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August 2023

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27555R20 Truck Radial 117V	\$183.99	LT27570R18 Truck Radial 1225	\$193.99
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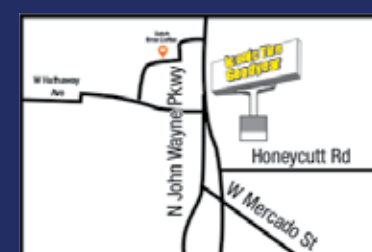
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State or local taxes or surcharges for Environmental protection will be an extra charge.

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CORRECTION

The date and credit for the history photo featured in the July issue (page 6) were inaccurate. It was taken in 1998 by Gray Photography.

ON THE COVER

InMaricopa's Bryan Mordt caught a portion of Mack Hodges' workout at MDE Athletics in Chandler. Story starts on page 48..



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Hey Maricopa!

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Welcome home

SAFE TO SAY, I'VE FINALLY FOUND MY HOME.

I've grown accustomed to the hustle and bustle of urban Phoenix. Maricopa, to me, is an oasis painted by the desert's golden brushstrokes.

But when I say I've found my home, I don't just mean in this city that's both cozy and captivating. I've found a home in this newsroom and among the bundles of glossy pages that are like colored shards in the kaleidoscope that is Maricopa's story.

I'm excited to have arrived here in my new home in time to celebrate an important milestone — Maricopa's 20th birthday. On my 20th birthday, I was a bushy-tailed sortagrad student in the Mid-South, writing about baseball and birdwatching in the local newspaper. Saguaros and magazine editorships were the last thing on my mind.

But I'm still the youngest editor in the history of *InMaricopa*, a magazine about as old as the city itself, and it's a role I take very seriously. A glance at the cover of our August edition and I'm reminded of this fact. One of our talented writers, Monica D. Spencer, profiles a man at the top of his craft despite his age. A powerlifter over 75 and an editor under 30 — isn't that one of the things that makes this city so special?

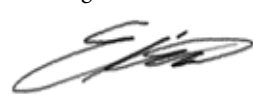
Aside from being a journalist whose résumé makes mine look like a used paper towel, *The Rush Limbaugh Show's* Bill Brady has long been the yin to my yang on Arizona radio airwaves. He never goes an episode without saying, "Elias, you're always

getting your fingernails dirty." He means I'm restless and don't know how to mind my own business. As it turns out, this characteristic is a perfect match for InMaricopa's beliefs (see adjacent box) of an informed citizenry and holding ourselves and others accountable. So, enjoy a pair of investigative pieces I literally could not wait to dive into — one about the costly crimes of stolen valor, the other about hush money and government incompetence.

And with school starting this month, you'll get lost in our Cameron Jobson's twin pieces about the highs of success in sport and the lows of relegating our youngest learners to a doublewide lecture hall.

We're smack dab in the middle of "the dog days of summer," a phrase with ancient Greek origins tied to exhaustion and bad luck. The snowbirds have left us here in Maricopa to suffer the record-breaking temperatures ourselves. But you know what? They don't know what they're missing.

On the contrary, I feel as lucky as ever to be in this scenic little desert town, and you should too. Hopefully, this edition of *InMaricopa* will remind you mid-summer is as exciting a time as any here in Pinal County. As always, thank you for reading our magazine.



ELIAS WEISS
MANAGING EDITOR | Elias@InMaricopa.com



STAFF



CAMERON JOBSON

Cameron uncovered an interesting story about the new football coach and athletic director at Sequoia Pathway.



BRYAN MORDT

Bryan shoots an evocative cover photo capturing one man's willpower to defy the laws of nature.



MONICA D. SPENCER

Monica tells the powerful tale of how a weightlifter defies age.

Publisher
SCOTT BARTLE

Managing Editor
ELIAS WEISS

Advertising Director
VINCENT MANFREDI

Advertising
MICHELLE SORENSEN
ASHLEY WALLACE

Writers
AL BRANDENBURG
KRISTINA DONNAY
CAMERON JOBSON
DAYV MORGAN
TOM SCHUMAN
RON SMITH
MONICA D. SPENCER
EUPHEMIA WEEKES
SHERMAN WEEKES

Photographers
BRYAN MORDT
JENECE MORDT
BRIAN PETERSHEIM JR.
MONICA D. SPENCER

Designer
CARL BEZUIDENHOUT

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We believe in:
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• Holding ourselves and others accountable.
• The success of deserving businesses.

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• Integrity
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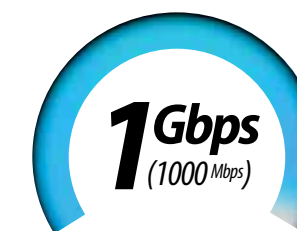
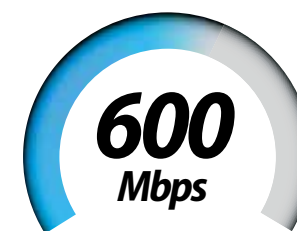
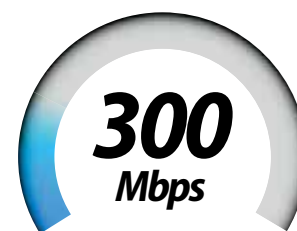
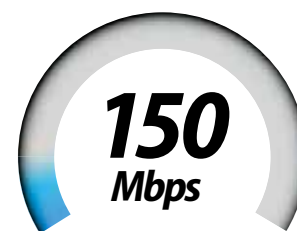
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520-568-0050 Fax
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Maricopa Road's metamorphosis

In the 1950s, the intersection of Maricopa Road and what later became the Maricopa-Casa Grande Highway, was the business district north of the tracks. At left are the Texaco Station, Woods Apartments and Headquarters. At right are Valley Auto (soon-to-be Napa Auto Parts), Jessie Estep's Diner, Black Diamond Bar and Maricopa Mercantile. In 1956, Maricopa Road was paved between Maricopa and Phoenix and then restructured into a divided road (State Route 347) in 1995. Maricopa-Casa Grande Highway was completed in 1956 and paved in 1959.

Today, the intersection has turned into a curve and goes under the overpass, which finished construction in 2019. The only surviving business is the Headquarters bar and restaurant, now called The New HQ. Napa was demolished in 2020 after the overpass was completed.

THIS MONTH BACK IN...

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



2008

Walmart prepared to join the Maricopa retail scene when it broke ground on Aug. 12.

The 200,000-square-foot superstore at The Wells would offer locals another place to buy groceries, apparel and home items. "This is the city's first large employer, and, hopefully, it acts as a magnet to attract other employers," then-Mayor Tony Smith said.



2013

A woman gave birth to a child on State Route 347 near Casa Blanca Road on Aug. 16. The woman's husband was driving her and a family member to Mercy Gilbert Medical Center when she went into labor. The husband pulled over and dialed 911 while the family member helped with the birth. The mother and newborn were later taken to Chandler Regional Medical Center.



2018

A family escaped an overnight Villages home that caught fire Aug. 4. Three adults and two children were in the home on the 43600 block of West McClelland Court when the blaze broke out. "The house was fully engulfed from the garage area," Fire Department spokesman Ricardo Alvarado said. Six Maricopa engine companies responded along with units from Phoenix and Chandler.

Maricopa Historical Society | Brian Petersheim, Jr.

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ProX Auto Detailing co-owner Jason Love washes a municipal van after the city loaned his startup \$7,500 in 2016. Today, the business owes more than \$18,000.

Loan survivor

City hasn't collected on huge debt caused by failed micro-lending program

BY ELIAS WEISS

THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS A FREE LUNCH, THEY SAY. While that's usually the case, there's an exception to every rule. Say, if your lunch was a startup loan, and your lunchtime was 2016.

And the city of Maricopa picked up the tab. Like the loan shark's antithesis, the city of Maricopa is perhaps more like a loan minnow, lapping limply at the surface of Copper Sky Lake. A forgetful financier that sprinkled loans like fish flakes, never bothering to reel in its debts.

Quietly, a list of nine erstwhile startups owes the city hundreds of thousands of dollars. The city sat on its hands for years as eight of those enterprises went out of business. A feeble attempt to collect seems too little too late.

It wasn't supposed to be that way. When the bygone Maricopa Center for Entrepreneurship loaned its final dollar nearly seven years ago, it expected its debtors to pay back what was owed. Most never did.

But not for lack of trying. Multiple MCE loan recipients told *InMaricopa* they had no way to repay what they owed. When the debt inevitably mushroomed, they gave up.

Leave me a loan
MCE launched a decade ago as an incubator for startups and a resource for existing ventures in the city. A \$50,000 U.S. Department of Agriculture grant for rural business development and \$120,000 of taxpayer funds seeded the program.

In 2015 and 2016, MCE authorized \$116,000 in micro e-loans that required little if any paperwork from its debtors and had a substandard barrier to entry, according to several people familiar with the program.

"My honest opinion is that it was way too easy to get that loan," Alan Anderson, an MCE loan recipient, told *InMaricopa* in a blunt interview about his failed startup.

MCE loaned Anderson's property management company \$4,500 in July 2016. Today, he owes nearly \$10,000.

Each loan ranged from \$4,000 to \$25,000 and carried a 5% interest rate. They were dispensed to businesses that were turned down by a bank or other lender, often with little vetting.

Today, the city is owed more than twice the sum it loaned. When the incubator went belly-up in 2018, the roster of mostly defunct businesses owed more than \$98,000 and the city was tasked with collecting the debt. But after years of inertia, that number ballooned to nearly \$200,000 by

Facebook

2020, according to data *InMaricopa* obtained through the Freedom of Information Act.

The city fenced with three executive directors over how MCE reported its progress, transparency and accountability. One blip in a string of ephemeral directors — Dan Beach, who was fired in 2016 amid turmoil — lives in Phoenix. Most of the indebted entrepreneurs have migrated north, too.

Beach didn't respond to a request for comment. Despite questioning MCE's accountability for the loans at the time he was terminated, Maricopa City Council unanimously approved up to \$200,000 for MCE expenditures.

Months later, it shuttered the program and reallocated leftover funds to other departments.










Loan shark clams up

The city was tight-lipped when confronted with the bill it let remain unpaid. Brandon LaVorgna, a spokesperson for the city, simply said the debt was turned over to a collection agency in 2020. He did not respond to a list of questions about the debt.

Multiple MCE loan recipients told *InMaricopa* that, to this day, they've never been contacted by a collection agency. The city did not substantiate its claim.

