



PREVIEW

City prepares for change in 2026

Top 5 story topics to watch

By Richard Smith
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

Glendale is preparing for a year of change in 2026 with a renovated City Hall slated to open, a city manager taking office this month, a recent hire as the Glendale Chamber of Commerce CEO and three city council seats up for grabs in the August elections, with at least one new council member guaranteed.

Here are five things to look forward to in 2026:

Downtown gets new centerpiece with modern City Hall

Dubbed the Downtown Campus Reinvestment Project by

• See **Change** on page 10

LOCAL BUSINESS

Glendale Chamber CEO jumps in for crucial new era of development

By Richard Smith
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

Glendale Chamber of Commerce CEO Zach Yentzer saw how pivotal the rest of this decade would be in setting up the next half century.

He wanted in.

After planting roots in Tucson for more than a decade and serving as vice president of business advocacy with the Chamber of Southern Arizona, Yentzer sought the challenge in Glendale. The chamber hired Yentzer in October 2025, and he started in the role in November.

"I believe that in the next two to five years what we do here will shape the next 25," Yentzer said. "And the chamber has to be a part of shaping and shepherding that. We can't be divorced from that. We have to be a part of driving it forward as a champion for this community."

Part of that — Yentzer and the chamber board believe — is a more cordial relationship with the city.

The partnership with city staff and Glendale's Economic Development

• See **Chamber** on page 11



Glendale Chamber of Commerce CEO Zach Yentzer smiles Jan. 20 outside the entrance to the chamber offices, at 10550 W. Mariposa St., Suite 1, Phoenix. Yentzer started in the role in November 2025. (Independent Newsmedia/Richard Smith)

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ON YOURVALLEY.NET**2026 ELECTION**

Councilmembers Baldenegro, Tolmachoff announce intent to run

By Richard Smith
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

Two of the three Glendale City Council members with terms ending this December are seeking to remain in their seat in the Aug. 4 primary election.

In the case of Ocotillo District Councilmember Leandro Baldenegro, he is not technically seeking re-election. Baldenegro was appointed by the council in April 2024.

Lauren Tolmachoff, first elected as the Cholla District representative, decided to seek a fourth term and announced her candidacy in early January.

"I think you need some voices on the council who are experienced. We've got people who are just going through their second budget cycle. It's a big learning curve to understand how all of that works," Tolmachoff said. "I just felt like it was not a good time for me to step away. With a new city manager, even though he's experienced he doesn't know Glendale."

Lupe Conchas and Dianna Guzman won primary elections in August 2024 and debuted on the council that December.

The Cholla District is the northernmost in the city, and every Glendale address north of Union Hills Road is in the district, which also jogs south to Bell Road from 51st to 59th avenues and from 79th to 83rd avenues.

Right of way beautification is one of her goals in the next four years. Current median improvements along Union Hills Road almost serve as a pilot program.

Sustainability of the lake system in Arrowhead Lakes is her top priority.

"We haven't quite got there yet. It's a work in progress," Tolmachoff said. "The HOAs and the country



Leandro Baldenegro (City of Glendale)

club own lakes but the water system is part of the city's treatment system. It's effluent water. The system is old," Tolmachoff said. "It's been a couple of years and we're not done yet. We're working on a sustainability program, where we can partner with Arrowhead Amenities, with the HOAs and with the city to make sure we have a sustainable system."

Tolmachoff said she hopes to serve as a conduit to things that happened in the past 10 years in the city.

She also wants to ensure Glendale's characteristic fiscal restraint is maintained even in tough economic times.

Tolmachoff was a driving force on the city's policy to not increase secondary property taxes for bonds.

As of now, she does not have an opponent in August. Glendale City Clerk Julie Bower stated in an email that five people have filed statements of interest and formed candidate committees for the election.

In addition to Tolmachoff, Baldenegro and Rory Goree intend to run in the Ocotillo District. Political newcomers Lisa



Lauren Tolmachoff (City of Glendale)

Baker and Michael Calles are the candidates in the Barrel District, where current councilman Bart Turner decided not to run.

These candidates filed annual and fourth quarter 2025 campaign finance reports Jan. 15. Excerpts from these reports include:

- Baker: Her first report of the campaign shows receipts of \$2,956 and a disbursement of \$512.75. The local Realtor contributed \$800 to her fund, Turner and former councilmember Yvonne Knack each gave \$500.

- Calles: Calles received \$6,842,41 total and \$4,068,74. Arthur Sandoval donated \$1,041.98. Calles contributed \$5,000 to his campaign.

- Baldenegro submitted his statement of organization on Jan. 13.

- Goree: Listed total receipts of \$41,332.30 and disbursements of \$37,996.67. Goree has relied on small donations over time. However, Sun City resident Richard Van Gelisti gave \$1,500 in October. Bitzee Mama's owner Lourdes Rodriguez has given a total of \$400, in four installments. Baker has contributed \$80 total.

