

in Maricopa

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January 2023

Tax whiz

Chris Scoggin of CS CPA Group
Taxes and Accounting

2022
*Year in
Review*

GOVERNMENT • BUSINESS • COMMUNITY • SENIORS • MORE

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21555R17 YOKOHAMA ASCEND LX 94V BW.....	\$183.99
18565R15 YOKOHAMA ASCEND LX 88H BW.....	\$119.99
19565R15 YOKOHAMA ASCEND LX 91H BW.....	\$121.99
22550R17 YOKOHAMA ASCEND LX 94V BW.....	\$194.99
22555R17 YOKOHAMA ASCEND LX 97H BW.....	\$188.99
23545R18 YOKOHAMA ASCEND LX 94V BW.....	\$230.99
21555R16 YOKOHAMA ASCEND LX 97H BW.....	\$158.99

OTHER SIZES AVAILABLE. 85,000 Mileage Warranty

ICONIC
TIRE & SERVICE CENTERS

GOODYEAR

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GET 4TH
FREE
WINTER SALE**

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26570R16 YOKOHAMA GEOLANDER AT G015 111T OWL....	\$231.99
24565R17 YOKOHAMA GEOLANDER AT G015 105T OWL....	\$246.99
24570R17 YOKOHAMA GEOLANDER AT G015 108T OW....	\$240.99
26570R17 YOKOHAMA GEOLANDER AT G015 113T OW....	\$238.99
24560R18 YOKOHAMA GEOLANDER AT G015 109H BW....	\$266.99
26565R18 YOKOHAMA GEOLANDER AT G015 114H BW....	\$284.99
27565R18 YOKOHAMA GEOLANDER AT G015 116H BW....	\$290.99
26575R16LT YOKOHAMA GEOLANDER AT G015 E 123R OWL....	\$275.99
27560R20 YOKOHAMA GEOLANDER AT G015 115H BW....	\$291.99

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26570R16 Wrangler AT Adventure	\$233.99
27560R20 Wrangler SRA	\$216.99
27555R20 Eagle LS-2	\$227.99
24565R17 Fortera HL	\$172.99
26550R20 Fortera HL	\$222.99

OTHER SIZES AVAILABLE

**GOODYEAR
ASSURANCE ALL-SEASON
65,000 Mileage Warranty**

*BUY 3, GET 4TH FREE

SIZE	BUY 3 PRICE
18565R15 Assurance All-Season 86T BLK.....	\$136.99
19565R15 Assurance All-Season 91T BLK.....	\$146.99
20555R16 Assurance All-Season 91H BLK....	\$149.99
20560R16 Assurance All-Season 92T BLK.....	\$166.99
21560R16 Assurance All-Season 95T BLK.....	\$169.99
21555R17 Assurance All-Season 94H BLK....	\$198.99
23555R17 Assurance All-Season 99T BLK.....	\$212.99
23545R18 Assurance All-Season 100H BLK....	\$241.99

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it is free on repairable tires up to 20".
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ASSURANCE MAXLIFE
85,000 Mileage Warranty**

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SIZE	BUY 3 PRICE
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20555R16 Assurance Maxlife 91H BLK....	\$178.99
20565R16 Assurance Maxlife 95H BLK....	\$176.99
21560R16 Assurance Maxlife 95V BLK....	\$170.99
22560R16 Assurance Maxlife 98H BLK....	\$145.99
21545R17 Assurance Maxlife 87V BLK....	\$190.99
21555R17 Assurance Maxlife 94V BLK....	\$202.99
22565R17 Assurance Maxlife 102H BLK....	\$209.99

OTHER SIZES AVAILABLE

*BUY 3, GET 4TH FREE PERFORMANCE RADIAL

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20555R16 Performance Radial 94W BLK....	\$100.99
20565R16 Performance Radial 99H BLK....	\$111.99
21560R16 Performance Radial 99H BLK.....	\$98.99
22560R16 Performance Radial 98H BLK....	\$123.99
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21545R17 Performance Radial 91W BLK....	\$106.99
21555R17 Performance Radial 98W BLK....	\$120.99

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19565R15 Kelly Edge A/S 91H BLK	\$109.99
20555R16 Kelly Edge A/S 91H BLK	\$119.99
20560R16 Kelly Edge A/S 91V BLK	\$129.99
21560R16 Kelly Edge A/S 95H BLK	\$139.99
21555R17 Kelly Edge A/S 94V BLK	\$142.99
23555R17 Kelly Edge A/S 99H BLK	\$131.99
23555R18 Kelly Edge A/S 100H BLK	\$175.99

OTHER SIZES AVAILABLE

*BUY 3, GET 4TH FREE LIGHT TRUCK RADIALS AT

SIZE	BUY 3 PRICE
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26570R16 Light Truck Radials AT 112T BW	\$201.99
24575R16LT Light Truck Radials AT 120Q BW....	\$177.99
26575R16LT Light Truck Radials AT 123S BW....	\$191.99
24570R17 Light Truck Radials AT 110T BW	\$196.99
26570R17 Light Truck Radials AT 115T BW	\$206.99
24560R18 Light Truck Radials AT 106V BW	\$169.99
27565R18 Light Truck Radials AT 116T BW	\$239.99

OTHER SIZES AVAILABLE. 40,000 Mileage Warranty

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R1234YF
systems



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- Computer precisely aligns front wheels to rear
- Ensures straight steering wheels
- Necessary for accurate alignment of newer cars

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& LIFETIME
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We beat Discount Tire, Big O, Firestone & Pep Boys ... Make us your last call!

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Photographer Victor Moreno captured CS CPA Group Managing Director Chris Scoggin and his staff at his newly renovated office in Maricopa.



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BIG GAME PARTY

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2023
DOORS • 4PM | GAME • 4:30PM
THE EVENTS CENTER AT
HARRAH'S AK-CHIN CASINO

Join us to watch the big game & visit Ticketmaster to purchase a food package for this event!



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CAESARS REWARDS

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SPORTSBOOK & CAESARS REWARDS MOBILE APP: Guest must show phone/device to verify app is downloaded and logged into in order to receive Free Slot Play and drawing entry tickets. BID TO WIN: One winner will be selected from each drawing drum. Winners will be notified via email by 11:59PM on Promotional Day. Winners must respond within 24 hours to the email, at which time they will receive instructions on how to claim their prize. Winning emails not responded to within 24 hours will result in forfeiture of prize. Must have valid email address on file to participate. Email address provided during this event will update Caesars Rewards account. Actual items may vary. All redemptions are final, no returns. For complete Free Slot Play details, please see Caesars Rewards or the Events Center. Valid only at Harrah's Ak-Chin Casino.

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The year ahead: Thoughts while stalled on SR 347

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO ACCOMPLISH THIS YEAR?

Improve your health and fitness? Find new ways to achieve happiness? How about the ability to ruminate on the year ahead at a splendid sit-down restaurant right here in Maricopa?

It's funny how the turn of a calendar page gets so many people to reset or refocus.

That's a good thing, of course, provided there is lasting follow through. Otherwise, a new year's resolution is as valuable as the latest new-restaurant projected opening.

We've asked leaders in various walks of life to share their hopes for Maricopa in 2023.

Would it surprise you that Mayor Nancy Smith and District 16 Representative and House Majority Whip Teresa Martinez have improving State Route 347 atop their lists?

Maricopa is a diverse place and the voices of people of color aren't always heard or even solicited. Civic leader Rachel Leffall shares how this might improve as part of our 2023 look ahead.

Among Maricopa's 500 or so city employees, how many would you imagine take home six-figure salaries? A dozen? Two dozen? Try 44 of them, with a 45th on his way at the end of the month. We got our



hands on the city's entire payroll through a public records request, and we were surprised to learn nearly 9% are making 100 grand or more. Are the people of Maricopa getting their money's worth? We share, you decide.

Apparently, one person who is doing a good job, based on clients' feedback, is Chris Scoggin, managing director of CS CPA Group Taxes and Accounting. Our cover story by Justin Griffin clues you in.

It is said, at least by Edmund Burke, "Those who don't know history are doomed to repeat it." And the Anglo-Irish statesman and philosopher of the late 1700s never sat on the 347 day after day with no change of fate.

History is big around here. Our readers love it. To that end, we give you a healthy final dose of 2022 in our Year in Review. There were many good things across the city, and there were some that might best not be repeated. Let's hope we learn.

Of course, one thing we hope is repeated for the foreseeable future is your continued readership of InMaricopa magazine and inmaricopa.com on the web. We'll try to keep earning your loyalty.

Happy New Year!



LEE SHAPPELL
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To us, he's "Junior." You don't see his name permeating our pages, yet he is among our most-valued contributors behind the scenes, whether tracking down content for lists or hustling out to take a photo.



MELISSA LUSK

To us, she's "Food Buddy," because she takes two bites from her lunch and then hands it off. To advertisers, she's our bright, fresh voice, eager to help you achieve your goals with us.



BRYAN MORDT

To us, he's "Bryan with a 'Y'" (we've got nicknames for everybody), not to be confused with Brian Jr. You wouldn't confuse his news photos or advertising videos with an amateur's, either. He is in focus.



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• Holding ourselves and others accountable.
• The success of deserving businesses.

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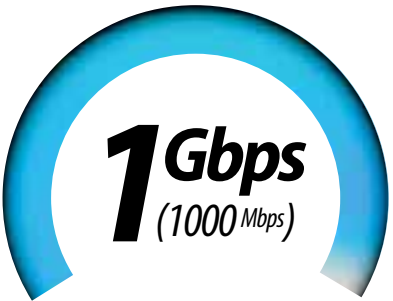
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A bridge to the future

The John Wayne Parkway overpass has changed life for Maricopans in numerous ways. Since it opened to traffic July 15, 2019, the elimination of the train crossing immediately made it safer for motorists by reducing traffic congestion and related stress. The 500-foot-long, \$55 million overpass, opened multiple avenues of development, with builders putting up (and planning more) homes in Palo Brea and Alterra. Commercial development along John Wayne Parkway has increased as well. Businesses in the south end of town have benefited, with customers and employees finding it easier to get to and from Harrah's Ak-Chin and Ak-Chin Entertainment.



THIS MONTH BACK IN...

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



2008

While most of Maricopa was kicking back to celebrate the passing of another year, Maricopa Police Chief Patrick Melvin and his officers were kicking off the city's transition from partnering with the Pinal County Sheriff's Office for public-safety services to being Maricopa's primary, full-time provider. "There is a different type of call that happens on the graveyard shift," Melvin said after working Maricopa PD's first-ever night shift from 9 p.m. New Year's Eve to 7 a.m.



2013

The more things stay the same: Traffic crept on State Route 347 after a southbound cement truck overturned while attempting to make a left turn onto Smith-Enke Road. The mess was exacerbated by a delay getting an appropriate tow truck to the scene. Maricopa police waited throughout the morning and early afternoon for two heavy-duty tow trucks. "It really does take a long time to clear an intersection," said MPD Officer Jenny Alsidez.



2018

Teachers said they feel disconnected and want their new superintendent, who would become Tracey Lopeman, to repair or rebuild relationships during a forum as Maricopa schools' Governing Board begins its search. Teachers urged the board to choose an inclusive leader who is transparent and a confident decision-maker; trust their teaching abilities, and be communicative and visible on all school campuses. Teachers added the new superintendent should focus on hiring and retaining qualified personnel rather than on simply filling vacancies.

Brian Petersheim Jr./file

Calling All Future Kindergarteners!

Maricopa Unified School District invites you to join teachers and staff to tour your new school! Learn about our full-day kindergarten program and register for the 2023-2024 school year.



MUSD KINDERGARTEN INFORMATION NIGHT

Tuesday, February 7, 2023
5:30-6:30 PM

**Online registration is available*

Documents needed for registration:

- Parent/Guardian ID
- Child's Birth Certificate
- Immunization Records
- Proof of Residency (electric bill, water bill, etc.)

www.MUSD20.org/kindergarten

For more information, contact your school site:

Butterfield Elementary School
43800 W. Honeycutt Rd
520-568-6100

Santa Cruz Elementary School
19845 N. Costa Del Sol Blvd
520-568-5170

Maricopa Elementary School
18150 N. Alterra Pkwy
520-568-5160

Santa Rosa Elementary School
Spanish Dual Language Immersion Available
21400 N. Santa Rosa Dr
520-568-6150

Pima Butte Elementary School
42202 W. Rancho El Dorado Pkwy
520-568-7155

Saddleback Elementary School
Maricopa Accelerated Program Available
18600 N. Porter Rd
520-568-6110



45 city employees belong to \$100K salary club

Looking for a good-paying job? City Hall might not be a bad option to battling traffic on State Route 347 to commute to one in the Valley.

According to data provided to InMaricopa via a public-records request, Maricopa employs 44 people whose salaries are in six figures among its 504 on the city payroll list it supplied.

A 45th will join the \$100,000 club when new Police Chief Mark Goodman comes on board Jan. 23.

In all, nearly 9% of city staff earns at least \$100,000 per year.

City Manager Rick Horst is the only city employee who cracks the \$200,000 barrier. Six others earn at least \$150,000 per year (Goodman will make it seven), while 14 more make \$125,000 to \$149,000.

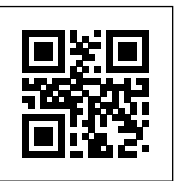
Mayor Nancy Smith's salary is \$34,944 and city councilmembers are paid \$21,320.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the 2021 median household income in Maricopa is \$82,388, meaning half are above that figure and half below it. The Arizona average is \$65,913.



MARICOPA'S 10 HIGHEST-PAID EMPLOYEES

City Manager Rick Horst	\$221,999
Police Chief Mark Goodman	\$182,401
Assistant City Manager Jennifer Brown	\$167,887
Deputy City Manager Matthew Kozlowski	\$162,738
Deputy City Manager Ben Bitter	\$158,240
City Clerk Vanessa Bueras	\$154,302
Court Administrator Johnny Tse	\$153,000
Fire Chief Brad Pitassi	\$152,000
Public Works Director Keith Brown	\$149,500
Parks and Recreation Director Nathan Ulliot	\$147,682



For a complete list of city staff salaries, visit InMaricopa.com, or click the QR code.



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2022
in Maricopa

Year in Review

2022 was quite a year in Maricopa. The city took many strides on the fronts of infrastructure, commercial development and residential growth. Maricopa Unified School District opened Desert Sunrise High School, its first high school in nearly 40 years. The City of Maricopa kicked off construction of the Sonoran Desert Parkway, also known as the East-West Corridor, which had been on the table for a decade. The year saw many more restaurants and retail establishments either announce their intentions to come to Maricopa or begin construction. It was a year of success and struggle, and in this section we look to wrap it up for you as we begin 2023.

Restaurants & Food

FOR MANY RESTAURANTS TRYING TO OPEN, DELAY IS ON THE MENU

OPENINGS

Crumbly Cookies, 20320 N. John Wayne Pkwy., Suite 105, opened in late July. With a rotating menu, the shop serves up fresh varieties like Molten Lava (dark-chocolate cookie with hot fudge and powdered sugar) and the Classic Pink Sugar (vanilla sugar cookie with pink almond frosting). Hours: Monday-Thursday, 8 a.m. to 10 p.m.; Friday-Saturday, 8 a.m. to midnight.

Jimmy Johns, 20320 N. John Wayne Pkwy., Suite 110, opened in the Sonoran Creek Marketplace. The national sandwich giant serves up fresh sandwiches in a variety of sizes. Favorites include the Spicy East Coast Italian (double salami, double capocollo, cheese, hot peppers, onion, oil and vinegar, and oregano-basil) and the Beach Club (turkey, double cheese, avocado spread and cucumber). Hours: 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. daily.

Neaux Coffee Company, 19428 N. Taft Ave., welcomed an early-morning crowd for the first time in August. The shop is a dream come true for owner and entrepreneur, Brooke Molyneaux, 23, a three-year graduate of Maricopa High who earned an Organizational Leadership degree from ASU in just five semesters. Pouring her savings from jobs at

Several new food outlets (coffee, cookies and sandwiches) opened in 2022, but the real news was the progress — or lack of it — by several anticipated food joints and sit-down restaurants due to construction delays, rising construction costs and workforce shortages. Here's a rundown of the new openings and what appears to be coming this year — or later:



Starbucks and other places into construction of the shop, she was assisted by her family. The menu offers a wide selection of coffees, flavored lemonades and Italian sodas, pastries of locally sourced ingredients and avocado toast. Hours: 5 a.m. to 8 p.m. daily.

ALMOST READY TO GO

Dell's Pizza, a Casa Grande institution for 58 years, will open a scaled-back shop in the city. The mostly take-out operation in the Maricopa Town Plaza will share a building with Rili B's Taco Shop. It will serve pizza and wings. Plans are for an early 2023 opening. The Maricopa shop will be the first Dell's outside Casa Grande and have separate ownership.