Continued on page 10

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

									
	ProX Auto Detailing	Hobby-Scopes	Ketalog	King and Queen	Precious Hands Healthcare	PropRX	Rivers Jumpers	True Reflections Boutique	WYS Education
BUSINESS	Mobile car wash and auto glass	Sold microscopes to coin collectors and hobby scientists	Online marketing	Clothing and accessory store	Medical training and staffing	Residential property services	Party rentals	Fashion shop	Wellness program
OWNER	Marina Love	Todd Clark	Kehinde Ogunjobi	Sharon Lee	Carol Mack	Alan Anderson	Alejandra Rios	Heidi Moir	Joi-Ashli Gibbs
LOAN	\$7,500	\$6,000	\$12,000	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$4,500	\$25,000	\$6,000	\$5,000
DATE	May 12, 2016	June 1, 2015	Oct. 25, 2016	Aug. 21, 2016	March 24, 2016	July 11, 2016	Dec. 16, 2016	Nov. 26, 2016	Nov. 26, 2016
TERMS	2 years	2 years	2 years	3 years	3 years	18 months	3 years	18 months	12 months
DUE*	\$18,101	\$17,226	\$23,717	\$49,801	\$39,304	\$9,449	\$31,657	Paid in full	Paid in full
STATUS	Love says she has no way to pay the city.	The company went out of business around September 2020. Clark, who now lives in the East Valley, declined to comment.	Business license is seven years overdue and inactive, according to the Arizona Corporation Commission. Ogunjobi is a real estate agent in Gilbert and declined to be interviewed.	King and Queen was out of business as of May 2021. Lee could not be reached for comment.	The company's website was taken down and it hasn't posted on social media since February 2015. Mack could not be reached for comment.	PropRX was out of business within six months. Anderson wanted to repay the loan but couldn't figure out how. He eventually gave up, he said.	Its website and Facebook page have been deleted. It's unclear when the company went out of business. Rios did not respond to multiple phone calls.	The boutique went out of business shortly after receiving the loan. Moir could not be reached for comment.	The business has not updated its website or posted on social media since January 2022. Gibbs declined to comment.

* Amount due with applicable 5% interest as of Sept. 1, 2020, the date the city last calculated amounts due.

“I never got any phone calls,” Anderson said. “There is no collection agency that I’m aware of.”

Several city employees also declined to elaborate on the records they handed over to *InMaricopa* but suggested the 2020 balance remains in arrears. Terms of the city’s agreement with the agency are unknown, but it can be assumed interest has continued to pile up.

Then-Mayor Christian Price stood by the initiative in 2018, positing the boutique micro e-loan office was “a little bit before its time.” He didn’t respond to requests for an interview for this story.

Buried somewhere in a 126-page annual financial report published June 30, 2012, the city lauded that the program “will provide business training and business incubation services to local startup companies with the goal of diversifying the local economy.”

That exact same language was regurgitated in annual reports filed in 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2017. Every other document referencing MCE has been removed from the city’s public database. A host of articles on the city’s website about MCE’s progress and affairs have been deleted.

There’s little evidence MCE provided the services it touted. “I got a loan and never heard from them again,” Anderson said. “There were no check-ups, no guidance. It surprised me.”

The incubator’s failure cannot be understated. The city collected just \$11,000 — 9% of what was disbursed — en route to wiping out the only two loans that were paid off. Both of those businesses, WYS Education and True Reflections Boutique, paid up before MCE closed and have since gone under.

The federally funded loans are in the city’s name now. In 2018, Maricopa grants coordinator Cassandra Brown said MCE was “supporting” and “actively working with these partners.”

But that support — if it existed at all — went nowhere.

And then there was one

The only MCE loan recipient that lived to tell the tale is ProX Mobile Detailing & Auto Glass, a car wash and garage based in a Tortosa neighborhood. Owner Marina Love does not credit the micro-loan with the success of her business.

Speaking of her tumultuous journey navigating MCE’s loan process, Love told *InMaricopa*, “It left a bad taste in my mouth.”

“With this program, they didn’t really want to help us,” Love said. “They didn’t feel like we had a good niche for Maricopa. But we’re still around because we found a definite need in town.”

Love used the MCE loan to purchase equipment and advertising, she said. If anything, it helped build the community’s faith in the business, but it didn’t contribute to its long-term success.

The incubator loaned her less than she was promised and quickly became difficult to work with as the relationship between lender and borrower soured, she said.

MCE loaned ProX Mobile Detailing \$7,500 in June 2016. By 2018, the fledgling business hadn’t paid off any of the loan yet. Love said she paid down some of the loan before MCE folded.

“MCE went bye-bye, and we don’t know what happened from there,” she said. “After they went under, we had no idea how to keep paying. All of a sudden, it just didn’t exist anymore. They wouldn’t take my money.”

Love believes she only owes \$2,500 on the loan. Records show she currently owes more than \$18,000 after her loan has idly collected interest for more than six years.

“The program was really tough,” she said. “It continues to be.”



In 2016, then-Mayor Christian Price pledges his unwavering confidence in a startup incubator that wound up a colossal failure. Now, he’s mum on the topic.

Debt end

ProX has no way to resolve its ever-increasing debt — enough to buy a private island in Belize — with the city, according to Love. And that red ink is mounting steadily. And that red ink is mounting steadily.

Love didn’t say she couldn’t afford to settle up. Nor did Anderson, whose property management outfit went kaput within a year of an injection from MCE.

“I didn’t know where to pay,” Anderson said. “I have no idea who to pay.”

The center never offered the advice and non-monetary support it promised, he said. Taking the blame for the succinct failure of his business, he said the city is still obligated to collect the public funds it squandered.

Even from him. “It’s always in the back of my mind,” Anderson said. “Knowing it’s taxpayer money that was lost... Don’t you think it makes me feel worse?”

Benefit of the debt

LaVorgna, the spokesperson for Maricopa, wasn’t willing to answer if the city would ever consider rebooting the incubator in some fashion.

Despite the cataclysmic end of MCE, however, Price maintained faith in the program.

“I envision we’ll have one in the future,” he said just after it imploded. “I just don’t know when that future will be.”

One thing is certain — it’s not today. It may not be ever.

But Mayor Nancy Smith takes up the mantle for her predecessor’s optimistic vision.

“An incubator opportunity would be a great addition to the city of Maricopa,” she told *InMaricopa*. “I definitely don’t see it being the same model or completely funded by the city.”

The sitting mayor hopes for a private-public partnership, or an initiative completely funded by a third party.

“The incubator systems in other small cities have created many successful small businesses for their community,” Smith said.

The question that remains is this: Can Maricopa take a second bite at the apple before it collects the hundreds of thousands of beholden dollars that remain unsettled? With each passing day, it seems more like an impossible task.

Time will tell.

File

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COMMERCIAL

Bungalows on Bowlin to build six parking canopies on its property. The contractor is Park N Shade of Tucson Inc.

Maricopa Heritage Museum to construct a 240-square-foot shade structure valued at \$14,500.

Seasons Living at Copper Sky to build 146 units in its independent and assisted living facility. The contractor is SCD Construction LLC.

Slim Chickens to install a temporary “coming soon” sign at 41740 W. Maricopa-Casa Grande Highway.

RESIDENTIAL

Bungalows on Bowlin to build four one-bedroom units, 18 two-bedroom units and four three-bedroom units.

Innovation Villas at West Maricopa to build four one-bedroom units and eight two-bedroom units.

DR Horton Inc. to build four homes at Rancho El Dorado Phase III, one home at Sorrento Phase 2 and two homes at Tortosa South.

KB Home Phoenix Inc. to build two homes at Tortosa South.

Starlight Homes to build three homes at Tortosa South. The contractor is Ashton Woods.

CW Tortosa LLC to build six homes at Tortosa South. The contractor is Ashton Woods.

K. Hovnanian to build 10 homes at Santa Rosa Springs and two homes at Rancho El Dorado Phase III.

Lennar Arizona Inc. to build one home at Anderson Farms.

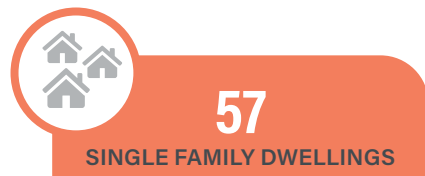
Pulte Home Company to build five homes at Santa Rosa Crossing.

Richmond American Homes to build one home at Rancho El Dorado Phase III.

Meritage Homes to build three homes in Province and four homes in Trails at Tortosa.

Century Communities to build 13 homes in Trails at Tortosa.

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Public works

Clockwise from top: Crews continue work on a new dog park next to Copper Sky Lake, which will replace the one at Copper Sky. | Maricopa Unified School District Governing Board Vice President Gary Miller speaks with Pinal County Attorney Kent Volkmer during a townhall held in Maricopa. | The Waste and Recycling Center will close Aug. 13. | Vice Mayor Rich Vitiello, pictured with Rep. Teresa Martinez, made news alluding to the fact a Lowe's home improvement center is in the works.



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Scamouflage

How a disgraced Maricopa Marine conned his way to the top

BY ELIAS WEISS



Billy Zinnerman admires a collection of fake medals that he claimed to have earned as a Marine. Most are easily available for purchase, in some cases for as little as \$10 online.

ENTANGLED IN A WEB OF LIES, a former Marine in Maricopa has found himself ensnared in the sticky grip of stolen valor accusations. Like a black widow spinning artificial silk, his own web has become his prison.

“This is f***ing r*tarded,” Billy Zinnerman told *InMaricopa*.

For Zinnerman — who falsely purports to be a retired sergeant major of the U.S. Marine Corps decorated with the most portentous service medals — it’s time to pay the piper.

The Bronze Star dangling next to the brass buttons of his midnight-blue jacket? The American War Memorial Library says he never received one. Museum-quality Bronze Star replicas are plentiful online, where they sell for as little as \$10.

Zinnerman has been crafting and advancing his spurious saga since at least 2010, when, ironically, he pontificated about moral upstanding on PBS’ bygone “Ethics NewsWeekly.” In retrospect, it was a scintilla of credibility that metastasized into a whole new identity for Zinnerman.

Suddenly, he was no longer a low-ranking pawn with a lengthy criminal record, booted from the service amid accusations of repeated misconduct. He was a war hero and Maricopa City Council hopeful, and he intended to keep it that way.

Semper fib

Zinnerman’s guile empowered him to con his way to the top. He hoodwinked Maricopa’s American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars posts, the Marine Corps League of Arizona and eventually the Marine Corps itself. He even fooled *InMaricopa* and was featured on its cover last year.

In November 2022, Zinnerman appeared at the 247th Marine Corps Ball as its guest of honor. A few months later, in May, he was lauded by U.S. Rep. Maxine Waters as he delivered the keynote speech at a commemoration in Inglewood, Calif., and accepted an award from the city’s mayor.

Victor Moreno

At the event, Zinnerman recounted fantastical tales of a helicopter crash in Afghanistan, surviving gunshots in Kuwait and rescuing his comrade from a burning car in Hawaii. He brazenly described a quarter-century of military service that culminated with an honorable discharge in 2002.

Zinnerman said he was a gunnery sergeant in Iraq in the years leading up to 9/11, leading a unit that identified targets for laser-guided missiles. Public records paint a different picture of Zinnerman at that time — one of a career criminal in Los Angeles.

By 2002, Zinnerman had been charged with nearly two dozen felony counts of burglary and theft, among other things. He was convicted at least four times, public records show.

The records also suggest that Zinnerman never left southern California between 1980 and his reputed retirement in 2002.

Armed forges

Fewer than 1% of those enlisted ever reach the rank of sergeant major, according to the Sonoma, Calif. nonprofit Wine Country Marines.

Sgt. Maj. Larry Leichty, one of the group’s board members, is one of the vanishing few. Leichty has had his own tangles with Maricopa’s infantry imposter in his home state of California.

“Zinnerman recently started defrauding some of our donors,” he said.

Wine Country Marines reported more than \$700,000 in donations in its most recent filings with the IRS and last year received another donation worth \$10 million from San Mateo County. Leichty didn’t disclose how much money he thinks Zinnerman was able to purloin.

Coupled with donations that Zinnerman solicited, and other ill-gotten funds used to shuttle him from Maricopa to public events across the country to tout his counterfeit awards, it was a strong enough cocktail to turn heads at the FBI, Leichty said.

