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INDEPENDENT



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Nonprofit partners with businesses to help prevent opioid overdoses

By Connor Van Ligten
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

A nonprofit organization is partnering with businesses in Mesa to help fight the opioid epidemic.

Community Bridges Inc. is helping distribute free Narcan kits to multiple businesses. Narcan is a nasal

spray designed to reverse opioid overdoses quickly.

They are also helping train local employees on how to treat and prevent opioid overdoses.

This campaign comes as a partnership between CBI, Maricopa County Public Health and downtown Mesa.

“Through opioid settlement funding through

• See **Opioids** on page 11

Meri Wiley from The cARTel at the OneOhOne Gallery holding a Narcan kit. The Mesa gallery was one of the first businesses to get involved, agreeing to keep several Narcan kits on-site. (David Leibowitz)

Mesa startup aims to bring public to padel

By Connor Van Ligten
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

Racquet sports have become increasingly popular as a recreational activity since the pandemic, and a Mesa company is hoping to capitalize on their popularity.

Padel Pals, a new multipurpose entertainment center at 4945 S. 71st St. in southeast Mesa, will offer padel, pickleball and more. Opening this fall, Padel Pals is the brainchild of founders Armando Acevedo, Carlos Pereyra and professional boxer Oscar Valdez.

Acevedo, the startup's CEO who hails from Tucson, said he spent countless hours playing padel when he lived with family in Mexico and Miami. Padel is a racquet sport similar to pickleball with a smaller court and usually played in doubles. The difference is in padel the ball can be played off walls surrounding the court.

When Acevedo came back to Arizona as an adult, he said it was hard to find any padel courts in the Valley

• See **Padel** on page 12

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COMMUNITY NEWS

IN BRIEF

Mesa council approves \$2.79B budget

Mesa City Council recently approved a \$2.79 billion budget for the 2025-26 fiscal year that includes investments in both public safety and core services.

“This is a significant budget as we move forward in a tremendous, historic way to provide enhanced services to the City,” City Manager Scott Butler said in a release. “The budget focuses on public safety, quality service and investment in neighborhoods. This budget demonstrates our commitment to providing quality core services in a fiscally responsible manner.”

Highlights of the budget include:

- Building two new fire stations: Station 223 (Lehi) and Station 224 (Hawes Crossing)
- The Northeast Public Safety Facility, which is opening soon and includes a police substation, the first new substation since 2005, and Fire Station 222
- Expanding the Real Time Crime Center to 24-hour coverage by adding a police sergeant and management assistant
- Additional ambulances for the Transport Services program
- Gateway Library, the first full-service library built in Mesa since 1995
- Eastmark Great Park, Phase 5

More about the budget is available on the City of Mesa website at <https://www.mesaaz.gov/Government/Management-Budget/Budget/Budget-Documents>.



Mesa fire crews fighting a wildfire. (Mesa Fire and Medical Department)

Mesa Fire working with national program to help reduce risk of wildfire damage in communities

By Connor Van Ligten
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

The Mesa Fire and Medical department is collaborating with a national wildfire safety program that helps reduce the risk of property damage from wildfires in local communities.

The program, called Firewise USA, was developed by the National Fire Protection Association and helps residents take steps to reduce the risk of wildfire damage to their property. The program starts with an assessment of the member's home and how well-protected it is against wildfire risk. One such place where Firewise USA operates is Las Sendas, an East Mesa community that borders the Tonto National Forest.

“They create a plan based on that assessment, which is looking at the condition of the homes and properties, generalities and trying to help that community find purpose and prioritize what they should work on,” Megan Fitzgerald-McGowan, Firewise USA program manager with the National Fire Protection Association, said. “It’s easy to get focused on looking out beyond the trees, instead of turning and looking at what’s under our control right here on our property.”

Mesa fire inspector, investigator and Firewise coordinator Tyson Matheny said the Mesa Fire and Medical Department works with NFPA and the Arizona Department of Forestry and Fire management on these assessments.

“The first thing we do is an assessment of the entire community. Us and DFFM will come out together and do a full assessment and point to prioritization zones where they want to work on first,” Matheny said. “After that, we start at the home level. We go out and do an assessment with the community members who are interested in it.”

That assessment is all about ember-proofing a home, according to Matheny.

“What we want to do is teach them ways that they can prepare their home for that ember attack. Meaning, sealing up cracks and crevices, putting wire mesh on vents, moving patio furniture away from the house,” Matheny said. “Storing the patio furniture in the garage if they’re going to leave for the summer. We also want to teach them about not stacking their firewood up against their house.”

Shawn Alexander, Mesa fire division chief and fire marshal for the fire prevention division, spoke on the

common reasons for why wildfires spread to properties. According to Alexander, terrain, weather and fuels that are in the area play an important factor. He also emphasized communities that are near a national forest are often at risk, as embers can travel far.

“As wildfires develop, they can send embers anywhere from 1 to 3 miles away from the fire based on wind conditions,” Alexander said. “Even though large portions of the city may not technically be in the forest, the fact that they’re close to the forest area increases the risk of wildfires spreading to those communities.”

Participation in the program is voluntary, but Alexander said that demand keeps rising. While Las Sendas is the only Firewise USA-recognized community in Mesa currently, Matheny mentioned that Mountain Bridge and Madrid are close to becoming Firewise USA-recognized communities.

“With those additional communities, that is well over 2,000 individual homes that are going to be doing self assessments, identifying risks and hardening their homes and community to those risks,” Alexander said.