UNDER CONSTRUCTION



Cold Beers and Cheeseburgers is among the most widely anticipated joints coming to town. The upscale burger place from the Valley has seen many delays, but the wait is nearly over. With construction continuing next to Sprouts in the Sonoran Creek Marketplace, the 5,475-square-foot sit-down restaurant known for its gourmet burgers is shooting for a late March opening. It will have a large outdoor patio for about 100 patrons. More than 150 beers will be available at the chain's largest bar in Arizona. Management expects to hire 60 to 70 full-time and part-time employees early this year.

Carniceria Sonora, the Mexican butcher shop and grocery store moving into the former Good2Go gas station/market on North Maricopa Road, looks to be opening very soon, as well. Management interviewed prospective employees in November. The owners, D&N Financial, were renovating the building's interior for dry goods resale and a small take-out restaurant shop.

It will feature a meat-carving area. The provisioner, which is known for its marinades and authentic salsas, tortillas and guacamole, operates other locations in the Valley.

Nando's Mexican Café, a Southeast Valley mainstay for nearly 20 years, is under construction at Edison Pointe. Co-owner Tim Shaughnessy said in June he hoped to be ready to open in the first quarter of 2023. The nearly 5,000-square-foot restaurant and bar will have a 900-square-foot patio that can seat 60 diners. About 50 non-management employees will be hired, about half of those full-time. The chain is known for its Sonoran-style Mexican cuisine — enchiladas, tacos, burritos — and will offer a daily happy hour during the week and a popular weekend brunch menu.



BoSa Donuts, an Arizona favorite, is hoping to open in the first quarter at The Wells. The 1,800-square-foot shop in a multi-tenant center just south of Bahama Buck's at Porter Road and Maricopa-Casa Grande Highway is under construction. It will have a drive-through lane. The eatery will offer a wide selection of raised, brown cake and devil's food cake doughnuts, breakfast and lunch sandwiches, coffees and fruit smoothies, and hot cocoa for the kids. Hours likely will be 5 a.m. to 9 p.m. at opening, though it could go 24 hours if the location proves to be busy.

Filibertos, the Mesa-based Mexican chain, has a location picked out in Sonoran Creek Marketplace, in the westernmost unit in the building that houses MOD Pizza. It

will have a drive-through. The stores typically are open 24 hours a day and serve a menu of traditional Mexican favorites, including meat and fish tacos, enchiladas, burritos and chimichangas.

Thai Chili 2 Go, the fast-casual Thai food chain with 13 outlets across the Valley, is also coming to Sonoran Creek. Its menu features authentic Thai dumplings, veggie spring rolls, gai tod (chicken bites), and a variety of curries, rice and noodles.

LONG TERM



Chili's hopes you can chill a while as they work toward opening at The Wells. The American casual-dining restaurant chain had hoped to begin construction in November, but that was pushed back. In June, a representative for operator Brinker International told InMaricopa it would be about 18 months — or about the end of 2023 — before it could open. A 5,177-square-foot restaurant — significantly larger than its typical footprint — is proposed for the northeastern corner of Stonegate Road and Maricopa-Casa Grande Highway, just west of Jiffy Lube. It would have 123 parking spaces. The eatery, expected to employ as many as 30 people, will be open from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. daily.

Cocina Madrigal, the sit-down Mexican restaurant coming south from south Phoenix, is generating the most buzz. It was ranked No. 1 on Yelp's 2022 list of the Top 100 Places to Eat in the U.S., up from fifth in 2021. It also is No. 1 on Trip Advisor's list of Best Mexican Restaurants

in Phoenix (with 85% of reviewers giving five stars). The menu includes Oaxaca Fundido, chicken tortilla soup, chocolate chipotle pie and a selection of salads, enchiladas, tacos and burgers. In June, the city opened its arms to the popular eatery by rezoning its half-acre site to permit a restaurant. When owner Leo Madrigal announced the location in November 2021, he said he expected construction activity within 12-18 months, but the project is still not listed on the city's development website.

Slim Chickens, a fast-food restaurant franchise owner Tom Barnett compares to Chick-Fil-A, was hoping to break ground in the first quarter of 2023, but construction and staffing issues forced another delay. The eatery, among several (eventually) coming to The Wells off Maricopa-Casa Grande Highway, will be between McDonald's and Big 5 Sporting Goods. It is not known when construction will commence.



eegees, the purveyor of frozen smoothies, started with a single truck driving around Tucson neighborhoods in 1971. In the decades since, it has opened 30 stores in the state, with one on the way to Maricopa. The chain announced in December it will build a 2,300-square-foot shop with indoor seating and drive-through in Edison Place, near the Sherwin Williams paint store. Its specialty is the eponymous fresh-fruit frozen treat available in lemon, strawberry, piña colada, skinny berry and a flavor of the month. The menu



also features hot and cold sub sandwiches, grinders, salads and fries. A timetable for opening is not yet available, but it is expected the shop will generate about 40 new jobs.



Burger King has been hit by the same issues as other projects. Barnett, also the franchisee for the BKs in town, in August put off the start of construction of the city's second BK at The Wells. He had originally planned to break ground by the end of 2022 on the 3,183-square-foot restaurant with a drive-through.

Carl's Jr. is making a Maricopa return. The burger franchise, which closed four years ago in the city, has plans for a 2,666-square-foot restaurant with drive-through on the east side of John Wayne Parkway between Iconic Tire and Maricopa Animal Hospital. The development is listed by the city as still in the planning phase.



Retail/Services

THE RETAIL LANDSCAPE

With Marshalls now open and Tractor Supply coming to The Wells, Maricopa shoppers are already dreaming of the next big-box retailer to announce plans at a particular city location. (See story, page 16.)

But during the wait for more details on that project, here's what opened in 2022 and what's ahead this year — and beyond:



OPENINGS

Marshalls' launch in November was the biggest retail opening since its neighbor, Sprouts Farmers Market, welcomed shoppers in August 2021. The nation's largest off-price family apparel and home fashion retailer opened a 22,000-square-foot store in Sonoran Creek Marketplace, hiring about 60 full-time and part-time workers. Hours: Monday-Saturday, 9:30 a.m. to 9:30 p.m., and Sundays, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Five businesses — **ATi Physical Therapy, Supercuts, Pet Planet, B-Luxury Nail salon** and **Vanessa McDill State Farm** — opened at Sonoran Creek Marketplace.



Fast & Friendly Car Wash opened in its second operation in town at 42020 W. Maricopa-Casa Grande Hwy. in The Wells.

UNDER CONSTRUCTION

AutoZone may open this month. Framing and exterior walls were nearing completion in November at its site at the northwestern corner of Maricopa-Casa Grande Highway and Porter Road, adjacent to Walmart at The Wells. The auto parts retailer's second store in town is in a 7,372-square-foot building with 36 parking spaces at 17542 N. Porter Road.

Petco, the U.S. pet retailer, will open in a 12,500-square-foot storefront along Edison Road at Edison Pointe. The retailer sells pet food, products and services, as well as certain types of small animals.

Banner Physical Therapy will open an office at The Wells as part of a 5,576-square-foot multi-tenant building at 17430 N. Porter Road that will include BoSa Donuts and another retail operation.

LONG TERM

Tractor Supply Co. looks to be the next big-box retailer to open in the city with its October announcement. The largest rural-lifestyle retailer in the nation will build a 21,633-square-foot store with its new prototype design on 3.4 acres at 41650 W. Maricopa-Casa-Grande Highway. The retailer will kick off Phase 2 of development at The Wells. Also planned: a 21,500-square-foot outdoor display area, 3,744-square-foot greenhouse, feed center and a pet-grooming/washing facility.

Maricopa Commercial Center, a two-building development of more than 40,000 square feet of retail and commercial space, is proposed by Alpine Development Partners. The site is on 3.6 acres of vacant land south of Honeycutt Road and east of Porter Road. The vacant property was originally slated for high-density, residential use but has remained undeveloped. There would be a 15,410-square-foot, multi-tenant retail building and a 25,600-square-foot multi-tenant, flex-commercial building — on separate parcels.

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South of the overpass, a retail explosion coming ... but in 2023?

With at least six projects — four restaurants and two service businesses — in construction or planning, The Wells is among the busiest developments in the city. Phase 2 will move to land northwest of Walmart, where Tractor Supply is the first commitment.

Meanwhile, development continues at Edison Pointe, where nearly 29,000 square feet of retail, restaurant and service space along Edison Road is under construction.

But much of the excitement about future retail development in Maricopa — at least from city officials — is centered on nearly 60 acres of dirt on the south side of the overpass, between John Wayne Parkway and the Union Pacific railroad tracks, that is part of a larger multi-use development dubbed New Maricopa Station. It is touted by city officials as a major retail development of about 450,000 square feet.

Speculation about major retailers, such as Target, Kohl's, Home Depot and Lowe's, have been rampant for a couple of years, but the city has held the identities of interested retailers close to the vest.

The larger New Maricopa Station development would include the Heritage District area north of the railroad tracks bounded by Honeycutt Road, Maricopa Groves Parkway and Mercado Street. The city's long-term vision is for an eclectic district of three-story buildings with ground-floor storefronts

and residences above them. Narrower streets would evoke a throwback era.

The city already has the funding needed to build a pedestrian bridge over the railroad tracks to link both halves of the development and allow residents and shoppers to walk throughout the entire area.

In the mixed-use retail center on the south side of the tracks, City Manager Rick Horst envisions a pedestrian-friendly area with green space and an open-air public market marketplace, where local vendors could rent affordable space — by the day, month or year — to sell their wares.

The city has been making land deals to facilitate — and control the development of — its vision for the major retail aspect of New Maricopa Station.

In the first half of 2021, it bought and sold parcels east of John Wayne Parkway, including purchase of 15 acres along the Union Pacific tracks for \$5.9 million. In March 2022, the city purchased 4.1 acres for \$3.24 million to market it to developers.

Horst has said the city moved quickly to acquire parcels in the area before others could “cherry pick” smaller parcels and effectively hem in the city's ability to attract large and mid-size stores, restaurants or hotels. The land is then sold to a developer or developers who share the overall vision of the economic development at hand.

Village zoning at City Center could attract small grocery

City planners and leaders have long talked about adopting a “village concept” to provide recreational and commercial opportunities within a residential area, removing the need for residents to travel to a single area of town to get needed services.

One of those villages looks to be in the City Center, the area around City Hall.

In June, City Council approved the rezoning of land on both sides of Bowlin Road east of White and Parker Road from transitional to neighborhood commercial.

The new zoning will allow Cocina Madrigal to open its second Mexican restaurant on a half-acre parcel directly south of the library. It also opens more than 22 acres immediately south of Bowlin for the development of small businesses like restaurants, retail shops and professional offices. Big-box stores are not permitted under the zoning classification.

A small grocery store would be allowed, city officials said.

The City Center is a target for development as it represents the geographic center of the city and residential growth moves south and east.



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Residential

2022: The rise of the apartment

The single-family home is king in Maricopa. But a housing shift is beginning. More options are coming — in the short term and long term — for people who want to move to this growing patch in the desert. Apartments, homes for rent and affordable housing define the shift.

In 2022, single-family homes represented most of the residential construction in the city, and most of it was expansion of established communities. Of the 19 HOAs in Maricopa, only two-thirds are fully built. In the others, foundations were being poured or earthmovers were grading hundreds of acres for new houses.

In fact, homebuilders pulled nearly 1,150 permits for single-family residences in 2022.

Multiple companies are building in The Lakes at Rancho El Dorado. On the east side of town, new homes are coming to Tortosa South and the Trails at Tortosa, where homes and a community center are under construction along recently paved streets. Nearby, new phases of construction are underway in Sorrento and Rancho Mirage.

Elsewhere in town, homes for sale are also rising in Palo Brea, Santa Rosa Crossing, Santa Rosa Springs and Province. And new single-family communities are already beginning to sprout — with more on the drawing board.

At the new Anderson Farms subdivision at Bowlin and Hartman roads, where nearly 2,000 houses will be built on 566 acres, roads are in and walls are going up.

Nearby, additional single-family homes are planned at two developments: Maricopa 40 and Murphy and Farrell. In other parts of the city, thousands of homes are proposed at Hogenes Farms (1,600 homes), Santa Cruz Ranch (6,600 homes) among others.

Some of these communities may not see building begin this year.

All told, more than 110,000 single-family homes are approved for construction, city officials have said. That includes 41,096 within city limits and a staggering 72,129 in unincorporated Pinal County.

Those numbers do not include apartments.

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RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY

Here's a rundown of current residential projects, including status, location, housing type and number of units. (Note: The city uses a standard of 3.2 residents per housing unit.)

UNDER CONSTRUCTION

Anderson Farms
Bowlin and Hartman roads
Type: Single-family homes
Units: 1,980
Site size: 566 acres
Density: 3.5 dwelling units per acre
Tidbits: Plans include a large turf play area and pickleball courts.

Bungalows on Bowlin
Bowlin Road, northwest of John Wayne Parkway
Type: Single-family for rent
Units: 196
Site size: 16.9 acres
Density: 11.6 dwelling units per acre
Tidbits: A resort-style pool/spa and farmhouse-style clubhouse are planned.

Copa Flats
Porter and Applegate roads, just north of Maricopa-Casa Grande Highway
Type: Affordable housing (apartments in 13 three-story buildings)
Units: 312
Site size: 13 acres
Density: 24 dwelling units per acre
Tidbits: Leasing was to begin last month, with move-ins expected in the spring; solar panels on roof.

Hampton Edison
Edison Road west of John Wayne Parkway
Type: One-story bungalow-style rental homes
Units: 151
Site size: 12 acres
Density: 12.5 dwelling units per acre

REV@Porter
Southeastern corner of Porter and Bowlin roads
Type: Single-family/multi-family homes for rent
Units: 194
Site size: 21 acres
Density: 9.2 dwelling units per acre
Tidbits: Every unit will have a small, private yard.

West Maricopa Village-FlatZ520
State Route 238 and Loma Road
Type: Three-story apartment buildings
Units: 348
Site size: 17.7
Density: 19.6 dwelling units per acre
Tidbits: opening in spring 2023

West Maricopa Village-Innovative Village
State Route 238 and Loma Road
Type: single-family units for rent
Units: 182
Site size: 16.3 acres
Density: 11.2 dwelling units per acre

PRE-CONSTRUCTION PLANNING

Apartments at Honeycutt
East of John Wayne Parkway, south of the overpass
Type: Apartments (eight four-story buildings)
Units: 574
Site size: 20.2 acres
Density: 28.4 dwelling units per acre
Tidbits: Part of the New Maricopa Station development; would be biggest apartment complex in the city.

El Rancho Santa Rosa
Farrell and Smith roads
Type: Single-family homes
Units: 680
Site size: 132 acres
Density: 5.2 dwelling units per acre
Tidbits: "Low water" crossing of Santa Rosa Wash will connect interior streets to Santa Rosa Springs and Ironpoint Drive.

Hancock Gunsmoke
Southwestern corner of Honeycutt and Gunsmoke roads in Seven Ranches
Type: Single-family homes for rent
Units: 253
Site size: 28 acres
Density: 10.14 dwelling units per acre
Notes: Some duplex models will have attached private garages.

Hogenes Farms
McDavid and Green roads
Type: Single-family homes
Units: Maximum of 1,600
Site size: 372 acres
Density: 4.3 dwelling units per acre
Tidbits: Tennis courts and walking trails planned.

Home at Maricopa
Porter and Applegate roads, north of Maricopa-Casa Grande Highway
Type: Apartments (three five-story buildings and three four-story buildings)
Units: 536
Site size: 18.8 acres
Density: 28.5 dwelling units per acre
Tidbits: Retail center planned in later phase.

Honeycutt Run
Honeycutt and Hartman roads
Type: Single-family/multi-family for rent
Units: 209
Site size: 20 acres
Density: 10.4 dwelling units per acre
Tidbits: Gated community; covered porches planned

>> continued on page 20



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THE RENTALS ARE COMING

For now, there is just one occupied apartment complex in town.

Oasis at The Wells opened in August 2021 with 120 units along Porter Road. Those units filled very quickly.

But many, many more apartments are coming in short order.

In 2022, in fact, hundreds of apartments and single-family homes for rent began to rise at Bungalows on Bowlin, FlatZ 520, Hampton Edison and other developments. Projects with hundreds more were approved by City Council and are in various phases of pre-construction planning.

Porter Road will become the nexus of rentals, with more than 1,240 apartments planned between Bowlin and Farrell roads.

At Copa Flats, construction is underway at the 312-apartment affordable-housing complex at Porter and Applegate roads. Tenants could be ready to move in this spring. Up the street, at REV@Porter, a mix of single-family and multi-family rental homes are going in at Porter and Bowlin roads.