“There is a federal investigation going on for stolen valor,” Leichty said. “[Zinnerman] got himself into some really deep water. He might not realize how deep, but it’s deep.”

The FBI was mum on the issue, although multiple sources said they had spoken with investigators at the bureau about Zinnerman.

“We neither confirm nor deny the existence of an investigation into [Zinnerman] and have no comment,” FBI national spokesperson Tina Jagerson said.

Submitted



Zinnerman claimed to be in this photo, but he’s not. These are U.S. Marines in Afghanistan in 2012. From left: Anthony Stewart, Patrick Beal, Zack Wilson, Joey DeGroot and Alec Tannenbaum (kneeling).

“There is a federal investigation going on for stolen valor. [Zinnerman] got himself into some really deep water. He might not realize how deep, but it’s deep.”

SGT. MAJ. LARRY LEICHTY

Sergeant stager

The probe isn’t limited to lucre, Leichty claimed. Zinnerman could face additional federal charges for falsifying military personnel documents.

The DD Form 214 — a certificate of release from active duty that all veterans receive — that Zinnerman provided to *InMaricopa* appears to be phony. The word “medal” is repeatedly misspelled on the document, which is dated after Zinnerman’s supposed retirement.

By 2002, when Zinnerman claims he retired, these discharge forms were generated electronically. But the document Zinnerman provided was typed on a typewriter. And the form lists decorations like the Bronze Star

and Purple Heart that Zinnerman never won, according to national databases.

The nail in the coffin for Zinnerman was the beefy list of accolades, promotions, certifications and deployments spanning the 1980s and 1990s. According to the National Personal Records Center, “There is no record of [Zinnerman’s] service after his discharge in 1980.”

Records show Zinnerman was not honorably discharged, nor did he serve for close to a quarter-century.

He served just three years before he was accused of repeated misconduct and ousted from the Armed Forces. He was a private first class when he was discharged — the second-lowest rank in the Marine Corps and seven ranks below sergeant major.

“His DD Form 214 is a forgery,” Wine Country Marines President James Brown told *InMaricopa*. “He forged a lot of documents. It’s a lot of felonies.”

In the devil doghouse

News that Zinnerman’s documents were forged spread like wildfire around the military community in Arizona. Zinnerman had attained membership in Maricopa’s VFW and American Legion posts as well as the Marine Corps League, a prestigious veterans’ organization chartered by the U.S. Congress.

Joe Uribe, a top officer in the local detachment of the Marine Corps League of

Arizona, expressed remorse for accepting Zinnerman's application to become a member some years ago.

"It pains me to say this," Uribe said in a June 29 interview. "It's clear and apparent to me that his document was 100% fraudulent."

On July 5, Frank Alger, a senior officer for the Marine Corps League's Department of Arizona, told *InMaricopa* the organization had concluded its own investigation into Zinnerman.

"He has been expelled from the Marine Corps League," Alger said. "This guy is a stolen valor guy."

Commander Thomas Kelley with Maricopa's American Legion post also confirmed the same day that an investigation into Zinnerman was elevated to the district commander, where his membership is expected to be terminated.

When asked to defend himself against the claims of forgery, Zinnerman couldn't offer an iota of evidence to support his own claims. He merely first referred *InMaricopa* to friends who could "verify who I am and what I did."

He said he'd had a stroke earlier in the week and was partially paralyzed. He said he never wanted to be on the cover of *InMaricopa* last year and was forced into it. He said he was



Zinnerman says he's related to Gunnery Sgt. Rashaud Drayton, pictured inspecting troops in 2018. He just can't remember how.

hopped up on prescription drugs during that interview.

Then, suddenly, he made an admission.

"You know what, I did have that one [other

than honorable] discharge. I know what they're talking about in 1980," Zinnerman said. "I do remember that now. I'm just having a hard time with my memory."

Submitted

Awkward family photo

Photographs Zinnerman shared with *InMaricopa* last year, purporting to be images of himself as a drill sergeant in Iraq in 1990, were proven to be bogus, too.

Zinnerman lifted the images, which did not depict him, from the Marine Corps Times. The individual resembling Zinnerman in the photos is Gunnery Sgt. Rashaud Drayton in 2018, according to Uribe and the Wine Country Marines.

Zinnerman had gone so far as to print and frame the stolen images and hang them inside his home. They were visible when *InMaricopa* first interviewed him last year.

When asked why the photos were hanging in his home, Zinnerman said Drayton was a family member. But he mispronounced Drayton's name.

Son? Cousin? Nephew? Not quite.

"Rashaud is, uh, just a distant, uh, family," Zinnerman said. He could not even articulate if Drayton was a relative on his mother's or father's side of the family.

'An affront to every veteran'

In 2013, Congress passed the Stolen Valor Act.

Submitted



Zinnerman speaks with Gen. Robert B. Neller (Ret.), who served as the commandant of the Marines Corps from 2015-2019.

It was breakthrough legislation that made it a federal crime for anyone to falsely take credit for military valor with the intention of profiting or otherwise enjoying the undeserved benefits those coveted awards entail.

Jason Metrick, assistant inspector general for investigations at the National Archives, said the coronavirus pandemic sparked an uptick in cases of stolen valor nationwide.

After a Pennsylvania man defrauded an American Legion post out of thousands of dollars in 2020, the prosecuting attorney called stolen valor "an affront to every veteran."

"Masquerading as a combat veteran in order to infiltrate and steal funds from an American Legion post is breathtakingly brazen and unprecedented in my almost 30 years of practicing criminal law," the attorney, Mark Powell, said in a statement at the time.

The imposter was sentenced to six to 12 years in jail. Zinnerman could face the same, or worse.

Those who violate the Stolen Valor Act are required to repay stolen money and can face a prison sentence of one year, according to the U.S. code. But sanctions can increase exponentially as related charges, like wire fraud and falsifying military documents, pile on.

As Zinnerman himself told *InMaricopa*, "This is a clusterf*ck." 🗨

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Fields of Gold

There was a 70-acre crop of sunflowers in Maricopa, which attracted spectators from all over the area. With over 300 days of abundant sunshine (approximately 10 months), these sunflowers thrived and mesmerized visitors with their natural allure. The bumper crop, located off of Ralston Road, just south of Highway 238, will be harvested for Cargill for use in their beauty products.



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Metal detectors

As part of Maricopa Unified School District's comprehensive strategy for safety and security, the district is considering rolling out OPENGATE, an advanced weapons detection system. The principals of Maricopa and Desert Sunrise High Schools will discuss plans with staff and the district leadership will seek input from stakeholders to ensure a comprehensive and inclusive approach.

New features to enhance safety

As part of a wider initiative to bolster security measures, MUSD strengthened existing infrastructure at Maricopa Wells Middle School and Maricopa Elementary School. Physical barriers were installed in the front offices to provide additional security for students and staff.

Desert Sunrise project complete

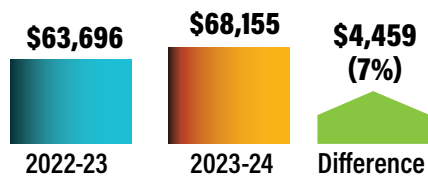
As Superintendent Tracey Lopeman said, "Every great ending ushers in an exciting beginning."

The completion of the student commons area at Desert Sunrise High School, featuring a communal staircase, amphitheater and a state-of-the-art library, was timed perfectly to align with the start of the school year.

Implementing innovative solutions and budget-effective strategies has garnered significant interest from neighboring districts.

"The school now serves as a source of inspiration and a model for their future products and their future projects," Lopeman said.

AVERAGE MUSD TEACHER SALARY



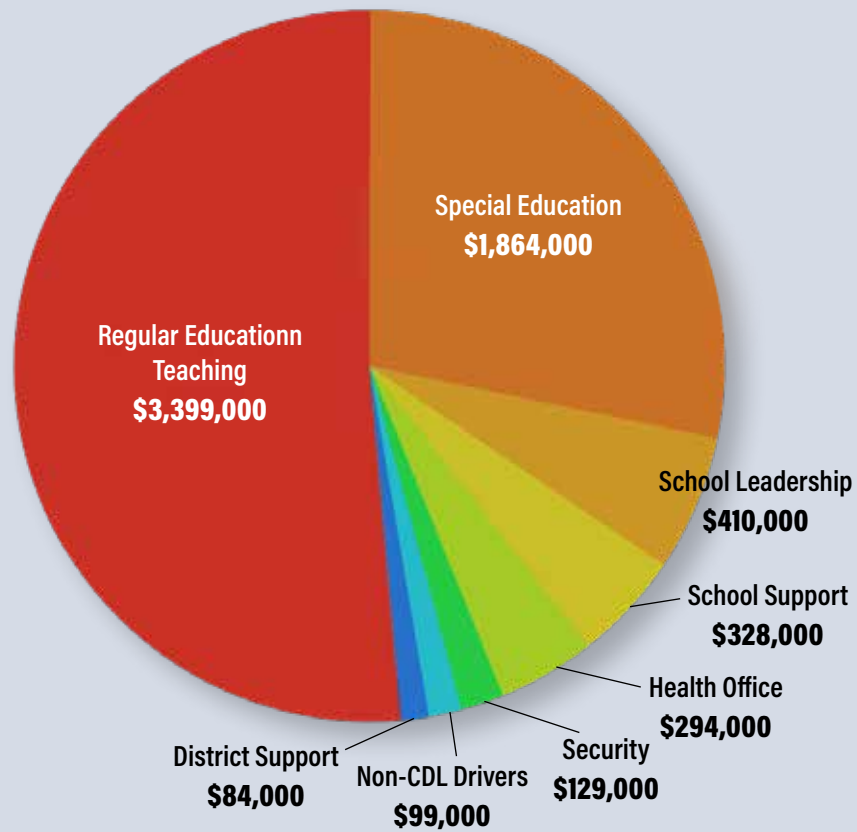
Source: Maricopa Unified School District

2023-24 annual budget | \$80,046,923

On July 12, the MUSD Governing Board unanimously approved and adopted a budget for this school year. The general maintenance and operations budget is \$80 million, an increase of almost \$7.7 million from last year.

Among the highlights: a 7% salary increase for all staff members and \$6.6 million for additional staffing, with a big chunk — nearly \$4.3 million — going toward 51 new teaching positions.

NEW POSITIONS [\$6,607,000]



Source: Maricopa Unified School District

New payment service

MUSD recently launched LinqConnect, a new parent payment and online application portal. The platform offers streamlined transactions and application processing, heightened efficiency for the child nutrition department and greater convenience for parents and students.

Parents need to submit their annual meal applications soon as the benefits from the previous school year's application expire Aug. 31.

Staffing updates

MUSD is expanding its staff. The district welcomed 119 professionals at the beginning of the school year, including 36 dedicated foreign national teachers and 29 first-year teachers.

"This strengthens our promise to provide high-quality education to our students as we continue to seek devoted individuals for both classified and certified roles," Superintendent Tracey Lopeman said.



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Jayden Wooden overcame a number of obstacles to record a stellar senior season for Morgan State of the Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference.

Scoring on and off the field

Junior college league creates opportunities for local players

BY TOM SCHUMAN

THE HOHOKAM JUNIOR COLLEGE Athletic Conference is all about second chances for football players — both on and off the field.

Entering his second season as the coach of the league's Salt River Scorpions, Larry Davis feels the HJCAC has a mission that doesn't involve a pigskin.