Holiday season car crashes decline in Glendale from prior year

According to data from the Arizona Governor's Office of Highway Safety pulled by the Glendale Police Department, the city had significantly fewer vehicle-related accidents this holiday season than the same period a year ago.

For this story, the holiday season is defined as Dec. 19, 2025 to Jan. 4, 2026, with the prior year statistics from Dec. 19, 2024 to Jan. 4, 2025.

The holiday period just past saw 203 total crashes in Glendale, compared to 263 in the same span a year ago

Read online:

<https://tinyurl.com/yaz2a6e5>

Companies moved into nearly 1.5M square feet in industrial corridor

The openings of La-Z Boy Incorporated and Broadrange Logistics capped off a prolific 2025 for the industrial district at Glendale's west end at the Loop 303 corridor.

According to the city of Glendale's figures, five businesses moved logistics or distribution centers in the area, occupying a total of 1,461,964 square feet.

<https://tinyurl.com/67yp9tu7>

Council picks Malnar as vice mayor

Glendale Councilmember Raymond "Ray" Malnar was unanimously appointed by the Glendale City Council to serve as Vice Mayor during its Jan. 13 meeting.

He is the council member for the Sahuaro District, the city's second northernmost.

<https://tinyurl.com/44p8hkwd>

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COMMITTEE

Council starts bond talks, lacks consensus

By Richard Smith
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

The Glendale City Council does not have a consensus on how to go about a bond election in 2026, but they do agree that the process needs to pick up speed.

During its Jan. 13 workshop, the council agreed to have councilmembers Dianna Guzman, Ray Malnar and Lauren Tolmachoff meet with staff and put together a plan and present to council in two weeks.

The bond committee meeting for the two 2025 bond initiatives still meet Jan 21. That meeting and the council staff discussions included conversations on forming two subcommittees, one each for likely bond items about libraries and parks.

“The committee may decide that 2026 is not the best year to do a bond,” Malnar said.

“We would still have a chance to discuss that and vote on it.”

Councilmember Bart Turner said he would like to see a larger bond committee this time around. Malnar said he would prefer subcommittees for each bond item.

Tolmachoff suggested using some members if the library advisory board and parks commissions could act as subcommittees or form the bulk of those committees.

Assistant City Manager Vicki Rios said the boards could do joint meetings instead of adding subcommittees.

“I do have a concern that it will consume time,” Mayor Jerry Weiers said.

No other councilmember backed Lupe Conchas’ suggestion to do away with a bond committee and reach out for more direct citizen engagement. He said this process will add a lot of time for city staff while not giving them direction.

Much of the debate resulted from the \$35 million bond proposal for the city’s operations campus failing by a mere 12



Glendale Parks and Recreation Director John Kennedy stands in the grass at Dos Lagos Park in northern Glendale in March 2025. The city decided to hold back on seeking a bond election for parks projects, including a small one at Dos Lagos. Glendale is considering a parks projects bond in 2026. (Independent Newsmedia/Nash Jensen)

votes in November, with 12,652 against (50.02%) and 12,640 (49.98%) for.

Weiers said blame for half of the 2025 bond’s failure cannot only be laid at the feet of the bond committee. As he pointed out, if each council member persuaded two more votes in their district to change their vote or come to the polls instead of sitting out, the bond passes.

“The council has to be more engaged,” Weiers said. “We all have to take some responsibility for that.”

Bond question 1 passed comfortably last year. It dealt with flood control and water retention and is for \$30 million.

Surveys taken last year suggested Glendale voters would pass both bond questions but were lukewarm about bonds on library and park projects.

“The survey also made some assumptions that people would understand the bond,” Malnar said. “I’m not sure we had the proper education. We had some education, but as we saw it was lackluster compared to what some other cities have done.”

If Glendale seeks a bond this year, Rios said, surveys will be done in late February and early March.

The city must notify Maricopa

County by May 7 if it wants to have a bond election this November, so April 22 is the last regular meeting before that.

Rios said Glendale needs to adopt the ballot language by June 8. Arguments for and against the bond printed on the ballot are due Aug. 5.

“If you form additional formal subcommittees, it will take longer and we run the risk, again, that we get into the situation where we form these subcommittees but they don’t really have the opportunity to do anything because we’re too close to these deadlines,” Rios said.

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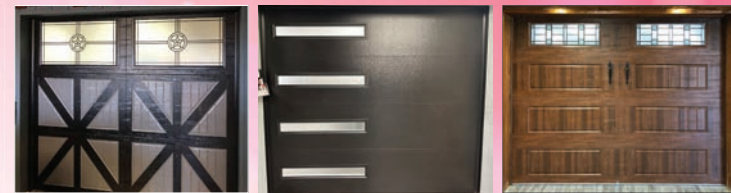
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BUSINESS MOVES

NOW OPEN

1 Vallarta Supermarket, a Latino-owned grocery chain known for fresh foods and in-store experience, opened its first Arizona location in Glendale Jan. 14. The store, at 5836 W. Camelback Road, will bring Vallarta's fresh produce, an in-house carnicería, freshly made tortillas, a panadería and prepared foods inspired by traditional Mexican cuisine.