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BUSINESS

IN BRIEF



Essential roof repairs in the program include leak repair, rotten wood replacement, tile replacement, shingle replacement, debris removal and other routine maintenance before they become repair emergencies. (John Halliday/HBC Roofing)

HBC Roofing starts free roof-repair initiative

HBC Roofing, a Mesa business, has started a community program to assist homeowners with free roof repair if they are public servants or struggling to make ends meet.

HBC Roofing is committed to setting aside 3% of its total revenue every quarter to help local homeowners receive essential roof repairs, such as leak repair, rotten wood replacement, tile replacement, shingle replacement, debris removal and other routine maintenance before they become repair emergencies, according to a release.

The Phoenix Roof Rescue Initiative focuses on minor roof repairs and basic roof maintenance, allowing HBC to maximize the number of residents helped each quarter, it states.

Members of the community are encouraged to nominate deserving individuals, such as public servants, the elderly or young families who own their homes and could use a little help. To nominate a deserving homeowner, visit <https://www.hbcroofingaz.com/roof-rescue-initiative/> and complete the form.

Recipients are not required to promote HBC roofing, and the company warrants all roofing work.

'We Build Spaceships' temporary banner approved for Virgin Galactic site

By Richard H. Dyer
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

A temporary building banner that states "We Build Spaceships" can be placed at Virgin Galactic at Mesa Gateway Airport, the Mesa Board of Adjustment decided recently.

The board voted 5-0 June 4 as part of a consent agenda with other items to approve a special-use permit for the modification of a comprehensive sign plan. Boardmembers Nicole Lynam and Gerson Barrera were absent.

Virgin Galactic is on the airport's west side, south of Ray Road on the east side of Sossaman Road, Staff Planner Charlotte Bridges said at a study session prior to the meeting.

"The proposal is to allow a 1,040-square-foot banner-type sign to be applied at that west elevation of the building for one year," she said.

Monica Ireland of Virgin Galactic is the applicant. Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport Authority is the owner.

Virgin Galactic requested the permit because the sign needed to be larger than what is allowed, according to a written project narrative.

"The 'We Build Spaceships' graphic feature is intended to highlight the amazing fact that Virgin Galactic is building spaceships in its assembly facilities at the Mesa Gateway Airport. Due to the size and orientation of the building, the banner needs to be larger than the allowable signage square footage



A rendering of the "We Build Spaceships" banner on the building. (City of Mesa)

Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport Authority

The airport is operated by the Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport Authority. PMGAA consists of representation from Apache Junction, Mesa, Queen Creek, Gilbert, Gila River Indian Community.

in order to maximize visibility and make the intended impact; the allowable square footage would be lost on the facade and not visible" it states.

The seven-member Board of Adjustment conducts public meetings to hear and decide requests for variances, special-use permits and interpretations of the city of Mesa zoning ordinance and sign code. Members are appointed for staggered terms of three years, accord-



Virgin Galactic is on the airport's west side, south of Ray Road on the east side of Sossaman Road. (City of Mesa)

ing to the city's website.

Richard H. Dyer can be reached at rdyer@iniusa.org, or on X @rhdyer. To voice your opinion on this story, connect with us at AzOpinions@iniusa.org.

NOMINATION ROUND-UP



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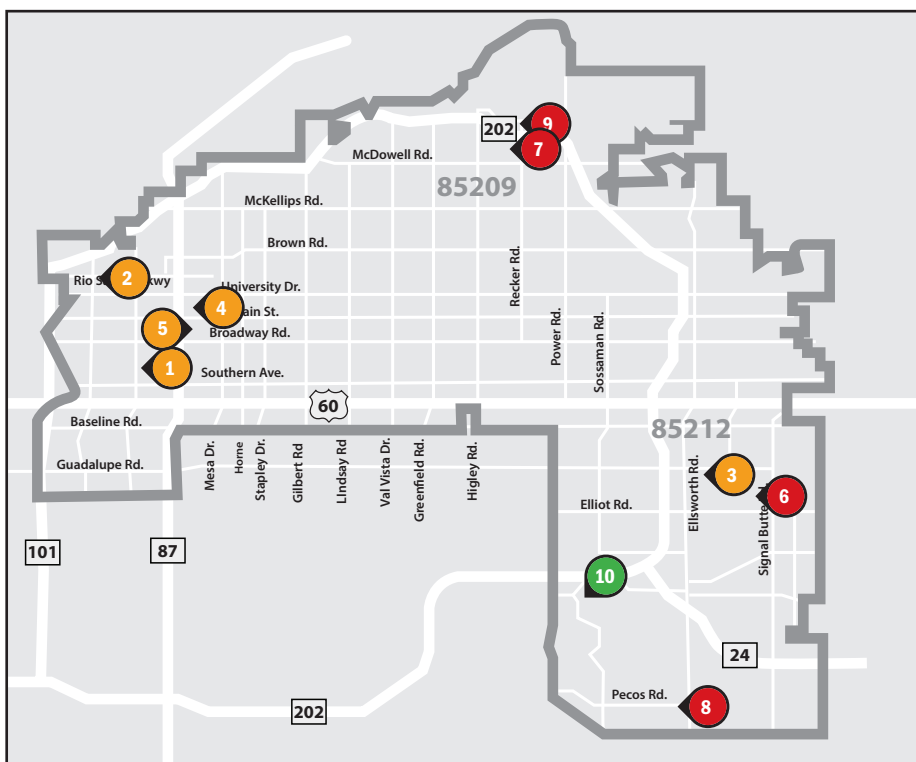
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BUSINESS MOVES



Compiled by Richard H. Dyer
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

LIQUOR LICENSES

The Mesa City Council at a meeting June 16 voted to make a recommendation of approval to the Arizona Department of Liquor License and Control for the following:

- 1 • A new series 12 restaurant license for Mariscos Mi Lindo Guaymas at 35th Ave LLC dba **Mariscos Mi Lindo Guaymas**, a restaurant that serves lunch and dinner at 1036 W. Southern Ave. Suite No. 104. There is no existing license at this location.
- 2 • A new series 12 restaurant license for Gravity Solutions Riverview LLC dba **Slick City Action Park**, a family entertainment center at 1812 W. Rio Salado Parkway in Mesa. There is no existing license at this location.
- 8 • A new series 7 beer and wine bar License is being sought for Pour Wine and Taproom LLC dba **Pour Wine**

and Taproom at 2905 S. Ellsworth Road Suite No. 103. The existing series 7 beer and wine bar license will remain active at the location and the new license will be held in non-use status until it has either been sold or transferred.