"My passion is using football to shape the lives of young men," said Davis, who moved to Maricopa in 2007. "It's really about helping them prepare for the biggest game they will ever play — that's the game of life."

Former Maricopa athletes and coaches are staying active in the sport they are most passionate about. The five-team league will begin its fifth season next month.

Davis, an all-conference nose guard at the University of Texas at El Paso, had brief runs in the Canadian Football League and NFL Europe. For most of his career, he's been a coach and administrator in Maricopa youth football leagues.

Jayden Wooden, who will join Davis' staff as a defensive backs coach, is emblematic of HJCAC's potential.

A two-time state champion at Peoria's Centennial High School, Wooden launched his collegiate football journey with a redshirt freshman season at Northern Arizona University. That was followed by a season canceled due to the coronavirus pandemic and an injury-plagued campaign at Morgan State University, a Baltimore HBCU.

Despite those challenges, Wooden's story has a happy ending.

After leaving NAU, he returned to the Valley, attended Mesa Community College and played for the league champion Gila River

Hawks in the first year of the HJCAC in 2019. The game film from that season helped attract the offer to play for the Morgan State Bears.

Three years later, he started all 12 games at safety, recording 45 tackles, a key interception and a forced fumble in a victory over defending conference champion South Carolina State. He did it all while earning all-academic and third-team all-Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference honors.

"I bet on myself and bet on this league," Wooden told *InMaricopa* as he looked back on his career. "I want to give back to the league that gave me so much. I get to mentor and coach these younger kids. They can see themselves in me because I was in their position."

"I want to give back to the league that gave me so much. I get to mentor and coach these younger kids. They can see themselves in me because I was in their position."

JAYDEN WOODEN

Submitted



Coach Larry Davis celebrates with some of his players after a 2022 game. The Salt River team finished 5-4.

Staying in the game

Davis, Wooden and their fellow Salt River coaching staff will guide players next season who prepped at Maricopa High School and Sequoia Pathway Academy. Among them are Tyshaun Mooney and Steven Forrester.

Mooney played his sophomore and junior seasons at Maricopa before transferring to Sequoia. In a half-season as a senior running back in 2021, he rushed for 665 yards and nine touchdowns. Several Division III schools wanted him to shift to safety, but he accepted an offer from Davis to remain on the offensive side of the ball.

"Coach is a father figure and his motivational words help keep my head on straight," said Mooney.

"This year, I feel I can do better than I did in high school and impress the coaches," he said, adding that he's pining for a roster spot at a four-year school.

He is taking online classes in dental hygiene at Snow College in Ephraim, Utah, an additional education option that was created for HJCAC players in 2021.

"I want to graduate with a 3.5 GPA and earn my degree," he said. "I made a promise to my mom that I would be the first of my siblings to go beyond the AA (degree). We have conversations every day. Mom always helps push me down the right track."

Forrester played slot receiver and running back at Maricopa. His first college stop, Oklahoma Panhandle State University in rural Goodwell, Okla., was not a good fit. He came back home to the desert last year and recorded his first start in the HJCAC with Salt River this fall.



Tyshaun Mooney (No. 6) lines up for Sequoia Pathway during his senior year of high school.

"I couldn't play the first year (in Oklahoma) as a redshirt, but practiced, got my reps in and got my grades done," Forrester says. "I'm ready to play."

He is taking biology classes at Snow College and looks forward to more football and more schooling after receiving his two-year degree.

"Arizona is a good football state," he added. "I don't mind the heat. I like the culture here, where everybody comes out and supports the teams."

"I'm looking forward to getting together with the team, bonding and having a good season."

Beyond the turf

HJCAC formed after the Maricopa County Community College District dropped the sport due to rising costs. League founders didn't want local players to miss out on the chance to continue on the playing field and in the classroom.

The nonprofit league funded by business now welcomes athletes from Florida, Texas and Colorado, among other far-reaching places.

"It was easy for me to buy in to what they were doing," noted Davis, who was also head coach for North Carolina state champion South Point High School in 2018. "Every

MORE MARICOPA CONNECTIONS

This spring, Sequoia Pathway Academy's Michael Luna-Fruit, Elijah Woods and TJ Kaley announced they will play for the HJCAC's Papago Pumas in Mesa while taking online classes at Snow College.

They followed Donnie Margerum, who is the new defensive coordinator for Papago.

Margerum resigned from Sequoia Pathway after the team went 5-5 in 2022. He was replaced by Kerry Taylor. (See story on page 28.)

"This year, the boys had a lot more opportunities to go out of state, but they chose to stay home," Margerum said. "I'll keep my boys with me." Luna-Fruit, a kicker, was a multisport athlete at Sequoia Pathway and decided to focus on football.

"I was leaning more toward basketball my junior year," he said. "But in my senior year, I had a teammate that passed away, so that drove me to keep playing his dream through me."

Woods is a versatile player who excels in the wide receiver role. Kaley has been a consistent cornerback.



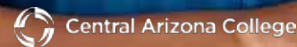
Coach Donnie Margerum

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young kid deserves an opportunity to further their academic and athletic career.”

Salt River players must sign a contract committing to the “three Cs”: classroom, character and competition. If they live up to their end of the bargain, the coaches will do everything they can to market the players to four-year schools.

Davis said at least eight players moved on after the 2021 season with 18 more receiving offers after last season.

Maricopa resident Perry Mitchell, who has coached with Davis at various levels, is outbound facilitator for the Scorpions and works tirelessly in contacting coaches and sharing game film to help players find the right fit after junior college.

Each of the five teams in the league recruits players from regional areas. The city of Maricopa, however, is part of an independent zone.

“We all recruit there,” said Davis, who credits his staff of experienced coaches and newcomers alike with the team’s success. “We’ve been pretty fortunate. Maricopa has been good for us. We have some players from (Maricopa) in their second year, so their time is now.”

Wooden went more than 700 days between games during his adventurous playing career. He ended up with that outstanding senior season, a degree and a good job in the insurance industry.

“The HJCAC brought out a side of me that I had not tapped into before,” Wooden insisted. “I found an unwavering will to succeed and the determination to make it happen. It’s all about taking a chance on yourself.”

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The nine-game 2023 season is slated to begin early next month. Games take place on Saturday evenings at local high schools. The teams and their home cities are:

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- Maricopa Mustangs, Glendale
- Papago Pumas, Mesa
- Salt River Scorpions, Phoenix
- Sonoran Sidewinders, Tucson



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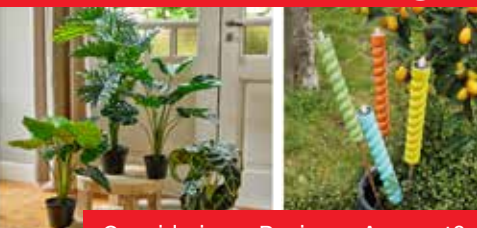


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From gridline to sideline

Ex-pro tackles new role as high school football boss

BY CAMERON JOBSON

S EQUOIA PATHWAY ACADEMY'S NEW athletic director and football coach knows all about taking it to the next level.

With a four-year stint in the NFL and successful coaching tenures at two other high schools, Kerry Taylor brings a wealth of knowledge and deep understanding of discipline, teamwork and dedication — all necessities for reaching new heights of success on the field.

Taylor has a keen eye for potential and sees a lot of it in town.

"I've always known about Maricopa and seen how the city is growing," he said. "There's a ton of talent out here."

And Taylor should know a thing or two about talent.

He was a wide receiver at Arizona State University from 2007 to 2011, where he earned a bachelor's degree in interdisciplinary studies.

He wasn't drafted out of college, but the hometown team didn't want to miss out on a potential hidden gem. The Arizona Cardinals signed Taylor as a free agent in 2012. Two years later, he signed with the Jacksonville Jaguars.



Kerry Taylor, second from left, with his coaching staff at Sequoia Pathway during a summer workout. Taylor was also a standout wide receiver at Arizona State University.

staff like Principal Rehema Stephens, Taylor was eager to take the challenge.

"I've already seen a major change," he said. "I saw Principal Stephens' vision and how it aligned with mine."

As football coach and athletic director, Taylor will play a multifaceted role in the school's athletic program.

One of his primary responsibilities will be recruiting talented staff and students to strengthen all the school's teams. Taylor will engage with college coaches, facilitate campus visits and contribute to the recruiting process.

He looks forward to building on the school's past successes.

Continued on page 30

He also played with the Green Bay Packers, New England Patriots, San Francisco 49ers and Minnesota Vikings during his four-year career.

Taylor replaced Donnie Margerum at Sequoia Pathway with hopes of building a competitive athletic program that can make a

mark at the national level — and replicate that success year after year.

He began his coaching duties at the charter school in March and was dubbed athletics director last month.

When he saw the opportunity to work with



Kerry Taylor

THE NFL: A FAMILY AFFAIR

Kerry Taylor embodies a legacy deeply rooted in the rich history of the sport.

His father, Keith Taylor, and uncle, John Taylor, both competed in the NFL in the late 1980s, igniting Kerry Taylor's passion for football.

Keith Taylor entered the big leagues as a safety when the New Orleans Saints selected him in the fifth round of the 1988 NFL Draft.

He'd go on to showcase his skills for the Indianapolis Colts and then-Washington Redskins, spanning a nine-year professional career.

Prior to his NFL career, Keith Taylor honed his football abilities at the University of Illinois.

Now, the father-son duo can still be found on the gridiron as they lead the football program at Sequoia Pathway, where the senior Taylor is defensive coordinator.

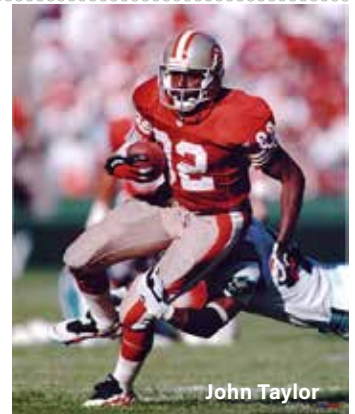
Keith Taylor's older brother,

John Taylor, is a three-time Super Bowl champion.

John Taylor faced setbacks early in his career after an unsuccessful attempt to walk-on at Johnson C. Smith University in Salisbury, N.C.



Keith Taylor



John Taylor

He then found a spot on the team at Delaware State University, where he set school records touchdowns with 42, 33 of them receiving.

The San Francisco 49ers drafted him in the third round of the 1986 NFL draft.

From 1987 to 1995, John Taylor's career with the 49ers included three Super Bowl victories. In 1989, he caught the game-winning touchdown in Super Bowl XXIII against the Cincinnati Bengals.

John Taylor finished his NFL career with 347 receptions for 5,589 yards and 43 touchdowns.

“I definitely have my hand in a lot of pots, trying to make everything move smoothly and just keep building the momentum we have.”

Taylor places great emphasis on professionalism in every aspect of his athletes’ lives, whether in the classroom, the community or on the field.

“We want to be a true pro in everything that we do,” he said. “We want to represent ourselves well and have a high standard.”

Taylor said many students at Sequoia play multiple sports. He encourages this.

“The more they can do, the better,” Taylor said. “That’s going to help build their résumés as a student-athlete and draw more attention to themselves as they get recruited for the next level.”

Drawing on his NFL experience, Taylor aims to instill discipline and personal accountability among the students, finding those who are willing to put in the extra effort and understand success requires going beyond the minimum requirements.

