

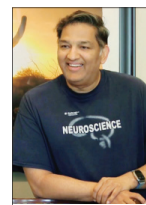


COMMUNITY

New plans for S.
Chandler property; 4



CHANDLER INDEPENDENT



BUSINESS

Research office
doesn't bill patients; 6

October 2025

Volume 4 Issue 3

Your Nonpartisan Community Newspaper • YourValley.net

City takes more steps toward building crime lab

By Jason W. Brooks
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

With a lengthy discussion, mostly about terms and the timeline and procurement and pre-construction items, the Chandler City Council took steps this week toward one of its larger municipal building projects it's taken on since the COVID-19 pandemic ended.

Sept. 15, council heard presentations and asked questions of Chandler Police Department staff and a division manager about construction of what the city calls its new "Forensic Services Facility," or crime lab.

Council approved a contract Sept. 18 with Willmeng Construction for \$431,000 as its "construction manager at risk" to build the lab.

Dan Haskins, the city's capital projects division manager, explained that a construction manager at risk, or CMAR, contract is where the city has chosen the contractor for the job, with exact costs of the entire project still to be calculated and finalized.

• See **Crime Lab** on page 12

What is Diwali?



Several East Valley Diwali events slated

By Jason W. Brooks
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

Not everyone knows what Diwali is all about.

That's OK with Kriti Agarwal, who's willing to teach a little about the annual celebration.

Agarwal, born in India and a longtime Chandler resident and dance studio owner, says Diwali symbolizes one of the more common spiritual commemorations: the victory of good over evil.

Diwali or "Dipawali" means "Festival of Lights." Diwali is the five- or six-day Hindu festival of lights, with variations celebrated in other Indian religions, like Jainism and Sikhism, according to the organization Step-Up Religion.

"It's an important tradition in my family," Agarwal said. "It involves prayer, feasting, fireworks, communi-

• See **Diwali** on page 9

Kyrene de la Paloma Elementary School students perform at a 2022 Diwali celebration. The Hindu holiday is now recognized internationally, including in Chandler, where there are community events and codified fireworks-permitted dates on file. (Edmundo Mendez, Jr./City of Chandler)

RENOVATE
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**YOUR GATE NEED
AN UPDATE?**

LOCAL FAMILY OWNED & OPERATED

PAGE 7

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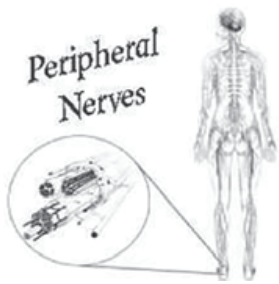


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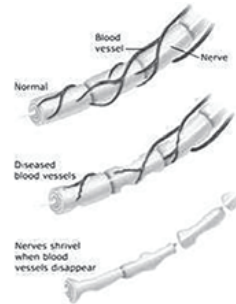
PERIPHERAL NEUROPATHY AND CHRONIC PAIN WARNING!

Mesa, AZ — The most common method your doctor will recommend to treat your chronic pain and/or neuropathy is with prescription drugs that may temporarily reduce your symptoms. These drugs have names such as Gabapentin, Lyrica, Cymbalta, and Neurontin, and are primarily antidepressant or anti-seizure drugs. These drugs may cause you to feel uncomfortable and have a variety of

Chronic pain and/or peripheral neuropathy is a result of damage to the nerves often causing weakness, pain, numbness, tingling, and the most debilitating balance problems. This damage is commonly caused by a hands and feet which causes the nerves to begin to degenerate due to lack of nutrient flow.



As you can see in Figure 2, as the blood vessels that surround the nerves become diseased they shrivel up which causes the nerves to not get the nutrients to continue to survive. When these nerves begin to "die" they cause you to have balance problems, pain, numbness, tingling, burning, and many additional symptoms. The main problem is that your doctor has told you



to just live with the problem or try the drugs which you don't like taking because they make you feel uncomfortable. There is now a facility right here in Mesa that offers you hope without taking those endless drugs with serious side effects.

(See the special neuropathy severity examination at the end of this article) neuropathy three factors must be determined.

- 1) What is the underlying cause?
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The amount of treatment needed to allow the nerves to fully recover varies from person to person and can only be determined after a detailed neurological and vascular evaluation. As long as you have not sustained at least 95% nerve damage there is hope!

Aspen Medical will do a chronic pain and neuropathy severity examination to determine the extent of the nerve damage as a public service to you and/or your family and friends. This neuropathy/pain severity examination will consist of a detailed sensory evaluation, extensive peripheral vascular testing, and a detailed analysis of the findings of your neuropathy.



Aspen Medical will be offering this chronic pain and neuropathy severity examination from now until November 30, 2025. Call 480-796-1136 to make an appointment to determine if your chronic pain and peripheral neuropathy can be successfully treated.

Due to our busy office schedule, we are limiting this FREE consultation to the first 15 callers. YOU DO NOT HAVE TO SUFFER ANOTHER MINUTE, CALL. Call 480-796-1136 ... NOW!

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ON YOURVALLEY.NET

Friends of Library announce annual gift of \$100K

The Friends of Chandler Public Library has announced its approved investment of \$100,000 to support the Chandler Public Library for the rest of fiscal year 2026.

Community members can support the Friends of Chandler Public Library by purchasing used books at the Downtown or Sunset branches. Online donations are accepted year-round by clicking here: tinyurl.com/3v96f5yf

For information about the Friends of Chandler Public Library or programs available at the Chandler Public Library, call 480-782-2800 or click here: tinyurl.com/u9p5xdxu

'Newest Americans' exhibit explores citizenship, immigration

A temporary exhibit at the Chandler Museum captures experiences of immigrants from 23 countries.

"The Newest Americans" is on view through Jan. 18, 2026, at Chandler Museum, 300 S. Chandler Village Drive.

The hours are Tuesday-Saturday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Sunday 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.; closed Mondays. There's no charge for Chandler Museum admission.

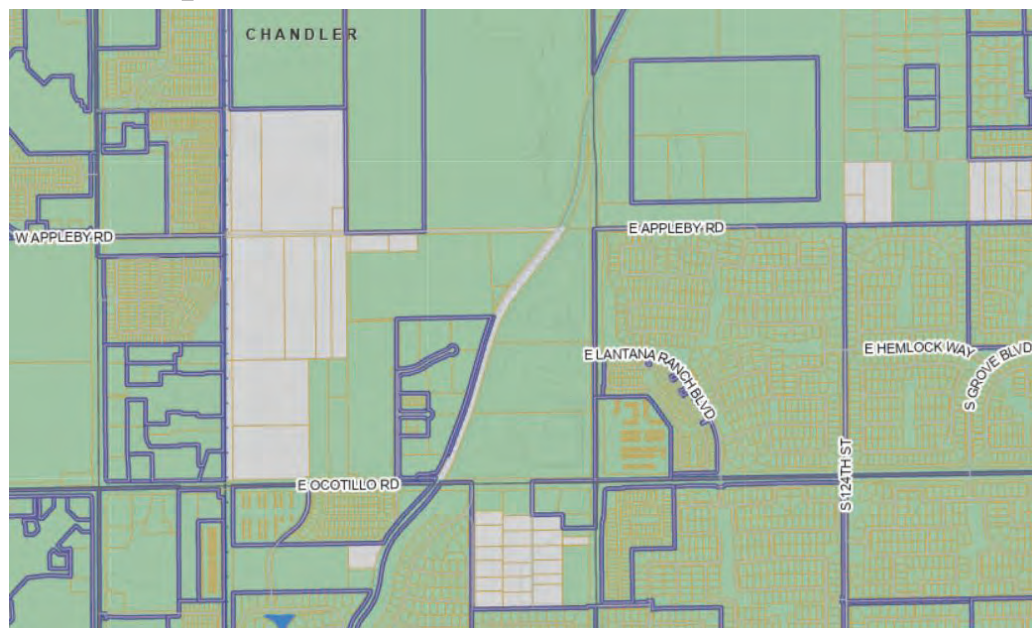
Find more information on the exhibitions and programming by going to tinyurl.com/yxj9ja97 or calling 480-782-2717.

