

Kristen Krey ready to lead Carefree as town administrator

By Zev Black
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

After 16 years, there is a new town administrator in Carefree. The town council officially appointed Kristen Krey as its new administrator at its monthly council meeting March 3.

Krey is stepping in for Gary Neiss, who spent 16 years in the role and 24 years with the town of Carefree. From 1997 to 2022, Krey held administrative roles in multiple departments for the city of Glendale before becoming town clerk and treasurer in 2024.

She said the past year was a big reason as to why she decided to apply for the job.

“Being the town clerk, you’re involved in just about everything here in Carefree,” she said. “The dedicated staff is kind of what put me over the edge because how often in your life do you actually have a ready-made team that’s a great group of people.”

She added that this is the first time in her career that she steps into a leadership position with an organization that didn’t need immediate changes.

Both Krey and Carefree Mayor



Kristen Krey said she used to foster kittens and puppies and currently has two shetland sheepdogs at home. (Submitted Photo/Town Of Carefree)

John Crane attributed that largely to the work Neiss put in over the past 16 years.

“Gary Neiss served us well for 24

years, just a great leader within town hall,” Crane said. “The testimonial to that is if you look at how strong our

• See **Krey** on page **25**

Cave Creek approves expanding scope to look at water utility sale

By Jeff Wendt
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

The Cave Creek Town Council unanimously approved expanding the scope of the possible sale of the Desert Hills Water System to also include the Cave Creek Water and Cave Creek Wastewater systems during a special meeting on Tuesday, March 25.

“A lot of really good comments on both sides tonight,” Mayor Robert Morris said in making the motion to approve the changes. “The companies think this is a snowball running downhill but it’s not. Municipalities do not sell water systems. It’s usually the other way around. They usually buy them.

“So anyone that has the idea that this is a done deal and just because we’re out here doing these things, I personally am skeptical,” Morris added. “I know we (Cave Creek)

• See **Utility** on page **28**

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SUPPORT

From left, Carefree Mayor John Crane, Foothills Caring Corps Neighbor Engagement Specialist Sherri Boozikee, and Cave Creek Mayor Robert Morris discuss joining the Dementia Friendly America network. (Courtesy of Foothills Caring Corps)



Carefree, Cave Creek join Dementia Friendly America network

INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

The mayors of Carefree and Cave Creek have joined forces to join the Dementia Friendly America network, according to a release Wednesday.

Carefree and Cave Creek joins more than 14 communities across Arizona, including Tempe, Scottsdale, Fountain Hills, and Phoenix, in the network.

This milestone reflects a community-wide commitment to ensuring residents experiencing memory loss can continue to live with dignity, connection, and purpose, officials said.

Last year, Caring Corps approached Dementia Friendly Arizona about the towns of Carefree and Cave Creek. Caring Corps then took on the role as the local “champion” organization leading the Dementia Friendly effort, in partnership with Home Instead, Banner Alzheimer’s Institute, local leaders, business owners and community members.

Caring Corps approached both towns, inviting them to be a part of and support their efforts through community initiatives and events.

Carefree and Cave Creek joining the Dementia Friendly America network highlights their dedication to fostering safe, respectful, and inclusive environments for individuals and fam-

ilies navigating dementia, officials said.

“Dementia, and all of its different forms, is affecting more residents and families in the Cave Creek area than we may know,” said Cave Creek Mayor Robert Morris in the release. “Becoming a Dementia Friendly community helps bring the resources that support families through these difficult times closer to home through the Foothills Caring Corps.”

“Carefree is deeply committed to working with the Foothills Caring Corps so that the needs of our residents and visitors living with dementia and their care partners/families are met,” said Carefree Mayor John Crane. “We wish for them to thrive, feel secure, and be treated with dignity and respect while remaining engaged in our community.”

Current local efforts include:

- A monthly Memory Café, offering a welcoming space for individuals experiencing memory loss and their caregivers.

- Music, Memory & Movement workshops, promoting cognitive engagement, gentle physical activity, and social connection.

- Partnerships with local businesses and organizations to provide education and practical tools.

- An active community Action Team focused on training, outreach, and ongoing resource development.

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EDUCATION

New Cave Creek Unified superintendent approved by governing board

By Maya McFall
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

The Cave Creek Unified school board approved the hiring of Dr. Nicole Regan as superintendent for the upcoming school year during the March 17 board meeting.

Regan will serve as superintendent beginning July 1. Although she lives in Nebraska, serving as superintendent of Gering Public Schools, she has family who live in the Valley, and has “done her research,” on CCUSD, according to board president Janet Greer-Busbee.

“We are very confident that she knew what she was stepping into,”

Greer-Busbee said after approving the motion to hire Regan. “She brings a great deal of energy and enthusiasm.”

The current superintendent, Bill Dolezal, has served since January 2024, but has been with the district since 2009.

Regan’s employment contract is set to expire June 30, 2029.

“We look forward to welcoming her when she gets here,” Greer-Busbee said.

Board meetings take place on the second and fourth Tuesday of the month and begin at 6 p.m. They are held at 33016 N. 60th St., Scottsdale, unless otherwise indicated.