As Taylor settles in at Sequoia Pathway, he said he’s eager to watch the athletics program develop. Over the next year or two, he believes the school will set itself apart from others in the area, becoming a local powerhouse in all arenas.

“We’re ready to build and continue to grow,” Taylor said. “The sky is the limit.”



Rehema Stephens, above and left, led UCLA in scoring her first and second seasons with the Bruins and was ranked fifth nationally her junior season. She is UCLA’s second all-time leading scorer.

PAST STOPS

Prior to his arrival in Maricopa, Kerry Taylor served as the head football coach at Scottsdale’s Arcadia High School in 2018 and 2019, combining for a 12-8 record.

Taylor inherited an Arcadia team amid a 16-game losing streak that saw just 29 points scored during the 2017-18 season. He led Arcadia to a 6-4 record in his first season before he was fired for an alleged recruiting violation that resulted in a warning from the Arizona Interscholastic Association. After an uprising by Arcadia parents, the school apologized to Taylor and reinstated him for a second season.

Taylor then coached San Tan Charter School in 2020 and 2021, where he helped the team improve from 3-5 to 5-5. Taylor was fired again after the final game of the 2021 season after his players stomped on a pink breast cancer ribbon at midfield after winning on a rival’s homefield. According to published reports on the incident, the opposing coach’s wife had late-stage breast cancer and served as an honorary captain for the coin toss.

Taylor said he disapproved of the players’ actions that night and suggested he had already accepted an internship with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers prior to his final game at San Tan.

“If I were to coach high school again, it was going to be with a principal that understands athletics at a high level,” he added. “I’m excited to work with and be under Ms. Stephens’ leadership.”

DYNAMIC DUO

With Stephens taking on an administrative role and Taylor manning the athletics, the duo has big plans for Sequoia Pathway.

Raised in the heart of inner-city Oakland, Calif., Stephens excelled as a high school All-American athlete. She began her collegiate journey at the

University of California, Los Angeles, where she reigns as the second-highest career scorer in women’s basketball.

After she graduated with a psychology degree, she turned pro. Stephens played overseas in Greece and Australia before joining the WNBA’s Sacramento Monarchs.

With their combined expertise, Stephens and Taylor

believe they can show young athletes what’s possible when they put their best foot forward.

“I’m a huge advocate for athletes,” Stephens said. “And at the middle and high school level, it’s just another way for kids to buy into school. It’s motivation and inspiration.”

Stephens believes in creating well-rounded students first — and athletes second.

“I think we have created this wonderful balance where athletics and academics come together, and our kids can really thrive in their environment,” Stephens said. “Athletics has this pulse that just pushes you.”

Of Taylor, she said he’ll “expand his gifts and talents” and that “he’s going to change the dynamics of our athletic program.”

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Back to school

Local high schoolers during their first week of school on what they're most looking forward to.



“Playing volleyball and meeting new friends.”

LIRAN MCANELLY, FRESHMAN AT
DESERT SUNRISE HIGH SCHOOL



“All the third-year programs I'm going to take.”

JACOB TEDESCO, SENIOR AT
MARICOPA HIGH SCHOOL



“I'm really excited that our drama department qualifies to compete in the ASU Gammage Awards and the Jimmy Awards.”

DELANEY FORTIER, SENIOR AT HERITAGE ACADEMY



“I'm looking forward to playing D'Artagnan, the lead role in our play of The Three Musketeers.”

KARSTEN BOGLE, SENIOR AT HERITAGE ACADEMY



“I'm looking forward to the new classes and new people.”

OLIVIA PORTILLO, FRESHMAN AT
SEQUOIA PATHWAY ACADEMY



“I'm looking forward to meeting new friends and having new experiences.”

GISELLE RAMIREZ, SOPHOMORE AT
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Overcrowding pushes youngest students into trailers

BY CAMERON JOBSON



AS THE STUDENT POPULATION OF MARICOPA UNIFIED School District continues to swell, schools are starting to feel the strain.

The growth is forcing the district to find temporary solutions as it waits for a new school — an issue most glaring at the elementary level.

To meet the demands of the latest surge, MUSD recently bought and installed seven portable structures at six elementary schools. Each building is about half the size of a tennis court with twin classrooms inside that can house 26 students each.

Superintendent Tracey Lopeman is eager to have the new classrooms open this school year.

“The portables will provide additional learning spaces to accommodate for our growing student population,” she said, adding they “reflect our commitment and investment to student success and class size.”

Jacob Harmon, the district’s chief financial officer, said enrollment shows no signs of slowing. He told *InMaricopa* the district expects to welcome 850 new students by 2025, more than a 9% increase from 9,100 this year.

Harmon bases his yearly projections — 200 students this year, 400 next year and 250 the following year — on several variables including demographic studies, new permit data and development in the city.

Without the trailers, Maricopa’s elementary schools are on track to be short nearly four dozen classrooms next school year. The portable buildings will have to serve as a bandage for the next 4-5 years until the district gets state approval for construction of a seventh elementary school.

Although it’s on the radar, Harmon said the district may not qualify for another school until 2028 because of how the Arizona School Facilities Board calculates capacity.

According to the state board, the total elementary school classroom capacity is 4,933 students across the district’s six elementary schools. And MUSD won’t qualify for the necessary funding until the district exceeds that capacity. It ended last year with just 4,016 elementary school students.

However, Harmon believes SFB’s projections are “very, very conservative.”

“While I say we’re going to be over capacity, the state does not agree at this point,” he said.

“It’s not fair.”

Some things are out of the district’s control. The only way to change SFB’s policies is by lobbying for new state laws, presenting a major hurdle for Harmon.

But in the meantime, he regularly attends meetings at the state legislature in Phoenix, speaking on behalf of MUSD and spreading hope of another elementary school in the city.

“Luckily, we’re still a few years out,” Harmon said. “I have time to advocate, invite them out to actually walk our classrooms, and we actually have some plans to have them come out and see what we’re doing while we’re bringing in portables.”

He hopes to build strong relationships with SFB to establish a reputable track record for the district.

“Our goal is to have SFB agree with our growth projections and approve funding for an elementary school,” Harmon said.

Even if SFB approved the construction of a new building today, there’s a considerable lag between the rubber stamp and the start of construction. Alas, the district would need the portables regardless.

“We’re going to continue to work on a committee level,” Harmon said. “Talk to stakeholders and come up with a plan that takes into consideration multiple viewpoints.”

Lesser of two evils

Although learning in an unconventional classroom is not an ideal situation, portable classrooms have become a reality — love them, hate them or merely tolerate them.

The alternative? Overcrowded classrooms within the schools.

Harmon said the district considered other options, such as modular and conventionally framed classrooms, but ultimately decided against them.

Continued on page 36



Learn More about the Cactus Mine



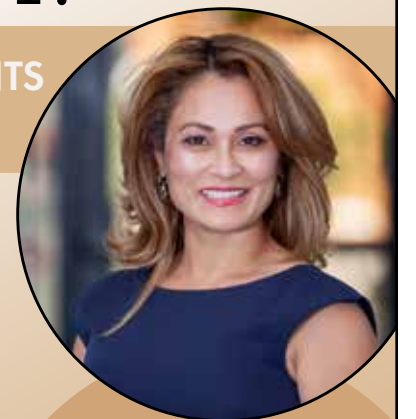
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Brian Petersheim Jr.

The main reason was cost. Framed classrooms are 20% more expensive. Portable classrooms, each one requiring a contingency for set-up costs, are \$450,000 a pop. The structures are not connected to the school buildings but situated close by.

On the flip side, a traditionally framed classroom runs about \$580,000 and wouldn't be as convenient.

"Those portables give us the flexibility and the ability to move them in the future," Harmon said.

The portables will only have plumbing for fire sprinklers, meaning they will not have bathrooms.

Harmon said restrooms are still a possibility in the future if they are needed. If the district wants to dole out additional dollars, that is.

"We are trying to do everything we can to maintain the student experience, maintain the classroom standards that we strive for," Harmon said.

Long-term plan

The makeshift classrooms can be taken down, stored or relocated to other schools in the district.

The district plans to maintain possession of the portables — and even purchase more — to meet potential increases in student population.

"This is something that we are choosing to do and are happy to do," he said. "We can afford to do it and plan to continue down this path."

Lopeman said the portables are a preemptive strike against district-wide growth.

"It's an investment in our staff," Harmon added. "It's an investment in our students. It's an investment in the community."



"We are trying to do everything we can to maintain the student experience, maintain the classroom standards that we strive for."

JACOB HARMON
MUSD CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

THE COST OF GROWTH

When it's approved, a new school will cost about \$40 million, according to MUSC chief financial officer Jacob Harmon.

MUSD's \$450,000 price tag per portable breaks down to \$403,000 for each unit with an additional contingency cost of \$47,000 for installation.

The district estimates that over the next 4-5 years, 28 portable units will be needed at a cost of \$11.3 million to \$14 million.

Restaurant inspections



A summary of the June 10-July 9 restaurants health inspections by Pinal County Environmental Health Services.

All restaurants inspected during this period received an excellent rating.

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- The Culinary Touch
- Fry's Marketplace - Sushi
- Li's Garden
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ON THE WAY

Carl's Jr. The fast-food hamburger joint is looking to make a comeback after dipping out in 2018. The proposed location is next to Maricopa Animal Hospital on John Wayne Parkway with an anticipated opening sometime next year.



SLIM CHICKENS The fast-casual restaurant broke ground in late May and anticipates a fall opening.

Pinal County Federal Credit Union The credit union is proposing a new location in the city on the southeast corner of Porter and Honeycutt roads. It submitted pre-application paperwork in early July for a full-service bank branch with three drive-thru lanes.



petco Maricopa's third pet store is under construction, though details about its opening remain slim.



Dutch Bros The Oregon-based coffee chain is looking to build a second location in town on the northeast corner of Maricopa-Casa Grande Highway and Stonegate Road. Although in the preliminary stages, Dutch Bros is expected to begin working on a development review permit to solidify interest.

eegee's Tucson's well-known slush and sub shop plans to construct its first Maricopa location on the southeast corner of John Wayne Parkway and Edison Road. While the company has yet to submit construction drawings, the city issued a development review permit earlier this year.



NextCare URGENT CARE With more than 170 clinics around the country, the newest will open this month on John Wayne Parkway and Hathaway Avenue.

nandos The Mexican food restaurant's fifth Valley location will be 5,000 square feet. It is preparing for a late-fall opening.

Weiss takes the reins at *InMaricopa*

InMaricopa welcomed managing editor Elias Weiss to the fold in July.

Weiss formally started July 6, rounding out the largest editorial team in the magazine's nearly 20-year history. With it, he brings an impressive résumé from news publications around the country.

Weiss graduated from University of Arkansas and worked as a reporter and editor for newspapers in Arkansas, Virginia and elsewhere in Arizona. As top editor on the East Coast at the *Chatham Star-Tribune*, the publication was named "Best Weekly Newspaper in Virginia" in 2019.

In 2021, he joined the *Phoenix New Times*, where one of his career highlights included breaking a national story about Arizona attorney general hopeful Abraham Hamadeh's secret record of committing voter fraud.

The story led to an opportunity to report on Arizona politics nationally for *The Daily Beast* and a chance to sit down with Brexit Party leader Nigel Farage on international television to discuss Arizona's divisive election politics during last year's midterm elections.



