



Council members react to former senator's data center threat

By Jason W. Brooks
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

A pair of Chandler City Council members have weighed in on what a former U.S. senator said at a pair of October meetings, with a routine upcoming vote on a development project seeming to have taken on added significance.

Not only did a development group called Active Infrastructure launch a plan to build a large artificial-intelligence data center on the site of a long-vacant industrial facility in south Chandler, but also, former Sen. Kyrsten Sinema came to a pair of October meetings to speak in favor of council approving the development plan.

Sinema used the term "federal preemption" both during an Oct. 15 Chandler Planning and Zoning Commission hearing about the data center and also the following night during the public-input time at a Chandler City Council meeting.

Chandler's planning staff brought

• See **Data Center** on page 12



Passing bonds change the game

By Jason W. Brooks
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

Many of the results of Nov. 4 special Chandler elections were apparent within hours of polls closing.

The \$475 million bond questions and two charter amendments the city of Chandler had on the ballot all seemed well on their way to passing, with none of those

six items even within 25 percentage points of the "no" votes.

Even a \$23.5 million bond for the fire agency that serves the Sun Lakes area was passing by a 25-point margin, as of mid-afternoon on Nov. 6.

That wasn't the case for one of the Chandler Unified School District questions on the ballot this year,

• See **Elections** on page 18

Leo Lucero got to work quickly at the start of his first day in Ashley Doering's Hartford Sylvia Encinas Elementary School class in Chandler in July. Hartford Elementary is one of many places set to see big improvements after both the school district and the city passed bonds in Nov. 4 elections. (Independent Newsmedia file/Jason W. Brooks)

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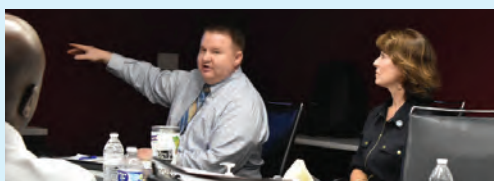
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Chandler Budget Director Matt Dunbar speaks during the Oct. 13 work session that served as the Chandler City Council's budget kickoff. Uncertainty about the future of various federal funding streams or programs was the ominous cloud that seemed to be present for the 90-minute session. (Courtesy of city of Chandler)

City budget: More unknowns in the cycle

By Jason W. Brooks
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

It's still unclear if Chandler will be able to do at least most of the things in fiscal 2027 that it has bragged about doing this fiscal year and in the recent past.

After a budget kickoff event, it was clear the city should be able to take most of the positive budget steps forward in fiscal 2027 as it took this year — although the wild card of federal funding streams and program status is as unpredictable as ever.

City Budget Director Matt Dunbar led much of the Chandler City Council's Oct. 13 budget kickoff work session, starting out by acknowledging what's essentially a setback.

"We do have some planned increases to our water, wastewater, reclaimed water and solid waste rates, to keep those funds self-supporting," Dunbar acknowledged early in his presentation.

Dunbar said keeping Chandler sales tax at 1.5% — among the lowest in Arizona — is a benefit to residents. Reducing the primary property tax rate for 10 consecutive years is also a community benefit, Dunbar said.

Inflation is a topic among local governments nationwide, as everything from new vehicles to lumber to cement has spiked consistently over the past five years.

"We increased our capital budget to

• See **Budget** on page 28

'No Kings' has bigger downtown presence in October than June

By Jason W. Brooks
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

When Nathan Tayloraft saw the decisions, policies and implementation the Trump Administration began making this year, he felt compelled to act.

Immigration policy, deportations and other domestic law enforcement decisions were certainly aspects that got Tayloraft's attention. But it was a set of issues that hasn't gotten as much mention in 2025 that he thought of first.

"Climate change," Tayloraft said. "Pulling out the Paris Accords. That's dangerous and very disturbing."

Tayloraft said how U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement has been ordered to skip due process and to detain people and break up families with zero stated charges is also upsetting, Tayloraft said, leading the high school junior to co-found a local organization called East Valley Unite.



Some of the signs at the Oct. 18 downtown Chandler "No Kings" protest demanded U.S. House Speaker Mike Johnson swear in recently elected Rep. Adelita Grijalva to Congress. (Independent Newsmedia/Jason W. Brooks)

Along with two other organizers, Tayloraft said, one of the first missions for East Valley Unite was to push out information about Chandler's local version of the Oct. 18 "No Kings" protests.

"We're an all-volunteer group of East Valley residents who are really passionate about democracy," Tayloraft said. "All that we do an

organization, we do with our own personal resources. We just want to help build community."

Tayloraft said it was his idea to assemble hundreds of the Oct. 18 protesters on the east lawn of Dr. A.J. Chandler park at the end of the downtown event for group photos. "No Kings" and "... in the USA"

• See **No Kings** on page 9

STORMS

Some storm damage in city after Oct. 11 weekend storms

By Jason W. Brooks
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA



This roadway flooding along Loop 202 at Cooper Road was temporary, though there was more permanent damage to at least a few structures in the city over the weekend. (Courtesy of Arizona Department of Transportation)

Minimal damage seems the best way to describe the lasting effects of four-plus days of heavy rain in Chandler.

Chandler Police spokesperson Ryan Cody said he was briefed on Sunday's response to the rainfall.

"Several roadways experienced flooding across the city," Cody said. "However no hard road closures were needed. I'm told streets and public works did a great job pumping standing water from the roadways."

Cody said westbound Loop 202 was closed for a short time at Cooper Road. That's one of the few bowl-type spots along the 202 in Chandler. There was heavy flood-

• See **Storm Damage** on page 9



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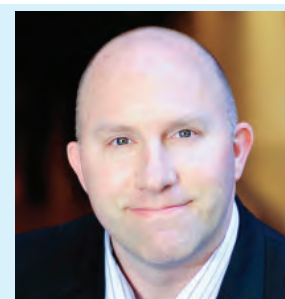
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RAIN Group, which calls itself a global sales training company in a news release, has announced the appointment of Scott McDonald as CEO. (Courtesy of Rain Group)

Chandler man is new sales-coaching firm's new CEO

INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

A sales consulting firm has announced it's hired a Chandler resident to be its next chief executive officer.

RAIN Group, which calls itself a global sales training company in a news release, has announced the appointment of Scott McDonald as CEO.

The release states McDonald has more than 30 years of experience in revenue leadership, operational excellence, and organizational strategy.

"RAIN Group is, at its core, a people-first culture," McDonald stated in the news release. "What stood out to me is how the company blends proven methodology with innovation, delivering research-backed training while embracing innovative tools to drive real behavior change."

RAIN Group, winner of a 2025 Gold Brandon Hall Group Award for sales training and performance, was acquired in November 2024 by Alchemist Group. Now part of the group, RAIN Group continues to operate under its own name while expanding its offerings through strategic collaboration with Alchemist.

McDonald stated that through the Alchemist brand and offerings, RAIN has a unique opportunity to support its clients not just in sales performance, but in broader leadership and management development as well.

"It's rare to have access to such a dy-

• See **RAIN Group** on page 34

New memory-care site has mayor, others at expansion

INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

Oakwood Creative Care celebrated the opening of a new Chandler campus in late October, bringing in local officials that included the mayor or for a ceremony.

The event drew a lively crowd of community members, supporters, and dignitaries — including Chandler Mayor Kevin Hartke — who gathered to mark the beginning of Oakwood's new chapter, according to a news release.

The new space, located at 2175 N. Alma School Road, Building B, just north of Warner Road in north Chandler, focuses on brain health, aging, and caregiving, the release states.

"This is more than a location — it's a community," Sherri Friend, president and CEO of Oakwood Creative Care, said in the release. "Thanks to our partners and the City of Chandler, we can now offer



Chandler Mayor Kevin Hartke speaks at the grand opening of Oakwood Creative Care's new Chandler campus in late October. (Courtesy of Oakwood Creative Care)

full-circle care that supports individuals and their families — helping people live well, with purpose, joy, and creativity."

Funded by Arizona Complete Health and the Centene Foundation, the Chandler Campus unites multiple programs under one roof, offering what OCC calls a holistic model of care for older adults and their fami-

lies and caregivers.

Guests enjoyed tours, music, refreshments, and remarks from OCC leadership and partners as they explored the new campus.

