the Walmart parking lot. Construction continued for **John Wayne Parkway Self-Storage** next to the new AAMCO building on John Wayne Parkway.



Raquel Hendrickson



Raquel Hendrickson

Bahama Buck's (left) is rising next to Walmart, while John Wayne Parkway Self-Storage is under construction near Big O Tires.

City seeks small-business applicants for AZCares funds

Maricopa small businesses and others started applying for AZCares money from City Hall starting June 18.

The application process will last through July 6 at 6 p.m.

"We want to make sure that all the businesses have the time to not only hear about it but get their application together," Mayor Christian Price said.

The City received nearly \$6 million of the state's portion of CARES Act funds to help the community recover from the effect of COVID-19 closures. After the application process, City staff will look over the applications, and city council will decide allocations by mid-July.

Eatery dinged by health inspector

Of the dozen Maricopa eateries inspected by Pinal County May 16-June 15, all but one received top marks. True Grit Tavern had a problem with proper cold holding, according to the inspector's report. A prep refrigerator that should hold food under 41 degrees F had raw hamburger at 60F, and turkey and ham at 56F to 60F. The items were discarded.



EXCELLENT [No violations found]

- Chipotle
- Dickey's Barbecue (John Wayne Parkway)
- Dickey's Barbecue (Maricopa-Casa Grande Highway)
- Dutch Bros
- Gyro Grill
- Helen's Kitchen
- Li's Garden
- Native Grill & Wings
- Plaza Bonita
- Say Sushi
- Water and Ice

SATISFACTORY [Violations corrected during inspection]

- True Grit Tavern

NEEDS IMPROVEMENT [Critical items noted during inspection cannot be corrected immediately requiring follow-up inspection]

None

UNACCEPTABLE [Gross, unsanitary conditions necessitating the discontinuation of service]

None

MEDA names VP of business development

After a nationwide search, the Maricopa Economic Development Alliance (MEDA) announced the hiring of James B. Smith, Ph.D., as vice president of business development.

Smith will be responsible for developing and executing business recruitment initiatives for MEDA on behalf of the City of Maricopa. He has 25 years of progressively successful leadership, and economic and community development experience, with non-profit organizations and private-public partnerships.

"We are delighted to have recruited someone of James' caliber to help propel MEDA in its newly expanded role," said John Schurz, MEDA



Submitted

James B. Smith, Ph.D.

chairman and CEO. "His track record in building organizations, communities and economies will greatly advance MEDA's ability to fulfill and exceed its mandate as Maricopa's official outwardly facing economic development organization."

Smith was the first vice president of corporate relations for the Economic Development Alliance of Baltimore. He was appointed as the senior administrator at the Baltimore Community Foundation to bridge the gap between community and economic development for the Greater Baltimore region.

Most recently, Smith served as the president and CEO of Healthy Teen Network, a national enterprise that focuses on addressing the sexual health education needs of teens and adolescents who are parenting and/or pregnant, in systems of care, and those who identify as LGBTQIA+.

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1. Police Chief Steve Stahl joined a large crowd of people and took a symbolic knee during a peaceful protest before a meeting of the city council at City Hall. *Kyle Norby*

2. Crews wrap the Silver Horizon California Zephyr railcar to protect it from the elements as its windows are upgraded. *Submitted*

3. People wear masks during a candlelight vigil held June 5 by the NAACP at Copper Sky Amphitheater. The Rev. Leroy Alamn of Mt. Moriah and Pastor David Anderson of World Outreach Maricopa prayed in solidarity with those gathered. *Kyle Norby*

4. People hold signs as traffic passes at John Wayne Parkway and West Edison Road during a June protest to show support for the Black Lives Matter movement. Dozens and dozens of motorists honked horns and yelled words of support. *Bob McGovern*



Danny Dyster of Laveen was commissioned to paint a decades-old water tower at the corner of White and Parker Road and Maricopa-Casa Grande Highway. *Raquel Hendrickson*

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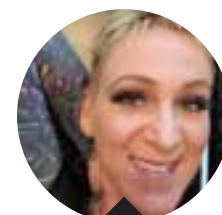
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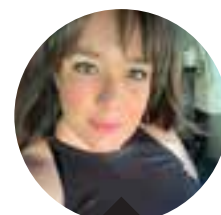
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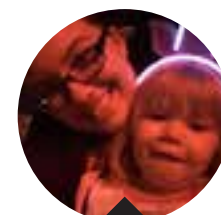
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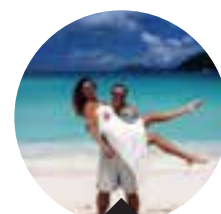
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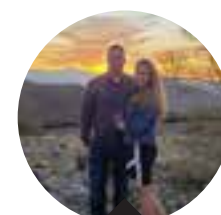
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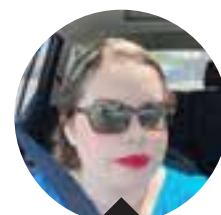
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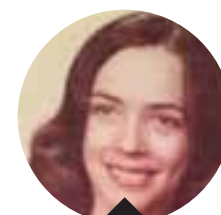
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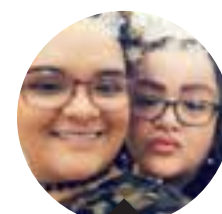
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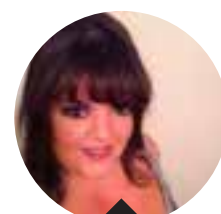
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Residents in the south end of the city, viewed from the overpass, have seen considerable benefits from the \$55 million project, including commercial development opportunities and renewed interest from home builders and buyers.



Bob McGovern

A year later

Overpass ‘opens up the city,’ allows a sigh of relief

By Bob McGovern and Kyle Norby

For years, the train tracks passing through town were the go-to excuse for many Maricopa students looking to delay the start of their school day. But the much-anticipated overpass has changed life in the city in numerous, more substantive ways, too. Its impact has been immediate, and even more positive effects will play out over years, if not decades.

Motorists perhaps have benefited the most from the bridge over the tracks, which opened to traffic on July 15, 2019. The elimination of the train crossing immediately made it safer for motorists and reduced traffic congestion and related stress.

Residents living south of those tracks have seen huge benefits from the overpass as well,

and perhaps stand to gain the most from the overpass in the long-term.

Ambulances respond to health emergencies faster, firefighters can answer fire calls and police can more easily get to developments like Maricopa Meadows, Alterra, Desert Cedars, Palo Brea and Santa Rosa Springs, according to city officials.

The 500-foot-long, \$55 million overpass, has opened multiple avenues of development, with builders putting up (and planning more) homes in Palo Brea and Alterra. Commercial development along John Wayne Parkway is increasing as well.

Businesses in the south end of town have benefited as well, with customers and employees finding it easier to get to and from Harrah’s Ak-Chin Hotel and Casino and the UltraStar Multi-tainment Center.

“I had always said that when the overpass goes in, not only is it going to help protect us from a public safety standpoint, because we simply don’t have the interaction with the trains anymore,” Mayor Christian Price said, “but the bigger thing — the long-term thing — will be the fact that it opens up the city in a way that we had never experienced before. Because we really did have a north and south side of the tracks.

“It’s kind of the gift that keeps on giving.”

A COLLECTIVE PATIENCE WORN THIN

As the city of Maricopa rose quickly on this nearly 43-square-mile patch in the desert, it grew around the Union Pacific Railroad tracks that bisect the city. The vast majority of that land lies south of the tracks.

The rail line intersected with State Route 347, the city’s main transportation corridor, which carries more than 31,000 vehicles per day on average and is expected to reach 60,000 vehicles per day in 2040, according to the Arizona Department of Transportation.

Crossing the tracks at SR347 was a major headache as often as not, especially during rush hour. Lights would blink and the safety gates would fall about 60 times a day as UP freight trains traveled the Sunset Route rails east and west laden with ferrous scrap, wheat and flour, and assembled vehicles.

It was a longer wait if you were trying to cross the tracks while Amtrak’s Sunset Limited

Bridge bypassed the tracks – and some businesses, too

The overpass is generally considered a huge success for the city, but there was collateral damage for some businesses working in the shadows of the structure.



Vimal Patel, the owner of the Chevron gas station and shop, was blunt about the effect of the project on his business: “Very bad. We end up doing 50% to 60% (less) business now. They just put us on the side. The city doesn’t even care.”



Kyle Norby

At the Country Stylin’ Salon in the Maricopa Manor Business Center, owner Janine Spencer said her business has suffered tremendously since the bridge opened in July 2019:

“I lost half my stylists and half my business, and we still haven’t recovered I hope to stay in business. The bridge kind of kicked our butt.”



At the Smokers Edge Smoke and Vape shop in the same shopping center, employee Rudy Duran said a falloff during the months the overpass took shape has mostly dissipated. “During construction we took a little hit there. Now that it’s all done, we’re doing pretty good.”



train was in the Maricopa station, just south of the crossing. Motorists could wait 20 minutes or much longer as passengers — and their luggage — embarked and debarked one car at a time, the train edging forward so the process could be repeated on successive coaches.

Many drivers found the situation excruciating, honking their horns at the train. Motorists regularly would turn their cars around. Others would turn off John Wayne Parkway and make long detours around the crossing if they saw the gleaming silver railcars in station.

Judit Kalman Hutson doesn't miss the old crossing one bit. She moved from Desert Cedars to The Villages at Rancho El Dorado in 2011, in part to minimize its effect on her daily life.

A Maricopa resident since 2005, she recalls getting "caught by the train" on her way to work from Desert Cedars or leaving her home at 10:20 p.m. and not making it to Fry's before the doors closed at 11.