South Chandler Dominion parcels the subject of pre-annex contract

By Jason W. Brooks
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

Two south Chandler land parcels that have been the source of passionate public discussions over the past three years are now one step closer to being officially within city limits. A group calling itself Chandler Acquisition I LLC received approval Sept. 18 for a pre-annexation development agreement with the city. The Chandler City Council, by approving the agreement, clears the way for further annexation and industrial development permitting steps. Dominion Properties tried

• See **Dominium** on page 26



This online map shows the two Maricopa County island parcels — sitting just above the “E” in E. Ocotillo Road — for which a developer and the city of Chandler negotiated a pre-annexation agreement. The Chandler City Council approved the agreement Sept. 18 after developer Dominion applied with the county for industrial-only use of the nearly-25-acre site. (Courtesy of Maricopa County)

FAMILY CAMPAIGN

Chandler initiates \$190K ‘young families’ marketing campaign

By Jason W. Brooks
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

The average age of Chandler residents is increasing — faster than some city and school district officials would like.

Chandler's City Council approving an intergovernmental agreement Sept. 18 intended to help minimize or reverse that trend.

Council approved a contract with the Chandler, Kyrene, Mesa and Tempe Union school districts, whom it convinced to help pay for what the city calls the Young Families and Young Professionals Community

Attraction Campaign. Each of those district's governing boards voted to hand over \$10,000 for the marketing campaign, which is intended to help attract young families and young professionals to live within Chandler's city limits.

The city will use grant funds from the Chandler Industrial Development Authority to cover a \$150,000 portion of the cost of the campaign.

A staff report states demographic concerns related to the city of Chandler were presented to the Council during a study session presentation in August 2024, along with a discussion

that took place during council's one-day retreat in late April. The Chandler Unified Governing Board has also received multiple presentations in the past few years from a demographer, analyzing several drivers behind plummeting public school enrollment in the East Valley.

Chandler Economic Development director Micah Miranda and his division will lead communication with marketing, though he said dialogue with the four school districts about strategy will be ongoing.

• See **Campaign** on page 24

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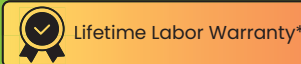
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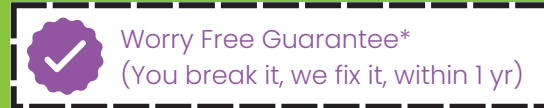
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NEWS IN BRIEF



The city of Chandler ranked high nationally in a study of economic growth and other municipal metrics — though not quite as high as some neighboring jurisdictions. (Courtesy of city of Chandler)

City ranks high in economic growth study

A study commissioned by CoworkingCafe highlighted the U.S. cities that experienced the most economic growth in recent years, split into categories of population size: large, mid-sized, and small.

Chandler took the fifth spot overall among mid-sized cities. The 13% growth in educational attainment and the 14% more housing units added both place Chandler fourth in mid-sized for these metrics.

The city also had a drop of 24% in crime from 2019-23, ranking fifth for this metric,

CoworkingCafe states it crunched the latest data from 2019 through 2023 across 11 key metrics, including GDP growth, job gains, housing expansion, export strength and infrastructure buildout.

Consulting firm leases almost 5K square feet

An East Valley consulting firm that assists companies in implementing and managing automated workflow platforms has leased office space in Chandler to keep up with its rapid growth since launching in

• See **Business** on page 28

Clinic's studies don't require money, insurance

By Jason W. Brooks
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

In August 2024, MD First Research Chandler earned a dementia-friendly business designation.

That was just one of many milestones and accolades for the Chandler clinic where dozens of medical studies have taken place.

The clinic opened officially in 2016 and has been at its current 3190 S. Gilbert Road, Suite 5 location since 2017, according to Director Giulia Andrews.

And according to Penny Kalschur, MD First Research Chandler's clinical research marketing director, the significant changes planned or expected with Medicare and Medicaid in the years ahead won't affect their studies or clients.

"All study-related medical exams, lab tests, and treatments are covered by the study sponsor, so participants do not need insurance or pay out of pocket for these services," Kalschur said. "Assistance with travel may also be provided to help make participation accessible."



Dr. Hemant K. Pandey, M.D., right, assesses a patient at MD First Research Chandler. Qualifying participants for studies offered at the clinic don't require payments, co-payments or insurance. (Courtesy of MD First Research Chandler)

The clinic's led by Dr. Hemant K. Pandey, M.D., a board-certified neurologist, dementia, and sleep specialist.

In affiliation with the Brain and Spine Center and Nuronz, MD First Research specializes in clinical trials for conditions such as dementia, di-

abetes, migraines, and neuropathy.

Kalschur said the team brings more than 20 years of experience in treating neurological conditions and chronic illnesses.

"We are currently conducting memory screenings in the office that includes a complimentary biomarker blood plasma test that is 95% accurate in identifying Alzheimer's disease, for those that qualify," Kalschur said. This groundbreaking test represents a significant advancement in early detection and care strategies."

Kalschur said MD First has also partnered with Amydis for an eye study related to Alzheimer's disease and is actively working to expand our research portfolio, with plans to launch new trials addressing additional conditions soon.

The clinic is helping to shape the future of patient care through research, she said.

Pandey, via Kalschur as spokesperson, said a major concern for the future is the rapid growth of the de-

• See **MD First** on page 22

CELEBRATION

Cash and praise for coach at gym's 30th celebration

By Jason W. Brooks
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

Aspire Kids Sports Center celebrated its 30th birthday with a bang — and a thump, and then another bang.

Those bangs and thumps are the sound of heavy mats being moved around Aspire's west Chandler facility, or someone landing on one.

The Sept. 13 activity, quite heavy for a Saturday at the gym, was part of the business's 30th anniversary, having been in the same specially con-



Students perform on balance beams during the Aspire Kids Sports Center's 30th birthday celebration Sept. 13 in west Chandler. (Independent Newsmedia/Jason W. Brooks)

• See **Gym** on page 28

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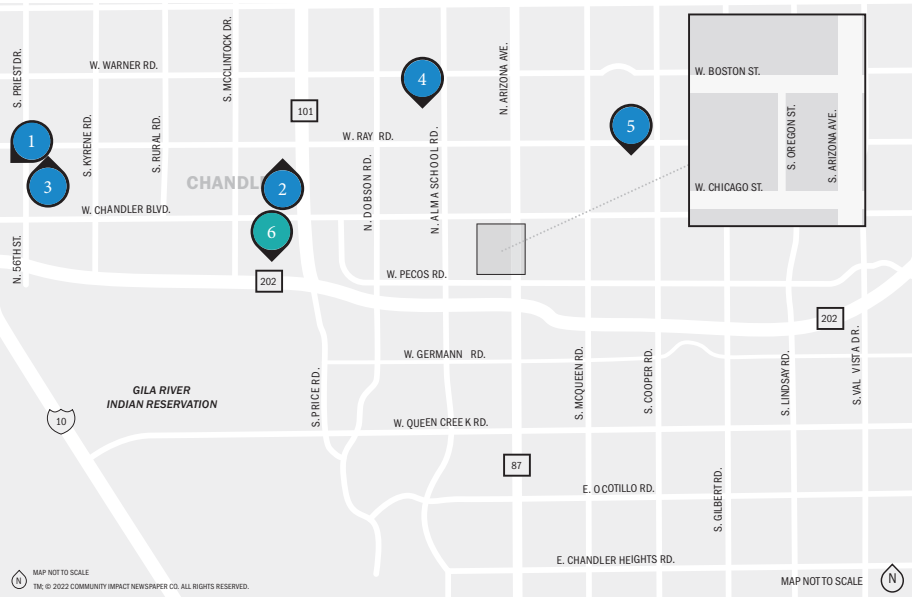


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BUSINESS MOVES



Compiled by Jason Brooks
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

OPENINGS

1 J. Alexander's starts hiring Monday, Sept. 15 for its first Arizona steak and seafood restaurant, set to open in west Chandler in mid-November, according to a news release. The chain, which has more than three dozen locations in various states, is taking over the former Buca di Beppo building at 7111 W. Ray Road, just east of I-10, across from Lowe's and In-N-Out Burger. J. Alexander's will operate seven days a week, offering a menu of hand-cut steaks, signature salads and sandwiches, handcrafted cocktails and an extensive wine list, the release states. Interested job applicants can apply for a J. Alexander's position in person at a nearby hotel: Sonesta Select Phoenix, 920 N. 54th St. Applications will be accepted Mondays through Fridays, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., Saturdays, 9 a.m. to noon. Visit jobs.jalexanders.com to learn more.

