

Cave Creek OKs financing options for Harquahala Valley water purchase; **6**



CAVE CREEK/CAREFREE INDEPENDENT

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Upscale Singers present Christmas concert; **16**

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Cave Creek fire and rescue director retires after 51 years of service

By Jeff Wendt

INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

Jim Ford had no plans of being a firefighter in 1975.

He was 19 years old, taking some college courses, when he got a call that changed the trajectory of his life.

"Initially I wasn't interested,"

Ford said. "I was right out of high school and I was taking first aid and extrication classes at the community college. Someone with Rural Metro contacted me, "We have a temporary opening at our downtown Scottsdale station and with your certifications already, we can put you there for four

months and see if you like it or not."

That began a 51 year love of labor that came to an end Nov. 30 as Ford retired as director of community risk reduction for the town of Cave Creek.

• See **Ford** on page 4

Carefree officials push back against new Arizona law

By Zev Black

INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

The Town of Carefree Planning and Zoning Commission held a meeting Nov. 10 to discuss House Bill 2447, which requires municipalities to designate an administrator to review and approve plans without public input. This bill was approved by Gov. Katie Hobbs on March 31 and will go into effect Dec. 31.

For the Town of Carefree, this designated person would be Planning Director and Zoning Administrator Stacey Bridge-Denzak.

In addition, the bill puts an expedited review process into place for those in good standing with code and allows at-risk submittals for infrastructure work.

Chairperson Peter Burns does not approve.

"I think it's very important that the people of Carefree understand why the legislature did this, it's offensive frankly," he said. "They usurp the authority of the council,

• See **Planning** on page 3

Cave Creek Director of Community Risk Reduction Jim Ford stands in front of a town of Cave Creek fire truck. (Courtesy of Jim Ford)



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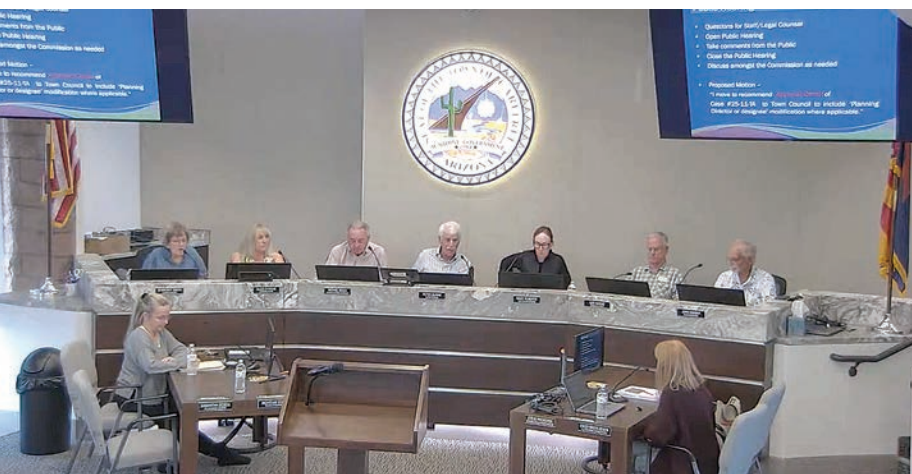
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FROM THE COVER



The new house bill will go into effect on Dec. 31. (Submitted Photo/Town of Carefree)

Planning

• From page 1

the Planning and Zoning Commission and the public to offer input on a development that's in their neighborhood. It's atrocious."

Town of Carefree Councilmember Colleen Rose-Scurti also disapproves.

"This bill takes all the power away from the public, from the government entities and puts it with one person," she said. "I love Stacey, but it's just not a good thing. Hopefully there will be some opposition to this, some revisions coming in the next legislative session. But I think that we need to be aware and we need to work on it."

The town staff is looking for ways to add these new requirements while staying in line with the larger mission of the Zoning Ordinance Update. They have coordinated with the Town's legal counsel and Michael Baker International, the Town's Zoning Ordinance Update consultant, to determine the best course of action.

"This approach allows the Town and community another opportunity to evaluate these legislative changes in context with other potential updates, ensuring that all amendments are thoughtfully integrated and remain consistent with the commu-

nity's long-term goals and expectations," Bridge-Denzak stated in the meeting agenda.

They have found four documents that required amending: the Subdivision Ordinance amendment, the Zoning Ordinance amendment, the Site Plan Development Review Manual and the Land Divisions Development Review Manual.

The commission voted on and unanimously passed Zoning Case No. 25-11-TA to allow for these modifications to the code.

Burns is also looking for other ways to circumvent the new law while still complying.

"I'm not trying to stand in the way of getting this done by Jan. 26, which is what the mandate is," he said. "I'm wondering if we could insert in our code where the Planning Director might be able to call a public hearing to gather input. I would like to comply with the law, but try to weasel around to accomplish some things that maybe we would like to see in the law."

He asked Bridge-Denzak to speak with the League of Cities and Towns about the bill and "urge the legislature to reconsider approval of 2447."

To watch the full meeting, go to youtube.com/watch?v=tUchJMN-WGfI&t=678s.



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FROM THE COVER

Ford

• From page 1

Ford, a Cave Creek resident, was honored during the Nov. 18 Cave Creek Town Council meeting for the years of service provided to not only Cave Creek, but with both Rural Metro and the Scottsdale Fire Department.

“I remember when we decided that we weren’t cutting it with our fire protection, that Carrie (Dyrek), the town manager at the time, came and said, “Well, Scottsdale has this fella who knows everything about fire,”” Mayor Robert Morris said during a presentation of a plaque to Ford during the council meeting. “And so we go through all this process, and then afterwards someone said it really difficult putting in a fire department from scratch.

“It was easy, we just gave it to Jim and said do the financing. That was the hard part. But the fire implementing was seamless,” Morris added.

Ford’s passion for firefighting took him from the Rural Metro Fire Department to Scottsdale in August 1975.

“Back in 1975, there were only three fire stations in the entire town of Scottsdale,” Ford said. “So they opened up positions and I passed all the testing and joined them.”

Current town manager Grady Miller read some of Ford’s achievements after Ford gave his first quarter report to the Council.

Ford worked through the ranks in Scottsdale, arising to the position of Deputy Fire Chief, Miller said.

Ford helped guide that department from three stations through its big growth to 16. Along the way, he became a respected expert in fire prevention and safety.



Cave Creek Director of Community Risk Reduction Jim Ford, right, and Daisy Mountain Fire Chief Brian Tobin present their quarterly report at the Town Council Meeting Nov. 18, 2025 in Cave Creek. (Independent Newsmedia/Jeff Wendt)

Ford successfully led Scottsdale to adopt a sprinkler ordinance, which resulted in saving both property and lives. It served as a model to other communities not only here in the Valley but elsewhere in the country. That ordinance led Ford to induction into the Arizona Fire Fighters Hall of Fame in 2009.

“Writing those papers and impactful studies on residential sprinklers in 1985 got me into the Hall of Fame, and it got me recognized all around the county and eventually all around the world,” Ford said.

Ford also earned the James M. Shannon Advocacy Medal in 2022 from the National Fire Protection Agency for recognition of his involvement with groundbreaking residential sprinkler initiatives in Scottsdale.

Ford then inducted into the Scott-

sdale Hall of Fame in 2023.

“That just shocked me, I had no idea,” Ford said. “That’s reserved for former mayors and chamber folks. I never thought that I had that much of an impact on the business community.”

In 2021, Ford was tapped by Dyrek to help determine the direction Cave Creek wanted to go with its fire and rescue services.

“Initially I came out in 2021 on loan from Scottsdale,” Ford said. “I was paid by Scottsdale through an intergovernmental agreement and I would work in Cave Creek to put a plan together of options for Cave Creek to move forward.”

“Once I completed the first year and the intergovernmental agreement came up, Cave Creek decided they wanted to hire me,” Ford added, “and so I retired from Scottsdale

and then took the position full time in Cave Creek.”

Developing an intergovernmental agreement with Daisy Mountain Fire & Medical in 2022 is what Ford says is one of his proudest moments working for Cave Creek.

“The town had nothing at the time,” Ford said. “It was a win-win for both. People didn’t want property taxes in the town. We figured out what the protection levels needed to be.”

“The town committed to that level of protection,” Ford added. “We did and we got everything. So the town went from having zero, not owning a station, not owning a truck, not having staff, not having a hose, to now reaping the benefits of the agreement.”

As far as who will fill his shoes in Cave Creek, Ford says he will leave that up to Miller and Fire Chief Brian Tobin from Daisy Mountain to determine.