Elements of the new campus include:

-The Oakwood Day Club: An art-based day program for older

• See **Oakwood** on page 28

BUSINESS

Pregnancy Care Center unveils mobile services

INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

Staff and others from the Pregnancy Care Center of Chandler were all smiles Oct. 8 when some valuable and expensive new equipment was unveiled.

The commissioning of "Esther Naomi" — a new mobile van — means the Pregnancy Care Center of Chandler can now provide pregnancy tests, ultrasound exams and other services at locations around the Valley.

The Oct. 8 ribbon-cutting for the van program was attended by Chan-



The Pregnancy Care Center of Chandler commissioned its new mobile unit, named "Esther Naomi," with an Oct. 8 ribbon-cutting. Esther Naomi is a van that will allow staff to extend reach of providing pregnancy tests, ultrasound exams to expectant mothers around the Valley. (Courtesy of Compass Christian Church)

• See **Pregnancy Care** on page 34

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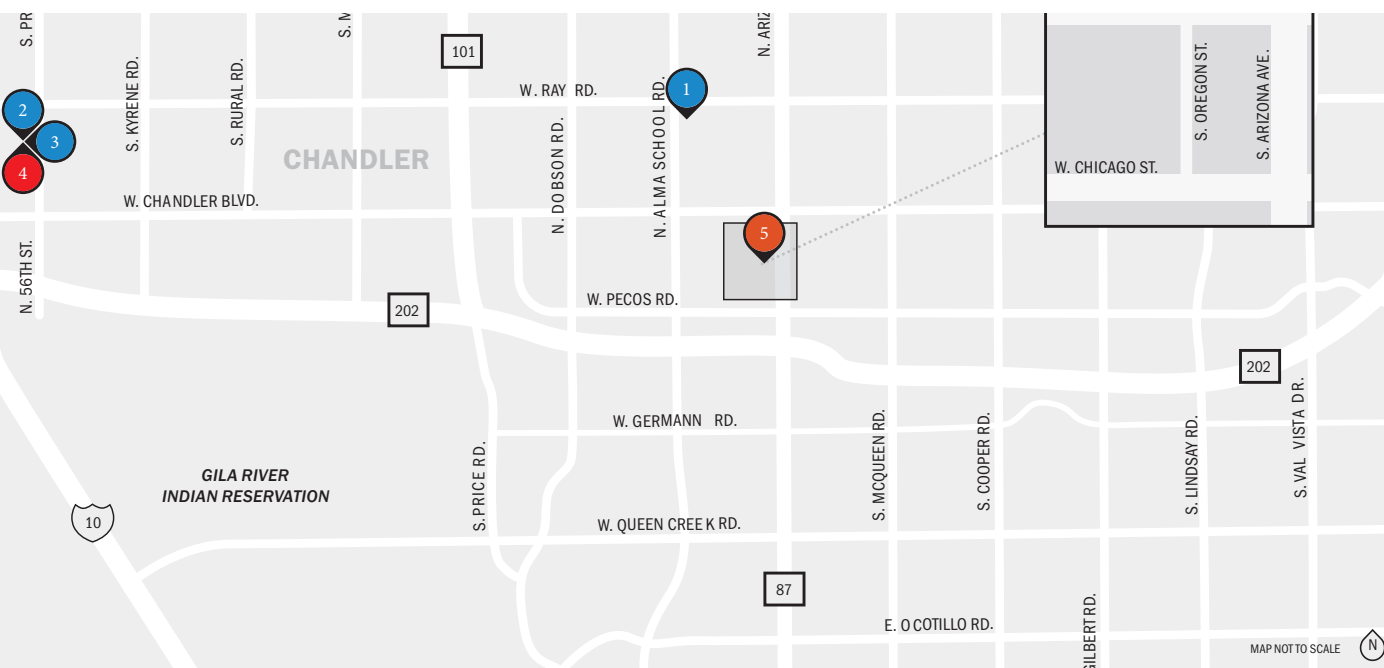


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BUSINESS MOVES



Compiled by Jason Brooks
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

NOW OPEN

1 Agege Bites is open on the southeast corner of Alma School and Ray roads in the center that includes Happy Jade Chinese. The Nigerian and west-African specialty place has rice dishes, swallows, stews, appetizers and shwarma and suya grills, with nothing priced beyond \$25. Learn more at agegebites.com, [@agegebites](https://www.instagram.com/agegebites) on Instagram or by calling 602-369-6452.

2 Chandy's Candies opened in July and held a late-October grand-opening event. The candy shop is in the Casa Paloma shopping center in far west Chandler, near AJ's, along Ray Road, just east of I-10. Chandy's wide range of products includes candy bars, boxed chocolates, candied nuts and caramels. The hours are Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.; closed Sundays and Mondays, Tuesdays by appointment only.

Chandy's can be reached at 908-208-1873 or through chandyscandies.com.

3 Taroko Sports is a hands-on sports entertainment center for all ages that opened Nov. 8 in the Casa Paloma shopping center in far west Chandler, behind A.J.'s. Activities available on-site include batting cages, a pitching mound, electronic darts, miniature bowling, an arcade, the HitTrax Swing Suite and food and refreshments. It's the third location for Taroko, with the first two being at Mesa Riverview and in Katy, Texas. The location's open 24 hours. Learn more by calling 480-971-9828 or at tarokosports.com.

COMING SOON

4 J. Alexander's is set to open its first Arizona steakhouse at 7151 W. Ray Road in west Chandler, in the former Buca di Beppo building of

the shopping center at 56th Street, in front of AJ's Fine Foods, on Nov. 17. The menu includes steaks, prime rib, sushi, burgers, sandwiches, house-made desserts, seafood and specialties. The hours are Mondays through Saturdays, 11:30 am to 10 p.m., Sundays 11:30 a.m. to 9 p.m. Reach the Chandler location at 480-786-8282 or through jalexanders.com.

CLOSED

5 Ghatt'Yo Tacos and Wings has closed its downtown Chandler location, next to The Perch Brewery, after eight years. It was the last of at least three "Ghatt Yo" brand eateries in the Valley to close. Specializing in street-style tacos and known for its colorful mural, was initially known as simply Ghatt Yo Tacos, though a partnership with the owner of b2 burgers & brews was meant to expand the concept.



AGEGE BITES



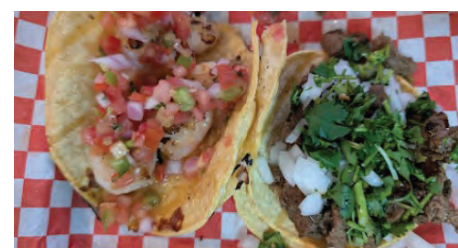
CHANDY'S CANDIES



TAROKO SPORTS



J. ALEXANDER'S



GHETT'YO TACOS

No Kings

• From page 4

were what the protesters spelled for aerial photos.

The downtown Chandler protest mostly consisted of sign-carrying protesters lining Arizona Avenue from Chicago Street to Chandler Boulevard.

East Valley Unite's and Indivisible AZ's estimates of the Chandler crowd size differ from that of the Chandler Police Department, though both estimates made the Oct. 18 event seem much larger than the similar No Kings protest in June.

Chandler Gilbert Indivisible stated there were at least 4,500 people at the protest, using "representative sample sections," while a Chandler Police spokesperson stated their count is between 1,200 and 1,500 protesters on-site between the hours of 8 a.m. and 10 a.m.

Police added that all participants were peaceful; there were no arrests.

Signs covered a number of opposition messages to Trump and to Congress, ranging from "Release the Epstein files" to opposition to ICE conduct to swearing in Rep. Adelita Grijalva.

Many wore resistance-slogan T-shirts; some identified as military veterans opposed to Trump policies.

Chandler Gilbert Indivisible co-leader A.J. Kurdoglu stated in a news release that local residents,



community leaders and volunteers were calling for "fair elections, accountable leadership and the protection of fundamental rights."

"It was amazing to see thousands of Chandler Gilbert residents getting together to say no to authoritarianism, no to strongman ideology and no to brazen corruption," Kurdoglu stated. "In a peaceful manner, Chandler and Gilbert residents demonstrated that they are here to protect their democracy and their way of life."

Indivisible stated the No Kings peaceful protests were organized by a coalition of organizations that include the ACLU, the American Federation of Teachers, Common Defense, 50501, Human Rights Campaign, Indivisible, the League of Conservation Voters, MoveOn, National Nurses United, Public Citizen and the Service Employees International Union.

