



Community

Voters split on VAI
Resort election
propositions; **2**



INDEPENDENT



Education

Highland Lakes
principal retires
after 21 years; **8**

June 2025 Volume 31 Issue 6 Your Nonpartisan Community Newspaper • YourValley.net

School meal prices rise on DVUSD campuses

Governing board approves
first price hike in five years

By Steve Stockmar
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

High food prices plus the rate of inflation will lead to the first rise in Deer Valley Unified School District meal costs in five years.

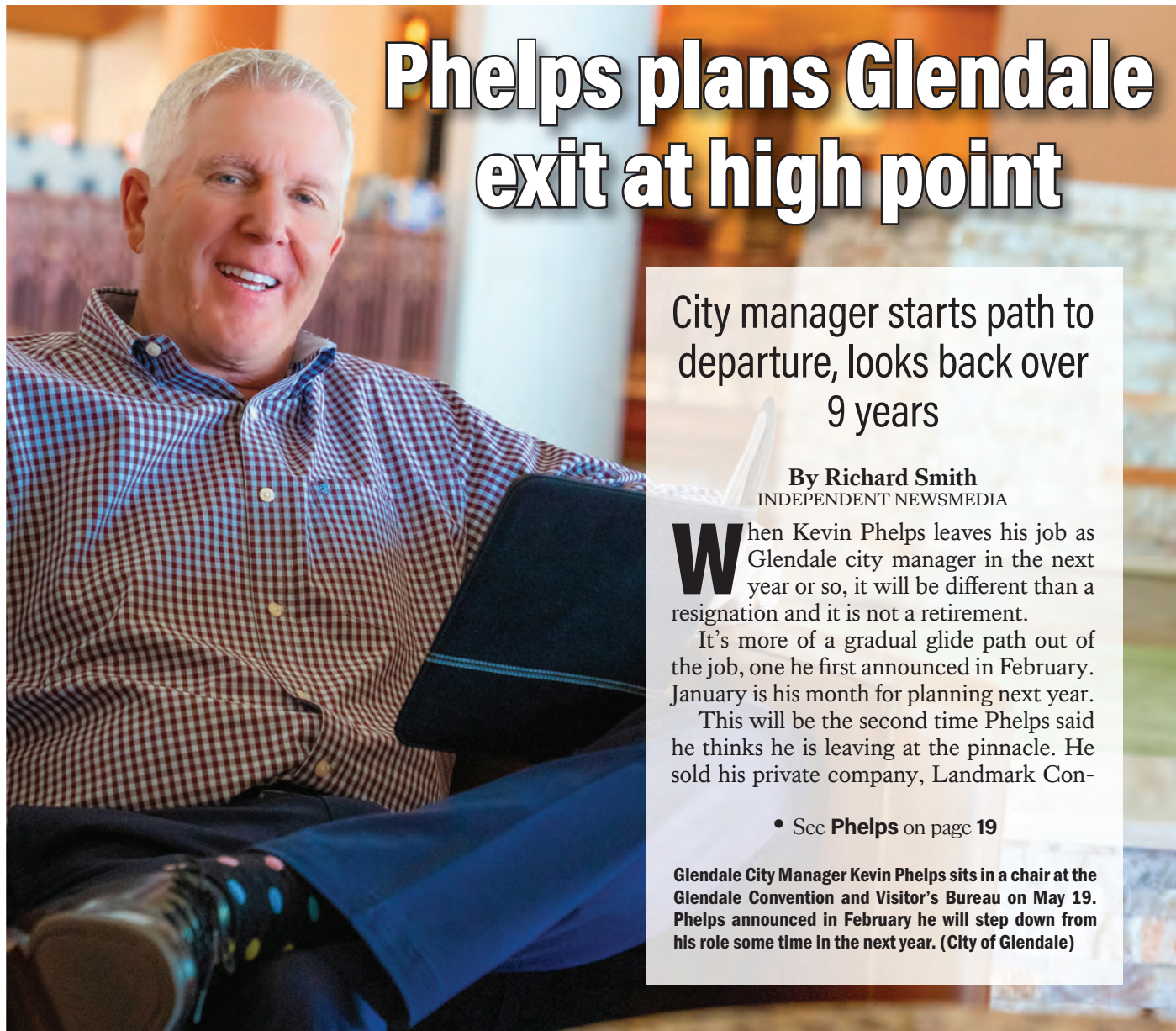
The governing board unanimously approved a measure to increase meal costs for the 2025-26 school year.

Deputy Superintendent Jim Migliorino, in his presentation to the board, noted that student meal prices have not gone up since 2020.

“Since then, U.S. food prices have risen significantly, with inflation exceeding 20%,” Migliorino wrote in his proposal. “During this period, we have also increased staff salaries and made substantial investments in kitchen equipment.”

The board raised breakfast costs at K-8 schools from \$1.50 to \$1.65 and

• See **Prices** on page 12



Phelps plans Glendale exit at high point

City manager starts path to
departure, looks back over
9 years

By Richard Smith
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

When Kevin Phelps leaves his job as Glendale city manager in the next year or so, it will be different than a resignation and it is not a retirement.

It's more of a gradual glide path out of the job, one he first announced in February. January is his month for planning next year.

This will be the second time Phelps said he thinks he is leaving at the pinnacle. He sold his private company, Landmark Con-

• See **Phelps** on page 19

Glendale City Manager Kevin Phelps sits in a chair at the Glendale Convention and Visitor's Bureau on May 19. Phelps announced in February he will step down from his role some time in the next year. (City of Glendale)



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COMMUNITY NEWS

IN BRIEF

BUDGET

City Council considers final budget adoption during June 10 meeting

During a special meeting at 5:30 p.m. June 10 in the Glendale Civic Center, 5750 W. Glenn Drive, the Glendale City Council will decide the fate of the Fiscal Year 2026 city budget.

At its May 14 meeting, the council unanimously approved a \$1.46 billion tentative budget. The amount of the final city budget cannot exceed the amount approved in the tentative budget.

The tentative budget included an operating budget of \$710 million and a capital improvement budget of \$478 million.

Glendale's debt service budget is \$115 million in fiscal year 2026. The budget also has a contingency appropriation of \$157 million.

The city projects \$1.02 billion in revenue during the budget year, plus a transfer budget of \$223 million.

Glendale will not increase its property tax rate in this budget, and the council will decide whether to adopt the property tax levy rate during another special meeting at 5:30 June 24, also in the Glendale Civic Center.

Council policy is to adjust the primary and secondary property tax rates in accordance with the home's assessed value so that the levy is as close to the same as possible year over year.