In between those developments will be the city's largest apartment complex when it opens. Home at Maricopa will

have 536 units across three four-story buildings and three five-story buildings..

The project was approved by City Council in May over significant opposition from residents, who said they had great concerns about safety along the thoroughfare. (See story, page 28.)

All told, about 6,000 more future residents — and their cars — will settle on that half-mile stretch of Porter Road.

Joining the apartments are single-family homes for rent, like those to be offered at Bungalows on Bowlin and Hancock Gunsmoke. Local developers are getting in on the build-to-rent trend that was sparked during the Great Recession and then took off during the COVID-19 pandemic with soaring demand for single-family homes and suburban living.

City leaders have long anticipated the arrival of apartments, saying many prospective residents — teachers, police officers and others on limited salaries — can't afford to live in the city. Current residents may not want the upkeep of a single-family home or just wish to downsize into smaller quarters. Some may just want a place that is both more affordable and has more amenities.

2022 will likely be remembered as the year apartments rolled in.

Ironwood Ranch

White and Parker Road, north of City Hall
Type: Affordable housing community (apartments in 10 three-story buildings)
Units: 252
Site size: 13.9 acres
Density: 18.1 dwelling units per acre
Tidbits: EV charging stations; every unit would have balcony or patio.

Lofts on Edison

Edison Road and Wilson Avenue
Type: Multifamily
Units: 43
Site size: 2.2 acres
Density: 19.5 dwelling units per acre
Tidbits: Units for lease or purchase; sidewalks

Maricopa 40

Steen and Murphy roads
Type: Single-family homes
Units: 184
Site size: 40 acres
Density: 4.6 dwelling units per acre
Tidbits: Small retail corner planned.

Moonlight Ridge

State Route 238 and Green Road
Type: Planned area development
Units: About 1,500
Site size: 349 acres
Density: 4.3 dwelling units per acre
Tidbits: Large central park and sporting courts planned.

Murphy and Farrell

Murphy and Farrell roads, across from Desert Sunrise High School
Type: Single-family homes
Units: 1,642
Site size: 326 acres
Density: 5 dwelling units per acre
Tidbits: Plans call for a 22-acre neighborhood commercial center, parks and trails corridor.

Palomino Ridge

Hogenes Boulevard and McDavid Road
Type: Single-family homes
Units: 265-300
Site size: 66 acres
Density: 4 to 4.5 dwelling units per acre
Tidbits: Union Pacific railroad tracks along northeastern border

Red Valley Ranch

Farrell and Anderson roads
Type: Master-planned community
Units: 575
Site size: 164.3 acres
Density: 3.5 dwelling units per acre
Tidbits: Two neighborhood parks planned.

Roers Maricopa

Porter Road, southwest of Iron Point Drive
Type: Apartments (eight buildings of varying height, with most three stories)
Units: 200
Site size: 12 acres
Density: 16.7 dwelling units per acre
Tidbits: Construction possible in late 2023; four acres of open space

Villas at the Gin

20405 N. Estrella Pkwy.
Units: 162
Type: Apartments (five three-story buildings)
Site size: 10.17 acres
Density: 15.9 dwelling units per acre
Tidbits: Plan includes two one-acre commercial pads.

Villas at Stonegate

Stonegate Road and Alan Stephens Parkway
Units: 293
Housing type: Townhomes for sale
Site size: 16.1 acres
Density: 18.2 dwelling units per acre
Tidbits: Each unit will have a two-car garage.

GARAGE CONDOS RISE AT APEX

The dream of a fully built-out "country-club racetrack" in west Maricopa accelerated in 2022.

The development work at APEX Motor Club off State Route 238 at Ralston Road continued last year as construction commenced on 48 condo garages in four buildings.

The 1,250-square-foot, trackside garage condos are offered with options that include a vehicle lift and a 625-square-foot mezzanine.



Another phase of 48 units will follow as part of the \$35 million development, and more could be built farther from the track.

When completed, the APEX facility will feature 4.2 miles of track including a 3,400-foot straightaway. The initial 2.3-mile track has been in place since 2018.

Commercial

HOSPITAL, INNOVATION CAMPUSES NEAR COPPER SKY ADVANCE

An ambitious commercial project that would bring a second hospital and an innovation campus to Maricopa is moving ahead.

In September, City Council approved the rezoning of more than 26 acres of land from general mixed use and transitional to planned area development for the project near Copper Sky. The hospital will anchor a 14.3-acre medical campus with separate seven-story hotel and condominium buildings, medical

office space, sports academy and a helipad. The 559,000-square-foot development is planned for the southeastern corner of John Wayne Parkway and Bowlin Road.

The specialty ER hospital with 100,000 square feet and 25 beds will be operated by Houston-based Nutex Health. An ambulatory surgery center, catheterization lab and office space to house physician practices and other medical services is proposed as part of the project.

The innovation campus, to be sited nearby at the northeastern corner of John Wayne Parkway and Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard, would cover 12 acres and have more than 1 million square feet of building space.

Plans call for a total of 13 buildings on the two campuses, including two smart-parking structures. The project developer, S3 BioTech, estimates completion of the full project will take four to five years. Development of both sites would create as many as 11,500 construction jobs and 3,000 permanent health care jobs, the developer estimated.

S3 BioTech said it is possible the hospital could be operational by late this year.



Health Care

Exceptional Community Hospital opens Fast Track ER

Exceptional Community Hospital, the city's first hospital when it opened 13 months ago, launched an initiative over the summer to speed emergency care to patients.

The hospital opened a Fast Track ER designed to reduce wait times as part of its commitment to concierge care. The Fast Track ER is open Monday to Friday, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. The hospital's regular emergency room, however, is open 24/7.

Now, the medical facility is looking ahead to future phases of development.

Phase 2, which will be constructed north of the current building, will add in-patient and ER rooms, plus an OB/GYN department.

The third phase will incorporate surgery and medical office space.



MARICOPA'S FUTURE TRADE AREA: POPULATION 458,000

As city leaders work to attract high-paying jobs, big retailers and more industrial development, they have an ace up their sleeves: Maricopa is growing rapidly — and destined to explode in future years and decades in terms of population and job growth.

As of February 2021, there were 91,835 people in the Maricopa trade area, which includes Maricopa,

unincorporated Pinal County land, Ak-Chin Indian Community, Gila River Indian Community and Stanfield.

A "trade area" is the geographic area from which a business enterprise or center of retail or wholesale distribution draws most of its business. In simpler terms, it is the greatest distance consumers are willing to travel to buy goods and services.

The Maricopa trade area had 28,344 single-family homes in February 2021, according to Nathan Steele, the city's chief economic development officer.

But consider this.

The 23,956 homes in Maricopa a little less than a year ago will grow to 65,000 homes when another 41,000 or so homes in the city limits already approved are built and sold to buyers.

That growth is impressive, but it will be even more dramatic in unincorporated Pinal County, where the current 3,241 homes in the Maricopa trade area will grow to 75,000-plus homes when all the residential developments already approved are constructed.

"If you (include) the entitled lots — meaning those already approved to be built — across the same area, you're looking at a trade area population of more than 458,000 when all is said and done," Steele said.

That does not include projects in the planning phases, multi-family projects or homes in the surrounding communities, he said.

Those numbers are in the same neighborhood as the 2021 combined population of Chandler and Tempe.

And while many of the coming homes — about 75% — would lie outside Maricopa's city limits if built today, the belief is many of those residential communities will want to be annexed to gain access to better city-provided services (police and fire protection) and community amenities (parks, schools and libraries).

In fact, that is already happening, with City Council approving in September the pre-annexation of 5,700 acres south and west of the city.

After initial splash, surf park site remains quiet

The May 2021 announcement of a surf park coming to Maricopa caused a stir.

The thought of swimming and surfing under the summer sun without the requisite drive up State Route 347 to a waterpark in the Valley had young and old alike giddy with anticipation.

For the past year, though, it's more hang loose than hang ten with little happening at the proposed site, 71 acres on the southwestern corner of State Route 238 and Loma Road.

In October, City Council voted to rezone the acreage



from industrial zoning to planned area development.

From the beginning, both the city and the developers of PHX Surf Park, Mesa-based PHX Surf LLC, have been tight-lipped about plans for the proposed attraction, including construction timelines.

In August, InMaricopa reported more details about the plan, based on a development application filed with the city. That document said construction would be done in phases.

The waterpark would have two 5-acre surf lagoons, a hotel with 80 rooms and a "tiny home" park with 42 surf villas, restaurants, an RV park and retail shops.

Other attractions would include water slides, a "lazy river" and a pump track, as well as a spa and outdoor concert stage. Nighttime activities are also planned, including live music and surfing under the lights.

The retail area would

be elevated above the surf beach and fronted with a boardwalk to provide better viewing for park and restaurant patrons. Other elements will include picnic and play areas, and walking trails.

The primary entrance to the park will be off SR 238 and lead to more than 11 acres of parking along Green Road. There will be two entrances off Green Road, with one dedicated to the RV campsite area, along the southern border of the property. There will be three entry points from Loma Road, which will provide access to the surf villa and employee parking areas.



\$4M project to add northbound lanes on SR 347

A project to improve northbound traffic flow on State Route 347 north of Smith-Enke Road is expected to go to bid this summer.

The work is meant to address the significant traffic congestion seen daily around the city's busiest intersection, especially during rush hour. Construction could start in January 2024 and would last about a year, City officials have said.

City Council voted in April to approve an intergovernmental agreement with the Arizona Department of Transportation to facilitate the project. The city will pay half of the \$4 million cost and cover any overruns.

A third northbound through-lane will be added from Smith-Enke to the northern border by extending

the existing left-turn-only lane into Cobblestone Farms. That work will require reconstruction of the median and curb.

An acceleration lane will also be added for traffic turning north out of Rancho El Dorado at Lakeside Drive. That lane will merge into existing lanes near the city border. Maricopans need to become familiar with the zipper merge.

In addition, the southbound left-turn lane onto Lakeview will be extended by several hundred feet to help keep traffic from backing up and blocking the two through-lanes on that side.

The pavement north of Smith-Enke will be resurfaced as well.

North of the city, SR 347 will remain two lanes in each direction until ADOT — at some point — widens the highway north to Interstate 10.

ADOT: 'Diverging-diamond interchange' is best option for I-10/SR 347

For residents commuting to and from the Valley during rush hour, improvements to the interchange at State Route 347 and Interstate 10 can't come soon enough.

According to Arizona Department of Transportation figures from 2018, the stretch of SR 347 from Maricopa Road to I-10 saw average annual daily traffic of more than 38,000 vehicles. That number is projected to nearly double by 2040.

In September, ADOT proposed a design in use in France since the 1970s, the "diverging-diamond interchange," to move traffic through the congested junction.

Brian Petersheim Jr.



The interchange would carry traffic through the area more smoothly and more safely, with fewer and less serious crashes, according to ADOT. It would also cost less to construct.

According to ADOT, most of the improvements to the interchange would be concentrated on the SR 347/Queen Creek Road alignment, which would be split in two — one alignment for each direction of traffic. The horizontal alignments for the ramps would be shifted farther outward to tie into the new configuration. The vertical alignment for eastbound traffic would match the existing road as closely as possible over the existing bridge to allow for its continued use.

The new configuration would have four eastbound lanes across the existing bridge and three westbound lanes across a new bridge as well as 10-foot shoulders across both bridges. A 5-foot bike lane in both directions would be included.

The new bridge and nearly half of the new interchange would be built in a way that minimizes traffic disruptions. Some short-term lane closures and detours would be necessary, including on I-10 for the new bridge construction. That would likely be done by rerouting I-10 traffic through the existing interchange ramp terminals.

The current interchange was built in the late 1960s and reconstructed in 1992. The basic urban diamond configuration remained, though additional traffic capacity was added because the interchange had become the new primary I-10 access point for SR 347.

The final environmental assessment and design concept report are expected to be complete and available early this year.



More deaths on State Route 347

There were more deaths on the stretch of State Route 347 between Interstate 10 and Maricopa in 2022.

The first came on Jan. 27 when Buford Delaughter of Maricopa was killed in an accident on the highway at Casa Blanca Road.

According to Arizona Department of Transportation, Delaughter's vehicle was southbound on SR 347 when it crossed the median and collided with a northbound vehicle with four occupants. Delaughter's vehicle burst into flames and he suffered fatal injuries. None of the occupants in the other vehicle sustained life-threatening injuries.

The next fatality came in February when Vanity Chavez, a recent graduate of Maricopa High School, died in a single-car crash. The driver of the car, Christian Galindo, also of Maricopa, was arrested and charged on multiple counts, including DUI, extreme DUI,

aggravated DUI and driving on a suspended license, police said.

"A Nissan Sentra was seen traveling at a high rate of speed before it rolled an unknown number of times," reported DPS spokesman Bart Graves. "There were signs of impairment located on scene. One female passenger was ejected and later pronounced deceased at a Chandler hospital."

In November, a two-vehicle fatal collision at State Route 347 and Riggs Road took the life of a Maricopa man.

Anthony Valenzuela, 25, was pronounced dead at the scene after his motorcycle collided with a Jeep Wrangler at the intersection, according to DPS. Valenzuela was southbound on SR 347 when he struck the SUV as it made a left turn from the northbound lanes of SR 347 onto Riggs Road.

The driver of the Jeep was taken to a local hospital with minor injuries.



Sonoran Desert Parkway a first for Arizona

Construction officially began on the Sonoran Desert Parkway in June, but the road project is hardly a new idea.

The first purpose-built parkway in the state of Arizona is more than a decade in the making.

Prop 469, a referendum aimed at helping fund part of the project, failed in November at the ballot box. But City Manager Rick Horst said the parkway is too important to let stall.

“You know, at the end of the day, if you’re always waiting for the cavalry to show up to bail you out, you’re probably going to fail more often than you succeed,” Horst said. “So, as a progressive community, both through our City Council’s leadership and our staff’s tenacity, we were not going to let that stand in our way.”

One of the biggest flaws in the city’s transportation infrastructure is getting to and from the Valley, where most residents work. State Route 347 is the one road in and the one road out. The four-lane highway is plagued by congestion, particularly at rush hour, and it is dangerous due to three high-

speed intersections.

It’s important to have another way to get in and out of Maricopa, but the new parkway will also improve connectivity between Maricopa and Casa Grande.

With employers like electric car manufacturer Lucid and plumbing fixture giant Kohler opening manufacturing plants in Casa Grande, that city is becoming a hub for high-paying jobs. Sonoran Desert Parkway will make it easier for Maricopa residents to work there instead of in the Valley.

The initial leg of the project is a 1.6-mile stretch between John Wayne Parkway and Porter Road along the Farrell Road alignment. The four-lane parkway eventually will link SR 347 to Interstate 10, incorporating a stretch of the Maricopa-Casa Grande Highway, giving residents of the south side of the city a more efficient route to connect with I-10.

It can also expand to six lanes when needed.

Ross Renner, city transportation engineer, said he hopes a ribbon cutting will be possible in June.



Environmentalists’ challenge to I-11 plan still in court

The mostly unfunded Interstate 11 project has many, many miles to go before carrying traffic from Nogales to Wickenburg, via Hidden Valley.

Late in 2021, the U.S. Department of Transportation published its findings for the I-11 study corridor — a 2,000-foot-wide, 280-mile path — and recommended a route for the proposed freeway. It was the final step in the Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement process.

The action cleared the way for the Tier 2 process, which will determine the actual 200- to 300-foot-wide alignment within the larger corridor, to proceed. The project is backed by city leaders in Maricopa.

But in April, four Tucson-area conservation groups sued the Federal Highway Administration, challenging its approval. As proposed, the interstate would be routed around the west side of Tucson, head north through Casa Grande then cut through Hidden Valley to west of the Palo Verde Mountains before continuing north through the western part of the state.

In their lawsuit, the groups claim the highway, as routed, will destroy “pristine” desert, worsen air pollution and endanger wildlife.

The plaintiffs contend the FHWA failed to consider other transportation alternatives, including a rail line, and “sidestepped” the required environmental review before approving the project.

The case, assigned to Judge John Hinderaker of U.S. District Court in Tucson, has yet to be decided. The federal government, meanwhile, has asked Hinderaker to throw out the suit.

Brian Petersheim Jr.



The winding journey of the Maricopa Welcome Monument

About a year ago, members of the Maricopa Youth Council and the Youth Mock City Council were on hand at the city public works facility to see a vision come to fruition.

In May 2018, as part of the mock City Council, Maricopa youth put together a proposal for a monument to welcome visitors to the town. The young planners were grilled on the cost of the monument, lighting methods and other facets of the project.

In January 2021, the monument was ready to be installed.