The Mesa City Council at a meeting July 1 voted to make a recommendation of approval to the Arizona Department of Liquor License and Control for the following:

- 4 • A new series 7 beer and wine bar license for Sacred Pint LLC dba **The Sacred Pint**, a Mesa taproom at 214 W. Main St. This is an ownership transfer; therefore, the existing license will revert to the state.
- 5 • A new series 12 restaurant license for True Taco LLC dba **Pacos Tacos**, a Mesa restaurant at 144 S. Mesa Drive Suite G. There is no existing license at this location.



LIQUOR LICENSES

COMING SOON

6 A Circle K convenience store with a fuel station is to be constructed on 1 acre at the northwest corner of Elliot and Signal Butte roads in Mesa. The landscaping and design for the facility were discussed during a meeting of the Mesa Design Review Board. Steve Bowser of Helix Engineering LLC is the applicant. Circle K Stores Inc. is the owner.

7 An industrial development is to be constructed on 6.5 acres approximately 840 feet west of the northwest corner of East McDowell Road and North Recker Road in Mesa. The facility's landscaping and design were discussed during a meeting of the Mesa Design Review Board. Karen Ohmann of Deutsch Architecture Group is the applicant. J & R Repair Service of Arizona LLC is the owner.

8 An industrial development is planned on 1 acre approximately 2,000 feet southwest of the southwest corner of East Pecos Road and South Ellsworth Road in Mesa. The Mesa Design Review Board approved the site plan, landscaping and design for the development in Gateway Airport Commerce Park. Ernesto Ramirez of Chavez and Associates is the applicant. Glenscott LLC is the owner.

9 A four-lot industrial subdivision is planned on 10 acres west of the southwest corner of North Recker Road and East Longbow Parkway in Mesa. The Mesa Planning and Zoning Board approved a preliminary plat for the development, **Longbow Lot 2**. The vacant property is in the Falcon Field sub area.



CIRCLE K



INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT



GLENSCOTT



Longbow Lot 2

IN THE NEWS

10 A temporary building banner that states "We Build Space-ships" can be placed at **Virgin Galactic** at Mesa Gateway Airport, the Mesa Board of Adjustment decided recently. The airport is operated by the Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport Authority. PMGAA consists of representation from Apache Junction, Mesa, Queen Creek, Gilbert, Gila River Indian Community. Virgin Galactic is on the airport's west side, south of Ray Road on the east side of Sossaman Road.



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EDUCATION

SCHOOL NOTES

MCC developing student skills for global workforce

A new program offered to Mesa Community College faculty to integrate global content into their courses assists students in better developing the skills needed to be competitive in the world economy.

MCC is one of only three colleges selected to participate in the training program, according to a release.

The program is a partnership between Digital Promise, a global education nonprofit working to expand opportunity for every learner, and the Association of Community College Trustees. It offers select faculty members a \$1,000 stipend, courtesy of the ECMC Foundation, to incorporate global content and skills into one of their existing courses.

Programming consists of four, one-hour virtual synchronous sessions per month and equips faculty members with strategies for incorporating global content into their courses to more actively engage students while still meeting required standards.

Due to the success of the pilot program introduced in 2024, the Digital Promise training program was extended into 2025.

“MCC faculty who participated in Digital Promise found value in this professional development activity, so we chose to continue it another year,” said Michael Voss, MCC dean of instruction in applied sciences & technology and business and computer information systems.

Go to <https://digitalpromise.org/>, <https://www.mesacc.edu/>.

Maricopa County Reads programs offers prizes, tickets and more to readers of all ages who participate

By Connor Van Ligten
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

If you're bored and you don't want to go outside in the summer heat, Maricopa County is offering a fun program that encourages the art of reading.

The Maricopa County Reads program, which runs from June 1 to Aug. 1, encourages people of all ages to read at least 20 minutes a day. For every minute of reading, participants get one point. The more points you have, the better prizes that you are eligible for. Points and scores are tracked via public library systems across the county, including in Mesa and Tempe.

Prizes vary from something as simple as a bookmark or sticker to something as extravagant as a Harkins gift card or Phoenix Mercury tickets.

“At 250 points you get a small prize of a bookmark and sticker. At 500 points you start getting vouchers for free food and beverages from places like Raisin’ Canes or Peter Piper Pizza,” Mesa Public Library Marketing Specialist Sarah Lipich said. “At 1,000 points, you get to choose a free book from a large list of options to help you build your home library, and you also get entered into raffles.”

Raffles can earn you some of the more valuable or highly coveted prizes mentioned earlier. The 1,000 points is the ultimate goal for all participants, and the promise of the raffle acts as a motivator to get them there.

This program was originally created to help prevent the “summer slide” in student readers, a phenomenon where students often forget or lose hold of information they learned during the school year over sum-



Two sisters compare books at the Dobson Ranch Library. (Courtesy City of Mesa)

mer break. Reading is a good way to counteract the summer slide.

