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City writing a 'West Side Story'



CITY COUNCIL'S DECISION TO SELL land off Loma Road for a proposed water and surf park came as a surprise to many. But more surprising, perhaps, is the location – on the west side of John Wayne Parkway.

Discussion about Maricopa's growth as a city tends to focus on the eastern and southern parts of the city, where acres and acres of farmland await conversion to homes and stores. But the major projects proposed in those areas are mostly long-term.

The action right now is on the west side, despite being more developed and mistakenly considered less ripe for development. In fact, there is much going on west of State Route 347 that will significantly improve the lives of residents and business owners – and attract visitors to the city.

A new county court and office complex just opened. A new hospital and a high-end grocery store are under construction. The city's first business park has broken ground. Two thousand homes on the drawing board at Hogenes Dairy.

Over the past several weeks, InMaricopa has delved into the bustle of development activity to

assess the short- and long-term changes coming to the west side. We found a lot to be excited about. We think you will, too.

Also this month, we'll introduce you to the winners and nominees in our annual Best Mom InMaricopa contest. Fathers get their turn this month, so nominate a Best Dad InMaricopa by sharing his story. Check out the details on page 36.

We also bid a fond farewell to Randy Brawner, better known as Buck, at the Maricopa post office. He retired May 28 after 15 years behind the counter. He was often the first face encountered by residents moving to the city, and his light and funny personality will be missed.

We also introduce you to firefighter Ciara Crowley, one of Maricopa's newest first-responders, whose career choice was influenced by a tragic event early in her life. "Resiliency is one of my strongest traits," she told us. She is certainly making the most of her second chance.

Enjoy the magazine.

BOB MCGOVERN | EDITORIAL DIRECTOR

CONTRIBUTORS



RITA BRICKER

A Master Gardener and 34-year resident of Maricopa, her favorite musician is Bob Dylan.



FRAN LYONS

With a background in public relations, she enjoys writing about the genuine good deeds of others.



DR. C. JON BEECROFT

Fluent in English and Spanish, he is a doctor of podiatric medicine.

ON THE COVER

A man rides a boogie board in a wave pool. A water and surf park is proposed for Maricopa.

Photo by Bengt Nyman via Flickr

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Flood of memories

This flooding scene near the Richfield service station on the old Maricopa Road in 1949 was captured by a photographer looking north from atop one of the water towers. Farther north on the same side of the street is the first schoolhouse, which later became the location of Headquarters Bar and Restaurant. On the east side of Maricopa Road (across from Richfield) is Rhoton's market and blacksmith shop, which became the site of the now former Valley/Napa Auto. The scene today was captured with a drone by Kevin Vasquez, a Maricopa High School student.



THIS MONTH BACK IN...

For these and other historical stories, visit InMaricopa.com.



June

2005

Mosquito samples collected in Maricopa and Stanfield tested positive for West Nile virus as transmission spread across the United States. The Pinal County Health Department conducted adult mosquito fogging in the city and advised residents to avoid outdoor activity between dusk and dawn and use insect repellent.



June

2008

A 46-year-old woman escaped life-threatening injuries when the 1977 Chevy Nova she was driving was sheared in half by a train traveling at about 70 mph. The car had become stuck on the railroad tracks between Porter and White and Parker roads.



June

2012

InMaricopa.com reported about a Maricopa couple who powered their 1985 Volkswagen Golf with vegetable oil. Candice Van Etten and her husband Craig Aykroyd started thinking about alternatives due to the high costs of his previous car, an Audi. They would fill up their VW with its converted diesel engine at a restaurant where Aykroyd was a regular.

Kevin Vasquez, "Reflections of a Desert Town," Maricopa Historical Association

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West side of city driving growth, development

BY JAY TAYLOR

IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO MISS ALL THE CONSTRUCTION activity in Maricopa.

Graders and bulldozers moving earth on vacant land. Road crews improving and widening streets. Structures sprouting from the ground like summer corn.

According to city leaders, new homes, apartments, shopping centers and a business park are being developed at record pace. Projects also include a community hospital, high-end supermarket, restaurants and a surf park proposed for a site off State Route 238. (See list of six key projects on page 10 and more on waterpark plans on page 14.) The eastern and southern parts of the city — with so much farmland offering opportunity — are often seen as the major gateways to growth. And that may be true in the coming years. But the future is now on the west side of State Route 347 — for good reason:

- It is closer to the current population center of the city.
- There are fewer flood plain issues that continue to plague development efforts in large parts of the city.
- Commuting time to the Valley is considerably less from west-side neighborhoods like Cobblestone Farms and Maricopa Meadows than from eastern communities like Tortosa and Sorrento.

City Manager Rick Horst said his city management experience tells him development to the west was predictable.

“If you think about the 347 as the life corridor for the city, which it still is right now but won’t be in the future, I think that’s more what’s driving development to the west,” he said. “In time, there will be multiple work and job and shopping centers in the city, so people won’t have to drive to the corridor to get the services they need. But right now, as people want to develop homes and anything else, they want to be close by the existing services, which means the area west of 347 is seeing more short-term growth.”

For the most part, it has readily available water and sewer service, and roads.

“Out to the east you have to build it; here it’s already built,” he said. “I think infill will always be what happens first.”

Where there is no water on the west side, the city is working to provide it. Mayor Christian Price said a pipeline planned to carry water from Global Water’s Southwest Plant around the west side of the city and north into an existing water line running along State Route 238 would encourage development in that area. The pipeline project would allow development at the APEX Motor Club to kick into high gear.

The APEX Motor Club completed its 2.27-mile track more than two years ago at its 280-acre site on State Route 238. A lack of water service at the site has the club pumping the brakes on its plans, but hope may be in sight for a restart.



Bob McGovern

A surf park with a hotel and restaurants is envisioned for the vacant 70 acres south of State Route 238 and west of North Loma Road.



Courtesy of APEX Motor Club

“If you think about the 347 as the life corridor for the city, which it still is right now but won’t be in the future, I think that’s more what’s driving development to the west.”

RICK HORST

CITY MANAGER

“Boy, I think that pipeline is critical,” Price said. “We have learned from our Native friends at Ak-Chin that water is life. This is the critical element of all things related to development and growth. You can’t build without water. Not houses, not businesses, not recreation — it’s the critical component of growth. As that main line comes up from that plant, it will be a game-changer for our city.”

Much of the pipeline would be outside the city limits, but within the Maricopa Planning Area.

The timing, routing and scope of the project will be determined in the coming year if city council includes the work in the FY2021-2022 spending plan. Horst said the project is an ideal use for part of the city’s \$12.44 million share of federal stimulus funds. If greenlighted, the city would work with Global Water to plan, design and build the line.

Much of the development will present opportunities to add or improve infrastructure, especially roads. For example, the construction of homes at Hogenes Dairy will help fund the proposed expansion of Green Road — with an overpass over the railroad tracks — to move traffic off John Wayne Parkway and onto a “ring road” encircling the city.

Infrastructure projects like that would serve to encourage even more development, according to Horst.

From homes to stores to government, the action covers a lot of ground.

RESIDENTIAL

Residential projects already on the city’s docket will add about 20,000 residents over the next several years.

According to city planners, the population of the Maricopa Planning Area is expected to increase dramatically by the end of the decade, reaching 105,000 residents by 2030. City population models show that at buildout, the planning area will have more than 630,000 residents. That’s two-and-a-half times the population of Chandler in 2019.

That population explosion will be fueled, in part, by a number of west side housing projects under construction or on the drawing board.

Construction started earlier this year on Bungalows on Bowlin, 196 single-story rental units on 16 acres at Bowlin Road and John Wayne Parkway. The \$28 million project was one of the first multi-family communities planned in Maricopa, addressing a need identified by both the city and Scottsdale developer Cavan Companies. It will offer a place to live within commuting distance of the Valley without the need to buy a home in an escalating market or renting in the more expensive Valley suburbs.

Multiple other projects are planned.

The 2,000-or-so homes planned for the Hogenes Farms subdivision on dairy land west of Maricopa Meadows is the biggest housing project planned west of SR 347, though a timetable for development has not been given by the developer, Matrix Equities of Scottsdale.

Nearly 500 acres at a former dairy, Anglin, is targeted for a mixed-use development that could include single-family and multi-family homes as well as commercial and retail space. The site sits on SR 238, just east of Ak-Chin Southern Dunes Golf Club, about 1.5 miles east of SR 347. It is not yet known how many homes would be built.

The Texas-based Forestar Group, a majority-owned

“We have learned from our Native friends at Ak-Chin that water is life. This is the critical element of all things related to development and growth. You can’t build without water. Not houses, not businesses, not recreation — it’s the critical component of growth.”

CHRISTIAN PRICE

MAYOR



Bob McGovern

As many as 2,000 homes are proposed for Hogenes Dairy land. The residential development would be known as Hogenes Farms.

6 KEY PROJECTS

BY JAY TAYLOR

THERE IS A LONG LIST OF ACTIVE AND planned residential and commercial projects on Maricopa’s west side. Here are six that look to change life in the growing city — as soon as year’s end.

TAKING CARE OF BUSINESS

The Estrella Gin Business Park, Maricopa’s first foray into a true business park, has one very important role — make it easier for people to do business.

Not only will local businesses have a way to get into professional office space, a difficult proposition in a city where it is rarely available, but Valley entities will find it easier to set up an outpost in town.



Construction should begin this month on 32 acres at West Edison and North Loma roads, according to Shane Cook, the commercial leasing agent for MHG Group. Zoned light industrial with flexibility for a variety of uses — retail, office, manufacturing, light industrial or warehouse — the park is expected to create 700 new jobs with an annual payroll of nearly \$42 million.

The smaller, flexible, commercial spaces are exactly what local businesspeople need, according to Mayor Christian Price.

“Some of the tenants are going to be

Construction at the Estrella Gin Business Park is expected to begin this month.

small and micro businesses that have to come out of their garages,” he said. “Rather than pay for some super-expensive site on (State Route) 347, they can have a more affordable location where they can take their business to the next level.”

The initial 6,000-square-foot office building has been fully leased by the City of Maricopa for the Maricopa Economic Development Agency, the Maricopa Chamber of Commerce and for city meetings and activities that cannot be accommodated elsewhere. MEDA should be in its space later this year with the rest of the 300,000-square-foot park on track for an early 2022 opening, Cook said.

He added he is already getting inquiries from small businesses in the Valley that see Maricopa as a potential expansion market.

A HOSPITAL, FINALLY

Residents have clamored for a real hospital for many years.

Later this year, the city’s decade-long efforts to attract one will finally pay off with the scheduled opening of Exceptional Healthcare’s community hospital.

With the facility rising quickly at the southwest end of the SR 347 overpass, the Texas-based company expects to complete the long-awaited, \$20 million facility by year’s end. It will include a 24-hour emergency department, eliminating the need for trauma patients to be transported to ERs in Chandler or Casa Grande.

When it opens, the single-story building will have 10 private rooms, 10 emergency department rooms, a medical lab and a digital imaging suite offering CT scans, X-rays, mobile MRIs and ultrasound. Outpatient and inpatient hospital beds will accommodate acute admissions and overnight observation of patients.

Ian Roberts



Air ambulances will be able to land on site to speed transfer of patients needing a higher level of care to regional hospitals.

The hospital expects to employ 60-100 people.

2,000 HOMES ON THE FARM

The development of Hogenes Dairy is the largest residential housing project planned west of SR 347.

The former Maricopa Meadows 2 project, newly rechristened as

The new community hospital is rising quickly south of the overpass.

Hogenes Farms, will have an initial phase of 812 single-family homes with future phases increasing the total to as many as 2,000. The development could ultimately add more than 5,000 residents on the west side of town.

No start date has been provided by Matrix Equities of Scottsdale, which also developed the 1,600-plus homes in Maricopa Meadows just east of the dairy farm.

Price said the project, while stirring some debate about growth, will provide solutions to some vexing infrastructure problems.

“We all agree there are traffic challenges in the city,” Price said. “This development will force the construction of the overpass on Green Road over the railroad tracks,

subsidiary of D.R. Horton, acquired the property in December 2020 for \$15.5 million, and RVi Planning of Tempe is the developer.

According to Rodolfo Lopez, the city’s deputy director of economic and community development, no formal application to develop the parcel has been submitted since the city granted approval of the major general plan amendment. The city will provide infrastructure including perimeter and interior roads, drainage, water and sewer.

