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Goodyear Civic Square closes 2025 with a wave of new openings; **4**



LITCHFIELD PARK/GOODYEAR

INDEPENDENT

Business

Top 5 Litchfield Park and Goodyear stories to watch for in 2026; **10**



January 2026 Volume 7 Issue 1

Your Nonpartisan Community Newspaper • YourValley.net

Historic Tal'-Wi-Wi Ranch listed on National Register



By James Goldmeer
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

A piece of Southwest Valley agricultural history has officially secured its place on the National Register of Historic Places, marking a milestone for preservation efforts in Maricopa County.

The Tal'-Wi-Wi Ranch, located at 9801 and 9816 N. Litchfield Road, was formally listed this month, according to federal records. The designation makes the ranch the first property in the immediate area to receive the honor, with a second nearby site, the historic Rancho La Loma hilltop, currently awaiting approval.

"This milestone not only honors the legacy of these properties but helps preserve the unique identity of our community," said Lisa Hegarty, executive director of the P.W. Litchfield Heritage Center.

The push for national recognition was a years-long effort led by the P.W. Litchfield Heritage Center's Historic Preservation Committee, with

• See **Register** on page 24

Lisa Hegarty celebrates Rancho La Loma Homestead and Tal-Wi Wi' Ranch being nominated for the National Register of Historic Places. (James Goldmeer/Independent Newsmedia)



Arizona workers receive a 45-cent minimum wage increase. (James Goldmeer/Independent Newsmedia)

Arizona minimum wage rises to \$15.15

By James Goldmeer
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

Arizona's minimum wage rose to \$15.15 an hour on Jan. 1, a 45-cent increase tied directly to inflation as the state continues to grapple with rising living costs and a deepening housing shortage.

The increase, announced by the Industrial Commission of Arizona, raises the minimum wage from \$14.70 and is required under the Fair Wages and Healthy Families Act, approved by voters in 2016 as Proposition 206. The law set scheduled wage increases through 2020 and mandates annual adjustments thereafter based on changes in the cost of

• See **Wage** on page 8

LITCHFIELD PARK/GOODYEAR INDEPENDENT

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Jan Cleere is known for her historical nonfiction books and her monthly column "Western Women" in the Arizona Daily Star. She writes extensively about the people who first settled in the desert southwest and the legends and tales of the Old West that she discovered.



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ON YOURVALLEY.NET



Wally Campbell is appointed vice chair to the National League of Cities. (Submitted photo/Corinne Holliday)

Goodyear official joins national council

INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

Goodyear Vice Mayor Wally Campbell has been appointed vice chair of the National League of Cities' 2026 First Tier Suburbs Council.

The National League of Cities represents municipalities nationwide and provides advocacy, education and resources for local leaders.

Campbell will serve a one-year term helping develop and guide programs for local elected officials from communities similar in size and demographics to Goodyear.

"I'm honored to represent the city of Goodyear once again at the national level," Campbell said in a statement. She said she plans to work with local leaders nationwide to share ideas, build connections and help develop resources and programs that can be replicated in similar communities.

Campbell has served on several National League of Cities councils and committees

Visit nlc.org for more information.

COMMUNITY

Goodyear Civic Square closes 2025 with a wave of new openings

By James Goldmeier
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

Goodyear Civic Square continued to establish itself as a major economic center in the West Valley in 2025, adding a diverse lineup of restaurants, retailers, office users and institutional tenants as development activity accelerated across the district.

The mixed-use project, developed through a public-private partnership between the city of Goodyear and Globe Corp., saw more than a dozen businesses open during the year, with additional projects announced or under construction heading into 2026.

City leaders say the steady pace of openings shows the development is moving toward its goal of becoming a walkable urban center that supports both commerce and community life.

"GSQ is moving where I hoped it would," Mayor Joe Pizzillo said. "We are seeing progress, continued interest



Trader Joe's opens in GSQ. (James Goldmeier/Independent Newsmedia)

from businesses, and development that reflects our vision. I'm proud of how GSQ is taking shape and excited about what's ahead."

Businesses that opened at GSQ in 2025

♦ American Wealth Advisers at GEN

1, a financial planning and investment advisory firm serving individual and business clients.

♦ Avila University, a private university offering graduate and professional education programs, expanding high-

♦ See **Square** on page 6

Truck traffic concerns persist at Camelback Road in Litchfield Park

By James Goldmeier
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

Residents along Camelback Road continue to press Litchfield Park officials for action on heavy truck traffic, raising renewed safety, noise and air-quality concerns following a recent increase in complaints and a lack of formal response from the city.

The issue resurfaced after city police announced stepped-up traffic enforcement along Camelback Road and after residents renewed calls for restrictions on commercial trucks traveling through residential areas.



Residents renew concerns over truck traffic on Camelback Road. (Submitted photo/Metro Creative Connection)

"We acknowledge our community's concerns around trucking activity and vehicles traveling above the posted speed limit along Camelback Road

and are aware that these issues cause a disturbance for residents," stated Yosha Brunson Kuhl, director of communications at Litchfield Park.

The concerns were most recently addressed publicly at a November 2024, information meeting where city staff and consultants presented the final results of the Southwest Valley Camelback Road Truck Study conducted by the Maricopa Association of Governments, along with an independent analysis by engineering firm Exponent. The studies found that while average

♦ See **Trucks** on page 5

Trucks

• From page 4

noise levels along Camelback Road are relatively low, periodic spikes from truck traffic were significant enough to disrupt nearby neighborhoods.