But the Arizona Department of Transportation said “not so fast” after the city moved its location, triggering a review of the project by ADOT. During that review, it was determined that a barrier was needed around the monument to redirect vehicles in the event of an accident.

The stylized “M” monument is the centerpiece of the city’s \$2 million upgrade to the median through town from the northern border to the overpass just south of Honeycutt Road.

Finally, in the middle of an October night, while most of Maricopa was asleep, crews carefully moved the monument onto a flatbed truck and made the slow journey along John Wayne Parkway to its resting place in the median of State Route 347 on the northern edge of the city.

The four-hour project was completed by 5:30 a.m., ahead of the bulk of morning rush-hour traffic, and now serves to welcome residents and visitors alike.

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At Alan Stephens Parkway and Porter Road, motorists sometimes ignore blinking safety lights when kids are in the crosswalk.

Residents question Porter Road safety — today and in the future

Public safety took center stage in May as City Council granted final rezoning approval for a 536-unit apartment complex on Porter Road.

Before the 5-2 vote to approve, however, a group of Glennwilde residents turned out to City Hall to complain about the current traffic situation on Porter and express their dissatisfaction with several multi-family developments set to add traffic to the mix.

The four-lane corridor is already heavily congested, especially during

morning drop-off and afternoon pick-up at the seven schools located on Porter or just off, residents said. At Saddleback Elementary School, cars queue up every school day in Porter's middle lane to await entry into the school driveway. The speed limit is 35 mph in some places and 45 mph in others.

At an earlier meeting before the Planning & Zoning Commission, one resident said traffic is a quality-of-life issue.

"The bravest person I know is the crossing guard by Saddleback

Elementary School; she's risking her life every day," she said.

"We've had three students hit and one adult hit this year," another resident warned. "Adding more cars isn't going to help that. It's going to make it worse."

Porter Road, just north of Bowlin Road, had an annual average daily traffic (AADT) of 8,162 vehicles, according to 2021 data from the Maricopa Association of Governments. (AADT is the total volume of vehicle traffic divided by 365 days.)

Three projects on Porter between

Bowlin Road and Maricopa-Casa Grande Highway — REV@Porter and Copa Flats, which are under construction, and Home at Maricopa — will add about 6,000 residents — and about 3,200 parking spaces — in the area. Meanwhile, a couple other residential communities are planned along Porter and development continues at The Wells shopping area nearby.

Before council's rezoning vote for the Home at Maricopa project, city officials noted commercial projects at the site and elsewhere would create considerably more traffic than residential developments.

In July, just after the first day of school, then-police Chief James Hughes told the council he expected new traffic plans — developed by the schools with assistance from city officials — would help improve the "stacking" of vehicles on Porter.

Hughes said he understands that parents' primary objective is to pick up or drop off their child safely.

But he said if the community approaches the issue from a collective, rather than individual standpoint, it will create a better and safer situation for everyone.

One Glennwilde resident, however, wrote InMaricopa recently to say he believes there is a related public safety problem on Porter Road endangering schoolchildren trying to cross the busy thoroughfare.

Steve Murray lives near West Carlisle Lane and North Jameson Drive, a short walk from Porter Road and the walk light at Alan Stephens Parkway.

"This morning there was another near miss with children in the crosswalk," he wrote. "It is a matter of time until we have a horrible incident at that light involving children. Someone needs to correct this horrible intersection immediately before something terrible happens. There needs to be an actual traffic light at the intersection instead of those blinking lights.

"No one pays attention to the lights as it is right now."

Bryan Mordt

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Personnel

PUBLIC SAFETY LEADERSHIP RESHUFFLES IN 2022

The year ended with new leaders in the city's police and fire departments after a retirement, hiring, resignation and promotion.

Chief Brady Leffler, who had led the Maricopa Fire and Medical Department since 2013, retired in March. He had been hired to overhaul a department.

Brad Pitassi, the department's assistant fire chief of operations, was named interim chief and then promoted to chief in mid-September.

As operations assistant chief, Pitassi's responsibilities included overseeing the department's day-to-day operations, risk and hazard emergency preparedness, personnel, long-term operational strategic planning and budget.



Brad Pitassi

NEW PUBLIC SAFETY CHIEF

A week before Pitassi was appointed fire chief, the city hired a new deputy city manager/chief public-safety officer as part of a reorganization of public safety administration. Micah Gaudet, 31, was brought on to

oversee police, fire and emergency management "to align public safety with the city mission to unlock its full potential to create a thriving and durable community, as well as enabling public safety to achieve the strategic objective of ensuring a safe and secure community," the city said in a release. The youngest municipal manager in the state, he led Miami, Ariz., a town of about 1,500 residents east of Phoenix, through the huge Telegraph Fire and historic post-fire flooding in June 2021. Gaudet has degrees in economics and public management, and a certificate in municipal finance. A U.S. Army veteran and decorated combat-zone veteran, he served two tours in Afghanistan.

SURPRISE EXIT

Gaudet's appointment came in the wake of police Chief James Hughes' surprise resignation.

Hughes, a 36-year law enforcement veteran, had led MPD for just 21 months. His last day on the job was Sept. 15, a week after the City announced Gaudet's hiring.

Hughes joined the department in 2012 as a commander overseeing operations. He replaced Chief Steve Stahl in January 2021, just six weeks after Stahl announced his unexpected retirement.

In an interview with InMaricopa just before his last day at MPD, Hughes

acknowledged the city's growth had changed its complexion and the nuances of policing. He said it had become apparent the job was not the best fit for him. But his law enforcement career is "probably not" over, he added.

In December, the City announced it had hired a new police chief after a national search.

Mark Goodman, a commander with the Pasadena Police Department in California, will start on Jan. 23. He has been with the department in the Los Angeles suburbs since 1994, working his way up the ranks.

COP'S FIRING UPHELD

In other police staffing news, the firing of a Maricopa police officer was upheld after an appeal hearing in July.

Officer Craig Curry, a 14-year MPD veteran and K-9 handler since 2013, was terminated by the department earlier in the year. After two days of testimony, including from Curry, a hearing officer upheld the department's decision. City Manager Rick Horst then affirmed the hearing officer's decision.

According to the city, Curry was the subject of 19 citizen complaints or internal investigations for incidents between September 2013 to November 2021. They included 10 use-of-force complaints; two vehicle collisions, including disciplinary action for backing his patrol vehicle into a parked fire truck; and three internal investigations.

One of those internal investigations revolved around the June 2020 incident that led to the death of his K-9 partner, Ike, a 9-year-old Dutch Shepherd who was left in an enclosed patrol vehicle for 103 minutes on a 108-degree day. The animal was humanely euthanized after suffering heatstroke.

Department investigators concluded Curry violated three code-of-conduct policies in the incident, and he served a 20-hour, unpaid disciplinary suspension.

The incident was also investigated by the Arizona Department of Public Safety and reviewed by the Pinal County Attorney's Office, which declined criminal prosecution of Curry.

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2 men die in police-involved shootings

Two men died this past year in separate police-involved shootings outside their homes in the Homestead and The Villages at Rancho El Dorado neighborhoods.

One of the men was fired on directly — and killed — by an officer as he advanced toward her. In the other incident, the man fired first at officers and was met with a hail of gunfire in return. But a continuing investigation has not yet established publicly that the man was killed by a police bullet.

March 27: ‘Just bring ‘em’

Three officers were summoned in late March to the home of Lawrence Knudsen in the 20000 block of North Mac Neil Street in Homestead.

Knudsen, 56, had called 911, informed an emergency dispatcher that he was outside his home armed with a handgun and told her to send police.

The man had been on the phone with the 911 operator several times leading up to the fatal shooting. In his initial call to 911, he told the operator, “Nobody’s listening to me. I’m about to put a bullet in my head.”

Several times, he hung up and the dispatcher called him back.

At one point, Knudsen said, “I’m not looking to hurt any cops, OK?”

Later, he told the operator that he would confront police if they approached him.

Still later, Knudsen told the operator, “Just bring ‘em. Bring the f***ers,” and “Let’s do this.”

When officers arrived and parked down the street, Knudsen sat on the tailgate of his truck and watched them get out of their vehicles with weapons drawn. He stood up and walked down the driveway, then continued down the street toward the law enforcement officers.

Police body camera footage showed an agitated Knudsen advancing on Officer Carmen Nylander as she repeatedly yelled, “Back up! Back the f*** up!” He continued to advance with his hands in the air, holding an object in each hand.

Nylander then fired four shots at Knudsen from 6 to 8 feet away after he ignored her commands and continued to advance on her. She can be heard uttering an expletive as Knudsen fell to the street and began to moan.

>> continued on page 34

Police and Fire Activity

IN 2022, SOME SCARY INCIDENTS

It was a busy year for city police and fire personnel, with a particularly active month of March. Here are the highlights — and lowlights — from 2022:

JANUARY

14

Gunshots at candlelight vigil

They came in the twilight to remember a Maricopa teen who was stabbed to death on Jan. 14, 2020, in Phoenix. But as friends and family of Kristopher Mickell gathered for a candlelight vigil in his memory, gunfire rang out in the parking lot. No injuries were reported, and an initial investigation found the gunfire stemmed from five teenagers firing into the air.

MARCH

6

Body found: A Maricopa resident doing some morning exploring in the southeast part of the city found the body of a woman in an abandoned palm orchard. The dead woman, found near North Anderson Road and Santa Cruz Wash, was identified as Renise Garcia, 25, whose last known address was in Casa Grande.



21

Trouble comes to town:

The drug deal gone bad started in Tempe and ended in Maricopa. Two people — Isaiah Williams, 18, and Saif Woods, 17 — met a man — Chris McCrimmon, 21 — in the parking lot at IKEA. During the transaction, an altercation began, and shots rang out, Tempe police said. McCrimmon fell to the ground, and Williams and Woods jumped into a Ford Expedition and headed for Maricopa. As they drove south on State Route 347, a Gila River police officer spotted the vehicle and began tailing it.

A Maricopa officer joined the

tail as the suspects’ SUV turned into Senita and stopped in the 43000 block of West Wild Horse Trail. At that time, the Maricopa officer took command of the tense scene, displaying his weapon and giving commands, until additional officers arrived to arrest and handcuff the suspects. McCrimmon died from his injuries, and Williams and Woods were charged by Tempe police with first-degree murder and aggravated robbery.

28

Food bank fire: The Maricopa Pantry in Hidden Valley was decimated by fire, leaving hundreds of families looking for a source of food. The fire started in a trailer at the food bank and spread despite a volunteer’s efforts to put out the flames with a fire extinguisher. There were no injuries, but three trailers used to store food were lost.

It was a crushing blow for founder Jim Shoaf, who was down but definitely not out. Within three weeks, he had secured three replacement trailers through the beneficence of St. Mary’s Food Bank in Phoenix. Food distribution resumed at the site within days. He would say of the immediate community response:

“You know, this city has reached out in more ways than I could think of reaching out. I mean every one of our needs are being met.”

The fire’s legacy may end up being a new, permanent structure at the site. Shoaf started working on a plan shortly after the blaze.

>> continued on page 34



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<< continued from page 32

Just as Nylander fired, Officer Timothy Nye fired his Taser at Knudsen. A third officer, Irene McCorry, also responded but did not discharge a weapon.

Knudsen was transported to a hospital, where he was pronounced dead.

The incident, and Nylander's role in it, was investigated by the Pinal County Sheriff's Office. The investigation revealed Knudsen was holding a vape pen and a cell phone in his hands when he was shot. Knudsen left the handgun on the truck tailgate as he walked toward police.

Nylander told investigators she was afraid for her life as Knudsen came toward her.

After reviewing the state statute on police use-of-force and the results of the PCSO investigation, Pinal County Attorney Kent Volkmer declined to charge Nylander criminally, saying his office determined the officer had acted within the law.

A sudden escalation

When several police vehicles rolled up on the 43900 block of West McCord Drive in The Villages of Rancho El Dorado on Aug. 29, it was familiar territory. Officers had been to the home of Brian Simmons several times previously to investigate reports of unusual behavior. This time it was a noise complaint from a neighbor.

On seeing Simmons that Monday morning — in a driveway strewn with possessions, music blaring — the officers greeted him by name. Police body-worn cameras showed Simmons and his dog walk out to the middle of the street, where an officer says, "Brian! How are you?" Simmons high-fived an officer as another is heard asking, "How's it going, Brian?" Simmons then bumped elbows with an officer and says to another, "Give me a hug."

Within moments, however, the friendly overtones disappeared. Simmons walked back to his driveway, picking up a firearm but not pointing at the officers.

Several times, officers can be heard commanding, "Hey Brian, put that down!" and "Drop the gun!" Simmons eventually places the gun on the driveway and raises his hands.

Neighbors were directed to shelter-in-place and Butterfield Elementary School, a block away, was placed on lockdown.

Simmons continued to refuse several more commands, including one to get down on the ground. Eventually, an officer fired a non-lethal round, which appeared to hit Simmons. Despite commands to remain outside, he ignored them and went inside the home, where he holed up for several hours.

Simmons then suddenly appeared in the side yard of the home and fired a shotgun round at police and missing. Officers responded with a hail of gunfire. At least 22 shots were fired. There is a long silence.

Police eventually put a camera-equipped drone in the air and spotted Simmons on the ground. To determine whether Simmons had survived the barrage, a flash-bang was fired to within feet of his body. He did not move. About 15 minutes later, members of the Pinal County SWAT team approached the side gate and peered over the top. They see Simmons' lifeless body.

The police-involved shooting remains under investigation by the Pinal County Sheriff's Office. It has not said yet definitively if Simmons was killed by police gunfire.

Simmons was a native of Idaho Falls, Idaho. After the incident, family members in Idaho said he was a former missionary for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints who had a generous heart and gave to others less fortunate.

Simmons had alleged in a 2014 lawsuit that as a worker at an Idaho nuclear facility he was exposed to radiation while regularly handling plutonium and other radioactive materials.

Family members said they believe his exposure to radioactive Plutonium-238, a carcinogen, caused a personality change in Simmons.

APRIL

6

Family scare: The 911 caller said his father was pointing a gun at his mother. The emergency operator could hear gunshots in the background before the call disconnected. As police traveled to the home in Maricopa Meadows, there was a second call from the reporting party: His father was in the kitchen, he said, and then gunfire and screaming. "Please hurry."

But this wasn't a violent domestic incident; it was a swatting, a criminal harassment tactic of falsely reporting a serious emergency — a murder or hostage situation, for example — to trigger an emergency response, often involving a SWAT team, to a person's address. Luckily, police were able to ascertain it was a false report before the family living at the home or officers got hurt. Police said they were taking the incident "extremely seriously," but it is unknown if an arrest was ever made in the case.

MAY

9

God made him do it: A man who allegedly used his vehicle to intentionally crash into another on Maricopa-Casa Grande Highway told police he was acting on orders from God. The motorist was charged in the incident, which left both cars on their sides near White and Parker Road. One of the vehicles struck a power pole and line that collapsed and fell near the vehicles. The victims were a husband and his wife, who was taken to a hospital for treatment of injuries. Witnesses said they believed the man was driving at speeds in excess of 100 mph before striking the other vehicle.

11

Train vs. truck: A Union Pacific train struck a stuck semi-truck west of Maricopa. The truck's trailer — laden with farm equipment — apparently

did not have enough clearance as it crossed over the tracks at North Ralston Road at State Route 238, and became firmly lodged, police said. A westbound train struck the trailer, but no injuries were reported.

AUGUST

7

Shots fired at busy intersection: A police pursuit erupted into a gunfight between the driver and officers on a Sunday evening at one of the city's busiest crossroads. Incredibly, no one was killed, even though a news station reported counting more than 27 bullet holes in the windshield, driver's side window and body of the suspect's car. The incident started with a reported stabbing on West Sanders Way in Homestead before the suspect turned his Toyota Scion south on North Porter Road. Followed by police, the man drove straight through the intersection at Maricopa-Casa Grande Highway as a moving train blocked Porter. When his vehicle struck a white SUV, the suspect "stuck his hand out the door, with the gun in it, and started shooting," reported an eyewitness, who was stopped at the light waiting for the train to pass. Police then returned fire.

The injured suspect, later identified by police as Michael Zapata, crawled out of the passenger side of the vehicle and lay down on the ground. He was arrested, taken to a hospital for treatment and subsequently charged with aggravated assault with a deadly weapon (domestic violence), kidnapping (domestic violence), aggravated assault. At least one other bystander was injured in the initial crash, but no officers were hurt.

ANNEXATION, CITY LAND DEALS: HOT ACTIVITY IN 2022

It was a busy year of annexation activity and dealmaking for city government.

And while the city is never shy about buying and selling land to facilitate development it deems worthy to propel smart growth, 2022 seemed particularly active across multiple fronts.

ANNEXATION

In September, City Council approved a series of pre-annexation agreements for 5,742 acres south and west of the city to provide fire protection.