“We can't satisfy everyone for sure, but I believe we came pretty close with this one.”

– Judit Kalam Hutson, resident

After she moved, three times a day she would leave 30 minutes early to make the 2.5-mile-or-so drive from The Villages to Copper Sky for her kids' morning swim practice or her evening spin class. The same trip today takes maybe 5-7 minutes, said Hutson, 44.

"I believe the majority of the residents agree that the overpass has been a positive result for our community," she wrote on Facebook. "We can't satisfy everyone for sure, but I believe we came pretty close with this one."

"I love the overpass."

Similar stories are numerous.

Bri Wilson, 25, recalled the hassle of leaving from her bartending job at UltraStar at night just to be caught waiting at the tracks.

"When I worked on Sunday nights, I'd either get stuck for around 30 minutes and I'd have to decide whether it was worth it to just wait it out or go all the way back down over by Porter Road to get through," she said.

Beth Mundell, who lives in Maricopa Meadows, said she would routinely get stuck at the crossing for 30-45 minutes.



Dozens of homes are being constructed in Palo Brea, one of the southernmost housing developments in the city.

Bob McGovern

\$55 million project spurs commercial, residential development

By Bob McGovern

The overpass is a bridge to the city's future.

City Manager Ricky Horst makes his point by underlining the considerable commercial development underway or on the drawing board south of the bridge that will create jobs and bring tens of millions of dollars to the local economy.

Among those projects are Copper Sky Commercial district, boasting senior housing and a La Quinta hotel, and development along John Wayne Parkway, including the South Bridge plan to revitalize the old section of Maricopa just south of the railroad tracks and along the shoulders of the overpass.

"The amount of attention from developers and builders has increased dramatically south of the overpass," Horst said. "Most of our growth will be to the south. It is important to have the opportunities to move forward. Good, planned growth is the key."

"There's a whole bunch of areas around the water tower in the Heritage

area that people are looking to come in and redevelop, and they're looking to do it from a market standpoint," agreed Mayor Christian Price. "It's the market going I can buy the land, I can develop it, I can create something from this."

Price said the positive effect was immediate, and the \$55 million overpass will pay dividends for a long time to come.

"Yes, it has had the intended effect, but we're so far from seeing its completion," he said. "We're just in the initial, early phases, and the stuff we'll see over the next 10 or 20 years because of that overpass is really phenomenal. It's going to (promote) development in a way that we never envisioned."

"You have Ak-Chin with its expansion and all the great things that they're doing down there. You have the Copper Sky area," Price added. "From literally the moment that people found out that the overpass was going to start getting funded, all of that land adjacent to the 347 all the way down suddenly became much more valuable."

STIGMA LIFTS ON SOUTH SIDE

With much of the commercial activity coming down the pike, the effect on residential development is already tangible.

Before the overpass, there was a stigma for many years about homeowners being on the "wrong side" of the tracks, according to Realtor Dayv Morgan.

"When I would ask a buyer what area of town they were interested in, they would often say, 'I don't want to be south of the railroad tracks,'" he wrote in this magazine in February. "I have lived on the south side

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“I’d think there had to be a science” to avoiding the Amtrak trains, she said. Then, about a year after she moved here, someone told her about the Amtrak app. She downloaded it and would literally schedule her leaving and return to the house around when the app indicated the train would be in station, she said.

“The overpass was life-changing in a lot of ways,” said Mundell, 45, a 12-year resident of the city. “I don’t even think about it anymore. I don’t think about the train. I haven’t even looked to see when it’s coming or going since the overpass opened.”

The first time she used the overpass she remembers thinking, “Thank goodness that this is here.’ I know the city council and the mayor worked so hard for it.”

For years, the crossing wore on the collective patience of the city. Heading from one end of town to the other was a mental hurdle. Everybody knew the solution, but where would the money come from?

‘IT WAS THE GREATEST THING’

City leaders envisioned an overpass — or underpass — way back in 2004.

The town was already booming. The population had mushroomed from about 1,000 residents to about 7,000 in just four years and was growing by about 1,000 residents a month by that year.

The city council’s general plan, a blueprint for what Maricopa would become over the next 10-15 years, included a Capital Improvement Plan with at least one costly project — a way over or under the tracks.

By 2013, through the persistence of city leaders, including former Mayor Kelly Anderson, the much-needed project was firmly on the radar of state officials and leaders in Washington.

At the time, Price said a “proactive” effort on behalf of the city and other interested parties helped push the project to the top of priority lists, according to an InMaricopa.com report. The city’s lobbying firm, Nexus Consulting, helped open doors in Washington.

Robert Miguel, chairman of the Ak-Chin Indian Community, recalled pushing the project in the nation’s capital when he was there to promote his community.

“Every time I’d gone to D.C. myself representing Ak-Chin Community ... I always made it a priority to sneak in a couple of quotes and try to establish a relationship with these lawmakers. ‘You know, we need this overpass

since coming to Maricopa in 2006, and when I would tell people where I lived, they would say, ‘Oh, that’s too bad.’”

That sentiment traditionally impacted the home prices in the south, which ran about 10% less than homes in northern Maricopa.

“You had real estate agents that would say, ‘Oh, never buy south of the tracks’” Price said. “All that is gone now.”

Now, home values in the south have caught up to, if not surpassed, those in the north, according to real estate agents.

“Our house value went up,” said Beth Mundell, a resident of Maricopa Meadows, “because no longer were we on the other side of the tracks.”

The big change has roots in the large-scale development of the UltraStar Multi-tainment Center at Ak-Chin Circle in 2012, followed by the opening of Copper Sky in 2014. People took notice.

Still, most southside subdivisions had seen little construction since the 2008 recession. All of that changed in early 2019 and homebuilders are busy there today.

HOMEBUYERS KEEP THEIR OPTIONS OPEN

“To say that the overpass has created some real estate opportunities ‘south of the tracks’ would be an understatement,” said Brian Petersheim, a Realtor with the HomeSmart agency who sees homebuyer activity firsthand. “The overpass has reduced the anxiety of buyers based on location and a specific side of the tracks. With the super-low inventory

of available homes, most buyers are looking at Maricopa as a whole and are keeping their options open.”

They have plenty of options — many in the low \$200,000s — in the south part of town, according to Petersheim.

In 2019, Lennar purchased lots on several undeveloped streets in Alterra and has been constructing single-level homes, and builder Wade Jurney purchased several lots to build homes. A holding company owns more lots in the subdivision today, speculating they will be purchased by either Lennar or Wade Jurney when they finish construction on their current lots.

In Maricopa Meadows, K. Hovnanian is constructing single-level homes on the remaining empty lots purchased in March 2019.

Meanwhile, Richmond American is selling the last of its homes at Palo Brea, where DR Horton purchased the remaining available lots — almost half of the subdivision — in February 2020 for almost \$16 million and plans to break ground this summer.

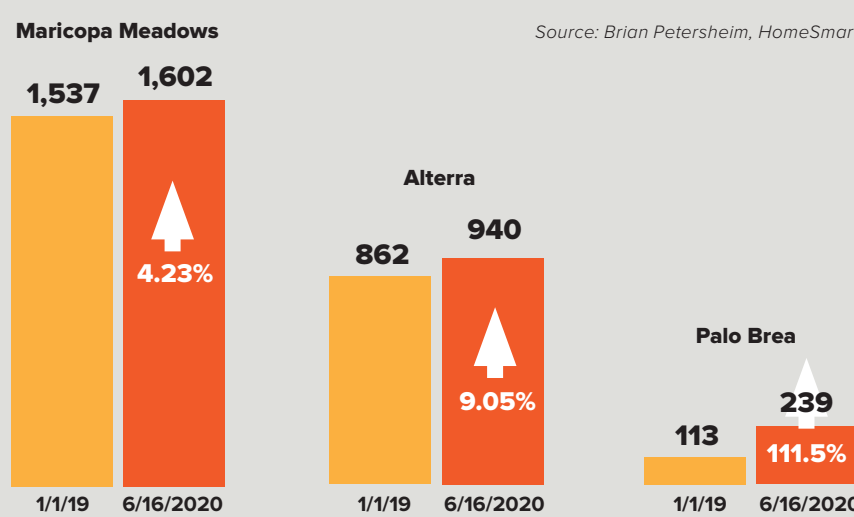
“The market is booming all over Maricopa,” agreed Realtor Brian French with the MyHomeGroup agency. “People aren’t ‘scared’ to live there anymore. I don’t hear the term ‘south of the tracks’ anymore.”

“There’s a lot of super-desirable homes in that area now,” he added.

And there will be more to come for sure.

The south side has plenty of space for new subdivisions within city limits.

NUMBER OF COMPLETED HOMES



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in Maricopa, so if there is any way we can influence and persuade to award Maricopa that grant, we're here to do that," he said.

"All we wanted was to make sure the residents of Ak-Chin and Maricopa were protected, public safety-wise, and for smoother flow in traffic," he added. "When it happened, it was great to see. It was the greatest thing to see that overpass go over."

Ak-Chin did not contribute to the project. However, it was eventually funded by a \$15 million federal TIGER grant and a \$15 million contribution by the City of Maricopa, in addition to ADOT's \$19 million commitment.

Rick Horst, the current city manager, observed the project was a long time in the making and noted the contributions of past council members and city leaders in getting the overpass constructed.

"They deserve a lot of credit," he said.

DOUBLE THE DANGER

City leaders and residents waited a long time for a remedy.

The rail crossing at John Wayne Parkway, with its high traffic counts (trains and vehicles) and many accidents, was dangerous.