The Cave Creek Unified school board approved the hiring of Dr. Nicole Regan as superintendent for the upcoming school year during the March 17 board meeting. (Independent Newsmedia/Maya McFall)

Cave Creek Unified to continue funding high school IB program

By Maya McFall
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

The Cave Creek Unified school board voted unanimously to continue funding the Cactus Shadows High School International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme at its March 17 board meeting.

The IB program is a rigorous two-year curriculum for ages 16-19 that is made up of six subject groups comprising theory of knowledge, creativity, activity, service, the extended essay and the Diploma Programme core, according to the official IB program website, ibo.org/programmes/diploma-programme.

The DP core pushes students to reflect on the nature of knowledge, to complete independent research and take on projects that involve community service.

CCUSD parents, as well as a CSHS student, used their time during the public comment section of the board meeting to vouch for the program’s continued funding.

Karen McMahon, mother of a

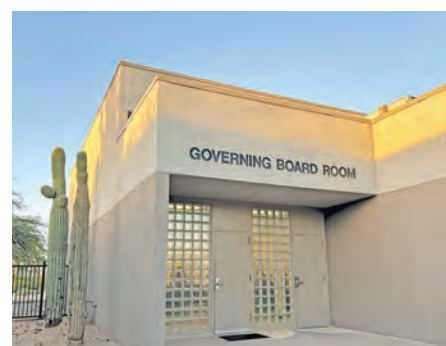
CSHS IB student, said that although she lives within the Deer Valley school district, she chose to place her daughter in CCUSD for the IB program.

McMahon said the “camaraderie shared amongst the IB students, the positive relationships with the teachers, and the challenging academic” standards were exactly what she was looking for when considering school options for her daughter. She urged the board to keep the program.

Following McMahon’s public comment, Susheta Shah, co-president of the CSHS parent teacher organization, also emphasized the need to keep the program running.

“Parents will travel for a great product,” she said. “You cannot lose our IB and AP classes. We have good test scores, and that will inevitably be impacted if you eliminate our high academic offerings.”

The last comment of the evening was made by the CSHS IB student association’s current president, Emerson Householder.



Cave Creek Unified school district’s governing board room located at 33016 N 60th St, Scottsdale. (Independent Newsmedia/Maya McFall)

Householder highlighted how the program impacts students to develop critical skills they can apply outside the classroom.

“Our classes are unique because it gives students the freedom to experiment and engage more deeply with the courses through our own interests,” she said. “While I understand the financial concerns, cutting the program as a solution may carry unintended costs because there is a distinct group of students who choose

Cactus Shadows specifically for IB, and without it, many would likely consider transferring elsewhere.”

After public comment, superintendent Bill Dolezal reminded the board that his recommendation, supported by the superintendent assistants, was to sunset the program. This would mean the students who are in the program are able to finish before it is dissolved as part of programmatic cuts.

The program costs approximately 1.4 full time estimate (FTE), which represents about 56 hours of work per week. An annual fee of \$12,000 is also included, said Dolezal. This does not include the cost of training those employees. Eight senior diploma candidates are currently enrolled, and 35 sophomores have signed up for IB classes for the 2026-27 school year.

Board member Jeff Fortney moved to continue funding the program.

“I do not think this is a program we want to lose here,” he said. “From my perspective, this is something that we need to retain...And this something that I think sets us apart.”



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COUNCIL

Town of Carefree holds March monthly meeting

By Zev Black

INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

The town of Carefree held its monthly council meeting March 3, to officially approve the appointment of Town Clerk and Treasurer Kristen Krey as town administrator and green-light a flood control project.

Mayor John Crane said the process of finding someone to replace Gary Neiss as town administrator went smoothly, saying the Maricopa Association of Governments managed the full external recruitment effort.

"They provided a professional, neutral and unbiased process because we wanted to take it out of Town Hall," he said. "They were great. Their HR director basically ran it for us."

MAG had posted the job description across multiple platforms, including the Arizona League of Cities and Towns website and the American Planning Association website.

Council then created a small committee consisting of Crane along with Councilmembers Colleen Rose-Scurti and Lon Johnson. The trio conducted initial interviews of qualified candidates before narrowing the number down to two.

The entire council then participated in an interview with each individual. They came to the consensus Krey was the right person for the job.

"I think we are extremely lucky that we had someone on our bench that has the strength of Kristen, has the knowledge, the background," Johnson said. "I was very impressed with everything and I think it just gives us so much the fact that you've been here a year."

The motion to approve her as town administrator passed unanimously.

She takes over for Neiss, who had



CJ DiMaggio takes questions from the council regarding flood control. (Submitted Photo/Town of Carefree)

worked with the town for the past 24 years. He will move into a new position with the town after the council unanimously approved a professional services agreement with him.

In this role, Neiss will be available "from time-to-time" to answer questions Krey may have.

"The purpose of the agreement is to be able to tap into Gary's institutional knowledge, his experience, his know-how from 24 years and to compensate him for that," Crane said. "It's just to give a new town administrator a tool to answer questions that might come up and myself as well."

Neiss's final day as the official town administrator was Feb. 27.

The council also discussed plans to replace a damaged culvert under Leisure Lane, a project aimed at preventing future flooding in the area.