City officials outlined potential mitigation options, including overnight or full-day truck bans, sound wall enhancements, and noise-reducing asphalt. City Manager Matthew Williams said the recommendations would be taken to the City Council for further discussion, though any action remains constrained by state law.

Under Senate Bill 1097, passed by the Arizona Legislature in 2022, cities are prohibited from enforcing truck restrictions on major arterial roads that provide through access between jurisdictions. As a result, Litchfield Park cannot enforce its local truck ordinances on Camelback Road or Dysart Road, despite previously annexing a 2-mile stretch of Camelback Road between

127th Avenue and North Village Parkway.

Residents in the Litchfield Greens neighborhood and nearby areas have voiced concerns since at least 2022, citing overnight truck noise, diesel exhaust and safety risks for pedestrians, cyclists and students traveling near the roadway.

The scheduled 2026 opening of new schools and community facilities along Camelback Road has intensified those concerns.

“How do you expect children from Litchfield Elementary School to ride their bikes after school to the new library with all these trucks? The library and new high school should have never broken ground until these trucks were solved,” said Julianne Davis, a Litchfield Park resident.

The city of Litchfield Park stated that Camelback Road is currently being redesigned and rebuilt with landscaped medians, sidewalks, and a roundabout.

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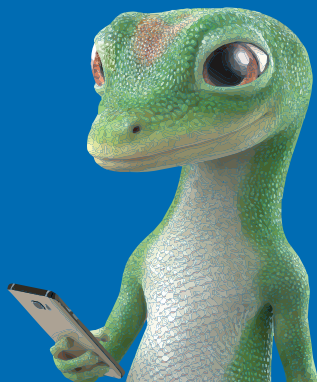
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Square

- From page 4

er-education options in the West Valley.

- Bacchus Wine Bar, a locally focused wine bar featuring curated wine selections and small plates.

- Banner Health, a branch of the major nonprofit health care system providing outpatient and specialty medical services at the GSQ location.

- BPR Companies at GEN 1, a real estate investment and development firm establishing offices within GSQ's Class A office building.

- Dave's Hot Chicken, a fast-casual restaurant chain known for Nashville-style hot chicken.

- Great American Title Agency at GEN 1, a title and escrow services firm supporting residential and commercial real estate transactions.

- High Tide, a seafood-focused restaurant offering casual dining with a coastal-inspired menu.

- Over Easy, a brunch restaurant popular for comfort food classics and extended morning hours.

- Realty ONE Group at GEN 1, a national real estate brokerage providing residential and commercial real estate services.

- Shake Shack, a national burger chain serving made-to-order burgers, fries and shakes.

- Spaces at GEN 1, a flexible co-working and office space provider offering short- and long-term workspace

solutions.

- The Yard Milkshake Bar, a dessert spot known for specialty milkshakes and sweets.

- Trader Joe's, a specialty grocery retailer offering private-label foods, organic products and prepared meals.

Pizzillo said GSQ's appeal to businesses comes from its intentional design and location.

"I see GSQ as successful because it was planned with purpose and created in a great location," he said. "The mix of dining, shopping, living and gathering spaces keeps the area active and welcoming throughout the day. GSQ has steady foot traffic, a growing community and a strong partnership with the city of Goodyear, which makes the area attractive to business."

Announced and coming soon

Several additional businesses announced plans to locate at GSQ but had not yet opened by the end of 2025:

- AC Hotel by Marriott.
- Black Rock Coffee.
- California Fish Grill.
- CAVA.
- Firebirds Wood Fired Grill.
- Fogo de Chão.
- Nordstrom Rack.
- Veterinary Emergency Group.

Under construction

An additional restaurant was actively under construction at GSQ as 2025 ended:

- First Watch, a daytime restaurant focused on breakfast and lunch.



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Loop 303 extension launches in Goodyear

By James Goldmeier
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

The Arizona Department of Transportation has begun work on a major transportation project to extend Loop 303 between Maricopa County Road 85 and Van Buren Street, a move officials say will improve traffic flow and regional connectivity in the West Valley.

The project, developed in cooperation with the city of Goodyear, the Federal Highway Administration, the Maricopa Association of Governments and the Flood Control District of Maricopa County, officially begins Monday, Dec. 22. Drivers should expect delays and lane restrictions as construction gets underway.

The new segment of Loop 303 will run north from MC 85 to Van Buren Street and will be elevated over cross streets and the Union Pa-

cific Railroad.

The project is based on a transportation study completed by ADOT in 2018.

Plans call for two general-purpose lanes in each direction between MC 85 and Lower Buckeye Road, expanding to three lanes in each direction from Lower Buckeye Road to Van Buren Street. Several new and improved interchanges are included, such as the completion of the south half of the Van Buren Street diamond interchange, a full diamond interchange at Yuma Road and a half diamond interchange at Elwood Street. A signalized intersection will also be built at MC 85.

To maintain access for local traffic, the project includes one-way frontage roads in each direction, with connections to major arterial streets from Elwood Street to Van Buren Street.

Drainage and flood control improvements are also a significant part of the project. These include replacing neighborhood retention basins along the Canyon Trails Channel, connecting the channel to the Loop 303 Outfall Channel, constructing a first flush basin near Citrus and Broadway roads, and building linear drainage basins between Elwood Street and MC 85.

Additional features include new sound walls where warranted by noise analysis, as well as updated lighting, signage and other roadway infrastructure.

Construction is expected to last about four years. ADOT officials encourage motorists to plan ahead, allow extra travel time and stay alert in work zones as the project progresses.

Visit azdot.gov for more information.