The improvements made at realigned John Wayne Parkway and Honeycutt Road have virtually eliminated one of the most dangerous intersections in the city.

Bob McGovern

Everybody knew it. In fact, a letter included with a city application for a federal grant in May 2013 to help address the safety problems called it "one of the most dangerous rail crossings in Arizona."

"Because it bisects the fastest growing area of Arizona, traffic is congested, public safety is compromised, and children are at risk because of its proximity to a high school," read the letter to the secretary of the U.S. Department of Transportation.

People died.
In June 2000, a child died after becoming trapped in a truck that stalled on the tracks.
A motorcycle rider was killed at the crossing in February 2013 after striking a descending barricade arm.
Other lives were threatened, too, like the young school bus driver who escaped injury in November 2015 by leaping off a bus, empty of kids, that was stuck on the tracks before it was struck by a freight train.

The intersection of John Wayne Parkway and Honeycutt Road, 600 feet north of the tracks, was dangerous, too. Too many motorists heading west on Honeycutt would make illegal left turns onto John Wayne leading to many wrecks.

"The intersection at Honeycutt and 347 was our top crash or collision intersection for three or four years running," said Maricopa Police Chief Steve Stahl, because drivers violated the no left-turn sign.

"And it was a one-way road where, you know, people became too impatient because the roadway was backed up," he said. "So, it was an extreme situation."

The overpass, an Arizona Department of Transportation project, did two things to dramatically improve safety. The bridge took the heavy traffic over the tracks, eliminating interaction between trains and vehicles, and the long waits commonplace for decades. It also realigned John Wayne to the east, its intersection with Honeycutt Road redesigned to make it easier to navigate safely and enhance traffic flow.

The John Wayne-Honeycutt intersection is "by far safer" today, Stahl noted. "Now, we're

rarely called there for a crash."
"The safety and mobility benefits of this improvement occur each time a train passes State Route 347," said Steve Elliott, Arizona Department of Transportation spokesman, "ADOT and Maricopa worked closely together to make this improvement a reality, and the result has paid dividends for the past year and will continue benefiting the city for decades to come."

Union Pacific supports roadway grade separations as they have broad public benefits, said spokesman Tim S. McMahan.

"(The overpass) improves traffic flow for the thousands of vehicles who previously were required to stop if a train was present at the crossing and eliminates potential collisions that could occur at an at-grade crossing, both with motorists and pedestrians," he said. "We applaud the efforts of those involved in making this a successful project."

"We look forward to working with the community on the next opportunity."

TIME-WORN EXCUSE LEAVES THE STATION

The sleek concrete overpass ended a longtime


excuse for students late to class at Maricopa High School.

Tori Kaszubksi, 23, a 2014 graduate of MHS, remembers vividly being trapped by the dreaded Amtrak trains.

"I remember the bus being stuck at the railroad crossing for as long as an hour sometimes," Kaszubksi said. "I think a good handful of us started to realize we could use the Amtrak to our benefit, since we would be late taking the bus anyway, why not ditch and walk to get breakfast knowing we'll be excused because of the traffic?"

Another graduate, Nicolas Kalnasy, 25, laughed and said, "It was an absolute annoyance. I am glad they built a bridge and got over it."

Maricopa Unified School District fought an uphill with the tracks for years, from bus delays to the inconvenience of sporting events letting out during late-night Amtrak stops. Serfio Pulido, transportation director for the district, said the overpass has been a marked improvement for transportation routes and getting kids to first period on time.

"The overpass is a blessing when it came to route timing. I've had nothing but positive feedback," Pulido said. 



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4



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1. With and without masks, families were lakeside at Pacana Park to enjoy nature and try to catch fish as amenities reopened. *Raquel Hendrickson*

2. Junior Rams had athletes age 9, 10 and 11 cautiously training for football with fitness exercises without contact June 20. *Raquel Hendrickson*

3. Bianca Bejarano-Soucie, right, packs a box at her Senita home with help from Sarah Young of Chandler, left, and Molly Porter of Florence. The women organized a highly successful effort to collect food and supplies and take them to a Navajo Nation town in Monument Valley where residents have been hard hit by the coronavirus pandemic. *Merenzi Young / Eye of Odin Studios*

4. A day after the mayor and city council strongly encouraged (but did not mandate) the wearing of face masks in public, Maricopans picked up free masks at InMaricopa June 19. *Kyle Norby*

5. Mary Lou Smith, a pillar of the farming community, was the center of attention for her 90th birthday as family and friends sent noisy greetings through her Villages neighborhood. *Raquel Hendrickson*



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Merenzi Young / Eye of Odin Studios

In Villages, frontline workers locked out of pool, clubhouse

By Bob McGovern

Heather Walter and her husband, Ryan, have been working on the front lines of the coronavirus pandemic for months.

Both work at the same Phoenix-area hospital. She is a nurse in the pediatric intensive care unit, and he is a respiratory therapist in the ICU. Their work requires them to be in close proximity with patients who have the virus.

The Walters have four children — aged 9, 7, 4 and 2 — and they work opposite shifts to ensure one of them is always home. One of the kids' favorite summer activities is swimming in one of the community pools at The Villages of Rancho El Dorado, where the family lives. Typically, they are at the pool five days a week, including weekends, Heather said.

Not this summer.

The family finds itself on the outside looking in, locked out of the pool by the

Villages HOA, because the couple has been exposed to coronavirus by providing care to ICU patients.

As a result, the HOA would not activate the keycard that admits the family to the pools, the splash pad, the clubhouse and other amenities.

Heather said the children are paying the price, especially after a trying few months with the COVID-19 stay at home order.

"Their lives have been turned upside down," Heather, 37, said. "We're basically stuck at home."

NO WAIVING OR REDUCTION OF DUES

The issue came up when the HOA required all residents to complete a "Health Screening Confirmation and Waiver and Release of Liability for Access to Common Areas" as a requirement to access the clubhouse, pools and fitness center. All access cards were

Ella Walter, 9, checks out the pool from outside the fence at The Villages of Rancho El Dorado. She and her sisters haven't been able to swim in the pool this summer.

deactivated by the HOA until the form was signed, residents said.

The letter asked residents to acknowledge that no members of the household:

- Had any COVID-19 symptoms.
- Were under quarantine after testing positive for the virus.
- Had tested positive, had close contact with anyone confirmed to have the virus, or traveled internationally or on a cruise.

The letter asked all residents to abide by social distancing rules, recommends face masks in common areas, and use of hand sanitizer and hand washing before and after using amenities.

Residents are also asked to accept a "Waiver and Release of Liability" that states: "I hereby assume all of the risks associated with COVID-19, including without limitation, related exposure, contamination,

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Heather Walter is surrounded by her four daughters - from left, Ella, 9, Eden, 4, Ensley, 2, and Emilee, 7 at the clubhouse at The Villages of Rancho El Dorado. Heather and her husband, Ryan, work on the frontlines of the COVID-19 pandemic at a Phoenix-area hospital.

and infection in connection with any and all use within and around the common areas...."

It asks residents to "agree to indemnify and hold harmless the following entities or persons for all claims of liability arising out of or related to COVID-19 in consideration for being permitted to use/access the common areas: the association and its members, agents, directors, officers, employees, volunteers, vendors, representatives, or affiliated persons' or entities (released persons)."

And then, in bold: "Participant hereby requests the association to provide participant with access to the common areas regardless of the inherent risk of contracting COVID-19 within the common areas."

If residents did not sign the document, their cards were not activated.

The Walters signed the document, answering truthfully that they had been exposed to the virus through their hospital work. Initially, their card was activated, but subsequently deactivated after the HOA said they needed to go two weeks without further exposure.

"We cannot possibly be the only healthcare providers in The Villages, I just happen to be honest," she said.

So, they inquired about a waiver or reduction of their \$285 quarterly dues.

No waiving of the fee and no reduction, the HOA told her, according to Walter.

InMaricopa.com contacted the local HOA office for comment on the situation, but community manager Diane Zavala did not return the call. Associated Asset Management (AAM), a Tempe-based company, provides management services to the HOA at the Villages.

VIOLATION OF HIPAA?

Walter said she called Zavala on June 10 to ask about the family's predicament. Zavala told her the HOA's Board of Directors was planning to discuss the situation in executive session during its regular meeting the next day, June 11.

June 12, Walter emailed Zavala to ask what the board decided. In an email response, Zavala told her the board didn't discuss the matter, but would "revisit your matter" at the next executive session set for June 24.

"In the meantime, can you please share more detail about yours and your husband's frequency of the exposure to individuals who

“Because the waiver calls for within the past two weeks, if there is a period where you/husband have not been exposed to anyone who has tested positive for Covid-19, with the necessary precautions and signed form you/husband can use the amenities.”

- Community manager Diane Zavala, in an email to a resident

have tested positive for COVID-19?" Zavala asked in the email.

"Because the waiver calls for within the past two weeks, if there is a period where you/husband have not been exposed to anyone who has tested positive for Covid-19, with the necessary precautions and signed

form you/husband can use the amenities," Zavala continued. "I believe the association is relying on you as good citizen and responsible frontline worker to limit your visits and amenity activity when you/ husband see necessary based upon your exposure and allow yourself a two week of rest time prior to reusing the amenities."

The Board of Directors, which is led by Tony Crisostomo, thinks it can do whatever it wants, said another Villages resident who faces the same lockout situation as a frontline worker.

An employee at a facility where he has been in contact with coronavirus, he was also asked to sign the waiver, said the resident, speaking on condition of anonymity because his employer forbids its workers from speaking to the media.

"The whole waiver thing is against HIPAA," he said, referring to the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996, a federal law protecting sensitive patient health information from being disclosed without the patient's consent or knowledge.