Voters approve Prop 402, reject Prop 401

Effects on VAI Resort to be determined

By Richard Smith

INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

On May 22, a full day after Maricopa County Elections released updated vote totals in the May 20 Glendale special election related to the VAI Resort, both campaign involved released statements.

It was a split decision. Not surprisingly, each group focused its commentary on the vote result that was a "win."

Glendale voters denied Proposition 401, with 13,803 no votes (50.9%) adding to its initial margin over yes votes, which now are at 13,315 (49.73%).

Vote percentages tightened a bit on Proposition 402 but the ultimate result did not. Voters are approving the proposition with 12,896 yes votes (50.94%) versus 12,418 no votes (49.06%).

"What we've accomplished is bigger than just one vote—it's about forcing the conversation on transparency and the need for our city's leadership to be accountable to us as residents," Glendale resident Shawn Foley stated in a press release. "I've personally spoken to hundreds of neighbors and we've started a conversation that needs to continue. The city needs to listen to residents when making these kinds of decisions."

Foley is one of the volunteers who worked on the "No" campaign led by Worker Power, a California-based political action committee with local offices.

On Dec. 20, 2024, Worker Power

VAI RESORT



Construction crews work on the VAI Resort in south of State Farm Stadium in Glendale in November 2024. Two Glendale City Council actions related to the project were sent to Glendale voters to decide on in a special election May 20. Voters rejected Proposition 401 and approved Proposition 402. (Courtesy VAI Resort)

PAC filed two referendum petitions with the City Clerk's Office to refer the adoption of Resolution No. R24-131 and Ordinance No. O24-46 to Glendale voters.

Proposition 402 is tied to Ordinance No. 024-46, which amended the VAI Resort Centerpoint Planned Area Development to rezone 66.31 acres at the southeast corner of Cardinals Way and the Loop 101 freeway.

Yes for Glendale Campaign Chairman — and VAI Global Development President — Grant Fisher released a statement Thursday night regarding the special election.

"Glendale residents voted to support the VAI resort rezoning. This result is a step in the right direction, and we look forward to bringing new jobs and new tax revenues to the city of Glendale," Fisher stated. "As we said throughout this campaign, this was about more than just VAI Resort.

I deeply appreciate the support of our entire coalition, including elected officials, the business community, and public safety leaders."

Proposition 401 is regarding Resolution No. R24-131 which amended the property on Glendale's general plan map from "parks and open space," to "corporate commerce center."

The no vote denied this amendment and may lead to delays as the zoning is discussed further.

"Glendale residents made it clear that they didn't like the idea of changing the land's zoning from parks and open space to zoning that would allow an office building and parking lot," stated Brendan Walsh, executive director of Worker Power. "A recent study ranked Glendale as the least sustainable of the 100 most populated cities in the United States. ... Tuesday's results are a step in the right direction for Glendale's future."

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BUSINESS

Planners approve veterinary ER south of Arrowhead mall

By Richard Smith
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

A veterinary hospital which provides only emergency services will move in to an unused side of a building on the Arrowhead Towne Center circle in Glendale.

The Glendale Planning Commission unanimously approved a conditional use permit for VEG Glendale at 7720 W. Bell Road, during its April 24 meeting.

"This is an old Trader Joe's site. They have since relocated to an area within the vicinity. This new veterinary hospital will have an adjacent suite next to it, which is the existing Sketchers outlet," Glendale planner Joseline Castaneda said.

Since it is a conditional use permit



The VEG Glendale veterinary hospital will come in to the eastern half of the building and parking lot just south of Arrowhead Towne Center. (City of Glendale)

at an existing building, the project does not require additional approval from the Glendale City Council.

VEG will be in a 9,752 square-foot

suite.

The acronym is short for Veterinary Medical Group, which 100 hospitals nationwide, including three

other Arizona locations in Chandler, Oro Valley and Phoenix.

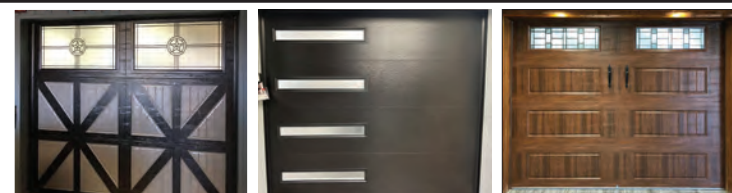
The company was founded in 2014. The Glendale veterinary hospital will employ a staff of 20, with at least five employees always on site.

VEG does not provide overnight boarding. Pets are only kept on the site for in-patient medical care and receive direct supervision by a nurse and a veterinarian.

"You stay with your pet. We're an open concept," VEG Director of Real Estate Samantha Fishbone said. "We use the highest level of technology to handle emergencies."

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COMMUNITY NEWS

TRANSPORTATION

Glendale upgrades several bus stop shelters

By Richard Smith
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

Work never really ends for the city of Glendale transit staff in terms of surveying and implementing improvements to bus stops in the city, but the 2025 fiscal year — ending July 1 — has seen major progress on the issue.

Councilmember Lauren Tolmachoff and then-Councilmember Joyce Clark brought bus stop inadequacies to the forefront during a March 5, 2024, council budget workshop. Tolmachoff asked the city to include more pullout lanes near bus stops, and use remaining funding to improve bus stop seating facilities and shelters.

Out of that budget process came an annual funding source of \$225,000 for bus stop-related improvements. Glendale budgeted \$162,000 in fiscal year 2025 for new and replacement bus stop structures, Transit Administrator Nathan Whyte said.

“We were able to secure a steady stream of budget money,” Tolmachoff said. “I’ve received multiple complaints from residents over the years that we need more pullouts.”

A pullout lane has been added on northbound 59th Avenue for the bus stop north of Bell Road, and another was finished early this year at Union Hills Drive and 67th Avenue.

A lack of seating for people waiting for the bus — or outdated seating without any shade structure — also was an issue.

Glendale crews are caught up with improvements or new bus stop structures in the city’s northern area, along



This shaded bus stop seating area on eastbound Union Hills Drive near 67th Avenue has been built from scratch in the past year by the city of Glendale. (City of Glendale)

Bell Road and all the stops north of it. Whyte said the work was on no more than five or six shelters in north Glendale.

Citywide, more than 10 bus stop structures were renovated or replaced this fiscal year.

Many more are to come.

“We’ve identified at least 30 more that we will see if they meet (Americans with Disabilities Act) requirements,” Whyte said.

• See **Shelters** on page 21



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BUSINESS MOVES



NOW OPEN

1 Along with a location of **Dutch Bros** recently opened at 5940 N. 75th Ave., just south of Bethany Home Road, several other businesses are in place at The Shops retail center. **Nothing Bundt Cakes**, **Cali Tacos Restaurant**, **BeBa Nails & Spa** and a **BeMobile Verizon Store** also opened in the center.