Kurdoglu thanked Chandler City Council member Jane Poston and U.S. Rep. Greg Stanton for being at the protest.

Taylorft said Stanton has been among the most vocal elected officials of Valley "No Kings" and similar resistance to Trump.

Taylorft said not only will there be more No Kings-type events in the months ahead, there are also plans to encourage economic disruptions in the form of boycotts.

"Black Friday and 'Cyber Monday' are areas where we're talking about mass mobilization," Taylorft said. "We're motivated to get people registered to vote, to vote in better representation in 2026, and to find neighbors who want to build community, to where we can do something really disruptive."

Storm Damage

• From page 4

ing at the Copper underpass.

"Our (Chandler Police's) only involvement was to help close those ramps until ADOT arrived," Cody stated.

Elsewhere in the city, the Chandler Fire Department responded to a four-vehicle collision at Arizona Avenue and Elliott Road on Sunday morning, according to a media outlet, with two people taken to a hospital.

Iglesia Vida, a church near that same Arizona/Elliott intersection in the north part of the city, appeared to have a partial roof collapse that led to suspension of regular services, at least temporarily.

"The heavy rain this week caused damage to our church building, and we had to cancel yesterday's services," the church staff wrote on social media. "But Life Church has always been more than a building... we are a family! If you would like to support us to repair our building, you can donate through this link: tinyurl.com/yzr9fczu."

Chandler Unified spokesperson Stephanie Ingersoll the school district's facilities team has been hard at work cleaning up what was left behind by the recent weather. Roof leaks, down trees and some flooding occurred.



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The Chandler Unified Governing Board chose a “modified Google format” for its upcoming 17-question stakeholder survey that’s part of its superintendent search. The current Superintendent, Frank Narducci, shown here, is retiring in June. (Independent Newsmedia file/Jason W. Brooks)

Board picks superintendent search method

By Jason W. Brooks
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

If the steps taken so far in the Chandler Unified Governing Board’s search for a new district superintendent are any indication, each turn in the process is likely going to involve a long, acrimonious discussion and a close vote.

The board voted, 3-2, to go with a “modified Google format” for its upcoming stakeholder engagement survey in the superintendent process search.

Board members Kurt Rohrs and Ryan Heap, both preferring what hired search firm Hazard, Young, Attea, & Associates calls a comprehensive, research-based survey, cast votes against the measure at the Oct. 22 meeting.

A major snag in the process seemed to be that HYA & Associates representatives — two of whom attended the board meeting via teleconference, confirmed they have ability to do the comprehensive

• See **CUSD** on page 36

Chandler Unified: Latest media arts center complete

By Jason W. Brooks
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

The ribbon-cutting of Navarrete Elementary School’s \$1.3 million media arts center remodel represented another step in a direction the Chandler Unified School District has been pursuing for several years.

The “reimagining” of some of the district’s older elementary schools includes a few complete rebuilds, but mainly, it’s the conversion of traditional elementary libraries into “media arts centers.”

Navarrete in southeast Chandler opened in 2004 and like about six other CUSD elementaries it had its original library converted into a media arts center. The work was capped by an Oct. 16 ribbon-cutting event.

Each of the district’s six new media arts centers are slightly different,

• See **Arts Center** on page 24



Chandler school district officials, contractors and students were all part of Navarrete Elementary’s media arts center ribbon-cutting Oct. 16. From the left are CUSD Governing Board member Kurt Rohrs, Navarrete Principal Vanessa Whitlark, Navarrete dean of students Christie DeCarlo, Jason Reynolds of Willmeng Construction, Mark Davenport of SPS-Plus Architects, and, with the microphone, CUSD director of elementary education Heather Anguiano. The Navarrete students holding the banner are Cassie Scott, left, and Caige Henry. (Independent Newsmedia/Jason W. Brooks)



Mark Davenport of SPS-Plus Architects spoke briefly during the Oct. 16 media arts center ribbon-cutting event at Navarrete Elementary School. (Independent Newsmedia/Jason W. Brooks)

EDUCATION

CUSD board renews dual-enrollment agreement with U of A

By Jason W. Brooks
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

Dual-enrollment course agreements between universities and school districts are routine and are often approved on consent agendas.

One such contract between Chandler Unified and the University of Arizona was extended by the CUSD Governing Board at its Oct. 8 meeting — but by the narrowest of margins, and after a lengthy discussion.

Board member Kurt Rohrs along with fellow board member Ryan Heap, tried to convince the rest of

the board to remove a course Rohrs said is a “heavy dose of politics” from a list of courses mentioned in a U of A dual-enrollment agreement with CUSD, but the motion to approve it as-presented passed by a 3-2 margin.

Rohrs said “PEL 101 — Markets & Morality” is a political course that shouldn’t be taught to high school students. He said the fact it’s listed as part of U of A’s Philosophy, Politics, Economics and Law degree program indicates to him that’s neither a business nor a marketing course and has no place for CUSD students.

“I kind of read it as Marxist eco-

nomie doctrine,” Rohrs said. “That’s preferred by some of the socialist professors we have there. It’s a heavy dose of politics. Some people complain about political indoctrination we have in schools. This would be an example. It’s not something we should be teaching in our high schools.”

Rohrs read a few of the “central questions” listed on arizona.edu in the PEL 101 course description, such as “Why do some societies grow rich while other societies remain poor?” “What must a person

• See **Agreement** on page 24

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FROM THE COVER

Data Center

• From page 1

the application to the commission despite encouraging the board to recommend denial to the City Council. Staff also put together a long list of rezoning and preliminary development plan conditions to meet, should the commission decide it wants to recommend approval.

The commission ended up voting 5-1 to recommend council approve staff's alternative list of conditions, making at least one modification of its own, meaning the Chandler City Council was initially set to decide the short-term fate of the 420,000-square-foot building-centered campus plan at its Nov. 13 meeting. Staff asked council to continue the hearing to the Dec. 11 regular meeting after the applicant requested more time to work out terms of a development agreement with the city.

Chandler City Council member Matt Orlando said he's spoken with Sinema many times, including since she spoke at Chandler's mid-October meetings. He said he didn't take Sinema's mention of pre-emption as a threat at all.

"In one way or another, local authority gets usurped by the state or feds all the time," Orlando said. "Cell phone towers are one example of this. Now, we have the chance to try to do



Chandler City Council members Matt Orlando, left, and O.D. Harris have had different reactions to former U.S. Sen. Kyrsten Sinema's October threat of "federal pre-emption" if council didn't approve a large speculative A.I. data center plan at a planned Nov. 13 meeting. (Independent Newsmedia/Jason W. Brooks)

this our way, and ask the questions we deserve answers to."

Orlando said he acknowledges the neighborhood changes and the way an additional massive water and electricity customer could affect rates and other aspects of life in Chandler. He said that's why it's important to analyze the worth and the sacrifices involved in the project through the lens of the city's long-term goals.

"The large data center that just opened in Mesa, they looked at us, first," Orlando said. "Through the decades, we've said no to some things that probably would have been good things for us. Who knows? But we have to keep an open mind and keep asking questions."

Chandler's General Plan and a 2022 ordinance place restrictions on where and how large a data center can be; a planned area development strictly for a data center is technically prohibited in the city.

Sinema described the city's approach as antiquated.

"At least three of the occupied buildings along the Price Corridor are call centers," Sinema said. "Those will cease to exist within five years. AI will replace call centers, as we know it. I appreciate the city's presentation. But what was missing was a fundamental lack of understanding about what AI data centers are, and the amount of companies that want to co-locate near those new centers.

I would urge Chandler to approach the AI revolution the way you approached the semiconductor revolution."

Another council member, O.D. Harris, didn't seem nearly as ready to simply cast aside thousands of jobs currently held by the tech and finance-tech communities in the city.

"Chandler's growth must be smart, people-first, and true to our voter-approved vision," Harris wrote on his social media. "The Price Corridor is our premier jobs and innovation district — home to employers like Intel, Wells Fargo, Bank of America, Northrop Grumman, and Microchip (Technology) — powering tens of thousands of high-wage careers and anchoring our long-term competitiveness."

Harris wrote that he has serious concerns about the proposed data center in this corridor, due partly to the amount of electricity needed and the noise often produced.