2 Keenstack is a consulting firm

that assists companies in implementing and managing automated workflow platforms has leased office space in Chandler to keep up with its rapid growth since launching in January. It has leased 4,650 square feet of office space at The Park at SanTan, 3075 W. Ray Road, where a five-story building looms over the Price frontage road along Loop 101. It was slated to start occupying space in September. KeenStack is now hiring for ServiceNow account executives, architects, business analysts and developers, it states. The website is keenstack.com.

3 Floor America held a ribbon-cutting opening ceremony in late September for its new 6909 W. Ray Road, No. 5 location in west Chandler, at 56th Street. The showroom includes many samples of carpeting, vinyl flooring and other types. Off-site services are available as well. Call 480-447-1801 or email flooringamericaofchandler@gmail.com to reach the store.



J. ALEXANDER'S



RISE UP BENEFITS

4 Rise Up Benefits is now open at 2160 N. Alma School Road, suite 102, north of Warner Road, in the Lenny's Burger, Malts & Fries shopping center, near Pep Boys. Viola Lucero, CLTC, is a licensed agent whose website, riseupbenefitsgroup.com, states she helps navigate the world of healthcare and employers. Call 480-300-5776 to find out more about Rise Up's services.

5 Spiced Up Smoothie Bar is open at 1909 E. Ray Rd, Suite 5, on the southwest corner of Cooper and Ray roads in a center anchored by CubeSmart Storage. The locally owned smoothie and juice shop uses herbs and spices and claims to combine new tastes with nutritious, filling shakes. It targets gym enthusiasts, foodies, and those who want an unexpectedly flavorful, refreshing smoothie. Favorites include the Espresso Cherry Bomb and Cayenne Papaya Craze. Reach the shop at 602-489-



KEENSTACK



SPICED UP SMOOTHIES



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3841 or through spicedupsmoothies.com.

NEW HIRES

6 Feringhee Modern Indian restaurant, in its effort to bring Indian fine dining to Arizona, has announced the promotion of long-time culinary talent, chef Vikas Rahna to head chef. A part of Feringhee's kitchen since its opening day, Rahna has worked alongside the founding team as sous chef, mastering the art of blending modern technique with Indian soul. Now, as Head Chef, he's bringing his creative vision in with a brand-new lunch menu. Launched this month, the menu includes special pricing. Feringhee's is at 3491 W. Frye Road, in the Target shopping center across from the Chandler Museum and the Fashion Center mall. Email info@feringhee.com or call 480-534-7178 to learn more.

FROM THE COVER

Diwali

• From page 1

ty gatherings and forgiveness. Diwali is celebrated by decorating homes with lamps and colorful lights, sharing special meals, exchanging gifts, and enjoying fireworks. Families sit together and pray for prosperity and happiness for everybody.”

In the East Valley, where there are many residents who practice Hindu faiths, Agarwal said, that will mostly take the form of feasts and dance performances.

And since Arizona and other U.S. states have altered their fireworks laws to accommodate Diwali, expect to hear some loud daytime bangs this month.

Agarwal said the growth of the religion, along with people moving from India across the world, have led to acceptance of the festival’s practice many places.

“Diwali is India’s biggest festival and is celebrated globally by over a billion people across faiths,” she said.

Agarwal said the acceptance and acknowledgment of world religious practices, including Diwali, can be seen across the U.S. and internationally. President Biden held a White House media event commemorating Diwali in 2024.

“Given that Asian American population increasing every year, the



Young people perform at a 2024 Diwali celebration. (Courtesy of city of Chandler)

cultural awareness and community engagement has elevated Diwali’s prominence,” Agarwal said.

Four U.S. states have made Diwali either a state or school holiday. Chandler Mayor Kevin Hartke mentions Diwali during City Council meetings each year; Phoenix Mayor Kate Gallego has already issued a “Diwali Week” proclamation.

In 2022, Arizona municipalities passed new measures acknowledging the state legislature had carved out some early-autumn Diwali-related dates for a revised holiday fireworks calendar.

“Fireworks signify getting rid of evil and starting afresh with new be-

ginnings,” Agarwal said.

The sale and use of permissible consumer fireworks are allowed in Chandler, thanks to an ordinance the Chandler City Council approved in late 2022.

Chandler’s ordinance allows the sale from two days before the first day of Diwali through the third day of the celebration each year. The use of such fireworks is only allowed from 8 a.m. to 11 p.m. on the second and third days of Diwali of each year.

In 2025, the five-day festival runs through Oct. 23, by consen-

• See **Diwali** on page 11



Priyanka Shah and Kriti Agarwal perform a traditional Diwali celebration dance. The Hindu holiday is now recognized internationally, including in Chandler, where there are community events and codified fireworks-permitted dates on file. (Courtesy of Clicks & Claps Photos)



Women perform a Diwali celebration dance. The Hindu holiday is now recognized internationally, including in Chandler, where there are community events and codified fireworks-permitted dates on file. (Courtesy of city of Chandler)



Autumn L.
3 reviews ★★★★★ 14 days ago

Took 00' 5-speed Golf into their shop for my clutch. Not only did they do a great job, they fixed so many other issues and mistakes that I didn't even mention!!! They communicate great and they are for sure all about the customer. I appreciate and trust these techs 100% with my baby now, especially after getting told by numerous shops no one will take my euro car, they do and they do magic.

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NEWS IN BRIEF



Students and staff helped Chandler contribute to major triumphs at an August international academic decathlon in China. Chaz Crismon, the Arizona academic pentathlon director, is at back left. Back right is Casteel High School volunteer Michelle Smith. Front and near center, to the right of student wearing dark pants, is Basha High and Accelerated Middle School teacher Joann Wuthrich. (Courtesy of Chandler USD)

Chandler students travel to China, help win titles

Seventeen students who attend Chandler Unified schools, competing with other Arizona students and against students from around the world, earned top honors at the first International Academic Decathlon during the World Youth Forum – Future Liberal Arts Leadership Summit 2025 in Macau, China in late August.

Teams were composed of standout academic decathletes and pentathletes from schools across the Metropolitan Phoenix area, including students from BASIS charter schools and CUSD.

One of the high school teams took first place, making it a world champion, with the other team placing fifth. The junior high eighth-grade team also won a world title, with the seventh-grade team placing second.

Chandler teacher among finalists for state award

A Chandler Unified teacher is among the five finalists for the Arizona Educational Foundation's Teacher of the Year award, to be

• See **Education** on page 30

Chandler school board member: Reduce ethnicity tracking

By Jason W. Brooks
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

One Chandler Unified School District board member questioned the use of ethnicity when collecting data on student achievement during a recent meeting.

The discussion came following a presentation of assessment data the district uses to measure student achievement during the Sept. 10 meeting.

Board member Kurt Rohrs said he would like to see the district move away from that.

"There seems to be — still — an obsession with ethnicity," Rohrs said. "And I'm not terribly convinced ethnicity is a good indicator of a kid's behavior or their performance. Every kid's different."