"We're expected to pay dues even though we can't use the amenities," he said.

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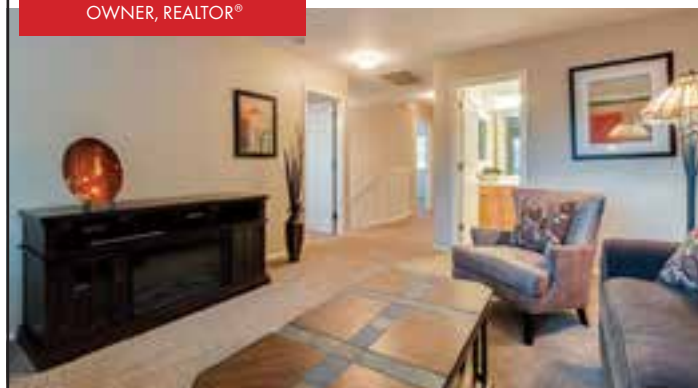
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Schools enhance protocols on physical and mental health to start new year

By Raquel Hendrickson

Getting children back on school campuses is less fun than it sounds. The opening of the 2020-21 year looms in July for Maricopa Unified School District and most charter schools in town. School leaders looked for a balance between best health practices and the wishes of families before presenting a plan. Another component is preparing students psychologically for a new experience.

As the Arizona Department of Education presented a "Roadmap for Reopening Schools," it told schools that implementing direction from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention "should be guided by what is feasible, practical, acceptable and tailored to the needs of each community."

MUSD surveyed parents to learn if and how families wanted children to return to campus. Some shared their ideas and concerns about reopening with InMaricopa, as well.

"Open the schools as normal, but with extra

sanitation precautions," Jesselee Evans Green said. "At my work, we stop every two hours to clean every surface that's been touched. It only takes a couple of minutes. Kids can help with that by wiping their desks down at the end of the class. Extra hand washing stations around the schools as well My kids need to go back to a learning environment that they enjoy."

HEALTH

District Nurse Lizabeth Stephens, R.N., created an infection-control plan for MUSD. She and the Health Services Department will put together health tubs for each teacher.

"It contains some backup hand sanitizer and also some Lysol spray, the larger alcohol wipes that are also with virucide. I read the label; it works perfectly. And with gloves and masks," Stephens said.

School nurses will also create a video for teachers about the items in their infection-control tub, explaining how and when to

use them. Stephens said she does not want teachers to use certain items incorrectly.

They will explain the difference between disinfecting and cleaning, for example.

"I'm also going to put together a video for the kids on the first day about the importance of social distancing, keeping as far apart as possible under the circumstances," she said. "Coughing and how important it is to keep their hands clean."

To convey the basics to students of all ages, they will explain the concept of sterile technique, "Clean to clean; dirty to dirty." That means if something is dirty and you touch it with your hand, your hand is now dirty and needs to be cleaned.

The schools will establish entry points where health workers will take the temperature of each student that comes in. It's not a diagnosis but it is a screening. Students who have a temperature of 100 or more are sent to the health office. Students with a temperature of 100.4 are sent home.

Students are expected to go to their classrooms immediately rather than milling in the hall and mixing with large groups before the first bell.

"We're trying to cohort the classrooms as the group, however many kids there may be," Stephens said.

For the elementary grades, that means, where feasible, schools will try to have art in

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their classroom and music in the classroom. They may even have breakfast and lunch in the classroom.

Principals and teachers will plan the recess times, which may not allow use of playground equipment. A cohort may be assigned a specific section of the play area for physical activity. And hand sanitizer will always be nearby.

“All we can do is the best we can,” Stephens said. “We try to teach them to be safe. As long as they’re not hugging each other and slobbering all over each other, I don’t care if they hold hands.”

Health Services has had video meetings with custodial staff to go through the cleaning and disinfecting process. If more than one cohort uses a classroom, the room will be disinfected between each cohort. If only one cohort uses the room, it will be disinfected once or twice a week.

For all ages the nurses are encouraging masks on the bus or from their drop-off point onto school grounds. If parents want their children to wear a mask in more settings, that can be accomplished up to a point.

“Children should not sit in a mask all day long in a room,” Stephens said. “It’s the rebreathing of the carbon monoxide. It’s not safe for anyone to wear a mask all day long.”

She said teachers would not wear masks while teaching unless they approach students to help with something. Afterward, both teacher and student are asked to clean their hands.

Middle school and high school, however, leaves Stephens at a loss, even with her many years of infection control. She has students wearing masks when they change classes. The schools may mark hallways to divide traffic moving in separate directions so students are not face to face.

To prevent congestion in the hallway, there may be monitors to move students along instead of stopping to chat. As they enter the classroom, they will be asked to clean their hands with school-provided hand sanitizer.

Meetings between Health Services and the principals were organized to get everyone’s ideas about how to put best health advice into practice. The Arizona Interscholastic Association’s COVID-19 guidelines are also a point of conversation.

There are procedures in place if a child who has been to school tests positive for COVID-19, especially determining who else has been exposed.



MENTAL HEALTH

“Overwhelmingly, what I’m hearing is students just want to go back to school,” said Amber Liermann, Exceptional Student Services behavioral counselor and licensed professional counselor and clinical supervisor.

Many parents, too, want their kids in the classroom.

The counseling department at MUSD has had weekly meetings during the fourth quarter of last school year and all through the summer to prepare for a start to a new school year unlike any other.

“As long as they’re not hugging each other and slobbering all over each other, I don’t care if they hold hands.”

-District Nurse Lizabeth Stephens, R.N.

“We want to make sure that we’re staying on top of the developments of what’s going on and making sure that we are prepared to support our students and our families for whatever happens and whatever options are offered,” Liermann said.

They have discussed validating each family’s and each student’s personal experience with COVID-19. Some families might have lost a loved one. Some might have financial impact while others were not as affected.

They are coming back with different levels of socialization as well.

“There’s not been a lot of activities. A lot of our students are not participating in typical summer activities,” Liermann said. “I’m so excited that AIA is allowing our athletes to participate in sports.”

When students do come back, reestablishing attachments, from elementary to high school students, has vital importance.

Aug. 5, MUSD is planning a Friendship Day, promoting social skills and friendship skills. While teachers usually spend extra time at the beginning of the school year getting to know the students, counselors will emphasize the importance of that social and emotional connection.

“It’s important to create routines as normal as possible so the students regain security,” Liermann said. “We would replace old rituals with new rituals. At the elementary schools, in particular, students want that hug from teachers. So, instead of a hug or a high five, they’ll have a tingle and a dance.”

The campuses have Positive Behavior Interventions & Support (PBIS) teams to help students make good decisions if they are feeling stressed. All schools also have Comfort Corners but will change how they are used to avoid sharing tools.

The teletherapy and video chats available last quarter will continue when appropriate.

“Self-regulation and stress-management are going to be really, really important this year,” Liermann said. “There are going to be fears and anxiety coming from students going to school. We will be teaching stress-management tools, help teachers know when to give breaks.”

Health Services asked to participate in administration training to talk about trauma informed care, crisis prevention and de-escalation strategies for a most unusual beginning of a new school year.

Understanding random studies and why vaccines need math

By Murray Siegel

A previous column provided details of an investigative report that contrasted the secondary mathematics curriculum of the United States vs. European schools, and how American students’ math achievement levels are significantly lower than most advanced nations. One difference between the programs is the lack of coverage of applications of data science (or statistics).



Murray Siegel

The most recent column demonstrated how the lack of knowledge of data science has left many Americans confused about the exponential growth of the COVID-19 virus. When medical experts talk about the need for a randomized experimental study with a placebo to test a vaccine, many citizens see this statement as if it were written in a foreign language. They cannot understand why it might take as long as 18 months to approve a vaccine.

Experimental studies require subjects to be randomly assigned to one of two groups, an experimental group whose members receive the treatment being studied or a second group that receives a placebo. The randomization is needed to allow the two groups to be similar in make-up.

A further step, blocking, is required if further control is needed for specific characteristics. For example, if there was concern about the effects of gender and age on the effectiveness of the vaccine, the subjects would be placed into four blocks, women under 50, men under 50, women over 50 and men over 50. Half the subjects in each block would be randomly assigned to the experimental group while the remaining half receives the placebo.

A placebo is a treatment with no active ingredient since some subjects will react positively even when the treatment is neutral. At the completion of the experiment, the percentage of the experimental group who contracted the virus is compared to the percentage in the placebo group. Data science dictates the difference in these percentages necessary to declare there is evidence of a benefit using the vaccine.

The process demands time be spent to allow the subjects to be exposed to the virus and to examine the results. If, after a proper time, no significant difference is seen between the two groups, the study must restart with a new treatment. It must be noted that the subjects never know to which group they were assigned, and the medical professionals examining and treating the subjects must not know who is in which group. This is a double-blind experiment, which allows for credible results.

Bringing data science into our math curriculum will make Americans better consumers of information. The addition of applied statistics to math classes will provide answers to the question, “When will we ever use this arithmetic and algebra?”

Murray Siegel, Ph.D., has 44 years of experience teaching mathematics. He is a volunteer at Butterfield Elementary School.



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'Best Dad' still on the job for kids, grandkids

By Raquel Hendrickson



Submitted

“He worked two jobs, and when I had my own family, he took us in, all four of us, and never once complained.”

—Valarie McRoberts, Zubia’s youngest daughter

Robert Zubia

Robert Zubia’s adult daughters did not tell him they were nominating him as the Best Dad in Maricopa.