But even with those opportunities, Weiss always planned to return to hyperlocal news in a small community.

"The warm glow of the national spotlight never quenched my yearning to return to leadership in a hyperlocal newsroom," he said.

That passion brought Weiss to Maricopa.

"I'm excited to learn more about the city of Maricopa and the people who live here," he said. "The youth and vigor of a rapidly growing city scintillate the journalistic senses."

UPDATES



Roots Eatery: Maricopa's hidden gem began a \$58,000 makeover in July for the busy fall season. Owner Chris Spear said replacing the floors, ceiling and lighting at the rustic American fare café were necessary for a more refined dining experience.

"It's going to complement our food and our hospitality and everything that we're going for," he said. "Adding these changes is going to add value to that steak and wine you're buying." Spear said he also plans to build a dining patio in front of the restaurant that will seat up to 15 people. He estimated the project will be completed in September.

"Come September and October, all the snowbirds start coming back and we start ramping it up," Spear said. "We're going to have something beautiful for them to see."

Monica D. Spencer

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Inaugural job fair draws hundreds

BY MONICA D. SPENCER

Triple-digit temperatures didn't deter Maricopa job seekers from an evening full of résumés and applications on July 20.

InMaricopa co-hosted its inaugural job fair with the government contractor CoreCivic at the Maricopa Library and Cultural Center. Employers eyed candidates for dozens of roles across the city.

Sonia Ross was one such applicant. "I'm looking for an admin position," Ross said, clutching a folder full of paperwork. She waited in line to speak with a recruiter from CoreCivic, which owns several detention facilities in Pinal County.

The recruiter, Lakiesha Townsel, said CoreCivic hired at least 10 people that day.

"The quality of candidates that have come in today has been outstanding," she said.

Other companies' scouts, like Shayna Morrison-Boccardo, reported similar results. She was vetting applicants for positions at the Hand of Grace, a disability support group based in Mesa.



"I've gotten lots of applications and résumés," Morrison-Boccardo said. She noted that in-person job fairs paid off for both applicants and employers than virtual ones.

"It can be really hard to reach out online because it always feels like you're kind of encountering a barrier," she said. "With in person events like this, you're able to meet people and see their energy."

With several hundred attendees filing in and out of the room, InMaricopa owner Vince Manfredi said Maricopa residents can expect to see more opportunities to find jobs in the future.

"I think the job fair was an overall success," he said. "It helped bring together people who were looking for work and companies looking to grow. We're looking to have a job fair quarterly."

Bryan Moritt

Ak-Chin loses mobile sports betting license

BY ELIAS WEISS

A New York-based sports betting firm left Harrah's Ak-Chin Casino high and dry when it unexpectedly pulled out of Arizona, resulting in the tribe relinquishing its mobile sports betting license a few months ago.

The ink of then-Gov. Doug Ducey's signature legalizing sports betting had hardly dried when Ak-Chin pounced to secure one of just 10 coveted licenses in 2021, this time rolling the dice on a burgeoning industry from the player's perch at the poker table.

Since live event wagering was legalized less than two years ago, Arizonans have wagered nearly



\$10 billion en route to emerging as the biggest state in the West for sports betting. It all happened on the backs of just 10 Indian tribes, including the one based in Maricopa.

Each tribe was partnered with a sports betting operator. But New York City-based Fubo Gaming wasn't all-in on Arizona and left partner Ak-Chin with no other option.

"There is one tribal entity that is no longer licensed to conduct event wagering," Arizona Gaming Department spokesperson Maxwell Hartgraves told *InMaricopa*. A review of agency records confirms Ak-Chin was the first and only tribe to shutter its sportsbook — after just one year.

The state gaming department will begin accepting applications for the vacant tribal sports betting license next month, Hartgraves said. Applications will open Aug. 1 and close Aug. 15, with a decision to be made Aug. 29.

Although Ak-Chin partnered with Fubo Gaming for its mobile betting outfit, that doesn't mean curtains for sports bettors at Harrah's Ak-Chin.

The casino's retail sportsbook also opened in 2021. While on

Ak-Chin land, it's operated by Caesars Entertainment.

Bettors visiting and living in Maricopa won't be affected by the relinquished license, officials said. At the casino, "nothing changes there," Harrah's spokesperson Abbie Fink said.

Tribal leaders said they're not giving up.

Ak-Chin told *InMaricopa* that, despite the state placing its one-time sports betting license on the auction block, tribal operators haven't abandoned their dream of finding a new partnership and putting mobile wagering back into the portfolio.

"Things are still going on and in process, so everything is still up in the air at this time," Ak-Chin spokesperson Bart Smith said. "But right now, there's no comment."



Maricopa Wellness Center Best of Pinal County 3 years running

BY DR. KRISTINA DONNAY DNP, FNP-C

More and more medical spas opening as less-invasive procedures are gaining popularity. But how do you know which one is best for your wellness and beauty needs? Searching for a top-quality med spa doesn't have to be a luck-of-the-draw affair. Taking the time to do your research up front will save you money, avoid hassle and help you find the right provider. Maricopa Wellness Center has been voted Best Med Spa in Pinal County for 2021, 2022 and 2023. Dr. Kristina Donnay DNP, FNP-C, has also been voted Best Medical Provider in Pinal County for the third year in a row while also capturing Best Medical Practice for the year 2023. The staff at Maricopa Wellness Center is honored to be consistently recognized.

Maricopa Wellness Center opened in April 2019 and has won numerous awards. The spa has won Maricopa Small Business of the year 2019 and 2022, and it was named Best New Med Spa in the West in 2019. Kristina was voted Local Businessperson of the Year in 2021. Maricopa Wellness Center was also awarded InMode's first Head to Toe Body Contouring facility in Arizona in 2021. Nextdoor dubbed the spa a local favorite business in 2021 and 2022.

Maricopa Wellness Center is a licensed medical facility specializing in full-service



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spa treatments, utilizing cutting-edge technology for comfort while offering patients the latest treatment options for their bodies and skin.

Maricopa Wellness Center is a husband-wife team and strives to provide top-quality care and customer service. Kristina is a family nurse practitioner and Certified Master Injector who's board-certified in aesthetics and anti-aging. She is also a national trainer for InMode, a leading aesthetic laser company.

Kristina has participated on advisory boards and continued research for many aesthetic companies. She is the onsite medical director and her husband, Chris Donnay, is the operations manager. Their focus is helping people look and feel better in their own bodies, combining medical-grade services in a relaxing spa setting.

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Gardening during monsoon season

BY AL BRANDENBURG



IF YOUR GARDEN IS LIKE MINE, peppers are thriving while most everything else is on its last legs. The triple-digit heat is deadly to most spring and early summer vegetables.

Once temperatures exceed 95 degrees, pollen dies and vegetables don't grow much. So, other than waiting until early fall, consider a "monsoon planting" when the rainy season hits. August is an excellent time for several summer vegetables to take advantage of the rain and higher humidity of monsoon season.

A monsoon is a persistent wind pattern caused by hot air that shifts direction between seasons. This shift in weather transports moisture from the tropical South Pacific up through western Mexico. Thunderstorms during the summer can contribute to more than half the area's annual precipitation.

Preparing for the additional wind and water is vital. Monsoon rains are often intense but brief. If you have a collection system, you can harvest the additional rainfall. I hope to add a rainfall harvesting system soon.

Prepare your trees, plants, and any structures in the garden for the monsoon season. Trim your desert trees during late June. Thin an abundance of new growth on deciduous fruit trees so the wind can blow through them. Water your trees deeply to encourage a robust root system and remove trees weakened by pest or diseases. Prevent wind damage in your garden by staking tall plants. Tie your plants to supports loosely to allow for movement, but prevent the crop from breaking off or falling.

As far as what to plant and when:

- Plant pumpkins, winter squash and black-eyed pea seeds through Aug. 15.


- Plant transplants of tomatillos and tomatoes.
- Provide shade for newly planted tomatoes if possible.
- Plant bean, corn, carrot and green onion seeds all month long.



- Check irrigation systems to ensure they're working properly.
- Move planters and potted plants into shadier areas to prevent sun scalding.

Planting conditions may be right any time from mid-July through the end of August. Each year is different and there are no guarantees. Look at the weather — if it's over 110 degrees, wait. Nothing likes it that hot.

Look at the forecast and if there's a cool front coming in, choose that time to plant. Take the necessary time to harden off transplants before planting. If done right, it can take up to two weeks. Plant transplants in the evening to let them settle in overnight.

Baby new plantings for the first couple of weeks and provide additional shade and water as needed. Plant seeds a little deeper as the soil is cooler. Mulch newly planted seeds lightly to help preserve moisture. 

Al Brandenburg, Pinal County Master Gardener

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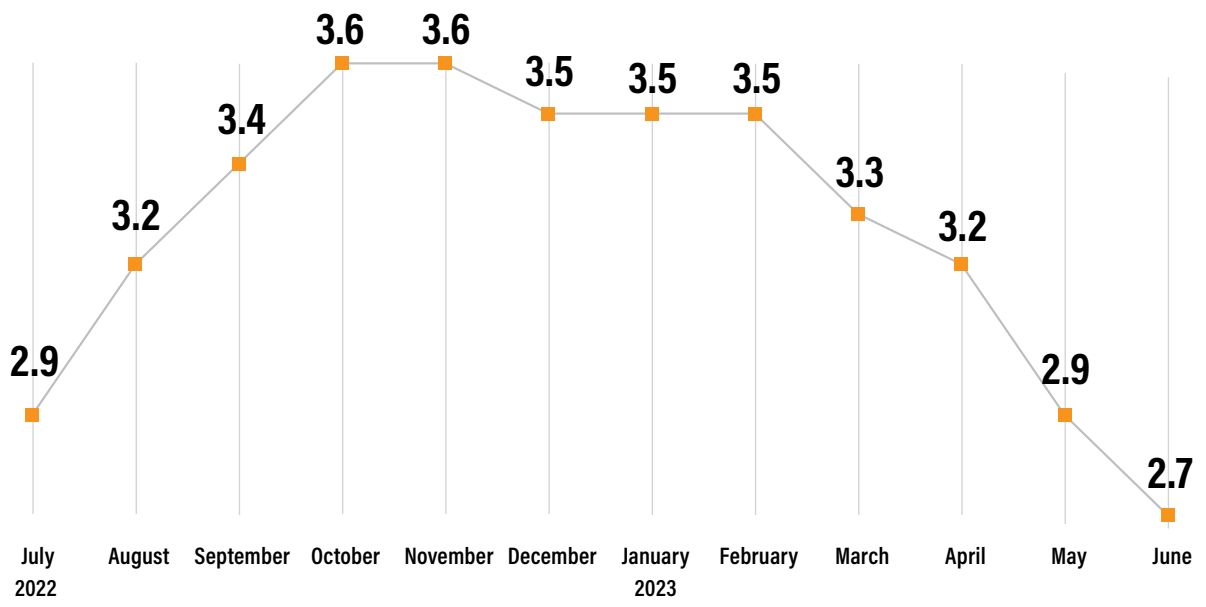
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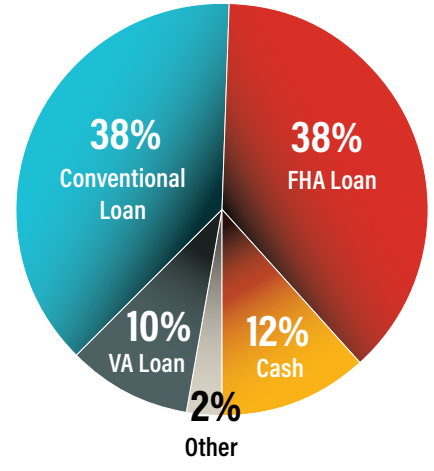
Absorption Rate

* Months inventory would last at current rate of sales



How do Maricopans purchase their homes?