“The summer slide is learning loss that kids can experience over the summer if they don't keep their minds engaged,” Lipich said. “Just reading five books over the summer helps them retain that information and keep their minds engaged.”

However, this program is open to all ages to participate. That's partially because public libraries serve everyone so they would not exclude adults, but it also provides a model of good behavior for young kids if they see their parents in the reading program too. Teaching kids the importance of reading at a young age can have a big impact on their education, according to Maricopa County Library District Communications Advisor Samantha

Mears.

“Something really important about early literacy with kids is modeling. You want your kids to see you reading,” Mears said. “Making this program so where a mom can participate as well as a dad and a grandparent is very important to establishing that habit of reading because you want your kid to be modeling what you want to see.”

The theme for this year's campaign is “Color Our World.” According to Tempe Public Library Director Jessica Jupitus, this theme is all about the visual aspect of reading, which is being implemented into the program. The Tempe Public Library is using a wall in the youth area to illustrate this theme by letting every kid who gets

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Wildfires

• From page 2

“That hasn’t been done before now.”

Fitzgerald-McGowan said the voluntary nature of the program helps especially in communities that might not have codes or ordinances available to them, but want to seek action to fire-proof their house. People who don’t want to participate immediately may see the program in action through other members of their community and feel more encouraged to join in, according to Fitzgerald-McGowan.

“The voluntary nature of Firewise USA has brought so many communities on board because they get to pick and choose,” Fitzgerald-McGowan said. “Not everyone has to participate, but over time, they see how it’s friendly and engaging, and helps reduce risk, and you get more people to



Mesa fire inspector, investigator and Firewise coordinator Tyson Matheny. (Mesa Fire and Medical Department)

come on board.”

Ultimately, Alexander hopes that Firewise USA enables residents who live in areas bordering wildlands and forests to feel more safe and comfortable.

“Our goal is for residents to feel



Shawn Alexander, Mesa fire division chief and fire marshal for the fire prevention division. (Mesa Fire and Medical Department)

comfortable living in these wildland urban interface areas,” Alexander said. “These areas do have higher fire risk, but that risk can also be managed ahead of time.”

For more information on wildfire safety in Mesa, visit <https://www.mesaaz.gov/Public-Safety/Mesa-Fire-Medical/Fire-Prevention/Fire-Code/Wildfire>.



Megan Fitzgerald-McGowan, Firewise USA program manager with the National Fire Protection Association. (Mesa Fire and Medical Department)

[mesaaz.gov/Public-Safety/Mesa-Fire-Medical/Fire-Prevention/Fire-Code/Wildfire](https://www.mesaaz.gov/Public-Safety/Mesa-Fire-Medical/Fire-Prevention/Fire-Code/Wildfire).

For general information on Firewise USA, visit <https://www.nfpa.org/Education-and-Research/Wildfire/Firewise-USA>.



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INDEPENDENT

FROM THE COVER

Opioids

• From page 1

Maricopa County Public Health we're able to go out to businesses in the downtown Mesa area and provide Naloxone and Narcan education," Natalia Chimbo-Andrade, director of community education and outreach at Community Bridges Inc., said. "For those that are interested, we're able to leave them free boxes of Narcan provided by the Arizona Department of Health to create awareness in that downtown community area."

According to Carmen Batista from Maricopa County Public Health Services, this helps with the county's substance use prevention and response plan.

"One of our stronger evidence strategies is the use of Narcan or Naloxone and having this kind of education in the community," Batista said. "Having increased access to Narcan kits is really essential for improving the health of our community."

Downtown Mesa being a lively

and populated area was another factor for targeting businesses, according to Andrade.

"We're taking this approach and knowing this is kind of seen as a hot zone area," Andrade said. "Informing the business owners if they have heard of Narcan, and that it's good to keep on hand just in case they encounter someone that might need it."

For Batista, it helps to have multiple avenues of access to care in the Mesa community, especially when it comes to opioids.

"We're interested in increasing access to care and as part of that, we want to meet people where they are and not everyone is going to be connected to something like a school," Batista said. "To have business as a part of that in our communities is another way we can meet people where they are."

Andrade said that providing these resources and training for business employees could potentially save a life.

"Research shows that individuals



Natalia Chimbo-Andrade, director of community education and outreach at Community Bridges Inc. (David Leibowitz)

who are struggling with substance use disorder or even in a case of an overdose they take place in a private residence or a public place like a public bathroom," Andrade said. "It's



Carmen Batista, Division Administrator at Maricopa County Public Health. (Maricopa County Public Health)

bringing awareness that it's important to have it on hand. We hope that nobody has to use it, but if they're in a situation they do, they feel more confident and prepared to use it."

NARCAN KITS, TRAINING OFFERED

While naloxone is available without a prescription at local pharmacies, Community Bridges Inc.'s prevention team has taken this availability to a new level by offering Narcan distribution and training to organizations and businesses at no cost.

For training inquiries or to request Narcan kits — Narcan is a nasal spray designed to reverse opioid overdoses quickly — contact the community education team at communityeducation@cbridges.com.

Source: Community Bridges Inc.

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.

FROM THE COVER

Padel

• From page 1

as pickleball was more popular.

Acevedo sensed a business opportunity with the lack of padel courts in Arizona.

“We started doing research to understand if we want to open a club. We want it to be built by racquet sport players and padel players and the local community. So we started asking friends who play racquet sports what they were looking for in a club.” Acevedo said. “That’s where I met Carlos. Carlos was a padel coach back in Mexico and managed some clubs down there.”

Pereyra brought with him management and business experience from his time as a padel coach to help with the club’s development.

Valdez said he believes the differences between padel and pickleball can make the former successful.