CJ DiMaggio, public works director with Carefree, presented to the

council regarding a damaged culvert in the 5900-6000 block of East Leisure Lane.

He said this culvert, which he estimated had been built in the early 1980s, was crushed and buried by sediment.

This allowed storm water to escape, damaging streets and private property.

"Of all those 200 plus culverts, this is the only one in the town of Carefree that has probably resulted in structural flooding," he said.

In 2014, water flooded the road and heavily damaged downhill homes. An improved culvert was designed in 2017, but the town deferred the project due to other priorities. In 2025, the Town revisited the project.

The new design will be a box culvert with no pipes. The estimated cost of the project is \$426,000. Under the proposed Intergovernmental

Agreement, the Flood Control District will pay up to 75% of the cost, an estimated \$319,500, while the Town will pay the remaining \$106,500.

The town will also be responsible for the utility relocation (\$35,000), legal review (\$10,000), construction staking (\$3,000) and inspection and materials testing (\$15,000).

The agreement passed the council unanimously. The council will vote at a later date to approve the construction contract once bidding ends.

The next town council meeting is 5 p.m. Tuesday, April 7, in the Town Council Chambers, 33 Easy St.

Reporter Zev Black can be reached at zblack@iniusa.org. Please submit comments at yourvalley.net/letters or email them to AzOpinions@iniusa.org. We are committed to publishing a wide variety of reader opinions, as long as they meet our Civility Guidelines.

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By **Janet Mohr**
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Statistical Market Analysis

Status	# Listings	List Volume	Sold Volume	List Price	Sold Price	Sale/List Price	Approx SQFT	List Price Per Approx SQFT	Sold Price Per Approx SQFT	Agent Days on Market	Cumulative Days on Market
Closed	69	74,549,456	72,241,400	Low	274,900	274,900	750	86.47	82.69	0	0
				Avg	1,080,427	1,046,977	2,619	404.51	392.73	100	104
				High	3,250,000	3,100,000	6,349	907.82	865.92	453	453
Overall	69	74,549,456	72,241,400	Low	274,900	274,900	750	86.47	82.69	0	0
				Avg	1,080,427	1,046,977	2,619	404.51	392.73	100	104
				High	3,250,000	3,100,000	6,349	907.82	865.92	453	453

Selection Criteria for Comparable Properties

Specified listings from the following search: Property type Residential; Close of Escrow Date relative 7 days back; Status of 'Closed'; Zip Code of '85331', '85377'.

Closed Listings

MLS #	Address	FE	Bed	Bth	SqFt	YR	OLP	LP	SP	COE	LP/SP\$/SF	ADOM	CDOM
6983983	5131 E JUANA CT	32RDO2G2S	3	2	1,389	1999	535,900	535,900	530,000	03/24/2026	385.82 / 381.57	11	11
6986249	31114 N 62ND ST	53RXPAO2G4S	5	3	3,374	2000	1,450,000	1,450,000	1,400,000	03/24/2026	429.76 / 414.94	12	12
6963177	7199 E RIDGEVIEW PL 101	33RDXO2G	3	3	2,372	2005	824	824,000	825,000	03/23/2026	347.39 / 347.81	62	62
6974007	6434 E MILITARY RD 102	33FRXSO2G	3	3	2,257	2012	1,050,000	999,000	935,000	03/23/2026	442.62 / 414.27	45	44
6978467	39913 N 26TH ST	32RDXHAO10G	3	2	1,721	1995	995,000	995,000	1,000,000	03/23/2026	578.15 / 581.06	50	50
6978154	39819 N 26TH ST	32RXHA3G3S	3	2	1,896	2013	127,500	1,275,000	1,225,000	03/23/2026	672.47 / 646.1	50	50
6972800	34815 N Arroyo RD	35RDXPSAO4G4S	3	5	5,230	1984	2,390,000	2,390,000	2,390,000	03/23/2026	456.98 / 456.98	22	22
6959927	4016 E CRIMSON TER	32RO2G	3	2	1,426	2013	599,500	599,500	575,000	03/20/2026	420.41 / 403.23	97	91
6907373	38065 N CAVE CREEK RD 4	33DXO2G2S	3	3	2,272	1997	730,000	730,000	715,000	03/20/2026	321.3 / 314.7	453	453
6867821	6520 E PEAK VIEW RD	43XPA2G2S	4	3	2,258	1986	1,150,000	925,000	895,000	03/20/2026	409.65 / 396.37	269	266
6982953	28621 N 55TH ST	42FRHAO2G	4	2	2,226	1998	970,000	970,000	940,000	03/20/2026	435.76 / 422.28	40	38
6923734	37021 N LAZY BURRO RD	44FRDXPAO3G3S	4	4	3,813	2013	2,500,000	2,450,000	2,375,000	03/20/2026	642.54 / 622.87	145	145
6970328	5716 E DESERT VISTA TRL	53RPSO2G10S	5	3	2,960	1984	1,100,000	999,999	980,000	03/19/2026	337.84 / 331.08	61	61

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The back alleys of Cave Creek

By Jim White and Don Senneville
SPECIAL TO INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

We sit here in the Village Coffee Shop and Creperie enjoying a perfect coffee and lemon bar surrounded by images of Audrey Hepburn and floral murals filling the high ceiling walls.