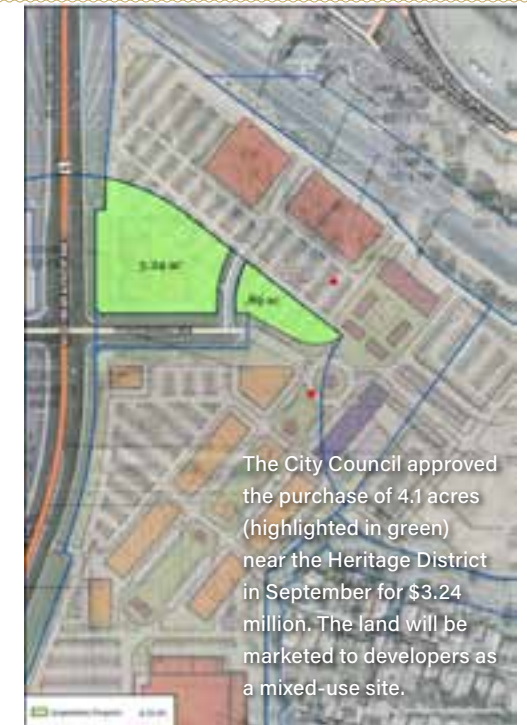
The city has agreements with the owners of 15 parcels in unincorporated Pinal County, including Thunderbird Farms and Hidden Valley. The properties range from the city's northern boundary to well south of the existing city limit. All lie west of the Ak-Chin Indian Community.

The acreage would increase Maricopa's land area by nearly 19%.

Several residents in the pre-annexation area told Council they opposed the action, saying it threatened the rural lifestyle they desired when moving to the area.

The agreements include parcels for residential developments at Hidden Valley Ranch (604 acres) and Pecan Woods (163 acres). If the land is eventually annexed, the city would be legally obligated to provide services to residents.

According to the city, the action would ensure landowners and future



The City Council approved the purchase of 4.1 acres (highlighted in green) near the Heritage District in September for \$3.24 million. The land will be marketed to developers as a mixed-use site.

homebuyers on that land pay for fire protection services and others, without impacting current residents financially. Developers will also pay an impact fee to fund utilities, streets, sidewalks and sewers.

A month later, the city subsequently paid \$137,500 to acquire 2.5 acres south of West Papago Road and east of North John Wayne Parkway to house a fire.

1,800 acres in east Maricopa: Earlier this year, City Council voted to begin the legal process of annexing nearly 1,800 acres of unincorporated land east of White and Parker Road and north of Honeycutt Road.

The land includes part of the University of Arizona's Maricopa Agricultural Center, a 2,100-acre farm used by the university's College of Agricultural and Life Sciences to conduct research on agricultural technology.

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

In a bid to spur the major industrial development — and the accompanying high-wage jobs — so far passing up Maricopa, the city acquired 230 acres of farmland east of White and Parker Road between Maricopa-Casa Grande Highway and Peters and Nall Road.

The \$12 million purchase of land from Red River Cattle LLP and Pinal Feeding Co., approved by City Council in

>> continued on page 36



City Council approved the purchase of 230 acres in the southeastern part of Maricopa in October at a cost of \$12 million. The city aims to use the land to attract major industry and jobs to the city.

<< continued from page 35

November, was made from city reserves, officials said. It will better position the city to compete for such key projects.

The acreage, in a 300-acre “industrial triangle” rezoned to industrial and employment use in March, includes access to a rail line that could offer opportunities for an inland port.

As part of the sale, the city agreed to lease the land back to Pinal Feeding to allow the 60,000 head of cattle on the site to be grown to maturity before being sold.

Perhaps most importantly to some residents, that means in about a year, the last feedlot in town — and its unpleasant aromas — will be gone.

COMMERCIAL/RETAIL DEVELOPMENT

With its desire to control the development process of the first major retail center south of the overpass, Maricopa purchased parcels of land and sold them to developers who share the city’s vision.

In September, City Council approved spending \$3.24 million for 4.1 acres south and east of the overpass at Honeycutt Avenue that will be marketed to developers as a mixed-use site.

The city has long envisioned the area — now being called New Maricopa Station — with retail stores, restaurants, housing and walkable areas. There is “tremendous interest” in the site, with dozens of national and regional retailers signing letters of intent.

Pedestrian bridge: A city project to link the retail center to a planned multi-use development north of the Union Pacific railroad to the Heritage District received a big boost in July. A \$2.7 million federal earmark, steered by U.S. Rep. Tom O’Halloran and cleared by Congress, will help pay for a pedestrian bridge over the tracks to connect both ends of North Maricopa Road. The project is estimated to cost \$3.5 million. The ADA-compliant bridge will allow people to walk from the revitalized development on the east side to stores on the west side, and vice versa. It will have elevators on both sides to facilitate bicycle access.

Other land deals: City Council voted in March to purchase 5.1 acres east of Ak-Chin Regional Airport for \$2.4 million. The parcel on West Bud Road, which comes with a 30,000-square-foot enclosure with connected utilities, will house the city’s second public works yard. A month later, the city announced it sold 2 acres to the developers of Estrella Gin Business Park. The land, north of West Edison Road and west of North Roosevelt Avenue, brought \$261,360. The developers said at the time there were no immediate plans for the acreage, and the city noted it was not involved in deciding how it will be developed.



Recreation

BLM aims to open Box Canyon range — soon

Just weeks before the much-anticipated Box Canyon Shooting Range was set to open in November, Mother Nature forced another in a long series of delays.

October rains damaged a berm and roads at the new 68-acre facility planned and built by the Bureau of Land Management about 10 miles west of the city in the Palo Verde Mountains.

BLM said the range could open as early as January. The range will be open during daylight hours seven days a week and accommodate about 90 shooters at a time.

The range aims to provide target opportunities for shooters of several types of guns in a safe environment, with shooting platforms, shooting lanes, permanent targets and berms.

CITY PLAYING BALL

The competition on the city’s baseball fields is fierce — and so is getting on the field in the first place.

The space crunch on fields across the city is years-old, but help is coming.

Earlier in 2022, the city stepped up to the plate, moving to build two new Little League fields in The Lakes at Rancho El Dorado. The 8.5-acre park has space to

squeeze in a third field at its location at North Powers Parkway West and West Placone Lane, officials said.

The fields, which will have 225-foot fences, will be built on land from Lakes developer METRO RED-1 LLC, Meritage Homes of Arizona and the Rancho El Dorado Phase III Homeowners Association. Metro and Meritage will pre-pay about \$800,000 in parks and recreation development fees for use toward development of the park.

Plans call for an entry pavilion and plaza, concession area with restrooms, playground, picnic area with a 20-by-20-foot ramada, multiple turf areas outside the ballfields and parking for about 120 cars.

COUNTY’S PARK PLANS

Pinal County’s plan to open a nearly 23,000-acre regional park in the Palo Verde Mountains area took a leap forward in 2022.

The county is working on final approvals with the Bureau of Land Management to acquire the lease for Phase I of the park development. The county would then begin work on final design and construction documents, a process expected to start 1-2 years after issuance of the lease and a right-of-way grant.

When all phases are completed — it will likely take decades to fully realize the county’s vision — the sprawling park will stretch from State Route 238 in the north to Interstate 8 in the south. It will offer miles of interconnected trails and places for camping and hiking, riding horses and off-highway vehicles, and, perhaps, disc golf, BMX biking and ziplining.

The first phase of Palo Verde Regional Park will comprise 6,000 acres south of SR 238. After completing an environmental assessment, Pinal County is seeking a 25-year, no-cost lease from BLM for three parcels — nearly 500 of those acres — to develop amenities. The county also seeks a right-of-way for a non-motorized trail system to link the three parcels.

Personnel

HERE COMES THE (NEW) JUDGE

As the city moves to build a new municipal court, a retired Pinal County judge will take the bench at City Hall.

In October, City Council hired veteran jurist Stephen McCarville to serve as interim presiding judge through Dec. 31, 2023. The former presiding judge worked with city staff through the last few months of 2022 to separate the current municipal court from a shared facility with the Pinal Justice Court, an arrangement since the city was incorporated in 2003.



With the new year, he replaces Judge Lyle Riggs, who has served for years as both an elected justice of the peace for the county and as a magistrate appointed by the city.

McCarville will earn \$82.50 an hour from the city as a regular part-time employee — at least at first. If he can’t perform his duties on a part-time basis, his contract with the city says the parties can enter good-faith negotiations to amend the agreement for more hours.

In September, City Council voted to build a new city court just east of City Hall. Soon, proceedings will be held in a temporary space — council chambers in City Hall.

The \$2.7 million permanent courthouse is expected to be completed by winter or spring of 2024.

CITY HONORS DEDICATED PUBLIC SERVANT

He came from one of Maricopa’s best-known families, but Mike Riggs only burnished that reputation over the years through his dedicated public service.

Riggs already had a master’s degree and years of parks and public facility management experience when he joined the city in early 2014 as a parks crew lead, just before the opening of Maricopa’s recreational jewel, Copper Sky. In short order, he would take on more responsibilities and become director of public works, with oversight of streets, parks and other facilities, and fleet management. Managing a budget of about \$8.5 million, he directed a department of more than 35 employees.



On Oct. 7, Mike Riggs suffered a heart attack and died. He was 55. He is survived by Camie, his wife of more than three decades and six children.

News of his death shook and saddened coworkers and residents alike who recalled the fourth-generation Arizonan’s big smile and hearty laugh as well as his honesty, resourcefulness and dedication to the city, the Boy Scouts, 4-H and his church.

Mayor Nancy Smith called him a leader of the highest quality — and a friend.

“It is difficult to quantify this loss, but what we know is there is a palpable hole in this community today,” she said.

“Every long-standing resident of Maricopa understands how great of a man Mike was. His life-long civic and religious dedication to this city has endeared him to all. Even those who didn’t know him personally have surely been impacted by his service.”

To recognize his many contributions, later this year the city will create a community service award in his name to bestow on “a group, organization or individual that provides a significant service to the community.”

MAYOR'S RESIGNATION CAUSES A FLURRY OF ACTIVITY

After serving as mayor for a decade, Christian Price resigned to lead the Maricopa Economic Development Alliance in 2022, taking the reins of the public-private partnership on July 1.

"When the position was offered to me, I asked myself how I could continue to serve Maricopa," he said. "I knew I wasn't going to run for re-election again, so I asked myself if my time as mayor was running out anyway, if making a jump to this new situation was a way to utilize the relationships that I had built over 10 years in office."

Price has cultivated relationships with business, political and civic leaders in every corner of Arizona.

"Economic development is the ultimate team game, and I wanted to bring all the elements and people that I've worked with over the years to move the needle forward and help the city," he said.



Christian Price



Mayor Nancy Smith

Nancy Smith selected as Maricopa's mayor

Nancy Smith, elected to the Maricopa City Council in 2014, and the wife of former Mayor Anthony Smith, was selected the city's new mayor, taking over for Vice Mayor Vincent Manfredi who served as interim mayor after Price's departure.

She is the city's first female mayor.

The vote was unanimous among her Council peers, who each praised Smith as a tenacious fighter for the city and for her strong leadership.

Smith said she plans no major changes initially and that her agenda will be familiar, but with a new twist.

"My priorities are the same as the City Council in the past, so definitely transportation, economic development, bringing in new companies, high-paying jobs," Smith said.

Goettl selected to serve on City Council

Eric Goettl's plan to run for City Council in 2024 was accelerated after Price resigned and Smith was appointed to succeed Price. That left her council seat open.



Eric Goettl

"My wife and I made the decision a long time ago to be involved in the city," Goettl said. "My wife and I have been active, more on the ecclesiastical side to this point. I have always had an interest in public service, and I had my ear to the ground, including speaking with ... Price to see when it might be a good time to throw my hat in the ring."

"When this seat came open, it was the perfect time for me and my family to jump in."

Appointed by a 4-2 council vote, he will serve out the two years remaining on Smith's term and can run for election in 2024.

Facilities

In 11th-hour decision, city moves new police station site out of Heritage District

As the city has grown rapidly, so has its police force. In fact, the Maricopa Police Department has needed larger quarters for many years. The current station, after all, opened in 2013 with zero space to grow. Two years ago, the city announced it would construct a 25,000-square-foot facility — more than twice the size of the current HQ — adjacent to the Pinal County Courthouse complex in the Heritage District.

The project, with its new headquarters and a separate emergency dispatch center, was heralded as another bright spot in the burgeoning development of the west side of John Wayne Parkway.

"This building will add to the feel of that whole area, with Sprouts, the complex, our new fire administration building, we've got a couple of other projects coming out there now, plus Estrella Gin," City Manager Rick Horst told InMaricopa in



The site for the new Maricopa Police headquarters.

January 2021. The area would connect to the Heritage District and South Bridge areas via a greenbelt and walking area with shade trees and other foliage, making for a pedestrian corridor.

Then in January 2022, Horst said the start of construction on the \$25.4 million project was imminent. With construction pegged at about 18 months, city cops would be set to move in this summer.

As 2023 dawns, however, pre-construction work has only recently commenced.

That's due, at least in part, to the city's abrupt announcement in May that the new headquarters would not be built in the Heritage District after all.

Instead, it would be sited next to the current police station, off White and Parker Road. The new location, the city said, would "place officers in a more central location for responding to emergencies" as the city expands away from its main drag.

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A new high school for a growing city

In 2022, Desert Sunrise, the second high school in Maricopa Unified School District, opened to students with freshman and sophomore classes. A junior class will be added when the new school year begins this summer and a senior class in its third year.

The opening was a culmination of a plan hatched years earlier.

When administrators conceived and began to plan Maricopa's second high school, the Academy Model inspired the educators, architects, planners and contractors who helped make the campus a reality.

Marlene Armstrong, the school's principal, feels the innovative approach will play to the students' advantage.

"I believe that the most unique facet of Desert Sunrise is the Academy Model experience," she said. "Students will be enrolled in a career academy and will be in small learning communities. Through this academy experience, students will

have the opportunity to earn industry credential certificates and learn the 22 essential skills to transition into adulthood successfully.

"Our goal is that each and every student is 'world-ready' upon graduation."

The Academy Model required commitment from the outset.

When the new high school was still in the planning stages, architect Saravanan Bala of Orcutt Winslow Architects said the school's academic building would have two "academies, or learning communities" on each floor, with each academy having classrooms, a lab and a makerspace.

The model encourages learning by collaborating and doing.

Maricopa Unified School District superintendent Tracey Lopeman said part of the master plan for the school was to have "fully-equipped classrooms, complete with technology, first-rate furnishings and dynamic teaching spaces."

MUSD's post-COVID higher grades reflect consistent, purposeful effort

Among the institutions most disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic was education.

Students were out of classrooms for extended periods. Ostensibly, they were being educated remotely on laptops. But were they? MUSD has a student population from a multitude of socio-economic backgrounds. Although the district provided laptops, some homes did not have internet connectivity.

There were questions and concerns, but the first letter grades released in the post-pandemic era in November by the Arizona Department of Education

suggest Maricopa public schools came through the chaos of the pandemic well.

"The consistent and purposeful efforts of our students, staff and principals have paid off," MUSD Superintendent Tracey Lopeman said. "Our focus remains on high expectations and providing our students and staff with the tools they need to achieve their full potential."

Arizona law requires the Department of Education, subject to final adoption by the State Board of Education, to develop an annual achievement profile for every public school in the state based on an A through F scale.

The system measures several factors, including year-to-year student academic growth; proficiency on English language arts, math and science; the proficiency and academic growth of English-language learners; indicators elementary students are ready for success in high school and high school students are ready to succeed in a career or higher education;



and high school graduation rates.

Grades were for the 2021-22 academic year and based largely on data collected by the state board last spring. The state's 2022 calculation heavily emphasized student growth and recognized the importance of recovering unfinished learning from the pandemic.

Of note, Pima Butte and Santa Rosa elementary schools received grades of A. For Santa Rosa, it marked

an improvement of a full letter grade from 2019, the last time the state gave schools letter grades due to the pandemic. Elsewhere in the district, Maricopa and Santa Cruz elementary schools were less than a point from an A. Maricopa High School improved a full letter grade to a B. Butterfield and Saddleback elementary schools both received a B. Desert Wind and Maricopa Wells middle schools received a C.

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Maricopa's new museum reflects a 21st-century city on the move

The Maricopa Museum and Visitor Center, operated by the Maricopa Historical Society, opened in the fall at 44240 W. Maricopa-Casa Grande Highway in a building that in the 1940s was part of Williams Field, an Air Force installation in Chandler where pilots were trained for World War II.

"We procured the building in 1987 when they were getting ready to close the base, and moved it here," said Paul Shirk, president of the Maricopa Historical Society.