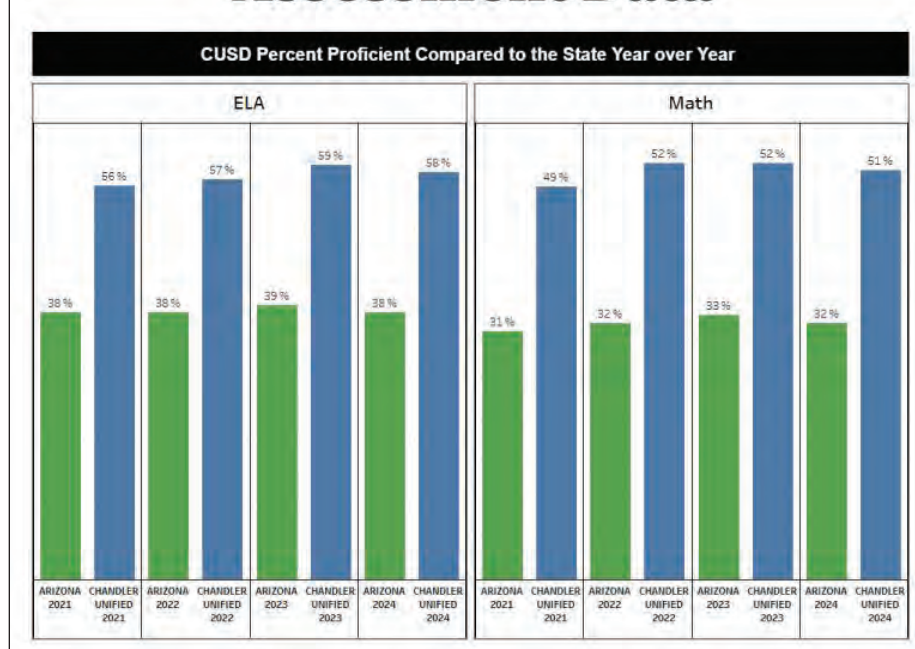
Rohrs said if there's a language ability problem, that will show up somewhere else besides in assessment scores.

• See **Assessment** on page 30



Students in Chandler Unified's Early Childhood CTE program, left, help host an April event. The Chandler Unified Governing Board approved two legal steps at its Sept. 10 meeting in its effort to prevent funding cuts to programs by the East Valley Institute of Technology. (Courtesy of Chandler USD)

Assessment Data



This graph, part of a Chandler Unified Governing Board study session packet, showing how CUSD students consistently have recently outperformed state averages in English and language arts, or ELA, and math. Other cohort and subgroup data in the presentation was not as positive. (Courtesy of Chandler USD)

SPECIAL COUNSEL

Chandler district preps for legal battle with tech-ed school

By Jason W. Brooks
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

The Chandler Unified School District has become one of eight East Valley school districts in Maricopa and Pinal counties to take legal steps to stop what some CUSD staff states are proposed East Valley Institute of Technology reductions.

The CUSD Governing Board, at its Sept. 10 meeting, voted 5-0 to hire the law firm of Osborn Maledon

P.A. as special counsel to the district for the "EVIT Satellite IGA." In a separate action, the board voted, 4-1, to "authorize legal action if needed regarding CTED funding statute and related EVIT IGA matters."

Board member Kurt Rohrs voted against the legal-action motion.

"I'm opposed to authorizing legal action at this time," Rohrs said. "This could get dragged out a lot

• See **Special Counsel** on page 30

FROM THE COVER

Diwali

• From page 9

sus of sources, though one can find many other five-day October-November spans online.

Agarwal said in Arizona, one can find public Diwali celebrations in communities as diverse as downtown Phoenix Paradise Valley. Tempe has held Diwali celebrations for the past five years, she said, while Chandler's is in at least its third year.

Agarwal said Diwali is probably one of the biggest, most important annual times in Hindu culture, comparable to the way many Americans regard Christmas.

"Many foresee Diwali becoming a more broadly celebrated part of the fall and win-

ter holiday season, joining the 'pantheon of holiday parties' that mainstream Americans are used to," Agarwal said.

Agarwal, who serves on the city of Chandler's Human Relations Commission, said like with many religions, she hopes Americans focus on the most positive, powerful messages from Diwali.

"Diwali is considered start of the Hindu financial year," Agarwal said. "Hindus worship Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth and prosperity. Diwali's core theme is the triumph of light over darkness — and knowledge over ignorance."

Several Valley restaurants that serve Indian cuisine will offer specials or host events.

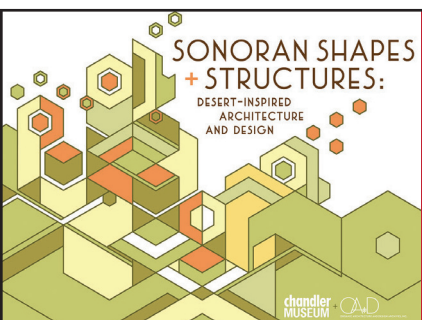
IF YOU GO

2025 Diwali event in Chandler

Saturday, Oct. 25
Diwali: Festival of Lights
10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.
Downtown Chandler Public Library, 22 S. Delaware St.
Free all-ages event with live music, dancing, and performances; stop by The Makery for free arts-and-crafts activities intended for all ages.



Kriti Agarwal shows a candle display while dressed for a traditional Diwali celebration. The Hindu holiday is now recognized internationally, including in Chandler, where there are community events and codified fireworks-permitted dates on file. (Courtesy of Kriti Agarwal)



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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

Crime Lab

• From page 1

He pointed out that “guaranteed maximum price preparation” is one of the steps called for in the CMAR contract.

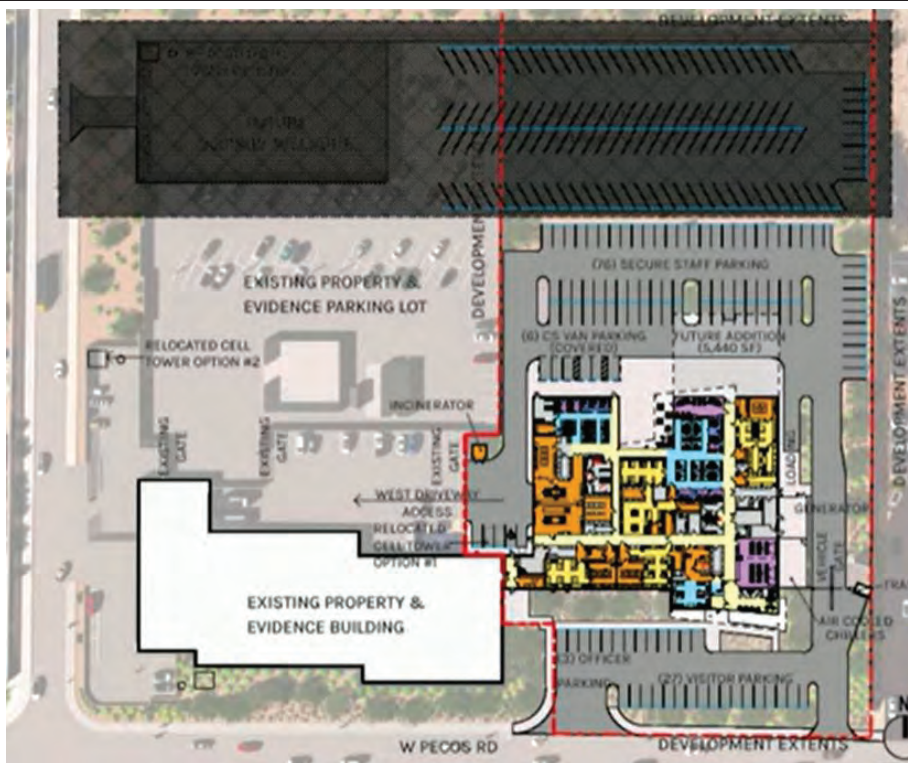
The city states, in staff reports, that it has \$55.6 million in 2021 bond funds earmarked for the project, with the about \$10 million remaining portion of the estimated construction cost to come from the city’s general fund.

Council member O.D. Harris asked about the final cost of the facility, to be built on city-owned Pecos Road property, adjacent to the Chandler Police’s evidence and property storage facility.

“I’m going to have a hard time voting for a \$60 million project without knowing the exact dollar amount,” Harris said.

Haskins explained state law prevents local agencies from talking about project cost with bidders on CMAR contracts, unless it’s the winning firm that’s been awarded a contract.

“If the cost comes in too high, we can go to the (second-place) bidder,” Haskins explained. “But it’s qualifications-based alone. The winner is the only one we talk dollars with. And we’re still early in the design phase, so we have some engineering estimates, but we’re not quite there



This diagram, presented at the Chandler City Council’s Sept. 15 study session, shows the Chandler Police Department property where the city plans to build a new “Forensic Sciences” crime lab on property it owns along Pecos Road. A construction management contract was discussed at the session. (Courtesy of city of Chandler)

yet on final design details and cost.”