Note: 1,205 homes purchased 1/1/23-7/15/23

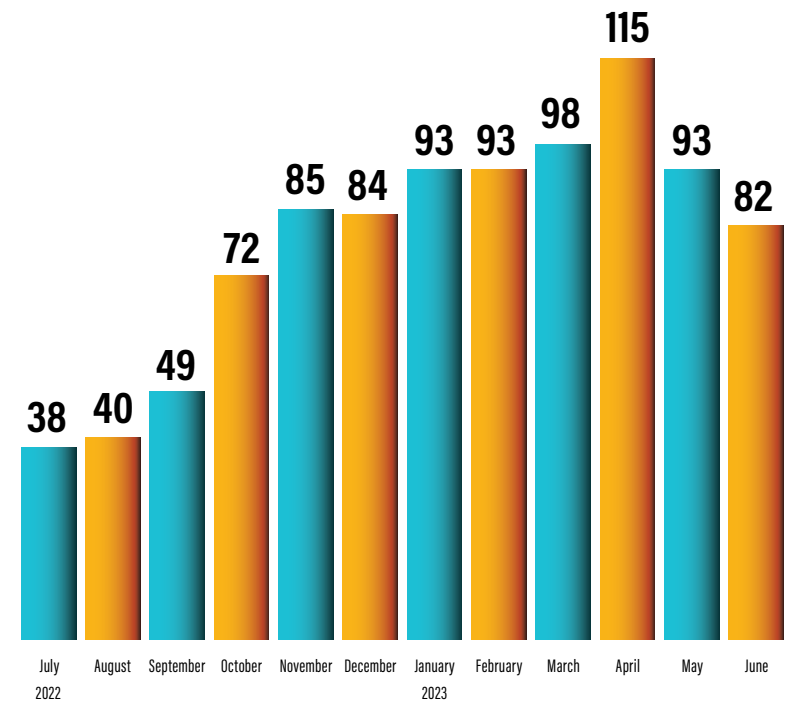


Source: Realtor Brian Petersheim Sr., Arizona Multiple Listing Service



Days on the Market

* Average cumulative days on market



most expensive HOME SOLD



22050 N. Desert Park Court **SOLD** July 5 \$ 649,000

This two-story home in Rancho El Dorado has a three-car garage and attractive landscaping. The kitchen features a breakfast bar and the living room boasts a billiards table and fireplace. Upstairs, there is an indoor gym among the spacious bedrooms. The backyard has a covered patio with a built-in grill, firepit, swimming pool, hot tub and ramada. The home sold for its original list price.

Community: Rancho El Dorado **Year built:** 2003
Square feet: 3,954 **Bedrooms:** 5
Price per square foot: \$164.14 **Bathrooms:** 3
Days on market: 36 **Prior sale:** \$348,000 on June 3, 2017
Builder: Hacienda

- 2. 40781 W. Desert Fairways Drive, The Lakes at Rancho El Dorado \$630,000
- 3. 40610 W. Desert Fairways Drive, The Lakes at Rancho El Dorado \$620,000
- 4. 40682 W. Desert Fairways Drive, The Lakes at Rancho El Dorado \$610,000
- 5. 41828 W. Springtime Road, Province \$595,000

least expensive HOME SOLD

42443 W. Jawbreaker Drive **SOLD** June 15 \$ 270,000



This duplex home in Province has a two-car garage and covered back patio. The kitchen, living and dining rooms are all open and connected. The home sold for \$9,000 below the original list price.

Community: Province **Year built:** 2004
Square feet: 1,345 **Bedrooms:** 2
Price per square foot: \$200.74 **Bathrooms:** 2
Days on market: 19 **Prior sale:** \$138,760 on May 21, 2015
Builder: Engle

- 2. 42550 W. Candyland Place, Province \$275,000
- 3. 46186 W. Holly Drive, Maricopa Meadows \$275,000
- 4. 44867 W. Alamendras St., Acacia Crossings..... \$280,000
- 5. 2037 W. Lunar St., Santa Rosa Springs..... \$285,000

Brian Petersheim Jr.

Source: MLS, June 10-July 9



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Professional property management services aren't as pricey as you think

BY SHERMAN AND EUPHEMIA WEEKES

LANDLORDS GENERALLY CONSIDER property management services a worthwhile expense. Property managers are hired to handle the tedious tasks



of real estate leasing and administration. But for landlords who have never worked with professional property management companies, unfortunately, many believe it's expensive.

Remember that not all property management companies are the same. It's important to do your research and find a reputable company that has experience managing properties like yours.

Some landlords feel they can self-manage their properties and don't want to pay someone else to do it. That's understandable. However, it's important to note that hiring a property manager can help landlords save money in the long run by finding the best tenant, collecting rent, preventing legal problems, saving on repairs and maintenance, and shortening vacancy periods.

Landlords typically take at least two weeks longer to rent a property than a property management company. That loss of income is usually about half the cost it would take to hire a manager for a whole year. The landlord also loses money when, as often happens, the home is priced too low.

Hiring a property manager to help you with your business is not as costly as you may think. Standard costs for property management usually include management fees, a flat fee or percentage of rents collected — usually between 8% and 10% for single-family homes. You may also need to pay the marketing costs, tenant placement fee and lease renewal fees.

Do you have the time to meet your tenants' needs promptly? Tenants need constant communication, maintenance, repairs and record-keeping.

Do you have the time to keep up with changes in tenant-landlord laws that can be very costly if you fall out of compliance? Managing your own property takes away from the time you need for your career, hobbies and investments.

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Coming up short in today's real estate market

BY DAYV MORGAN

OVER THE LAST YEAR, HOUSING PRICES have taken quite a ride.

By the end of 2022, prices were down 17%. They've rebounded about 7% this year so far, but that means for anyone who bought a home in the spring of 2022 and is now experiencing a job loss, a divorce or any other kind of dramatic life event, they could be underwater on the home they just bought.

For example, a home purchased for \$440,000, the average price in April 2022, would likely sell for around \$390,000 now.

Most homes are purchased with less than a 20 percent down payment, meaning that the proceeds on such a home right now may not cover the loan amount. In this situation, a seller must ask the lender for a short sale.

In a short sale, the seller needs the cooperation of the lender to first agree to the process, and then to accept less than the original loan amount. While very few short sales have taken place in Maricopa over the last few months, it's still a possibility for some homeowners while the market recovers.

The seller must make a case as to why a short sale is needed. Lenders may be sympathetic to job losses or an unexpected illness and other events, but not if the seller just wants to buy something else and get out of the current loan.

Most of the time, lenders will require a homeowner to demonstrate that they have a financial hardship and may not agree to consider a short sale until at least one payment has been missed. This will negatively impact the owner's credit — both their score, as well as their ability to get a loan in the future.

Generally speaking, a short sale will do less damage to a person's credit than a foreclosure.

According to the Fair Isaac Corporation (FICO) if you have a credit score of 680, it will take three years to recover from a short sale, whereas a foreclosure could take 5-7 years.

Additionally, a homeowner who goes through the short sale process will be eligible for a new mortgage in less time than if they allow the home to be foreclosed.

If you think you may need to do a short sale, consult with both a Realtor and legal professional to see what options are best for your situation, and whether you may be responsible for repaying any deficiency that the lender writes off.

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

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GETTING TO know

DAVID HUFFAKER
Pest Control Owner and Technician

Hometown: Vale, Ore.
Reside in: Cobblestone Farms
Maricopan since: 2011
Family: Married with three teenagers
Car: Toyota Tundra
Hobbies: Bow hunting, camping, serving others
Dream vacation: Hawaii
Like most about Maricopa: Great people here
Like least about Maricopa: Commute on 347



Quote: "Greatness is not found in possessions, power, position, or prestige. It is discovered in goodness, humility, service, and character."
— William Arthur Ward

FAVORITE ...

Food: Mexican
Drink: Horchata
Meal: Steak
Getaway: Mountains

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He has the power

Weightlifter doesn't let age or others' opinions stand in his way

BY MONICA D. SPENCER

A 76-YEAR-OLD RETIRED SOIL SCIENTIST SHOULD SPEND HIS DAYS GARDENING, RIGHT? Not Mack Hodges.

Every weekday morning, Hodges makes the 30-mile trek north to MDE Athletics in Chandler to train for his next powerlifting meet. It's an eyebrow-raising sight to watch a man older than King Charles III deadlift 140 pounds on a light training day. But Hodges does it while hardly breaking a sweat.

"I love lifting weights," he said. "It's fun to me. It's a release."

Hodges finds the exercise exhilarating, and he's exceptionally good at it.

He placed first in a half-dozen recent national powerlifting meets across the country, lifting hundreds of pounds in squats, deadlifts and bench presses. During a meet in Scottsdale last month, he lifted a combined 1,000 pounds — the weight of a concert grand piano.



Powerlifter Mack Hodges works out at MDE Athletics.

Hodges began powerlifting in 1971 while in the Army, winning his first meet in El Paso, Texas.

"I didn't get a trophy or anything like that, but," Hodges said, "I think I did pretty good."

From there, Hodges competed in his first official powerlifting contest at a Niles, Ill., YMCA in 1973. He powerlifted until 1987, when he gave it up.

But even with his 70th birthday in the rear-view, in 2019, he could no longer stay away from competition.

"It's like starting over, so I've got room to gain more and to get stronger because of that," he said. "You have to love the process, you have to love lifting, whether it's for competition or just going to the gym. If you don't love the process, you're going to quit."

Hodges is headed to the North American Regional Powerlifting Championships in the Cayman Islands this month. He hopes to qualify for the World Classic & Equipped Masters Powerlifting Championships in South Africa next year.

Lifting heavy at 76

At his age, Hodges is the picture of motivation for others in his community.

"He's an inspiration to us old guys," said his neighbor, fellow 76-year-old Barry Scott.

Hodges' friend and former lifting partner, Tim McFarland, agreed.

"It's so motivational to see someone his age lifting," he said. "It just changes how you look at stuff."

McFarland, 58, first met Hodges last year while lifting weights at a Maricopa gym.

"When I met him, he had just completed a heavy lift," he said. "It's very inspiring to see anybody lifting with that type of intensity ... at any age, and then you exponentially multiply it when someone is 75 or so. It just blows your mind so that you want to do better yourself."

However, Hodges knows not everyone is supportive of his story.

Continued on page 50

Bryan Morcitt

RECENT COMPETITION RESULTS

Hodges placed first in his division in his five most recent meets, reaching personal bests in squats and deadlifts for the first time since 1987. All records can be found in online databases such as OpenPowerlifting, AMP Classic Junior and Masters

Nationals | June 2, 2023

Squat: 341.7 lbs

Bench: 286.6 lbs

Deadlift: 374.8 lbs

USAPL Arnold Masters of Iron

March 3, 2023

Squat: 297.6 lbs

Bench: 292.1 lbs

Deadlift: 363.7 lbs

USAPL Windy City Open | Oct. 22, 2022

Squat: 402.3 lbs

Bench: 303.1 lbs

Deadlift: 396.8 lbs

USAPL Mega Nationals | June 8, 2022

Squat: 363.7 lbs

Bench: 292.1 lbs

Deadlift: 402.3 lbs

AMP WSS Invitational | May 1, 2022

Bench: 292.1 lbs



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"Sometimes, when you tell them what you're doing, they don't believe you," Hodges said. "Some of them admire it. Some of them don't like it."