2 Influence Studios, a production and digital marketing company, is now a full-service creative agency headquartered at 7018 N. 57th Ave., in Downtown Glendale. The agency delivers video production, creative rentals, and marketing, offering a full-service creative stack that spans video production, studio and equipment rentals, and digital marketing with brand strategy.

3 Pencoco, Inc., a family-owned manufacturer of water and wastewater treatment chemicals, recently opened its Arizona manufacturing operation in Glendale. Pencoco's facility is at 5090 W. Camelback Road. It will manufacture specialty chemicals used by municipal, mining, and industrial customers to treat drinking water and wastewater.

4 The reimagined La Perla Sports Club, which shares a name with a legendary downtown restaurant, had its ribbon cutting ceremony Dec. 5 at 5723 W. Glendale Ave. It is now a sports bar by day and a dance club by night.

OPENING SOON

5 Boba Cucue announced plans to open early this year in Glendale, at a storefront at 5930 W. Greenway Road, Suite No. 19.

GROUNDBREAKING

6 On Dec. 4, International Furniture Direct broke ground on its new, near-100,000-square-foot facility at 73rd



and Northern avenues. It will serve as the company's international headquarters and distribution center.

ANNOUNCEMENT

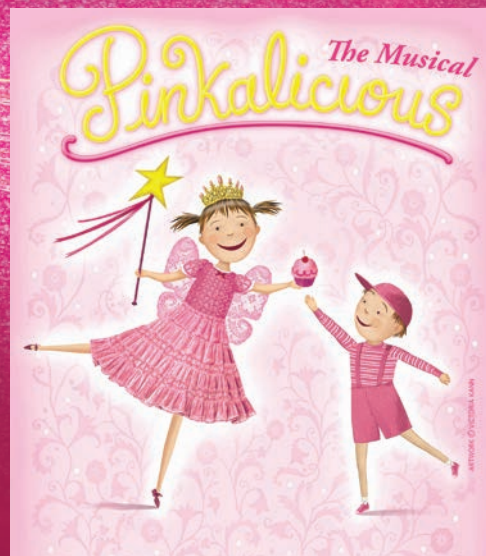
7 Red Hawk Development recently played host to a pre-construction sales event near Glendale Municipal Airport. Charles Eckert, founder and principal of the Phoenix-based business, stated in an email that vertical construction should start in June on **Red Hawk Industrial Park-Glendale** at 7922 N. Glen Harbor Blvd. The project will feature Class A construction and amenities on condos ranging from 966 to 3,000 square feet.



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BUSINESS

Meet Your Business: Loved Before Ready For More

INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

Diane McMillion retired from work in the dental field in August 2024 after 45 years.

With the support of her husband, Gary, McMillion looked into opening a resale clothing store for children. Loved Before Ready For More had a soft opening just west of 67th Avenue and Greenway Road in Glendale early in the summer of 2025 and was open by August.

"I wanted to create a space where families could buy and sell gently used children clothing and feel good about it financially and for the environment," McMillion said.

It helps fill a void in the area that grew with the closing of Other Mothers at 2734 W. Bell Road in Phoenix.

- See **Loved** on page 9



Owner Diane McMillion opened the children's resale clothing store Loved Before Ready For More in Glendale in 2025. The store also offers childrens' accessories and toys. (Independent Newsmedia/Richard Smith)

An advertisement for The Montecito Senior Living by Cogir. The top half features a photograph of an elderly couple smiling and holding a glass of wine. A green circular graphic on the left says "ASK ABOUT OUR MOVE-IN OFFERS!". The bottom half has a dark blue background with white text. The logo "THE MONTECITO SENIOR LIVING" is at the top right, followed by "by cogir". Below this, it says "Independent Living, Assisted Living & Memory Care". A large white text block says "FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL (623) 323-1550". At the bottom, it says "TheMontecitoSeniorLiving.com". There are also icons for accessibility and a license number.

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Loved

• From page 8

The Glendale Independent caught up with the McMillion for a question and answer session:

Name: Diane McMillion

Business: Loved Before Ready For More, 15410 N. 67th Ave., Suite 1, Glendale

What type of store is it? Children's resale clothing store as well as toys and all children accessories.

What made you choose this line of work and why is it important or interesting to you? I am always touched when children can dress nice. They always have a more outgoing personality and feel more confident in themselves. In a world where kids outgrown their clothes it seems overnight, our store offers a smarter and sustainable way to cloth their children.

What separates you from your competition? Our store carefully selects gently used clothing. And the thing that makes our store different is we take every piece that we take in and launder it and sterilize

it before it goes on the rack with eco-friendly detergents.