Morris thanked Ford for his service to the town.

“Your contributions are going to last far beyond all the people in this room,” Morris said. “Our town is going to be safer for decades and maybe hundreds of years into the future with what you’ve done.”

“You’re so easy to work with,” Morris added. “You are just an absolute dream to work with. It’s been just wonderful to have you a part of Cave Creek. I don’t know what we’re going to do without you.”

“I am leaving the department in good hands,” Ford said.

As Ford heads into retirement, he plans to remain in his role as executive director of the Arizona Fire Chiefs Association, a position he has had since 2023, so he can help with future firefighters in the industry.

“It’s also time to travel, do some different stuff, and have a little recreation time as well,” Ford said.



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WATER

Cave Creek OKs financing options for Harquahala Valley water purchase

By Jeff Wendt

INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

The Cave Creek Town Council voted 5-2 Tuesday night to approve financing options for the upcoming purchase of water rights in the Harquahala Valley area west of Phoenix.

The town will move forward with an application for a loan from the Water Infrastructure Finance Authority of Arizona, as well as authorizing to pursue excise tax obligations, and to authorize reimbursement of expenditures from the General Fund if needed. The town could also decide to use a mixture of all the options available to them, but that would be decided at a future council meeting.

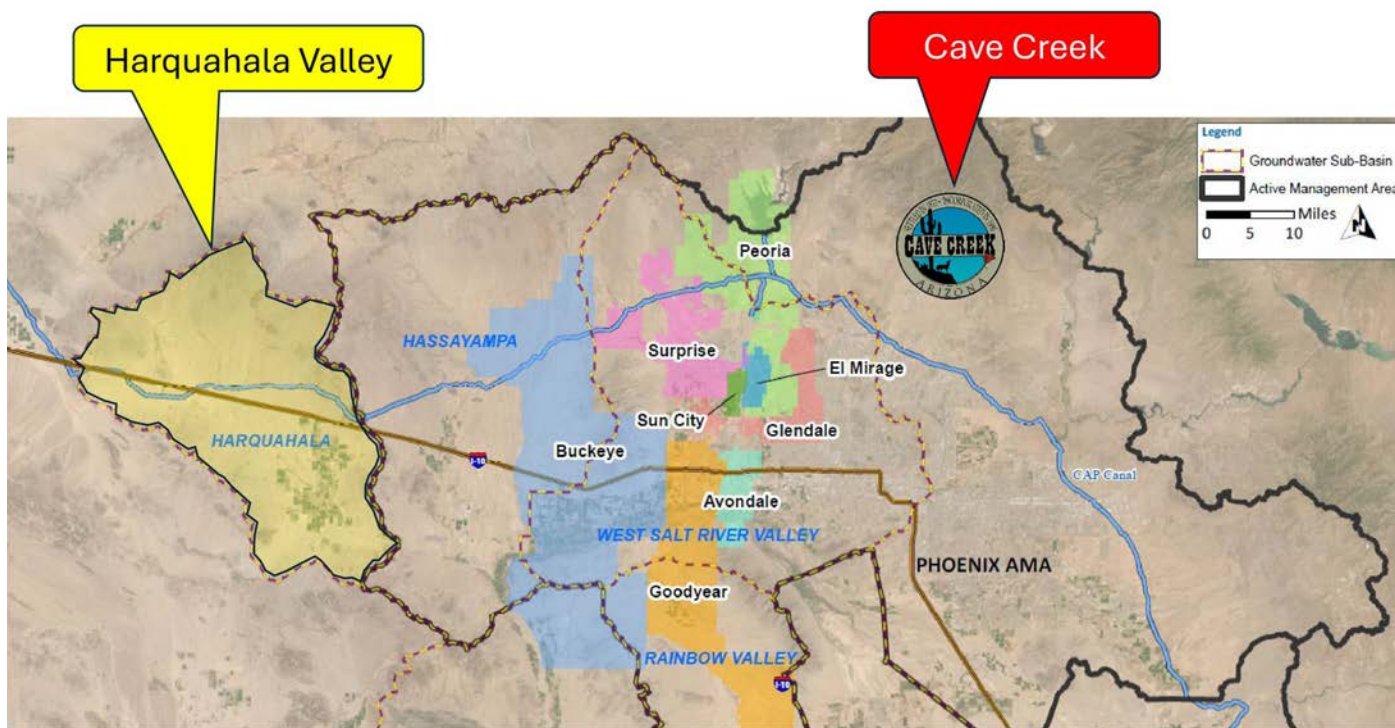
"We are going through an extensive due-diligence process," Vice Mayor Kathryn Royer said. "We're doing our extensive investigations of everything related to it."

"We're doing the responsible thing as elected town councilmembers," Royer added, "That is to provide for the future of our town in terms of its water supply."

Prior to the council voting on the measure, Town Finance Director Cherie White and town bond counsel Timothy A. Stratton presented the pros and cons to all the options placed before the council. And the town's Municipal Advisor Jim Stricklin walked the councilmembers through all the options they had.

Mayor Robert Morris reminded everyone that this is still in the beginning stages.

"This is no action, this is part of the investigation that people want to know the answer, you have to know the options," Morris said. "This is



The Cave Creek Town Council approved financing mechanism for the purchase of a lot in the Harquahala Valley for groundwater at the meeting on Nov. 4, 2025. (Courtesy of the Town of Cave Creek)

one of the options, the financing of it."

Morris also reminds residents that the town is 14 months away from a reduction in water received from the Colorado River via the Central Arizona Project.

"We are anywhere from zero to 100% reduction of water from the Colorado River," Morris said. "At 100%, we're in deep trouble."

Councilmember Cynthia Driskell also knows they are up against a timeline to get this matter taken care of.

"I agree the town has a very challenging timeline to deal with the water and augmentation issues," Driskell said. "And no one knows this better than the staff, who has been working

diligently trying to find us options and find us information."

"Personally I don't have a firm opinion on the best course of action, but I consider this resolution to be a step in the right direction to start the process to get funding for water augmentation if that is our choice."

Councilmembers Tom Augherton and Dusty Rhoades opposed the measure, as they did in opposing the authorization of the purchase of the lot at the Oct. 21 meeting.

"I just want to clarify a couple things," Augherton said. "What this money is allocated for is an acre of land in the Harquahala Valley. It doesn't bring the wet water, it brings you the ability to obtain the wet wa-

ter with the affiliation of the organization. And then the other unspecified costs that come with getting the water from ground to the town of Cave Creek."

One of the options Augherton would like to see is the possible privatization of water companies in Cave Creek.

"The staff is looking to put out RFPs (Requests for Proposals) out to test the private sector's interest in privatizing the water companies in Cave Creek," Augherton said. "If we had the answer to the RFP's in the process to selling the water companies and using that asset value for other priorities in the town, this might take on a different complexion."

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REAL ESTATE

News from the Cromford Report

By Janet Mohr
MOHR REALTY

I am really feeling these statistics. The supply is very low in our area. Active listing counts are dropping quickly now. This is following a typical seasonal pattern, but the trend is stronger than we normally expect to see.. For all areas and types in the ARM-LS database, we record a 2.3% decrease over the last week in the number of active listings without a contract. One of the drivers of this trend

is the drop in the arrival rate of new listings. In the last week we have seen just 1,653 listing records added to the database. This is down 7% from the same week last year. For most of 2025 we have seen higher arrivals compared to 2024, so this new trend is a surprise. Cancellations are unusually high, with 622 listings changed to cancelled status in the last 7 days. Expirations are modest at only 146, while closings are 1,559. This means the last 7 days have seen a listing success rate of only

50.7%. This is discouraging for sellers. Indeed, it seems that sellers are pessimistic and that a larger number than normal are taking their homes off the market until the new year. When a lot of sellers do this, it makes life easier for the remaining listings, since they have fewer competitors. The drop in supply has caused the Cromford® Supply Index to change direction and head lower. At the same time, demand is moving steadily higher, even though it remains far



below normal. We therefore expect the Cromford® Market Index to cruise to a higher level over the next 5 weeks, moving above 80 again. This is good news for the sellers who remain active.