So, he was shocked to find out he was a finalist in the vote-driven competition at InMaricopa.com and bowled over when he was declared the winner.

“Unbelievable!” he said. “Those little brats.” A long-haul trucker who has lived in Cobblestone Farms for just a year, he was on his way to Washington for Father’s Day weekend when notified. It’s a job he’s worked for 15 years.

“I couldn’t do it when they were young because I’d be gone all the time,” Zubia said.

His youngest daughter Valarie McRoberts, 31, said her father wasn’t just the greatest dad but the greatest human on earth.

“He stepped up to raise me and my sister when my mom had left,” she said. “He worked

two jobs, and when I had my own family, he took us in, all four of us, and never once complained.”

Starting a family when he was 18, Zubia, now 55, said being a single dad to two little girls at such a young age was “hardcore survival.”

“My youngest one, the mother left when she was 2 weeks old, just an infant. And the other was 4 or 5 years old. It wasn’t easy,” he said. “They’d have the Mother/Daughter Banquet at school, and I would show up there. They’d be like, ‘This is for the mothers and daughters,’ and I’d be like, ‘Well, I am the mother.’ I didn’t want her to miss out.”

Family was able to help a little with childcare, but he was careful about where he left them. In the early years he had neighbors he trusted to look after them while he worked.

“That was also scary,” he said. “I had to do what I had to do.”

That meant finding a balance of work that fit their circumstances.

“You name it,” he said. “I worked as a pharmaceutical technician, construction, any jobs I could that would blend so I could work two jobs here and there and make ends meet. It was brutal.”

It paid off with memorable family vacations. Now, he’s glad they remember those times and appreciate the sacrifices that went into their raising.

“I was afraid they forgot,” he said. “Like, ‘Ah, the old man, he’s useless now.’”

Obviously, not so useless, as he helps with his five grandchildren and ailing mother while donating to Maricopa causes and preparing to marry and gain three stepchildren. They moved to Maricopa a year ago from California.

“I’m so glad we made the move,” Zubia said. “The grandkids love the schools out here. They’re making friends. I’m glad that everyone’s happy now.”



Submitted

Demitri Esparza

Demitri Esparza can relate to the pressures of being a single father to a small child. A 2010 graduate of Maricopa High School, he was engaged to the mother of his son Abraham when she was killed in a traffic collision. Abraham was two months shy of his first birthday.

“Though extremely heartbroken, Demitri has powered forward, never feeling sorry for himself,” said his uncle, Ed Esparza, who nominated him for Best Dad in Maricopa. “He works long hours to ensure he builds a good future for himself and Abraham. All Demitri’s free time is spent with Abraham at home, camping, the zoo, the lake, doing the things the three of them loved doing, making sure Abraham knows his mother.”

Friends called him “a beautiful person.” They worked hard to keep up daily votes to show their appreciation for his dedication as a young father.

“Most young men would have walked away,” Ed Esparza said. “That thought never entered Demitri’s mind.”

“All Demitri’s free time is spent with Abraham at home, camping, the zoo, the lake, doing the things the three of them loved doing, making sure Abraham knows his mother.”

—Ed Esparza, Demitri’s uncle

OUR OTHER GREAT NOMINATIONS (ALPHABETICALLY)

James Arthur is a protective man but affection is his middle name. He is a true partner in parenting, thank you my love. James is one of the best and hard-working person I know, he goes above and beyond every day for our family. He’s loving, caring, goofy, smart, amazing and a handsome cowboy. I love you, Happy Father’s Day.



I nominate **Danny Avis**. He is a great guy with an awesome family. I have known him for many years. I coached their sons in the Challenger league, and he

always was positive and a good person. With his wife now diagnosed with cancer, he has two special needs sons along with a wife who is battling for her life! I give him credit. I do not know if I could be half as strong. I hope he wins.

My husband, **Bryan Buchberger**, is such an exceptional man. Not only does he work in the elements, cold in winter and blazing-hot in summer, he has volunteered countless hours to our community to



help with the youth and future leaders of Maricopa and works as a respite care provider for special needs children in our community. Bryan has coached, taken it upon himself to restore a community baseball field and install drip systems so that Little League had a place to practice. Bryan is a pillar of our community and is available to anyone in need, whether it be 3pm or 3am. He never takes off work unless he is seriously injured or sick and provides for our family and others. Bryan is so deserving and his kids agree that he should be the best Dad!!!



Aaron Bell (center) picks up his prizes at Karsten's Ace Hardware with Manager Will Gonzalez (far right) and the Bell family, wife Celine, twins Mickenzee, and Macee and Savanna. Not pictured are son Cade, daughter Hailee and grandson Roan.

Raquel Hendrickson

Aaron Bell

Rancho El Dorado resident Aaron Bell had a large family base cheering him on in the “competition” for Best Dad in Maricopa. His nomination came in the form of a video created by his daughter Macee.

“My dad is not only a great husband, grandpa, but also a great dad,” she said. “He married his high school sweetheart at a young age and soon had five kids. I know what you’re thinking: ‘Wow, what a handful.’ My dad loved it.”

Macee touted the fact her father was the breadwinner in the family while still making time for the kids’ extracurricular activities and supporting his wife through several surgeries.

“When I was young, my granddad sat me down and said, ‘Son, they don’t make a hearse with luggage racks,’ Bell said. “So, invest in things that last: family, community and most of all your children. When things like this happen, I see that philosophy holds weight.”

“When I was young, my granddad sat me down and said, ‘Son, they don’t make a hearse with luggage racks,’ so, invest in things that last: family, community and most of all your children.”

—Aaron Bell



I would like to nominate my husband, **Charles Carter**, as the best dad in Maricopa. He is my children’s stepfather. He has taken in my daughter 3 times when she had nowhere to

go. He paid several times to get her from wherever she was to back to our house. He put a car on his credit card when she was without a vehicle. He walked her down the aisle for her wedding. He let my son and two grandchildren move in with us two times. He has helped my son financially several times. He never turns down my kids for anything when they need help, even if it means juggling our finances to do it. He gets the Father’s Day gifts from them instead of their bio dad. I love him for accepting my kids as his own. I think he is the best dad in Maricopa!



I think my dad, **Jason Dobson**, should win because he is always working hard. He wakes up at 2 a.m. and gets off at 2 o’clock. My dad always puts everyone first before him and I think this

would be an opportunity to show him I appreciate him. My dad always makes sure all 4 of his kids are happy. He makes sure all 4 of his kids have nice clothes and make sure we get anything we want. My dad loves Ace Hardware and I think this would be a great opportunity for him to be able to get a surprise. My dad does everything for everybody and I feel like this is a opportunity to put a smile on his face. My dad is a very hard worker and I will do anything for him to win.



William “Jim” Edens is 79 years old and has 7 children, 20+ grandkids, and 20+ great-grandkids! He has been a single dad since 2014 when my mom passed away, and that same year my older brother passed away as well and not once during those times did he fail to continuously provide for me and my other siblings physically or mentally. He was always 100% there for us! He is currently on dialysis and still supports two of my siblings. He loves spending time with his family!



I am nominating a guy who is a dad in every sense of the word, **Aaron Etzel**. Not only does he manage life with three teenage

girls, a pre-teen daughter, and a pre-teen lil’ dude, but he is an incredible step-dad to a lil’ sweetheart with a terminal illness (Bri!) and makes her laugh uncontrollably. On top of that, the impact he has had on young athletes in this town is immeasurable! Great guy, and always willing to help others, and he would offer the shirt off his back without question. Aaron sets a great example for those he reaches.



I would like to nominate my son in law **Kevin Gatten**. He took on 5 children and have raised them as his own. He loves to take his children camping, fishing and teaching them how to be respectful adults. He is an awesome Dad to all 5 kids.

“True wealth is not measured in money or status or power. It is measured in the legacy we leave behind for those we love and those we inspire.”- Cesar Chavez.

Consequently, **Richard Gillespie** has dedicated his life to always giving more than he could, but always managing to keep himself replenished awaiting the opportunity to give even more. He is the biological father of three children, but a father figure to many more because of his unconditional love and ongoing investment in the well-being of others. Richard recently retired after 35 years of service from the Department of Interior as a construction control representative. He has enriched the lives of all his employees through his humility, gentle leadership, and his embrace of diversity. He is without a doubt worthy of the Best Dad in the World title.



COOLING TIPS

1. Program thermostat to comfortable temp, and raise set point before sleeping or leaving home
2. Routinely clean/replace air conditioner filters once a month or as recommended
3. Turn on exhaust fans during cooking or bathing and leave them on for about 20 minutes afterward.
4. Turn off ceiling fans when you leave a room
5. Set fan switch on thermostat to “Auto” unless system operates continuously for health reasons
6. Close window coverings during the day to block sun’s heat

Source: Energy.gov



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I am nominating my husband **Donald Grace II**. We have three sons ages 22, almost 19 and 16. Don has always been an amazing father to each of them, always putting them first and leading by example on their journeys to becoming young men. He works hard for his family and still makes time to be there for us, even after 12-14 hour shifts. Recently Don encouraged me to move my aging parents in with us from Texas. We lost my Mom to Alzheimer's five months after doing so, now taking care of my Dad with dementia. Don knew the value of having them here not only for me but for our sons. Our sons are blessed with a Dad who teaches them about respect for others, being a wonderful husband, putting family first, applying yourself in all you do, working hard, being good brothers, being kind and so much more.



I have to say my husband **Shawn Gregory** is the best dad in Maricopa. He goes above and beyond for his family working 6 days a week.