2 Earlier this year, **Cabinets 4 Less** opened a Glendale location at 5830 W. Bell Road. The store had its grand opening celebration on May 5. It is the Mesa-based cabinet and counter top company's first location west of Inter-

state 17.

Courtesy Westpac

3 Westpac Construction recently

announced the completion of **Marbella Northern Parkway Phase 1**, a LEED-certified project and the first



MARBELLA

step in a six-building, 51-acre industrial park master-planned for Northern Parkway and Dysart Road in Glendale. Developed by Panattoni Development Company and designed by Ware Malcomb, this project delivers 445,000 square feet of industrial space across three buildings.

OPENING SOON

4 **Dick's House of Sport** recently received its business license for a location near Westgate at 6385 N. 99th Ave. Like a standard Dick's Sporting Goods store, this location will continue to sell athletic gear, but add a variety of sporting activities around their stores such as rock climbing walls, batting cages for baseball, softball, lacrosse and soccer, and virtual driving ranges.

REMODELING

Courtesy Streets of New York

5 **Streets of New York** reopened its remodeled location at 9240 W. Northern Ave., in late April. The redesigned space blends modern-industrial design with warm touches while. Red exposed ductwork, whitewashed brick columns, and black accents complete the look.

6 **Fabletics** plans to open a store inside a vacant suite at Arrowhead Towne Center, with opening slated for this summer.



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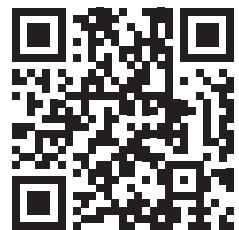
We are highlighting business favorites across the Valley.

This year we have separate ballots –

West Valley, East Valley, North Valley, and Fountain Hills.

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EDUCATION

SCHOOL NOTES



Jim Migliorino, Heather Mock

ROLES

Deer Valley Unified deputy superintendent steps down

Jim Migliorino, Deer Valley Unified School District's longtime deputy superintendent for Fiscal & Business Support Services, has been appointed the executive director of the Arizona Association of School Business Officials, effective July 1.

Migliorino joined Deer Valley Unified in 2005 and has served in his role since 2007.

The district governing board in May hired Heather Mock to succeed Migliorino. Mock, who has served in the district finances department for 19 years, will assume her new post on July 1.

LEADERSHIP

4 new principals to take over DVUSD campuses

When the 2025-26 academic year opens on July 31, there will be four new DVUSD principals.

Kelly Zywczyk will be principal of Gavilan Peak School, Pam Vigil is the new campus leader at Park Meadows Elementary School, and Sharon Wieser takes over at Barry Goldwater High.

Longtime Highland Lakes principal retires

Health scare led Mark Anderson to change his career, but he's not done teaching students

By Steve Stockmar
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

Mark Anderson has been around schools, students, classrooms, and education for so long even he can't quite remember exactly when it all started.

Was it when he started running a summer program for the city of Scottsdale when he was only 16? Within a year there were hundreds of kids in the program that blossomed into an after-school responsibility during the school year. Or was it at a young age when he helped his mom, who for 32 years was a special ed teacher herself?

What is clear is the moment he knew he wanted to be a principal.

As a student in the Paradise Valley School District as a kid, Anderson came across Richard Ebert, who served 17 years as principal of Palomino Elementary School, which during his tenure received three Arizona A+ awards.

"He knew every single kid's name as they walked in and he knew every kid's name as they walked out. And I went to my mom when I was this big and thought 'I want to do that,'" Anderson said. "I just knew that he had a connection with people."

With a career in education that literally started in his teens, Anderson, at the young age of 50, has just retire from his post at Highland Lakes School, which itself this past February was one of only three Deer Valley Unified

DVUSD



Mark Anderson sits surrounded by memories in his principal's office at Highland Lakes School on April 17. When the last day of school arrives May 22, it will mark the end of Anderson's 21st year on the north Glendale campus and his 23rd year overall with Deer Valley Unified. (Independent Newsmedia/Steve Stockmar)

School District campuses to earn an A+ rating from the Arizona Educational Foundation. Opened in 1999 and located at 19000 N. 63rd Ave., in Glendale, Highland Lakes serves pre-K through eighth grade students. The last day of school was May 22, marking the end of Anderson's 21st year on the north Glendale campus and his 23rd year overall with Deer Valley Unified.

Amanda Hicks was appointed by the governing board in February to take over as principal in 2025-26. Anderson said earlier in the spring that he was not exactly looking forward to that

last day of school with his 76 teachers and Highland Lakes students.

"I don't know that I can keep my composure," he said. "I'm not a good crier."

A health episode four years ago set in motion this career decision. At the time a high blood pressure diagnosis came as a shock and would end up changing his life.

"At that time I didn't look like me, like I look like I have a syndrome or something. Something's not right," he recalled.

• See **Anderson** on page 24

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SPORTS

Mountain Ridge hurdler: State is steep learning curve



Samel Eminovic, left, of Mountain Ridge, clears a hurdle in the May 17, 110-meter final at the AIA Open State Track & Field Championships in Mesa as Keegan McCarthy of Canyon View, right, closes in. Eminovic placed third in the 110 hurdles and was fifth in the 300 at the Open meet. (Independent Newsmedia/Jason W. Brooks)

By Jason W. Brooks
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

MESA — Mountain Ridge junior Samel Eminovic acknowledged there's a lot to learn about an all-classes state championship meet.

And some of it, such as adjusting for unexpected wind, an athlete almost has to experience once before they know how to adjust to it.

The wind was one element Eminovic learned about during the weekend of May 16-17. That's when he competed in the 110 and 300 hurdles at the AIA Open State Track & Field Championships for the first time.

Eminovic placed third in the 110 hurdles final and was fifth in the 300.

"The wind was definitely pushing," Eminovic said after the 110 final. "I messed up on a few hurdles, but was still able to come in third."

Eminovic burst onto the scene this season. He won the 300 hurdles at the Division I meet on May 10 in a personal record of 37.65.

He posted the best time in his divi-

sion in the 110 meters in preliminaries May 8 and was disqualified in the final May 10.

Another element Eminovic learned about was varied competition: he not only faced familiar rivals from the West Valley and/or Mountain Ridge's division, but also top rivals like Bellemey Amina-Harris of Desert Edge, who he'd only raced against at a Chandler meet before the Open meet.

Amina-Harris easily won both races.

The 300 final featured many of the same hurdlers who made the 110 competitive. One exception was Highland Prep senior Marcel Pratt, who narrowly beat two other hurdlers and Eminovic to be the 300 runner-up.

Eminovic said he'd like to run track in college. But his first priorities include prepping for a senior year that involves returning to, and winning at, the Open championships.