The Loop 303 extension project brings roadway improvements to Goodyear. (Submitted photo/ADOT)

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Goodyear shifts traffic duties from officers to civilian staff

By James Goldmeer
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

Goodyear is shifting much of its non-emergency traffic workload to unarmed police assistants, a move city officials say will free up sworn officers for emergencies, criminal investigations and proactive patrol.

The change allows police assistants, or PAs, to handle parking enforcement and non-injury crash investigations, responsibilities the department says they were originally intended to perform.

“The whole premise of this change is to allow police assistants to do the job they were hired to do,” Police Chief Brian Issitt told the council. “This keeps our officers available for higher-priority issues that truly require a sworn response.”

City data shows Goodyear officers responded to more than 4,400 vehicle collisions from 2022 through September



Goodyear Police Assistants take on new traffic duties. (James Goldmeer/Independent Newsmedia)

ber 2025. Issitt said PAs could eventually take on about half those calls, more than 700 per year, once properly trained.

“If an officer gets there first, determines there’s no criminal violation and it’s a non-injury accident, a police assistant can finish the investigation,” he said. “That lets the officer get back

out on the street where they’re needed most.”

Police assistants are uniformed but unarmed civilian staff who support officers by taking low-priority calls, directing traffic, responding to minor crashes, collecting evidence at non-criminal scenes, issuing parking citations, documenting incidents,

and helping with prisoner processing. They do not have arrest authority and do not initiate traffic stops.

“They’re fully recognizable in uniform, but they’re not there to conduct criminal arrests,” Issitt said. “They’re professional staff who keep the wheels turning on the calls that don’t require a sworn officer.”

Council members emphasized the change is about staffing efficiency, not increasing fines.

“This isn’t about money,” Councilmember Trey Terry said. “It’s about getting our patrol officers back on the street.”

Issitt echoed that sentiment, saying the department is not expecting more citations, just the same work handled by different personnel.

“The only difference is who completes the paperwork,” he said.

Visit goodyearaz.gov for information.

FROM THE COVER

Wage

• From page 1

living.

Under state law, the yearly increase is calculated using the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers, measuring inflation between August of the previous year and August of the current year. Federal data show the CPI-U rose 2.9% from August 2024 to August 2025, triggering the new wage floor.

Tipped workers may still be paid up to \$3 an hour less than the minimum wage, provided tips bring their total earnings to at least \$15.15 an hour.

The wage hike affects thousands of workers in entry-level and service-sector jobs across Arizona, including fast-food workers, retail clerks and warehouse associates. While many employers already pay above the minimum to attract workers, advocates say

the increase remains critical as everyday expenses continue to climb.

Inflation data published by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics shows that while gasoline prices fell 6.6% over the past year, core household costs remain elevated. Shelter prices rose 3.6% year over year. Food prices increased 3.2%, with food away from home up 3.9%. Electricity prices rose 6.2%, and natural gas jumped 13.8%.

Those pressures are especially evident in Arizona’s housing market. According to the Common Sense Institute’s 2025 housing update, the state faces a shortage of more than 52,000 housing units and median rent in Goodyear has reached \$1,848, placing market-rate housing out of reach for many minimum-wage and hourly workers.

Against that backdrop, affordable housing developers are racing to add

supply.

Dominium, one of the nation’s largest affordable housing developers, recently opened three major projects in Goodyear and Marana, adding affordable apartments for working families and seniors.

“With rents in Phoenix more than doubling over the past five years, Arizona has a significant need for affordable housing,” said Owen Metz, Dominion’s senior vice president and Mountain West development leader.

Even as affordable housing projects move forward, broader solutions remain unresolved.

In Goodyear, planners have begun a comprehensive review of the city’s zoning ordinance amid growing state pressure for more housing production. The effort could eventually allow higher-density development, expanded multi-family housing options and in-

centives for affordable units, but officials emphasized that the process is in its early stages and may not result in immediate changes.

City and state leaders say wage increases and housing development must work in tandem to address accessibility.

“Affordability is key, not just for apartments and families, but for homes everywhere,” Goodyear Mayor Joe Pizzillo said at the project opening.

Supporters of the minimum wage law argue that indexing wages to inflation helps prevent workers from falling further behind as housing and utility costs rise. Critics counter that higher labor costs can strain small businesses, though economists note Arizona’s voter-approved system provides predictability by tying increases to published federal data rather than legislative debate.

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ON YOURVALLEY.NET



Avondale Toyota donates a car to Alice Cooper's Solid Rock Teen Center in Goodyear. (Submitted photo/Avondale Toyota)

Local dealership donates vehicle to Goodyear teen center

INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

A Goodyear nonprofit that serves teens through arts and vocational programs has received a vehicle donation from a local car dealership.

Avondale Toyota donated a 2026 Toyota Sienna minivan to Alice Cooper's Solid Rock Teen Center, which provides free after-school programming for teens ages 12 to 20. The vehicle will be used to transport participants to events, performances and other activities throughout the Phoenix metropolitan area, according to the organization.

The Solid Rock Teen Center offers instruction in music, dance, art and vocational skills and supplies instruments to participants who do not have their own. The Goodyear location operates under The Norelli Family Foundation.

Avondale Toyota General Manager Alex Cosenza said the donation was intended to support local community organizations.

Top 5 Litchfield Park and Goodyear stories to watch for in 2026

By James Goldmeer
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

Growth, development and elections are expected to shape communities across Goodyear, Litchfield Park and the West Valley in 2026. City leaders and residents point to five major developments likely to have the greatest local impact.