This mural inspired us to think about several other outdoor works of art adorning the sides of buildings and back alleys of Cave Creek.

Of course, the first thought went to the grandma in the No Parking mural found in the alley by Big Earl's, on the back of the Old Glory Barbershop building.

A bit of research found us at Big Earl's where we discovered a framed picture with a name: Catherine Jones, of Cave Creek, Arizona! There is a story here.

Six-Gun Katie, as she was affectionately called, was the first sheriff of Cave Creek. Think 1928, when her family homesteaded the 1,300 acre Cahava Ranch. She lived here until 1970. Credit to the Cave Creek Museum, who knows the whole story! This pistol packing mama made full use of the 2nd amendment. Her accuracy is legendary.

So, we got another coffee to go at Big Earl's and headed off to find more mural art in Cave Creek. Together we at The CUP have experienced the mural art in places such as Lisbon, Paris, various parts of Mexico, and East LA, so we were surprised at how impressed we were with the Cave Creek back alleys.

It's hard to top the granny-with-a-gun mural, but voila! Back to the Creperie to reflect on our experience: a gun-toting grandma and Audrey Hepburn.

We found our tactical sanctuary through the back alley door of the Village Coffee Shop and Creperie again.



The mural at the Village Coffee Shop and Creperie in downtown Cave Creek. (Courtesy of Jim White)

We entered to the sounds of French accordion music, delicious kitchen smells, and a massive mural of Audrey in flowers in Paris. Studying that mural dominating the large eastern wall of the very large open room and seeing a couple photos — why Audrey Hepburn? — we ask.

Further research is needed. There are other works of art on the walls, too. A few are big paintings by Elena Erős, whose work brings forth the memory of Renoir's French Impressionism. With Marina as the Artist in Residence, the Creperie is a special place that brings together the many diverse facets of Creeker life and serves them up on your favorite crepe.

Apparently, Don thought his crepe was a tortilla by the amount of Cholula he poured on it. Jim had a bagel.

Now, as you enjoy the European vibe here, top it off with a macchiato and a lemon bar to go. Just head out the front door into Stagecoach Village, and you are back in the Wild West



again.

Here you can buy a premium cowboy hat/belt/buckle at Watson's Hat Shop, have a taco at Ofrenda, get your hair cut at Sam's, and finally, go up the hill and have a Guinness. You can't miss the signs.

Then, if you're really feeling it, head to the Buffalo Chip for rodeo, the Roadhouse with your Harley, the Hideaway for leather, and Harold's to bet the horses.

Then call an Uber and go home and eat that lemon bar from owner Marina of The Village Coffee Shop and Creperie. Bon Appetit!

Our final thoughts on this month's CUP article are conflicted. Don is concerned that using the expression "back alley" didn't seem, well, classy enough for our towns.

So, we asked ourselves, "What really is an alley?" Now with AI at our disposal, we asked IT. It did not lead us down a blind alley, but led us to the importance of alleys in history. Examples include the "traboules" (more than 200 of them) of Lyon, France, narrow alleys linking streets through buildings way back in the day; mysterious blind alleys; alleys for merchants and smoke breaks; baseballs are hit to alleys; sure is up my alley; bowling alleys; and finally the alleys of Cave Creek. Check them out, if you dare.

Share your favorite alley with us at The CUP, c/o jwendt@iniusa.org or AZNews@iniusa.org.

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Here are the top questions we get from patients about healing from stem cell treatments.

Most recently, the Nurse Practitioner and I shared some of the most common questions patients ask us about their recovery after receiving regenerative treatments in our office.

“How long does it take to feel better?”

We agreed that this is the top question asked, and the answer we give is, “It depends.” The condition, the patient’s health and inflammation prior to the therapy, the patient’s age, diet, and a few other factors that may either accelerate their results or slow them down. We coach our patients to follow a non-inflammatory diet prior to their treatments. We also encourage them to be cautious about taking NSAIDS and some supplements that are anti-inflammatory, for a couple of weeks prior and after. Tylenol, acetaminophen, is not an NSAID, and is allowed. NSAIDS are not recommended, because we actually want to have some inflammation where the site of the injection is, so the cells will know where to go. We recommend a non-inflammatory diet at the same time. Why? Because if the entire body is inflamed, the cells may go to many areas and will not be as potent in the area we want

them to go. Healing mechanisms take approximately 3-8 weeks to fully activate. Healing continues for 12-18 months

“Does it hurt?”

With most injections, there may be some discomfort that lasts only a short while. In many cases, patients experienced other aches and pains in their body were reduced after their treatments. This is because some of the cells we use down regulate inflammation. They can travel to other inflamed areas of the body, therefore, helping other aches and pains to be greatly reduced, or even go away.

“Can I eat and drink what I want?”

Maintain good nutrition as mentioned above, and hydration. Discontinuing smoking and alcoholic beverage consumption during the healing process will ensure the best results.

“When can I exercise?”

No excessive activity immediately following treatment. No heavy lifting or strenuous physical activity for at least 1 week following treatment.