Statistical Market Analysis

Status	# Listings	List Volume	Sold Volume	List Price	Sold Price	Sale/List Price	Approx SQFT	List Price Per Approx SQFT	Sold Price Per Approx SQFT	Agent Days on Market	Cumulative Days on Market
Closed	3	1,885,400	1,865,500	Low	599,000	605,000	0.98	2,469	242.61	245.04	34
				Avg	628,467	621,833	0.99	2,469	254.54	251.86	70
				High	650,000	640,000	1.01	2,469	263.26	259.21	131
Cancelled	2	1,283,000	0	Low	608,000	0	0.00	2,469	246.25	0.00	75
				Avg	641,500	0	0.00	2,469	259.82	0.00	76
				High	675,000	0	0.00	2,469	273.39	0.00	77
Overall	5	3,168,400	1,865,500	Low	599,000	605,000	0.98	2,469	242.61	245.04	34
				Avg	633,680	621,833	0.99	2,469	256.65	251.86	72
				High	675,000	640,000	1.01	2,469	273.39	259.21	131

Selection Criteria for Comparable Properties

Specified listings from the following search: Property type Residential; Inside the map search Rectangle (-112145212,33858789,-112116974,33824712); Inside the map search Rectangle (-112117746,33861212,-112093027,33842323); Status of 'Active', 'Cancelled', 'Closed', 'Coming Soon', 'Expired', 'Pending', 'Temp Off Market','UCB (Under Contract-Backups)','CCBS (Contract Contingent on Buyer Sale)'; Approx SQFT between 2200 and 2500; # of Interior Levels between 2 and 2; Subdivision like %anthem%; Under Contract Date relative 365 days back; Close of Escrow Date relative 184 days back; Expire Date relative 184 days back; Temp Off Market Date relative 365 days back; Cancel Date relative 365 days back.

Closed Listings

MLS #	Address	FE	Bed	Bth	SqFt	YR	OLP	LP	SP COE	LP/SP\$/SF	ADOM	CDOM
6923222	41122 N MAJESTY WAY	42.5FDPSO3G3S	4	2.5	2,469	2001	650,000	650,000	640,000	10/30/2025	263.26 / 259.21	34
6837782	3259 W MORSE DR	42.5FP3G	4	2.5	2,469	2000	699,000	636,400	620,500	08/28/2025	257.76 / 251.32	131
6880704	40814 N MAJESTY CT	42.5FD3G3S	4	2.5	2,469	2001	599,000	599,000	605,000	07/30/2025	242.61 / 245.04	45

Cancelled Listings

MLS #	Address	FE	Bed	Bth	SqFt	YR	OLP	LP	SP COE	LP/SP\$/SF	ADOM	CDOM
6842017	40814 N MAJESTY CT	42.5FD3G2S	4	2.5	2,469	2001	625,000	608,000		246.25 / NA	75	75
6756716	3125 W STEINBECK DR	32.5FRXO3G3S	3	2.5	2,469	1999	720,000	675,000		273.39 / NA	77	73

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FROM THE MAYOR

The Holiday Season in Cave Creek is About Community

By Robert Morris
CAVE CREEK MAYOR

Cave Creek is celebrated for its independent spirit and its commitment to western heritage. The community embraces activities such as hiking, horseback riding, motorcycling, biking, and enjoying the arts. Most importantly, it fosters a strong sense of community, which attracts many people to live here.

The holiday season is a time for sharing, and I am proud to say that the residents of Cave Creek



Robert Morris

are known for their generosity and support for one another. Our Town is home to several non-profit organizations that make a significant difference in the lives of those in need. For instance, the

Desert Hills Food Bank has reported a 30% increase in demand for its services in just the past month. While the Food Bank accepts food donations year-round, the need is

particularly critical this Christmas season due to the recent federal government shutdown, which has left many families struggling to meet basic food needs. Additionally, the Daisy Mountain Fire District and the Daisy Mountain Firefighters Charities run an annual holiday family adoption program to support families in need during this festive season.

These are just a couple of the outstanding organizations making an impact in our community, with

many others contributing in various ways. To learn more about some of these incredible organizations helping those in need this holiday season, or to discover the benefits of volunteering, please visit www.DesertFoothillsVolunteers.com.

As both a resident and the Mayor of Cave Creek, I feel fortunate to be part of such a beautiful and caring community. On behalf of the Town, I wish you and your family a Happy Hanukkah and a Merry Christmas this holiday season!

Coffee, wifi, music, art and sun!

Coffee, wifi, music, art and sun. Yes, this is what brings the Snowbirds back to roost. So today we will join the “others” at three of our favorite patios.

First, we will venture into the human-built cave — The Grotto Cafe — and order our usual, Machiatto in a real cup and an americano in paper with a lid, stir-stick and napkin — but wait! Don wants something more traditional. He went for the house drip with half-and-half in a paper to-go cup! (Where are we going?)

Is an americano really American? Maybe the beans were from America and brought in by the Red Truck out front! Whatever. Fact check: Columbian Beans.

The American baristas and blueberry scones were most excellent as was the quick and friendly service. Very intriguing feng shui. No bats... but beware of the grackles!

We wind our way through the labyrinth of private spaces to find the perfect spot. So, it appears that a grot-

to is really not a cafe or a bar or a shop or a bodega, but rather a space or grotto, as defined by the Greeks, then the Romans, then the English, and finally by the Creekers. Google it.

Now that we understand what we have entered, we come in, do the lineup, order from the rather extensive menu on the wall behind the attentive baristas. It can get crowded with people you may or may not know, but that must mean it's good, right? We needed the time to read the wall and investigate pastries. We were happy to see muffins and scones served as cave food.



We admire the truly impressive array of musician photos, mostly from the 60s and 70s, not to mention the Buck Owens style guitar on the wall. Wow! Of course, Don could identify the album's artists ad infinitum and

every song they sang and when.

More coffee please. The building itself is a work of some kind of wonderfully creative art — concrete art? Grotto art? The tree covered patio is inviting and comfortable. The machiatto was delightful except that Don kept getting up to look for the recycling bin for his paper cup and stir and napkin. There are lots of birds,

including grackles, which created a new appreciation for patios and the furnishings and a new story.

We decided to follow the Trail of the Grackle (long story — more to come) and visit a couple more patios.

As we often do, we stopped at Local Jonny's. The most sought-after part of the outside of Local Jonny's is the “front porch” (so to speak), where hungry customers sit up on high tables and watch the world go by. (Don reports that it's his granddaughter's favorite place to sit and eat in Cave Creek.)

When live music is happening, the spacious, shady, side patio is good for experiencing the music up close or back a ways, whichever.

In our case, the front porch was full, so we had coffee in the back room. We often head in that direction anyway, since it's a great quiet morning spot to be served breakfast and assume our roles as local (ahem)

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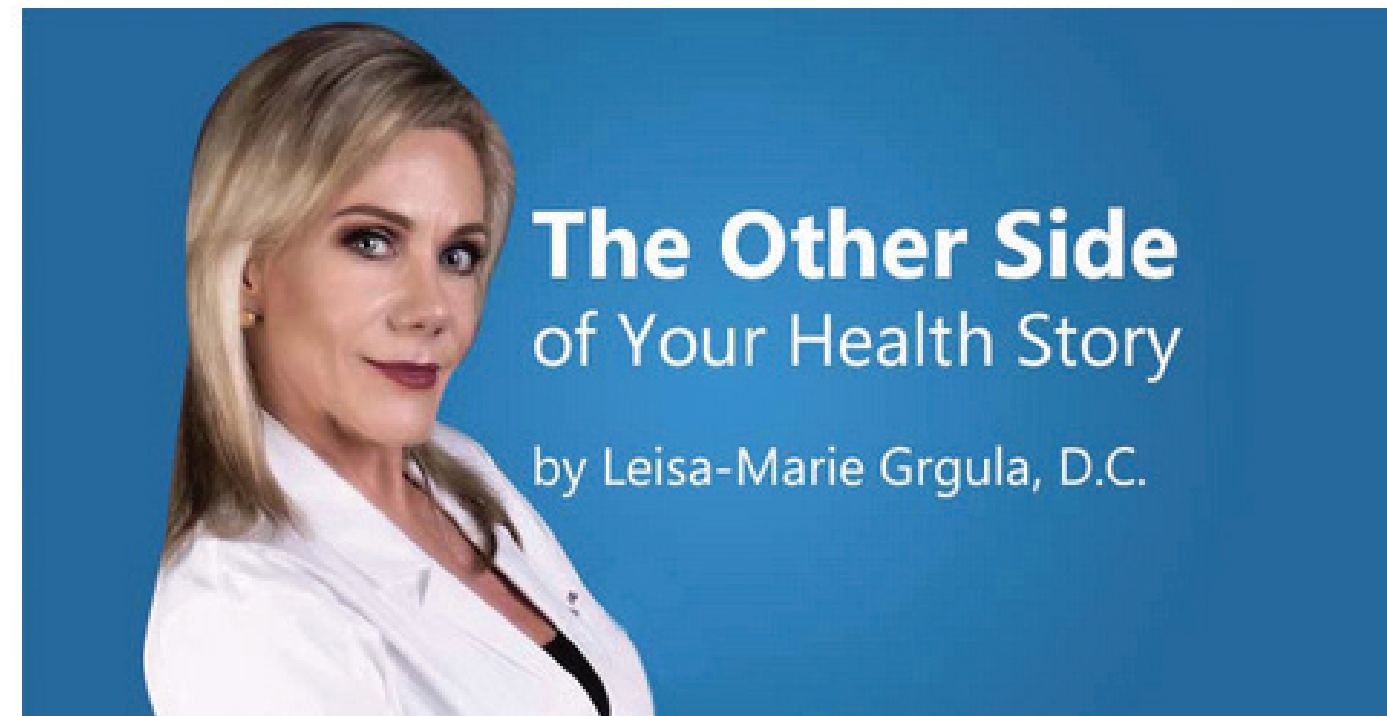
The celebration goes on for my 30th year in practice with a holiday gift for you