Two smaller residential projects on the west side have been approved by the city.

More than 200 single-family homes are planned in the new McDavid Estates community just north of Maricopa High School. There is no current timetable for construction.

The triangular, 64-acre parcel is bordered by the Union Pacific Railroad tracks running from northwest to southeast along the property’s northern border. The developer, Maricopa 64 Partners LLC, will install a buffer area to decrease noise from frequent trains.

The small, mixed-use parcel may include single-family and multi-family housing with the potential for townhomes, cluster housing and live-work type units or office/neighborhood commercial uses.

In March, city council approved a zoning change for West Maricopa Village.

Three separate uses are planned for the 35-acre parcel on the east side of North Loma Road at SR 238 — single-family homes for rent, apartments and a gas station, retail or office space. The project will be developed in phases, with construction starting first on the rental community. Innovation Villas will comprise 182 single-family homes on 16-plus acres. The homes, which will feature a density



of 11 units per acre, will include both two-bedroom, stand-alone units and one-bedroom duplexes. Amenities include a swimming pool and social pavilion.

Phase 2, known as Fuze 520, would feature three-story apartment buildings on 14 acres. The total number of units is undetermined, but zoning calls for high-density usage. The buildings will have a maximum height of 42 feet. The commercial phase would follow on the 1.5 acres at the corner of Loma and SR 238.

COMMERCIAL

Given the massive growth expected in Maricopa over the coming decades, the city is laying the groundwork for a well-planned city designed to accommodate a population

The new Pinal County Complex enables city residents to conduct county business without traveling to Florence. Two buildings house county offices and the Pinal County Justice Court.

Bob McGovern

influx. Horst believes rooftops drive retail and with more than 24,000 single-family homes, the city has reached the point population numbers will begin to attract major retailers and other new businesses.

The activity provides a glimpse of how the city is looking to grow, with important projects that include Sonoran Creek Marketplace and its anchor Sprouts, which is anticipating a fall opening.

Also coming is the Estrella Gin Business Park at North Loma and Edison roads, which will give local businesses the opportunity to set up shop away from their homes or garages. Leasing is anticipated to begin next year. With its flexible zoning, it will be able to accommodate several uses.

GOVERNMENT

The Pinal County Complex, which opened in May at 19955 Wilson Ave., provides county services to city residents without the need to travel to Florence. Two buildings house assessor, recorder and other offices, as well as Pinal County Justice Court, Clerk of the Superior Court, Adult and Juvenile Probation services and a sheriff substation. Next door, the city will build a 20,000-square-foot headquarters for the Maricopa Police Department. Construction is expected to begin in early spring 2022 with a target opening date of mid-2023. The two-story building will be built with future expansion in mind, much like the city’s new library, with plumbing and electrical services prepared for eventual enlargement.

ADVENTURE CORRIDOR

The proposed water and surf park would burnish the city’s efforts to develop on the west side of John Wayne Parkway



an “adventure corridor,” which includes the Ak-Chin Southern Dunes Golf Club and Estrella Sailport.

APEX, of course, will also attract high-end visitors from the Valley to its members-only condos and racetrack.

“Imagine buying a new Lexus sports car, and opening the glove compartment and finding a letter saying ‘Congratulations on your purchase — you can go APEX Motor Club in Maricopa for a three-day, high-performance driving class to learn how to get the most out of your new vehicle,’” said Price, highlighting a partnership between APEX and Lexus.

“That gets people coming down here, and once they’re here, we feel like they’ll like what they see.”

Sports cars line up at the APEX track for an event.

which will be an anchor of traffic solutions for the future that are not on 347. It will add tax dollars from the new homes that are built and force new traffic relievers to come into play, and that’s a big deal.”

Matrix will provide the right-of-way dedication and construction of Green Road, preliminary design of an overpass across the tracks at Green Road and limit the number of homes that can be built until the overpass is completed, according to City Manager Rick Horst.

SPROUTS IS SPROUTING

Sonoran Creek Marketplace may be the city’s most anticipated commercial development for one reason — Sprouts Farmers Market.

The popular, high-end grocery is one of nearly a dozen businesses coming to the shopping plaza, which will begin to open later this year at the southwest



corner of Edison Avenue and John Wayne Parkway. The store will anchor 82,000 square feet of retail space on 19 acres.

Shoppers might be feeling fresh produce in their hands at Sprouts this fall as construction could be done by the end of September, according to Andrew Call, vice president of development management for the Southwest region of developer Thompson Thrift.

Horst said the development will help drive the local economy, creating

Construction of the Sprouts Farmers Market continues at Sonoran Creek Marketplace. It is expected to open in the fall.

282 new jobs with \$10.4 million in annual wages and an economic impact of more than \$25.6 million.

Other stores signed up for Sonoran Creek include MOD Pizza, Jimmy John’s, State Farm, Filiberto’s Mexican Food and Neon Barre Fitness Studio.

Up to four more tenants will be added at the shopping center, according to Call, who said research indicates the project will play a significant role in the city’s economic development efforts.

“It will spur new services and restaurants that are desperately needed, as well as more new retailers,” he said. “It will definitely spur some additional development in the city, and especially in and around that area.”

Bob McGovern

STALLED ON THE TRACK

APEX Motor Club completed its 2.27-mile track more than two years ago at the 280-acre site on SR 238, six miles west of town. But aside from the track and a car-storage building about to be completed, the project has pretty much hit the brakes. But there is hope for a restart.

“We’ve been subsisting for the last two years with the promise of water,” said Jason Plotke, general partner of the private club. “Nothing is going to happen on our end until we have water.”

Plotke’s concern underscores an issue that accompanies every project west of SR 347 — where is the water going to come from to support development? APEX is hoping the answer is a newly approved pipeline that would carry water from Global Water’s Southwest Plant at Rancho Mirage west and then north, perhaps up Ralston Road and across SR 238.

When completed, the members-only facility will feature 4.2 miles of track with a 3,400-foot straightaway. The club offers private garages and 1,250-square-foot “car condos” with mezzanines. Still in Phase 1 of development, the club has sold all 48 car condos. There will be nearly 180 garages total when fully built out.

Membership levels range from a \$50,000 initiation fee and \$5,000 annual dues to \$175,000 initiation and \$22,500 annually. APEX has sold more than 200 memberships and will cap membership at 425, Plotke said.

Price sees the facility as a huge driver for tourism.

“I think APEX, once the water pipeline is done, will be a whole new ball game,” he said. “It will be something we’ve never seen before as part of the adventure corridor.”

COUNTY SERVICES, CLOSE TO HOME

Maricopans have more convenient

access to Pinal County services with the recent opening of an \$11 million auxiliary office complex. Two buildings with a total of about 42,000 square feet are now open at 19955 N. Wilson Ave.

County business that may have required a 43-mile drive to the county seat in Florence can now be conducted at Building 100, which houses offices for the assessor, treasurer, recorder, development services and office space for county Supervisor Jeff McClure, who represents Maricopa and District 4.

Building 200 is home to the Pinal County Justice Court, Clerk of the Superior Court, Adult and Juvenile Probation services, and a Pinal County Sheriff’s Office substation with holding cells.

The Maricopa Police Department will eventually move to the west side when a new headquarters is built down the street from the county complex in 2023.



A truck passes the site of the proposed surf park to be developed by PHX Surf LLC in the “adventure corridor” along State Route 238.

Surf park plan includes hotel, tiny-house village

BY JAY TAYLOR

MARICOPANS LOOKING TO HAVE A BIT OF AQUATIC FUN MAY SOON be able to avoid a drive to a Valley waterpark or lake and head instead to a surf park proposed at State Route 238 and North Loma Road.

In pre-application paperwork filed with the city, Mesa-based PHX Surf LLC outlines the scale of the proposed facility, known as PHX Surf Park, which will cover about 70 acres. The city is selling parcels of land to three developers, each of whom will own about 20 acres. The remaining 12 acres will be leased by the city to PHX Surf.

A preliminary rendering and other documents envision two wave/surf pools totaling 7 acres, multiple water slides, a lazy river, swimming pools and a splash pad. A series of shade trellises equipped with misting systems would help keep guests cool during the summer heat.

Other potential amenities include a hotel, retail stores, restaurants, swim-up bar, live-performance area with shaded stage and lawn seating, spa, sand volleyball courts and a bike pump track, a looped sequence of swooping, banked turns that enables cyclists to ride with minimal pedaling.

One of the most interesting amenities mentioned is a tiny-house village with its own clubhouse. The rendering shows 22 units that would allow visitors to stay on site. There is also an RV park.

PHX Surf said the project will be developed in phases. The list of amenities could change and a timeline for the project was not available. PHX Surf representatives did not respond to requests for comment about the project.

Mayor Christian Price said the proposed park could usher in a new era of business development within the city’s “adventure corridor” concept, a strategy to drive tourism and visitation through outdoor activities in the area. Currently the corridor includes APEX Motor Club, Ak-Chin Southern Dunes Golf Club, Estrella Sailport, which offers glider rides and pilot instruction, and Airparamo, a powered paraglider facility.

“There are so many things that are exciting in that area, and it’s a real draw,” Price said. “It’s really Maricopa’s first dabble into the tourism industry. We don’t have a Grand Canyon; we don’t have a snow-capped mountain that people come to, so we have to get creative.”

In its application narrative, PHX Surf said “the PHX Surf Park will be a premier destination not only in Pinal County, but across the state of Arizona and beyond. The park will create a unique attraction that offers advanced active entertainment, progressive surfing experiences, water play, related retail and dining, concert and open space, and hospitality — all immersed with ‘ocean views,’ and the sound of crashing waves breaking in the desert sun.”

The pre-application for project suggests the fun won’t stop when the sun goes down. In its narrative, PHX Surf calls for night surfing under lights as well as the presence of restaurants, bars, live music and entertainment.

Councilmember Henry Wade said the benefits of a tourist attraction like the surf park are multi-faceted.

“We will always need something that is going to be a draw, and that (park) would be a very significant draw,” Wade said. “We have the resources to draw those folks in to get additional housing starts and some additional economic development, and ultimately more jobs.”

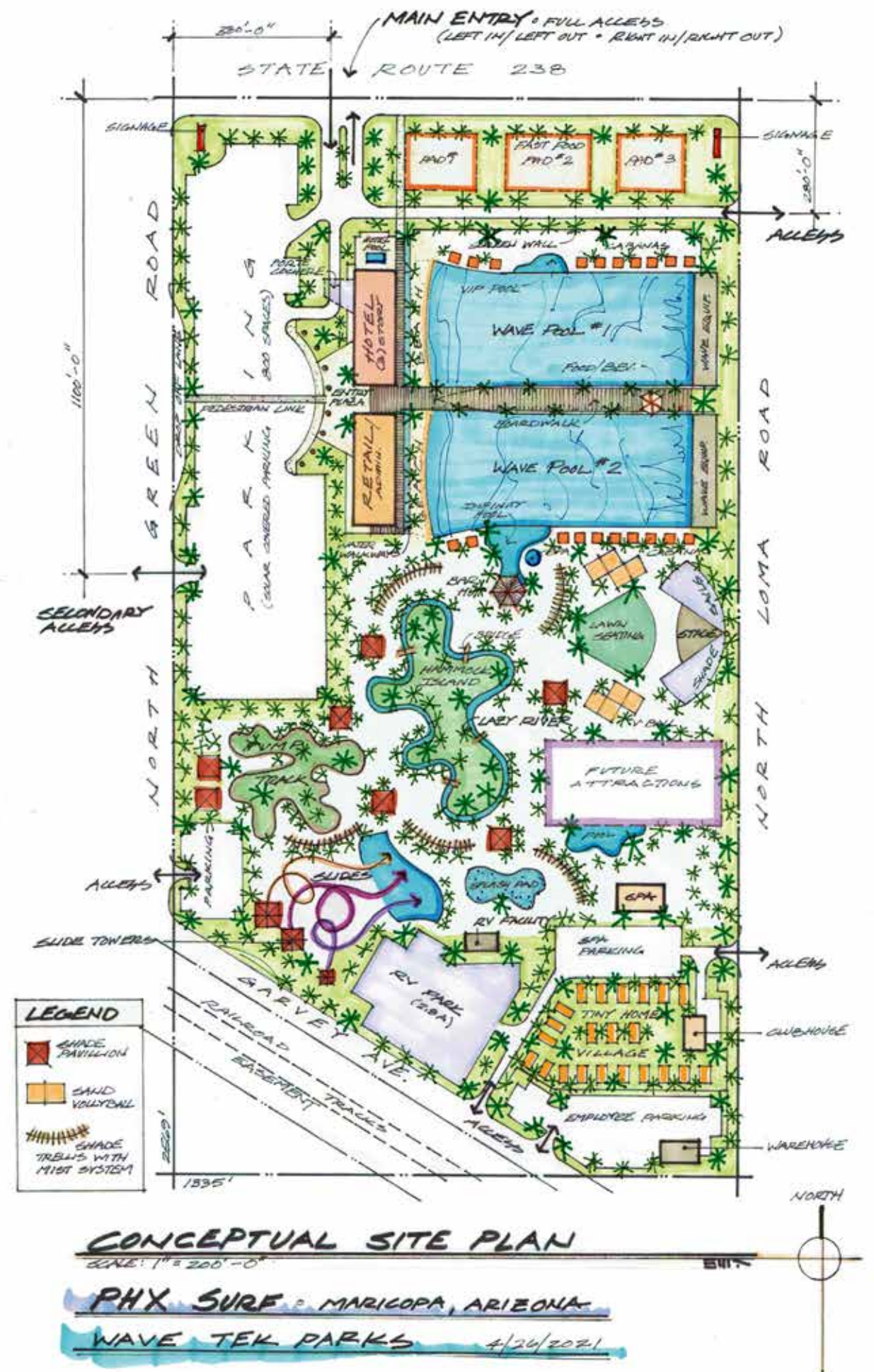
Both the city and the developers can cancel the land purchase contracts if either party does not want to move forward during a four-month due diligence period, according to City Manager Rick Horst.