"Once operational, they can generate constant mechanical noise that disrupts nearby neighborhoods," Harris wrote. "These pathological noise makers would be a regular nuisance and harm the quality of life for Chandler residents."

Sinema said she's the founder and co-chair of what she calls the AI Infrastructure Coalition, which she

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OPINION

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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.

Is Chandler's career and technical-ed program insufficient?

As education has evolved over the last several years, career and technical education, or CTE programs have developed into critical pathways for a student's future employment success.

The learning of essential technical skills can directly impact a student's ability to get placed in high-paying career jobs.

A CTE program is defined as a pathway sequence of courses in a technical field that leads to a certificate, license, or degree. This is usually two or three year-long courses at the high school level.

The expenses of a CTE program pathway sequence are supplemented by the Arizona Department of Education and administered by local career and technical education districts, or CTEDs, set up by Arizona statute for this purpose.

The East Valley Institute of Technology has jurisdiction over programs in East Valley High Schools, including Chandler Unified, and these are referred to as "satellite" districts.

But this isn't what is really happening.

A recent annual report from CUSD, mandated by the state of Arizona, revealed that less than one-third of CUSD students enroll in the next CTE course as required in their program sequence.

This measurement is known as "persistence," meaning that students are persistent in following a defined program sequence to its completion. It appears that CUSD students, with the tacit approval of their academic counselors, are simply using CTE courses as general-education electives in their

Please send your comments to Az0pinions@iniusa.org.

We are committed to publishing a wide variety of reader opinions, as long as they meet our Civility Guidelines.

academic curriculum.

It is quite likely that (students in the other member satellite districts in the EVIT CTED are doing this as well.

This is not the intent of the CTE initiative and appears to be a systemic misuse of state funding designated for this purpose.

This was one of the serious issues pointed out by an Arizona Auditor General's report in 2024. CUSD initially refused any responsibility for the conclusions and corrective recommendations in that report but has since begun to acknowledge that they, as EVIT satellite districts, are under the same scrutiny as their parent CTED organization.

In addition, it appears that CUSD has systematically accumulated excess CTE expense reimbursements over several years to build a slush fund of \$10,463,714 in their special purpose CTE fund account (Fund 596).

It is far past time for CUSD to drop the gamesmanship and lawfare, accept the oversight given to the EVIT CTED by statute, and to comply with all statutory requirements, performance expectations, and financial controls they are responsible for.

Kurt Rohrs

Chandler Unified School District Governing Board Member

Amber McAfee

President, East Valley Institute of Technology Governing Board
Rohrs' and McAfee's views are their personal opinions and do not represent the views on their respective boards.

SPEAK UP

Here are some recent online comments about Chandler Independent items:

"CHANDLER SCHOOLS BUYS SEMICONDUCTOR EQUIPMENT, TRAINING":

"How about teaching kids how to read, write, and do basic math without the use of a calculator?"

— **Andy Augustyniak** via story comment

"CHANDLER SCHOOLS: LATEST MEDIA ARTS CENTER COMPLETE":

"Well done, Kurt"

— **Virginia K.** via story comment

"KYRENE DISTRICT OVER-RIDE APPEARS HEADED FOR APPROVAL":

"Thank God, I don't live in that school district."

— **Robert Danzo** via story comment

"CHANDLER POLICE 'NO KINGS' CROWD ESTIMATE IS WAY TOO LOW":

"I was there and the people were three to four people deep. So I'd say at least 6,000 were there."

— **Paul** via story comment

"Who cares? These people are exercising their right guaranteed by Trump. Imagine that."

— **George Gonzalez** via story comment

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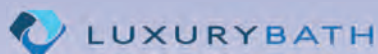


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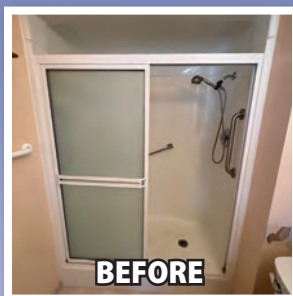
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BEFORE



AFTER



Dance studio well-represented at Diwali event

By Jason W. Brooks
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

Kriti Agarwal, owner of Kriti Dance in Chandler, helped organize an Oct. 18 Diwali event at an elementary school in a district with Chandler schools.

The Kyrene del Norte Elementary School event included dance demonstrations by both children and adults and a clothing sale. A food truck served traditional dishes.

Agarwal said it's one of the most prominent Hindu holiday seasons. She said Diwali symbolizes one of the more common spiritual commemorations: the victory of good over evil.

Diwali or "Dipawali" means "Festival of Lights." It's India's biggest annual festival and it's a five- or six-day Hindu festival that involves prayer, feasting, fireworks, community gatherings and forgiveness, she said, celebrated by decorating homes with lamps and colorful lights, sharing special meals, exchanging gifts, and enjoying fireworks.

Tempe Mayor Corey Woods spoke briefly at the event.



Pooja Rastogi, back left, completes dance steps in a row behind Shakun Jain, center, and Joanna Spencer during a Diwali festival and celebration Oct. 18 at Kyrene del Norte Elementary School. (Jason W. Brooks/Independent Newsmedia)



Traditional clothing and food were for sale at a Diwali festival and celebration Oct. 18 at Kyrene del Norte Elementary School. (Jason W. Brooks/Independent Newsmedia)

A traditional dance presentation was part of a Diwali festival and celebration Oct. 18 at Kyrene del Norte Elementary School. In the back row, from the left, are Deepa Chhabra, Mamta Hotz and Pooja Rastogi. In front are Renu Whig, Kriti Agarwal, Shakun Jain and Joanna Spencer. (Jason W. Brooks/Independent Newsmedia)

MEET YOUR NEIGHBOR

Ice skating, soccer family balances Chandler life, travel

COURTESY OF FLUTTER PR

Sometimes, disappointment leads to discovery.

That's exactly what happened for 17-year-old ice skater Josephine Javing, who had been skating with a partner for four years.

When her partner left the sport, Javing was at a bit of a crossroads; in the skating world, finding the right partner is a process that can take years.

But a fateful trip to Arizona four years ago changed everything.

Javing, whose home base is in Montana, traveled to Arizona on vacation. One of her coaches from back home

suggested she make time to meet with a highly respected and accomplished coach at the Ice Den in Chandler.

The two met. They clicked. And suddenly, Josephine realized there was a whole other world of skating for her to explore.

"I never knew I could compete in solo ice dance," Javing recalls. "She introduced it and I loved it."

What started as an introduction to a coach who could help her refine her edges and fine lines has evolved into a new level of competition.

Javing recently returned from the 2025 Solo National Dance Final in Salt Lake City, placing 13th in the na-

tion in her pattern dance category and 17th in the junior-combined event.

Those are tall accomplishments, but this high school senior is just getting started. Competing at this level means balancing a rigorous practice schedule while working to finish high school.

Javing and her brother, Kade, a sophomore, both attend ASU Prep Digital, which means their classes are all online and they can keep working toward graduation and college whether they're at home in Montana or at their home-away-from-home in

• See **Ice Skating** on page 35



Josephine Javing prepares to complete some moves during a skating session at the Ice Den in west Chandler. The young competitive skater's family splits time between Chandler and Montana. (Courtesy of Flutter PR)



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FROM THE COVER

Elections

• From page 1

as the seven-year override spending authority seemed well on its way to passing, though its \$271.5 million bond was passing by only slightly more than 400 votes as of about 48 hours after polls closed. By Tuesday, Nov. 11, there was a gap of about 1,450 votes, with the 28,847 in favor of the bond and in the lead.

In one of the more busy ballot Novembers for East Valley voters in an odd-numbered year, voters had a strong voice in how the community evolves over the next several years.

As of Nov. 11, Maricopa County Elections reported more than 50,000 ballots cast, or almost 30% voter turnout — a high number for an odd-numbered-year special election.

The city's biggest 2025 ask, in terms of bond dollars, is the \$183 million streets and traffic question, which was passing by a 72%-28% margin.

The \$158 million parks and recreation bond question was passing by a 68%-32% margin.

The \$88 million fire services question was passing by the greatest margin of the four — about a 75%-25% margin.

The \$46 million police services question was passing by a 70%-30% margin.

The two city charter amendment contests were nearly as one-sided. As of Nov. 6, Proposition 410, which clarifies there's no "sitting out" time required between serving either on council or as mayor and then running for the other seat, was passing by a 78%-to-22% margin.