Prioritizing your health: Is it really worth compromising? You've spent years building a lifestyle defined by comfort, success, and rewarding experiences. Now, as you embrace your later years, it's becoming clear that your greatest treasure isn't your wealth, it's your health.

Celebrating my 30th year as a physician, I've observed why some patients recover faster and maintain better overall wellness. Their key to success? They never compromise their health. My commitment and purpose, widely recognized through my work online, television, radio, and newspaper, is straightforward: empowering people to enjoy long, vibrant, pain-free lives, without drugs or surgery. Our last promotion was such a success that I want to extend it for the holidays. Especially for those who may have missed my April article. **I am offering 30% off regenerative treatments, including stem cells, until December 31, 2025!**

At first glance, premium natural healthcare may seem more costly. But ask yourself honestly: what would it really cost you, in lost time, comfort, and overall life quality, to settle for something less?

Take knee replacement surgery, for instance. Often overlooked are the hidden costs, lengthy downtime, painful recovery periods, dependency on caregivers, ongoing appointments, and medications. There are also the inherent risks and stress associated with surgical procedures and prolonged rehabilitation. The number one cause of mortality in the US is heart disease. The use of NSAIDS, like ibuprofen, when used for chronic conditions like joint pain,



increase the risk of heart attack and stroke. By getting regenerative therapies to assist the body to regrow tissue rather than hiding the pain, patients can reduce their risk of heart disease greatly. I will be writing an article on this subject soon.

Natural and regenerative treatments including stem cells, present a clear alternative. Patients who choose these methods spend significantly less time in medical offices and pharmacies, thereby reducing disruptions to their everyday lives and reduce their risk of heart disease. They maintain their independence, mobility, and precious time with family and friends.

The long-term results reinforce this approach. Those investing in proactive health care typically face fewer chronic issues, experience

fewer flare-ups, and enjoy a noticeably better quality of life.

Savvy patients recognize that true value lies not in minimal upfront expenses but in sustained health, happiness, and independence. Prioritizing your health now ensures you won't face greater costs, financially, physically, and emotionally in the future.

Ultimately, the essential question isn't whether premium natural healthcare costs more upfront; it's whether you're willing to risk your long-term wellbeing by choosing anything less.

If you're committed to naturally maintaining optimum health, vitality, and well-being, and you appreciate the real value of investing in yourself, then we invite you to experience exceptional care tailored spe-

cifically for you.

Should you or anyone you know, suffer from chronic joint pain, lung issues, nerve pain, neuropathy, or many other debilitating conditions please call my office to schedule a complimentary consultation to see if you qualify for treatments that keep you in the game of life without stressful downtime. If you qualify, I will honor this discount as a holiday gift to you or to your friends and family.

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Janey's Coffeehouse (Courtesy of Jim White)

The Cup

• From page 10

journalists. We've mentioned Local Jonny's in several of our past articles. People seem to show up from all over the place to enjoy the food and atmosphere. Their breakfast burrito es muy bueno! Firecreek Coffee.

Then there is Janey's patio, for basking in the sun in the early morning, having great coffee, and watching the customers with dogs. These phenomena could be an entire future CUP article.

People talk to them and ask them what they would like to eat. (They

somehow communicate.) You must check out the "tiny monks' booths" inside on your way outside. They're three feet by three feet and seat 4 small monks or 4 jockeys.

Outside, the Sonoran desert is right there, on top of the hill in back of the patio. Lush after the rain. (You can sit at the bar inside, too, and look out on that same desert scene.)

There's a real stage on the east end of the patio, and the owner, Julian, has a large calendar out front with who's coming to play on weekends. There are plenty of full-size picnic tables with umbrellas — coffee with breakfast in the morning,

lunch, and music with a full menu on weekends.

Then there's the red ATM machine on the west end (Don could not get his crypto to work), along with the Liverpool FC Soccer Club flag on the wall. We love Premier League Football. This patio where we sat drinking our drip with half-and-half and oat milk, respectively, is among the most comfortable in town. Makes you want to wear something Creeker. We left, carefree and caffeinated. We checked out all the license plates in the parking lot.

Incidentally, we received several pieces of correspondence from our

last articles. One from a real monk who praised the tiny booths and paper cups to go. Where does a monk go anyway?

Another reader asked why Don's coffee was American? Oh. Someone please answer this for Don. We can't.

Another follower asked if we know what Army Coffee is. We do. Cowperson Coffee as well.

More on the Tale of the Grackles and the "tiny monks' booths" to follow.

Welcome back Snowbirds.

If you have a fun story from the history of our Coffee Row, please write to Don and Jim at The CUP, AZNews@iniusa.org

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Memberships



UTILITIES

Town of Carefree approves new water pipes

By Zev Black
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

The Board of Directors of the Town of Carefree Arizona Utilities Community Facilities District and the Board of Directors of the Carefree Water Company, hosted a joint meeting Tuesday, Nov. 4.

The purpose of this session, held at Carefree Town Council Chambers, was to discuss Resolution 2025-03, which would authorize a project that would replace 4,000 feet of existing, aging pipeline with a new water pipe.

The current pipe is a three-inch PVC pipe. The new pipe going in would be eight inches in diameter and be made from ductile iron. Seven new fire hydrants in the highlands would also be installed.

"The advantages that that replacement affords are many," Carefree engineer C.J. DiMaggio said. "The ductile iron material can withstand higher pressures. It can convey more volume, that's just common sense ... because it can take more pressure, it can allow the installation of hydrants, the extension of fire protection services into this part of the town."

The pipeline is going to feed to the existing Carefree Water Company tanks that are in Silver Saddle. It will be able to convey water uphill and downhill depending on demand.

The majority of the funding for this project, 80% of the total price, was expected to come from the Environmental Protection Agency Community Grant. This is on hold due to the ongoing federal government shut-down.

The total bid amount was \$894,466, meaning that the EPA would contribute \$715,573. The rest



C.J. DiMaggio presents the waterline project to the Town Council. (Submitted photo/Town of Carefree)

of the \$178,893 would come from the Utilities Community Facilities District. A 25% contingency was requested for UCFD-approved change orders or a variance in "hard dig" ground.

Hard dig is when an excavator encounters naturally formed cement in the gravel. It can be extremely difficult to dig around.

DiMaggio said that around 20% of the 4,000 foot pipe qualifies as "hard dig." He said that this could add \$70 to \$75 per foot, or \$200,000 to \$300,000 total.

The resolution was passed unanimously by the council.

Mayor John Crane also gave an update on the open general manager position after Greg Crossman's retirement.

"He did a great job for us in the 13 years he was here," Crane said. "He did the water consolidation project, which was a big heavy lift."

Several resumes have been received and the town is going through the interview process.

To watch the full meeting, go to youtube.com/watch?v=4e4EwWk-1SWs.



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Sun., Dec. 14, 2025 4:00 p.m.