Buc-ee's opens its first Arizona location

One of the most anticipated openings in the region is Buc-ee's, the Texas-based travel center known for its massive footprint, fuel stations and retail offerings.

• See **Top 5** on page 18



Buc-ee's comes to Goodyear in 2026. (Submitted photo/City of Goodyear)

Goodyear growth fuels demand for apartments, city updates zoning rules

By James Goldmeer
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

Rapid population and job growth in Goodyear is increasing demand for multifamily housing, city officials say, as the West Valley city works to modernize its zoning rules to better manage development.

More than 13,000 jobs have been added in Goodyear over the past five years, drawing new residents and increasing the need for a wider range of housing options, according to a report on the Arizona Metropolitan Area Employment and Unemployment.

Multifamily housing, including apartments, makes up about 18% of all homes in Goodyear, and vacancy rates remain low.

City officials state that apartments and other higher-density housing serve a range of residents, including young professionals, families between homes, people unable to buy a house and those seeking a lower-maintenance lifestyle.

As housing and business demand grows, the city has begun an update of its zoning ordinance, starting with its first public meeting on the process earlier this year. The update is intended to bring older rules in line with state requirements and the city's needs.

"The state does not feel that we are doing enough and they are considering, every year, taking different abilities."

• See **Housing** on page 17



Goodyear plans to zone more multifamily housing options. (James Goldmeer/Independent Newsmedia)

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BUSINESS MOVES



1 House of Honey Coffee

House of Honey opened its second location to patrons in the West Valley, selling pastries, beverages and locally farmed honey.

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2 Primerica – Grand Opening & Ribbon Cutting

Primerica celebrates its grand opening with a ribbon cutting hosted by the West Valley Regional Chamber. The company offers financial services including term life insurance, investment strategies, and personalized Financial Needs Analyses.

15655 W. Roosevelt St., Ste. 141, Goodyear

3 Family Care Center – Ribbon Cutting

Family Care Center opens its fifth Arizona location with a ribbon cutting on January 22 at 11:00 a.m. The center provides accessible, compassionate behavioral health care for individuals and families in the West Valley.

1616 N. Litchfield Rd., Ste. 270, Goodyear

4 Goodyear Fit Body Boot Camp

Goodyear Fit Body Boot Camp has reopened with new programs. The gym offers 30-minute, coach-led training sessions, including Fit Body Forever for adults 55+.

560 N. Estrella Pkwy., Ste. 15, Goodyear



LITCHFIELD PARK/GOODYEAR

INDEPENDENT

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Your Local Team



Richard Smith
Reporter
rsmith@iniusa.org



Steve Chernek
News Page Designer
schernek@iniusa.org



James Goldmeer
Reporter
MGoldmeer@iniusa.org



Chris Williams
Graphic Designer
cwilliams@iniusa.org



Ann Kampmeyer
Multimedia Advertising Consultant
akampmeyer@iniusa.org

Arizona Leadership

Circulation Manager: Terri Rodgers.....trodgers@iniusa.org
Digital Sales Manager: Austin Moose.....amoose@iniusa.org
Editor-in-Chief: Patrick O'Grady.....pogradey@iniusa.org
Business Operations Manager: Kathleen Kotzbauer.....kkotzbauer@iniusa.org
V.P. of Sales & Marketing: Barbara Wandling.....bwandling@iniusa.org
President & CEO: Charlene Bisson.....cbisson@iniusa.org

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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

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Date Night Out	West Valley Symphony Dillons @ Western Trails Ranch Breakthrough Smash Room
Event Planner	West Valley Symphony Paint the Party Mobile Art Studio Bente
Event Venue	Vista Performing Arts Center West Valley Symphony Dillon's at Western Trails Ranch
Festival	Dysart Festival of the Arts Christmas Tree Lighting, Surprise Renaissance Festival
Hotel/Resort	Wigwam Desert Hotel and Casino
Live Theatre	Arizona Broadway Theatre West Valley Symphony Theater Works
Local Attraction	Wildlife World Zoo & Aquarium West Valley Symphony Andretti Indoor Karting & Games
Local Author	Nancy Kasten Rusty Bradshaw Sarah Mulleneaux
Movie Theater	Harkins Arrowhead AMC Surprise Point 14 FatCats
Museum	Del Webb Sun Cities Museum Musical Instrument Museum Phoenix Art Museum
Music School/Instruction	Dysart Schools Musical Surprise Thunderbird High School- Vocal Ensemble
Music Venue	The Vista Center for the Arts West Valley Symphony Westside Blues and Jazz

Performing Arts School	Shadow Ridge High School Dysart Schools Musical Surprise
Place to Have a Birthday Party	Fat Cats Surprise Organ Stop Pizza Dillons @ Western Trails Ranch
Place to People Watch	Arrowhead Mall Westgate Walmart
Place to Take the Kids	TEAM 4 Kids Pediatric Therapy Wildlife World Zoo & Aquarium Phoenix Science Center
Sporting Event	Spring Training at Surprise Stadium Arizona Cardinals Arizona Rattlers
Tourist Destination	Bearizona World Wildlife Zoo White Tanks Regional Park
Wedding Venue	Briarwood Country Club The Spicery in our 1895 Home Trilogy Country Club

COMMUNITY

Administrative Assistant/Receptionist	Brandi Harris Jenesis Palacios - TEAM 4 Kids Pediatric Therapy Christina Bertelsen TEAM 4 Kids
Charter School	Paradise Honor High School Black Mountain Science Academy
College/University	ASU Ottawa ASU-Barrett Honors College
Community Event	TEAM 4 Kids Cruisin Car Show Dysart Festival of the Arts Sun City Home Owners Association (SCHOA) - Day of Service