“Can I drive myself home?”



Yes. There are no restrictions on driving after your treatments, unless there were restrictions prior to your appointment.

“What else can I do on my own to increase my results?”

Trying to eat low inflammatory foods as recommended by us, is one of the easiest ways to increase your results. We show you video sites and an app that help you to make better choices at the grocery store. Reducing your stress is always a good idea to decrease internal inflammatory pathways that may interfere with your healing of any type of treatments, not only regenerative ones. Ask me your questions and I will give you the correct information you need to heal effectively. Trying to search for

answers online that may not be the best for you, may also interfere with your treatment plan we have designed especially for your condition.

Should you or anyone else you know want a second opinion on joint surgery, I offer complimentary consultations to see if you qualify for treatments that keep you in the game of life without stressful downtime.

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OP-ED

Carefree: The iconic Arizona saguaro

By John Crane
CAREFREE MAYOR

The iconic saguaro cactus symbolizes Arizona. Its beautiful white bloom is the Arizona state flower. Who can forget Snoopy's brother Spike sitting under a huge saguaro cactus? The saguaro graces the foreground of the town of Carefree seal taking center stage in front of our legendary sun dial. A second stands in the background. And more importantly, when in Carefree, the stately saguaro is virtually everywhere. It defines who we are — resilient and adaptable, frequently standing tens of feet tall for more than 100 years, some longer than Arizona has been a state, a good neighbor serving as shelter and sustenance to a myriad of Sonoran Desert birds, lizards and wildlife despite a changing world.

The Carefree Desert Gardens present a marvelous opportunity to admire majestic saguaros, including two crested specimens. Each saguaro is unique. Some look flawless as depicted in legendary images. Others sport borderline comical arms and unique character. When their crowns and arms bloom, they look like white haired creatures holding beautiful bouquets.

Our unusually warm spring seems



Town of Carefree Mayor John Crane (Submitted Photo/Town of Carefree)

to not only confuse even seasoned Arizona residents, but native plants as well. We may find saguaro buds and flowers in the Carefree Desert Garden this April, way ahead of the typical May or June bloom cycle!

Although many myths depict the saguaro cacti as a guardian of the desert, our twenty-five-year drought and unusually warm temperatures, both day and night, take a toll. As saguaros weaken, they are more susceptible to high winds, bacteria and

infection. Some drop an arm. The larger the saguaro the more likely it is to lose an arm and eventually fall.

Invasive plants are an existential threat to saguaro cacti. These grasses and weeds, smother seedling saguaros and fuel fires that kill saguaros. Maricopa County Parks and Recreation warns that desert wildfires are one of the most serious threats to saguaro cacti. These giants are not fire adapted and often die after even moderate burns. Depending on burn severity, studies show saguaro mortality rates are typically 32 percent to 50 percent following a desert wildfire, and over time, significantly higher.

Carefree monitors the health of each saguaro in our garden with the aid of professional landscapers. Landscapers can help monitor the health of your saguaros. Through the town Firewise program, homeowners are encouraged to remove invasive weeds and wildfire fuel.

To gain a close-up appreciation of these giant, iconic cacti, why not take an enjoyable morning or an evening stroll through the Carefree Desert Gardens? We are truly fortunate to live amongst such unique plants. But even these resilient giants occasionally need a little help.



Saguaros (MetroCreative Connection)

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OP-ED

Hot temperatures and lack of rain a bad recipe for wildfires

By Robert Morris
CAVE CREEK MAYOR

We just experienced the hottest month of February, and we've already seen the hottest March days on record. Add this unbelievable heat to our parched landscape from the western drought, and we have a recipe for a higher-than-average wildfire season.

As wildfire season begins earlier and lasts longer, it's crucial for every resident to take action to protect our Town. Remember, for those of us who lived in Cave Creek in 2020, a wildfire in our neighborhoods is a real threat. Let's each do our part and get prepared.

Since 2020, we have joined forces with the Daisy Mountain Fire District. We have built a fire station and joined the Automatic Aid System. This provides us with additional firefighting



Mayor Robert Morris

support from nearby communities. Besides the Cave Creek Fire Station, we are partners in the new Daisy Mountain Fire District station at 24th Street and Cloud Road. Together, these two stations offer excellent coverage and response times throughout Cave Creek.

Take action now: Keep invasive grasses, weeds, dead tree limbs, and bushes at least 30 feet from your structures. By clearing non-native plants from your yard, you help prevent wildfires from spreading. Bring your yard clippings to the Town's final green waste drop-off event on Saturday, April 18, from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. at the Water Ranch, 44th Street and Carefree Hwy, and help protect your home and our community.

The Town takes the community's safety very seriously. In 2024, we passed an ordinance that allows for cost recovery for emergency responses during Stage 1 and Stage 2 Fire Restrictions.

These expenses include the costs of providing police, firefighting, rescue, and emergency medical services at the scene of an incident. If you are respon-

sible for starting a wildfire, you will be held liable for the cost of our public safety services.