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aask-az.org

A NEW LEAF

A New Leaf is dedicated to helping Valley families overcome homelessness and escape domestic violence. By providing shelter, food, and support, families are given hope and a chance to rebuild their lives. This lifeline is only possible through continued community support. Every donation, big or small, can literally mean the difference between a family sleeping on the street or finding shelter—helping to restore dignity and break the cycle of violence. Together, we can create a stronger, safer community for everyone.

turnanewleaf.org

ARIZONA SUNSHINE ANGELS

Arizona Sunshine Angels supports children in foster care residing in group homes across Maricopa County by providing

essential items that nurture self-esteem, education, independent living, and hope for a brighter future. With welcome boxes, clothing closets, holiday gifts, and more, the organization helps every child feel seen, valued, and loved. Help brighten children's lives today!

sunshineangelsaz.org

CHILDREN'S CANCER NETWORK

Finding out a child has cancer is devastating. The emotions and experiences throughout cancer treatment and beyond can weigh heavily not just on the child, but on the entire family. Children's Cancer Network supports children and families throughout their cancer journey with programs designed to provide financial assistance, psychosocial support, and encouragement for healthy lifestyles.

childrenscancernetwork.org

CREIGHTON UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

The award-winning Creighton neighborhood schools inspire adventurous thinkers, collaborative learners, and kind-hearted leaders. Tax credit donations help provide educational and extracurricular programs for thousands of Arizona children each year—shaping the minds of future leaders, compassionate caregivers, and inspired inventors.

creightonschools.org

EAGLE PATHWAY

Each year, more than 24,000 young individuals age out of the foster care system with no real direction or next step. Eagle Pathway helps many of these young men, women, and often mothers by providing empowering programs that teach them to fully realize who they are and how to become contributing members of the community.

eaglepathway.org

HONORHEALTH FOUNDATION

For almost 100 years, HonorHealth Desert Mission has served the most vulnerable members of the community. Donations support programs like Desert Mission Food Bank—a center that provides free and reduced-cost food programs, nutrition education, and resource services. Adult Day Healthcare is a senior enrichment program offering older adults and those with physical or cognitive challenges a safe environment during the day. These and many other programs demonstrate HonorHealth's ongoing commitment to strengthening the community.

honorhealthfoundation.org

HOPE & A FUTURE

Children in foster care need compassion that is actively demonstrated through love and encouragement. Hope & A Future provides just that through reliable, relationship-based programs of acceptance

for abandoned and neglected children in the community. By supporting these programs, donors directly impact many of the 15,000 foster children in Arizona—teaching life skills and providing mentoring, tutoring, educational scholarships, and summer camps.

azhopecom

KIWANIS CLUB OF CAREFREE

The Kiwanis Club of Carefree is a community of civic-minded, patriotic men and women united by a common goal: enriching the lives of children and young adults in the area. Members are dedicated to creating brighter futures for local children through hands-on support, educational programs, scholarships, and community events.

kiwaniscarefree.org

PREGNANCY CARE CENTER OF CHANDLER

Pregnancy Care Center provides free pregnancy tests, ultrasounds, life-affirming options, counseling, and community resources. Being pregnant while unemployed, uninsured, or undocumented can be frightening, and the need for PCC's services in cases of unplanned pregnancy has never been greater. Clients receive prenatal care, life skills education, fatherhood programs, ICU Mobile services, diapers, and other essentials.

pccchandler.com

LANDSCAPING

Carefree Development Review Board approves new house

By Zev Black
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

The Town of Carefree Development Review Board hosted a meeting Monday, Nov. 10, to discuss and vote on a request for an exception to Article IX regarding landscaping for a new home.

The specific subparagraph that was addressed was Section 9.10 Grading and Drainage, subparagraph (7) (C), which requires the amount of fill material to not exceed the amount of cut material on a building site.

Tyler Green from Green Studio in Scottsdale is looking to build a new three-bedroom, four-bathroom house with a second floor and a one-bedroom casita. It is located at 3049 Ironwood Road, Lot 24, Boulders Carefree Unit 5 and is 18,339 square



Tyler Green presents his vision for the new house. (Submitted Photo/Town of Carefree)

feet.

"It's an absolutely gorgeous lot," Commissioner Les Hardie said. "The idea that you have to have more fill than cut makes perfect sense. It's one of the textbook reasons why there

have to be exceptions to general cut-and-fill rules and I think this is a perfect example of an exception."

The reason for the exception is that there is a large slab of granite on the property that Green said would

be nearly impossible to cut into. The proposed plan for the house has raised floors that would minimize disturbance to the existing rocks in the lot. This would greatly simplify construction and would keep the natural landscape in place.

Section 9.10 exists because raising houses off the ground could block views for neighbors. On June 30, Green mailed notification letters to the 23 surrounding houses and HOAs. They were notified that the house would not significantly block any view.

There is a golf course to the north and to the east of the property, a road to the west and 40 feet of open space to the south.

The board approved the exception to the article.

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INDEPENDENT NEWS MEDIA

ARTS



The Upscale Singers present their annual Christmas concert, this year titled "Christmas Memories in Song!" on Dec., 13 and 14 at the Cactus Shadows Fine Arts Center in Scottsdale. (Courtesy Linda Sheeran, Upscale Singers)

Upscale Singers present Christmas concert

INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

The Upscale Singers are set to present their Christmas concert "Christmas Memories in Song!"

The concert will take place Dec. 13 at 2 p.m. and Dec. 14 at 4 p.m. at the Cactus Shadows Fine Arts Center, located at 33606 North 60th Street in Scottsdale.

There will be the audience favorites, such as "Rise Up, Shepherd, and Follow," "Sing We Now

of Christmas" and a mix of Latin and German, "In Dulce Jubilo."

There will also be new songs, such as "Somewhere in My Memory," "That's Christmas to Me" and the Hanukkah number, "We Are Lights," which director Catherine Wendt calls "a beautiful melody that hints at the scales you would associate with Jewish music."

"Upscale Singers have been successful as a chorus for so many

years, there's a certain element we want to keep within expectations and add a little bit from there," said Wendt, who has taken over from founding director Margaret Miner. "To come in and undo anything doesn't seem to make a lot of sense."

"People want to hear some new things, but not too new," Wendt added. "They really want to feel like it's Christmas. Here in Arizona,

it's even harder to get that feeling that Christmas is around the corner unless you're intentional about it. I think these songs definitely kick off those memories, those emotions, those feelings that this IS the holiday season even though we don't have snow."

Tickets are \$30 for adults and \$10 for youths age 18 and under.

Visit www.upscalesingers.com to purchase tickets.

KIDS



Attendees at the 2024 Kiwanis Club of Carefree Christmas event. The 2025 event takes place Dec. 6 in downtown Carefree. (Courtesy of Jen Miles/TechFourLife)

Kiwanis Club of Carefree to host Christmas event downtown

INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

The Kiwanis Club of Carefree will transform downtown into a winter wonderland to host its annual "Christmas for the Kids."

The event will take place Saturday, Dec. 6 from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. and it is free for all to attend.

The event is powered by Kiwanis volunteers and local high school students who come together each year to spread holiday magic.

With more than 1,000 expected to attend, guests can experience:

- A visit with Santa and Mrs. Claus — perfect for holiday photos.
- Live animal encounters featuring Arizona creatures.
- Miniature ponies.

- Hayrides through the festive sights of Carefree.

- Hot dogs, cotton candy, and popcorn.

- Face painting, balloon art, and games for all ages.

- Hourly bicycle giveaways — over 50 brand-new bikes will be raffled off by age group. Winners must be present to claim their prizes.

"This event is pure joy," Kiwanis Club President Gordon Minns shared in a release. "It brings together families, volunteers, and local students to create a truly special day for the community."

For more information or to get involved, visit kiwaniscarefree.org.

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DESPERADOS

Desert Mountain's land preservation group supports neighboring community

INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

The Desperados, a nonprofit organization committed to land, wildlife and environmental conservation, as well as cultural enrichment in and around the Desert Mountain community, announced two philanthropic grants to Carefree Park and to the Sonoran Arts League. The presentations were made during a Nov. 10 event in Desert Mountain.

The Desperados contributions support two efforts in the neighboring Desert Mountain community. Carefree Park is working to acquire the last remaining 48-acres of accessible Sonoran Desert in Carefree to preserve it for all to enjoy. The Sonoran Arts League is an arts organization dedicated to actively advancing art, artists and art education.

Since the Desperados were formed in 2016, the group has supported neighbors who share and promote its mission with more than \$200,000 in grants, including regional museums and art organizations, land trusts and government agencies, wildlife and environmental conservancies and outdoor recreation associations.

About the desperados

The Desperados were founded in 2016 when two outdoor enthusiasts realized the potential to protect a 3,000-acre wilderness preserve for the Desert Mountain community by establishing a carefully developed trails system. The trails were master planned and developed over a decade, modeled after the McDowell Sonoran Preserve trail system. The result is a magnificent, private 25-mile stacked loop trails system that won the national "Best New Trails" award from American Trails. Since then, many other trails amenities have followed.