"Absolutely, I'd love to do track in college," Eminovic said. "And I want to win here next year."

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SPORTS

O'Connor completes 4-peat in beach volleyball

By Jason W. Brooks
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

QUEEN CREEK — In the first decade of beach volleyball as a sanctioned sport in Arizona, one North Valley squad has been the definition of a dynasty.

The O'Connor Eagles wrapped up their fourth consecutive Division I crown by sweeping Xavier Prep, 3-0, April 30 in the team finals at Casteel High School. The duos of Leyton Heldt and Kaylee Woodruff, Kaiya Kearney and Imani Huesca and Sami Mondino and Alyssa Archiello were all victorious against the rival Gators.

Coach Jamey Spartz — after being doused by a water cooler again — said this year's team was bolstered by strong freshman and sophomore players.

"We can keep building," Spartz said. "We had three freshmen who contributed to varsity this year. The level of play and the number of schools with strong programs is really rising with the popularity of the sport, though."

Mondino and Archiello are sophomores; three Eagle juniors played April 30. But most championships are won with at least some senior leadership; senior Leyton Heldt teamed with junior Kaylee Woodruff to easily win their two-set match against Xavier.

Heldt can say she was a state champion all four years of high school beach volleyball.

"We're really close, and I wouldn't ask for a different group to do this with," Heldt said. "The competition was hard. Facing Xavier is always intense."



O'Connor girls beach volleyball junior Kaiya Kearney dives for a dig against Xavier Prep in the Eagles' fourth consecutive state team Division I team championship clinching match April 30 in Queen Creek. (Independent Newsmedia/Jason W. Brooks)



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FROM THE COVER

Prices

• From page 1

at the high school level from \$1.50 to \$1.75. Lunch at K-8 schools will rise from \$2.95 to \$3.10, and rise at the high school level from \$3.50 to \$3.75.

In March of this year food prices were 3% higher than in March 2024, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

“In 2025, overall food prices are anticipated to rise slightly faster than the historical average rate of growth,” the Department notes. “In 2025, prices for all food are predicted to increase 3.5%.”

School Nutrition Association, a national nonprofit representing 50,000 members who have provided meals to students across the country since 1946, surveyed its school nutrition director members this past fall. The survey evaluated current challenges, gauged the state of school nutrition program finances and staffing, and examined other concerns.

Almost 4,000 school districts across the U.S. were given surveys, with 191 of those responding noted as being from the “Southwest.”

There are more than 200 public school districts in Arizona serving approximately 900,000 students, according to the Arizona Department of Education.

Among the survey’s findings are



(MetroCreative Connection)

that 74% of Southwest respondents said that food costs were rated as a significant challenge.

Among respondents that do not offer free meals to all students, 96.8% reported challenges with unpaid school meal charges/debt. Other reported challenges include families in need not receiving free and reduced-price benefits (89.3%), paperwork/administrative burden (88.7%), students going hungry/choosing not to eat (73.5%) and stigma for low-income students (68.9%).

The study also shows an ongoing nearly decade-long trend of increas-

ing median unpaid meal debt. The reported unpaid meal debt of \$6,900 in fall 2024 was 102.9% higher than the median reported unpaid debt in 2017-18 and 245% higher than the median reported unpaid debt in 2014-15.

A whopping 92.1% of responding directors reported serious or moderate concern for the financial sustainability of their school meal programs three years from now.

In the Southwest, the median per-meal charge for students who pay full price for lunch for school year 2024-25 is \$2.75 (elementary), \$2.95 (mid-

CHALLENGES FOR U.S. SCHOOL MEAL PROGRAMS

The top 5 challenges for school meal programs, calculated by combining the percentages of each item rated as ‘moderate’ or ‘significant’ challenges, are:

Food costs – 97.9%

Labor costs – 94.9%

Equipment costs – 91.4%

Staff Shortages – 88.7%

Procurement issues (e.g. long lead times, substitutions, late deliveries, insufficient bid responses) – 86.8%

SOURCE: School Nutrition Association 2024-25 Report

dle), \$3.10 (high). Elementary and middle in the Southwest are lowest or tied for the lowest region in the country. The high school rate of \$3.10 is second lowest (\$3, Southeast).

School meals must meet calorie, sodium and fat limits and offer students fruits, vegetables, milk and entrees made with lean proteins and whole grains.

Deer Valley Unified has worked to absorb rising food and labor costs through procurement practices, use

• See **Meals** on page 13



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Your Local Team

FROM THE COVER

Meals

• From page 12

of USDA Foods, and by maximizing available funding under the Child Nutrition Program, Migliorino said. Additionally, he added, temporary supply chain assistance money helped offset some of the most significant cost increases in recent years.

“These combined efforts allowed us to delay the need for a price adjustment until now,” Migliorino writes. “However, despite these strategies, we are no longer able to generate sufficient revenue to fully offset our increased operating expenses. Additionally, there is current uncertainty surrounding the level of future federal funding and potential regulatory changes that may further impact revenue and drive up costs.”

Nearly one in five children in Arizona face hunger, according to Feeding America.

Support is available in the West Valley at Hope for Hunger Food Bank (phoenixrescuemission.org/hope-for-hunger), 5605 N. 55th

Ave., in Glendale, and at Valley View Community Food Bank (feedingaz.org), 10771 W. Peoria Ave., in Sun City.

Visit <https://www.dvUSD.org/departments/food-nutrition> to apply for free and reduced lunches.

FREE SUMMER KIDS MEALS AVAILABLE AT THESE 2 PHOENIX SPOTS

Deer Valley Unified School District will provide free meals for children this summer.

The district's Summer Food Service Program offers meals to all children, ages 18 and under, without charge, regardless of a child's race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age. There will be no discrimination in the course of the meal service.

Meals are available at the sites and times as follows:

Constitution Elementary

18440 N. 15th Ave., Phoenix

Meal service dates: Now through July 30, Monday through Thursday (meals will not be served at this location the week of June 30-July 4)

Breakfast: 7:30-8:30 a.m.

Lunch: 11 a.m.-noon

Deer Valley Community Center

2001 W. Wahalla Lane, Phoenix

Meal service dates: Now through July 25, Monday through Friday (meals will not be served at this location June 19 and July 4)

Lunch: 11 a.m.-noon

Snack: 3:30-4 p.m.

Visit www.dvUSD.org/summermeals for more information about the Summer Food Service Program.