He doesn't only work hard day in and day out for our family, but he does it for the people of Maricopa as the owner of Lifted High Garage Door Repair. He serves our community as a businessman and he leads his family in faith. Sunday is his day but if there's an emergency and a customer needs help, he's there and still makes time for his family, he really deserves something special.

Hi I'm Dominica. This is why my Dad, **Bryon Hector**, is the best dad in Maricopa: He works so hard so that everyone can get what we want, and what we need! He



also built us a dance floor while everything was closed, so we could still dance! Then, he also taught me how to play poker, and even got us a nice poker set! Hi my name is Andromyda. I love him so much! He also taught us how to weld and took us to horseback riding lessons. Even after a long day at work he still comes home and plays with us and helps my mom.



I would like to nominate my husband, **Chris Holsinger**. From the start he amazed me with his caring heart and loving soul. 26 years ago, I was a single mom

with a 10-year-old son. My son's biological father was in and out of my son's life with many disappointments. Chris took over being his dad and never once called him his stepson. Bruce was HIS son. His patience and love for my son was shown from the start. We were blessed with 2 girls, Chrissy and Becky. He makes time to listen to all of them and have father and daughter/son time even though they are all grown up. Chris is an EMT for Gila River, never missing a day or shift at work. He also received 2 awards for going into a burning building and rescuing people.



Local business owner, **Justin Knapp**, should be nominated for "Best Dad of Maricopa," because of his devotion and selflessness to his stay at home wife, Deana and their 3 kids. He is a dedicated

and patient Dad to his children Axel, Elsie and Olive. Justin shows his family how to have fun and how to be respectful, even-if they are just planting flowers in the garden or showing them how to clean windows and screens, so that as adults, they will be sincere business owners like him, in their family window cleaning business, 1st Glass Window Cleaners, LLC.



I nominate my husband, **Andre LaFond**! This may be unconventional because our first baby, Jack, won't be born until the end of June. Andre is already the very best dad to our little miracle baby. Andre has a love for baby Jack that I can't explain with words. The way he looks at my growing bump, kisses my belly upon waking and before bed, sings (even if he can't hold a tune!), and speaks sweetly to Jack, just makes my heart melt. I can't wait to see all the wonderful ways that Andre will be the best dad to Jack!



I nominate my husband **Kevin Marcus** for best Daddy in Maricopa. He is one of the most amazing people I have ever known. He

pours his heart and soul into everything he does. He goes above and beyond in everything. He loves our beautiful Khloe so much! Besides sharing Jesus with her, playing neighbor, Barbies, doing art, bringing on hysterical laughter and singing together... he even built her a swing set and rock wall in our backyard during this crazy quarantine. Kevin is amazingly hardworking, gifted and loving. We couldn't ask for a better Daddy.

My dad, **Steve McMullen**, is dad of the year because he works hard for his family. When he comes home from work, he cooks our meals and then takes us to practices, where he helps out the coaches. When

he's home, he's in the backyard fixing something so we can enjoy ourselves back there. He's also kind of funny. During quarantine he's been working harder than ever as a parent. He still has to do things for his job but keeps us entertained while we are stuck in the house. It would be hard to find a better dad.



I am the oldest of my 6 brothers and sisters and We would like to nominate our dad **Daniel Melendrez** as Maricopa's best dad. He may not my biological dad but he treats me as his own since the day I met him. He never treats any of us different from one another and loves us all equally! When people ask him, 'do you really have seven kids and are they all yours?' His answer never ceases to amaze me. He always answers with a big smile on his face and says, 'yes they are all mine and yes I have seven children.' Twelve years ago we were blessed with an amazing man we call our DAD! He removed us from a very bad situation and since then has been the protector of us and works hard every day to make sure we have everything we need and a better life than he did.

I would like to nominate my husband **David Obregon** as the best father in Maricopa. He's not perfect, far from it, but every day he strives to be the best father to our daughters that he can. According to our daughters, David makes the best over easy eggs in the world, helps build Lego sets like a master and reads the best bedtime stories ever. He also shows them daily what a good man is and helps them understand how a man should treat women with equality and respect.



Jaime Rodriguez, grandfather, and father of 5 deserves the best dad award. Growing up he taught us that as long as you work hard anything is possible, he's worked 2 jobs his whole life supporting us kids and my mom. My dad grew up harder than we did, struggling in LA with a single mom. My dad has done honest and hard work his whole life and made sure we had everything he didn't have. I don't admire anyone else as much as my dad. He continues to be the best dad and grandpa, spoils us rotten.



I would like to nominate my husband **Jacob Shures** for the best dad in Maricopa contest. He is incredibly kind and active in his kids' lives. He is a patient teacher sharing his love of competition shooting with his oldest daughter 14, and son 6. He's so playful, playing hide and go seek nightly with all 3 of his kids. He loves them fiercely and spends all of his time and effort making sure they know that. He loves to travel the world with his kids and family and always wants to ensure they are given every opportunity possible. My kids are so lucky to have such a dedicated and loving father.

My husband **Anthony Singleton** is the ultimate #girdad. We were surprised when expecting our first daughter, but he has and still remains the most solid person in mine and baby Sofia's life. He has been climbing the ladder at work, promotion after promotion. I know he works this



hard for us. We are expecting our second daughter this July, we couldn't be happier. Watching him be a dad is the one of the sweetest things in my life. He deserves this. Happy Father's Day my love. Steven Taylor is an awesome father and example to his 6 children. He takes this role seriously and provides not only physical and emotional needs for each of them, but also cares for their spiritual well-being. He demonstrates how to practically put God first and love others as Jesus loved them. He battles an extremely rare autoimmune disorder with humility, grace, and humor. His pain is overcome through his extremely positive attitude and his joy at being someone who can make a difference for another. His kindness and love towards everyone has changed many lives and certainly has made him worthy of honor on Father's Day!

Derek Yubeta, our Dad the hero, no matter how busy he puts us first. A good provider, selfless, loved by many, dependable, supportive, open minded, has a great sense of



humor, believe in his children, gives great advice and will protect his family at all cost. For a man raised without a father role he poses a nurturing, unconditional love, and qualities that makes us proud to have a Dad like him. Dad is a person we can count on through good and bad times. Our Dad lives by values he passes to his children to embody as they grow.

Managing chaos

By Harriet Phelps

Anxieties are run-ning pretty high right now and we need to be vigilant in maintaining our stress levels. Society has gone through many major shifts in how we think and act. Think about how this has affected you and your family.

Dealing with stress wears many hats. We may sit down and have some time to think or we may overreact and begin yelling with no end in sight. We develop these reactions over our lifetime and are especially modeled by the family we grew up in.

Take a personal inventory and mentally step back and see what our kids see us doing. How are they learning to cope? Is there a lot of reaction, tension or substance abuse



happening? Domestic violence is on the rise with the current environment. Call 911 when threatened with harm. If you have concerns about your relationship, contact 800-799-7233 or www.thehotline.org and they will help. Always maintain safety for yourself and children.



Harriet Phelps

We can only change ourselves, but like ripples on a pond from a rock thrown, our change reaches them, too.

First look to the source of our chaos. Begin with incoming information such as the news and social media. We have alarming events going on. Ask the kids what they think about these events and what worries they may have.

Returning to school will bring up questions about sickness from the virus. How have they processed that information? Analytical thinking begins about age 10 or so, small ones are very concrete in their thought process. Ask them and listen to how they make sense of the virus or the riots.

Give reassurances of safety as much as possible. Ask them what they will do for safety and develop a plan of action. These are learning and teaching moments for all of us. Riots have shown negative responses to an issue requiring change with negative outcomes. Protests bring attention to important issues in a positive and responsive way. Talk about that and ask what they think.

Reduce the incoming information by limiting the news and social media. Plan activities that create positive thinking, burn up excess energies or involve disconnect and down time. Keep or make a schedule that replicates returning to school and work.

- We do better when we maintain a schedule.
 - Teach counting to 10 before speaking if anger reactions flare.
 - Take a time out to reduce tensions and give time to think about the outcome you want.
 - Schedule a time when calm has returned to begin the discussion again.
- As always, be awesome. 🙌

Harriet Phelps, PsyD. Retired Volunteer
Be Awesome Coalition

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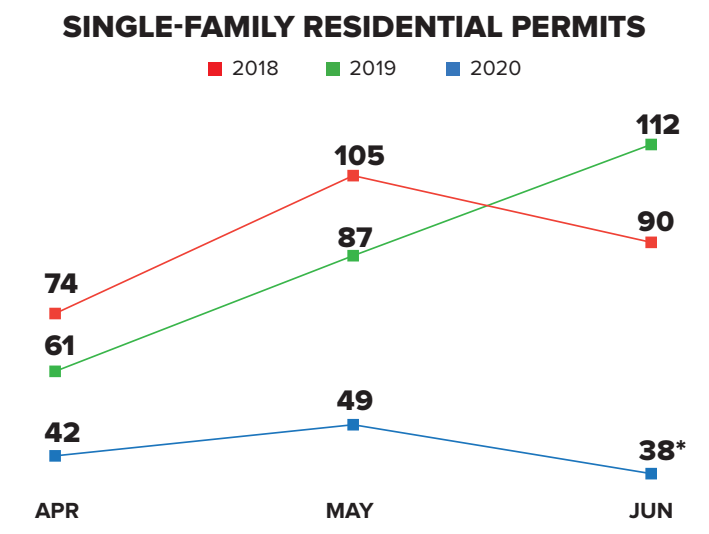
1. 42706 W. Colby Drive, Rancho El Dorado

1. 40576 W. Walker Way, Homestead

The most expensive home sold in Maricopa May 16-June 15 spent less than a week on the market. It is on a large lot with a private pool in a resort-style backyard and is only 4 years old. Its sold price was 24% above its previous listing.