The Town utilizes an app called CodeRed to keep residents informed in the event of an emergency, such as a wildfire or flood. In the event of a fire or flood, the CodeRed emergency telephone notification service will alert those registered with a recorded message about the emergency and what actions you should take to ensure your safety. You will find more information and registration for CodeRed at www.cavecreekaz.gov/codered. If you registered with our CodeRed system, now is the time to ensure your information is up to date. If there is a town emergency, I encourage you to follow the Town's website and social media pages for updates and information on fire danger and flash-flooding periods.

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KidStrong is a science-based kids training program that builds strong, confident and high-character kids. Kids walking to age 11 tackle challenges in weekly classes led by expert coaches.

Paradise Valley



N. Scottsdale



EVENT

Cave Creek Museum to feature exploration of Hohokam culture

INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

The Cave Creek Museum will host archaeologist J. Scott Wood for presentation entitled “The Northern Hohokam Periphery” at the museum on April 4.

The presentation will run 2-4 p.m. and will showcase the influence of the Hohokam Indians during their reign.

Wood, who studied for an archaeology degree at Arizona State University and the University of Arizona, will lead a discussion about the interesting prehistoric occupation of the northern part of Phoenix and points north, from Cave Creek and Carefree to Perry Mesa and Bloody Basin.

Wood will share insights into the political relationships between the Salt River “core area” of the Hohokam and its neighbors to the north, who lived where, who they traded and worked with and why, where they ended up, and how droughts and floods affected the movement of people across the landscape.

Along the way, Wood will show the largest Hohokam site in existence and a nearly pristine archaeological location that once was a haven for a drought-stricken Hohokam. It is impressive enough to be designated as a national monument.

Wood, who has worked for numerous museums and the U.S. Forest Service in the Tonto National Forest, has published research into Hohokam, Salado and Apache archaeology in central Arizona. He also was involved in the preservation and interpretation of insightful



J. Scott Wood will be presenting “The Northern Hohokam Periphery” at the Cave Creek Museum on April 4. (Courtesy of Fran Booth)

discoveries with others in the field. In addition, he funded the Arizona Archaeological Council and continues his research efforts, among other achievements.

Reservations are required for the event. Members are free. Nonmembers pay \$10 for admission. Register at cavecreekmuseum.org. No culture passes accepted.

The 55-year-old museum’s mission is to preserve the artifacts of the prehistory, history, culture and legacy of the Cave Creek Mining District and the Cave Creek/Carefree foothills area through education, research and interpretive exhibits. The Cave Creek Museum is located at 6140 E. Skyline Drive, and is open from October through May. The museum can be reached at 480-488-2764 or cavecreekmuseum.org.

EVENT



April’s Kiwanis Pioneers book of the month is “Wonky Donkey” by New Zealander Craig Smith and illustrated by Katz Cowley. (Courtesy of Fran Booth)

Cave Creek Museum, Kiwanis Preschool Pioneers present ‘Wonky Donkey Day’

INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

The Cave Creek Museum, in conjunction with the Kiwanis Preschool Pioneers presents “Wonky Donkey Day” at the museum.

“Wonky Donkey Day” will take place 10-11 a.m. April 9.

As part of the program, children will don “Neigh Ban” glasses to explore the museum campus and greet special rescue equine guests from Donkeys of the Heart Cave Creek Rescue. The program will begin with an interactive and participatory reading of the viral children’s book, “Wonky Donkey.” The book follows a donkey as new, funny characteristics are revealed on each page, eventually leading to the full description: “a spunky hank-panky cranky stinky-dinky lanky honky tonky winky wonky donkey.”

Kiwanis Preschool Pioneers is designed for children ages 3-5, however all ages are welcome. Children must be accompanied by at least one adult. Age-appropriate

books set the stage for movement and music, trying out a process, exploring museum artifacts or acting out parts of the story with props. Pre-registration is strongly encouraged; walk-ins are accepted on a first-come, first-serve basis as class size is limited. This free program is made possible by the financial support of the Kiwanis Club of Carefree. Adults must engage with their child as this is not a drop off program.

Register for the event at cavecreekmuseum.org. The 55-year-old museum’s mission is to preserve the artifacts of the prehistory, history, culture and legacy of the Cave Creek Mining District and the Cave Creek/Carefree foothills area through education, research and interpretive exhibits. The Cave Creek Museum is at 6140 E. Skyline Drive. The museum is open from October through May. For information, call the museum at 480-488-2764 or visit cavecreekmuseum.org.

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ART THOUGHTS

C. R. E. A. T. E.

By Judy Bruce

SPECIAL FOR INDEPENDENT
NEWSMEDIA

At both the marketing and fund-raising meetings for the Sonoran Arts League, we all stressed the importance of highlighting the immense value of ART, not only to the community but also to our members.

I made a list of the ways art can change lives and truly lead to a healthier, happier life. Fellow Board Member, Jo Gemmill, suggested and acted on creating mnemonics to spread the word about the many benefits of a life with art. Our favorite was C.R.E.A.T.E.

C. Connects us to ourselves and others! When you are working alone in your studio or art space for hours, as in

meditation, you do connect with your inner spirit. When you are at an exhibition, in a museum, or in a class, you are connecting with other art lovers.