DVUSD CURRENT MEAL PRICES (NEW PRICES)

Breakfast K-8: \$1.50 (\$1.65)

Breakfast High School: \$1.50 (\$1.75)

Breakfast Adult: \$2 (a la carte pricing)

Lunch K-8: \$2.95 (\$3.10)

Lunch High School: \$3.50 (\$3.75)

Lunch Adult K-8 Campuses: \$4.50 (\$4.75)

Lunch Adult High School: \$4.75 (\$5)

SOURCE: Deer Valley Unified School District



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NEIGHBORS

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Family Promise unveils Glendale container village for homeless



Family Promise CEO Ted Taylor, right, Mary Thompson from the BHHS Legacy Foundation and Glendale Mayor Jerry Weiers smile just after cutting the ribbon cutting for the new Family Promise Legacy Village in Glendale on May 6. (Courtesy 10 to 1 Public Relations)

By Richard Smith
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

South Glendale now features another innovative solution to the affordable housing crisis after a recent grand opening.

Family Promise Legacy Village debuted May 6 as community-based small-scale housing for families. The 22 units feature six repurposed 640-square-foot ocean containers transformed into fully furnished small apartments.

Legacy Village, on the campus of Iglesias Dios de Segunda Oportunidad at 6242 N. 59th Ave., is designed for families who have experienced homelessness. Families can move in starting June 1 by calling Family Promise of Greater Phoenix, which will put together a waiting list.

"The genesis of the project was to

figure out how to develop affordable housing that is infill. It's very rare," Family Promise CEO Ted Taylor said. "This particular church, they have 3.84 acres. We could use about an acre of it to develop a housing project so the families could be inside the community, where they could be close to school and close to work instead of being on the outskirts where the parents are pulled out of their family's lives."

Family Promise works with 54 congregations,

BHHS Legacy Foundation is the seed founder on the village and contributed the greatest amount toward it.

"They believed we could do this, even though it had never been done in the Valley, building out of containers in this kind of configuration and full solar

• See **Village** on page 17

NEIGHBORS

Village

• From page 16

on the top. It's amazing," Taylor said. "They were at the heart of this."

Local Initiatives Support Corporation, Garcia Family Foundation, Fiesta Bowl, The Nina Mason Pulliam Charitable Trust, SRP, and the Arizona Housing Fund also contributed to the project.

In particular, Taylor thanked The Fiesta Sports Foundation, which contributed the development's playground and a sports court.

Family Promise partners with Head Start, Deep Behavioral Health Care, Iglesias Dios de Segunda and the city of Glendale pitched in to put the project together.

"There were volunteers from the city building our fence. The columns, those are with the city's help to build them. And they have little messages



Fiesta Sports Foundation contributed this basketball half court at Family Promise Legacy Village in Glendale, a transitional community for families experiencing homelessness. (Courtesy 10 to 1 Public Relations)

painted on rocks by the children," Taylor said.

Glendale brought water to the site.

Mayor Jerry P. Weiers was on hand to cut the ribbon.

"This village will provide families in

need with a chance to get their life back on track," Weiers stated in a press release. "Family Promise has done a great job in developing quality homes at this site and will provide wrap-around services to the residents living here."

Using containers decreased costs, Taylor said. Each two-bedroom home cost about \$101,000 to manufacture.

He said Family Promise devised this community model with more conventional houses 13 years ago in its South Scottsdale location, with the homes ringing a central courtyard.

"Homelessness is partly a problem of a lack of housing. So we really needed to get into the housing space, which we are. But we knew if we didn't bring community to those developments, we really miss the whole purpose of bringing families in," Taylor said. "We're doing something very unique and very innovative here that we know works. So you know, 86% of the families that go through our units end up in permanent housing and be sustainably housed."

Please send your comments to AsOpinions@iniusa.org. We are committed to publishing a wide variety of reader opinions, as long as they meet our Civility Guidelines. Richard Smith can be reached at rsmith@iniusa.org.

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THINGS TO DO

JUNE 1

House Rocking Blues

Big Daddy D & the Dynamites are back at WestsideBlues, Jazz & More. Led by the talented and charismatic Darryl "Big Daddy D" Porras, and matched on stage by the powerhouse vocals of Betty Jo Vachon and the Dynamites, this is gonna be a rockin' Sunday afternoon, so grab your tickets now to save your seat. The vocalists and guitarist are joined by Rachelle Romeo on sax, Rick Mutter on keys; Mahlon Hawk on bass and Dr. Bob Sellani on drums. Reservations are only held until start of music. Open seating. First come first served.

Westside Blues, Jazz & More
17045 N. 59th Ave., Suite 104
3 to 6 p.m.

JUNE 2

Cooking With Larry

Chef Larry Canepa leads an evening of Street Life: Eating on the World's Most Famous Avenues at Foothills Library. The world offers an array of street food delights, each region boasting unique flavors and culinary traditions. Street food is the ultimate in casual dining and a sensory window into the culinary heritage of a hungry metropolis. Learn how to recreate these foods — to go. Samples are provided. Canepa is a certified culinary educator.

Foothills Branch Library
19055 N. 57th Ave.
6-7:45 p.m.

JUNE 21

Make Music Day

Make Music West Valley is a festival led by the West Valley Arts Council and designed to showcase local musical talent and inspire others to play music. Events are planned across the West Valley, including a songwriters circle in downtown Glendale led by On Stage Now Entertainment.

Coyote Oaties
7005 N. 58th Ave.
Time TBD

ON STAGE

Local theater troupe to stage coming of age 'The Outsiders'

SPECIAL TO INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

Stage Left Productions, celebrating its 10th anniversary year in the West Valley, will raise the curtain on "The Outsiders" in June.

The play is a searing story of real kids in real situations with real consequences seen through the eyes of young Ponyboy, a theater press release states.

"Territorial battles between the have-it-made rich kids — the Socs — and Ponyboy's tough, underprivileged 'greaser' family and friends are just a part of life," Stage Left sums up. "But even in the midst of urban gang warfare, somehow Ponyboy can't forget a short poem that speaks to their fragile young lives."

The teen drama is adapted by Christopher Sergel from the book by S.E. Hinton.

Performances take place: 7 p.m. Thursday, June 5; 7 p.m. Friday, June 6; 2 & 7 p.m. Saturday, June 7; 7 p.m. Thursday, June 12; 7 p.m. Friday, June 13; and 2 & 7 p.m. Saturday, June 14.