Initially, the building was the city library, and then it became a veterans center. Now, it is loaded with information and memorabilia, including a big dose of John Wayne's presence, that tells Maricopa's journeys of a few miles each from Maricopa Wells to Maricopaville to Maricopa Junction — the place now known as Maricopa.

When the building was a library, there was "Coffee on the Porch."

That's back, Shirk said. On Wednesdays, the public can stop

by for a cup and a chat on the front porch with members of the Historical Society about the city's history.

While the building has history of its own, there's much more inside, with concentration on the three places that have been Maricopa in some form.

Maricopa Wells was the original. Then, Maricopaville, which became Heaton, was about 6 miles west of today's Maricopa.

A model of wagons in the Maricopa Wells section shows that people who came west from the East Coast didn't always travel in the covered wagons traditionally associated with the Old West. They looked more like stagecoaches.

Shirk's pride and joy is an exact-scale replica of the Maricopa and Phoenix Railroad Station, from which trains made their first journey to Phoenix in 1887. Fire destroyed it in 1931. Originally a school project, the replica was in poor shape when Shirk got his hands on it, he said.

It took Shirk and other members of the Historical Society years to find items for the museum.



Longtime Maricopa historian, schoolteacher Pat Brock dies

Pat Brock, who documented the history of Maricopa in her books "Reflections of a Desert Town" and "Images of America: Maricopa," passed away in August.

Brock's "Images of America: Maricopa" followed and celebrated Maricopa's rich heritage — from the early Hohokam digging canals with sticks to the residents of the city in the 21st century.

The 127-page 2010 book combined archival photographs with stories from the past, revealing the people and events that helped shape the character of what Maricopa is today.

"The material came from the files of the Maricopa Historical Society's oral and written history projects — newspapers, magazines and even faded handwritten letters saved in someone's old trunks," Brock said at the time.

She also chronicled the early history of Maricopa and profiled some of its residents in her previous book, "Reflections of a Desert Town."

In 1973, Brock, with a degree from Arizona State University, began her 25-year elementary teaching career in Maricopa.

Brock was raised in Maricopa with 11 siblings. Her father, Jewell Spurlock, came to Scottsdale from the Midwest in 1921 to check out the Wild West, eventually building and operating a Tempe dairy. In 1952, the family moved from their farm east of Maricopa to the town itself. The children, including Pat, were not excited, but "kids did not get a vote in the 1950s," she recalled.

Graduating from Maricopa High School in 1961, one of 12 graduates in her class, Brock married her husband, Harry, later that year.



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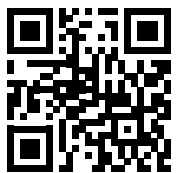


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WHAT'S ON THE HORIZON FOR 2023?

As the new year begins, we
asked community leaders
what may lie ahead.



For
the city



NANCY SMITH
Mayor

Here is my Top 10 List of what
I hope to see in 2023:

- Serious discussions and action with ADOT and DPS on public safety with regard to State Route 347.

- Phoenix Surf continues to progress into a wonderful entertainment center for our residents.
- State legislators remember to manage their budget without impacting cities' budgets, keeping these decisions local.
- State legislators remember planning and zoning remains a local decision, not a state decision.
- The city reduces its primary property-tax rate again.
- Maricopa Economic Development Alliance and the city land an exciting opportunity for job creation.
- Lowe's and/or Home Depot join our city.
- The city continues to see growth in retail, restaurants and health services.
- Our new fire chief and new police chief have great success keeping our city in the top-5 safest cities in Arizona.
- All of our Maricopa schools continue to raise their grades, providing the best education to our students.

For
the area



TERESA MARTINEZ
LD 16 Representative, Arizona
Legislature's Majority Whip

First of all, my top legislative priority
is state routes 347 and 238.

For Maricopa, I see more people
moving in and housing will be at the
forefront of everyone's mind. I do see
some really good-paying jobs coming
to the area and I'm excited about that.

Statewide, we will face some uneasy
times. High Inflation is a very serious
concern of mine. Everything is getting
more expensive, and I fear food costs
(among others, like household supplies,
baby formula and appliances) will
drastically increase. Like many of you,
I have to really budget and make every
dollar count. That's why we at the state
are focusing on doing all we can to help.

I know together we will make great
things happen!

RACHEL LEFFALL
Planning and Zoning
Commission

I see multiple opportunities
on the horizon for
people of color to best be
represented in Maricopa in the
coming year. It starts with continued
participation, both at the city and from
diverse populations: participation in
diversity awareness and action, as
well as participation in community

involvement and civic responsibility.
The city has a responsibility to actively
function in the best interest of all its
citizens and citizens have a responsibility
to actively engage in the community,
focusing on the common good.
The city can work toward a more
inclusive environment by:

- Improving diversity training to reduce systemic racial stigmas.
- Recognizing and publicly denouncing actions that historically and continuously impact people of color.



- Celebrating freedoms from oppressive policies and brutalities.
- Working with diverse populations to seek citizen input to identify issues, develop measurable and actionable objectives, implement plans to accomplish goals, measure progress and adjust as necessary and continue efforts without pause.
- Include people of color in city imagery (architectural design renderings, events, etc.).

Citizens can work toward a more
inclusive environment by:

- Practicing civic engagement through voting and community involvement.
- Utilizing city communication channels to stay informed and voice concerns.
- Report issues as well as commendations for correction/acknowledgement and provide constructive feedback on ways to improve diversity.

It is imperative that we move toward an
inclusive environment without dilution
(perceived or actual) of any race.

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HELEN SIMMONS
*Director, Molly's
House of Little Feet*

In 2023, we must pay close attention to our youth. All of us must start paying attention to our children. They are crying out for our help and we are not listening. They are turning to social media for their answers to questions we have lived through. They feel as if they cannot talk to their own parents because they are scared of their response. As a family, we must start showing them our hearts are open. We need to actually start listening. Pay attention to the things they don't believe you are paying attention to. In 2023, let's release some of this so-called depression. It is real only

because we allow it to be real. I fight demons on a daily basis, so I need all of my children to know they are not alone and we are here. We have been through what you have been through. We have cried your tears. Let us help you. Because of where we are now in this society, it's going to take a lot of persistence and motivation to keep our youth going. It's going to take more of us being involved. Let's come together to show our children we are listening. They are not alone. They deserve at least that much. Can we do that for them? They are waiting. Let us choose to listen.



DR. TRACEY LOPEMAN
*Superintendent of Maricopa
Unified School District*

On the horizon for 2023:

Foundation in reading, writing and math signature programs

Capitalizing on new skills, our teachers will invest in methodologies that reinforce MUSD traditions of rigor

and relationships. We seek to build a foundation that paves multiple paths to graduation and doubles down on fundamentals of academic success in all grade levels with emphasis on:

- Preschool.
- Focus on phonics.
- Science, technology, engineering, arts and math.
- Arts.
- Accelerated elementary.
- Dual-language immersion.
- 20+1 blended learning.

College readiness and workforce development

Our city and county partners have told us the critical skills they need in their employees. Accordingly, we'll have a robust offering of career and technical-education certification

programs. Graduates will be ready for work the day after graduation. Our College Prep investments include:

- Bio-tech science.
- Emergency medical services.
- Early childhood.
- Finance.
- Hospitality and tourism.
- Auto tech.
- AFJROTC.
- Network security.
- Digital photography.
- Honors, AP and AP capstone.

Planning for growth

The challenges of rapid growth bring opportunities to collaborate with our community. Our parents and community can be confident we will:

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- Maximize space.
- Complete Phase II construction at Desert Sunrise High School.

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- IV Therapy
- Lymphatic Drainage
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- NAD+ IV Therapy
- Neurotoxins- Botox and Xeomin
- PRP (platelet rich plasma)
- RF Microneedling with Scarlet and Agnes
- Semaglutide, B12 and lipotropic injections for weight loss.
- Silhouette instalift threads
- Weight Loss

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CS CPA Group: More than a tax service

BY JUSTIN GRIFFIN

SUNSTREET LENDING OWNER RICHARD FURMAN isn't a rookie in the business world, yet he had an accountant who had him perplexed and frustrated as tax season loomed last year.

"We had a \$7,000 tax bill and we couldn't figure out why," Furman said. "None of it made sense. We'd increased our withholdings and what we were paying quarterly, but we still owed money."

After a couple sleepless nights, Furman and his wife, Kristy, decided to get a second opinion from CS CPA Group Taxes and Accounting.

"Apparently, our last accountant didn't understand how Chapter S Corps and pass-throughs worked," Furman said. "I still don't, but Chris (Scoggin) took a look at it for us and in a day or two, we went from owing \$7,000 to getting a \$10,000 refund."

Scoggin, managing director of CS CPA Group Taxes and Accounting, was happy to lend a hand.

As an entrepreneur takes the first step in opening a business, there are so many facets to consider: the goods and services that will be offered, sourcing those goods, finding employees, and of course, identifying and reaching a customer base.

Unfortunately, some business owners overlook the importance of tax and accounting services and don't realize the folly of their ways until they think it's too late.

The good news, however, is that it's seldom too late.

While some business owners might feel an accountant is a luxury they haven't yet grown into, Scoggin said his firm places a premium on value for their clients.

"We want to be an affordable resource for the individual and the business owner," Scoggin said. "I want to build relationships. For every dollar I charge you, I want to save you 10."

While some business owners may be comfortable handling their own tax returns and paying monthly sales taxes, at some point, a situation will arise that requires a higher level of expertise.



Above: Valeria Zornes collects a printout during a busy day at CS CPA Group.

Right: Chris Scoggin, the managing director for CS CPA Group, came aboard in 2019 when he and Jim Chaston joined forces and combined their accounting practices.

"We are general practitioners," Scoggin said. "We handle everything, from the couple who has just retired and want their taxes prepared, to businesses that have much more complex needs. We try to handle any way that a business needs to interface with a government agency, with the exception of certain items like safety and health concerns."

"For 90% of businesses, they're dealing with governmental agencies, handling payroll taxes, along with tax returns and sales tax. All of those are touchpoints that a business has with the government. And that most business owners don't have a lot of experience with. We become that entity that can help them interpret government-speak."

Scoggin said his firm focuses on helping clients find success.

"We want to be the resource for any business starting out in the city of Maricopa," he said.

The business climate in Maricopa

With nearly 400 businesses as part of his clientele, Scoggin has a finger on the pulse of the business community in Maricopa, and for many reasons, he points out, it's vibrant.

While the pandemic might have wrecked the economy in some cities across the country, it forced many in Maricopa to reconsider their options, as Scoggin explained.

"When COVID-19 hit in 2020, it was like all of the air went out of the balloon," Scoggin said. "And since then, I think a lot of people who live in Maricopa and the surrounding communities decided that 'I no longer want to be tied down to one job,

Victor Moreno



one employer. I don't want to be commuting up to central Phoenix or, for that matter, Chandler, Tempe or Gilbert.'

"What we've seen after that initial shock from COVID was this great entrepreneurial renaissance. We have so many businesses coming to us, saying, 'Hey, I've always wanted to do this,' or, 'I got let go from my job when COVID hit and now is the perfect time for me to start doing what I was doing but doing it for myself.'"

The 'side hustle' gets serious

Prior to the pandemic, there was always talk about the "gig" economy, people taking second jobs at night or over the weekend to bring in extra money.

Many times, the intentions weren't that serious. It was kind of a hobby for many people, a way to keep busy.

"But from what we're seeing now, people are taking those 'side hustle' jobs and making them their primary source of income," Scoggin said. "It's really exciting to see what's happening with the entrepreneurial spirit that's going on. We have a lot of businesses that are starting out in their garage.

"For example, we have one client that's making custom cutting boards. Another client went out and bought a laser engraving machine. It's just amazing, the creative ways that are out there to make a living for yourself."

Looking ahead

As the new year turns, there's talk of a recession. While that might be the case for some parts of the country, it's difficult to imagine such a thing happening in Maricopa for an extended period, he said.

"At this point, we're not really seeing any kind of pullback locally," Scoggin said. "We expect that the economic activity is going to be about the same as it was in 2022."

In some ways, 2023 might serve as a minor speed bump on the way to bigger things for local businesses.

"We're going to be getting past the hangover of the stimulus that was handed out in 2020 and 2021," Scoggin said. "But we think at the end of 2023, we're going to be back on the growth path in that businesses are going to start to grow again."

And a large part of that growth comes from the desire of Maricopans to control their own destiny.

"I see a big move towards people having more control over their own economic future," Scoggin said.

"As the bigger corporations have decided to pull back and lay off some employees, we're going to see more people stepping out on their own, who have saved up some money and decided that they want to start their own business. We see this entrepreneurial spirit getting stronger as 2023 progresses."

Scoggin understands the difficulty that comes with layoffs, but he also sees a toughness in Maricopans. He believes in their strength to turn a negative into a positive.

"Ultimately, it's an incredibly painful thing to go through, to be let go, through no fault of their own – incredibly painful," he said. "So many times, we get people



From left: Valeria Zornes, Wendy Carlson, Shelley Scoggin and Chris Scoggin are seen at the front desk of the newly renovated facilities at CS CPA Group in Maricopa.

in here that say, 'Hey, I've decided that I could go out and I can do this,' And whatever it is, making cutting boards, cleaning pools, or repairing cars or opening a restaurant, we think we're going to continue to see that happen in Maricopa."

A long-term partner

About a year ago, Danielle Byers with Maricopa-based ACP Painting, which also services the Valley, took the decision of whom to hire as her next CPA seriously. While staying local was important, the right fit was the key, she said.

"Every business needs a CPA," Byers said. "We met with a few different folks, but Chris really stood out to us as someone we could really connect with. He had a great knowledge of not only accounting, but business in general."

A key component of going local was the comfort factor, Byers said. "We love the availability," she said. "We know everyone in that office. If Chris is unavailable to meet with us, we'll talk with Craig. He's fantastic, as well. The whole

Victor Moreno

"We want to be an affordable resource for the individual and the business owner."

– CHRIS SCOGGIN, MANAGING DIRECTOR, CS CPA GROUP

organization is accessible and caring. You can tell that they are concerned with the success of our business."

Scoggin said his CPAs offer more than just tax preparation.

"We want to encourage entrepreneurs and, in effect, be their business coaches," Scoggin said. "It just comes along with the other services we provide. I want our clients to call us with questions as they need us and let us help them understand the tax ramifications of a move before they make it. We don't nickel-and-dime our clients. We're not lawyers who start the clock when a client calls. Our success, ultimately, is the success of each and every one of our clients."

After the experience the Furmans had with CS CPA Group, Kristy Furman is a fan.

"Any time we have someone who needs any kind of tax help, I recommend Chris and his firm," she said. "I only hear rave reviews from the people who take my advice."

THE ADVANTAGE OF A TAX RETURN PREPARED BY A CPA

Some national tax preparers seem cheaper, but not really, as Scoggin explained. His firm charges \$300 for a Form 1040 tax return.

"They'll throw out their specials, telling people to come get their taxes done for \$99 or \$129," Scoggin said. "However, once they get done charging for every little extra form, like for a child tax credit, employment forms ... I can't tell you how many returns we see where someone will have paid close to \$500. That's why we have a fixed fee."

Online filers often have the same issues. They are lured by a cheap price, but if they need a special form for a deduction or if they have a state return to file, the extra costs start to add up. And should you be audited by the IRS and you opted for the extra audit protection the website scared you into purchasing, the person who's managing your case may not even reside on this side of the planet.

For some firms, tax preparation is a seasonal business. They bulk up from the beginning of the year and go until the end of tax season. CS CPA Group remains fully staffed, year-round.

"They're getting a firm that's going to be

there after April 15," Scoggin said. "If heaven forbid, they do get a letter from the IRS, they have a place to go. Most national tax preparers shut down all but one office in a city after tax season is done."

Some national tax firms don't require their preparers to have any form of license or a degree.

At CS CPA Group, the education is ongoing.

"With us, you're getting a licensed CPA to actually look at your taxes," Scoggin said. "To be a certified public accountant, you have to go through at least 80 hours of continuing education every two years."

"All of our people are spending at least one week in the classroom each year, and many of our preparers have been with us for at least 10 years."

This year, new filers who can have all their information ready by Feb. 15 will get a discount at CS CPA Group.

"It's our early-bird special," Scoggins said. "There will be a coupon in InMaricopa magazine for \$50 off our normal rate of \$300. So, for \$250, you'll get a 1040 tax return that's double-checked by another CPA on our staff."



Role of collagen peptides

BY DR. KRISTINA DONNAY DNP, FNP-C

COLLAGEN IS A SPECIAL TYPE OF protein that accounts for as much as 30% of the body's total protein. It's a primary structural component of connective tissue.

Collagen constitutes 75% of skin, 70% of ligaments, 65-80% of tendons, 50% of cartilage, 30% of tooth dentin, 16% of bone and 10-11% of muscle fibers. It also plays a part in the structure of the arteries and veins.