R. Restores balance, calm, and healing. One of our members approached me at the Desert Foothills Gallery reception after I spoke about art healing. She reported that after two bouts of cancer, she was able to do art for the first time in her life and found it very healing. Her work in the show was amazing.



E. Encourages creativity and problem solving. I define creativity as the ability to be flexible and fluent, to elaborate, to practice redefinition, and to generate unique ideas and solutions. Today, the ability to problem-solve is one of the most valuable skills workers bring to companies.

A. Awakens purpose, especially for the many retirees we have in the area, and personal expression.

T. Takes us beyond screens and technology. With the proliferation of computers, phones, and screen-based

games, art can help us remain human!

E. Enriches our lives through shared experiences. As an artist, there is nothing more rewarding than having the viewer “get it” and tell me that I “get them!” Art classes can be magical places where you can often hear a pin drop as all are so engaged, or you can hear an electric buzz as artists simultaneously get it, finish, or have a breakthrough.

Art does improve your life! It can enhance creativity and joy, be meditative, increase curiosity and meaning, give life purpose (especially when you retire), reduce loneliness, and be just plain fun!

You “gotta have art” and aspire to a life of art as you C. R. E. A. T. E. Join us at the Sonoran Arts League for these fabulous benefits!

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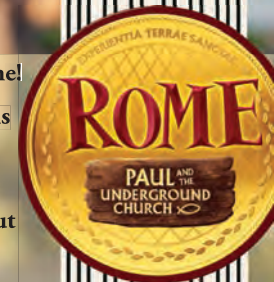
Join us for an exciting adventure back in time to ancient Rome!

During VBS 2026, we'll step into the shoes of early Christians and follow the incredible journey of the Apostle Paul and the underground church.

Kids will explore the heart of the early church, learning about faith, courage, and the power of God's love—all in a fun, hands-on environment!

June 8-12, 2026
9:00AM-12:00PM

Invite your friends, share the date with your family, and join our planning team to help make this year's event amazing!



register now!
deadline: may 29



HAPPENINGS



Cave Creek Bike Week

When: April 3-12

Where: Cave Creek Roadhouse
6900 E Cave Creek Rd, and Hideaway Grill 6746 E Cave Creek Rd

What: The annual biker event is back. Celebrating its 28th annual Bike Week, gear up for Sunday contests, gypsy tours, vendors, live music, and more.

Info: Hideaway-usa.com/2025/08/19/cave-creek-bike-week-2026

Kiwanis Pancake Breakfast

When: 7 a.m.-11 a.m., Saturday, April 11

Where: Sanderson Pavilion, 101 Easy St.

What: Enjoy all you can eat pancakes, sausages, orange juice, coffee, and more presented by the Kiwanis Club of Carefree.

Info: Kiwaniscarefree.org/event/kiwanis-pancake-breakfast

Flapjacks and Fire Trucks

When: 9 a.m.-11 a.m., Saturday, April 4

Where: Carefree Fire Station, 37401 N Tom Darlington Dr

What: Meet your local fire team, tour the station, and enjoy pancakes and refreshments while learning about the many services the department offers, including CPR classes, lock boxes, Firewise certifications, and other community safety programs.

Info: Visitcarefree.com/flapjacks

The Arizona Gold Mining Experience

When: 10 a.m.-11:30 a.m., Saturday, April 11

Where: Cave Creek Museum, 6140 E Skyline Dr.

What: Get ready to travel back in time with the mining experience's display of complete hard rock ore extraction process, with mine shafts, tramway, ore carts, crushing and extraction. The blacksmith shop put on demonstrations, and gold panning stations will be available.

• See **Things to do** on page 19

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@kiwanismarketplace

Kiwanis Marketplace Thrift Store is a 501(c)3 organization. Donations may be tax-deductible.

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APRIL 11

SPRING Sale

APRIL 18

VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION SALE

APRIL 25

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FLAPJACKS & FIRE TRUCKS

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CAREFREE FIRE DEPARTMENT

EARTH DAY Celebration

Saturday, April 18
Sanderson Lincoln Pavilion
9 a.m. - 1 p.m.

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CRAFTS & ACTIVITIES
AND SO MUCH MORE!

2025 End of Year Giving

GOOD DEEDS GUIDE

YOUR GUIDE TO INFORMED GIVING IN THE VALLEY.

make a difference, donate today!

A NEW LEAF

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

turnanewleaf.org

AID TO ADOPTION OF SPECIAL KIDS (AASK)

There are more than 13,000 children in Arizona's foster care system due to abuse, neglect, and abandonment. For over 35 years, AASK has served kids and teens in Arizona's foster care system by matching them with supportive, caring adults who are looking to foster, adopt, or mentor. Donations help the compassionate staff of AASK provide these children with opportunities to enjoy stable, nourishing relationships—often the first in their lives.

aask-az.org

ARIZONA BROADWAY THEATER

ABT is dedicated to shaping the future of theatre and the arts by developing young artists, designers, and leaders. Through hands-on experiences and creative opportunities, it fosters confidence, creativity, and personal growth—helping participants become not only skilled performers, but well-rounded individuals prepared to make a positive impact in their communities.