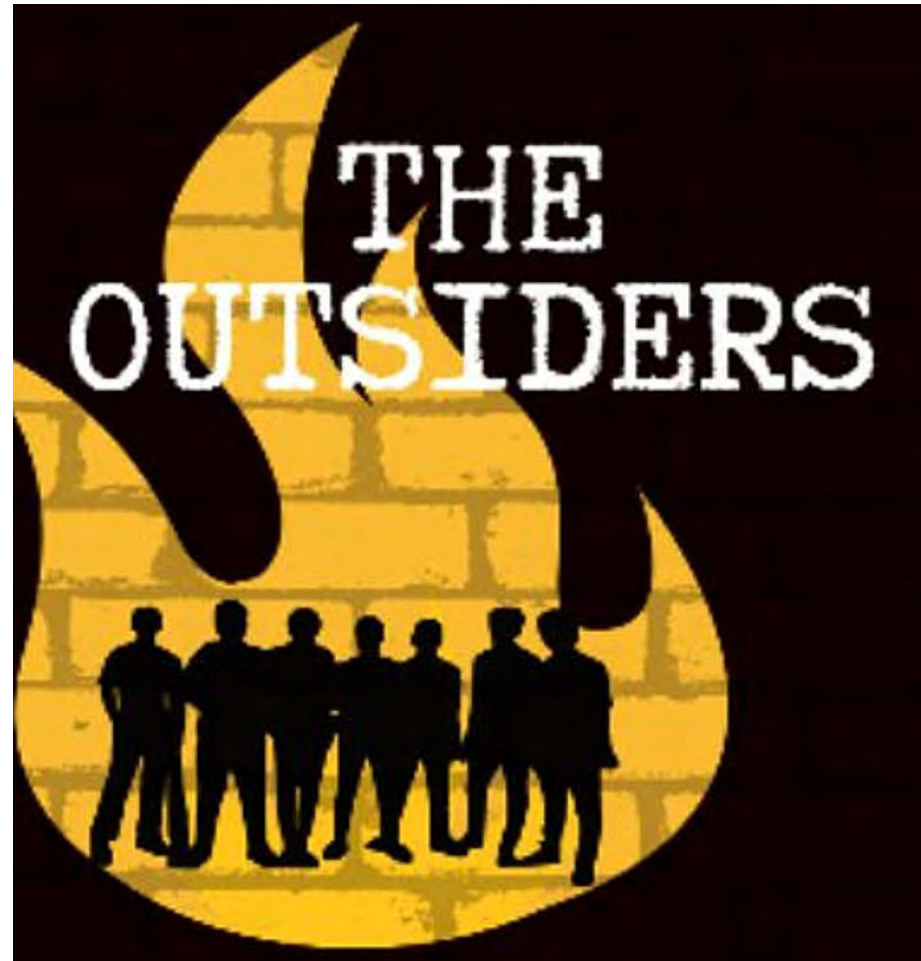
Tickets are \$25.

Stage Left Productions is located at 5930 W. Greenway Road, Suite 1A, in Glendale.

Email tickets@stageleftaz.com or text/call 623-285-6321 for information.

Visit <https://app.arts-people.com/index.php?show=256320> to purchase tickets.

Please send your comments to AzOpinions@iniusa.org. We are committed to publishing a wide variety of reader opinions, as long as they meet our Civility Guidelines. Richard Smith can be reached at rsmith@iniusa.org.



(Show poster provided by Stage Left Productions)

IF YOU GO

What: "The Outsiders"

When: June 5-14

Where: Stage Left Productions, 5930 W. Greenway Road, Suite 1A, Glendale

More Information: Email tickets@stageleftaz.com or text/call 623-285-6321

FROM THE COVER

Phelps

• From page 1

vention Center in Washington state, in 2007 after a record year.

He points to the opening of a new City Hall, Heroes Park, and an invigorated staff as reasons to turn the operation over to someone else.

"If you're not careful, sometimes senior leadership will stay on where you start going into a decline, then they leave when things are not as strong as they were," Phelps said.

Phelps said he hopes to help the council pick the next leader. That came with a detailed plan to council on six- to eight-month recruitment process. Hiring an out of state replacement would add a month.

When the next city manager is hired, Phelps envisions but being available as a consultant for as long as five months.

Phelps said he is not retiring, and most likely will end up back in the private sector.

"If there's a Glendale secret, it's that when we say we're for economic development, that's not just something we put on a business card," Phelps said.

If there is a regret from roughly a decade on the job, Phelps said, it is trying to build a bridge to Arizona Cardinals.

When Phelps began work in 2016,

the Cardinals and the Arizona Sports & Tourism Authority had a 2012 claim of \$66.7 million against Glendale. In November 2016 the city settled the suit for \$17 million and the agreement to add new lots.

The relationship between the city and Cardinals Owner Michael Bidwill never improved. Bidwill came out against the VAI resort and ignored the city when it made a \$3 million contribution to the Super Bowl Host Committee.

"I did everything I could to try to make them successful. What I learned was, no matter what we did it would never be enough," Phelps said.

Getting the house in order

Glendale hired Phelps, then the deputy executive in Pierce County, Washington, in November 2015. He started as city manager in February 2016.

The city's situation with the National Hockey League and Arizona Coyotes was important at the time. But his top priorities were internal, addressing the city's financial troubles and its inability to retain top employees.

Former City Manager Ed Beasley left in 2012 followed by Horatio Skeete as interim city manager. Dick Bowers came on board as acting city manager, Brenda Fischer was hired in summer 2013 and resigned in February, causing Bowers to fill in again.



Glendale City Manager Kevin Phelps walks on the ground floor of the Glendale Convention and Visitor's Bureau on May 19. Phelps announced in February he would step down from his role some time in the next year. (City of Glendale)

Mayor Jerry Weiers credits Phelps for leading the city's turnaround in the years the city stumbled out of the Great Recession..

"Kevin's business development focus since joining Glendale has resulted in bringing world-class brands to the city, creating quality jobs in the area, growing experiential offerings and positioning Glendale as a leading city in

Arizona," Mayor Jerry Weiers stated in an email.

Phelps said he was surprised an organization Glendale's size had been more than a decade without a strategic plan. Employee morale was low

"What happens when there's bad retention and bad culture is your good employees leave and your bad employees stay. The bad ones don't have any options. So you wind up with a lower common denominator," Phelps said. "Fortunately, there were still a lot of really dedicated employees that stuck out through some pretty tough times. The minute we showed some momentum, it was easy to get some buy in."

Defining Glendale as an entertainment epicenter

When Phelps first started, he viewed his new home city a bit different than some longtime Valley residents, and he drew inspiration from his home in Washington.

"Tacoma considered itself a blue collar, kind of gritty community," he said. "I saw a lot of similarities between Tacoma and Glendale. So much of what was happening was ourselves holding us back and not leaning into what we could be. And when you don't think you're worth anything, you can't expect other people in the Valley to do that."

• See **Manager** on page 22

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OPINION

LETTERS TO THE NEWSROOM

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Yes, I will do my part to help my community become a safe place for people to engage in civil discourse about public issues. Visit iniusa.org/civility-pledge/ to take the pledge.