"The Desperados applaud the efforts of both Carefree Park and the Sonoran



Location of proposed Carefree Park. (Submitted Photo/Carefree Park)

Arts League," Desperados co-founder and vice president Troy Gillenwater said. "Carefree Park's work to preserve a pristine parcel of desert and the Sonoran Arts League's mission of advancing the arts are in perfect alignment with our values. The Desperados are proud partners of both organizations and support the great work they are doing throughout the Desert Foothills community."

Over the years, the Desperados grew into an outdoor enthusiast group with several hundred members. In time,

Desperados philanthropy extended into the Tonto Foothills region, supporting 17 like-minded philanthropic organizations dedicated to preserving the natural environment. Today the Desperados are a 501(c) (3) organization comprised of volunteer leaders, active steward members and celebrated contributors all focused on furthering the Desperados' mission.

About carefree park

Carefree Park is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization with the mission of acquiring, preserving and making accessible to the community the last remaining 48-acres of accessible Sonoran Desert in Carefree, Arizona. Supporters are volunteers who love the natural look and feel of the Sonoran Desert and who are committed to preserving the land as open space for all to enjoy.

"There is a sense of urgency to save this parcel of land in Carefree," Carefree Park co-founder and president Wendy Mattes said. "We are especially grateful to the Desperados for their financial support, and perhaps more importantly, for their encouragement and moral support."

According to Mattes, the organization's primary objective is to acquire the land for the benefit of future generations. Carefree Park is cultivating public

and private partnerships, conducting fundraising activities and accepting donations and pledges from individuals, corporations and foundation grants. Carefree Park's strongest commitment is toward preservation of this land, which is home to hundreds of ancient saguaros, natural Sonoran Desert vegetation and is a thriving wildlife habitat and wildlife corridor.

About the sonoran arts league

The Sonoran Arts League is a non-profit 501 (c) (3), volunteer-based, arts service organization dedicated to actively advancing art, artists and art education. The League, celebrating its 50th year, began in 1975 as an informal gathering of local artists who put on art shows under the Tamarisk groves in Cave Creek. Today, the organization has grown to over 550 members.

"The Sonoran Arts League's vision is to inspire a life of art in our community," Sonoran Arts League president David Court said. "The generous support from our friends, the Desperados, helps make it possible for us to provide high-quality art and helps to fund educational programs for a broad spectrum of constituents, including free classes for Veterans and youth."

Notable programs impacting target groups include: Hidden in the Hills Artist Studio Tour, which offers opportunities for the public to learn about artists' techniques from 165 artists at 41 studios; Empty Bowls, benefiting the Foothills Food Bank; scholarships for graduating high school Seniors, year-round free youth art classes; art events, mentoring and workshops for youth; Art in Public Places, bringing free art events and exhibits to the general public; a Veteran Art Program with free art classes and exhibits for military veterans; and art classes and workshops for community members.



Left to right: John Crane, Carefree Mayor; Troy Gillenwater, Desperados; Sharon Wong, Desperados; Wendy Mattes, Carefree Park; David Court, Sonoran Arts League; Robert Borsch, Desperados. (Submitted Photo/Desperados)



INDEPENDENT
NEWS MEDIA'S

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December 7 - **"FAITH"**

December 14 - **"LOVE"**

December 21 - **"PEACE"**

*Christmas Eve
Services Dec. 24*

"Celebrating the Birth of Christ"

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5 pm - Candlelight Service

7 pm - Candlelight Service
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Dec. 21 • 5-6pm

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Desert Hills Presbyterian Church
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COUNCIL

Carefree town councilmembers want suggestions for Town Hall redevelopment

By Maya McFall
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

An open house to discuss the future of the Carefree Town Hall took place Nov. 6 at Town Council Chambers, 33 Easy St.

Town council members were at stations during the community event to discuss ideas for the redevelopment of the Town Hall building at 8 Sundial Circle. The building currently generates no sales tax revenue, according to the town's website.

The Town Hall is part of the 2023 Village Center Redevelopment plan to "restore and enhance the economic vibrancy of the Village Center in a way that supports the long-term viability and sustainability of the entire Carefree community," according to the redevelopment plan.

No budget has been set for the project as the council awaits community feedback.

Community members can fill out a written survey during the open house to share their suggestions.

"We're really just trying to garner feedback and suggestions from the community on what they would like to see at this site," said Madi-



An open house to discuss the future of the Carefree Town Hall took place Nov. 6, at Town Council Chambers, 33 Easy St. Submitted Photo/Town of Carefree

syn Garret, the council's communications manager, during the Nov. 4 council meeting.

Proposed ideas include turning the property into a restaurant, retail storefronts or extra parking.

Councilmember Sheila Amoroso, expressing her support for redeveloping the Town Hall, described the building as a "prime piece of real estate."

"Exploring the options makes

sense to just start and move forward," Amoroso said. "It can be an entrance, an iconic building that draws the eye in to see the rest of the gem that...is not visible from the street."

Councilmember Lon Johnson echoed Amoroso's vision for the town.

"I think it's holistically understanding what we do best, why people come here, and having that

plan," he said. "I think if we do that, we can sell this town."

The Town Hall redevelopment is one of Carefree's newest construction projects, following the development of Stagecreek Estates and the Carefree Quarter.

Resolution 2025-18 for the replat of a final plat for Stagecreek Estates was voted on and approved unanimously by council during the Nov. 4 meeting.

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COSTS

Cave Creek customers will likely see price hike in water rates

By Jeff Wendt

INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

The Cave Creek Town Council on Tuesday put plans in motion to increase the water rate for customers of Cave Creek Water, Desert Hills Water and Cave Creek Wastewater system.

The 7-0 vote to increase the rate by 6% will result in water bill increases to most of the 5,500 customers Cave Creek serves.

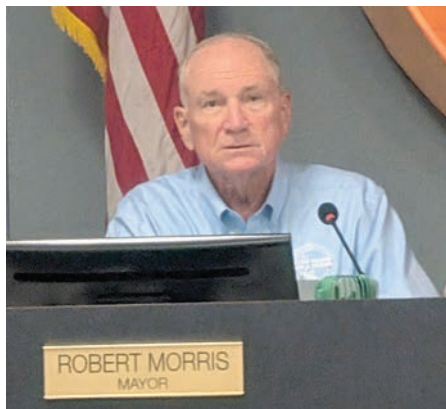
The votes sets in motion the process to increase the rates in February of 2026. A written report will be released to the town's customer on Nov. 7, and a public hearing on the rate increase will take place Jan. 6, 2026 with adoption of the rate increase at that meeting.

Also included in the rate increase is a new tiered system, where the top level comes down from 50,000 gallons per month to 40,000 and creates a new tier from 0 to 4,000 gallons per month.

The council decided against adding a water resource fee, which was first discussed in the Oct. 15 work study session, saying it needed more real data to decide whether a resource fee should be added to customers' bills. The council also decided against going to a seasonal rate, seeing that there was not much change to customers' bills, with the rate on increasing minimally, and councilmembers decided there wasn't enough gain in revenues to justify the seasonal rate.

"I mean, we've squeezed blood from that turnip already. So I think 6%'s a pretty reasonable increase based on the cost we're incurring," councilmember Dusty Rhoades said.

The residential customers in the first three tiers under Cave Creek water will see a modest 3-4% increase while the top end customers will see between



Cave Creek Mayor Robert Morris speaks at a recent Cave Creek Town Council meeting. (Independent Newsmedia/Jeff Wendt)

a 17-19% increase in their bill. Cave Creek water has nearly 2,000 customers, with nearly 1,850 customer within the first three tiers of the new plan. Cave Creek Water also has 200 commercial customers, who will also see their rates increased as well.

Most customers on the Desert Hills water system, however, will see a decrease in their bills, between 1 and 7%. Customers at the highest tiers on Desert Hills water will see a 1% increase in their bills.

Of Desert Hills' 1,800 customers, just over 1,500 of its customers would see the decrease in their bill.

Mayor Robert Morris Rhoades couldn't figure out why there are residential customers that are using an acre foot of water (approximately 325,000 gallons) per month.

"It just seems like that's problematic," Rhoades said. "Particularly as we're facing massive shortages here. We need to talk to anybody that's over 40,000 gallons."