“Padel is played on padels in an enclosed court with glass, which is almost like squash, which makes rallies more strategic and makes games a bit longer,” Valdez said. “The racquet is solid, it has no strings and the scoring is just like tennis. Padel is more tactical and pickleball is more reaction-based.”

Valdez, a former WBC super featherweight champion and WBO featherweight champion, has a deep



The interior of the upcoming Padel Pals location. (Armando Acevedo)



Padel Pals co-founder and professional boxer Oscar Valdez. (Armando Acevedo)

athletic background that extends beyond boxing. He’s 34 now and starting to think about business ventures beyond boxing.



Padel Pals co-founder Carlos Pereyra. (Armando Acevedo)

Already being friends with Acevedo, this was a business plan Valdez could fully get behind.

“From 30 to 35 is about that age



Padel Pals CEO Armando Acevedo. (Armando Acevedo)



Aaron Norwood, real estate partner from LevRose. (LevRose)

where boxers start retiring. I still feel like there’s a couple of years in me but

• See **Padel** on page 17



INDEPENDENT

Celebrating & Connecting Our Communities

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MESA

OPINION

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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.

Your Opinion

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.

Fix the lights out along Loop 202 in southeast Mesa

I was wondering why there is no comments section in the Mesa Independent. It would be useful to be able to ask a few questions or suggest coverage.

For example, it might be of interest to folks in Mesa to have an explanation of the strategy for erecting hundreds of commercial buildings all around the Mesa airport and beyond; and who finances them. Most appear to be empty, while construction continues.

One other issue is the lighting along the 202 from Power to Guadalupe — hundreds of lights are out at night it seems, and have been for years. While this is a DOT issue, the city of Mesa should at least have some concerns.

Here are some comments about stories happening in your area:

LIQUOR LICENSE SOUGHT FOR THE SALTED KNOT IN MESA

"Getting any license in this state seems to take an eternity. Good luck!." — **Helena Marie** via Nextdoor comment

3 MESA MASONIC LODGES DONATE \$1K TO FAMILY OF FALLEN APACHE JUNCTION POLICE OFFICER

"That's beautiful." — **Lorraine Carroll** via Nextdoor comment

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.

Just a few suggestions.

L. E. Murr
Mesa

Editor's note: Thank you for the comments. Because of the smaller size of the June 2025 newspaper, the opinions page was removed.

Valley development, water use concerns reader

I see articles on the news about Arizona's water supply, but I also see ads for the development in Mesa called

SPEAK UP

"So lovely and heartwarming to see the community coming together. Thank you." — **Veronica Aragon** via Nextdoor comment

MESA COUNCIL TO VOTE ON CONTRACT FOR FIRE DEPARTMENT BREATHING EQUIPMENT

"It's imperative, what would concern me more is whose family member gets the contract in the high probability of kickbacks." — **Thomas G.** via Nextdoor comment

"Then maybe you should go to the meeting." — **Elissa Wolf** via Nextdoor comment

Golfland Sunsplash, where there are several slides and a huge manmade lake where you can surf.

In my opinion, the politicians do not care as long as the development brings in money. We live in a desert, not a land that gets rain almost all year round. I wonder how many gallons of water are wasted just in evaporation?

Now the politicians have approved the development of the gigantic resort VAI, just south of the Cardinals stadium, and there will be a gigantic lake and water features.

Not to mention the huge housing developments going on across the Phoenix Valley. Wake up politicians; maybe they will when a gallon of water is more expensive than a gallon of gas! Sad, greedy world we live in today.

Jerry Cowdrey
Sun City

MESA COUNCIL APPROVES CONTRACT FOR ANTI-BIRD NETTING AT MESA PD SUBSTATION

"Not for it." — **Janette Boyd** via Nextdoor comment

"Why? What's the point of it?" **Lauren C.** via Nextdoor comment

SERIAL SHOOTERS REMEMBERED 20 YEARS LATER

"Keep them incarcerated!" — **Pj Peterson** via Nextdoor comment

"20 years ago? Felt like that time was last week." — **Cindy S.** via Nextdoor comment

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EDUCATION

Reading

• From page 8

1,000 points put a paint splotch on said wall with their name on it.

“Pretty much everything colors your world, right?” Jupitus said. “You read something or you listen to something. Whatever your experience is, it makes your world a little bit more colorful. So that’s what we’re trying to emphasize.”

Since the Maricopa County Library District is funded through a special tax connected to property taxes, any resources provided would go out to all library systems in the county that are connected to the district. This would include the Maricopa County Reads program. However, a united community of readers across the whole of Maricopa County only further helps the program shine.



Mesa Public Library Marketing Specialist Sarah Lipich. (City of Mesa)

“Having a unified program where we’re all behind the same message is gonna make for a more successful program,” Mears said. “We’re gonna get more participants and more engagement when we’re all working together toward the same goal.”



Tempe Public Library Director Jessica Jupitus. (City of Tempe)

Overall, Jupitus hopes that people can find or rediscover their joy for reading as a result of this program.

“I hope people find that they discover something that they love that they never would have known, and that they connect with their commu-



Maricopa County Library District Communications Advisor Samantha Mears. (Maricopa County)

nity,” Jupitus said. “They find each other, or they find themselves, or they find it through the library.”

For information on the program, visit <https://maricopacountyreads.org/>.

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City's 2024 water quality consumer confidence report available

How well do you know your H₂O? Learn about the quality of Mesa drinking water by reading the new city of Mesa Water Quality Consumer Confidence report.

It is at <https://www.mesaaz.gov/ccr>

For over 100 years, the city of Mesa has been committed to providing its customers with water that meets more than 100 state and federal drinking water standards. The new report reflects testing performed in 2024 and highlights water quality,

sources, treatment, testing and monitoring, according to a release.