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Our opinions page is to provide an open forum for our readers. We hope to stimulate debate, not to dominate or control it. We reserve the right to edit our opinions, and we insist on civility. Please include your name and phone number, so we can contact you for clarification or confirmation. We welcome your photo. All opinions must be no more than 300 words.

Those that are judged as personal attacks or complaints about neighbors, businesses or other opinion writers will not be considered. No person may submit more than two opinions for publication during a calendar month. Two submissions in the same issue will not be published. The content of a submission is the responsibility of the person who submitted it.

Speak Up

We support the use of pen names. Too many people don't speak up because they fear intimidation or even danger to their families and/or careers. Pen names are an important part of our nation's history.

Corrections

We will promptly correct all factual errors. We offer a "right of reply" to the people about whom we write. Readers who disagree with a news story are welcome to respond with a letter.

Five safe driving essentials Valley parents should teach their teens

For many teens, getting a driver's license is more than just a milestone — it's a symbol of freedom, independence and stepping into adulthood. But behind the excitement lies a serious reality: with newfound freedom comes real risk.

According to the U.S. Department of Transportation, teen drivers, ages 16 to 19, are three times more likely to be involved in a fatal crash at night compared to adults aged 30 to 59, measured per mile driven. And the danger spikes even higher during the summer, when teens are 20% more likely to be involved in a fatal collision. As parents, mentors and community leaders, we have a unique opportunity to empower the next generation of drivers with life-saving knowledge. Here are five essential tips to help your teen drive smarter and safer, especially when it matters most.

Set clear boundaries and expectations

Establishing clear structure is one of the most effective ways to help teens grasp the seriousness of being behind the wheel. Implementing a driving agreement with clearly defined rules and consequences sets expectations early and creates accountability. Consider setting nighttime driving restrictions and limiting the number of passengers — both proven strategies to reduce distractions and lower crash risk. Curfews and occupancy limits may seem strict, but they are practical tools that significantly improve teen driver safety. By creating thoughtful boundaries, parents and guardians can help young

drivers build safe, responsible habits from the start.

Be a leader for your learner

A teen's driving habits often mirror what they see at home. Parents who consistently model safe, responsible driving play a powerful role in shaping their teens' behavior behind the wheel. Wearing your seatbelt every time, avoiding distractions like cell phone use and following traffic laws are not just good practices, they're daily lessons. When teens regularly observe conscientious driving, they're far more likely to adopt those same habits, reinforcing safety through example rather than just instruction.

Create a plan for the unknown

Being in an unfamiliar area or encountering unexpected situations can be challenging for new drivers. Before going to a new location, discuss the route, potential issues and what to do in case of an emergency. Encourage teens to stay calm, pull over safely if needed and contact a trusted adult if they feel uncomfortable. Practicing these scenarios can build confidence and preparedness.

Understand the duties of being a passenger

If a teen happens to be riding with another new driver, they also play a key safety role in the car. Passengers should avoid distracting the driver with loud conversations, sudden movements and showing them photos

or videos on a phone. Encourage passengers to speak up if they feel unsafe and find alternative transportation if necessary. Being a responsible passenger contributes to overall road safety.

Establish an accident plan

In the unfortunate event of a car accident, proper documentation is essential. Keeping a checklist in the vehicle can help guide the driver through a stressful situation with clarity and confidence. This checklist should include steps such as collecting the personal and insurance information of all parties involved, filing a police report, obtaining witness statements if available, taking photographs of the scene and maintaining detailed records of any medical treatment received. Auto accidents can have far-reaching consequences — financially, emotionally and psychologically — so having an advocate to help pursue justice and fair compensation can be an important step in the recovery process.

By setting clear expectations, modeling safe driving habits and preparing for potential incidents, teens are better equipped to navigate the responsibilities of the road. Ongoing support and open communication from parents play a vital role in reinforcing positive behaviors and helping young drivers build a strong foundation for a lifetime of safe and responsible driving.

Cristina Perez Hesano
PEREZ LAW GROUP

Cristina Perez Hesano is founding partner of Perez Law Group, PLLC in Glendale.

Weiers gives kudos to Glendale University graduates

Congratulations to the Glendale

COMMUNITY NEWS

Shelters

• From page 5

The bus stop structures at 51st, 67th and 83rd avenues and Bell Road were refurbished, as was the stop at 75th Avenue and Union Hills Drive.

A structure on eastbound 67th Avenue and Union Hills Drive is completely new.

“All I can see there is the concrete landing pad, which is new. And it has an arch over the shelter,” Whyte said.

Before deciding to build a new structure at a current stops, the city must confirm the site has the required dimensions to build an ADA-required landing pad.

After identifying a site, the transit department takes a proposal to engineering. Some sites cannot be changed because of electric or water lines under them — or other factors,

If the city can upgrade a current bus stop, it will lay more concrete on a landing pad.

“You have to see what is underneath the actual pavement,” Whyte said. “The ones that are not ADA compliant are sort of grandfathered in.”

Lower volume stops float to the bottom of the priority list, Whyte said. Tolmachoff, now Glendale’s vice mayor, is on the Valley Metro board of directors.

She said usage studies for each bus



This shaded bus stop seating area on westbound Bell Road just west of 52nd Avenue was rebuilt by the city of Glendale in the past year after a crash tore up portions of the old structure. (City of Glendale)

stop in the Valley will help determine whether buses should continue going there and inform cities on how they

could allocate resources.

“Now that we’re going to be surveying more efficiently, we’re going

to have a better idea of how to prioritize how they should be used,” Tolmachoff said.

Civility Checklist

How to engage in respectful, honest & civil dialogue about public issues.



Take the high road. Respond to the topic — not the person. Refrain from demonizing others for their opinions. Assume those you disagree with are, like you, genuinely interested in improving the community.

Be respectful. Bullying, public humiliation, insults, name-calling, harassment and threats directed at another person — or that person’s race, gender, religion, ethnicity, etc. — have no place in civil discussions. Find ways to respectfully disagree without questioning someone’s character or motives.

Be truthful. Base your opinions/arguments on facts. Value honesty. Make only accurate statements when making your point and avoid exaggeration and stereotypes.

When appropriate, cite your sources of information that others may question.

Don’t misrepresent. Always identify your opinions as opinions (not stating opinions as facts). Never misrepresent the views of others or falsely claim your opinions represent someone else. If quoting the words of others, identify and credit the source.

Listen and learn. It’s both polite and respectful to listen to those we disagree with (as well as those we support) and be genuine in our attempts to understand their point of view. Expand your mind by thoughtfully seeking out views that don’t agree with your own.

Look for common ground. When disagreeing with others, look for even small areas of agreement — which can be the gateway to working together for the greater good.

Respect privacy. Keep private things private — whether it involves your own information or those with whom you disagree. Revealing private information about someone else is rude, unethical, potentially harmful and, in many cases, illegal.