How important was it to offer more than just clothes, and to include car seats, strollers, toys and other items any parent of a young child will need? It helps parents save money, reduce waste, and keep high quality children's clothing in circulation — all while building a strong sense of community.

What advice would you give to someone contemplating starting their own business? It's always hard to start new things. Starting a new business always has its ups and downs. But the reward is worth it.

What has been the most rewarding aspect of providing an affordable service for families? As we are building the community, we continue to hear that our store is a little different in that way. It has been mentioned that there is not a place in that area that meets this need. Everyone is excited that we have joined in the community. Our statement piece is every child deserves to dress nice without the high price.



The children's resale clothing store Loved Before Ready For More opened on Greenway Road in Glendale in August 2025. (Independent Newsmedia/Richard Smith)

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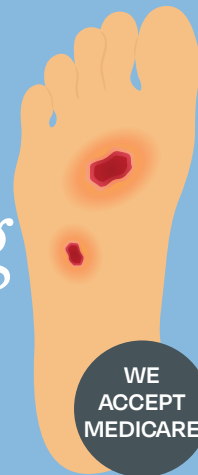
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Change

- From page 1

Glendale staff, the renovations to City Hall began in August 2022 with concepts and designs. Work on the \$94 million project to transform City Hall and the immediate area around it began in late 2023.

As this year began, Glendale said the City Hall remains on track for a spring 2026 ribbon cutting.

"Most of the work now is at ground level, outside of the south façade," City Architect Eddie Garcia said during a presentation at the Dec. 9, 2025, council workshop. "Where the back of the link for the bridge is, there's a two-story space and that's being glazed as we speak. That's the last of the curtain wall that's being installed on the north façade. We'll be moving in to the end of the calendar year with all of those things completed."

Changing face of council resumes with August election

Glendale had a largely static city council for a decade before three new members joined in 2024 — Leandro Baldenegro, Lupe Conchas and Dianna Guzman. That unit has been stable since then and should stay the same until the end of 2026.

One change is for certain. In November, longtime Barrel District Councilmember Bart Turner announced he will not seek reelection. In December, he endorsed Lisa Baker for the seat. Michael Calles announced his candidacy in October and is endorsed by Guzman.

Baldenegro said he intends to run for the first time in the Ocotillo District — he replaced Jaime Aldama in 2024. Rory Goree was the first candidate to announce in mid-August. He will run against Baldenegro and has an endorsement from Conchas.

Cholla District Councilmember

Lauren Tolmachoff formally announced her candidacy in the first week of January. She does not have an opponent, as of Jan. 21.

City Manager, chamber CEO have say in business community

New City Manager Patrick Banger starts the job Jan. 12, arriving from Gilbert to replace Kevin Phelps nearly a year after Phelps decided to step down.

As he said in a December interview, downtown Glendale will be an early focus.

The Glendale Chamber of Commerce hired Zach Yentzer as CEO last fall and began in the role. At times, the relationship between City Hall and the chamber have been frosty, but appears improved with new players in place.

VAI Resort enters year without opening day target

The \$1.2 billion mega resort near State Farm Stadium took pains to not commit to an opening date in 2026.

Owners originally expected it to open — with less amenities than planned now — in January 2023.

As VAI continues to grow, current and future city leaders are confident VAI will be worth the wait. Do residents share those sentiments?

Arrowhead Towne Center continues reinvention

Construction fencing is now up around the former site of Sears at Arrowhead Towne Center. Mosaic at Arrowhead Towne Center is projected to open by the end of the year and will focus on Asia Pacific cuisine.

Planned stores and restaurants include 99 Ranch Market, TESO Life, Kinokuniya Books, Pho 602, Swirl Crepe and Bafang Dumpling.

Chamber

• From page 1

department has always been positive, Yentzer said. Years of policy disagreements and procedural frustrations between some elected officials and the chamber piled up.

He's the third full-time CEO in three years, following Joshua Gunn, who was hired in May 2024 and resigned in July 2025. Yentzer credited Gunn with beginning the thaw in the relationship with City Hall.

"I know Joshua really wanted a positive relationship. I'm really pleased to share with you today that I've been able, in partnership with the board, to finish that work. We've been able to sort through and resolve some of the issues and challenges that created that frostiness. The ice is breaking in a massive way," Yentzer said.

The chamber's board decided before hiring Yentzer to not endorse

candidates in Glendale elections anymore, he said.

Instead it will take part in forums and legislative scorecards and be more involved in ballot items and policy issue stances.

"We still have to get the work done. We realized over time that the endorsement strategy was getting in the way of being able to get the work done," Yentzer said.

Decade-long CEO Robert Heidt grew the Glendale chamber from around 200 to about 1,400 members.

He left in December 2023 for the same role at the Sacramento Metro Chamber.

"He grew the Glendale chamber into one of the five largest in the state, which was incredible," Yentzer said. "Walking in, the board was very clear of the past growth we have and the stability. Members are engaged and the chamber is in a good place."