Fundraising Event	TEAM 4 Kids Cruisin' Car Show A Very Merry Christmas - @ Dillons Phoenix Feeding Farms
Non-Profit Civic Organization	Sun City Home Owners Association (SCHOA) Foundation Dysart Education Foundation Feeding Phoenix Farm Inc.
Park	Surprise Park Viewpoint Lake, Sun City Fellowship Square - Surprise Paloma Park
Philanthropic individual/organization	Dysart Education Foundation Sun Cities 4 Paws Feeding Phoenix Farms Fellowship Square - Surprise Soldier's Best Friend
Place For a One Day Trip	Bearizona Prescott Lake Pleasant
Place For a Quiet Stroll	Vietnam Memorial Fellowship Square - Surprise
Place to Work	TEAM 4 Kids Pediatric Therapy Dysart Unified School District Western State Bank
Place to Worship	CCV Saint Claires Catholic Church St. Clement of Rome
Pre-School	Growing Minds Preschool Black Mountain Science Academy North Valley Christian Academy
School District	Dysart Unified School District Phoenix Union High School District Nadaburg School District
Teacher	Bonnie Armstrong Aimee Jensen - Valley Vista High School Deborah Forest
Youth Organization	YoungLife Girl Scouts Cactus Pine Council Ewa Fencing Club

FOOD & DRINK			
Asian Restaurant	Thom Yun Surprise Good China Saigon Kitchen	French Fries	Five Guys McDonald's Freddy's
Bakery	Oasis Bagels Wildflower Bakery New York West	Frozen Treats	Handel's Homemade Ice Cream Culvers Dairy Queen
Bar	Coopers Hawk Charley's at The Lakes Charley's Sports Grill Fuzzys	Grocery Store	Safeway Winco Sprouts
BBQ	Dillons BBQ Texas Road House Eric's!!!	Happy Hour	Barrio Queen Charley's at The Lakes
Breakfast	Oasis Bagels Over Easy First Watch	Ice Cream	Handel's Homemade Ice Cream Baskin Robins Cinnabon Swirl
Brunch	Oasis Bagels The Wigwam Hashhouse	Italian Restaurant	Babbo Italian Eatery Olive Garden The Sicilian Butcher - Peoria
Burger	In-N-Out Burger Five Guys Charley's at The Lakes	Mexican Restaurant	Rio Mirage Cafe Abuelo's Macayo's
Butcher/Meat Market	Bob's Butcher Troub's Butcher Shop Off The Hook Meat Shop	Outdoor Dining	Dillons Charley's at The Lakes Torchys
Caterer	Oasis Bagels Abuelos Moe's Southwest Grill The Spicery in our 1895 Home	Pizzeria	Barrows Taste of Italy Ray's Pizzeria
Chicken	Popeye's Charley's at The Lakes	Restaurant	Texas Roadhouse Long Horn Steakhouse Chili's Dillons
Chinese Restaurant	Big Budda Good China Great Wall	Sushi	Squid Ink Uni's Trapper's
Coffee Shop	Oasis Bagels Spencer's Place Boyer	Takeout Food	Cafe Zupas Torchys Jack in the Box
Comfort Food	The Links Neighborhood Grill Oasis bagels Cracker Barrel	Wings	Booty's Arizona Pizza Company Charley's at The Lakes
Date Night Restaurant	Cooper's Hawk State48 Picazzo's	Wine Bar	Cooper's Hawk Postino Sip at the Ranch
Donuts	BoSa Donuts	HEALTH, FITNESS & WELLNESS	
Family Restaurant	Links Neighborhood Grill Cold Beers and Cheeseburgers Chili's	Chiropractor	Trinity Advanced Health AFC Physical Medicine & Chiropractic Centers Muscle Chiropractic
Fine Dining Restaurant	Links Neighborhood Grill Cooper's Hawk Flemings	Day Spa/Massage	Optimal Weight and Wellness Med Spa Massage at Arrowhead Creekside Synergistic Living Massage & Wellness Center
		Dermatologist	Dr. Katharine Cordova, Beatrice Keller Clinic Emily Jenson, PA-C, US Dermatology Partners Dr. Karan Lal
		Dentistry	Sun City West Dental Village Dental Breez Dental Goodman Dental
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		Hearing Aid Center	Grusecki Audiology
		Hospital	Banner Thunderbird Medical Center Banner Del E Webb Medical Center Mayo Clinic
		IV Therapy	West Valley Naturopathic Center
		Local Pharmacy	Walgreens Rightway Pharmacy Sun City Safeway in Estrella
		Med Spa	Optimal Weight & Wellness Med Spa Muscle Chiropractic-Frequency Based and Soft Tissue Therapy Synergistic Living Massage & Wellness Center
		Medicare Insurance Agent	Jay Jones Dave Mitchell / Ideal Insurance Agency
		Mental Health Therapist	Dan Kapelle-DK Counseling Becoming Transformed Counseling Horizon Recovery