“Do I think that will happen?” asked Horst. “No. Each day they are spending more time and money, the less likely it would be that they would back out.”

Price, however, is clearly seeing the park as an important cog in the economic engine driving future growth in Maricopa.

“It’s a catalyst to great things.”

Kevin Vasquez



Drought and the Colorado River

BY SHAINA SHAY, WATER RESOURCES & CONSERVATION SPECIALIST

What's happening?

The Colorado River Basin, like Arizona, is in the midst of a 20-plus-year drought that is stressing water supplies.

Due to decreasing water levels in Lake Mead, it is highly likely that the U.S. Secretary of the Interior will declare a Tier 1 shortage for 2022 in August of this year. If a shortage is declared it will primarily affect agricultural users, not municipalities.

A shortage on the Colorado River doesn't mean a shortage at your tap.

Global Water is prepared.

Global Water Resources does not rely on Colorado River water to provide water for our customers.



Ample water supplies have been secured for current and future customers, enabling development in the City of Maricopa to continue for the foreseeable future.

We have been preparing for water shortages since the beginning. The image shown is from our 2009 campaign to raise drought awareness and encourage the use of recycled water.

To combat water scarcity, Global Water Resources practices Total Water Management (TWM) and has committed to using water wisely, encouraging conservation and planning for the future.

How has Arizona prepared?

Arizona, along with other states in the Colorado River Basin and Mexico, have had many years to prepare for shortage. Joint collaboration resulted in the signing of a Drought Contingency Plan (DCP) in 2019.

This plan, along with other agreements, established a system for sharing water surpluses. Additionally, states are working through a process called reconsultation, and by 2026 plan to further align demand for Colorado River water with the effects of climate change.

Arizona continues to invest in water infrastructure, alternative water supplies, and conservation programs.

 [GWRResources.com](https://www.gwrresources.com)

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Maintenance can help extend life of your water heater

BY TERRY LEAMON, MY MARICOPA PLUMBER

DO YOU WONDER IF WATER HEATER flushes are necessary? Do you do regular maintenance on your water heater? Well, if not, you should be. It helps prevent your water heater going out, or worse, from leaking. Doing this helps extend the life of your water heater. The mineral content and hardness of the water dictates how often you should be doing flushes. Annual flushes, if not every six months, are recommended.

If not regularly flushed, your water heater can corrode more quickly. The sediment can also block the drain valve and also the temperature and relief valve, which prevents your water heater from exploding. If the water heater is not draining, or draining slowly, the problem is likely a sediment build-up blocking the drain valve. Once the water heater is drained, it will

flow steadily and your water heater will be back up and heating your water again.


Another important key to extending the life of your water heater is the anode rod. What is the anode rod, you ask, and why is it important? It is a temporary steel core wire with magnesium, aluminum or zinc around it. An anode rod exists to protect the metal lining inside of your water heater tank to prevent explosion or corrosion over time. The rod goes in the top of the water heater and attracts the corrosive materials, so it will corrode first.

Over the course of 3-4 years, however, the anode rod will corrode away entirely. When it is NOT replaced, materials start to corrode the water heater itself, eventually leading to leaks. The anode rod should be replaced every three years if you have a water softener and every



four years if you do not.

Regular maintenance is extremely important to extend the life of your water heater and prevent water damage from leaks or the bottom rusting out.

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GETTING TO know

MANDI LOPEZ
Owner –
The Indigo Ballroom

Hometown: Phoenix
Reside in: Desert Cedars
Maricopan since: 2020
Family: My partner Jasper and I have a beautiful pup named Ella.
Hobbies: Dancing, yoga, spending time with my family, exploring and enjoying life
Pet peeve: Kindness matters
Dream vacation: A life where I feel like I'm on vacation
Like most about Maricopa: The community and natural beauty

FAVORITE ...
Book: The Four Agreements
Movie: Casablanca
Musician: Billie Holiday
Restaurant: Roots

Getaway: My yoga mat
Joke: When people tell me they are too old to learn how to dance or not flexible enough for yoga.


Mandi Lopez with partner Jasper and pup Ella

 [Learn more about Mandi at InMaricopa.com/Community/Getting-to-Know.](https://www.inmaricopa.com/Community/Getting-to-Know)

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Ditch your razor this summer

BY KRISTINA DONNAY, FNP-C

SHAVING CAN BE EXPENSIVE AND time-consuming. We don't often notice the cost because it's a small part of our weekly grocery bill, but each razor adds up and over the course of your life you'll spend far more on shaving than you would imagine.

The average American spends between \$350 to \$600 a year on disposable razors. Shaving daily can cost money, time and produce red, irritated skin. On average, women will spend 72 days shaving their legs over the course of a lifetime, approximately 1,728 hours. Men, on the other hand, will spend 45 days shaving their beard and neck or 1,080 hours over their lifetime. This does not include underarms, bikini area and more.

There is a better way! Laser hair-removal can reduce your cost, save time and save your skin from irritation. Unlike traditional methods (waxing, shaving, bleaching or using depilatory creams), laser hair-removal gets to the root of the problem — literally — rather than provide a temporary solution. Traditional methods continually need application, while laser hair-removal only requires a few sessions.

Maricopa Wellness Center is proud to offer the cutting-edge laser hair-removal technology, DiolazeXL by Inmode. With DiolazeXL, you can effectively throw away your razor. It safely and effectively eliminates unwanted hair with



advanced technology that destroys the root of the hair follicle. This laserhair-removal technology addresses large treatment areas quickly and efficiently, so treatments are short and sweet. With unique cooling features that set the DiolazeXL apart from the rest of the pack, most patients report little to no pain. Clients typically need just 4 to 7 sessions, which are done 4-6 weeks apart.

The DiolazeXL can treat light and dark skin tone. Lighter hair (red/blond/ grey/white) is more difficult for the laser to treat because the pigment in the hair is what signals the laser beam to destroy the hair growth. Dark-haired clients with fair skin get the quickest results, but Maricopa Wellness Center offers free consultations to assess your situation.

A completely noninvasive procedure, DiolazeXL presents nearly no risks to your

health other than transient swelling and redness where follicles were treated. You can resume your work or other daily activities immediately following a treatment session.

DiolazeXL hair removal can safely be used to permanently remove hair from the under arms, face, bikini line, back, chest, legs, shoulders, chin, stomach, neck and more.

If you suffer from excessive, unwanted hair or wish you could throw your razors and waxes away for good, call us to schedule a consultation with one of our certified laser technicians.

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Trust has never been so important

BY C. JON BEECROFT, MD

TRUST IS A HARD THING TO EARN these days. This last year has taught us about trust, and lack of trust. Internet, government, people around us, co-workers and loved ones. Who do we trust? I am sure we all learned something in 2020 we were sure was true, only to find out later it was a false information.

At Maricopa Foot and Ankle, we want you to feel comfortable and that we, as physicians, are trustworthy.

One of those ways is to look at our credentialing.

Dr. Stewart, Dr. Crezee and I are all Board Certified in foot surgery. What does this mean?

“The American College of Foot and Ankle Surgeons (ACFAS) recognizes the role of board certification as an attestation to medical providers’ mastery of the standards and competencies that are specific to their training and practice within their specialty,” according to the governing body.

The American College of Foot and Ankle Surgeons has been around since 1942. It allows patients to have a better trust in their doctors as qualified to do surgery. It takes years to become Board

Certified, and for good reason. One wants a qualified, trained professional to take care of them.



In addition to Board Certification, we as physicians are annually reading and studying for 25 credits of Continuing Medical Education (CME). This enables us as to learn and train in better treatments for our patients.

Each surgeon in our office has finely tuned his skills through years of Residency Training, Board Certification and Continuing Medical Credits. This is done to help our patients improve and heal.

These certifications, training and learning are all here to help each patient that enters our office to feel trust that the physicians they are seeing are qualified to provide them the best outcome.

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Business, development around town

Otter Creek LLC will spend \$90,000 to remodel the kitchen at the QuikTrip store, 20530 N. John Wayne Pkwy., including new equipment, millwork, finishes, mechanical, electrical and plumbing. The company also will remodel the sales floor and remove a condenser from the roof. The work will be done by T Built LLC. **Heritage Point Garage** at 45115 W. Garvey Ave. will build a detached structure with work done by Rick Moser Contracting. The project is valued at \$113,628.

Sequoia Pathway Academy will build a \$300,000 athletic field at its campus, 19265 N. Porter Road. Willmeng Construction Inc. will provide grading and drainage, minimal demolition of site elements, concrete paving, and installation of new bleachers and an \$18,000 electronic scoreboard.

Smith & Kelly Feed Co. Inc., 38351 W. Cowtown Road, will make \$12,000 in electrical repairs necessary due to fire damage. The work will be performed by Desert View Systems Inc.



Tenant improvements will be done to accommodate the **L'Image Beauty Salon** at Maricopa Grand Professional Village, 41640 W. Smith-Enke Road, by owners MCMAT Holdings LLC. The \$110,000 project will be done by Torrez Unltd. Construction LLC.

Grading and drainage work will be done at 18265 N. Karsten Drive in the Santa Rosa Crossing development. The work, valued at more than \$330,000, will be done for **Pulte Home Co. LLC** by Knochel Bros. Inc.

KB Home of Phoenix Inc. will convert model home garages at 36405 and 36433 W. San Ildefonso Ave. to a sales office and construction office, respectively. The \$120,000 project is part of the Tortosa South parcel G.



Off-site loop-road improvements will be made at **Estrella Gin Business Park**, 45654 W. Edison Road. The work — paving, water, sewer, landscape and streetlights for the City of Maricopa — will be done by Construction Solutions Company LLC.