"There's a difference between commercial and residential in my view because the problem in Arizona is out-

door water use," Morris added. "And when you're that high, it's highly unlikely that you're using that much water indoor."

Rhoades asked Cave Creek Utilities Service Director Shawn Kreuzwiesner if there was a way to control the highest users from using too much water.

"There are actually some jurisdictions who through conservation have actually given customers both instances," Kreuzwiesner said. "One example we looked into is actually in California where they go out with their customers and actually give them a yearly annual balance, and if they go over that and they don't throttle back after being notified three times they'll actually go put a reducer on."

Utilities Advisory Committee chairman William Sullivan expressed concern over the fact the committee did not have much say when it came to setting the rates and would like to see more interaction between the committee and the council in the next rate study.

"One of the things that we would ask in the next go around is to create a process that we can be involved in, and that means seeing the data that they're considering before they come up with recommendations to you so we can have input right away," Sullivan said. "We never saw a cost of service study. We never saw what customers were using what so that we could help really define what rates should be proposed."

"So it's pretty important to keep us involved if you want a meaningful recommendation from the committee," Sullivan added.

Sullivan said the committee was supportive of the recommendations brought forth to the council from the previous work study.

CAVE CREEK

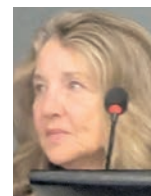
Town Council passes hotel, bed tax increase to little fanfare

By Jeff Wendt

INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

The Cave Creek Town Council unanimously approved increasing the town's hotel tax by 2% up to 5% and the bed tax by 1% up to 5% at its meeting on Tuesday night.

"It's a tourist town so you know we're largely dependent (on taxes)," councilmember Tom McGuire said. "We don't have a town property tax, and that's a benefit to those that have these short-term rentals. So I think this is a very good idea. It's not a huge increase."



Cynthia Driskell

Town Finance Director Cherie White presented the council again with the same presentation that was given back in October with no changes made.

The town is able to make the tax increases without having limitations on what the tax is used for. Anything over a 2% increase, and those tax revenues must be directly applied to promotion of tourism.

The tax code defines a "hotel" as public or private hotel, inn, hostelry, tourist home, house, motel, rooming house, apartment house, trailer, or other lodging place offering lodging, wherein the owner thereof, for compensation, furnishes lodging to any transient.

And a "transient" is defined as any person who either at the person's own expense or at the expense of another obtains lodging space or

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**By Shoulder Pain Expert,
Dr. Matthew Hernandez**
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Ice packs and heat compresses were no longer helpful, and relying on pain-pills was not an option he wanted to take.

He committed to physical therapy for several weeks with little impact, tried dry needling and cortisone injections without success, and was ultimately told by multiple doctors to stop all activity that aggravated his arm. Tim had done everything his insurance allowed but was still stuck at square one.

WHAT THE OTHER DOCTORS MISSED...

Tim had fallen into what we call "The Gap"—where insurance-based care cycles with no end in sight, surgery isn't an option, and waiting for the pain to get worse seems like the only choice. Most providers only look for what they know how to treat. But our comprehensive 'Deep Dive' approach and expertise allowed us to bridge that gap for Tim.

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SCHOOLS

Cave Creek Unified looks at new calendar with longer breaks for next year

By Maya McFall

INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

A Cave Creek Unified School District committee is proposing a new calendar with longer spring and fall breaks starting next year.

The committee, led by CCUSD Director of Student Services Jill Sarraino, proposed a 2-2-2 schedule to the Cave Creek school board at the Nov. 18 governing board meeting.

A 2-2-2 schedule refers to a calendar school year that has two weeks of fall break, two weeks of winter break, and two weeks of spring break. The committee created example calendars for the next three years that would implement this schedule.

This schedule provides more frequent breaks throughout the school year but shortens summer break from 10 to 8 weeks. With this change, the 2026-27 school year would begin July 27.

Sarraino, presenting the proposed change, said, “through collaborative, transparent, and data-informed planning, the committee believes that our recommendation builds a positive and equitable educational experience for all.”

The potential benefits of such a change, Sarraino said, could include:

- Attracting potential employees by providing more frequent work breaks
- Reduced loss of learning over the summer.

- Having solid mental health breaks for students and staff.
- Allowing families the freedom to travel more often.

Concerns about the new schedule discussed during the committee meetings, Sarraino said, include:

- Summer break will be shortened for vacationing families.
- Students who rely on food assistance may experience gaps in access to daily meal services.



Cave Creek Unified School District's governing board building 33016 N. 60th Street, Scottsdale. (Maya McFall/Independent Newsmedia)

tance may experience gaps in access to daily meal services.

- It could negatively affect some special needs students who rely heavily on consistent schedules and structured routine.

Sarraino addressed the concerns and assured the board that families will still have the same amount of time off, it would just be dispersed more throughout the year.

According to Sarraino, 14% of students at CCUSD qualify for food assistance.

“The district will collaborate closely with Child Nutrition to develop a comprehensive plan ensuring that any student in need continues to receive appropriate assistance,” Sarraino said.

For students with special needs, the 2-2-2 schedule would align better with those families, Sarraino explained.

“ESS will develop individualized plans, aligned with each student's IEP and specific needs, to ensure appropriate support for the small percentage of students who may be impacted,” said Sarraino.

EVENTS

Chanukah in Carefree announces 2025 celebration schedule

For the ninth consecutive year, Chanukah in Carefree invites the community to gather for its weeklong holiday celebration at the Sanderson Lincoln Pavilion in the Carefree Desert Gardens. The festivities will take place each evening beginning 5:30 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 14, through Sunday, Dec. 21.

The event features the nightly lighting of a 6 ½-foot Chanukiah (menorah), traditional Chanukah songs and themed programs hosted by local organizations. Guests can enjoy latkes, sufganiyot, coffee, hot chocolate and apple cider each evening.

A silent auction will also benefit this year's Spirit in Giving recipient, the Hilton Family Holocaust Education Center. Winners will be announced on the last night of Chanukah.

Mayor John Crane invites the entire community to experience this cultural holiday event.

"Chanukah in Carefree will offer a great line up of events this year," he said. "We strive to bring the community together and bring the lights of the holiday to each and every family. Please join us."

2025 Schedule of Events:

Sunday, Dec. 14 – Community Night: Hosted by the Carefree Cave Creek Chamber of Commerce, featuring the mayors of Carefree and Cave Creek, local businesses and a performance by the Cactus Shadows Honors Choir under the direction of Karen Dolezal.

Monday, Dec. 15 – Family Night: Presented by the Center for Jewish Philanthropy, with games, crafts and music by Israeli musician Erez Kessler. PJ Library will provide

free books and activities for children.

Tuesday, Dec. 16 – Chanukah Around the World: Temple Chai presents global Chanukah food and music with Cantors Sharona Feller and Tanya Greenblatt and the Temple Chai adult and children's choirs.

Wednesday, Dec. 17 – Kids Light Up the Night: Hosted by five local nonprofits including the Cave Creek Museum, Desert Foothills Library, Desert Foothills Land Trust, Sonoran Arts League and the Kiwanis Club of Carefree. Live music by Cantorial soloist Sharon Friendly.

Thursday, Dec. 18 – Family Fun Night: Hosted by Chabad of Anthem and the North Valley, featuring a magician, holiday treats and kids' activities.

Friday, Dec. 19 – Rocking Shabbat Chanukah: Temple Kol Ami's celebration with Rabbi Schneider, Cantor Noa, the Temple Kol Ami Congregational Band and the Bauman family.

Saturday, Dec. 20 – Chanukah Havdalah: Congregation Kehillah with Rabbi Bonnie Sharfman and Israeli guitarist Erez Kessler.

Sunday, Dec. 21 – Closing Night: Hosted by the Phoenix Holocaust Association, featuring Holocaust survivor and speaker Dr. Michael Markson.

This year's celebration is made possible through the support of the Kiwanis Club of Carefree, the Center for Jewish Philanthropy, APS, Spirit in the Desert and Temple Chai.

The event is free, open to all faiths and held outdoors with enhanced security measures.

For more information, visit ChanukahinCarefree.com.