Jim Peyton was the interim CEO before Gunn was hired, and Lisa Baker served as interim between

Gunn and Yentzer.

Clearly, the desire for stability in leadership was crucial in the most recent search.

Born in Pennsylvania, Yentzer moved to Arizona in 2002. Other than a year studying abroad, he has lived here every year since.

Most of that time was in Tucson, though Yentzer earned his degree from Arizona State University.

Many chambers are torn between operating as a sales chamber and solutions chamber, Yentzer said.

The vision needs to extend beyond the chamber to the greater Glendale community.

"I've been telling our members that I want to be a great sales chamber and a great solutions chamber. The Glendale moment requires us to be both. I've had members come up to me and say, 'My business has never been better and more successful than when the chamber is successful,'" Yentzer said.

• See **Downtown** on page 24



PUSD PROPOSES CHANGES, CUTS IN GLENDALE

Pioneer Elementary School in Glendale is one of two schools in the city, along with Kachina Elementary, proposed to be closed by the Peoria Unified School District. The public can speak up about this proposal, as well as the plan to make Cactus High School a 7-12 campus during a community forum beginning at 6 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 19 at Cactus, 6330 W. Greenway Road, Glendale. Read Philip Haldiman's reporting on these proposals affecting five PUSD schools in Glendale at www.yourvalley.net/glendale-independent. (Peoria Unified School District)



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Yes, I will do my part to help my community become a safe place for people to engage in civil discourse about public issues. Visit iniusa.org/civility-pledge/ to take the pledge.

Your Opinion

Our opinions page is to provide an open forum for our readers. We hope to stimulate debate, not to dominate or control it. We reserve the right to edit our opinions, and we insist on civility. Please include your name and phone number, so we can contact you for clarification or confirmation. We welcome your photo. All opinions must be no more than 300 words.

Those that are judged as personal attacks or complaints about neighbors, businesses or other opinion writers will not be considered. No person may submit more than two opinions for publication during a calendar month.

Two submissions in the same issue will not be published. The content of a submission is the responsibility of the person who submitted it.

Speak Up

We support the use of pen names. Too many people don't speak up because they fear intimidation or even danger to their families and/or careers. Pen names are an important part of our nation's history.

Indivisible invites local Republicans, Independents concerned about ICE overreach

To Republicans and independents in the Northwest Valley who are concerned about recent ICE and Border Patrol operations in Minnesota and other states: this is an invitation to stand with your neighbors and show up with Northwest Valley Indivisible. Like you, we believe in secure borders and the rule of law while also expecting federal agencies to operate within clear legal limits.



Brett Peak

If you are hesitant due to concerns about safety or disorder, here are the facts. Last year, Northwest Valley

Indivisible organized more than 40 peaceful events, with over 8,400 local residents participating. These events were calm, orderly, and non-threatening. Most were coordinated in advance with local law enforcement to ensure public safety.

We maintain strong working relationships with the Surprise Police Department and Phoenix PD, and we have coordinated multiple district-wide events with Glendale PD, Peoria PD, and the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office. We respect law enforcement and the communities they serve. Our events reflect that respect

OPINIONS

by remaining peaceful, non-vulgar, and family-friendly.

This is not about opposing police or undermining public safety. It is about accountability, constitutional boundaries, and the long-standing American principle that government power must have limits.

I have personally partnered extensively with a local Republican leader on immigration issues over the past year. We first met when she led counter-protests at our events and we coordinated for safety and civility between our groups. Today, we are close friends. That experience reinforced something important: concern about federal overreach crosses party lines.

Many Republicans and independents in our community are deeply uneasy about what is happening now. If that includes you, now is the time to lend your voice.

Our events are safe places to do so. View upcoming events at: <https://www.mobilize.us/northwestvalleyindivisible/>.

For information, visit www.northwestvalleyindivisible.org.

Brett Peak
CO-CHAIR, NORTHWEST VALLEY
INDIVISIBLE

Councilmember cheers Vallarta Supermarket debut, leads tenant rights town hall

The opening of Vallarta Supermar-

Please send your comments to AzOpinions@iniusa.org.

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

ket at 59th Avenue and Camelback Road is a moment that fills my heart.



Lupe Conchas

It's a sign that our community is being seen and invested in. I got my first job in a grocery store when I was a teenager. That experience shaped me, and seeing a place like Vallarta open its

doors here feels incredibly meaningful.

My priority is to make our district a place where families feel safe, supported, and proud. We are working to improve our streets and infrastructure, clean up neighborhoods, support public safety and invest in our parks so children can play and families can gather.

I invite Cactus District residents and Glendale residents to join me for a Housing and Tenant Rights Town Hall with Arizona Attorney General Kris Mayes from 5:30 to 7 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 29 at the Glendale Women's Clubhouse, 7032 N. 56th Ave.