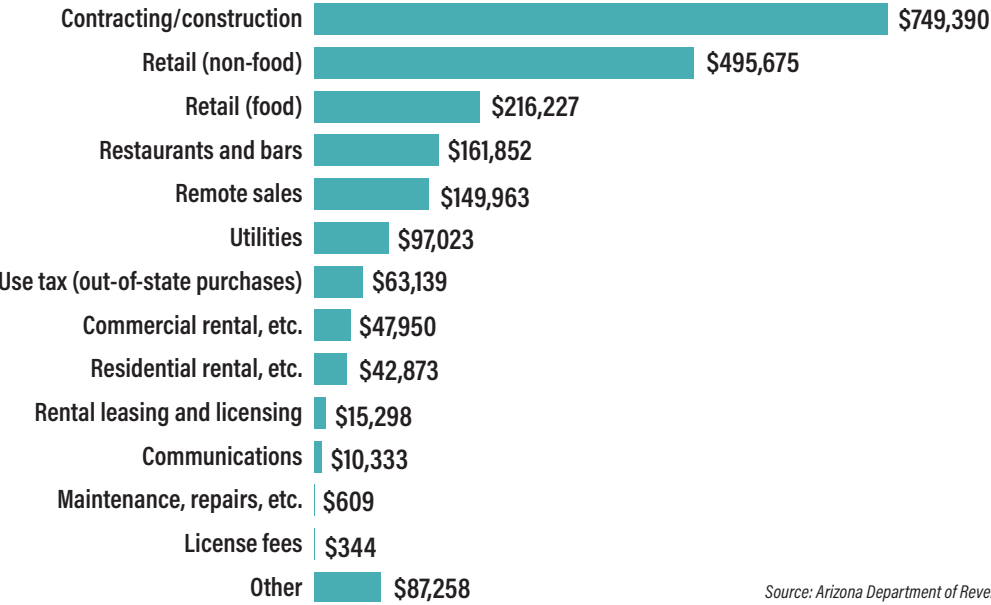
Maricopa Auberge LLC was granted a right-of-way permit to install gas service at the **La**

Quinta Inn, 44575 W. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., including a 4-foot bell hole with flagman. NPL Construction Co. will do the work.

The City of Maricopa will add high-speed internet service at the **Maricopa Library and Cultural Center**, 18160 N. Maya Angelou Drive. Fishel Construction Co. will perform the work.

Maricopa Sales Tax Collections

In April, businesses paid nearly \$2.14 million in transaction privilege taxes. Here's where people spent money based on the amount of sales tax collected:



Source: Arizona Department of Revenue



Finding the joy

BY KRISTIN GRAMANDO
J. WARREN FUNERAL SERVICES

NO ONE IS EVER READY FOR the death of a loved one, but for Patty Higham, losing her mother unexpectedly when she was 9 years old was especially devastating. Caught unprepared by the tragic accident, the family's pain was compounded by a messy funeral process that delayed the service for a week.

Instead comforting his three young children and focusing on his own grief, Patty's father was forced to spend precious time hunting down paperwork and arranging details and finances for the funeral.

"When my mother passed away there was just total devastation," she said. "Nobody knew what we were supposed to do. We were just stricken with pain. Sitting and enjoying her life just wasn't in the picture. I felt like the healing process was delayed for so many people."

When her father passed away in 1995, however, she began to see things in a new light.

Bracing for another logistical ordeal, Patty and her two older brothers met with the funeral home director, who explained their father had prearranged and prefunded his funeral service.

"My brothers and I didn't know he had done that," she said. "We looked at each other and said, 'But what about all the other things we have to take care of?' He said, 'your father took care of everything.' We went home and started enjoying our father's life."

Instead of sifting through paperwork, discussing funeral details and making tough financial decisions, Patty and her brothers were free to start celebrating their father's legacy. They were able to begin their healing process with a clean slate.

Patty said the stark difference between her parents' funerals was eye-opening. She realized



despite the pain of losing a loved one, funerals can be a positive thing when the burden is removed from the grieving family.

"Funerals allow you to be around those people you love. It's a glorious time to appreciate the deceased's life. It does not have to be how my mother's was.

"There's a huge difference between being preplanned and not being preplanned, and we lived through both."

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5 eateries tagged by inspectors

Five Maricopa eateries were marked down by Pinal County health inspectors from April 15-May 14.

Barro's Pizza

Inspector observed a build-up of encrusted grease on the fryer baskets and debris on kitchen floors and on ventilation hood filters. Manager asked to clean at a frequency that negates build-up.

The internal temperatures of meatballs being held in the steam well were 109-111 degrees. Manager instructed employee to reheat meatballs to at least 165 degrees. Foods in hot holding should be maintained at or above 135 degrees.

Papa John's Pizza

An inspector observed an employee use bare hands to place a ready-to-eat pepper into pizza box for take-out order. It was discarded. The manager was instructed to provide a barrier between bare hands and ready-to-eat foods. The manager provided tongs.

Riliberto's

A cook was observed picking up trash off the floor and then continuing with food prep. Employee was immediately stopped and manager was asked to instruct employee to wash hands. A cook also used bare hands to garnish a burrito with ready-to-eat cheese. The person in charge was asked to instruct the employee to use a barrier between bare hands and ready-to-eat foods. The manager instructed the employee to wash hands and don gloves.

The burrito and cheese were discarded.

The inspector observed a cookline handwash station blocked by a table and pieces of bread in the hand sink. The manager was instructed to provide accessibility to the hand sink at all times and to use the sink for handwashing only.

Sunrise Diner

The manager/person in charge was not present at the beginning of the inspection. Employees were not able to identify who was assigned as the person in charge while the manager was absent. The manager was present at the end of the inspection. The inspector and manager reviewed the requirement to assign and ensure person in charge has food safety and employee illness knowledge and reviewed the employee illness policy.

The inspector observed a pan of raw chicken being stored above ready-to-eat fruits and vegetables in the walk-in cooler. The pan



was loosely covered with plastic wrap. An employee moved the chicken to the bottom shelf.

The internal temperatures of cooked pasta, hamburger, chili and beans being held in deep, covered pans in the upright reach-in cooler overnight were 50-63 degrees. Staff discarded the items. The inspector reviewed cooling methods.

The operator is offering undercooked eggs and meat


without the use of a complete consumer advisory. The manager was instructed to add an asterisk to the menu items that are offered undercooked that corresponds to the tabletop reminder. Re-inspection was scheduled within 10 days to verify correction.

The inspector observed a 2-gallon spray container of insecticide in the back area of the kitchen. This item is restricted in the facility. The manager removed the insecticide.

The inspector observed a mesh bag of onions being stored directly on the floor in the back area of the kitchen, versus at least 6 inches off the ground. The manager moved the onions to a shelf.

The inspector observed a build-up of grease and debris on and around the outdoor grease receptacle. The manager was asked to clean at a frequency that negates accumulation.

Water & Ice

A chlorine-based sanitizer in the in-use, three-compartment sink was tested at 200 ppm. The inspector provided manual ware-washing procedure training to include the use of all three sinks to provide individual steps for wash, rinse and sanitize. The person in charge provided correction and sanitizer was tested at 50-100 ppm. 

EXCELLENT

[No violations found]

- Bahama Buck's
- Burger King
- Chipotle Mexican Grill
- Copa Craze
- Desert Wind Middle School
- Dickey's Barbecue Pit, 20924 N. John Wayne Pkwy.
- Domino's Pizza
- Dutch Bros.
- Firehouse Subs
- Francisco's Mexican Food
- Freddy's Frozen Custard & Steakburgers
- Good 2 Go
- Heritage Academy
- Jack in the Box
- Legacy Traditional School
- McDonald's, 41710 W. Maricopa-Casa Grande Hwy.
- Maricopa Head Start
- Maricopa High School
- Maricopa High School — Culinary Arts
- Papa Murphy's Pizza
- Plaza Bonita
- Rosati's Pizza

SATISFACTORY

[Violations corrected during inspection]

- Barro's Pizza
- Papa John's Pizza
- Riliberto's
- Sunrise Diner
- Water & Ice

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

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City of Maricopa

Economic Development

In 2018 and 2019 the City of Maricopa issued nearly 1,000 single family home permits. In 2020, the Economic & Community Development team issued more than 1,500 single family home permits, along with the first multifamily home permits issued in city limits. These records are being shattered again, with more than 1,000 single family home permits issued in 2021 - and we are only halfway through the year!



While Maricopa's history has been exclusively single family housing, Maricopa's future will see a wide variety of housing options for all phases of life. Multifamily, assisted living, town homes, single family for rent, and more housing projects are being permitted or built today, in addition to the affordable single family housing Maricopa is known for.

This year is setting the tone for the future of Maricopa with hundreds of millions of dollars of residential property value and millions of square feet of single family homes issued this year alone. With hundreds of homes under construction and additional developments in the pipeline it is certain that Maricopa's biggest years are on the horizon.

"You guys are one of the best municipalities to work in. I was recently talking with both an engineering firm and another development group about how Maricopa is such a better place to work in now... they are happy to give bids and do the work here."

-Shane Graser, President of Copper Nail



Maricopa Issues More Than 1,000 Single Family Residence Permits in 2021 - And Counting!



There has never been a better time to get started in one of the hottest markets in Arizona.

For more information on development, contact Adam Shipley, Economic Development Coordinator, 520-316-6990, adam.shipley@maricopa-az.gov

For a list of everything happening in Maricopa, visit www.WhatsNewMaricopa.com

‘top fans’



Allen Wolford



Art McCloskey



Barbara Sparks



Caleb Wedel



Candice Thomas



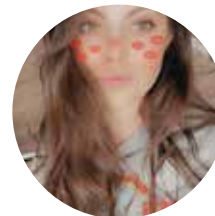
Evans Clay-Chose



Jamie Brisbin



Katie Ayer



Kortney Hanley



Maricela Ortiz



Marie Moreno



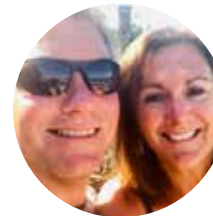
Mercedes Lucas



Nicole Annecharico



Nyah Jackson



Yvonne Cartwright

PEOPLE



Maricopa Meadows resident Rommel Gloria accepts a certificate and coin recognizing his heroism from Chief James Hughes, right, at a May 6 “Coffee with the Cops” event. At left is Cmdr. Stephen Judd.

Man hailed as hero for saving stranger’s life

BY BOB MCGOVERN

A MARICOPA MAN WAS HAILED AS a hero for his quick-thinking actions that saved the life of a stranger in need.

The morning of Feb. 2 started like many others for Rommel Gloria, 42. He was driving his son to Maricopa Elementary School when he saw a man lying motionless on the sidewalk in the 45000 block of West Amsterdam Road in Maricopa Meadows, where he has lived since 2015.

Gloria stopped his car and checked on the man, who was unconscious and not breathing. He quickly dialed 9-1-1. Though he had never been trained in CPR, the fiberoptic engineer sprung into action, guided by a dispatcher. He performed the maneuver for 5-7 minutes to keep the man’s heart beating until Maricopa police Ofc. Scott Schreiber arrived on the scene to take over chest compressions. An ambulance responded soon after and transported the man to a hospital in Chandler. He survived the medical episode.

“It was just human instinct,” Gloria said of his quick-thinking action, adding he would do it again in a heartbeat.

At a May 6 “Coffee with the Cops” event, Maricopa police Chief James Hughes presented Gloria a certificate thanking him for his heroic response and service to the community as well as a Chief’s Coin for Excellence, just the second one handed out by Hughes, who took over the department in January.

Bob McGovern

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“The opportunity to save a human life is an achievement you will cherish for the rest of your life,” Hughes told Gloria. A number of MPD officers joined Hughes and Cmdr. Stephen Judd in attendance.

“Due to the heroic actions of Mr. Gloria to save a life, a Citizen Lifesaving Award is hereby presented as our Thank You for your service to our great community!” the certificate read.

Gloria accepted the honors surrounded by his family — wife Vanessa, daughter Roanne, 16, and sons A.J., 14, and Jayden, 6. His parents, Antonio and Elena Gloria, also drove six hours from Los Angeles to watch their son recognized.

“It’s overwhelming,” Gloria said after the event. “I’ve always dreamed of helping someone but didn’t think it would happen like this. I will remember this for the rest of my life.”



1



2



3

Prom night at MHS

1. Students at Maricopa High School display their achievement certificates during the Senior Awards Ceremony on May 11.

2. Maricopa High School baseball player Lynn Andrews and his family celebrate on Senior Night. A catcher and first baseman, he hit .358 in 18 games his senior season.

3. and 4. Maricopa High School seniors celebrated with a "Night Under the Stars" prom on April 24 on the football field at Ram Stadium. Dressed to the nines, the students danced and posed all night long.

Victor Moreno





Breaking ground for a new school

1. Maricopa Unified School District hosted dignitaries and guests for the May 7 groundbreaking of the new high school at North Murphy and West Farrell roads. The high school band played.

2. In her remarks, Marlene Armstrong, the principal of the new high school, said the groundbreaking was symbolic of the MUSD commitment to ensure all students achieve excellence as lifelong learners.

3. "It was 1955 when the first high school, Maricopa High School, opened its doors," district superintendent Dr. Tracey Lopeman told the crowd.

"Now 66 years later, we break ground for the second high school in MUSD."