Proposition 411, which gives council discretion on how much severance pay to give to a removed city manager, was on its way to passing by a 63%-to-37% margin.



Chandler City Council member Matt Orlando speaks during an April event recognizing the end of the Vietnam War, with Mayor Kevin Hartke sitting behind him. Not only did the city's four bond questions, totaling \$475 million, appear to pass easily in Nov. 4 special elections, but so did two charter amendments. (Jason W. Brooks/Independent Newsmedia photo)

Council member Matt Orlando said he's especially grateful to see the \$158 million streets and traffic bond question pass easily, as the city is in dire need of some expensive infrastructure upgrades on that front.

Orlando stands to benefit directly from the passage of Proposition 410. He has filed a statement of intent to run for mayor in 2026, which will be his eighth consecutive year on council.

Proposition 410 establishes a 16-consecutive-year maximum for serving on council before a break must occur. Had the proposition not passed, it would have been ambiguous, according to the city attorney, whether an elected official needed to take time off in between mayoral and council terms.

Orlando said he wasn't surprised the city bonds passed, but with vocal area resistance to the propositions, especially 410, he was less confident.

In a spring work session about charter amendments, more than one council member, knowing a bond election was planned, were concerned about overloading voters with information, high-dollar conversations, or both.

"I'm pleasantly surprised," Orlando said. "I'm always afraid, when you have a wide mix of things on a ballot, it can be too much for voters."

Orlando said it's easy to see a difference between close bond or tax elections and easily passed questions if one knows how much trust voters have in specific local leadership.

"I'm so grateful that so many resi-

dents trust us," Orlando said. "We've hard to make it and keep it that way. They trust us, and we trust the voters."

Council member O.D. Harris, taking to social media, also thanked voters for trusting the city and approving all six measures.

Orlando said he's grateful to Joe Granado, who ran the "Keep Chandler Term Limits" campaign that helped 410 pass, especially with simple messaging. He said he knows the title of the campaign might have seemed to some residents as unclear or not capturing everything in the measure, but that's a challenge inherent in major charter reforms.

"It's tough to encapsulate all of what we were trying to do, in terms of what will fit on a sign," he said.

Orlando said he's unsure if the passage of 410 will change much about 2026 mayor's race, which currently includes himself, state Rep. and former council member Jeff Weninger and Ronnie McKenzie. Kevin Hartke's second and final consecutive term as mayor ends next year.

"I know that I'm still running," Orlando said.

Proposition 410's official wording is: "Shall Article II, Section 2.01 of the City Charter be amended to clarify term limits for councilmembers and mayor, including limits of two consecutive four-year terms for each office, and 16 consecutive years as a combination of councilmember and mayor, establish limits that may apply when there are two years or less between service as a councilmember and mayor, clarify a limitation on the eligibility of members who resign, and eliminate outdated language?"

Proposition 411's official wording is: "Shall Article III, Sections 3.01 and 3.02 of the City Charter be amended to allow the city council to

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FROM THE COVER

Elections

• From page 18

establish the term of the city manager as the council deems appropriate and the amount of severance pay in the event of the manager's termination?"

Orlando sent in this official statement about city elections:

"Thank you to Chandler voters for approving Proposition 410 and reaffirming the importance of experienced leadership in our city. This decision preserves the clear election rules Chandler has followed since the 1960s. We are especially proud of the strong turn-out, which shows that our community not only listens but also stands up for the city and its values. This sends a clear message that Chandler voters will have their voices heard. We appreciate the strong community support behind this measure, including from public safety professionals, the business community, and local leaders. With this foundation in place, Chandler is well-positioned to continue building on its progress,

ushered in by dedicated and experienced leadership."

Chandler Unified's override was passing by a 55%-45% margin as of Nov. 6, with 24.87% voter turnout. The bond was passing with 22,238 votes to 21,789 against it — a difference of 50.51% to 49.49%.

Chandler Unified election questions

The vote comes only a year after CUSD's \$487 million bond failed by a significant margin — its first bond failure in decades — with voter turnout higher due to the presidential and other elections. Chandler Unified voter turnout was listed as 37.1% by Maricopa County Elections. That's high for an odd-year, two-question election, though the city of Chandler, fire and county mental health questions on the ballot helped get more turnout in 2025 in the mail-only election. The county mental health bond vote was relatively close, so CUSD's single-digit bond margin was not really

an outlier in the Valley. But the long list of projects \$271.5 million in bonds will pay for, puts Chandler in a much better position than other districts.

Around the Valley, some overrides were defeated, while more than a dozen districts had bond elections that looked to be likely to be defeated, as of Nov. 11. Chandler Unified Superintendent Frank Narducci appeared in a short video, posted Nov. 10, six days after the election, thanking voters in an apparent acknowledgment the bond and override are likely to pass. "I want to send out heartfelt gratitude on behalf of the entire district for the passage of our override and bond," Narducci said. The superintendent said the vote was historic, as it was the first time Chandler Unified had asked its voters to approve both a modern override and a bond in the same election. "We're thankful for the support," Narducci said. "The override will allow us to keep and recruit top-quality teachers and other staff.

The bond will allow us to keep our buildings 21st-century ready and also safe spaces for our students." Among the biggest beneficiaries of the bond passing, in terms of major upgrades, will be Hartford Sylva Encinas Elementary School. A \$40 million rebuild of the 1957 school, similar to the recent rebuild of nearby Galveston Elementary, is baked into the \$271.5 million bond. HVAC upgrades and equipment replacement is a main aspect of the bond. This includes \$2.5 million of such upgrades as part of a long list of Andersen Junior High School improvements. Narducci thanked voters from all three main CUSD municipalities — the city of Chandler and the towns of Gilbert and Queen Creek — and pointed out that some CUSD schools still get students whose parents opt into a Chandler school despite living elsewhere in the East Valley. "We value you," Narducci said. "We have a well-educated community that values education — and that's our secret sauce."

Data Center

• From page 12

says is "working hand-in-glove with the Trump Administration to ensure American AI dominance."

The proposed plan is for a 420,000-square-foot artificial-intelligence data center to be the centerpiece of a campus with five smaller buildings on a site along Price Road, just northwest of the Dobson intersection, near Intel. The developer would tear down a former Northrup Grumman-owned building in the process.

"If we choose not to move forward with this development, the land will continue to sit vacant (Northrup Grumman vacated the building in 2019),

until federal preemption occurs," Sinema told the planning commission. "Earlier this year, the AI action plan, set out by the Trump Administration, says very clearly that we must continue to proliferate AI and AI data centers across the country."

Sinema, who was announced by the law and lobbying firm Hogan Lovells as part of its team in March, serves as a senior adviser in the global regulatory and intellectual property practice, according to the firm.

Several residents and others, including Chandler Chamber of Commerce President Terri Kimble, advocated for the project at the commission meeting. Area residents who oppose approval call large data centers unproven in terms of all long-term impact being known yet, and

chemical output and water and electricity use as known problems.

Orlando said not only could an under-negotiation infrastructure agreement mean the AI data center could help pay for the city to upgrade utilities and more along the corridor, the initial small increase in jobs would be accompanied by hundreds more jobs involving companies that co-locate to be near Intel and the data center.

"This is where we need to keep looking at the whole picture," Orlando said.

Mayor Kevin Hartke, when asked through a spokesperson for comment specifically on Sinema's federal preemption threat, said he wants to wait until the infrastructure agreement's completed before weighing in.

Harris said there is plenty of room

in Chandler for investors and companies that want to honor the community's vision for the Price Corridor and create real opportunity for residents without harmful side effects.

But he seems opposed to national-level involvement in such local decisions.

"I will not accept erroneous claims that the federal government 'pre-empts' cities on this kind of land-use decision," Harris wrote. "Zoning and land-use approvals are local responsibilities guided by our voter-approved General Plan. As such, I will continue to defend Chandler's right to local self-governance and community self-preservation — protecting our residents' health, safety, water, and quality of life through responsible planning."