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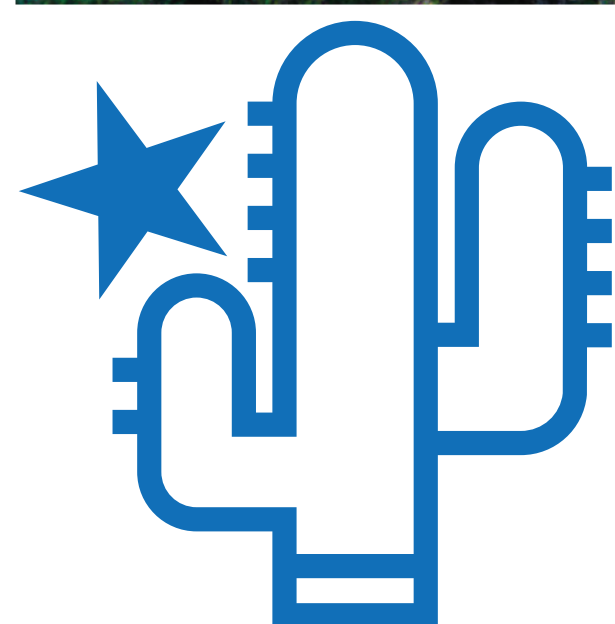
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Housing

• From page 10

ities for the cities to regulate its own future away,” said Christian Williams, Goodyear’s planning manager. “We want to be a part of the solution, we want to be in control of our own destiny, we want our citizens to be in control of their destiny.”

The zoning ordinance sets rules for development, like building heights, multifamily housing locations, parking mandates and is used to carry out the city’s broader General Plan. Officials said that the update will not change existing zoning designations or raise property taxes.

Topics under review include parking and landscaping standards, permit processes, housing diversity and development near Luke Air Force Base.

Matthew Klyzeiko, associate vice president at Michael Baker International, said the goal is to strike a balance between protecting neighbor-

hoods and accommodating growth.

“The grand slam is if we can achieve all of this, have a code that is functional, that is current, and then also continues to guide the city in a positive direction,” Klyzeiko said.

Consultants are also exploring ways to encourage a wider range of housing types, including duplexes, townhomes and accessory dwelling units, while keeping new development compatible with existing communities.

“We’re looking for ways to write into code opportunities for diverse housing, affordable housing, in ways that are compatible with the community,” said Laney Corey of Matrix Design Group.

City officials say public input will play a key role throughout the process. The zoning ordinance update is expected to be completed about midway through 2026. Residents can follow the process at goodyearaz.gov/zoning.



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who is an accredited VA attorney, retired army combat veteran and former VA employee who spent more than 13 years federal service in multiple VA offices in various positions.



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Top 5

• From page 10

The company plans to open its first Arizona location in summer 2026 along Bullard Avenue near Interstate 10 in Goodyear.

City officials say the development is expected to attract travelers from across the Southwest.

“We picked Goodyear because it’s just the ideal location for us... a business-friendly council, and an amazing opportunity for employment,” said Buc-ee’s co-founder Arch Aplin.

The facility is expected to create hundreds of jobs, further strengthening Goodyear’s growing employment base.

New schools come online to address growth

Rapid residential growth across the West Valley has increased demand for educational facilities,

prompting multiple school projects scheduled to open in 2026. Hilltop School for the Arts, on La Loma Hill in Litchfield Park, will serve up to 450 students with a focus on visual and performing arts.

Litchfield Elementary School District plans to open Troy Gilbert Elementary School in fall 2026 to accommodate enrollment increases and relieve overcrowding at nearby campuses.

District leaders say the new schools reflect ongoing efforts to keep pace with population growth while expanding specialized learning opportunities.

La Loma Hilltop redevelopment advances

Litchfield Park is moving forward with the long-anticipated redevelopment of the historic La Loma Homestead. City plans call for transforming the area into a cultural and educational hub featuring

a new library, a fine arts academy, a performing arts center and a museum honoring the southwest Valley.

“We do feel these uses are the catalyst for the city to start moving the efforts forward simultaneously,” said Randy Proch, Litchfield Park planning director.

Officials say the project is intended to preserve the city’s history while creating a gathering space for residents and visitors.

GSQ development continues to expand

Commercial and mixed-use growth remains strong in Goodyear, particularly at GSQ, a development near Loop 303 and McDowell Road. Several new businesses are planned or under construction, including an AC Hotel by Marriott, a Nordstrom Rack and multiple restaurants and retail spaces.

“I see GSQ as successful because it was planned with purpose and created in a great location,” said Goodyear Mayor Joe Pizzillo.

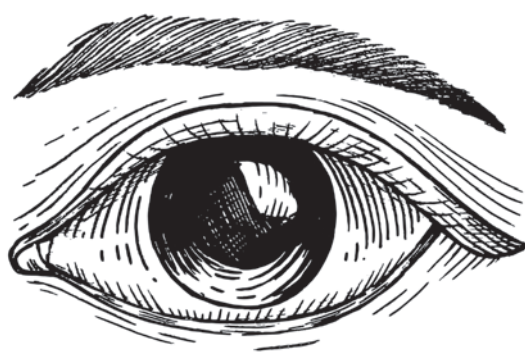
City leaders say the project is helping to position Goodyear as a regional destination for shopping, dining and entertainment.

Voters face a full slate of elections

Beyond development, 2026 will be a pivotal year politically. Goodyear voters will elect a mayor, vice mayor and two council members, decisions that will shape policy priorities for years to come.

School board races are also scheduled across the Agua Fria, Litchfield Elementary and Liberty school districts, alongside several state legislative contests.

Together, these projects and elections are expected to influence growth, education and governance across the southwest Valley.



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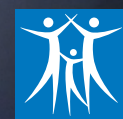
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EDUCATION

\$22M investment aids military families' education crisis

By James Goldmeier
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

President Donald Trump recently signed the annual Agriculture and Rural Development funding bill into law securing \$22 million for a new Child Development Center at Luke Air Force Base in Glendale. The funding is intended to provide a necessary lifeline to military families accross the West Valley who have struggled with a nationwide childcare crisis.