4. Mayor Christian Price speaks at the event.

5. Members of the MUSD Governing Board and other dignitaries shovel dirt to mark the occasion.

Jay Taylor

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Probationary firefighter Ciara Crowley fights a fire during her 16-week boot camp at East Valley Recruit Fire Academy in Mesa in August. She graduated in December and joined the Maricopa department.

Firefighter's own rescue kindled interest in helping others

BY FRAN LYONS

FOR CIARA CROWLEY, A TRAGIC accident when she was a toddler planted a seed for a life in public service.

The seed sprouted quickly. When she was about 6, her grandmother helped her understand how lucky she was to survive the crash and the little girl decided she wanted to be a firefighter when she grew up. Later in life, it was clear her motivation to become a first responder was rooted in saving lives and helping people in crisis.

Crowley spent years on her dream. In 2018 she moved to Tempe to work as an EMT for the city's fire department while studying at a cadet program designed to develop skills and prepare her for acceptance to the firefighting academy. Last summer, Crowley joined the

Maricopa Fire Department as a probationary firefighter.

"Resiliency is one of my strongest traits," she said. "I consider myself a student of the craft and mastery is a primary goal. I know I have the strength to meet and deal with whatever presents itself to me in my life."

Chris Bolinger, deputy chief at Maricopa Fire, has mentored Crowley in her development as a firefighter.

"She excelled at the interview process and also demonstrated her passion for the job," he said. "Ciara's commitment to a healthy, physically fit lifestyle and capacity for public service were also major contributing factors to her outstanding qualifications."

Although just starting out, she already has plans to climb the ladder to the rank of captain.

A SECOND CHANCE

Born in Danville, California, Crowley is one of seven children — four boys and three girls, including her twin sister.

When she was just 2 years old, her family was involved in a devastating and life-altering rollover auto accident. Her mother and stepfather were ejected from the car. He died instantly and her mother's injuries left her paralyzed. Crowley and her twin sister had to be extricated from the vehicle by firefighters, who also rescued their siblings.

While she said she does not remember the tragic event, Crowley's "second chance" at life set the tone for her future and the path she would follow.

After the accident, Ciara and her siblings were raised by grandparents in Danville.

A runner in high school, she participated in several other sports and fitness activities. After graduation, she attended community college to study Emergency Medical Services and became a qualified EMT. Becoming even more dedicated to her fitness regime, she worked out every day to enhance her strength, endurance and agility.

After moving to Tempe, she began applying to regional fire departments. The Maricopa Fire/Medical Department responded. In June 2020, after two rounds of rigorous interviews before a panel, she was offered a job as a recruit.

Crowley's next step was basic training. She began her 16-week boot camp in August 2020 at East Valley Recruit Fire Academy in Mesa where classes included academic lessons and a daily, 1—2-hour physical training routine.

"We had a weekly skills course designed for those who have never touched a fire hose," Crowley said.

48 HOURS ON, 96 HOURS OFF

A top priority for Crowley was to gain complete confidence in her ability to carry the strenuous weight and workload required of each firefighter.

"We were tested weekly on what we had learned and practiced and how well we were prepared," she said. "Throughout our time in the academy we prepped to work in the fire environment of live, 'hot-fire' situations where we needed to climb building structures, rescue people and work with the 'bottle,' or the SCBA (self-contained breathing apparatus)."



CIARA CROWLEY

Age: 22

Residence: Tempe

Family: My boyfriend and me

Favorite firehouse food:

Teriyaki chicken and rice

Motto: "Be happy in life. Be

kind. Get up and contribute.

Serve your community."

"I love our family of firefighters at the department here in Maricopa," said Ciara Crowley, who was photographed at boot camp. "I have been welcomed like a sister in a family of brothers."

Crowley graduated from the fire academy in December. She was among eight women in her graduation class of 40 participants and she's one of two female firefighters in Maricopa. She is currently assigned to a truck at Maricopa Fire Station 575 on Edison Road.

Well into her probationary year, she has been rotating between different captains and crews at the four stations. Her shift includes 48 continuous hours on duty, then 96 hours off duty.

"I love our family of firefighters at the department here in Maricopa. I have been welcomed like a sister in a family of brothers," Crowley said. "We all work together in close proximity sharing chores, cooking and a good sense of humor. We also share the serious nature of the job — the EMS calls, the hard calls."

Her work as a first responder makes her happy and she plans a long career.

"I plan to dedicate my life to being a firefighter and medical rescue provider until I retire," Crowley said. "I look forward to all phases of the job and the career opportunities along the way through the ranks from firefighter/EMT to paramedic, engineer to captain."

Crowley said she loves Maricopa and enjoys outdoor activities, friends and family.



Lee Grant; Maricopa Fire/Medical Department

Ciara Crowley, who will spend her year as a probationary firefighter working in four city fire stations, works at the scene of a house fire in Maricopa.

Maricopa mothers shine in annual 'Best Mom' contest

BY JAY TAYLOR



FROM AN IMPRESSIVE GROUP OF Maricopa mothers, Lucinda Boyd was voted Best Mom in Maricopa for 2021 in the annual contest.

Humility was a common theme of this year's contest presented by Iconic Tire and Service Center and hosted again by InMaricopa.com. All three winners were surprised to be nominated, despite their everyday dedication to children.

Boyd gets plenty of practice honing her motherly skills. As the mother of four and stepmother of two she has her hands full. But according to the nomination by her daughter, Melissa Fierros, her motherly duties go beyond her own kids.

"She has taken in lots of teenagers throughout the years," said Fierros. "Took care, fed and loved them as her own."

That loving and giving philosophy was bred in Maricopa.

"I have lived in Maricopa for 37 years," Boyd

said. "All my kids grew up out here and some of the other kids in Maricopa as well. They all came to my house to stay, so I had a lot to do with a lot of kids here in Maricopa."

Being a mom the community can turn to in a time of need has become a career for Boyd, who, with her husband Rob, founded a nonprofit that provides life skills, rehabilitation and intervention programs for troubled and at-risk youth and those who are incarcerated.

Based on her husband's book of the same name, Boyd said The Streets Don't Love You Back programs are taught at Maricopa middle schools, Pinal and Maricopa county jails and more than 165 prisons nationwide.

"A lot of people in jail or prison are coming back to our communities," she said. "So, we want to teach them how to set goals and get themselves back into society. Our movement is about helping people change their lives for the better."

According to Fierros, it all begins at home.

Lucinda Boyd, center, was the winner of the annual Best Mom in Maricopa contest sponsored by Iconic Tire. She is the mother of four and step-mother of two. Ashley Burke, left, the mother of a young son, won second place, and Ericka Abeyta, a mother to five children, won third place.

"Where do I start?" she said. "My mother is amazing; she is truly a wonderful mother. My mother raised four children and did an amazing job. I can call her for anything, and she is always there for me and my siblings, no matter what!"

Amazing enough to be voted Best Mom in Maricopa, with a third of the nearly 1,900 votes cast.

Boyd won a grand-prize package worth more than \$2,000 that included gift cards to several businesses, \$200 credit on her electric bill and dinner for two at Harrah's Ak-Chin's Chop Block and Brew with bottle of wine or cider, flowers and a chauffeur-driven ride in a Rolls Royce Phantom.

Meranzy Young photo

ASHLEY BURKE - 2ND PLACE

Bryan Tompkins had no doubt his wife Ashley was deserving of the honor.

"My wife undoubtedly deserves this title," he wrote in his nomination. "She deserves and earns this title every day. She is the most loving, patient, selfless, passionate, caring and devoted mother in the known universe."

He said she proves it through the early mornings, long days and sleepless nights spent caring for their son Kyler, a toddler.

Burke was happy just to be nominated.

"I was surprised," she said. "My husband had told me, 'You're probably not even going to know so I need to tell you something. I nominated you for Best Mom.' I was so happy and surprised, it just made me feel great."

Burke, who works with special needs adults and children, said she has to set her workday aside when she gets home.

"That's a really tough job," she said. "And I have to come home and be a mommy after that, so in a lot of ways my job never ends. But it makes what I do at home seem a little easier and more rewarding."

She won a \$1,000 gift package that featured Sunday brunch for two at Arroyo Grille with flowers and chauffeur-driven ride in a 1955 Chevrolet Bel Air convertible.

ERICKA ABEYTA - 3RD PLACE

Ericka Abeyta finished third in the contest.

The Maricopa mom, according to the nomination from Angelina Manuel, is a "fun, loving, beautiful and caring mom of five kids, six grandchildren and two daughters-in-law. And the devoted wife to chef Frank Abeyta." She is described as a hard-working woman who lives for her family and presents a positive spirit at all times.

Her nomination caught Abeyta off guard, too.

"I'm not going to lie, it was a beautiful gift," she said. "I didn't even know about it; it made me feel very special that I'm very loved by my kids. I even told my daughter I don't care if it's third place, it was just the thought that counts."

Her daughter-in-law, Angelina Higareda, said Abeyta makes a tough job seem easy.

"There's been a lot of obstacles thrown her way over the last couple of years and she's always overcome them," Higareda said. "She has the support of her family and she's always there for somebody, whether you just need to talk or get away, she's always there. She's very thoughtful and caring."

Abeyta received more than \$700 in gift cards and other prizes. 

THE OTHER GREAT NOMINATIONS

Victoria Booth: Victoria Booth is a full-time stay-at-home mom who also takes care of her mom and has recently lost both her father, and then eight days later miscarried her daughter, Haley. In spite of her own pain, she has been trying to reach out to other moms in Maricopa to bring awareness to infant loss. All while balancing her marriage, mom duties and taking care of her senior mom. She is attempting to build a support group for these grieving moms in Maricopa so they have a support network and eventually resources to turn to in the most terrible pain they will endure ... the death of a child. Please vote for her, she is such an amazing mom and person! Nominated by Dawnette Heath



Mindy Caputo: I would like to nominate my wife, Mindy Caputo, for Best Mom in Maricopa. She has had a rough road since her pregnancy, giving birth to triplet boys prematurely at six months. She lived in the



hospital for five months with them and went through great hardship with the loss of one of our sons early in our journey with the hospital. She acts as our children's advocate and provides them with countless hours of therapy, teaching and love. She somehow finds time to also home-school our boys and work. She is simply an amazing mother and woman! Nominated by husband Sam

Michelle Chance Trujillo: Michelle is a loving "Super Mom" of 3. She adapted to successfully work her demanding job from home during the pandemic, taught online school to her 3rd grade son, and while eight months pregnant with her second son, contracted COVID, all

the while not missing one day of work in 2020 in order to save her maternity days. Once her baby was born, her body struggled to heal after surgery. She never complained and continued taking care of everyone in her family,



including going dairy-free to be able to nurse her baby. Michelle deserves Mom of the Year! Nominated by Cynthia Koontz
Alicia Cook: I would like to nominate my best friend Alicia Cook. There is no one more deserving. She has suffered so much physical and emotional struggle this past year and as a single mom does so much for her two boys, Kobly and Devin. She has been nothing short of a miracle to my own family and goes above and beyond for her friend and family. After enduring physical abuse, she has been stronger than ever for her sons and does everything she can to care for them she deserves a day to be pampered. Nominated by friend Nicole Lim

Rochelle Diaz: I would love to nominate my mother-in-law, Rochelle Diaz! On top of being the best Mom and Grandmother, she is an amazing mother-in-law. Rochelle is a longtime resident of Maricopa, has made many friends and helped so many. She takes care of other kids, teaches classes at the church and makes sure everyone is taken care of. My kids' friends know her as Grandma Rochelle! She has always made her family number one! She has done so much for me, that I owe her the world. Not enough words to describe this amazing woman! We LOVE you, Rochelle! Nominated by daughter-in-law Emma



Valorie DeLeon: My mom has been caring, comforting and strong for as long as I can remember and the foundation of our family. She's cared



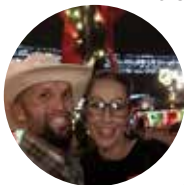
for numerous family and friends without expectation, even though she has battled cancer and continues now to fight Parkinson's and still has unconditional love to give her kids and grandkids. She's always showed my sister and I how to be tough, fight and never give up. She has sacrificed a lot being a single, sole provider. She's kept us safe with a roof over our heads, food in our bellies and clothes on our back. Nominated by daughter Mandy