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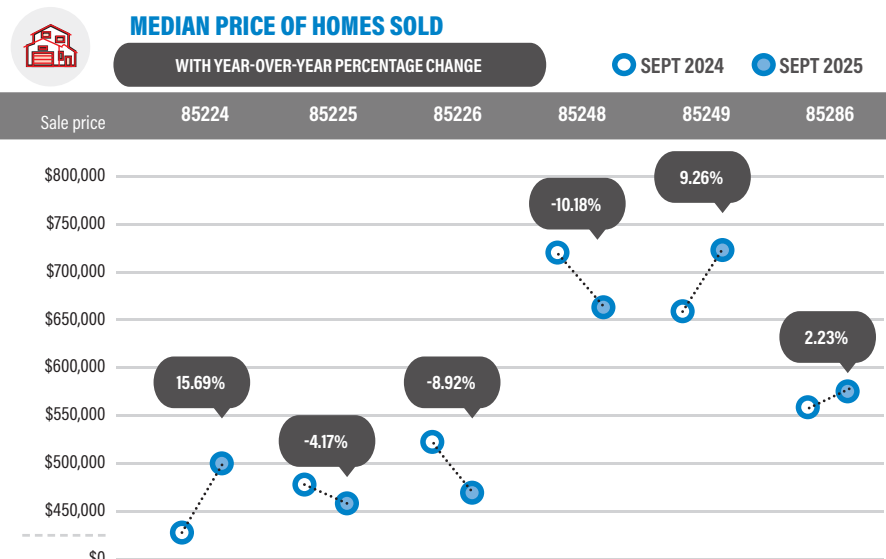
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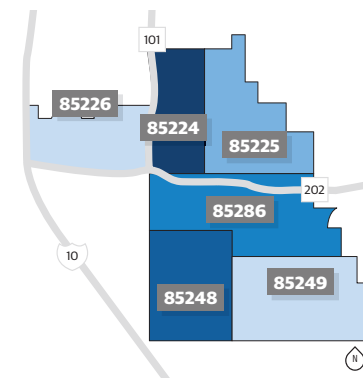
	SEPT 2024	SEPT 2025
85224	56	74
85225	111	164
85226	59	64
85248	72	94
85249	132	195
85286	94	136

AVERAGE DAYS ON THE MARKET

	SEPT 2024	SEPT 2025
85224	42	60
85225	58	73
85226	52	68
85248	71	81
85249	49	71
85286	63	89

NUMBER OF HOMES UNDER CONTRACT

	SEPT 2024	SEPT 2025
85224	36	36
85225	57	64
85226	28	29
85248	23	26
85249	60	61
85286	37	44



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Arts Center

• From page 10

with Navarrete's including a main room with high ceilings and modern hanging lighting, with books on bookcases located in between work tables.

Side rooms include a lab-type classroom with a roll-up door that allows for indoor-outdoor activities. A separate theater-type room can be used in a number of ways.

Two small separate reading rooms and a conference room with movable middle divider are also contained in the center.

Two Navarrete Nighthawks students, Cassie Scott and Caige Henry, held the ribbon for the giant "scissors" used to cut it.

Several Chandler school administrators and representatives of project contractors were at the event, including CUSD Governing Board



A color guard was on hand for the Oct. 16 media arts center ribbon-cutting event at Navarrete Elementary School. (Independent Newsmedia/Jason W. Brooks)

Vice President Barb Mozdzen, board member Kurt Rohrs, CUSD director of elementary education Heather Anguiano, Mark Davenport of SPS-Plus Architects, Willmeng Construction, Inc.'s K-12 director and former Valley superintendent Jason Reynolds.

They joined Navarrete's dean of

• See **Arts Center** on page 36



Chandler Unified director of elementary education Heather Anguiano speaks during the Oct. 16 media arts center ribbon-cutting event at Navarrete Elementary School. Seated are, from the left, Navarrete Principal Vanessa Whitlark, Navarrete dean of students Christie DeCarlo, Jason Reynolds of Willmeng Construction and Mark Davenport of SPS-Plus Architects. The Navarrete students holding the banner behind them are Cassie Scott, left, and Caige Henry. (Independent Newsmedia/Jason W. Brooks)

Agreement

• From page 10

do to succeed in market society?" and "What must a person do to deserve to succeed?"

Board President Patti Serrano disagreed, reading some of the more entrepreneur-centered questions from the course description herself. She added that the board regularly

hears from parents encouraging more teaching of critical-thinking skills.

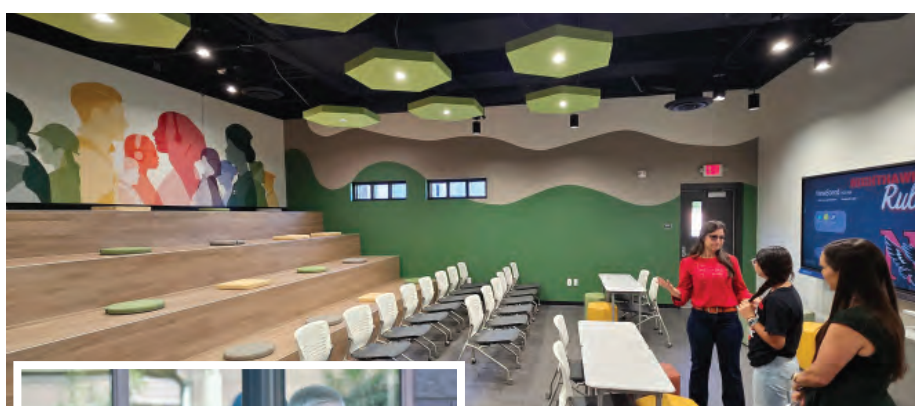
PPEL 101 would be a new addition to the list of U of A-offered dual-enrollment classes, with ENGR 102 and two other classes, both currently offered, continuing to be offered.

The consolidated agreement runs through the 2029-30 school year.

CUSD Assistant Superintendents Jessica Edgar and Mike De La Torre



The main central area in the new media arts center at Navarrete Elementary School has some traditional stacks of books, though its more modern features are its collaborative and individual spaces. (Independent Newsmedia/Jason W. Brooks)



A theater-type room is one of the features of the new media arts center at Navarrete Elementary School. (Independent Newsmedia/Jason W. Brooks)



Cassie Scott, left, and Caige Henry were the Navarrete Elementary School students who held the ribbon cut to commemorate the opening of the school's new media arts center. (Independent Newsmedia/Jason W. Brooks)

both mentioned procedural details of how a college course becomes a Chandler-offered class. Not only is the request for a particular type of course initiated by school staff themselves, each course must align with state and district standards and be vetted by both an instructional coach and the district's course catalog approval process for new classes.

De La Torre said an instructional course determined PPEL 101 aligns

with the macro- and microeconomic standards of a Chandler course called SOC 420.

Rohrs initially moved for PPEL 101 to be removed from the short list of courses, with Heap seconding the motion. The board voted against the motion, 3-2, with Rohrs saying he's "very disappointed."

The board then voted, 3-2, to approve the contract extension as presented.

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'Fuelfest' returns to Chandler on Dec. 6

INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

Fuelfest is a car-enthusiast event that returns to Firebird Motorsports Park in Chandler on Saturday, Dec. 6.

The event includes drag racing, a 700-car show, live action drifting with fan ride alongs, a live concert and special appearances by actors Tyrese Gibson and Cody Walker with fan meet-and-greets, according to a news release.

Firebird Motorsports Park — located at 20000 S. Maricopa Road, near Wild Horse Pass Boulevard — will have its gates open for the event from 1 p.m. to 8 p.m. Admission tickets start at \$38 per person and children 12 and younger are free.

Visit FuelFest.com for ticket and show car registration information.

Now in its seventh year of hosting events globally, FuelFest blends the



Fuelfest is a car-enthusiast event that returns to Firebird Motorsports Park in Chandler on Saturday, Dec. 6. (Courtesy of Zucker Media Group)

enthusiast's passion for the automotive world with appearances by entertainers tied to the auto-racing world, according to the release.

Founded in 2018 by Walker, whose late brother, Paul, was a star of the Fast

& Furious movies, FuelFest is Cody Walker's vision of creating an automotive celebration that incorporates live action motorsports and music.

Gibson, the Walkers' Fast & Furious franchise co-star, help FuelFest

returns to Firebird Motorsports Park for the first time since 2022.

The show will feature an all-new layout and show configuration, quarter-mile drag racing, more than 700 top custom, exotic, rare and exclusive show cars, famous Fast and Furious movie cars, plus drifting and fan ride-alongs.

The Fitment Industries drift pits are open access, allowing fans to see these machines up close.