In April, council approved a \$430,000 design contract for the new lab.

Haskins said the CMAR process is regimented and standardized. Mayor Kevin Hartke mentioned that a Mesquite Groves Park \$320,000 CMAR contract was also on the Sept. 15 study session agenda for what will be a multi-million-dollar, multi-phase

project.

In March, Harris and five other council members voted to approve a CMAR pre-construction services contract to the same firm, Willmeng Construction, for the first phase of planned A.J. Chandler Park renovations.

Haskins, in response to another Harris question, said the four firms that were interviewed for the con-

tract were Willmeng, Core, Okland and Mortenson. Caliente, Jacobson, M.J. Harris and Sun Eagle also bid, but weren’t interviewed.

The planned 30,000-square-foot new lab will address both capacity and technology constraints as it replaces the 5,500-square-foot, 26-year-old lab Chandler Police use now at their downtown station on Chicago Street.

The Chandler Police’s forensic services manager, Alicia Rosenberg, spoke at the study session about the need for the new facility.

She said the new lab will create more capacity for police to continue the 10-print analysis, DUI blood alcohol analysis, seized drug analysis and latent fingerprint services the department already provides. It will also allow Chandler to offer, for the first time, DNA, blood, drug, sex assault, computer forensics/digital and evidence analysis.

“The connection between the two buildings will allow for secure transfer of evidence,” Rosenberg said. “This will allow us to provide forensic services that we think are currently very important, and in the future, also taking some cases we currently must send to the state lab.”

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. Jason W. Brooks can be reached at jbrooks@iniusa.org.



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OPINION

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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.

Vote yes on Chandler's Proposition 410

I am a veteran and a lifelong member of this great community.

I grew up here, graduated from Chandler High School, raised a family, and built a successful business right here in our city.

I feel compelled to speak directly to you about an important matter that impacts the future of Chandler's leadership and governance.

This upcoming vote is not just about policy — it's about preserving the proven and effective way our citizens were heard for decades.

I urge you to Vote YES to clarify the language in our City Charter.

This structure isn't new. It has been successfully used by two of our past mayors and our current Mayor today.

It provides a clear pathway for experienced leadership, ensuring that those who seek to guide our city have firsthand knowledge of its operations, challenges, and opportunities.

These leaders didn't just show up — they earned their way through service, and that experience has served Chandler well.

Changing this structure would disrupt a system that has worked effectively for our community. It would strip away an important step in preparing future mayors to lead with wisdom, knowledge and continuity.

I've seen firsthand the positive outcomes of this model — as a resident, a business owner, and a proud supporter of responsible governance.

We must not allow anyone to distort or rewrite the intent of our charter for political convenience. Let's make sure anyone running for office does so on their own merit.

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.

Let's stand together for clarity, stability, and experienced leadership.

Vote YES on Proposition 410 to keep Chandler on the right track.

Joe Granado

CHANDLER

Editor's note: Joe Granado is the chair of the political action committee "Keep Chandler Term Limits."

Vote to approve both city of Chandler election propositions

The City Charter is essentially Chandler's "constitution." From time to time, it needs updates to address ambiguities or improve clarity so our community continues to function with transparency and fairness.

For these reasons, the City Council placed two important Charter amendments on the Nov. 4 ballot.

Proposition 410 rectifies newly created confusion over Council and Mayor terms by:

- Ensuring experienced Councilmembers who serve two terms are then eligible to run for Mayor, the historical practice for over sixty years. The last three persons to serve as Mayor all served two full terms on the Council and then were elected Mayor.

- Limiting Mayors or Councilmembers to the current two terms for those specific offices.

- Establishing a combined

• See **Commentary** on page 32

SPEAK UP

Here are some recent online comments about Chandler Independent items:

"MAN GETS 25 YEARS FOR SHOOTING AT CHANDLER POLICE":

"So he gets the right to live on taxpayers dollars for free .. 25 years. Really .. and the poor dogs in the shelters who have no one to adopt them .. get euthanized in days. What a joke."

— Evelyn Ulmer via story comment

"The problem, of course, is that he will be released from prison — probably before the end of his 25-year sentence. Unless he's rehabilitated, which is unlikely, he's going to present a danger to the public."

— Ronald Bates via story comment

"EAST VALLEY PLAYERS ON FIRST NATIVE QUALIFIER FOR BASEBALL NATIONALS":

"Congratulations to all of you."

— Elaine Giles via story comment

"REGISTER FOR CHANDLER'S CODE ENFORCEMENT RESIDENT ACADEMY":

"The annual snitch academy."

— NotoriousCHA via story comment

Vote on improvements in our community

Chandler will hold a Special Bond Election on Nov. 4

This election includes proposed bond funding for:

Parks & Recreation

Fire Department

Streets & Traffic

Police Department

The city projects NO increase to the property tax.

The estimated average tax rate for the proposed bond authorization is \$0.4795 per \$100 of assessed valuation. The new bonds are timed with retiring debt, which the city expects will keep the secondary property tax rate stable. These projects aim to improve daily life, ensure public safety and support Chandler's future growth.

Vote sobre los mejoramientos en nuestra comunidad

Chandler llevará a cabo una Elección Especial de Bonos el 4 de noviembre

Esta elección incluye la financiación propuesta de bonos para:

Parques y Recreación

Departamento de Bomberos

Calles y Tráfico

Departamento de Policía

La ciudad No proyecta aumento alguno a la tasa del impuesto sobre la propiedad.

La tasa promedio de impuestos estimada para la autorización de los bonos propuestos es de \$0.4795 por cada \$100 de avalúo tasado. Los nuevos bonos están sincronizados con la cancelación de la deuda, la cual la ciudad espera que mantenga estable la tasa secundaria del impuesto sobre la propiedad. Estos proyectos tienen como objetivo mejorar la vida diaria, asegurar la seguridad pública y apoyar el crecimiento futuro de Chandler.



chandleraz.gov/BondElection

Memorial bike ride tied to Chandler

INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

An annual group bicycle ride is devoted to a late Chandler-area rider — as his Chandler-resident father and a nonprofit try to keep memories and a push for greater safety alive.

The Rob Dollar Memorial Foundation works to raise awareness around the dangers of cycling, but more importantly, according to a news release, what the community can do to keep riders safe.

That foundation's 2026 version of its signature annual event is set to happen in late October.

The eighth annual Rob Dollar Memorial Ride is set for Sunday, Oct. 26 in Phoenix. The ride honors Dollar, who was tragically killed by a motorist in 2017.

Rob's father John, a Chandler resi-

dent, started the ride and the foundation to bring to light the issue of bike safety and road awareness.

Arizona is notoriously known for being the worst state for cyclists, with the number of fatalities being about 30 a year, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

Rob grew up in the Chandler area, moving to California, but returning to Arizona just a few months before he was killed.

The 2025 Rob Dollar Memorial Ride is from 7 a.m. to noon on Oct. 26, at South Mountain Park, 10919 S. Central Ave., Phoenix.

The base cost to register for the ride is \$19 per person.

Learn more about the ride and register at robdollarfoundation.org/robdollar-ride.html.