Grace Gomez: I nominate my mom, Grace Gomez. She is a longtime resident here in Maricopa. This year has been really rough on her, losing her mom in July 2020

and then her daughter in January of this year. Grace has been a volunteer for a lot of different organizations and has made a difference here in the town. Grace was the co-founder of Relay for Life, has served on the water board in the Heritage area, and was a member of the Maricopa Optimist Club for many years. Nominated by daughter Crystal



Brittney Hall: Please consider my beautiful wife Brittney! This year she almost lost her grandmother to a stroke, her best friend passed and our daughter had some health issues. Brittney has an autoimmune disorder and, despite all this, she cares for us with such love and patience. It's remarkable. She gets up every day, takes the kids to school, cares for our home, has home-cooked meals and keeps this family from falling apart even when she's ill and exhausted. She's had a rough year, and this would surely make her day. Nominated by husband Bryan



LaBelle Herrera: She is not my mom but my sister and has always been there for me like a mom. When things got tough in the family she always stepped up and took care of things like she still is now. Not only did she take care of her two daughters and our uncle, she now takes care of our mom and grandmother and has always been the greatest aunty to my three boys. She is always putting others first and is the first to help out no matter what. She deserves a lot more praise than I can ever give her. Nominated by sister Mandy



Brenda Holcombe: Previously, I thought I was too old to nominate my mom. However, I believe she deserves to be nominated now more than ever because no matter old I am, she has always been there for me even when she did not have to be. I am



26 now and each day, she chooses to show up to be my mom no matter how difficult it is. Not only has she chosen to be there for me, but her son-in-law as well. My husband grew up without his mother, which has made me realize how lucky I am to have a mom like her and that she tries her best to be a great mother-in-law, too. Nominated by daughter Cassie

Marlene Jones: The reason I have the BEST MOTHER is because she is a beautiful, caring, independent, strong, humble, loving, selfless mother and child could ask for! She has sacrificed a lot raising five girls. She did the best she knew how. She deserves the moon and the stars and someday I would like to give that to the best mom I know. I will always take care of my Mother and I will try my best to be as good as her. My Mother has been and will always be my best friend. I don't know what I would do without her in my life. She is going to be 88 years old in June, and I wonder how she made it through some of the roughest challenges that life threw in her path. It's because she has faith always. I love you Mom than you'll ever know. Nominated by daughter Sharon Lindemann



Vanessa Karten: The picture below is a goofball picture of me and my mother behind me. She has been through the kinds of things where if it were another person, they could be homeless or even worse. But my mom got better for her own life and mine as well. She is an extremely valued worker at Buena Vista Recovery and works so hard to support our family. No matter what happens or how she is feeling, she will do what she can to get through it. I hope to treat my mom with a nice prize because she deserves a nice break. Nominated by daughter Nevaeh Harrell



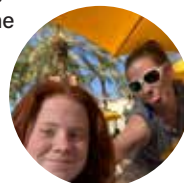
Stacy Lusader: My mother's name is Stacy, and she has been through it all. She is a single mother of three kids, been through two divorces, works a stressful job to provide for her family, owns her own side business, and her mother has recently been diagnosed with cancer. She truly deserves an amazing Mother's Day. Over the years, my mother has worked incredibly hard to provide for her family, and to make sure they have the very best, and I want to return the favor, by nominating her as the best mother in Maricopa. Nominated by her daughter



Lakisa Muhammad: I would like to nominate my wife, Lakisa Muhammad. She is a stay-at-home wife and mother homeschooling two 17-year-olds who graduated in 2020 and a 13-year-old

who is continuing. She is a local licensed mid-wife when duty calls, getting all the babies here safely in Maricopa and other areas in the Valley. We nominate her best Mom in Maricopa! Nominated by husband Dewayne

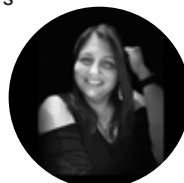
Krystal Nelson: I want to nominate my mom, Krystal Nelson, because this year she had her car stolen and didn't get to buy a new one. She has still managed to get me and my brother to every single game and practice we have had for softball and baseball. She has found many ways for us to get to and from practice or games and she has always seen our games. She has given up things such as trips just to make sure she could watch us play. Nominated by daughter Athena



Andrea Nuno: My friend, Andrea Nuno, is such an inspiring woman! She has five amazing children and has worked hard to help them overcome many challenges. She opened her heart and home to two of her children through adoption. She also teaches a classroom full of Exceptional Student Services scholars by day! Beyond all that she does for her family, she also works tirelessly to help our community through Copa Kid's Closet, collecting donations for families in need, and running the W.O.W. women's group at our church! She's truly dedicated! Nominated by friend Katrina Nichols



Rachelle Robert: I believe my mom is the best not just for a year but overall! She's a hardworking woman! She's a housekeeping supervisor for Harrah's Ak-Chin. She's been working there for about 10 years now. She deserves the best and I believe if she wins it, it will DEFINITELY make her feel really happy! I really want this for her! She's been there for me since day one! And I want to show her that I'm willing to do anything for her! She works her butt off all the time and this will make her happy! It's about time my mom gets recognized for something! I love you mom! Nominated by daughter Katelyn



Tina Salas: Let's talk about my mama. She's amazing, selfless, beautiful and full of life. She's the best grandma to my two-year-old son and does everything in her power to help me and my

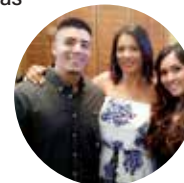


sister whenever and however she can, even though neither of us live close, and one lives halfway across the world. She's strong and always willing to lend a helping hand, even when she needs one herself. She's the best mom and "TT" anyone could ever ask for. Nominated by daughter Savannah Garrison

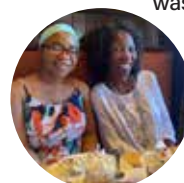
Danica Stanek: My mom is more wonderful than Wonder Woman. Never in my life have I met a woman who works day and night for her kids and loves harder than any person on this earth with the widest open heart. Everything she does is for my brothers and me. A mother on her own raising three kids by herself, dedicating her heart and soul to benefit for her three sons' futures. I aspire to one day become as patient, kind, loving, driven, courageous, and motherly as my mom. Please consider her highly in this nomination! Nominated by son Turner



Adriana Square: I would love to nominate my mom, Adriana Square, on behalf of myself and my brother Luis. Our mom is the strongest woman I know. She has gone through so much and yet has the ability to always show positivity and continue to move forward. Since we were little, she has instilled in us to be caring, loving and hardworking. She taught us this by example. To this day she is our number-one supporter and people have come to know her as Mama Cravings. Nominated by daughter Karla Wear



Keshia Williams: For Mother's Day this year, I nominate my former foster mother, Keshia Williams. For the two years that I stayed with Keshia, she was my support, she took care of all of my appointments, bought me clothes, shoes, and my favorite food. She would always pack my lunch box even if she was tired. She paid for my prom and my senior trip and was always in attendance to any school events I had while giving me advice along the way. With her being a mom of three other kids, a wife, working full time, and helping take care of her parents as well, I thank her for being the mother I never had. I want the bond that we have to never break, and I aspire to be the woman she is today. Thank you for immediately accepting me as your daughter and thank you for being my mom. It's an absolute blessing. Nominated by her former foster daughter Raya Columbus



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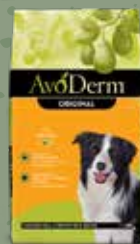
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Randy "Buck" Brawner serves a customer at the Maricopa post office with just days to retirement. "The Buck Stops Here" reads a tribute front page a co-worker created for the clerk, who is hanging it up after 15 years behind the counter.

After 15 years at post office, Buck retires — with many friends

BY BOB MCGOVERN

A BRIGHT SPOT AT THE MARICOPA post office has dimmed.

The clerk better known as "Buck" has stamped his retirement on a 15-year career behind the counter, where he engaged — and delighted — his customers with an easy-going and pleasant manner. His last day was May 28.

Randy Brawner, 60, started out as a letter carrier for three months and then became a full-time clerk, selling stamps and prepping letters and packages for delivery. (A first-class stamp cost 37 cents in 2006; it's 55 cents today.)

Like his family and friends, the people conducting business at the post office got to know the man who goes by Buck.

"He's really nice," said Sheryl Jackson as she left the post office after a recent visit. "He's funny and keeps everything in perspective."

The Brawners moved to Maricopa in 2003 from Charleston, South Carolina, after Buck retired after 21 years in the military.

"We kind of wanted to live in a smaller town," he said. "We didn't want to live in Chandler."

They came down the road and decided to make a home here. He and Gina have been married 27 years and have four children — three on her side and one together — and two grandchildren. They live in Rancho El Dorado.

He worked at a Home Depot in Tempe for 18 months, but when he saw all the houses going up for sale in Maricopa in the mid-2000s, he thought to himself, "These guys (at the post office) are going to need some help."

He took a couple of postal service tests and received offers for jobs in Wickenburg and Tempe, but turned them down. The third job offer was the one he was holding out for: letter carrier in Maricopa. He had really wanted to work in the city.

When he moved behind the counter as a clerk three months later, Buck was following in the footsteps of his father, who retired after 30 years as a window clerk at a post office in Iowa.

A NICE SMILE

"When I first took it over, there were maybe 4,000 people in town," Brawner said. "And then, Boom!, they just started building, building, building."

But the post office hasn't kept pace with that growth, he said, a sentiment shared by many Maricopans. "It's really busy now. I keep telling the postmaster, 'You're going to have to do something.'"

The USPS recently extended a lease on the main post office on West Hathaway Avenue, Brawner said.

Buck's weekday routine is well-honed.

He arrives at the post office at 7:50 a.m. and clocks in 10 minutes later. He opens the store, gets the computers going and tends to the mail chute, which is typically jammed full. Then he checks on the American flag out front. At 8:30, he is behind the counter — the window all the way to the right — to "meet and greet" customers, as he called it.

Bob McGovern

Today, as in years past, some are new residents. He said two or three customers a day tell him they are new in town.

"He has a fun personality and nice smile," said Cindy Wright, who said she mails packages at the post office just about every day. "He is going to be missed very much."

Buck is on a first-name basis with many of his customers. "There's not too many I don't know," he said.

Buck, his wife remembered, once gave out his number to a random customer, who later called him about going on vacation together.

People enjoy his conversation so much they stop him in the supermarket to chat. In the beginning, Gina would wait politely for those conversations to end before resuming their shopping.

"She doesn't wait anymore," Buck said with a laugh. "I get accused of talking a lot."

"It is crazy," Gina added. "Everybody knows his name."

'BUCK' STUCK

Before joining the post office, Brawner spent two-plus memorable decades in the U.S. Air Force.

Arriving in Germany early in his military career, his sponsor took one look at him and said, "You look like a Buck."

The name stuck.

In 1994, while stationed in Charleston, Buck and 70 of his fellow airmen were brought in one day. Each was given an M-16 rifle and told to get on a plane — destination undisclosed. The servicemen landed in Spain, but were in the air again an hour later, still uncertain where they were headed.

Buck and his fellow airmen landed in the middle of the Rwandan Civil War, where they took up residence at a bombed-out airport in Kigali and stayed for a month as planes landed about every 15 minutes as part of a humanitarian mission, he recalled.

Gina learned Buck was in Rwanda by watching CNN. In 1994, their first year of marriage, she said her husband was on missions for about 300 days.

In the late 1980s, he was part of a five-man detail that handled distinguished visitors at Andrews Air Force Base in Maryland. During George H.W. Bush's term, he would done his dress blues to salute the president as he boarded Air Force One.

In the position, he had the opportunity to meet a number of political luminaries, including Queen Elizabeth II, Margaret Thatcher, prime minister of the United Kingdom and Mikhail Gorbachev, the last leader of the Soviet Union.

Courtesy of Buck Brawner; Bob McGovern



Retirement will mean Buck Brawner has more time for fishing and golfing. He is seen holding a huge halibut he caught in Homer, Alaska, where his son owns a restaurant.



Buck Brawner helps a customer with a mail problem on a recent afternoon. When he saw all the houses going up in Maricopa in the mid-2000s, he thought to himself, "These guys (at the post office) are going to need some help."

RANDY "BUCK" BRAWNER

Age: 60

Maricopan since: 2003

Neighborhood: Rancho El Dorado

Occupation: Retired postal clerk at Maricopa post office and retired Air Force

Family: Wife Gina, four children and two grandchildren

Best golf shot: A double-eagle on a course in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. On his second shot on a par-5, he hit a 3-wood from 220 yards into the cup.