Sold: June 11
Purchase Price: \$399,000
Square Footage: 3,095
Price per square ft: \$128.92
Days on Market: 4
Builder: KB Homes
Year Built: 2016
Bedrooms: 3
Bathrooms: 2.5
Community: Homestead North
Features: Three bedroom, gourmet kitchen, all-tile floors, three-car garage, granite countertops, rollout shelves, stainless steel appliances.

- 2. 44549 W. Canyon Creek Drive, Cobblestone Farms.....\$370,000
- 3. 22249 N. Reis Drive, Rancho El Dorado\$335,000
- 4. 41788 W. Summer Sun Lane, Province.....\$328,640
- 5. 38088 W. Montserrat St, Rancho Mirage.....\$325,000



*June 1-15

No matter how dry, floodplain impacts homebuying and selling

By Dayv Morgan

One of the overlooked aspects of house-hunting in Maricopa is the floodplain.

Although Maricopa has not had a serious flood in decades, flood zone areas established by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) impact homesites in eight subdivisions throughout the city and the Heritage District.

A buyer cannot get a loan on one of these properties without flood insurance, which could affect how quickly the home sells. Flood insurance can cost \$500-\$2,000 annually, depending on the value of the home and the zone rating, so homebuyers are usually more concerned about the cost of flood insurance than about an actual flood.

And buyers typically don't budget for this unexpected cost, which gets added into the mortgage payment. This means that even

though they may like the house enough to move forward with a contract, the added expense may cause their monthly payment to be higher than they qualify for.



Dayv Morgan

Long-time residents may have purchased or built their home at a time when FEMA did not consider it in a flood zone. That changed in 2014 when FEMA remapped flood zones in Maricopa, affecting areas from Palo Brea to Tortosa.

Sellers are responsible for full disclosure and should have all current flood-zone documentation and land surveys available. However, it's possible that some homeowners may not even realize these changes happened and that their home is now in a floodplain. If they had a mortgage on their home they would have been notified by their mortgage company about the need to add a flood insurance policy.

If their house was owned without any liens, then they likely were never informed about the change to the floodplain.

You can research a specific address and find flood zone maps and other useful information at FEMA.gov.

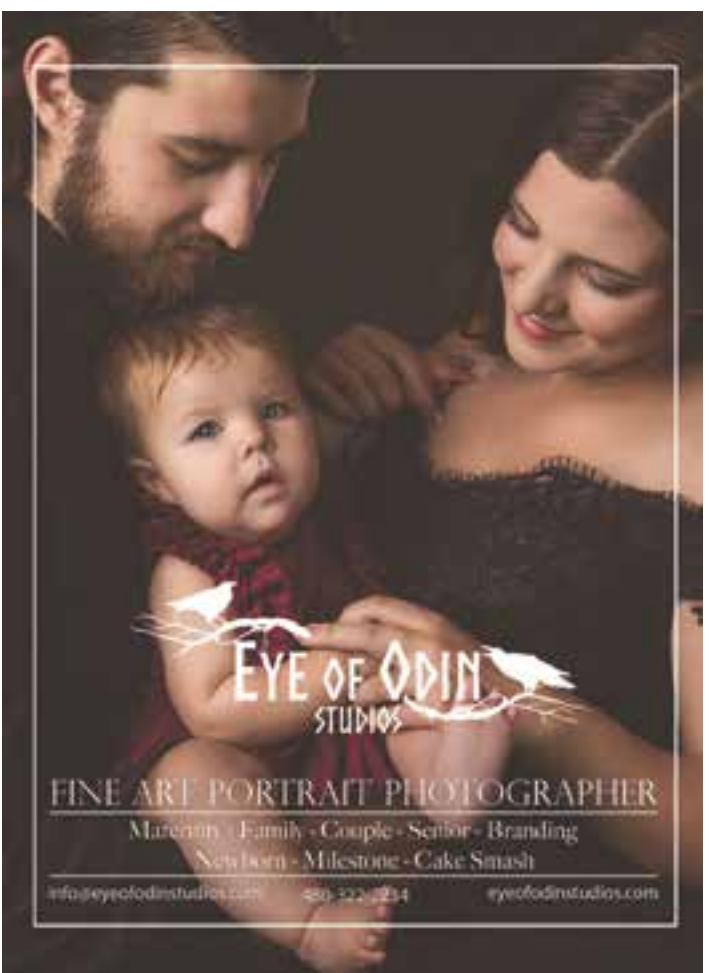
Most of Maricopa's floodplain issues affect areas that have plans for commercial development. That is why the city is developing a solution to reroute washes to potentially move the direction of any floodwaters and bring acres of Maricopa land out of the floodplain.

These changes are years in the making, so even though we are in a desert town, residents should continue to monitor changes to the flood maps and how it may affect rentals and sales.

Dayv Morgan is a Maricopa Realtor and owner of HomeSmart Success.

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- Sold:** June 11
Purchase Price: \$185,000
Square Footage: 1,308
Price per square ft: \$141.44
Days on Market: 56
Builder: DR Horton
Year Built: 2003
- Bedrooms:** 3
Bathrooms: 2
Community: Rancho El Dorado
Features: Corner lot with a huge yard, convenient location — walk to clubhouse.
- 2. 43318 W. Elizabeth Ave., Senita\$185,000
 - 3. 39999 W. Thornberry Lane, Homestead North.....\$186,500
 - 4. 45522 W. Barbara Lane, Maricopa Meadows.....\$189,000
 - 5. 39963 W. Thornberry Lane, Homestead North.....\$197,000

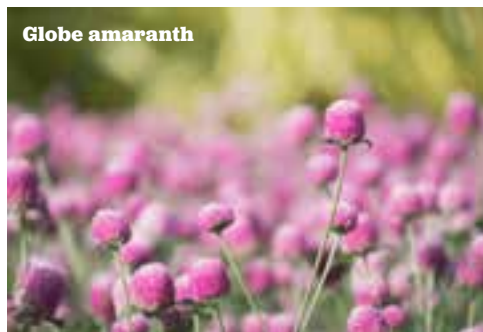
For a full list of last month's Maricopa home sales, visit [InMaricopa.com/Real-Estate](https://inmaricopa.com/Real-Estate).



Orange cosmos



Zinnias



Globe amaranth



Kochia



Cucumbers

Hot! Hot! Hot! Gardening in July

By Al Brandenburg

Another year and again I am watching my plants wither in the 100-degree-plus heat. Gardening in Arizona in July can be difficult indeed, but it can be done. Planting the right plants in the right location at the right time and watering them correctly is critical for success. Now going forward:



Al Brandenburg

July To-Do List:

- Fertilize sweet potatoes with a balanced fertilizer.
- Clear out squash and other plants that have stopped producing or are showing signs of heat stress and disease.
- Don't prune or fertilize most plants. Most are in summer dormancy to survive. Pruning can expose new parts of a plant to sunlight damage, and fertilizing can cause stress in plants as well.
- Water evenly. Hopefully the monsoon humidity and added moisture comes to us this month. A rain gauge is helpful to see how much rain you've received. If you measure 0.5 inches of rain, turn off

your water timers. You can also insert a screwdriver into grass or rocks to determine whether to water. If it passes easily into the soil, you can wait a day or two to water.

What to plant in July:

- Pepper, tomatillo and tomato transplants at the end of the month or beginning of August
- Snap beans in the middle of the month
- Carrots at the end of the month or beginning of August
- You can also plant Armenian cucumbers, shallots, pumpkin, corn, winter squash, black-eyed peas, pinto beans, tepary beans and a final planting of yard-long beans or cantaloupe for the year.
- Flowers that can be planted this month: orange cosmos, globe amaranth, kochia, vinca, purslane, zinnias and sunflowers.

Several varieties of peppers are producing in the garden this month. Serrano peppers take the heat well. Bell peppers can get sunburned if fruits get direct sun;



provide some shade if scalding is a problem.

Also the last of the tomatoes on the vine have ripened. It is too hot for pollen to be viable for new tomatoes to develop. As temps cool, you will start getting fruit again.

Cucumbers do best on a trellis, with even watering and mulching with compost. Pick cucumbers young and pick them often to encourage production. Production slows or even stops this month as temperatures heat up.

As far as herbs are concerned, rosemary is doing great and doesn't mind the heat. It's best not to prune it this month, but you can harvest it as needed for recipes.

Then there's my favorite; basil is the champion herb of summer. Be sure to keep it pruned and try different varieties to mix things up.

Good luck and stay cool. 

Al Brandenburg is a Pinal County Master Gardener.

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Independence Day is all about We the People

By Joan Koczor

Many people see the Fourth of July as fireworks, pool parties and barbecues, but this American holiday is more than an object or activity.

The Fourth of July stands for independence and freedom. This day is for us to look back and see the good our country has done instead of the bad. We look at the average-day people who are seen as heroes by many. People are the Fourth of July, not flashing lights and family baseball. People make up our country, and they are the ones who decide if they want to make it great or not.

On July 4, 1776, the Second Continental Congress approved the Declaration of Independence. The Declaration is a formal, legal document that explained why the 13 original colonies desired to leave the British Empire and form their own nation.

They also affirmed the fundamental

rights of all citizens in the document: “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.”



Joan Koczor

As a result, we are free to think and speak out. We are free to change something we don't like. We are allowed to show emotion whether it be sadness, hatred or love. We are free to become whoever we set our minds to. We are free to be ourselves.

The Fourth of July is a day to remember the history of this great nation and think of how far we've come as a nation and how far we will go as a nation. This is decided by you. The people get to make our future. The next generation gets to make America better than where we left off.