Lupe Conchas
GLENDALE CITY COUNCIL, CACTUS
DISTRICT

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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
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Local Attraction	Wildlife World Zoo & Aquarium West Valley Symphony Andretti Indoor Karting & Games
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Movie Theater	Harkins Arrowhead AMC Surprise Point 14 FatCats
Museum	Del Webb Sun Cities Museum Musical Instrument Museum Phoenix Art Museum
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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
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Pre-School	Growing Minds Preschool Black Mountain Science Academy North Valley Christian Academy
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FOOD & DRINK

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Bar	Coopers Hawk Charley's at The Lakes Charley's Sports Grill Fuzzys
BBQ	Dillons BBQ Texas Road House Eric's!!!
Breakfast	Oasis Bagels Over Easy First Watch
Brunch	Oasis Bagels The Wigwam Hashhouse
Burger	In-N-Out Burger Five Guys Charley's at The Lakes
Butcher/Meat Market	Bob's Butcher Troub's Butcher Shop Off The Hook Meat Shop
Caterer	Oasis Bagels Abuelos Moe's Southwest Grill The Spicery in our 1895 Home
Chicken	Popeye's Charley's at The Lakes
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Coffee Shop	Oasis Bagels Spencer's Place Boyer
Comfort Food	The Links Neighborhood Grill Oasis bagels Cracker Barrel
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Donuts	BoSa Donuts
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Fine Dining Restaurant	Links Neighborhood Grill Cooper's Hawk Flemings

French Fries	Five Guys McDonald's Freddy's
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Ice Cream	Handel's Homemade Ice Cream Baskin Robins Cinnabon Swirl
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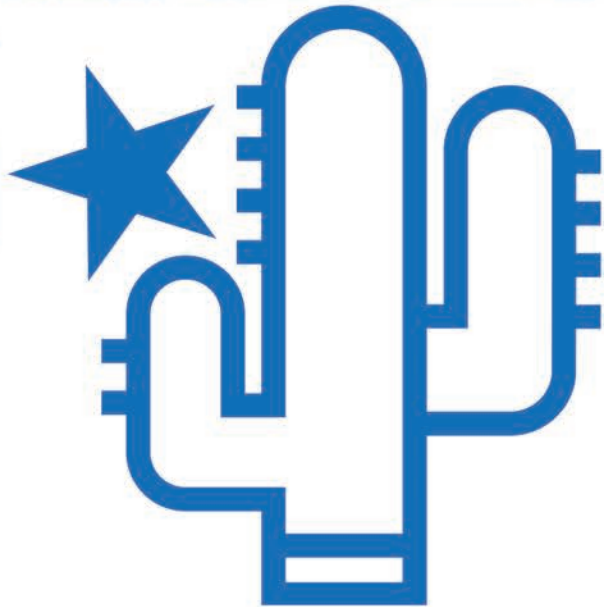
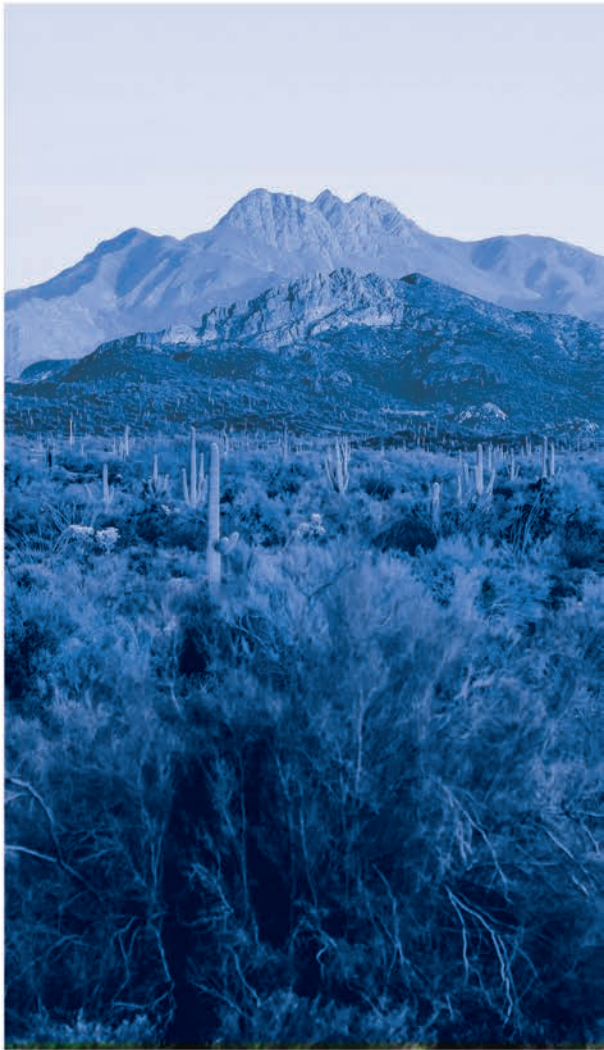
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ON TOUR

Bruno Mars announces Glendale stop on upcoming tour

Grammy winner to take on first full headline tour in almost a decade

SPECIAL TO INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

Bruno Mars will bring his first full headline tour in nearly a decade to Glendale this spring.