MORE GOLF, TRAVEL AHEAD

Now, Buck the retiree will have more time to spend on leisure — golf, fishing and family.

While he will continue to run a house-watching business, he will be working on his 7 handicap with his golf buddies at The Duke and Southern Dunes courses. Gina and their son Ryan also hit the little ball.


The Brawners have been visiting Homer, Alaska for the past five years, since Ryan opened a restaurant there.

In July, they will head north for another visit, this time for three months. Part of his time will be spent trying to hook king salmon on the Kenai River, the most popular sport-fishing destination in Alaska.

Longer trips with family and friends are ahead, he said.

A send-off for Buck Brawner was planned for May 22 at Pacana Park to give the community an opportunity to show gratitude to the man who always had a smile or a kind word at the post office.

The memories of those interactions with his customers, especially the new residents in town, is what he will treasure most.

"I'm usually the first one they meet. I am going to miss it." 



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EDUCATION



A student assesses his MUSD education

BY MURRAY SIEGEL

PARENTS OF SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN MAY ASK, "CAN schools in the Maricopa Unified School District provide the quality education I want for my child?" This is a valid question, especially if the child is an excellent student.

It appears some parents, who seek schooling outside of the district, say the answer is "No."

One incoming freshman has his own thoughts on the question.

Brady McMullen has attended MUSD schools from kindergarten through eighth grade, taking advantage of available programs and activities. In third and fifth grade, he participated in the Nissan "A World in Motion" program, working on engineering projects and touring the automaker's test facility in Stanfield. The experience led him to consider future studies in engineering.




After completing fifth grade at Butterfield Elementary, he attended Maricopa Wells Middle School, where he was in the Blended Learning Program. Brady explained the program helped him make great strides developing as a student. The group work and projects, as well as working with computers, enhanced his ability to meet future education challenges, he said.

He has great praise for three of his middle-school teachers. Robyn Rice, his math teacher, provided him with the learning he needed to take high school geometry while still in eighth grade. Jackie Hahn, his science teacher, used experiments to help Brady explore new ideas. His English/history teacher, Jennifer Cameron, emphasized the need to improve his writing skills and challenged him to become a skillful writer.

Brady also mentioned the sports programs at the middle school, which provided enjoyable competitions and allowed him to interact with a diverse set of peers. He played baseball, basketball, football and soccer, and he plans to try out for teams at Maricopa High School. His other extracurricular activities include orchestra, student council and National Junior Honor Society.

As an eighth-grade student, Brady was allowed to take the PSAT college admission test. He scored in the 92nd percentile on a test primarily taken by 10th graders.

For Brady McMullen, MUSD has offered a collection of opportunities to prepare him for the road that lies ahead. It is a great place for a good student to attend school. 

Murray Siegel, Ph.D., has more than 44 years of teaching experience and volunteers at Butterfield Elementary School.

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Students from Stepping Stones Homeschool recently toured the new Maricopa Library and Cultural Center with their teacher Anna Hart. Her approach to education calls for special needs students working alongside their neurotypical peers, with both groups learning from the other.

At Stepping Stones, teaching tandem blends special education and Montessori methods

BY BOB MCGOVERN

ANNA HART BELIEVES ALL CHILDREN deserve a quality opportunity to learn, and her passion for special education reflects that conviction.

“I just don’t think there’s anyone worth overlooking, nobody, and I mean that at all levels,” she said.

For several years the educator has operated Stepping Stones Homeschool, an inclusionary program that uses the Montessori approach to teach students with special needs, including autism and dyslexia. The two-pronged, two-teacher approach — Hart is a licensed special educator with a specialty in autism and speech therapies and Karen Wood is a certified Montessori teacher — offers a curriculum tailored to address the individual needs of their students. An aide rounds out the team.

A couple of years ago, Hart was teaching by herself when she realized she needed more help. Through a bit of luck, she connected with

Wood, whom she called a “blessing” and an “amazing educator” who is knowledgeable, patient and flexible.

“I decided to hire a teacher and she’s Montessori-certified so we could teach together,” Hart said of Wood. “I don’t have to know Montessori curriculum, thank goodness, because it’s too much to do. She tells me the scope and sequence of the curriculum and I make the modifications and scaffolding (instruction built on prior knowledge) for each one of the students.”

Established in 2013, the school provides educational services to students with special needs and students with typical needs in preschool and early elementary grades. It also provides speech/language services, daycare and afterschool care. The school has operated out of Hart’s home for five years.

But when the new school year starts later this summer, Hart will have a bigger space that will

allow her to take on several more students. She has signed a lease for about 2,000 square feet of space in the old Electrical District No. 3 building in the Maricopa Manor Business Center.

“We’re very excited because we’ll have more workspaces and quiet spaces, more space for activities and exploration of materials,” she said. “And everybody will be in the same classroom. It will be a more professional atmosphere and the kids will have ownership of the space.”

Hart said she still wants the program to remain small, so each child gets the attention they need as unique learners.

‘A FANTASTIC TEAM’

“They are exceptional teachers,” said Angela Garcia, an Eloy mother of two boys who have been learning with Hart and Wood. “They go above and beyond just teaching. It’s just absolutely amazing what they do.”

Courtesy Anna Hart



Logan Goettl, 12, who has cerebral palsy, works with materials at Stepping Stones to help him learn about telling time. “It’s been such a blessing in our lives,” said his mother Carrie Goettl of the school.

Her sons — Marcus, 11, is dyslexic, and Daniel, 9, is on the autism spectrum — have attended Stepping Stones for two years.

Garcia said Marcus was just being passed along year to year at local schools, unable to read effectively in the 4th grade. After two years at Hart’s school, he is making significant progress and growing in his confidence, she said. And Daniel now has a teacher who can teach at his level.

“They have come such a long way,” Garcia said of her sons, who will continue at the school for as long as they can.

The boys are among six students who attended the school this year. From 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. four days a week, the students learned math and reading in the morning and science and social studies in the afternoon.

Logan Goettl, who is nearly 13, has been working with Hart for about a decade.

He has cerebral palsy and is speech-delayed, said his mother, Carrie. He started out in preschool, then started tutoring with Hart.

At a Montessori school, Logan thrived with the approach to learning, but not the school. When Hart decided to create a school combining special education and Montessori methods, Logan was one of her first students.

“It’s been such a blessing in our lives,” Carrie Goettl said. “Logan loves to go there. All the kids get along so great. My son has met some great friends there.”

Goettl marveled at the great patience some of Logan’s friends show with him, explaining he uses a device to communicate.

ANNA HART

Age: 46

Maricopan since: 2010

Neighborhood: The Villages

Occupation: Owner/
Special Educator, Stepping
Stones Homeschool

Family: Husband Josh works
at Hexcel in Casa Grande; son
Jake, 14, and daughter Abbey, 16,
attend Desert Vista High School

Educational philosophy:
Research-based approaches
to teaching all learners. Data
dictates progression of teaching.
Educational modalities utilized:
Montessori, Applied Behavior
Analysis, TEACCH, Social
Thinking, Orton-Gillingham
Out of the classroom: Walking,
biking, staying active, and
traveling and enjoying new foods!

The multi-disciplined approach to learning has worked for Logan, she said.

“Together, they just make a fantastic team,” she said of the teaching tandem, highlighting their ability to be “loving and strict” at the same time.

A SILVER LINING

Hart’s approach is built on the idea that special needs students work alongside their



Teachers Anna Hart, left, and Karen Wood, right, have worked with brothers Marcus Garcia, 9, and his brother Daniel, 7, for two years.

neurotypical peers, with both groups learning from each other.

“I really believe in inclusionary education, that children should be educated with their neurotypical peers both for the benefit of the neurotypical peer and for the child with special needs,” said Hart, who grew up with an autistic sister.

Hart has an undergraduate degree in Early Childhood Special Education and Communication Disorders from Boston University as well as a graduate degree in curriculum and instruction for students with special needs from Johnson State College. She has also completed coursework in Applied Behavior Analysis and been trained in the Treatment and Education of Autistic and Communication Handicapped Children, or TEACCH, program.

An Arizona certified special educator, she is a licensed speech-language pathologist assistant.

Part of her mission is preparing parents how to recognize quality special education. It’s a vital part of the process, she said, because Arizona has so little regulation of education.

“So, you can send your child (to a school) and the only recourse you have is the same if you got a bad cup of coffee — you just don’t go there anymore,” she said. “But now you’ve wasted a year or two or three of your child’s education and, on top of that, these are children with special needs. They’re already behind the eight ball.”

Though not required by the state, Hart sets goals for her students, uses research-based intervention and tracks data-driven results. The lack of regulation has a silver lining: it allows Hart to be innovative in her approach.

“I’m trying to impart that level of seriousness that goes into education that’s getting completely missed,” she said. “It is very, very scary.”

“I feel obligated to my students and I want to do what’s absolutely best for them.” “And I want them to have a future that’s bright and good.”



Proper storing of produce preserves flavor, extends life

BY RITA BRICKER

HAVE YOU BECOME A BACKYARD gardener because of the coronavirus pandemic? Many of us have turned to growing our own food for a number of reasons. Maybe it's because you had more time on your hands. Perhaps you weren't making as many trips to the grocery store. Or you were looking for a healthy activity to enjoy with your children at home.

Whatever the reason, now is the time of year harvesting your warm-weather produce will start in earnest. And it is important to know how to store both homegrown and store-bought vegetables and fruits this time of year for maximum freshness and shelf-life, and to reduce food waste.

First, harvesting your own vegetables and fruits is best done in the morning when the water content is at its peak. And some, but not all, produce should be washed before storing. Moreover, not all produce should be refrigerated. So, let's look at some specifics.

Tomatoes, everyone's favorite homegrown food (actually a fruit), should be stored at room

temperature on your counter for best flavor and juiciness. Potatoes should be stored in a cool, dark place with plenty of air circulation. But do not store potatoes with garlic or onions, both of which produce ethylene gas as part of the ripening process.


Many fruits also produce ethylene but can be kept at room temperature while ripening then transferred to the refrigerator for longer-term storage. This list includes apricots, plums, peaches, avocados and nectarines. Apples, however, should go straight into the crisper in your refrigerator to retain their texture.

Citrus also does best when stored in the refrigerator, as do grapes, berries, cucumbers, peppers, eggplant, summer squash and zucchini. But if you overplanted zucchini as I did, you won't have enough refrigerator space to hold it all, so give some to your neighbors! If you buy mushrooms, they should be stored unwashed in the refrigerator for best flavor. But remove the plastic wrap if you keep mushrooms in their original container to keep them from getting slimy.



Lettuces and other leafy greens may also be stored unwashed in sealed containers or plastic zip-top bags to retain their crispness. But they must be washed immediately before use.

Brassica or cruciferous vegetables are cool-season crops when grown at home but are available year-round in our grocery stores. This group, which includes cauliflower, cabbage, broccoli, kale, bok choy and brussels sprouts, should be refrigerated in sealed containers.

Enjoy the fruits (and vegetables) of your labor longer by storing them properly. 

Rita Bricker is a Master Gardener.

 **520-374-6263, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.**
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Realtor: Read up on the CC&Rs when buying your home

BY DAYV MORGAN



A VERY IMPORTANT PART OF MOVING INTO A NEIGHBORHOOD governed by a homeowners association is the “Declaration of Covenants, Conditions and Restrictions,” or CC&Rs.

This document explains the rights and obligations of the homeowners and the HOA. The association usually has strict policies on color palettes, landscaping, use of RV gates, street parking and additions like ramadas. The CC&Rs are legally binding rules that are filed with the state.

Homebuyers will receive a copy of the CC&Rs from the escrow company. Even if final inspections have been made, the homebuyer can still back out within five days if they find something in the CC&Rs that is objectionable. Read the CC&Rs carefully, as they are different for each community. There is usually an “architectural standards” section, which pretty much applies to anything on your property that can be seen from the road. Understand what you are responsible to maintain and what is the HOA’s responsibility. If the CC&Rs are not clear, contact the community manager.

Homeowners who rent their homes will receive notices of alleged violations on behalf of their tenants. Lease agreements can include a stipulation holding the tenant responsible for CC&R violations. If you are a renter, ask your landlord or property manager for a copy of the CC&Rs. It is often the homeowner rather than the HOA who will notify you of violation complaints.