"Our priority is to provide Mesa residents and businesses with a safe and dependable supply of drinking water," Water Resources Department Director Chris Hassert said in the release. "The city invests millions of dollars in water infrastructure and has inspectors, analysts, technicians, engineers and water treatment specialists who work diligently so you can be confident about your drinking water."

FROM THE COVER

Padel

• From page 12

you never know with how dangerous combat sports are," Valdez said. "We want to leave the sport healthy and enter into business models."

Padel was invented in Mexico. However, its popularity may be crossing into the United States, especially in a border state like Arizona.

"Padel was created in Mexico and developed in Argentina and Spain," Pereyra said. "(Armando) saw the opportunity to bring to the Valley the fastest growing sport in the world."

Downtown Mesa seemed like the ideal spot for the business because of its rapid development and proximity to the East Valley.

"The East Valley was really the target market, and this location is good for residents of East Mesa and Eastmark, which is a huge area of growth nearby," LevRose real estate partner Bryn Norwood said. "It's nearby Gilbert and not far from Chandler and

Tempe even with freeway access."

Aaron Norwood added the nearby area's income and education demographics made the location a great pick as well.

"The demographics out by Mesa Gateway Airport are really strong," Norwood said. "The amount of households in the area as well as the income demographics and education level out there. You're dealing with people with a little more free time."

Acevedo said he hopes Padel Pals will be able to open sometime this fall. They haven't ruled out the possibility of expanding beyond Mesa.

"We're aiming to open by the end of August or early September, and we are working with the city of Mesa and waiting on their approval so we can start building," Acevedo said. "... If we are sure that this is going to be a success, our plan is to create a network of clubs around the valley."

For information, visit <https://padel-pals.com/>.



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DEVELOPMENT

Soda shop, car wash planned at Guadalupe, Power roads

By Richard H. Dyer
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

A substantial conformance improvement permit recently was approved to allow deviations from certain development standards to allow for a restaurant with drive-thru and a car wash at Guadalupe and Power roads in Mesa.

The Mesa Board of Adjustment voted 5-0 June 4 as part of a consent agenda with other items to approve the permit along with a special-use permit to expand a nonconforming structure and modification of a special-use permit for the car wash at the 1.7-acre development. Boardmembers Nicole Lynam and Gerson Barrera were absent.

- See **Soda Shop** on page 20



The gas station/auto repair facility will be reimagined into a soda shop drive-thru. (City of Mesa)

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FOR THE FIGHT



3 Mesa masonic lodges donate \$1K to family of fallen Apache Junction police officer

By Robert King

APACHE LODGE NO. 69 IN MESA

Three Masonic lodges rallied together to support a community cause by collecting donations totaling \$1,000 for aiding the family of a fallen police officer.

Officer Gabriel Facio of the Apache Junction Police Department passed away on June 8 from wounds received during a shootout with a suspect in Apache Junction.

The three lodges, Oriental No. 20, Apache No. 69 and Camelback No. 75 called for donations and the brethren generously gave to the cause to assist the family of Officer Facio, a three-year veteran of the Apache Junction Police Department.

The donations were presented July 1 to the AJPD to be given to the family of Officer Facio.



• See **Donation** on page 20

From left are Brother Paul Sweitek, Worshipful Master Mark Geyer, Worshipful Master Norman Petersen, Police Chief Michael Pooley, Worshipful Master Robert King, Police Cmdr. Cindy Ewer, Police Cmdr. Joseph Prenze and Assistant Police Chief John John. (Apache Lodge No. 69)

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Donation

• From page 19

Attending the presentation were, from the AJPD, Chief Michael Poole, Assistant Chief John John, Cmdr. Joseph Penze, Cmdr. Cindy Ewer; the

worshipful masters of the three lodges, Marc Geyer of Oriental No. 20, Robert King of Apache No. 69 and Norman Petersen of Camelback No. 75; and Brother Paul Sweitek.

In all three lodges, there are members who are or have been members of various police agencies. The call

to assist the family of a fallen fellow officer was met with an immediate outpouring.

The Masons are a benevolent fraternal organization. They believe in self-improvement, supporting each other, community service and charitable works. The best-known body

of Freemasonry is the Shriner's Children's Hospitals.

These three lodges meet in east Mesa and hold their regular meetings in the same building at 726 N. Center St. in Mesa.

DEVELOPMENT

Soda Shop

• From page 18

The permit reinstates a previous approval granted by the board of adjustment that expires in August 2025, Staff Planner Charlotte Bridges said during a study session prior to the meeting.

"So by reinstating this board of adjustment case, it would allow this proposed project to proceed with building permits and construction," she said.

Sean Lake of Pew & Lake PLC is

the applicant. DR ONE LLC is the owner.

The site is currently operating as a gas station and auto repair facility and car wash, according to a written project narrative from Lake.

"However, with approval, the gas station/auto repair facility will be reimagined into a soda shop drive-thru. Additionally, the thriving car wash will be upgraded to the newest technology as an accessory use to the primary business," it states. "The proposed soda shop building will have an open floor plan including an indoor dining area. The drive-thru lane is

12 feet wide with 81.7 feet of order stacking and 100 feet of order to window stacking. Two menu boards will be located along the drive-thru."

The seven-member Board of Adjustment conducts public meetings to hear and decide requests for variances, special-use permits and interpretations of the city of Mesa zoning ordinance and sign code. Members are appointed for staggered terms of three years, according to the city's website.

Richard H. Dyer can be reached at rdyer@iniusa.org, or on X @rhdyer. To voice your opinion on this story, connect with us at AzOpinions@iniusa.org.