We may not be the perfect nation but we, the people, are still correcting and attempting



to make life better.

The Fourth of July is a special day to not only celebrate the history of our independence and this great nation. And, to believe in the future of our country and what we as a people can accomplish. Happy Independence Day!

Joan Koczor is a senior advocate and a member of the Age-Friendly Maricopa Advisory Committee.

Make your bath senior-friendly

By Ron Smith

The bathroom can be one of the most dangerous rooms in your house due to the increased potential for falls caused by slippery conditions.

Ultimately, the dreaded grab bars may become a necessity. If you had planned for this need, your builder either installed them already or hopefully reinforced the walls at the tub, shower and toilet to accommodate them.



Ron Smith

Be sure to hire a professional installer for grab bars. They need to be able to support the full body weight of an individual should they start to fall. The bars must be firmly installed into the framing if possible, but there are special anchors that make it possible to install them under other conditions. Beware of suction cup grab bars since they may provide a false sense of security. There is no guarantee that they will remain attached when you need them.

The entrance into a tub or a shower can become a trip hazard. So, in addition to grab bars, consideration should be made for easy access, such as low threshold showers or wet rooms that can eventually allow for easy transfer from a walker or a wheelchair. Some people may want to consider the pros and cons of a walk-in tub. A built-in or a portable seat can facilitate bathing and provide additional

safety. Bathtubs or showers need to have nonslip mats or strips. Showers should also have adjustable or hand-held showerheads. The hot water temperature should be set at a max of 120 degrees F to avoid scalds.

If your legs are not too short, you may want to consider a comfort-height toilet or a raised toilet seat. The taller seat allows for easier movement on and off the toilet. A grab bar can help provide additional leverage to compensate for weaker muscles.

Bathroom flooring should have a high coefficient of friction to minimize slipping. Many new tiles are now designed for wet surfaces. Of course, any rugs should be rubber-backed or secured with double-side tape or carpet mesh.

If your vanities are designed for wheelchair access, the pipes beneath the sinks should be insulated to avoid burns on legs. The sink, bathtub and shower faucets should be lever-style fixtures rather than knobs that are difficult to turn.

Check your lighting. It should be as bright as the fixtures allow without causing glare. Install long-lasting LED bulbs to reduce future replacement hazards using a ladder. You should have a night light or lighted switches to make navigation easier in the dark.

(Source: AARP HomeFit Guide at aarp.org/homefit.)

Ron Smith is a Maricopa resident and an aging-in-place advocate. He is also a member of the Age-Friendly Maricopa Advisory Committee and a member of the Maricopa Senior Coalition.

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Technology helping more seniors age at home

By Al Brandenburg

Americans are living longer, and most would prefer to age in their own home and community, rather than going to a hospital or other facility.

But there are challenges and costs associated with maintaining that independence. Health care technology is helping. Nearly 11,000 people turn 65 each day in the United States. The Census Bureau projects the annual number to nearly double from 52 million in 2018 to 95 million by 2060.

Not surprisingly, 9 out of 10 senior citizens would prefer to avoid a nursing home or assisted living facility, according to an AARP study. A 2015 report by the National Council on Aging found the leading reasons include liking where they live, having friends and family nearby, and not wanting to deal with the inconvenience and expense of moving.

The emotional effects of leaving a home or community can have serious health

implications. A study published in the journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences found that both social isolation and loneliness are associated with a higher risk of mortality in adults ages 52 and older.

Aging in place is a lot safer now than even a decade ago due in large part to a wide range of technologies. A few examples follow:

HomeFit AR is an app that uses a smartphone to scan a room and recommend modifications to ensure safety, mobility and accessibility. aarpinnovationlabs.org/homefit-ar/

Pillo Health offers a device that uses voice recognition, real-time alerts and video-calling capabilities to remind users when to take medication at the correct time and dose. The device stores and dispenses up to four weeks of pills and alerts when it's time for refills. pillohealth.com

BellPal offers a watch that functions as a

medical alert device. In the event of an emergency, it can notify loved ones via smartphone or 24/7 monitoring center that contacts EMS, police or fire department. The watch uses motion detection sensors to determine if the wearer has fallen. bellpal.com/us/

CarePredict @Home is a smart wearable that uses AI to detect changes in daily patterns that may signal a health problem. It can alert others if the user has been skipping meals, has trouble sleeping, hasn't gotten out of bed, or displays atypical behavior. carepredict.com

Aging in place requires planning ahead. Talk to your doctor about any health problems or concerns you have and what assistive devices and home modifications could help.

Al Brandenburg is director of Maricopa Senior Coalition (MCS).

Sources: AARP, seniorlifetips.com, greatseniorliving.com, everydayhealth.com



Al Brandenburg

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Calendar

JULY



4
Fourth of July Fireworks
9 p.m., Maricopa

8
MUSD Governing Board Meeting
6:30 p.m., Maricopa Unified School District Admin Building
44150 W. Maricopa-Casa Grande Hwy.

9
Maricopa City Council
Candidate Town Hall
6 p.m., Facebook.com/InMaricopa

14
Maricopa City Council Meeting
7 p.m., City Hall
39700 W. Civic Center Plaza

16
Blood Drive
8 a.m., My Home Group Real Estate
20046 N. John Wayne Parkway, Suite 106A

Meet-the-Teacher Night
6 p.m., Heritage Academy
41000 W. Heroes Way

22
First Day of School*
Legacy Traditional School
Heritage Academy

MUSD Governing Board Meeting
6:30 p.m., Maricopa Unified School District Admin Building
44150 W. Maricopa-Casa Grande Hwy.

23
First Day of School*
Maricopa Unified School District

27
First Day of School*
A+ Charter Schools
Sequoia Pathway Academy

31
Multi-Generational Game Night
6:30 p.m., Copper Sky
44345 W. Martin Luther King Blvd.

CONTINUING

Sundays
Narcotics Anonymous
7 p.m., 45295 W. Honeycutt Ave.

Mondays
Virtual Storytime
9 a.m., Maricopa Public Library
Facebook.com/MaricopaLibrary

Narcotics Anonymous
7 p.m., 16540 N. Porter Road

Tuesdays
Celebrate Recovery
Small Group Meeting
7 p.m., Maricopa Community Church
44977 W. Hathaway Ave.

Thursdays
Narcotics Anonymous
7 p.m., Ak-Chin Social Services
48227 W. Farrell Road

Fridays
Al-Anon
7 p.m., Community of Hope
45295 W. Honeycutt Ave.

* Tentative



Musicians take safety measures to return to rehearsals

After a spring during which arts and entertainment were canceled across the state and around the world, one of Maricopa's musical groups is getting back together.




Maricopa Music Circle chamber orchestra resumes its rehearsals on July 20, ushering in the upcoming arts season in Maricopa. While individual Maricopa musicians, dancers, actors and visual artists remained active on their own during the coronavirus sequester, city arts groups were on pause for a few months.

To ensure the safety of MMC musicians, summer rehearsals will be held outdoors in evening hours. This permits more generous spacing between players while balancing the ensemble sound experienced in a new acoustic.

All players will need to have stand lights and communicate with MMC's executive committee prior to the first rehearsal.

Membership in MMC is by audition. Interested musicians should be experienced ensemble performers on standard orchestral instruments and fluent sight readers. The orchestra is currently especially interested to welcome new string players and mid-range and lower winds.

The orchestra performs without a conductor at events throughout Maricopa, from City Hall to UltraStar Multi-tainment Center, area churches and Maricopa Agricultural Center, and in nearby cities. Its colorful and varied programs include beloved orchestral works to solos, seasonal music, popular tunes, jazz and great standards from the big-band era to the present — all in arrangements specially tailored for the orchestra.

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KAITLIN COLLINS
CLUB MANAGER
PLANET FITNESS MARICOPA

Hometown: Las Cruces, NM
Maricopan since: 2004
Family: Husband, myself, and both of our families call Maricopa home
Hobbies: Cooking, kayaking, 5k for charities, and bingeing Friends!
Dream vacation: Santorini, Greece
Like most about Maricopa: I love that no matter how big this town gets, there is still a small town community.

FAVORITE ...
Charity: Arizona Autism United
Book: "House Rules" by Jodi Picoult
Team: Cardinals and Packers
Restaurant: Say Sushi
Quote: "We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit" – Will Durant
Words to live by: "Do things for people not because of who they are or what they do in return, but because of who you are." – Harold S. Kushner

Learn more about Kaitlin at [InMaricopa.com/Getting-To-Know](https://www.inmaricopa.com/getting-to-know)

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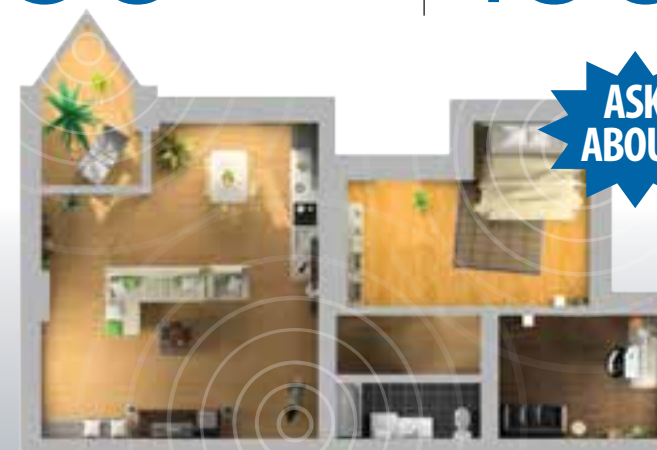


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