Residents in an HOA should stay on top of any updates. I had a client who repainted his house the exact same color, only to be told by the HOA that it needed to be redone because the approved color schemes had changed. Some neighborhoods in Maricopa now prohibit overnight parking on the street, and others are passing new restrictions on short-term rentals like Airbnb or VRBO.

CC&Rs may also detail the minimum and maximum number of plants and shrubs. Another client of mine bought her house and shortly after moving in received a notice she had to install more bushes in the front yard.


Can you install a shed visible over your back wall? Can an inoperable car be parked in the street? How soon do you have to remove your trash cans after pick-up? How early can you set up your holiday decorations?

These are all questions to understand in advance to avoid potential fines.

Homeowners may get a surprise notice if the previous owner did work that was never HOA-approved. One client was told by the HOA a shade structure over an AC unit had never been approved. The seller was expected to address the situation even though the structure had been in place since she purchased the home six years earlier.

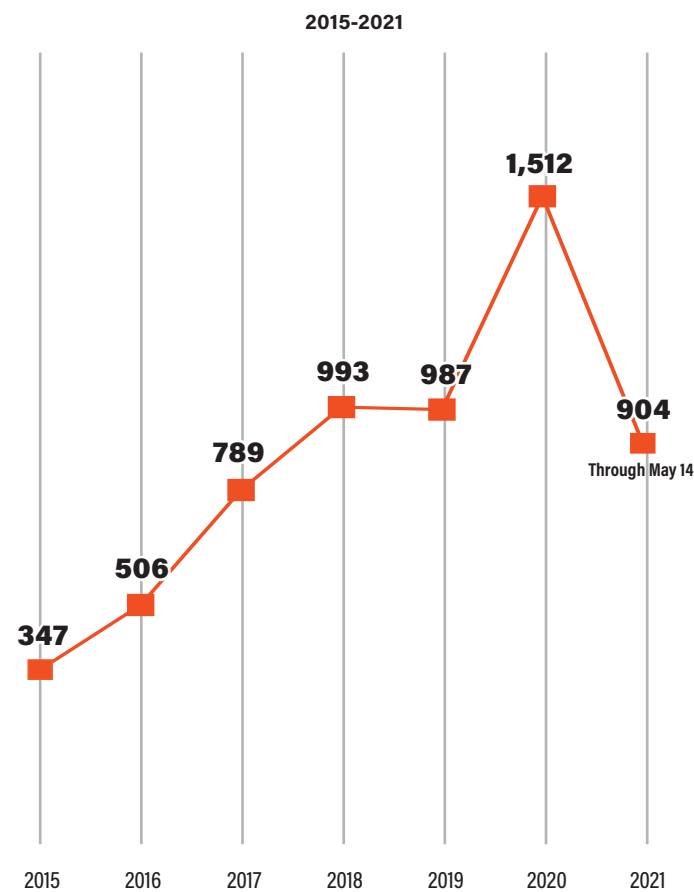
Understanding and abiding by the CC&R rules covering these details will make HOA life a little easier. The early discovery of rules that could conflict with your lifestyle and budget could save you from making an investment you come to regret. 

Dayv Morgan is a Maricopa Realtor and owner of HomeSmart Success. He is a 15-year resident of the city.

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HOME

most expensive HOME SOLD	43560 W. Elizabeth Ave.	April 22	\$ \$490,000
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The most expensive home sold in Maricopa April 13 – May 12 was a two-story in Senita. The home features a formal living/dining space on entry with tile floors continuing into the kitchen. Carpet helps create a cozy feel in the great room along with a built-in electric fireplace. Upstairs the oversized loft was turned into a screening room, including tiered seating and projection screen. The master bath and secondary bathroom have been remodeled with upgraded counters, sinks and shower in the master. The backyard features a large pool with waterfalls, above-ground spa and large pergola to provide plenty of shade. The home was listed for just over a month and sold for \$11,000 over asking.

- Square feet:** 3,750
Price per square foot: \$130.66
Days on market: 36
Builder: Pulte
Year built: 2005
Bedrooms: 4
Bathrooms: 2.5

Features: Three-car garage, theater room loft, remodeled and upgraded bathrooms, pool, spa, pergola, travertine-tile back patio, granite counters in kitchen, built-in electric fireplace, new paint throughout.
2. 41200 W. Robbins Drive, Homestead North.....\$462,500
3. 18265 N. Larkspur Drive, Desert Cedars.....\$461,000
4. 42395 W. Abbey Road, Province.....\$458,000
5. 42422 W. Bravo Drive, Rancho El Dorado\$454,445

least expensive HOME SOLD	43357 W. Chisholm Drive	April 24	\$ \$202,000
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- The least expensive home sold in Maricopa April 13 – May 12 was a one-story, three-bedroom in Rancho El Dorado. This home was on the market for an extended period due to a lease-to-purchase agreement that did not complete. The property needs some TLC and was priced to reflect.
- Square feet:** 1,893
Price per square foot: \$106.71
Days on market: 1,343
Builder: Hacienda
Year built: 2002
Bedrooms: 3
Bathrooms: 2

Features: Entrance is to the formal living/dining room. Kitchen features an island and breakfast nook. Large master with a full bathroom. Carpet and tile flooring.
2. 36564 W. La Paz Street, Tortosa\$219,500
3. 45610 W. Windmill Drive, Maricopa Meadows.....\$222,600
4. 36113 W. Prado Street, Tortosa\$234,725
5. 46180 W. Sheridan Road, Maricopa Meadows.....\$243,000

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C'mon man, it's time to get healthy

BY JOAN KOCZOR

SOME MEN JUST DON'T LIKE talking about their health.

Even when they see a doctor, one of five men admit they haven't been completely honest with their physicians. Common reasons include embarrassment or discomfort with discussing certain issues and not wanting to be told to change their diets or lifestyle. Some say they didn't mention a health concern because they weren't ready to face a troubling diagnosis or wanted to avoid being judged.

That's a bit troubling as recent studies show men are dying an average of five years younger than women and lead nine out of 10 of the top causes of death.


June is National Men's Health Month, a national observance to raise awareness about health care for men. The focus is on encouraging boys, men and their families

to implement and practice healthy living decisions, such as exercising and eating healthy. And to increase awareness of health problems that can be detected early.

Some serious diseases may not have symptoms. High blood pressure can cause heart attack and stroke. (That's why they call it "the silent killer.") High cholesterol and diabetes can be symptom-free.

Choose a doctor you're comfortable with and be honest about what's really going on. The more often you're open, the easier it will become, and the less you'll cringe at the thought of an exam.

Avoiding the doctor won't make your health issues go away. Lean on your support network (taking a buddy to the doctor doesn't make you weak) and find a doctor you can trust. You'll thank yourself later for taking care of yourself today.

You can do anything for a month, and if you do it for a month, you can do it for life. 

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

 InMaricopa.com/Columnists



Start small and make real progress

Now's a good time to take stock of your health and think about how healthy you want to be. Set small and achievable goals and work with your doctor to make them a reality:

- **Eat healthier** and cut back on those snacks.
- **Add variety** to your diet, including fresh fruits and vegetables; brown rice and whole-grain breads; fiber-rich foods, including beans and leafy greens; and lean cuts of meat and poultry, such as skinless chicken breast and lean ground beef.
- **Exercise.** Walking, jogging, swimming, basketball, tennis and other physical activities can increase muscular strength and flexibility, strengthen the heart and improve circulation, and decrease blood sugar levels.

calendar 06.21

1

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

2

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

7

Maricopa Historical Society meeting
5 p.m.
Maricopa Library and Cultural Center
18160 N. Maya Angelou Drive

15

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

21

Maricopa Planning & Zoning Commission Meeting
6 p.m.
City Hall
39700 W. Civic Center Plaza

23

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

26-27

Maricopa Amateur Radio Association Field Days
11 a.m.
Maricopa Library and Cultural Center
18160 N. Maya Angelou Drive

Sundays

Narcotics Anonymous
7 p.m.
Community of Hope Church
45295 W. Honeycutt Ave.

Mondays

Virtual Storytime
9 a.m., Maricopa Public Library
[Facebook.com/MaricopaLibrary](https://www.facebook.com/MaricopaLibrary)

Narcotics Anonymous
7 p.m.
Community of Hope Church
45295 W. Honeycutt Ave.

Tuesdays

Maricopa Cruise-in
5-9 p.m., behind Burger King
20699 N. John Wayne Parkway

Alcoholics Anonymous
6:30 p.m.
Mt. View Community Church
50881 W. Papago Road

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.

Alcoholics Anonymous Open Meeting
7 p.m.
Mt. View Community Church
50881 W. Papago Road

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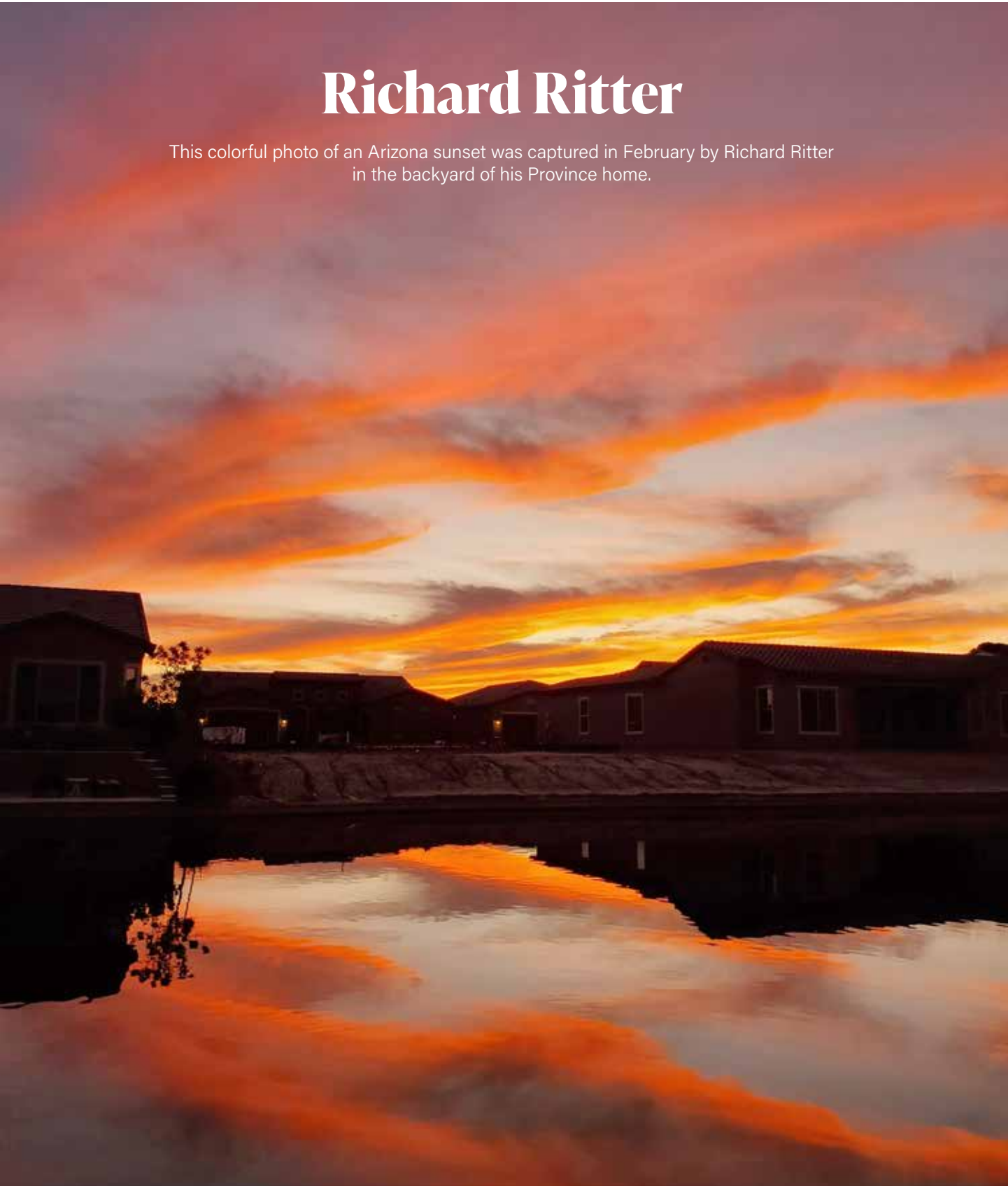
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