The permit reinstates a previous approval granted by the board of adjustment that expires in August 2025 for the property at Guadalupe and Power roads in Mesa. (City of Mesa)

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COUNTY/STATE



A picture of horses in the Salt River. Groups are vying to win a state contract to help oversee the horses. (Jenny Clark)

Groups spar over who should care for Salt River horses

By Brent Ruffner
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

A lack of transparency and not getting everyone's input are two reasons why the Salt River horses need to have a different group care for the animals than the present Salt River Wild Horse Management Group, according to Fountain Hills resident John Mack.

Mack — who moved to the Valley in 2017 — found out about the Salt River horses while kayaking and fell in love with the majestic animals.

"I was entranced," Mack said.

The horses reside on land which "is

about 20,000 acres in size and encompasses the Goldfield and Bulldog areas on both sides of the lower Salt River within the Mesa Ranger District of the "Tonto National" Forest, according to the Arizona Department of Agriculture.

Now, Mack is part of the Wild Horse Transition Team — a group vying to win a state contract to help oversee the horses. The group would be in charge of helping out from anything from a break in nearby fencing to assisting a hurt horse get veterinarian care, he said.

• See **Horses** on page 25



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THINGS TO DO

JULY 20

Artist talk with Lily Reeves

The artist will be speaking about her inspiration, past work and new pieces in the exhibition "Fire to Form" in July at Mesa Arts Center. A Q&A and gallery walk-through will follow. Refreshments will be provided. 1-2 p.m.



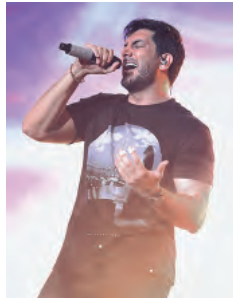
Dobson Lecture Hall at MAC, 1 E. Main St.

<https://mesaartscenter.com/index.php/events/artist-talk-with-lily-reeves>

AUG. 2

Farzad Farzin

The Iranian superstar returns to Arizona for a night of music and emotion. With a career spanning over two decades, he has captivated audiences with his voice, poetic lyrics and a signature sound that fuses classical Persian influences with modern Pop. Tickets start at \$70.50 8:30 p.m.



Ikeda Theater at Mesa Arts Center, 1 E. Main St.

<https://mesaartscenter.com>

AUG. 10

Roman coin prep

Activity for adults and children 10 and older who are eager to preserve history and these ancient artifacts. Each participant will receive four uncleaned Roman coins, discovered throughout the Mediterranean and dating back 1,800 years. 1 p.m.



Tyrannostorus, 1816 W. Baseline Road in Mesa.

<https://tyrannostorus.com/pages/classes>

Boyce Thompson Arboretum lowers admission prices through August

Summer weather has arrived and Boyce Thompson Arboretum is ready to welcome guests with seasonal pricing, adjusted hours and a changing showcase of desert blooms and wildlife.

The arboretum is at 37615 E. Arboretum Way near the town of Superior.

From June through August, admission for adults is \$16 — a savings of \$8.95 off the regular price of \$24.95. To ensure the comfort and safety of visitors and staff, the arboretum will be open from 6 a.m. to noon throughout the summer and will be closed on Tuesdays during these months, according to a release.

"We have plenty of shaded trails and there are rangers and other staff on site walking around to answer questions," Kim Gray, Executive director of the arboretum, said in the release. "Whether you're hiking, birding, or just enjoying the garden's quiet beauty, early morning is a magical time to experience the desert."

The arboretum is a destination for birdwatching, with frequent sightings of yellow warblers, vermilion flycatchers, black-throated sparrows, Western tanagers, and many others. Visitors may also encounter butterflies and coatimundis, especially in the cool of the morning.

What's blooming: A seasonal snapshot

Each month brings new beauty to the trails and gardens:

- See **Arboretum** on page 23



Visitors may encounter butterflies and coatimundis, especially in the cool of the morning. (Cameron Lee/Boyce Thompson Arboretum)

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THINGS TO DO

Arboretum

• From page 22

July:

- Crepe-myrtle (*Lagerstroemia indica*) – Children's Garden, Demonstration Garden
- Hedgehog Cactus (*Echinopsis* spp.) – Cactus Garden, Wallace, Hummingbird/Butterfly Garden
- Texas Sage (*Leucophyllum* spp.) – Blooms after rain; Children's Garden, Chihuahuan Trail
- Desert-willow (*Chilopsis linearis*) – Hummingbird/Butterfly Garden, Wallace Rose Garden
- Sacred Datura (*Datura wrightii*) – Widespread in Wallace Garden and Aussie Desert
- Fishhook Barrel Cactus (*Ferocactus wislizeni*) – Cactus Garden, Wallace, Sonoran Upland
- Cardon Grande Cactus (*Echin-*

opsis terscheckii) – Cactus Garden, South American Loops

August:

- Crepe-myrtle (*Lagerstroemia indica*) – Children's Garden, Demonstration Garden
- Hedgehog Cactus (*Echinopsis* spp.) – Hummingbird/Butterfly Garden, Cactus Garden, Wallace
- Texas Sage (*Leucophyllum* spp.) – Blooms after rain; Children's Garden, Chihuahuan Trail
- Desert-willow (*Chilopsis linearis*) – Hummingbird/Butterfly Garden, Wallace Rose Garden
- Sea Squill (*Drimia maritima*) – Canyon Entrance, Demonstration Garden
- Sacred Datura (*Datura wrightii*) – Widespread: Wallace and Aussie Gardens
- Cardon Grande Cactus (*Echinopsis terscheckii*) – Cactus Garden, South American Loops

With shaded trails, expert staff on hand, and remarkable plant and wildlife displays, Boyce Thompson Arboretum provides a cool and captivating escape from the heat.