There's also the new "Taste of Tokyo," giving fans a Japanese underground car-meet vibe, the release states, with a variety of cars likely to be seen on the streets of Tokyo.

VIP access includes a private lounge, premium benefits, early admission access, limited edition merchandise, free swag and auctions.

Visit FuelFest.com for ticket and show car registration information.

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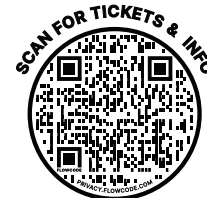
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Budget

• From page 4

account for inflation,” Dunbar said, looking at one of at least six uses of the word inflation in his printed presentation.

Dunbar said the early part of the budget process is where feedback is gathered from council on direction and suggestions and ideas are collected from staff and the public for the upcoming year. He and city chief financial officer Dawn Lang fielded questions and concerns from council at the kickoff work session.

Dunbar said city leaders converted some positions from being funded by federal grants or relief funds was “a good move,” as some programs that affect housing, homeless services or otherwise help the lowest-income residents are on the chopping block, in some ways.

Dunbar said the federal shutdown, which was about three weeks old at the time of the Oct. 13 session, has

prevented the city from getting the latest information on the status of various federal grants and programs.

Dunbar also bragged on the city’s high bond ratings. It hopes to maintain those ratings as the city is assessed again late this year, prior to selling its final set of 2021 bonds.

The kickoff session also was a chance for council to give direct input on priorities and guiding principles for the upcoming budget. One example is that after Council member O.D. Harris wondered aloud if the first word of budget priority No. 4, which begins with “Build the strength of our workforce ...,” was the best word to use. That prompted a thorough council re-examination of the entire list of the five budget priorities that were presented.

Mayor Kevin Hartke agreed with Council member Matt Orlando’s caution about going after grants because of convenience, rather than to meet an urgent city need.

“Don’t chase the golden goose to

the detriment of others,” Hartke said.

Harris said he’s concerned about city staff layoffs. Acting City Manager Jeff Pombier said that possibility hasn’t been in any administrative budget conversations to that point.

“If a federal program completely goes away in a way that affects any of our budgets or staff, we’ll have some of those tough conversations, but we’ll be monitoring those kinds of things constantly,” Pombier said.

Regarding departmental and larger-view budget sessions that take place in the late spring, leading up to final budget approval, especially council’s daylong, all-departments budget briefing, Orlando said he’d like to hear and see more about capital improvement plans.

The next major step in the city’s annual budget cycle, from a public perspective, is a resident budget survey. Last winter, the budget survey was live on the city’s website from Nov. 27 to Jan. 12.

Oakwood

• From page 6

adults living with memory or cognitive changes.

-The Hub: A community center that features memory cafés, monthly mingles, caregiver workshops, and expert-led support groups designed to educate, empower, and connect families navigating dementia and aging challenges.

-The Wellness Clinic & OakFit Gym: A new approach to brain-body health, featuring a gym with age-accessible equipment, relaxation zones, and clinical services, including occupational therapy through the COPE program, counseling, and other wellness resources open to the broader community.

Oakwood Creative Care has been around for about 50 years, the news release states. Visit OakwoodCreativeCare.org to learn more.



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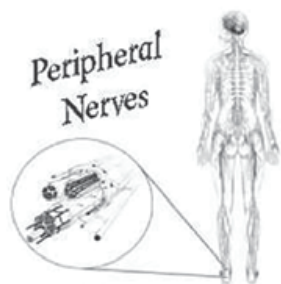
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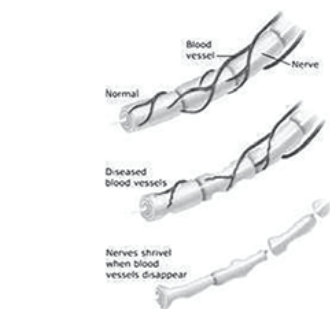
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Mesa, AZ — The most common method your doctor will recommend to treat your chronic pain and/or neuropathy is with prescription drugs that may temporarily reduce your symptoms. These drugs have names such as Gabapentin, Lyrica, Cymbalta, and Neurontin, 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?
- 2) How much nerve damage has been sustained.

NOTE: Once you have sustained 95% nerve loss, there is likely nothing that we can do for you.

- 3) How much treatment will your condition require?

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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 December 30, 2025. Call 480-796-1136 to make an appointment to determine if your chronic pain and peripheral neuropathy can be successfully treated.

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TRANSPORTATION

Compiled by Jason W. Brooks
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

1 Price Road, from Loop 202 to south of Queen Creek Road, will be the site of major restrictions through the estimation completion date of Dec. 1. The estimated 469-day sewer bypass and re-lining will affect both southbound and north bound traffic, in various spots along Price Road. Installation of concrete “K-Rail” barriers along Queen Creek Road, from Price Road to Old Price Road, is expected to add minor restrictions through Dec. 19.

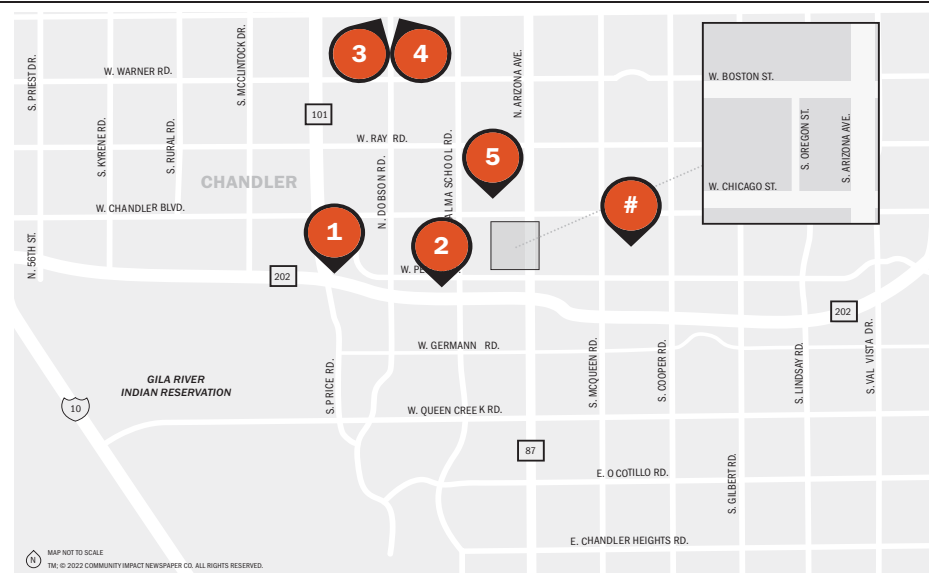
2 Willis Road, from Alma School Road to Holguin Way, will be the site of major restrictions through Thursday, Nov. 20. The estimated 31-day utility project is for “fiber project main layouts” and will involve open trenches for placement of power. Alma School Road, for short distances on either side of the Willis

Road intersection, will be the site of major restrictions as well.

3 Dobson and Elliot roads and Mesquite Street, and streets southwest of the Dobson/Elliot intersection, is an area where full street closures are planned through Sunday, Nov. 23. The estimated 28-day project is for fiber work.

4 Dobson and Elliot roads and Sycamore Place, and streets north-east of the Dobson/Elliot intersection, such as Cortez Circle, will be site of major restrictions through Tuesday, Nov. 25. The purpose for the estimated 31-day project wasn’t specified.

5 Hartford Street, from Erie Street to Chandler Boulevard, will have its southbound lane completely closed until Thursday, Nov. 27. The estimated 18-day closure is for util-



ity work. Nearby, Pleasant Drive’s southbound full closure was set to end earlier this month, as were the both-directions utility closures of Vine and Jay streets.

6 Ryan Road, from Arizona Ave-

nue 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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FROM THE CEO

Enjoy Thanksgiving as you navigate ‘sus’ comments during family dinner



Charlene Bisson

Happy Thanksgiving to our valued readers who make it worthwhile to publish community digital and print publications.

We appreciate your enduring support during this holiday season.

If you're like me and you have teenagers, you may often wonder how the modern language keeps shifting into shortened words, or lingo that doesn't quite make sense.

I'm still trying to understand the phenomenon of 6-7, and why my teenagers and/or their friends try to bait me to say it. And, not so surprisingly, it made word of the year, and an NFL football commercial. Huh?