The investment, advocated for by Arizona Senators Ruben Gallego and Mark Kelly, is expected to create an on-base facility capable of serving an estimated 250 to 300 children, including infants, toddlers, and preschoolers, according to information provided by Senator Gallego's office. The current facility at Luke is aging and severely

undersized, unable to meet the growing needs of service members and their families stationed at the base.

Luke Air Force Base did not respond to a request for comment.

A Barrier to Readiness and Retention

The allocation of \$22 million is more than just a local project; it is a direct attempt to combat a problem the Department of Defense has recognized as a threat to military readiness and retention.

According to the National Military Family Association, for years military families have faced a crisis of accessibility: the average wait time for an on-base Child Development Center spot is often between six and 12 months, with thousands of children languishing on waitlists globally.

This shortage forces service members into an unsustainable cycle.

Military parents, who frequently work irregular hours, shift schedules, or deploy on short notice, struggle to find civilian childcare that can accommodate their unique demands. When they move due to a Permanent Change of Station, they are often sent to the back of the line at their new duty station.

The National Military Family Association states that military spouses cite childcare as a significant hurdle to their career prospects, feeling that staying home to provide childcare is the only option.

"The new Child Development Center at Luke Air Force Base will give military parents peace of mind knowing they have reliable and accessible childcare while serving our country,"

said marine combat veteran, Senator Gallego, according to a response from his office regarding questions about the bill. "This funding will change the day to day lives of many service members at Luke... I will continue fighting to support Arizona service members and military families."

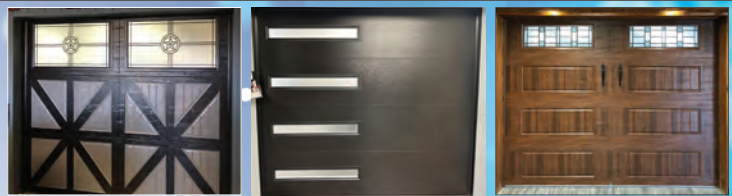
Legislative Context and Funding Details

The \$22 million secured for the Luke AFB Child Development Center was part of the Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2026. This act was included in the larger appropriations legislation signed by President Trump.

The law provided a total of \$19.737 billion for military construction and family housing programs for FY2026.

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SPORTS

Millennium girls' lone senior moves in, fits in

Newcomer Eteuati joins Tigers

By Richard Smith
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

Millennium girls basketball remains the favorite to repeat as Open Division champions despite the fact that its only senior is the new girl in town.

In this case, it helps greatly that the newcomer is T'Maea Eteuati. The 5-8 guard does a bit of everything on the court and is talented enough to have committed to play Division I ball at Colgate next season.

Even better for the Tigers, who entered a Jan. 10 home showdown with Tucson Salpointe Catholic with a 9-3 record, Eteuati is proving to be a no fuss star player who showed up on Millennium's doorstep.

"I'd never seen her before. The Lord works in mysterious ways," Mil-

lennium Coach Danny Soliman said. "She's been a blessing for us to have and is a great kid."

Her family reached out to athletic director Remigo Gordillo as summer began. Eteuati played her first three years at Davis High School in Utah.

Eteuati played in the Lady X tournament the last two days of May before moving into Millennium or really seeing the school.

But she quickly found the team and type of game she was looking for when she moved to Arizona.

"It definitely was something I was looking forward to just because I was able to play a different type of basketball. Arizona is very different than Utah basketball," Eteuati said. "Arizona is more aggressive and defense oriented. Utah is more like shooters. It's not as fast paced. It's more of getting



T'Maea Eteuati

in our sets. There's only a couple of good teams in the state and I feel like AZ has a little more widespread talent."

She said she connected well with three fellow guards — sophomore Mariah Brownlee, junior Daisha Richardson and Brooklyn Williams. Their play styles complement each other.

The Tigers were very welcoming and their family principles stood out immediately, she said.

"We pass up good shots for great shots," Eteuati said. "Everyone on our team is super talented. We can depend on each other to have each others' backs."

Eteuati is the most balanced aspect of a very balanced team. She leads the

Tigers in rebounds (5.9 per game), assists (3.8) and steals (3.3) and is second in scoring (12.8).

Soliman said he can get on his new star player for mistakes without worrying if she will withdraw.

"She's a dawg out there, diving on the court. She's just a winner who does all the little things," Soliman said.

Millennium's roster is full of younger players still tapping into their potential like juniors Richardson, Jayda Hunt and Niya Nsonwu and sophomores Brownlee and Tiana Grant. Then there are complete newcomers to the program like Eteuati, Williams and freshman center Amaya Ribbens-Brown.

When it's all clicking the results can be spectacular, like a 23-10 third quarter against O'Connor on the Eagles court.



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ENTERTAINMENT

Wigwam Fine Art Festival returns in February

By James Goldmeer
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

More than 100 artists are expected to gather at the Wigwam Resort in February when the Wigwam Fine Art Festival returns, transforming the resort's front lawn into an open-air gallery featuring work from across the country.

The festival, scheduled for 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Feb. 13–15 at the Wigwam Resort, 300 E. Wigwam Blvd., will feature jury-selected artists working in Western, traditional, contemporary and Native American styles. Admission is free.

The upcoming event follows the resort's recent Holiday Festival of Arts, a three-day, farmers market-style showcase that welcomed visitors to browse about 60 artist booths spread across the property. Artists offered work in a wide range of media, including copper, painting, jewelry, pressed-flower art, carvings and mixed-media pieces, while guests strolled the grounds and spoke directly with creators.