For information — including details on upcoming events, memberships and conservation initiatives — go to www.btarboretum.org, call 520-689-2723, or connect with the Arboretum on Facebook, Instagram, or X (formerly Twitter).

Boyce Thompson Arboretum is Arizona's oldest and largest botanical garden. Founded in 1924 by mining magnate Col. William Boyce Thompson, the Arboretum spans 372 acres, featuring nearly 5 miles of trails, 135 acres of cultivated gardens, and more than 20,000 desert plants from regions around the world, including North and South America, Africa, the Middle East, Asia, and Australia. For information, go to www.btarboretum.org.



Each month brings new beauty to the trails and gardens. (Boyce Thompson Arboretum)

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DEVELOPMENT

6-week 'Sanctum of Horror' haunted house venue planned

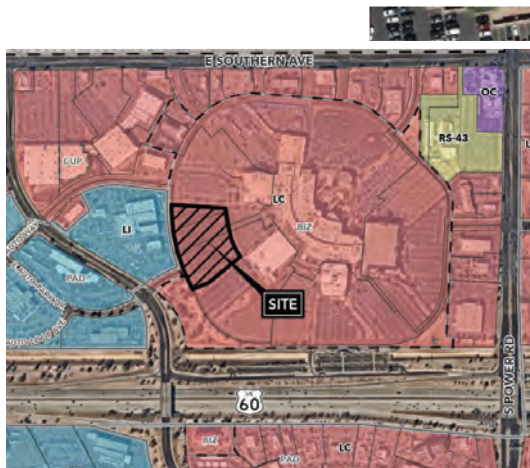
By Richard H. Dyer
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

A five-year permit recently was approved for the Sanctum of Horror temporary entertainment venue to exceed the maximum number of days allowed for a special event in Mesa.

The Mesa Board of Adjustment voted 5-0 June 4 as part of a consent agenda with other items to approve a special-use permit for the 6-acre site at Superstition Springs Center, 6555 E. Southern Ave. Boardmembers Nicole Lynam and Gerson Barrera were absent.

The Mesa zoning ordinance limits a special event to a maximum of four days but the maximum number

- See **Haunted House** on page 25



Construction will begin in August and the event is September through Nov. 1. The structures will be removed by mid-November. (City of Mesa)



From August to November, Sanctum of Horror will be the only event in the parking lot area of Superstition Springs Center. (City of Mesa)



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COUNTY/STATE

Horses

• From page 21

One current problem is there's not enough food for the current herd of 282 horses, Mack said.

In April, the cooperative extension at the UA College of Agricultural and Life Sciences conducted a vegetation study and found forage production levels "are insufficient to sustain the existing horse population without supplemental" feeding, the study found.

Cooperative extension looked at 10 sites where some spots with vegetation are fenced off and don't allow the horses access.

In addition, continuous grazing isn't good for nearby plant life in the area, according to the study.

"The effects of continuous grazing on perennial vegetation are likely to influence plant vigor adversely, particularly under the ongoing (drought conditions) — which may compound the stress already experi-

enced by these plants," it states in the study.

Care for the Salt River horses goes beyond available vegetation.

Mack said the current management group — the Salt River Wild Horse Management Group which works with Arizona Department of Agriculture — doesn't have a well-grounded approach in areas such as transparency and accountability.

But Simone Netherlands — president of the Salt River Wild Horse Management Group — said her group is transparent with the public.

For example, the Salt River Wild Horse Management Group takes donations for food through its rescue program and general donations from the public, Netherlands said.

Through its general fund, the Salt River Wild Horse Management Group used funds to buy a 34-acre parcel of land in Prescott that will be used as a sanctuary for injured horses and horses that need to be removed from the Salt River area.

DEVELOPMENT

Haunted House

• From page 24

of days may be exceeded with the approval of a special-use permit.

Construction will begin in August and the event is September through Nov. 1. The structures will be removed by mid-November, Staff Planner Kwasi Abebrese said during a study session prior to the meeting.

"The proposed haunted house attraction is ... two open-air mazes totaling approximately 6,700 square feet," he said. "Generally they operate for a maximum of 20 days over a six-week period usually during the weekends."

Sanctum of Horror LLC is the applicant. East Mesa Mall LLC is the owner.

From August to November,

Sanctum of Horror will be the only event in the parking lot area of Superstition Springs Center, according to a written project narrative.

"We are an exciting and unique form of entertainment that brings people from all around the Valley and even from out of state. We provide additional business and publicity to Superstition Springs Center during the Halloween season," it states.

The seven-member Board of Adjustment conducts public meetings to hear and decide requests for variances, special-use permits and interpretations of the city of Mesa zoning ordinance and sign code. Members are appointed for staggered terms of three years, according to the city's website.

Richard H. Dyer can be reached at rdyer@iniusa.org, or on X @rhdyer. To voice your opinion on this story, connect with us at [AzOpinions@iniusa.org](https://www.azopinions.com).

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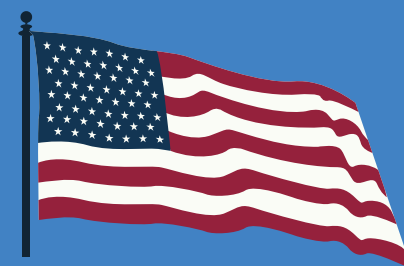
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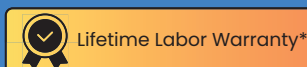
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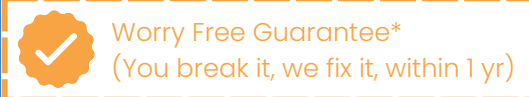


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