Set a good example. Practice civil behavior online as well as in public and in your interaction with others. Encourage others to practice these civil behaviors. And it’s OK to challenge disrespectful behavior — but be courteous, respectful and helpful in your approach.



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FROM THE COVER

Manager

• From page 19

The key was to differentiate Glendale from other Valley suburbs. Phelps said it would be difficult to compete with Scottsdale and its resorts and attractions, or even a city like Chandler — where he also interviewed for a city manager position — with its large tech center employment.

What Glendale was building was built around fun. Glendale, Phelps said, boasts a stadium, an arena and 22,000 parking spaces right off a freeway, plus 1 million square feet of retail and a number of hotel properties nearby. That's an advantage over every Valley suburb.

Glendale had 879 hotel rooms in 2016. When the VAI Resort gets opened up, and the Desert Diamond White Tanks Casino adds 469 rooms, Glendale's total soars above 4,000 rooms.

Phelps did not foresee anything like VAI, but when it first was presented as Crystal Lagoons in 2019, he knew it would be a game changer. Even with delays, Phelps sees good things as the city waived about \$5 million in potential fees on the project.

"Normally most developers are finding ways to cut things from the budget. These guys keep getting bigger," Phelps said. "It's going to be there for 30, 40 or 50 years. To me what they're doing is truly a legacy project."

Building business bridges

After solidifying city staff, the next goal was to bolster revenue by attracting new businesses instead of raising taxes. Phelps saw promise in land off Loop 101 originally slated as a park-and-ride.

"We had a relationship to where we reached out to a guy named Larry Van Tuyl, who had sold his portfolio

to Warren Buffet for over \$8 billion in 2015. His non-compete went away if he only developed the property. He couldn't operate it. We got him to come in to build the BMW," Phelps said.

The dealership was a catalyst for Volvo Cars Arrowhead, Jaguar Arrowhead, Land Rover Arrowhead, INEOS Grenadier Arrowhead, a Carvana across Loop 101 and under construction Arrowhead Porsche.

Phelps credited Development Services Director Randy Huggins for building relationships with the business community.

Shortly after a Red Bull factory opened off Loop 303 in Glendale, the city and another West Valley city were recruiting Whiteclaw — as was a Utah city.

Mark Anthony Group founder Anthony Von Madi visited Glendale. At the time, his company could not supply retail stores with enough Whiteclaw product.

Glendale laid out a plan to have open a 1 million-square-foot brewing facility in one year from groundbreaking to a certificate of occupancy,

Von Madi said it was a nearly impossible goal. Phoenix base Merit Partners developed the Red Bull campus for Ball. Merit President Kevin Czerwinski went through the process and by the end of the day, Phelps said, Mark Anthony selected Glendale as the site and Merit as the developer.

Since then Mark Anthony brought down its science and research team and built a distribution center in Glendale.

Weiers said council was not surprised when Phelps announced his plan to retire from the city, because in his usual style he presented a smooth transition plan.

"In my opinion, Kevin's legacy as the Glendale City Manager is focused on business development and financial responsibility," Weiers stated.

OPINION

Letters

• From page 20

University class of 2025.

The participating residents heard from all our city departments during this free 10-week course that is sponsored by Arizona State University.

Each year we host this in-depth look at how city government works. Attendees learn the inner workings of a variety of city services, including public safety, city court, libraries, public works, finance and budget, parks and recreation, public affairs, neighborhoods, water services, boards and commissions, and more.

Glendale residents and business owners whose businesses reside in the city are eligible to register for Glendale University to learn more about city government directly from

the Mayor, City Manager's office, and senior management from other departments.

In the more than 25 years since the program was started, more than 1,000 people have attended. The program's continued popularity is credited to the one-on-one interactions and the core curriculum that focuses on city operations.

If you are interested in attending Glendale University, visit this webpage https://www.glendaleaz.com/your_government/city_council/mayor_jerry_weiers/glendale_university for updates on how and when to register for the next round of classes, which will begin in March 2026.

For information, contact the Mayor's Office at 623-930-2260 or email GlendaleUniversity@glendaleaz.com.

Jerry P. Weiers
MAYOR OF GLENDALE

"Advertising in the Independent Community Newspaper Has Been a Game-Changer for Our Business!"

At **Vero Chicago Pizza**, we've always prided ourselves on delivering the best pizza in town — fresh, flavorful, and made with love. But we knew that great food alone wasn't enough to stand out in such competitive market. That's when we decided to partner with the independent Newsmedia for our local advertising, and the results have been incredible!

Since we started running ads in the Gilbert and Chandler editions, we've seen a noticeable increase in foot traffic. Our weekday lunch specials are getting more attention, and we've had more families and new customers coming in to try us out. The exposure we've gotten has been invaluable — it feels like our restaurant has become a true local favorite!

The newspaper's readers really resonate with the personal, community-oriented approach we've taken in our ads. We've received so many positive comments from customers who say they saw our ad and decided to give us a try.

Thanks to the Independent Newsmedia, we're not just a pizzeria — we're part of the community, and it's been amazing to see the growth we've experienced. We highly recommend advertising here to anyone looking to connect with local customers!

Isaac Younan

— Isaac Younan, Owner





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EDUCATION

Anderson

• From page 8

Usually on campus by 7 in the morning each day, Anderson rarely left before 7 p.m. That included up to a dozen work phone calls on Saturday, and Sundays saw him at work in his office almost six hours. His cardiologist noted that Anderson was for the most part healthy. But one factor stood out.

“It’s not because there’s something wrong with you because you’re in shape, because you’re not overweight, you don’t have bad habits,” he remembers his doctor telling him. “He goes, ‘It’s the job.’”

Anderson happily lives a completely different lifestyle now. His days involve exercising, meal prepping, and he’s on meds and supplements that keep him at healthy levels. He recognizes his own situation can remind others —

especially fellow guys like himself; he admits he rarely visited a doctor before his health scare — to prioritize diet and fitness, not to mention a good work/life balance.

“That’s my message to everybody that asks,” he said.

With such an early start to his career enabling him to pile up his retirement points, Anderson was able to step away at only 50. He has no plans to stay idle, though.

Anderson runs a real estate business on the side, on which he’ll now focus primarily. He has two grandchildren to spoil, and maybe best of all given his long career in education that started as a special ed teacher, he’s already on the Deer Valley Unified list to substitute teach as needed.

“Now I just get to focus on kids and focus on parents and focus on teachers and have those conversations and make a difference,” he said.



LEAVING THE NEST

Graduates in the Deer Valley High School Class of 2025 look around Desert Diamond Arena in Glendale at the crowd gathered for the May 15 ceremony. (Courtesy DVUSD)



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