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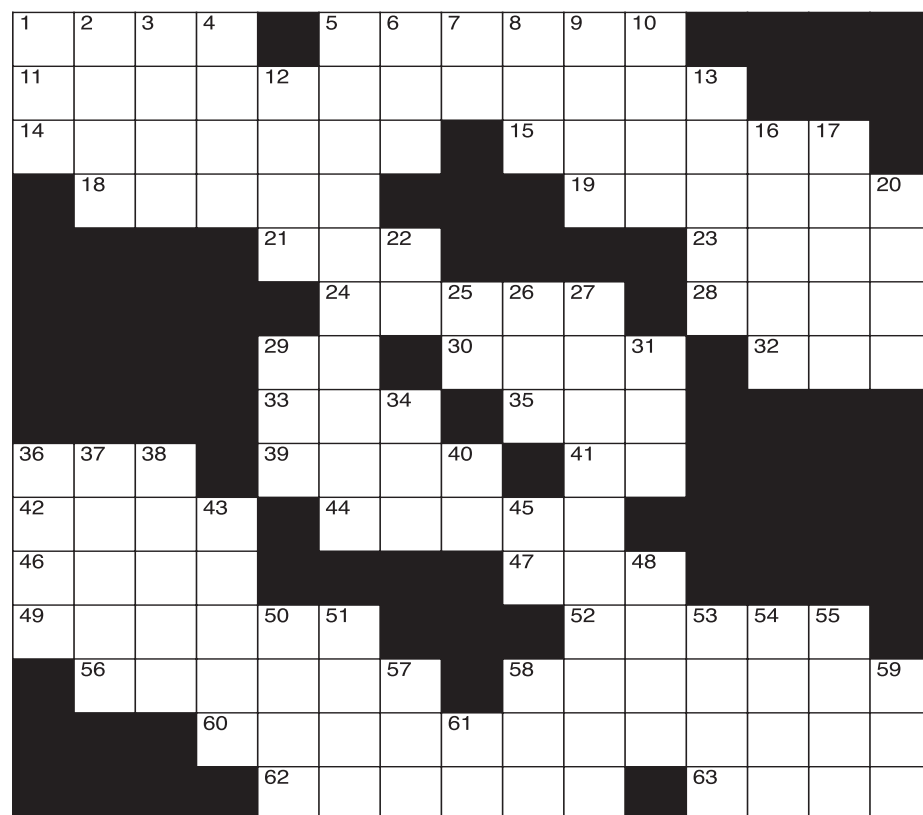
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5. Rise
11. Gratitude
14. A low wall
15. Kidnap
18. A cup golfers want to win
19. Outgoing
21. "Partner" to flow
23. Former Michigan coach Brady
24. Proverb
28. Gasteyer and de Armas are two
29. Helps a body recover
30. Baseball Cy Young winner
32. Very fast airplane
33. Offensive baseball stat
35. Body of water
36. Record of one's heartbeat
39. Signs a contract
41. Atomic #24
42. Bind securely
44. French Jesuit theologian
46. Fragrant brown balsam
47. Post office box
49. Sells tickets at inflated

prices

52. Places to hang coats
56. Jewish salutation
58. Yellow fruits
60. Poorly educated
62. Microorganism
63. Talk show host Barrymore

CLUES DOWN

1. A way to plan
2. Three-banded armadillo
3. Mobile
4. Romanian city
5. Making sour
6. Take a seat
7. "The Golden State"
8. When you hope to arrive
9. Pointed ends of pens
10. Extinct flightless bird
12. Sharp-pointed dueling sword
13. Nape of neck
16. Problems (Spanish slang)
17. Narrow carpet
20. To avoid the risk of
22. Spiritual academic degree (abbr.)
25. Equally
26. Traditional cars still need it
27. Eligible voters
29. Greek alphabet letter
31. Body part
34. Referee-declared outcome
36. Means to moving money
37. Popular footwear brand
38. Cockatoo
40. NFL's big game
43. Botswana currencies
45. News-reporting organization
48. Batman villain
50. Urgent request
51. Not all
53. Hallmark's specialty
54. Knot in a tree
55. Satisfy
57. Notable space station
58. Baby's dining accessory
59. Stitch clothing
61. ___ and behold

SOLUTION ON PAGE 30

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	7		1	3				6
8	9	6		5			2	
	1			8	2	9		5
1				7	3		4	
	2		4	6	8			9
	5	4				8		
			9			2		
5		1		2	6			
9		2				5		4

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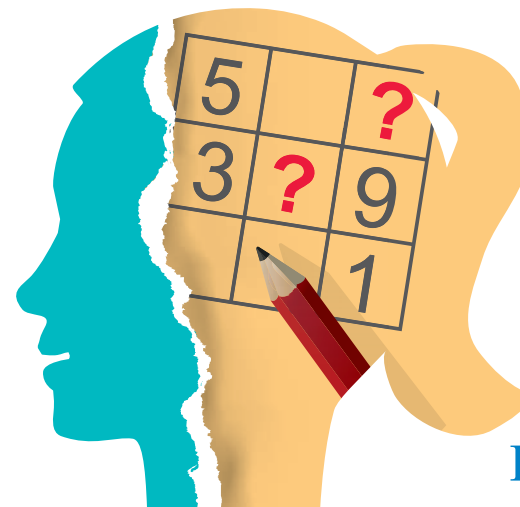
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PUZZLE ANSWERS

from page 26 & 27

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A	P	P	R	E	C	I	A	T	I	O	N								
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Public Notice

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
 TOWN OF CAVE CREEK
 UTILITY RATE INCREASES**

Notice is hereby given that a Public Hearing will be held by the Town of Cave Creek Town Council on **Tuesday, January 6, 2026** at 5:00 p.m. at the Cave Creek Town Hall, 37622 N. Cave Creek Road, Cave Creek, AZ to consider approval of proposed changes to the Town of Cave Creek Water, Town of Cave Creek Wastewater, and Desert Hills Water utility rates pursuant to A.R.S. Section 9-511.01.

The Final Rate Study Report can be found on the Cave Creek Town Website
 www.cavecreekaz.gov

Questions about the proposed changes can be directed to Cherie White, Finance Director at 480-488-6600 or cwhite@cavecreekaz.gov.

Publish: Phoenix Independent, November 28, Cave Creek/Carefree Independent, December 3, 2025/34248_1

Calendar

- From page 24

ESS is an acronym for Educational Support System which provides support to students with disabilities. An IEP is an Individualized Education Program which helps students who require modified schedules.

The board will vote on the new schedule during the Dec. 9 board meeting. Doors open to the public at 5:30 p.m. and the meeting begins 6 p.m.

When asked for a comment about the potential new calendar change by the Cave Creek Independent, Superintendent Bill Dolezal said, "The calendar committee did a great job com-

municating the benefits they believe a 2-2-2 calendar provides."

"In my mind, the best thing I can do before retirement is leave the district I love on a trajectory of innovation and student-centered decision-making, setting up the next superintendent for success," Dolezal said.

The 2025-26 school year is Dolezal's final year serving as superintendent. The board moved to hire McPherson and Jacobson LLC for the superintendent search.

The company conducts national superintendent searches and has helped other districts such as Dysart Unified in 2017-18, Peoria Unified in 2017-18, and Mesa Public Schools in 2019-20.

Bed tax

- From page 22

the use of lodging space on a daily or weekly basis, or on any other basis for less than 30 consecutive days. Anything over 30 days becomes a long-term rental.

The annual revenue increase estimated is \$57,000 on each 1% increase. So the town expects to see an increased revenue of approximately \$171,000.

An example given by White showed that a hotel with 100 rooms and an average occupancy of 69% and a room rate of \$150 a night would generate approximately \$378,000 of tax revenue.

As far as the impact on the customer, White gave the example of someone paying \$150 a night would see their taxes increase from \$10.50 to \$15 a night.

The tax revenues could help with the strain on the General Fund Resources, such as the fire budget (set at \$4.7 million), the streets funds budget (\$2.4 million), and support the utility funds of Cave Creek Wastewater (\$2.9 million), Cave

Creek Water (\$1.2 million) and Desert Hills Water (\$502,000).

After the tax increases, only seven municipalities will have a bed tax higher than Cave Creek's, and only four municipalities will have a hotel tax rate higher than Cave Creek's.

The Arizona Department of Revenue requires 60 days for a tax to be implemented instead of the normal 30 days the town has to implement new taxes, so the tax increase will become official on Feb.1, 2026.

"I think one thing to consider is we don't know in the upcoming sessions what other legislative restrictions might be applied to a town's ability to tax certain categories," councilmember Cynthia Driskell said. "We lost the long-term rental residential tax revenue, and it is certainly possible that we could lose other tax revenues depending on which way the wind blows in the legislature."

"So, I think it's a reasonable increase," Driskell added "It makes us maybe a little less competitive with immediate areas, but I think we'll see other prices, market prices kind of support the properties that attract attention."

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