His The Romantic Tour launches April 10 in Las Vegas with a second stop, on April 14, at State Farm Stadium in the West Valley.

The Grammy winner's tour will span nearly 40 shows across North America, Europe, and the UK, marking one of the biggest global outings of the year.

Joining Mars in Glendale will nine-

IF YOU GO

Who: Bruno Mars

When: April 14

Where: State Farm Stadium, 1 Cardinals Drive, Glendale

Tickets: Available at BrunoMars.com

time Grammy-winning artist and Silk Sonic collaborator Anderson .Paak as DJ Pee .Wee as well as Leon Thomas.

The tour announcement follows recent news of Bruno's upcoming fourth solo album, "The Romantic," arriving everywhere on Feb. 27 via Atlantic Records.

Tickets available at BrunoMars.com.



Bruno Mars' new album, "The Romantic," arrives Feb. 27. (Photo provided by Live Nation)



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INDEPENDENT NEWS MEDIA

BOYS BASKETBALL



Deer Valley senior guard Simon Gonzales, left, and Sergio Gonzales smile in the lobby of the Glendale school's gym Jan. 22. The twins flank the 4A boys basketball state title trophy that the Skyhawks won in 2024 when they were sophomores. (Independent Newsmedia/Richard Smith)

Gonzales twins try to double Deer Valley hoops titles

By Richard Smith
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

It's nearing the end of the Gonzales twins' senior basketball season, but it feels like the end of a nine-year era.

Deer Valley Coach Jed Dunn first heard about Sergio and Simon Gonzales then.

"Their dad was telling me about these twin boys all the time. They were probably in the fourth grade at that point," Dunn said. "We would always see them, and then I coached Rudy. And Lanae, their sister, played volleyball with Kobie, so we've known them for a long time."

Funny enough, Simon Gonzales said the twins saw themselves as football players growing up. They started in the club basketball world in fifth grade and began to focus more on hoops as freshmen.

With older sister Lanae, then older brother Rudy, playing for Deer Valley as the twins grew up, Sergio and Simon learned how to compete at a young age. They saved the one-on-

one battles for the driveway.

"We've always been on the same team," Sergio Gonzales said. "Having a twin is a good partner. It's someone that can hold you accountable and push you everyday."

They started at Deer Valley in the fall of 2022 and things were a little weird. Rudy Gonzales had just transferred to Cactus for his senior year, mostly to play quarterback for the Cobras.

Cactus also had a quality 4A basketball team at the time, led by center Bradey Henige and Rudy Gonzales. The Cobras split two basketball games with the Skyhawks

"The experience was amazing because those seniors we came in with our freshman year, we grew up with those kids because our brother grew up with them. We had our brothers at school and our brother at Cactus," Sergio Gonzales said. "It was great experience to make that state run, play against our brother. I think it set

• See **Twins** on page 22

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what you just said with a
nod and smile. I really
heard what you said.
My mind is sharper!”

– Jim Polito



Twins

• From page 20

the tone for our whole career.”

They were ready to play varsity minutes from day one, Dunn said. But the twins saw spot duty as freshmen and did not complain, learning from guards like seniors Jayden Sleeper, Eric Perkins and Jaydon Cameron and junior Travis Vasquez.

Deer Valley caught fire in the playoffs that season as the No. 8 seed in 4A, knocking off top seed ALA-Gilbert North and No. 4 Gilbert Mesquite on the road in the playoffs. Region rival Peoria held off the Skyhawks 65-57 in the state final.

“We got a grasp of what a state championship really is. After losing that, knowing the feeling of losing and now that we know the feeling of winning — the feeling of losing is so much worse than the actual joy of winning,” Simon Gonzales said. “We want to win one more before we go out.”

Next year, they were regulars on a team that was going straight back to the 4A finals. To get there Deer Valley had to get through Mesquite in Gilbert again.

Sergio Gonzales scored the Skyhawks’ final 11 points and put the 51-48 semifinal win away with a pull-up jumper at the 9.1 second mark. Led by its seven seniors and two feisty sophomores, Deer Valley outlasted Tucson Sahuaro 63-61 in overtime to win the first boys basketball title in school history.

“They’re certainly fearless and they love competition. That’s hard for kids these days, to embrace from competition,” Dunn said. “We coach that. Certainly you’re not going to win every game, but you have to play hard.”

Last season, the Skyhawks were back in Veterans Memorial Coliseum for the 4A final. This time, Tyran Simpson was the only senior to play for Deer Valley against Phoenix St. Mary’s Catholic — which was on a one-year break from the Open Division.

Dunn’s team dragged the Knights and 6-11 superstar Cameron Williams — now signed to play for Duke — into overtime. Williams’ 30 points and 11 rebounds eventually were too much to overcome in a 59-55 St. Mary’s win.