Moving on, I recently learned fire now means it's cool, and crashed out doesn't mean passing out on the couch. Apparently, it means he's mad or frustrated about something.

I asked AI what the rest of the popular slang words are in 2025 that teenagers and young adults use. Here's the AI quick hits:

Bussin': Describes something as really good or amazing.

No cap: Means "no lie" or "for real."

Ate that: Used to praise someone for doing a great job, especially in a performance or presentation.

Sus: Short for suspicious.

Rizz: Short for charisma, a term used to describe someone's charm or skill in romantic situations.

Bet: Used to show agreement or confirmation.

Iykyk: An acronym for "if you know, you know."

It's giving: Used to describe the vibe or energy something is exuding (e.g., "It's giving 80s").

Drip: Refers to someone's great style or fashionable outfit.

Bae: An abbreviation for "before anyone else" or baby, used to refer to a romantic partner or close friend.

Cap: Means "lie" or "false" (the opposite of "no cap").

Glow-up: A significant improvement in someone's appearance or confidence.

Mid: Describes something that is mediocre or unimpressive.

Big yikes: An expression of embarrassment or secondhand cringe.

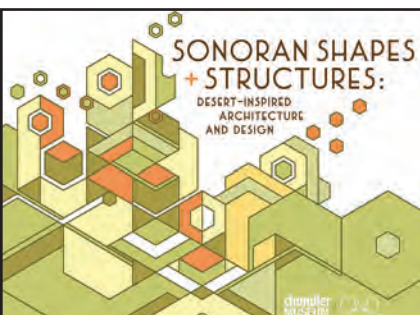
Touch grass: An insult telling someone to go outside and be more in touch with reality.

Delulu: Short for delusional, used to describe someone with unrealistic expectations.

I've heard about half of the above, but not as much as late as 6-7, which is the 2025 Word of the Year from Dictionary.com.

Best wishes during the Thanksgiving holiday.

P.S. If you'd like to share your thoughts on slang language that's not inappropriate, please email me at cbisson@iniusa.org.



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A group poses at the Pregnancy Care Center of Chandler, which commissioned its new mobile unit, named "Esther Naomi," with an Oct. 8 ribbon-cutting. Esther Naomi is a van that will allow staff to extend reach of providing pregnancy tests, ultrasound exams to expectant mothers around the Valley. (Courtesy of Compass Christian Church)

Pregnancy Care

• From page 6

Chandler Mayor Kevin Hartke, Chandler Chamber CEO Terri Kimble and others.

Compass Christian Church, which started the Pregnancy Care Center about 17 years ago, posted about the ribbon-cutting on its social media.

"We are so excited as they commissioned their new mobile unit," the

church wrote. "That will allow them to extend their reach of providing pregnancy tests, ultrasounds, hope, and the love of Jesus to expectant mothers around the Valley."

Learn more about the center at pcchandler.com.

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

RAIN Group

• From page 6

dynamic mix of proven methodologies and offerings that can immediately and collectively contribute to our client's learning and development journeys," he stated.

McDonald left The Brooks Group, where he served as chief sales officer, to join Rain. His prior experience includes chief revenue officer at Garten, managing director at Challenger and Gartner (formerly CEB), and chief operating officer at Oakwood Worldwide.

McDonald began his career at FedEx Office, where he held several sales and operations leadership roles.

"Scott's brings deep experience in scaling high-performing teams and delivering measurable client results,"

stated Stu Packham, group chief executive officer at Alchemist Group. "He. His leadership will drive RAIN Group forward as we expand our reach and deepen our impact."

Following the acquisition by Alchemist, RAIN Group co-founder and former president, Mike Schultz, stepped down and transitioned into a new role as special advisor to the board.

McDonald holds a bachelor's degree in advertising from Indiana University-Bloomington and completed the executive education program at the University of Texas-Austin's McCombs School of Business.

The release states RAIN Group has more than 20 years of researching and enabling top sales performance, helping enterprise teams drive results through coaching, reinforcement, and tech-enabled solutions.



The Javing family — from the left, Kade, Donald, Kellie and Josephine — enjoy a walk in the snow near their Montana home. Kade and Josephine split time between Montana and Chandler, where Josephine hones her ice dancing skills at the Ice Den and Kade plays on a soccer team. (Courtesy of Flutter PR)

Ice Skating

• From page 16

Chandler.

Kade Javing plays soccer for a team in Chandler, thanks to a partnership with ASU Prep, so the winter/spring semester is quite the adventure for this athletic family.

In October, Josephine Javing was set to spend time at the Ice Den in Chandler, selecting music and learning new programs for the coming competitive season.

She'll commute back and forth to the Valley at least once a month be-

tween now and January, then she'll put in extra hours at the Ice Den as she gears up for competition season that begins again in March.

Meanwhile, she'll still be hitting the rink twice a day — all while doing normal teen activities — all while completing her ASU Prep schoolwork and college applications in between.

Attending classes online gives Javing the flexibility of being at the rink when everybody else is at school, and it leaves time for her part-time job coaching beginners and lower-level skaters.

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CUSD

• From page 10

questions in English and Spanish, but any other languages, including Mandarin, would cost CUSD \$400 to translate it.

The modified Google option can apparently handle all 64 of the district's home-spoken languages, as implemented by HYA at no extra charge to the district.

Board President Patti Serrano said she feels it would be more transparent to attempt to get superintendent feedback from "a minimum" of all 64 of those home-language families.

Vice President Barb Mozdzen agreed the modified Google format was the better approach; not all board members agreed.

"The Google survey says it takes 5 to 10 minutes for 17 kind of broad-based questions," board member Kurt Rohrs said. "The

HYA survey is 10 to 15 minutes for 31 very specific questions. I understand parents don't have a lot of time, but I think they have five more minutes for this. I don't want to unnecessarily restrict the amount of public input we have on this. This is a rare opportunity to really study our district and get a lot of valuable feedback."

Mozdzen said the Google format might end up being the only point of contact some families have with the district throughout the superintendent search, with in-person forums or focus groups unlikely to be held in more than a handful of different languages.

Board member Claudia Mendoza agreed with Mozdzen and Serrano's quantity message: Getting input from the most types of CUSD families on the search is the priority.

One of the representatives stated getting at least 10% of district

enrollment in responses, or about 3,900, in Chandler's case, is a participation goal.

Rohrs made a motion to approve the HYA comprehensive questions at the start of the discussion. It was never seconded, and about 45 minutes later, Heap moved to approve the HYA survey questions, adding translation of CUSD's next top-five home languages after English and Spanish.

Rohrs seconded Heap's motion. Serrano pointed out that even with those five languages added, the survey still wouldn't reach about 1,000 households. The motion failed, 3-2, with Serrano, Mozdzen and Mendoza voting against it.

The final vote was taken more than an hour after the choice was first presented, at the start of the fifth and final hour of the board's marathon study session and regular-meeting evening.

Arts Center

• From page 24

students Christie DeCarlo and Principal Vanessa Whitlark.

Anguiano, Davenport, Reynolds and Whitlark all spoke briefly at the event.

Spending on the project was approved in phases, the last of which was on a March 29 board vote. Shumway Leadership Academy's "Launchpad" media arts center was unveiled Oct. 13.

The reimagination, which include the \$35 million rebuild of Galveston Elementary, have all been funded by the district's \$290 million 2019 bond so far. The only reimagination project in the \$271.5 million CUSD bond on the Nov. 4 ballot this year is a rebuild of Hartford Encinas Elementary School, which opened in 1958 and is the district's oldest active elementary school.

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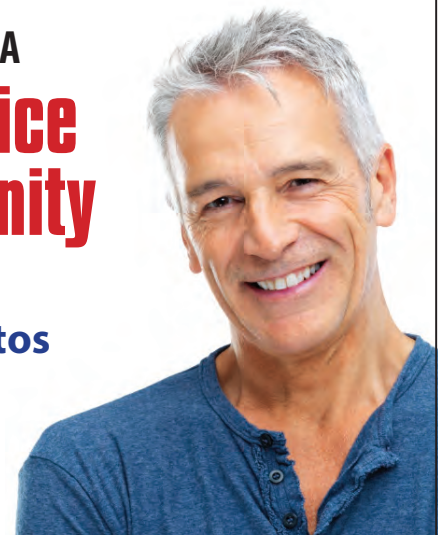
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