Occasionally, people gripe that Hodges is too old to lift or that he should spend his golden years resting. He's even been accused of using steroids.

"Those accusations are normal, and I live with it," Hodges said. "The powerlifting community is riddled with drug use."

Hodges also knows it's far too normal now for people to paint others with a broad brush. He's determined to carry on with his passion, undeterred by what others say or think.

"You learn to let (the accusations) go because you can't do anything, you can't control that," he said. "If they don't believe me, that's OK."

Accepting a new challenge

For Hodges, accepting the effects of aging has been a struggle. After all, his body has changed over the decades.

"I think my best year in powerlifting was when I was 39," Hodges said. "I squatted 633 pounds, deadlifted 650 pounds and bench pressed 429 pounds."

These days, that weight has decreased considerably. The online database Open Powerlifting shows his personal bests over the last two years as squatting and deadlifting 402 pounds and benching 308 pounds.

Seeing that number decline proved tough to accept.

"I didn't like it at first because I felt like I was losing something," Hodges said.

Working with his trainer has allowed Hodges to begin thinking about his routine differently.

"I think I'm training just as hard as I used to but my body's saying, 'OK, this is all you got right now,'" Hodges said. "The 402 I deadlifted was a year ago. This year, my best has been like 380. I think and know that I can do better, but I have to figure out: Do I need to eat more, do I need a different routine?"

Hodges' journey is one of highs and lows. But as he progresses, he learns a little more each step of the way.

"The true challenge of aging is to figure out a way to gradually improve," Hodges said. "You have to accept the fact that when you get older, things start to decline."

His parting words are surely applicable beyond the weight room: "I still like what I'm doing, so I'll keep doing it."

Bryan Moritz

SENIORS

YOUTHFUL BENEFITS

Bones and muscles deteriorate over time. But stimulating those tissues through exercise can stymie the aging process. Resistance training and other exercises that improve strength and endurance are important, said Dr. Lionel Lee, a physician at Maricopa's Exceptional Community Hospital.

"As we all get older, our bone density decreases. So, it's important for us to do some resistance training just to keep our muscles and bones (healthy)," Lee said. "It means you're less likely to have fractures and breaks as you get older."

Hip fractures are one of the top concerns for older adults, Lee said, calling them "devastating."

"We want to prevent that," he said.

More than 300,000 adults over 65 are hospitalized with hip fractures each year, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.



Such injuries result, in part, from decreased hormone levels as the body ages. In men, lower testosterone levels lead to decreased muscle mass and lower levels of energy. But resistance training can be less extreme than powerlifting, to

similar effect. Lee suggested starting with something accessible and low impact like a promenade around the neighborhood or a visit to the local pool.

"Swimming is a big one, especially in Arizona where we have so many pools," he said. "Swimming is a huge, easy start. I also think that walking is a great way to get exercise."

Staying active through the years is one of the factors Hodges attributes to his health and ability to continue powerlifting at his age.

"Part of my longevity is staying physically fit," he said. "I may not be lifting heavy weight or competing all the time, but I've been in basketball leagues, volleyball leagues and played a lot of softball through the years."

"For me, the key was to stay active all the time to keep my blood pressure down, to stay healthy so that everything stays good!"


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Help foil scammers

BY RON SMITH

“NOT AGAIN!”

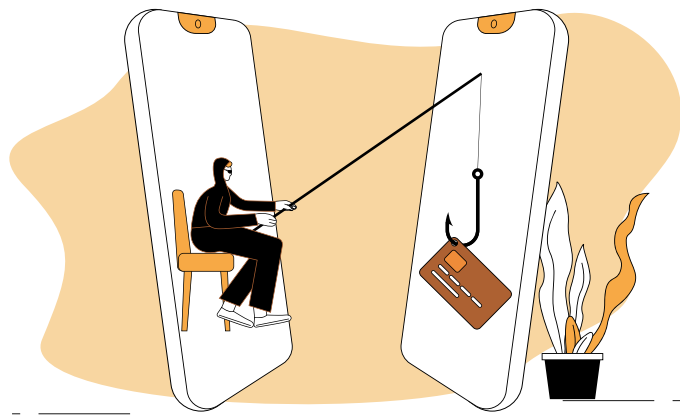
That was the first thing my wife heard me utter. She immediately asked me, “What’s up?”

“It’s the credit union’s fraud department again!”

We recently cleared up some fraudulent charges while on vacation. The replacement debit card was only a few weeks old, but my caller ID was blazing with the name and number of my credit union. So, when the voice on the phone said he was calling from the fraud department, I quickly bought it. My guard was down because I have grown to thoroughly trust those people with their timely interventions.

But I had just been spoofed!

Spoofing is when a caller falsifies the information transmitted to your caller ID display to disguise their identity. The timing was perfect and no doubt intentional. But there was something wrong with the call. He was talking too quickly. And the static on the line was probably a clue.



But a conversation loaded with information that sounded reasonable, coupled with an occasional question intended to get me to say “yes,” was starting to raise my guard senses. Finally, he got to one of those questions that my credit union has constantly reminded us that it would never ask. I knew at that moment that I was being scammed, telling the bogus caller that I was proceeding to my local branch to validate his information.

Of course, the credit union confirmed my suspicion — it was all a scam. A sophisticated scam at that, but my instincts had warned me just in time.


It reminded me we often need someone to help keep us out of trouble. Life is often chaotic and distracting. Periodic nudges are a great idea and my credit union’s warning about their normal practices had been very valuable — just like those public service notices about not crossing flooded roads or pulling off the road during a dust storm.

With this notion in mind, I suggest a couple of additional services to help us stay out of trouble. The first is to join **AARP’s Fraud Watch Network**. With the new chatbots and voice-cloning AI-powered scams, regular reminders on how to avoid scams are necessary. The Fraud Watch Network can equip you with reliable, up-to-date insights, alerts and fraud prevention resources to help spot and avoid scams.

Sign up for free, biweekly **Watchdog Alerts** delivered right to your email and phone.

I also recommend the new **Maricopa Community Alert Network**. The city recently launched this new version of the regional alert system to warn of emergencies, local events or incidents that may have a safety impact on us. If you were enrolled under Everbridge or Pinal County’s PENS system with a Maricopa address, you have been included in the conversion to the new MCAN system. To take full advantage of the new community-specific system, you’ll need to create an MCAN account.

You can choose how you want to be alerted and the topics that you want to be alerted about, such as local traffic, emergencies and city events.

The lesson for me has been to slow down and use a few reminder tools if necessary to keep me out of trouble. Scammers count on us to make mistakes during stressful events. The constant conditioning of my thought process by the credit union helped me avoid a scam. To help strengthen our mental faculties, “what if” games help us prepare for the unexpected in almost any area. We need to condition our memory to be more responsive when needed. 

Ron Smith is a senior advocate, a member of the Age-Friendly Maricopa Advisory Committee and a member of the Maricopa Community Advocates. He is a CAPS and CLIPP™ certified planner.

 [AARP.org/FraudWatchNetwork](https://www.aarp.org/FraudWatchNetwork)
 [CityOfMaricopa.genasys.com/portal/en](https://www.cityofmaricopa.genasys.com/portal/en)



Dancin’ in the daylight

Each week, Maricopa seniors lace up in preparation to kick, shimmy and sway in an afternoon line dancing class at the Maricopa Community Center. It’s not only a chance to work in their daily steps with a foxtrot and two-stepping, but also a prime opportunity to mingle with peers.

“I love music, so I think it’s nice that we can exercise with rhythm,” said Effie Gross, one class participant. “I love dance, I love music and it’s good to be socially connected with other people.”

While participants may move a touch slower than in their prime, they still show plenty of sparkle when practicing their moves.



Monica D. Spencer





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THINGS TO DO

Calling all Maricopa crafters

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Crafters and artisans, get ready to carve out some time in your schedule and register now.

Maricopa's American Legion Auxiliary will host its second annual craft fair Oct. 28 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

at the Veterans Center.

The group hosts the fair as part of its annual fundraising to assist local veterans with meals and monetary needs. Its 2022 event proved a hit, said event coordinator Joan Moss.

"Last year's craft fair was a huge success," Moss said. "I hope this year's is even better."

Moss said the group hopes to fill all 36 vendor spots by the end of August.

"Our goal is to have all spaces filled," she said. "Hopefully we are fully by August so we can begin to advertise the craft fair."



Vendor spaces start at \$20. To reserve a spot, email Joan Moss at navyfriget2012@hotmail.com.

AUGUST

1

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

5

Maricopa Amateur Radio Association
9 a.m., Maricopa Public Library & Cultural Center
18160 N. Maya Angelou Drive

SafeHouse - Break the Ice
9 p.m., Water & Ice
20928 N. John Wayne Pkwy.

7

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

9

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

10

Survivors of Suicide Loss Support Group
6 p.m., Northern Lights Therapy
21300 N. John Wayne Pkwy., Suite 103

15

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

19

Teen Group
10 a.m.- noon, Northern Lights Therapy
21300 N. John Wayne Pkwy., Suite 103

23

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

24

Survivors of Suicide Loss Support Group
6 p.m., Northern Lights Therapy
21300 N. John Wayne Pkwy., Suite 103

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

THINGS TO DO

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 Large and 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
Noon, 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 meeting
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

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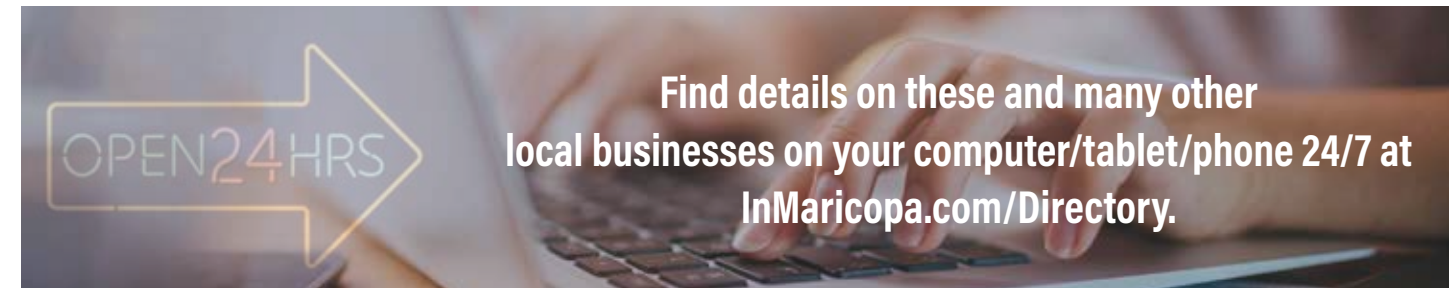
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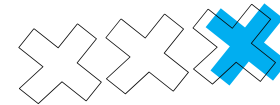
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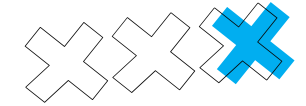
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