That makes the twins’ goal clear enough. They want to lead a fourth straight 4A finals trip and a second title.

“It would be so fulfilling. Knowing that we lost last year and feeling like I could have done more in last year’s game, if we get one more chance we can show everybody that we’re the group that should be known,” Simon Gonzales said.

Now the Gonzales boys are the senior leaders, teaching a roster with three freshmen and three sophomores.

Deer Valley is 11-1 and ranked No. 2 in 4A behind St. Mary’s. The Knights are No. 3 overall in Arizona and almost certain to return to the Open.

“It breaks my heart that they’re seniors,” Dunn said. “We’ve got those four freshmen on the varsity. They just want to win. That’s the ultimate goal

with the twins. They don’t care who they go with. They would sacrifice their own playing time to win.”

Both Gonzales brothers are a bit better at walking the fine line now.

Their arguments with refs in the past three seasons often led to technical fouls or took them out of their games a bit.

“For me, it’s been more of the mental game. I know there’s going to be a next play, and if the ref makes a bad call, they’re human, they’re going to make a mistake. Moving on to the next play is important as a teammate,” Simon Gonzales said.

The Gonzales and Dunn families have visited each others’ houses plenty over the last few years.

So the coach knows better than to douse their competitive fire.

“I don’t take that from them. That’s a strength of theirs. They need that edge,” Dunn said. “I was the same way, a small guard. My dad allowed me to do some things, and it got me in trouble at times. But that’s our advantage, in my opinion.”

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Downtown

• From page 11

“We do a great job of creating connection. I want to continue that. But I also want it to be a solutions chamber. What I mean by that we have a really critical moment for Glendale ahead. You see the growth along the 303, what’s happening at Westgate and what’s going to happen downtown, as it finishes its revitalization and the Arrowhead area. For all the growth and development we’ve seen, there is so much left to go. And we have a new city manager.”

Patrick Banger officially began Jan. 12, hired away from Gilbert. Yentzer said Banger handled Gilbert’s downtown revitalization expertly.

With a new City Hall opening this year, Yentzer is confident that downtown Glendale can enjoy a renaissance — and that its success will not come at the expense of Westgate, or vice versa.

“Something that I’ve heard as the new guy is almost a competitiveness between downtown and Westgate. I think that is not the right way to think about it. Those are two different cores and different entities,” Yentzer said. “Think about how Scottsdale handles that framing. They have a hospitality, lodging and tourism street that is very unique, and they have Old Town Scottsdale. They’re not pitting the two against each other.”

The new chamber CEO said he supports the VAI Resort.

Glendale has a lower percentage of hotel rooms around the entertainment district, which benefits Phoenix and Scottsdale when big games are at State Farm Stadium. VAI solves that almost in one fell swoop.

“I think when you saw the Worker Power push on the ballot to slow and stall and stop the resort, the chamber was involved — as it should have been. They have my commitment to be involved as a business voice, to push back on some of the interest groups,

especially the out-of-state ones, to slow what we have in ways that are not helpful,” Yentzer said. “We’re going to enter a much more difficult environment around business and smart growth, and the chamber has to be proactive, not reactive.”

That said, Glendale understands that smart economic growth raises revenue for city coffers and allows the city to not have to rely on raising property or sales taxes to pay for city services, Yentzer said.

For the most part, Yentzer said he found Southern Arizona lacks awareness of the importance of smart growth.

“This is a very business-friendly council. I come from a Southern Arizona environment where there is often differing viewpoints between electeds and the business community about what a thriving region looks like. There’s often a lot of time spent trying to work through and work around butting heads,” Yentzer said.

Glendale Interim Economic Development Director Trent Dutry stated in an email the city has seen a stronger, more collaborative partnership with the chamber taking shape in recent months.

“That momentum started before Zach’s arrival, but he’s helped accelerate it by being proactive, communicative, and very aligned with the city’s economic development goals,” Dutry stated. “Zach brings a high level of energy and optimism to the role, along with a genuine eagerness to connect people and move ideas into action. It’s been refreshing and productive to work alongside him as we support Glendale’s business community together.”

Yentzer’s goals for 2026 include expanding on the chamber’s partnership with West Ventures on a small business incubator. West Ventures is a partner with Pendergast Elementary School District, which is where the chamber makes its home.

Then it’s time to party. 2027 is the 100th anniversary of the Glendale Chamber of Commerce.

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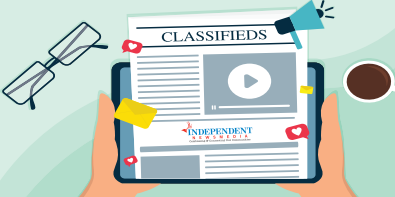
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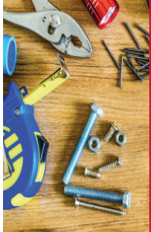
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