An annual group bicycle ride is devoted to a late Chandler-area rider — as his Chandler-resident father and a nonprofit try to keep memories and a push for greater safety alive. The eighth annual Rob Dollar Memorial Ride is set for Sunday, Oct. 26 at Phoenix's South Mountain Park. (Courtesy of Rob Dollar Foundation)

THINGS TO DO

Glowing Pumpkins is an immersive Halloween experience for all ages, featuring pathways of lit pumpkin sculptures and displays with music, sounds and special effects. It's held at Riverwalk at Rawhide, 5700 W. North Loop Road, Chandler, near Wild Horse Pass Boulevard, through Nov. 1, from dusk to 10 p.m., with ticket prices varying. Check glowingpumpkins.com. (Courtesy of Evolve PR)





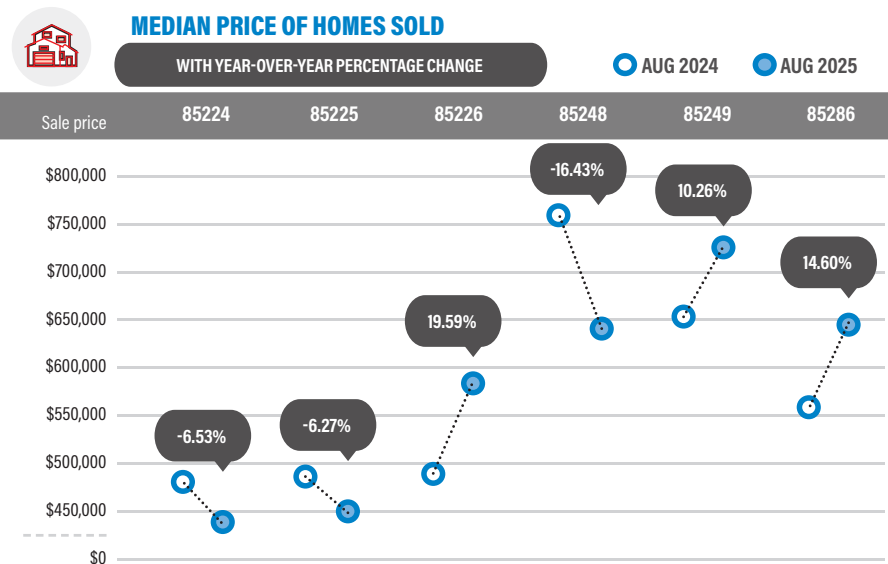
Our goal is early detection.

October is National Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Prioritize your health, and book an appointment for your annual mammogram. Regular mammograms can detect early signs of breast cancer, when treatment options have the greatest chances of success. Take time for your health—you deserve it.

Scan to schedule your annual mammogram or visit dignityhealthazcancer.org.



REAL ESTATE



DATA PROVIDED BY KATIE TAYLOR OF THE GOODMAN TAYLOR TEAM

katie@thegoodmantaylor.com
480-220-6364



NUMBER OF HOMES ON THE MARKET

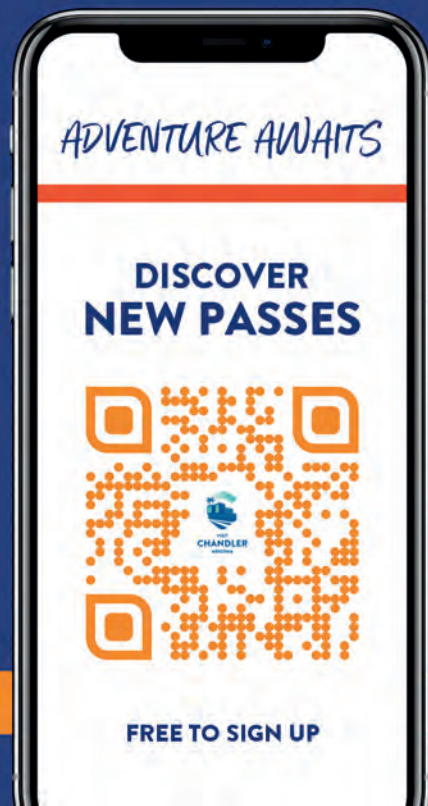
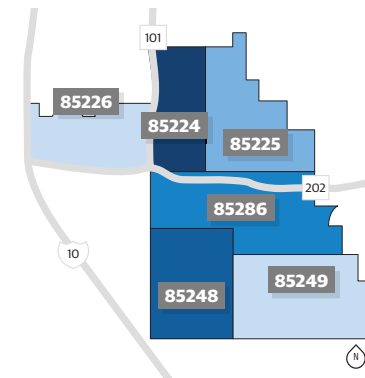
	AUG 2024	AUG 2025
85224	59	84
85225	98	156
85226	49	56
85248	63	97
85249	114	164
85286	90	132

AVERAGE DAYS ON THE MARKET

	AUG 2024	AUG 2025
85224	33	61
85225	46	62
85226	44	56
85248	62	78
85249	52	74
85286	48	59

NUMBER OF HOMES UNDER CONTRACT

	AUG 2024	AUG 2025
85224	29	36
85225	49	73
85226	21	34
85248	21	17
85249	55	58
85286	34	37



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TRANSPORTATION

Compiled by
Jason W. Brooks

INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

1 Frye Road, from Arizona Avenue to Hamilton Street, will be the site of a full eastbound closure through Thursday, Nov. 6. The estimated 46-day phase is for concrete work that's part of the Frye Road Bike Lane Project.

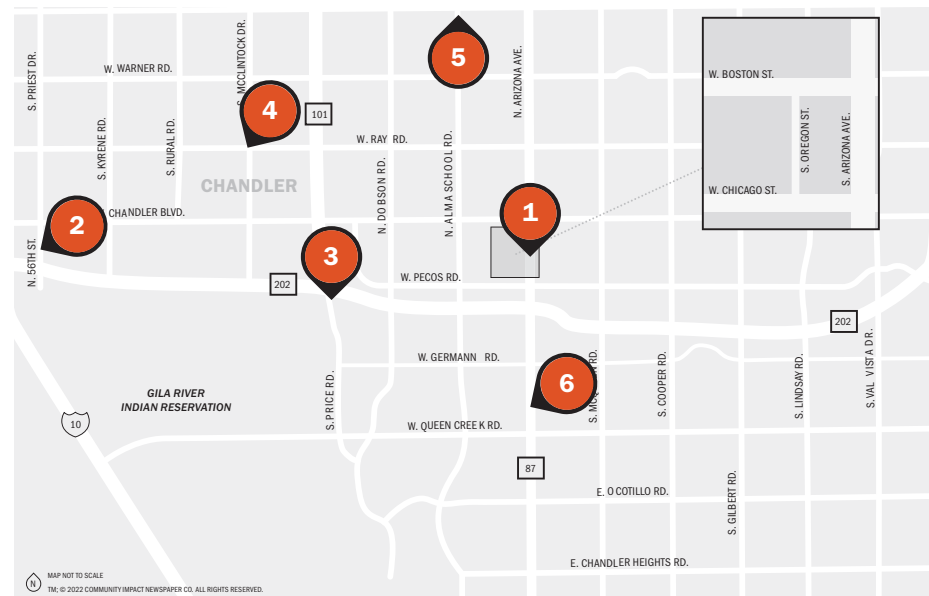
2 56th Street, from Frye Road to Ray Road, will be the site of minor restrictions in both directions through Thursday, Oct. 23. The estimated 11-day project is for pavement restoration.

3 Price Road, from Loop 202 to as far south as Germann Road, will be the site of minor and major restrictions through the estimation completion date of Nov. 30. The estimated 469-day sewer bypass and

re-lining will affect both southbound and north bound traffic, in various spots along Price Road. Manhole rehab will also take place as part of this roadwork.

4 Ray Road, from west of McClintock Drive to about Pennington Drive, will be the site of night-time restrictions in both directions through Thursday, Nov. 6. The estimated 23-day project is for mill and overlay operations.

5 Elliott and Alma School roads is and several residential streets to the southeast will be the site of major restrictions in both directions through Thursday, Oct. 30. The estimated 45-day project — which also involves major restrictions on Hartford Street, Mesquite Street, Marlboro Drive, Evergreen Street and Palomino Drive — is for installing telecommunications as part of



the “Gigapower” project.

6 Ryan Road, from Arizona Avenue to McQueen Road, will remain closed in both directions through

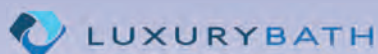
Saturday, Nov. 29. The estimated 181-day project is for unspecified work that requires the city to “close off 4 sections of road in phases to work safely.”