The amino acid composition of dietary collagen is extremely similar to human collagen, making dietary collagen peptides an ideal source for supporting body collagen turnover and renewal. To keep our body in optimal condition, it is important to have enough raw materials to build healthy new tissue.

Compared to other proteins, collagen has a unique amino acid composition. Collagen is an effective choice in supporting strength and flexibility of bones, tendons and cartilage, appearance of skin and nails, and GI tract health.

Many people, the elderly in particular, do not consume enough protein. Those with higher protein intake are still deficient in adequate sources of collagen unless they utilize the richest sources of collagen like animal skins, bones and tendons.

If a person does decide to supplement their bodies with collagen, they must look for one that is hydrolyzed. This means the collagen has been broken down into small peptides that are easy for the body to digest and transport to the cells where they're needed.

Benefits of collagen peptides

These include:

- Healthy skin elasticity, thickness, hydration and appearance.
- Improving brittle nails, damaged hair and fine lines and wrinkles.
- Improve symptoms of osteoarthritis, osteoporosis and rheumatoid arthritis by reducing joint pain. It also improves joint tissue health and function involving cartilage, tendons and ligaments.
- May improve gut health and reduce symptoms of irritable bowel syndrome. It also strengthens the immune system,



making a person less likely to suffer from infections or allergies.

- Improve recovery time and joint function in athletes.

Starting in your 20s, your body starts losing collagen. By the end of your 40s, you're likely to lose 1% of your bodily collagen per year. Although we all can't be Jennifer Aniston, we can take a page out of her youthful playbook and take a scoop of collagen peptides daily which she swears by. Taking collagen peptides can help prevent unwelcome health woes by replenishing some of your body's collagen supply.

Collagen peptides comes in pill or powdered forms and are typically made from bovine (beef) or porcine (pork) sources. Marine collagen supplements, made from fish also are available. Currently, there are no vegan

sources of collagen supplements, as collagen itself comes from the bones and skin of animals.

Here at Maricopa Wellness Center our collagen peptides contain three highly potent forms: FORTIGEL®, FORTIBONE®, and VERISOL®. This ensures we get all the numerous benefits in an easily digestible form. It is nonflavored and can easily be mixed into hot or cold drinks. One scoop provides 12.5 grams of collagen peptides.

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SPONSORED CONTENT



Business, development around town

Maricopa will begin major capital improvement project work on the **Sonoran Desert Parkway**, with work on Farrell Road from Porter Road to State Route 347 and on Porter Road from Farrell to Iron Point Road.

Maricopa also will begin a minor capital improvement project to construct the **Park at the Lakes**, which includes two new youth baseball fields. The Lakes at Rancho El Dorado Homeowners Association will have the work done by **Haydon Building Corp** of Phoenix.

The **Anderson Farms** residential development will construct commercial shade structures at 17340 N. Alicante St. at a cost of \$88,000, which include a 20-foot-by-20-foot ramada and a 30-by-40 shade sail. Caretaker Inc. will do the work for Lennar Arizona Inc.

Estrella Gin Business Park will add a 47,200-square-foot flex office/warehouse shell at 20655 N. Estrella Pkwy. at a cost of more than \$6 million. **Construction Solutions Company LLC** will do the work.

Tenant improvements will be made for **Adobe Blinds and More** in its

store in Maricopa Grand Professional Village, 41600 W. Smith-Enke Road. The \$275,000 project includes non-bearing partition walls, a suspended ceiling system, plumbing and electrical. Owner Venture Investment Group LLC has contracted **Kroll Contractors Inc.** for the project.

A yet-to-be-named medical office and urgent care facility will make \$300,000 in interior tenant improvements to its space at 20236 N. John Wayne Pkwy. The work, in an existing shell space, will be done by **Commercial Construction Inc.** for owner Tacoma Financial Center Partners LLC.

Paragon Hampton Edison will begin construction on 13 duplex units at its Hampton Edison multi-family project at 45305 W. Edison Road. All the units are single-story. There will be seven two-bedroom duplexes (14 units) of 1,020 square feet and six one-bedroom duplexes with 12 units of 645 square feet. The \$3.3 million project is being built by **Beckshar Diamond Commercial LLC**.

The single-family homes for rent portion of **Hampton Edison** will start work on 24 single-story units — 10 two-bedrooms and 14 three-bedrooms. The two-bedroom units will each have 1,028 square feet while the three-bedrooms will span 1,295 square feet. Cost of the project is \$4.3 million. **Beckshar Diamond Commercial LLC** will perform the work.

Innovation Village Duplexes at West Maricopa Village will begin work on 10 one-bedroom duplexes (20 units) at 21055 N. Village Pkwy. Each single-story unit covers 677 square feet and has a private porch. Cost of the units is \$2.2 million. Work will be done by **T&K Contracting LLC** for owner Maricopa 35 LLC. [Maricopa 35 LLC](https://www.maricopa35llc.com)

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Global Water committed to reinforcing water distribution system and reducing water-main breaks

BY JON CORWIN, VICE PRESIDENT AND GENERAL MANAGER AT GLOBAL WATER RESOURCES

N MARICOPA, GLOBAL WATER maintains almost 300 miles of water mains, and the number continues to grow.

All water utilities deal with water-main breaks. For example, you may have heard about Tempe’s large water-main break that closed the U.S. 60 for days last summer.

While it is not possible to eliminate all water-main breaks, steps can be taken to reduce the frequency of their occurrence. At Global Water, we recognize the frustration and inconvenience main breaks cause. We understand the community’s concern and are striving to take actions to reduce the number of breaks within Maricopa.

We think it is important to understand some of the historical issues that contribute to main failures in the city. We also want you to know the actions Global Water is taking to fix these issues.

The history of Maricopa’s water system

In the early 2000s, Maricopa started to grow rapidly. It grew so rapidly that it was among the fastest-growing, on a percentage basis, in the country. To accommodate rapid expansion of housing, large investments were made in new utilities.

Service to sections of the city were provided by Sonoran Utility Services (SUS), which was not affiliated with Global Water. Unfortunately, SUS struggled to accommodate the rapid growth. Within the SUS service area, homes were being sold and homeowners were moving into homes, but SUS had not finished constructing their wastewater treatment facility. Additionally, SUS’s water did not meet federal and state safe drinking-water standards.

SUS also installed miles of water mains that were not constructed properly. The state of the SUS utilities resulted in the need for emergency action. Maricopa, Arizona Department of Environmental Quality and Arizona Department of Water Resources asked Global Water to take over services on an emergency basis.

Ultimately, the SUS water and wastewater infrastructure was acquired and fully integrated into Global Water’s utilities. While most of the



issues that created the emergency declaration have been fixed, the improper water-main construction has continued to be problematic.

Actions taken by Global Water


Over the years, sections of water mains installed by SUS have failed repeatedly. To mitigate failures on water mains known to have a high failure rate, Global Water has implemented a multi-year program to install water-main liners to reinforce problematic water mains. Four liner projects have been completed to reinforce problematic water mains. A fifth project is scheduled for early 2023. The fifth project will reinforce the water main under Honeycutt Road from Hartman Road to Rose Road.

Lining problematic water mains is not always a viable option for the repair of poorly constructed water mains. Global Water continues to analyze and evaluate solutions to reduce the failure rate on other problematic water mains.

Nearly all water-main breaks have been associated with polyvinyl chloride pipe. PVC is among the most common materials used in water-main construction. Several years ago, Global Water revised our design standards and now require ductile iron pipe for all new water-main installations. The ductile iron pipe is wrapped to protect from corrosion. Ductile iron pipe has a very long life and is less susceptible to catastrophic failures often associated with PVC water mains.

Additionally, Global Water has purchased specialized pressure-monitoring equipment to track water-system dynamics. The equipment specializes in identifying potential causes of system pressure spikes, called transient pressures, which can cause water-main breaks.

Data provided by this specialized equipment led to a project that will optimize the sequencing of large water distribution pumps. This project also will include installation of specialized equipment that allows pumps to start and stop more slowly, thus reducing rapid pressure spikes or drops within the distribution system.

While water-main breaks will occur periodically, our goal is to reduce the frequency. We commit to continually evaluating the water system in Maricopa and the effectiveness of the solutions being implemented. With rapid growth, system dynamics will change, but we commit to continuing to find solutions to reduce water-main breaks. 

 **GWResources.com**
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SPONSORED CONTENT

Restaurant inspections



A summary of the Nov. 12-Dec. 19 food inspections by Pinal County Environmental Health Services



Certified food protection manager
No employees present with certified food manager certificate

Cleanliness and sanitation of food contact surfaces
Heavy debris built up on food-prep sink basin

Proper hot holding temperatures
Internal temperatures of hot dogs held in warmer 125°F to 129°F. (135°F required).

Cleanliness non-food contact surfaces
Buildup of food debris on interior side of French fry-warmer hood.



3-101.11 Safe, Unadulterated and Honestly Presented: Container of glitter found in food-prep area. Owner stated glitter is used on consumer cakes. Original container of glitter was found labeled as “Galaxy Dust for the decorative enhancement of arts and crafts.”

Toxic substance properly identified, stored and used
Spray bottle of quat sanitizer tested above 400 ppm (200 to 400 ppm required).

Insecticide found in kitchen
Several cans of spray insecticide in kitchen and storage areas. Only licensed professionals are to apply insecticides.

Ware-washing facilities: Test strips must be installed, maintained and used
Owner using quat-based sanitizer without testing strips.

Physical facilities installed, maintained and clean
Ceiling tiles throughout kitchen damaged

EXCELLENT

- A+ Charter School
- Bashas' Bakery
- Bashas' Deli
- Bashas' Retail
- Bashas' Starbucks
- Dunkin'
- Fry's Marketplace
- Fry's Marketplace Bakery

- Fry's Marketplace Deli
- Fry's Marketplace Starbucks
- Legacy Traditional School
- Starbucks (21423 N. John Wayne Parkway)
- Wingstop

SATISFACTORY

- Freddy's Frozen Custard & Steakburgers
- Helen's Kitchen

EXCELLENT No violations found.

SATISFACTORY Violations corrected during inspection.

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

UNACCEPTABLE Gross, unsanitary conditions necessitating the discontinuation of service.

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Plenty of horsepower

The Masik Tas Rodeo is among the major attractions during the Ak-Chin Indian Community's annual celebration in December.



Bryan Mordt



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COMMUNITY



Think good thoughts, focus on mindfulness

BY HARRIET PHELPS, PSYD, RETIRED

WE MADE IT THROUGH ANOTHER difficult year when we were challenged with many shifts in our lives.

Life lends itself to shifts and changes, although usually not as many as these past few years. The best response is to protect ourselves from negative fallout to our mental and physical well-being. It is a relief to see that wellness care has moved to the forefront of public discussion, including the primary issues of depression and anxiety. It is not easy asking for help, but it is worth it.

We may believe the way we think cannot be changed. Our self-image was established when we were very young by our environment and circumstances. Through repetition, we developed an automatic response to events as we learned in childhood and life experiences. Mindfulness means becoming aware how we think and respond.

A simple thought can bring us down into depression or anxiety. The Book of Proverbs says, "As a man thinketh in his heart, so he is." This statement is so comprehensive it encompasses conditions and circumstances of our lives.

Henry Ford said, "If you think you can or think you can't, you are right." Thoughts acted upon without thinking or mindfulness will trigger an emotional reaction, positive or negative. Choose the positive.

Change your thoughts, change your life. Develop a solution response. When working with clients to develop a more positive approach to problem-solving, I would ask, "Where's the saber-tooth tiger?" Many times, we simply react by throwing an old pattern at it without seeing if the tiger was really in the room.

A traumatic event can elicit an extreme response to prevent repeating the pain of the first event. Is the tiger in the room? In an emergency,

we are going to react with the old tools we have used in the past. Check your toolbox. Thoughts, feelings and behaviors are interconnected.

Develop a healthy response before an emergency. Ask: Is this a thought or is this really happening? Is this an emergency? If not, relax. If so, react:

Ask: Can I do something about this?

Yes, do it.

If you cannot do anything, then accept.

Breathe: Check your bodily reaction.

Pause: Take a breath to slow heart rate.

Anchor: Anchor your mental presence by visualizing a root going into the earth and anchoring your body. Slowly breathe to regain calm.

Self-talk to soothe: Check your thinking and what you are telling yourself about the situation. I'm OK, there is no danger, I can take time to plan or accomplish this situation. I can do this.

Meditate: When home, in the appropriate place to relax, take a few minutes to utilize meditation music on social streaming.

Harriet Phelps is a retired psychologist and a volunteer at Be Awesome Youth and Maricopa Senior Center.

Cancer care on a higher level

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Now is the perfect time to plant roses

BY WENDE GEHRT

ROSES ARE TIMELESS FLOWERS and, fortunately, they grow very well in Arizona. In fact, the oldest Lady Banks Rose in the world, which was planted in 1885, can be found in Tombstone. As with all gardening successes, growing roses just requires a little knowledge.

The best time to plant roses in Pinal County is mid-December to late January. Choose a location that receives at least six hours of sunlight a day and has fertile, well-drained soil.

Roses can be purchased as bare-root plants, packaged in plastic or in containers.



Bare-root plants must be soaked in water for 8-24 hours before planting. Dig a hole 18-30 inches wide and deep enough to accommodate the root ball. Amend native soil with compost, creating a “cone” for the root ball. Cover with soil leaving the bud union 2 inches above the soil line.

A plastic-wrapped rose also might need to be soaked depending on the medium it’s packed in.

For container roses, dig a hole only as deep as the container, but wider to allow for amended soil, keeping the plant at the same level it was in the container. Water thoroughly for the first week and fertilize frequently following the label directions.


Favorite roses for our area that are low maintenance and repeat bloomers include Mr. Lincoln, a beautiful, deep red with strong fragrance.

If you prefer a yellow variety, good choices would be Julia Child, the color of butter, chosen by Julia herself, or St. Patrick, a pale yellow that’s very heat tolerant.

For peach color, look for Marilyn Monroe or Fragrant Cloud for a coral-colored bloom.

Peace features a pale-yellow center with bright-pink edges and Rainbow Knockout has yellow centers with coral edges. Double Delight has white centers with strawberry-red edges.

Of course, for a climbing rose, Lady Banks is a great choice with yellow or white flowers.

Growing the “Queen of Flowers” is a lot of fun and cutting roses from your yard is delightful. 

Wende Gehrt is a master gardener with the University of Arizona.

 InMaricopa.com/Columnists



TYPES OF ROSES

- Hybrid Tea Roses produce long, single-stem flowers and are repeat bloomers.
- Floribundas means “many flowering,” and are smaller and bushier than Hybrid Tea Roses. They have small clusters of three to five flowers.
- Grandiflora means “large flowered,” and is a cross between Hybrid Tea Roses and Floribunda roses. They’re larger than both, with large blooms in clusters.
- Polyanthus means “many flowered,” and they are low-growing, bushy plants. With small leaves and dense clusters of flowers, the blooms may be single, semi-double or double.
- Miniatures are repeat flowering shrubs and often sold as house plants. They require cold dormancy to survive in the garden.



Local Realtor pays for homeowner upgrades

Dayv Morgan takes risk to ensure clients sell homes quickly, for maximum value

WHEN IT’S TIME TO SELL OR invest in a home, Maricopans have a unique opportunity to benefit from using a local agent who is so committed to selling a home that he’s willing to pay out of his own pocket for improvements. Dayv Morgan of HomeSmart Success offers to cover the costs of renovating and updating a home before putting it on the market, in order to increase its value and marketability.

All homes experience wear-and-tear over the years, and Dayv counters that by installing new carpet, fresh paint and even full kitchen remodels when necessary. The selling price can then be increased to cover, and usually exceed, the cost of the improvements.

“Move-in ready homes sell much faster and for a significantly higher amount,” he commented. “When a buyer walks into a home that looks and feels like it was just built, because it has new paint, flooring, and appliances, they will pay a premium.”

Dayv, who sells over 100 homes annually, advised that such improvements not only help the seller make more money but also benefit the buyer as well. “Most buyers in Maricopa don’t have the money, after they buy a house, to fix it up. They would much rather pay a slightly higher price and finance the upgrades through the mortgage. If they paid \$10,000 for




improvements and put it on a credit card they would end up paying 16 to 22 percent interest. If that \$10,000 is instead done by the seller and included in the price of mortgage, now they’re only paying 5 or 6 percent.”

The program Dayv developed allows a seller to access his pool of preferred contractors, with whom he has negotiated reduced fees, or sellers can use their own referrals to make the repairs. Regardless of who completes the work, he pays up front for the improvements and is reimbursed from the proceeds of the sale, without charging any interest to the seller.