Among the participating artists was Scott Palmer of Copper Phoenix Studio, a Mesa-based artist who works full time with copper. Palmer displayed hand-shaped copper wall art treated with patinas, a chemical process that alters the metal's surface to create flowing color and texture. Each piece is produced individually.

Palmer said his path to copper was unexpected. He began his career as an abstract and impressionistic painter before being introduced to the medium through friends who worked in copper.

"They saw my work and hired me to do some painted pieces for them," Palmer said. "Then I started helping with their copper work, and I learned

a lot about copper."

While his friends primarily used torch-fired techniques, Palmer gravitated toward patinas, which chemically alter copper to create natural color variations.

"I wanted to work with patinas, where the copper actually changes color," he said. "It just turned into a really cool thing that ended up being, 14 years later, my full-time career."

Palmer said festivals like the Wigwam events play an important role in sustaining artists by creating opportunities for direct connection with buyers.

"For me, it's direct access to the customer," he said. "In galleries, I don't get to meet the people buying my work."

Those interactions often lead to custom commissions, as visitors discuss their homes and the spaces they are looking to fill. Palmer added that community-based art festivals also help keep interest in fine art alive, particularly among younger audiences.

"When I sell my work to younger couples, it's always such a huge boost for me," he said. "If people don't have an opportunity to see art, they're probably not going to go to a gallery. These kinds of festivals help reignite that."

While parting with his work was once difficult, Palmer said he now views selling his pieces as part of the creative cycle.

"I would rather have someone have my work in their home and that brings them joy," he said. "That's what makes it meaningful."

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Tierra Verde Lake Park, 301 S. Old Litchfield Rd., Litchfield Park

International Holocaust Remembrance Day Presentation

Tuesday, Jan. 27, 2026, 6-7:15 p.m.

Holocaust survivor Dr. Dirk van Leenen discusses his experiences during World War II and his family's efforts to hide Jews in the Netherlands.

Georgia T. Lord Library, Pro-

gramming Room, 1900 N. Civic Sq., Goodyear

Heart & Sole 5K and 1-Mile Fun Run

Saturday, Feb. 7, 2026,
8 a.m.-Noon

Community run and walk event offering a 5K and one-mile option for participants of all ages.

Goodyear Ballpark, 1933 S. Ballpark Way, Goodyear

Jazz in the Park

Friday, Feb. 13, 2026, 5-8 p.m.
Evening event celebrating Black artists featuring live jazz music, local artists, food vendors, and a beer and wine garden.

Goodyear Civic Square, 1900 N. Civic Sq., Goodyear

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FROM THE COVER

Register

• From page 1

backing from the city of Litchfield Park. Hegarty noted that the grassroots interest in saving Tal'-Wi-Wi Ranch was the original catalyst for the broader movement to protect the area's history.

Until now, Monument Hill in Avondale stood as the only other federally recognized landmark in the region.

Tal'-Wi-Wi Ranch rose to prominence in the 1920s as a pioneer in scientific desert farming. For nearly a century, it served as an agricultural landmark, proving the viability of large-scale cultivation in the arid Arizona landscape.

Founded by Colonel Dale Bumstead, Tal'-Wi-Wi became an international model for scientific desert farming. Before planting anything, Bumstead spent four years researching soil quality, water drainage, and temperature variations across the property.

According to the P.W. Litchfield Heritage Center, the ranch achieved global fame for its diversification, successfully cultivating cardinal grapes, date palms and over 300 heads of cattle.

National Register status provides more than just a plaque; it allows the sites to apply for federal preservation grants and tax credits. As the surrounding El Mirage and Litchfield Park areas continue to develop with new schools and libraries, these designations ensure that physical links to the past remain.

The successful listing is the culmination of a years-long effort by Tal'-Wi-Wi Ranch conservators and the P.W. Litchfield Heritage Center.

The successful listing of the ranch has provided a blueprint for the pending nomination of Rancho La Loma Homestead. That property served as the winter home of Paul Litchfield, the former president and CEO of Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co. and a titan of 20th-century regional development.

"Paul Litchfield didn't just shape

the business and agricultural landscape here, he shaped the community," Hegarty said. "That hilltop has long been a landmark, a place that brought people together."

The push for national recognition was a years-long effort led by the P.W. Litchfield Heritage Center's Historic Preservation Committee, with backing from the city of Litchfield Park. Hegarty noted that the grassroots interest in saving Tal'-Wi-Wi Ranch was the original catalyst for the broader movement to protect the area's history.

For the Southwest Valley, the National Register designation is more than a title. It opens eligibility for federal preservation grants and tax credits while potentially boosting heritage tourism in an area undergoing rapid modernization.

"It will absolutely raise the profile of our local history and strengthen community pride," Hegarty said. "People often don't realize the depth of what's been here unless there's something physical to connect them to it."

The recognition arrives as the landscape around the Rancho La Loma hilltop transforms. Construction is underway for a new library and school, and the Litchfield Heritage Center is preparing to move into a restored historic building on the site. Plans for the historic district include preserving original structures, such as cottages, a water tank, and a pumphouse.

"We've worked closely with the city and the state to ensure these elements are protected," Hegarty said.

The Heritage Center is currently fundraising for a \$3.5 million relocation to the historic Litchfield-Denny house atop the hill. The capital campaign has reached nearly 80% of its goal.

"Our vision is to be the cultural and historical heart of the Southwest Valley," Hegarty said. "And having these properties recognized at the national level is a powerful step toward that."

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