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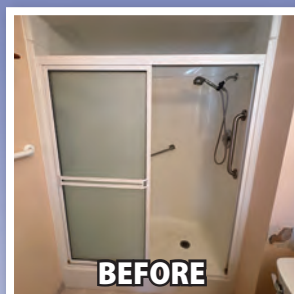
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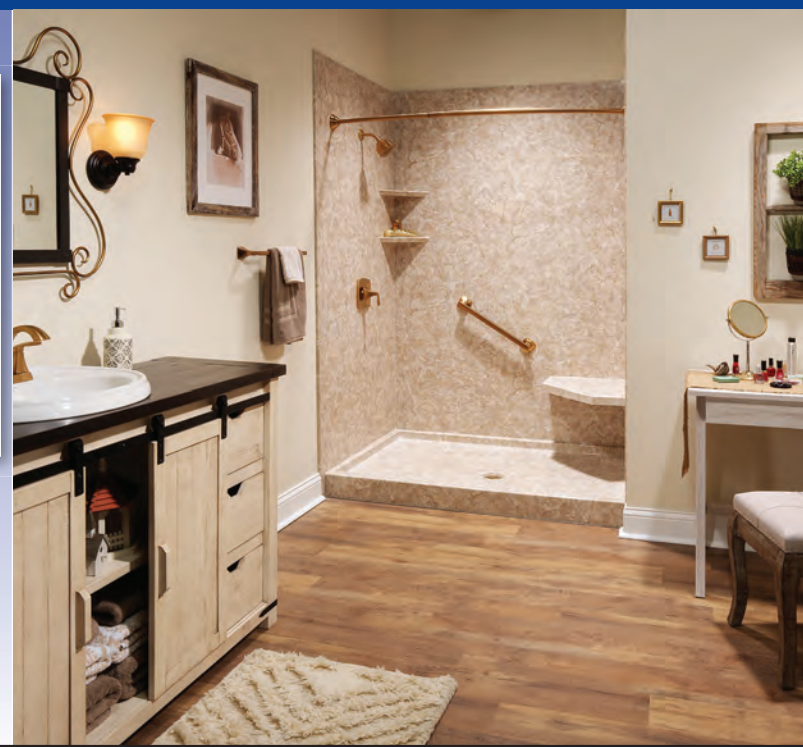
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Dine In, Pick Up, Delivery

MD First

• From page 6

mentia market and the importance of ensuring that the necessary resources are in place to provide quality care for this population.

The average age of Chandler and of Arizona residents is slowly rising, along with the average for the U.S.

Kalscheur said in addition to sponsors covering all medical and travel expenses related to studies, participants often can receive therapies years before those become publicly available.

She said there is education and screenings beforehand, as well as ongoing “around-the-clock” support to ensure safety and comfort throughout each study.

Here are MD First’s current



Director Giulia Andrews welcomes participants into MD First Research Chandler. Qualifying participants for studies offered at the clinic don't require payments, co-payments or insurance. (Courtesy of MD First Research Chandler)

clinical studies and research initiatives:

- ♦ Migraines: Two active studies; an Ipsen study will be closing soon
- ♦ Lower back pain: One active study

♦Hypertension: One active study

♦Neuropathy nerve pain: One active study

Here are MD First’s upcoming C=clinical studies:

- ♦ Annovis: Early Alzheimer’s study
- ♦ Biohaven Therapeutics, Ltd: Early Parkinson’s disease
- ♦ Eli Lilly: Early Alzheimer’s Study
- ♦ Merz Therapeutics: Xeomin for the prevention of chronic migraine
- ♦ Merz Therapeutics: Xeomin for the prevention of episodic migraine

Anyone interested in the studies listed above or wants to know what other studies are on the horizon can contact the office at 623-267-8314 or online through mdfirstresearchaz.com/studies.

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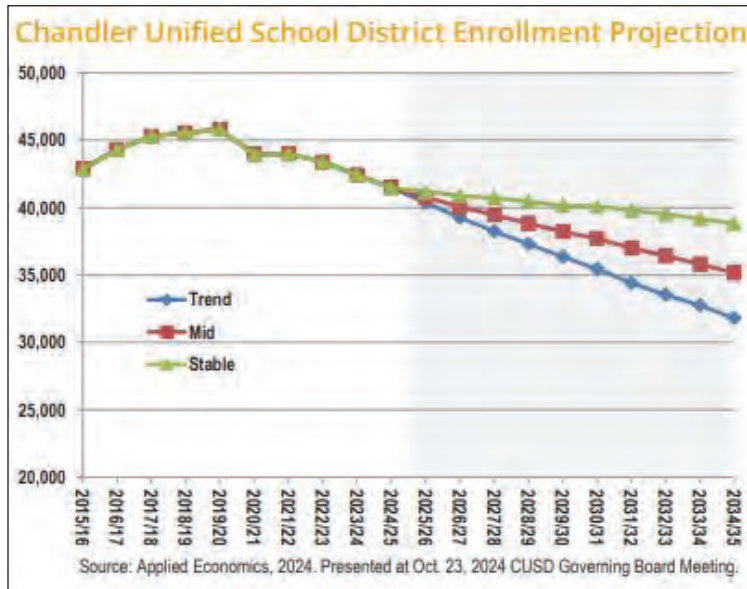
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This chart shows some projected declines in Chandler Unified district enrollment within the next decade. The city of Chandler, along with CUSD and three other school districts, are pooling money to pay for a marketing campaign meant to draw young families and young professionals into the city. (Courtesy of Chandler USD)

Campaign

- From page 4

The Chandler Unified school board member who abstained in voting to approve CUSD's \$10,000 contribution to the marketing, Ryan Heap, said he feels high costs of housing and interest rates are main factors in school enrollment dropping, and the campaign isn't intended to address those factors.

Chandler Vice Mayor Christine Ellis asked Miranda if the city is looking at how to overcome the challenge of housing costs in getting couples with one income or two small incomes to live in the city.

Miranda said that challenge is one of the elements to be addressed in assembling the campaign.

"However, when we look at our peer communities in the region, Chandler might not always be the most expensive location for those families," Miranda said. "Some of our surrounding communities are actually more expensive destinations. Young families are choosing to go there. We want to understand why they're making those decisions, as part of this campaign."

Miranda listed several real estate

metrics in which he said Chandler is at or near at least the rest of the Southeast Valley, if not the entire Valley. He also said Chandler's age and real estate situation is partly dictated by the city having developed and brought in a tech workforce earlier in the '90s and 2000s than other Valley communities, which are still growing quickly.

Chandler grew almost exponentially for about 30 years before the COVID-19 pandemic, when real estate, near-buildout of land and the constraints of construction financing slowed the growth of the city considerably.

A staff report states that an aging population and low birth rate are factors not unique to Chandler, but do pose significant challenges for the city and schools.

"At a city level, slower growth and an aging population could affect future labor force availability, consumer spending, service expectations and the sustainability of municipal revenue streams," the report states.

Miranda said the campaign is expected to be stretched out over at least a couple of years, so aside from direct feedback on marketing, there won't be many quick ways to evaluate the campaign to know if it's working.



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SOUTH COUNTY FIRE & MEDICAL DISTRICT

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South County Fire & Medical District serves over 20,000 residents in Sun Lakes and Tonopah Valley. The District is seeking approval from voters for a \$23.5 million bond to fund emergency response vehicles, equipment, and facility improvements placed on the ballot as Proposition 408.

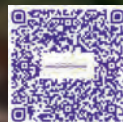
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Dominium

• From page 4

to get Maricopa County development plan approval for apartments on nearly 25 acres of property along the north side of Ocotillo Road, between Arizona Avenue and McQueen Road, using multiple incarnations of plans — the more recent of which was called Sonoran Landings. Met with strong community resistance both times, mainly over added traffic congestion and water issues, the Maricopa County Board of Supervisors advised Dominium to pursue annexation of the county-island land by the city of Chandler. Dominium announced earlier this year it's selling the property, though that thought is apparently at least paused, as the company's name is mentioned throughout a staff report on the agreement. Dominium submitted a revised land use entitlement application to Mar-

icopa County Planning and Zoning in early 2025 that proposed an industrial-oriented project only with no residential component. The staff report states Chandler Development Services Director Kevin Snyder sent a letter in April to Maricopa County Planning and Development Director Tom Ellsworth, responding to Dominium's revised application for industrial use only. The letter called for a long list of tasks and steps Dominium would need to complete in order to have the property annexed by Chandler and considered for development permits. Annexation into the City of Chandler is required for the city to add the developed property to its water and wastewater system, Snyder wrote, and a pre-annexation agreement is required and must be approved by the council and executed prior to any annexation application. Also, land uses of the site must be consistent with Chandler's Gen-