The idea came to him after seeing companies like Open Door and HomeVestors “low-ball” sellers to buy their home as-is, and then after making a few cosmetic improvements they would list the home on the MLS and resell it for a profit. He was surprised to see how much equity owners were giving away by selling their home direct to an investor. As a listing agent he created a process that allows sellers to “flip their own house” and keep the profit themselves. “It



doesn’t cost the owners anything out of pocket, and it increases their return,” Dayv noted. “It’s a win-win for everyone involved — the buyer, the seller, myself as the Realtor, and even the city of Maricopa as it helps the neighborhood values to increase.” 

Dayv Morgan is a Maricopa Realtor and owner of HomeSmart Premier. He is a 16-year resident of the city.

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 Nov. 29

\$ 599,995

This single-story home in The Lakes has three bedrooms and two and a half bathrooms. The home also has a study room that can be used as a bedroom or office. With a three-car tandem garage and an RV garage, the home has plenty of parking. The home has an large kitchen with a large walk-in closet, and a large, covered patio. The house was on the market for 76 days and sold for list price.

Previously sold for: New build

Community: The Lakes at Rancho El Dorado
Square feet: 2,580
Price per square foot: \$232.55
Days on market: 76

Builder: Richmond American Homes
Year built: 2021
Bedrooms: 3
Bathrooms: 2.5

2. 21753 N. Greenway Drive, Rancho El Dorado.....\$570,000

3. 19569 N. Ventana Lane, Glennwilde.....\$550,000

4. 18337 N. Falcon Lane, Glennwilde.....\$575,000

5. 44044 W. Palo Abeto Drive, Palo Brea\$539,000

least expensive HOME SOLD



 18495 N. Celis St.

 Nov. 15

\$ 245,800

This single-story home in Desert Passage has three bedrooms and two bathrooms. The home has a pass-through in the kitchen and a covered patio. The house sold for \$64,200 below list price with a cash offer.

Previously sold for \$155,000 on 6/30/2018, \$108,900 on 5/6/2008

Community: Desert Passage
Square feet: 1,321
Price per square foot: \$186.07
Days on market: 79

Builder: KB Home
Year built: 2007
Bedrooms: 3
Bathrooms: 2

2. 142774 W. Raynon St., Senita.....\$253,000

3. 43981 W. Cowpath Road, Senita.....\$256,000

4. 45205 W. Hathaway Ave., Heritage District.....\$299,900

5. 21830 N. Liles Lane, The Lakes.....\$280,000

Source: MLS, Nov. 10 – Dec. 9

Brian Petersheim Jr.

HOME



Mortgage options allow for savings

BY DAYV MORGAN

AFTER HITTING A RATE OF NEARLY 7.5 percent in November, it appears that mortgage rates might be softening as we head into 2023.

Most people think that the Federal Reserve directly sets mortgage rates, which isn't exactly true. While the Fed can change its Fed Funds Rate and a few other rates, it doesn't set consumer mortgage rates.

Assuming inflation eases in the next year, mortgage rates will fall. But what if you want to

buy a house now? There are a couple of tools that could help get you through the next year or two while the market recalibrates.

2-1 rate buy down

Given that the market has slowed down, most sellers are offering concessions, like a temporary rate buy down, meaning that you could get a rate two percent lower than your agreed upon rate for the first year you own the home and a one percent rate reduction the second year. For example, if your base rate is 6.5%, for the first year of your mortgage you'd have a 4.5% rate and for the second year a 5.5% rate, before bouncing back up to the original rate from year three through the end of the loan term. The hope is that mortgage rates decline within the next two years so you can refinance to a lower rate before it resets in year three.

Loan Assumption

Some homeowners are sitting on loans with extremely low mortgage rates and there may be an opportunity to transfer their loan into your name and let you take over their payments. There are conditions that have to be met and if

you don't have the cash on hand, you may have to take out a loan to cover the extra equity the seller has in their home that they will want to be compensated for.

See a loan expert

While as a Realtor, I've seen some of these options used, it's a good idea that you consult with a mortgage loan officer to figure out which works best for you. The rate buy-down and the loan assumption process could be answers that allow you to buy a home and save money while waiting for interest rates to fall. But before going down that path, it's a good idea to consult with a mortgage loan officer to help you understand your options. 

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

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Why use pro management services to build real estate investment portfolio

BY SHERMAN AND EUPHEMIA WEEKES

REAL ESTATE COULD BE AN EFFECTIVE place to grow your hard-earned money, but it must be managed skillfully. It could become a drain on personal time, resources and create frustrations which may force anyone to abandon the idea of investing.

After acquiring real estate, it is best to use a paid property manager, who will efficiently and professionally manage the property while you as owner/investor receive returns directly into your account monthly. Management fees would be written off as an expense on your taxes and you save frustrations of handling it by yourself.


To be successful at managing a property, time is needed to:

- **Advertise and market** — Wider marketing yields a better pool of tenants.
- **Screen tenants** — Always use the right tools and resources to help to select the best



tenant. The process must be thorough and correct each time. Taking shortcuts and not dedicating enough time to screening can be disastrous.

- **Prepare lease** — These are legal documents that must always contain terms to protect your investment.
- **Handle maintenance and respond to emergencies** — This is time consuming, costly and can severely impact the bottom line.
- **Collect rent, file and serve notices**, and appear in court for eviction hearings.
- **Learn tenant and landlord law** — It takes time to learn and know the duties of a landlord. Tenants have rights and landlords must abide by the rules relating to upkeep of the property, visiting the property, security deposits and eviction processes. Failure to know those rules could be very costly and may cause your investment to have negative returns.

Property management companies know the Arizona Landlord and Tenant Act and have the legal resources to manage all issues that may arise in the process of managing rental property. 

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Does Maricopa have a disaster plan in place?

BY AL BRANDENBURG

WHILE IMAGES OF HURRICANES and wildfire destruction have been in recent news coverage, homeowners, renters and business owners can ill afford to ignore other catastrophes that can wreak havoc.

Cities have faced challenges planning for disaster responses, especially extreme weather events. The spotlight has been on the importance of remediation, repair and recovery in the aftermath.

Catastrophic response and recovery are forward-looking and possess a strategic focus on the restoration of infrastructure, housing and the economy of a community. Remember the torrential rainstorm in October that knocked out power across the city, impacting businesses. And consider the wicked windstorms that caused damage to trees, roofing and backyards.

With our city continuing to grow, we must consider the effect of a major lightning or dust storm that knocks out power and other utilities citywide.

Imagine your home without A/C for an extended period when it's 110 degrees. What would you do? Where would you go? This could be especially critical for older citizens.

Recent weather events in Florida and along the East Coast remind us every community needs to invest in preparing for the next emergency or disaster. Evidence has shown there is a direct correlation between the level of preparedness and the level of resiliency in a community. Specifically, the more prepared communities are, the greater their ability is to respond to and recover from a disaster.

However, the most resilient communities go beyond simply developing a response plan that "checks the box" and supports it with periodic training and scenario-based exercises.

We are fortunate in Maricopa to have a Community Emergency Response Team



that works with city organizations and utility companies and focuses on reducing the city's vulnerability to disasters. They are creating plans for protection, preparedness, response and recovery.

As an example, if a major summer storm knocks out power across the city, where can people go to escape the heat? How will those who are incapacitated be transported to appropriate


shelters? What resources are available for those who choose to shelter at home?

According to FEMA, it makes sense, especially for older Americans, to prepare now. They recommend having a kit with three days of emergency supplies, including medications, and emergency documents like family and medical records.

This kit should include hearing-aid batteries, wheelchair batteries and oxygen.

FEMA also recommends a plan for what you will do in an emergency, such as who to call, and what everyone in the family should do, depending on the circumstances.

Be informed. Watch TV or listen to the radio for emergency instructions.

In Maricopa, during an emergency contact City Hall by calling 311 for assistance. For additional information, go to Ready.gov or call 1-800-BE-READY. In the meantime, be well and stay safe. 

Al Brandenburg is a member of Maricopa Community Advocates.

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As the year turns, it's a good time to rethink how we live our Golden Years

BY JOAN KOZOR

THIS PAST YEAR BROUGHT many challenges. Many of us are dealing with unexpected health issues. COVID-19 left its mark. Inflation had a profound effect.

Several articles on senior living give axioms of how we should re-think our Golden Years. Some suggestions, you may find thought provoking; Others, you may disagree with.

Use the money you've saved. Use it and enjoy it. Stop worrying about the financial condition of your children and grandchildren. You've taken care of them. You gave them an education, food, shelter and support. The responsibility is now theirs to earn their money. Don't feel bad spending your money on yourself.

Adopt a healthy lifestyle. Do moderate exercise, like walking every day. More ambitious? Join a health club. Eat well and get sufficient rest. Stay in good shape and be aware of your medical and physical needs. As we age, it seems easier to become sick and more difficult to be healthy. Keep in touch with your doctor. Do tests even when you're feeling well. Stay informed.


We experience pain and discomfort more as we age. Try not to dwell on it but accept it as a part of the cycle of life we're all going through. Minimize it in your mind. This is not who you are, but something that life added to you. If it becomes your entire focus, you lose sight of the person you used to be.

Don't stress over the little things. You've already overcome so much in your life. You have good memories and bad ones, but the

important thing is the present. Don't let the past drag you down and don't let the future frighten you. Feel good in the now. Small issues will soon be forgotten.

Laugh a lot. Remember, you are one of the lucky ones. You managed to have a life, a long one. Many never get to this age, never get to experience a full life. But you did. Find humor in your situation.

Have pride in yourself and what you've achieved. Embrace your history, your memories and the life you've lived. There's still much to be written. Don't waste time thinking about what others might think. Now is the time to sit back and enjoy. Be at peace and as happy as you can be.

Mark Twain may have said it best: "Life would be infinitely happier if we could only be born at the age of 80 and gradually approach 18." 

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

 InMaricopa.com/Columnists



Survey challenges conventional wisdom about aging

BY RON SMITH

THIS PAST JUNE, AMERICAN Association of Retired Persons and National Geographic published results of their joint "Second Half of Life Study" in the AARP Bulletin.

AARP and National Geographic were curious how Americans perceive aging. Researchers found results to be positive, writing, "Life is good for older Americans — especially those over 60." Interestingly, they conclude with confidence, "the most prevalent opinions and stereotypes of aging were proven wrong!"

Health redefined

About two-thirds people in their 50s and 80 percent of people in their 80s are living with one or more serious or chronic health condition. Yet, despite diabetes and other chronic conditions, "78% to 83% rated their health good, very good or excellent!" There is a survival benefit to resilience. One respondent said, "Good health is being able to get up each day and do the things that you plan to do, and not dread them."

Respondents ages 60 to 80-plus tended to get more restful sleep. They better maintain heart health, weight and physical stamina. Many are doing strength training. Is this due to more available time or a stronger commitment to health and resiliency?

Respondents feared loss of mobility and mental decline more than chronic illnesses, such as diabetes and heart disease. That's a powerful message that many doctors, health advisors and families don't always hear. Providers must describe implications for the patient's independence.

Money perceptions

Respondents clearly showed finances remain a big concern, due to lack of clarity regarding



the future of Social Security and loss of private pension plans. Most people in their 40s don't understand the importance of Social Security once they hit 80.

The pursuit of happiness

Nearly three times more people aged 80 and older say they're living their 'best possible life' or close to it, than younger adults. Happiness may have more to do with optimism. People tend to prioritize positive experiences as they get older. Optimism increases with fulfillment or the promise of it.

Relationships

Friends are great, but family comes first. They're the people you rely on. If you find yourself with limited family, consider turning to friends as a "chosen family" for the long haul. Relationships are important to your sense of joy.

Life stages

This survey also focuses on the shift from midlife crises in the 40s. The survey calls the 60s the watershed decade "when it comes to shifts in attitudes we've described about longevity, relationships, well-being and wealth." Concerns about life-expectancy may drop, but other concerns arise regarding cognitive skills, eyesight and mental prowess. Evaluating relationships becomes more important along with a focus on physical health.

Our final years

AARP Chief Public Policy Officer Debra Whitman says people aren't afraid of death.

The survey confirms fear of death decreases with age. Of greater concern is controlling circumstances. Whitman says, "people want choice and self-control when dying."


One respondent said aging "can be good if you have the right attitude." On the other hand, "it can be terrible if you resent it and think of all the aches and pains."

People in their 70s and 80s are great examples of resilience. They become more realistic about changes in life and are more prone to be happy.

Conclusion

AARP CEO Jo Ann Jenkins said the study is packed with information that largely contradicts conventional wisdom about aging in America. Answers from more than 2,500 Americans reveal "many negative beliefs about aging are not only incorrect but also nearly opposite of the truth."

Jenkins is on a mission "to disrupt aging, to challenge outdated stereotypes and attitudes and to find new solutions that help people live better as they age." Research, such as this survey, provides value for planning and policies.

The bottom line, from Whitman: "Most people are optimistic about aging and do not see it as a bad thing." 

Ron Smith is a living-in-place advocate, a member of the Age-Friendly Maricopa Advisory Committee, a Certified Aging-in-Place Specialist and a Certified Living in Place Professional.

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Maricopa's Derek Day moves into position for a point.

Holdin' it down

Maricopa High's wrestling team recently hosted a meet on Dec. 4 before the winter break. The Rams will be back at it again on Jan. 4 when they play host to Desert Sunrise and Hamilton High. A few days later on Jan. 6-7, they travel to Poston Butte High School for the Central Arizona Classic Wrestling Tournament.



Maricopa's Arleth Alvarado-Cruz gains an advantage.

Victor Moreno



Daniel Raudales-Oliva



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THINGS TO DO

January

3

Maricopa Historical Society
5 p.m., Redwood Room
Maricopa Library & Cultural Center
18160 N. Maya Angelou Drive

11

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

13

Night Market Time Machine
5 p.m., Copper Sky Park
44345 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.

17

Maricopa City Council
6 p.m., City Hall
39700 W. Civic Center Plaza

21

2023 Senior Info/Expo
10 a.m., Copper Sky
44345 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.

23

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

25

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

Sundays

Narcotics Anonymous
7 p.m., Maricopa Meadows
Community Park
45511 W. Honeycutt Ave.

Mondays

Narcotics Anonymous
5:30 p.m., Maricopa Library &
Cultural Center
18160 N. Maya Angelou Drive

Alcoholics Anonymous

6 p.m., Community of Hope Church
45295 W. Honeycutt Ave.

Tuesdays

Maricopa Cruise-in
5 p.m., Parking lot behind Burger
King
20699 N. John Wayne Pkwy.

Alcoholics Anonymous

6:30 p.m., Mountain View
Community Church
50881 W. Papago Road

**Celebrate Recovery
Small Group**

7 p.m., Maricopa Community Church
44977 W. Hathaway Ave.

Wednesdays

Al-Anon — New Beginnings

10 a.m., Maricopa Library & Cultural
Center
18160 N. Maya Angelou Drive

Alcoholics Anonymous

12 p.m., Maricopa Library & Cultural
Center
18160 N. Maya Angelou Drive

Narcotics Anonymous

5:30 p.m., Maricopa Library &
Cultural Center
18160 N. Maya Angelou Drive

Thursdays

Maricopa Police Cadets

6 p.m., Maricopa High School
45012 W. Honeycutt Ave.

Alcoholics Anonymous

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

Fridays

Narcotics Anonymous

4:30 p.m., Maricopa Library &
Cultural Center
18160 N. Maya Angelou Drive

Al-Anon — Strength & Home AFG

7 p.m., Community of Hope
45295 W. Honeycutt Ave.

Alcoholics Anonymous

7 p.m., Mountain View Community
Church
50881 W. Papago Road

Saturdays

Alcoholics Anonymous

10 a.m., Maricopa Library & Cultural
Center
18160 N. Maya Angelou Drive

ALL EVENTS ARE TENTATIVE



For details on these and other local events — and to list your own —
visit InMaricopa.com/Calendar.



FEB
11

Art for the Heart Festival

On Feb. 11, the Maricopa High School Graphic Muse Club will host its fifth annual citywide Art for the Heart Festival on the Copper Sky Recreation Center lawn from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Art for the Heart will feature original artists from the Maricopa area and display their unique works for purchase. The club will send 75% of profits to the American Heart Association.

Applications for artists interested in selling their works are available at the Art for Heart website, Art4HeartAZ.org. Fees to reserve and set up a booth are \$60. There is no admission charge to the public.

Students of Graphic Muse at Maricopa High host the festival in conjunction with their Community Service Project competition, which is part of a circuit in SkillsUSA, a nonprofit national education association that prepares middle school, high school and post-secondary students for trade, technical and skilled-service occupations.



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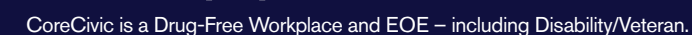
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