eral Plan and Airpark Area Plan. Snyder wrote that Maricopa County "should specify additional land uses identified in the letter as prohibited for consistency with the city's land use policies." Data centers should be a prohibited land use by the county, Snyder wrote. After Snyder sent the letter to Ellsworth, Dominium representatives requested a continuance of a hearing that had been scheduled before the county supervisors. After that continuance, the staff report states, city staff and Dominium representatives met multiple times to discuss and negotiate elements of the pre-annexation development agreement. The agreement not only includes the land use policies, building and safety standards, engineering regulations, transportation standards and prohibited Planned Industrial-1 (I-1) zoning uses, the city added a few more prohibitions. At the Sept. 18 meeting, Council

member Matt Orlando read into the record an amendment with a list of prohibited commercial-type uses. These included "third-party parcel distribution centers in excess of 400,000 square feet in aggregate, including no single parcel distribution building in excess of 200,000 square feet. The report states the city will have the ability to concurrently approve, alongside Maricopa County, during its review process, all specified land uses, building design, site design, parking area layouts and site access points. "Further, this agreement requires that annexation occur prior to any construction at the project site," the report states. City staff contacted property management representatives for Pinelake Place and Kerby Estates — located across Ocotillo Road from the parcels — to notify them of the process, but had not heard back from them as of Sept. 18, the report states.



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Gym

• From page 6

structed gym for the past 20.

Getting to three decades wasn't easy, owner Scott Barclay told the hundreds of parents, family members and others who showed up Sept. 13 — but it was the young athletes who made it happen.

And since one of the two-decades-plus coaches on staff has a rare and incurable condition, the event was also a fundraiser and tribute for Rob Survick.

Survick spoke briefly in between performances by student gymnasts.

"I don't feel sick," said Survick, who was diagnosed with ALS in 2021." Survick told the attendees. "All I feel is the love I've gotten from this community."



Aspire Kids Sports Center owner Scott Barclay holds the microphone for coach Rob Survick on Sept. 13. The daylong event served as both a 30th birthday party for the center and a fundraiser for Survick, who has ALS. (Independent Newsmedia/Jason W. Brooks)



Elliott Foster completes a routine as part of Aspire Kids Sports Center's 30th birthday celebration Sept. 13 in west Chandler. (Independent Newsmedia/Jason W. Brooks)

Coach Megan Connor, with microphone, oversees and directs young gymnasts as they demonstrate during Aspire Kids Sports Center's 30th birthday celebration Sept. 13 in west Chandler. (Independent Newsmedia/Jason W. Brooks)

Business

• From page 6

January.

KeenStack has leased 4,650 square feet of office space at The Park at SanTan, 3075 W. Ray Road, where a five-story building looms over the Price frontage road along Loop 101.

KeenStack would start occupying space in September, it states.

Thiru Thangarathinam, founder and CEO of KeenStack, said in a statement that KeenStack's workforce has already grown from five employees in January to 48 worldwide. He wants to grow the company to about 100 employees globally by the end of 2026.

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Assessment

• From page 10

"I'm kind of hoping we can move away from that and start treating these kids as individuals and addressing their needs as individuals —and not start perpetuating stereotypes that we should have gotten away from long ago," Rohrs said.

Assessment data is useful and necessary, Dr. Jennifer Fletcher said.

"Assessments and data are good to help drive student success," Fletcher said prior to Rohrs comments during the Sept. 10 meeting. "Our teachers use data and assessments to help students' abilities be on campus, engage on campus, love school and start their learning journeys."

Special Counsel

• From page 10

longer than we want to. We have a superintendent search and bond and override elections happening. I don't think we want to get involved in legal proceedings unless it's absolutely necessary."

Board President Patti Serrano reminded Rohrs that the "if needed" clause is in the motion.

Earlier in the Sept. 10 meeting, more than 15 teachers, students, former students and parents spoke during public input about on-site career and technical education, all in positive ways. Their main contention was that the board should preserve and continue to fight for on-campus CTE programming, as opposed to arrangements that involve students having to travel from their homes to one of EVIT's Mesa

Facilities. Following the comments, Fletcher said it's the obligation of districts, under state and federal laws, to report data by subgroups to ensure districts are driving toward success for every child.

"We agree with you," Fletcher said. "It's not the ethnicity that's driving the behavior."

Board President Patti Serrano agreed with Fletcher, noting one purpose of extensive research is to help stave off districts and school systems from past behaviors of marginalizing different groups of students.

"The data does indicate that we have, in fact, marginalized subgroups (through the years)," Serrano said. "The other example we saw there was our special education students."

facilities.

Rohrs interrupted at the end of public input, stating there are no plans to eliminate any Chandler CTE programs, pointing out CUSD has doubled its budget and has millions of dollars in a designated reserve. Serrano reminded Rohrs to limit his feedback on public input to correcting the record on facts.

But Stephanie Ingersoll, spokesperson for CUSD, said EVIT is proposing funding cuts of 5% in the first year, 9% in the second year and 12% in the third year.

CUSD spends \$873,000 annually to transport students to EVIT's Central campus in Mesa, Ingersoll said. Among Chandler's 21 CTE programs, nine are unique to the district and are not offered at EVIT.

At least seven other districts have joined CUSD in taking legal steps to stop the cuts, as of this writing.

Education

• From page 10

announced Oct. 18.

Angelica Abbey, a sixth-grade teacher at Frye Elementary School in Chandler, is among those five educators.

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OPINION

Commentary

• From page 14

service cap of 16 consecutive years as Mayor and/or Councilmember before requiring a four-year break.

- Clarifying how resignations and partial terms are treated under term-limit rules.

These updates remove ambiguity, provide clarity for everyone and ensure consistent application of term limits moving forward.

Proposition 411 addresses Charter language about the hiring and removal of Chandler's City Manager by:

- Clarifying that the Manager serves at the pleasure of the City Council.

- Empowering the City Council to remove the Manager for whatever reason by a majority vote in a public meeting.

- Requiring severance pay for a Manager be established in the contract

between the City Council and the City Manager.

These changes are intended to align the Charter with modern best practices in local governance and ensure accountability between the City Council and its appointed administrator.

I ask all residents to vote Yes on both Propositions 410 and 411 and encourage your involvement in shaping the ways we govern ourselves as a community.

Additional details and the text of the proposed amendments are available on the City of Chandler's Special Election webpage: tinyurl.com/394cbswx.

Matt Orlando

CHANDLER CITY COUNCIL MEMBER

Editor's note: Matt Orlando has served six terms on the Chandler City Council, the last two continuously since 2019. He has filed a statement of interest to run for mayor in 2026.

CONSTITUTION WEEK



REVERENT DEDICATION

The Sons of the American Revolution were part of recognition of Constitution Week on Sept. 15 with the Chandler City Council. From the left are Council member Jane Poston, SAR members David Bonnet, Jim Hinsey (holding the certificate), Mayor Kevin Hartke and SAR members Brad Hopkins and Bill Baran. (Independent Newsmedia/Jason W. Brooks)

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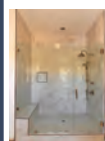
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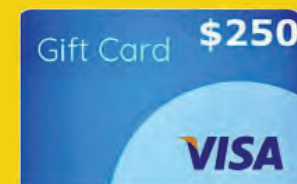
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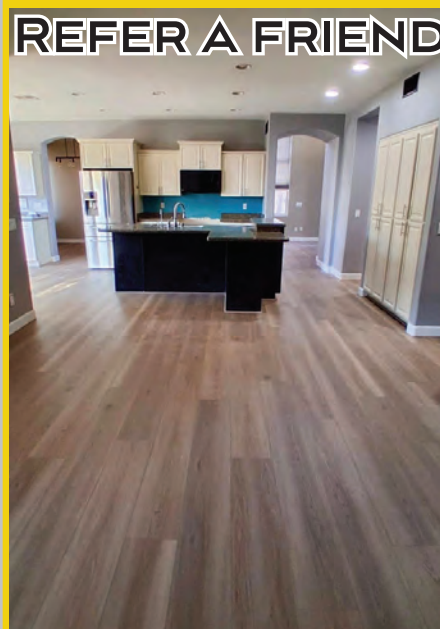
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