azbroadway.org

ARIZONA CANCER FOUNDATION FOR CHILDREN

Arizona Cancer Foundation for Children provides a welcoming space where kids with cancer and their families can find support and normalcy. Through social, emotional, and financial assistance—including help with medical bills, counseling, and creative programs like art and teen studios—it offers families relief, connection, and resources throughout their cancer journey.

azcancerfoundation.org

CATHOLIC CHARITIES COMMUNITY SERVICES

Catholic Charities Community Services supports vulnerable neighbors across Northern and Central Arizona through 20+ programs, providing housing, education, refugee support, and family services to more than 34,000 people each year.

catholiccharitiesaz.org

CHILD CRISIS ARIZONA

Child Crisis Arizona provides emergency shelter for children experiencing abuse or neglect, along with foster care and extended foster services. It offers early education programs, parenting classes, counseling, and family support to prevent child abuse and strengthen families. Through these services, the organization helps children and parents build stability, resilience, and a foundation for lifelong wellness.

childcrisisaz.org

CHILDREN'S CANCER NETWORK

Finding out a child has cancer is devastating. The emotions and experiences throughout cancer treatment and beyond can weigh heavily not just on the child, but on the entire

family. Children's Cancer Network supports children and families throughout their cancer journey with programs designed to provide financial assistance, psychosocial support, and encouragement for healthy lifestyles.

childrenscancernetwork.org

FRESH START WOMEN'S FOUNDATION

A pillar in the Phoenix community for over 30 years, Fresh Start transforms lives by providing access and resources that empower women to achieve self-sufficiency and use their strength to thrive. Their services support women across Arizona to become the hero of their own story.

freshstartwomen.org

HOPE & A FUTURE

Children in foster care need compassion that is actively demonstrated through love and encouragement. Hope & A Future provides just that through reliable, relationship-based programs of acceptance for abandoned and neglected children in the community. By supporting these programs, donors directly impact many of the 15,000 foster children in Arizona—teaching life skills and providing mentoring, tutoring, educational scholarships, and summer camps.

azhope.com

KIWANIS CLUB OF CAREFREE

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

kiwaniscarefree.org

PREGNANCY CARE CENTER OF CHANDLER

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

pccchandler.com

SOLDIER'S BEST FRIEND

Soldier's Best Friend pairs U.S. military veterans living with PTSD or traumatic brain injury with rescued service or therapeutic companion dogs. Through training and bonding, both veteran and dog heal together. The program supports emotional recovery while reducing shelter overpopulation, with all services provided at no cost to the veteran.

soldiersbestfriend.org

VOICES FOR CASA CHILDREN

Voices for CASA Children promotes and supports volunteer advocacy for Arizona children who have experienced abuse or neglect. As an affiliate of the National CASA Organization, it raises awareness about the need for safe, permanent homes and empowers community members to take action in improving outcomes for children in the foster care system.

voicesforcasachildren.org

HAPPENINGS

Things to do

• From page 17

Info: cavecreekmuseum.org/event/the-arizona-gold-mining-experience-35

High Street Farmers Market

When: 9 a.m.-1 p.m., April 12 & April 19

Where: 5415 E High St., Phoenix

What: Award winning High Street Farmers Market will present farm-fresh produce, locally sourced honey, olive oils, barbecue sauces, seafood, flowers, baby clothes, jewelry, and muc more. This event is dog friendly.

Info: highstreetaz.com/event/farmers-market

Aging with Dignity: Foothills Caring Corp.

When: 10 a.m.-11 a.m., Wednesday, April 15

Where: Carefree Town Council Chambers, 33 Easy St.



What: Each workshop focuses on a new topic related to aging. These presentations offers guidance, thoughtful conversation, and trusted information to plan ahead and remain connected.

Info: foothillscaringcorps.com/upcoming-events

Carefree Art Night

When: 4 p.m.-7 p.m., Thursday, April 16

Where: Carefree Town Center, 101 Easy St.

What: An evening for art lovers. Wander through the town's art scene and connect with local artists while enjoying live music and refreshments. Each gallery offers its own unique style.

Info: visitcarefree.com/artnight

Carefree Earth Day Celebration

When: 9 a.m.-1 p.m., Saturday, April 18

Where: Desert Gardens, 101 Easy St.
What: Experience Arizona wildlife featuring mini ponies, birds, and rattlesnacks. Listen to experts as they explain insights about the desert ecosystem. Enjoy live music from the Jubilate Conservatory of Music while wandering the gardens.

Info: visitcarefree.com/earthday

Kiwanis' Family Fun Days: Fiber Fun Day

When: 10 a.m.-2 p.m., Saturday, April 18

Where: Cave Creek Museum, 6140 E

Skyline Dr.

What: Meet Roxanne Eklund, a Cave Creek felt sculptor who uses Churro sheep wool that's sourced from the Indigenous Navajo shepherds to create sculptures inspired by their culture. Try your hand at her spinning wheel and other "tools of the trade" as you enjoy a day focused on fiber arts geared to visitors of all age groups.

Info: cavecreekmuseum.org/event/kiwanis-family-fun-days-fiber-fun-day

Coffee with a Cop

When: 8 a.m.-10 a.m., Thursday, April 23

Where: Black Mountain Cafe, 7211 E. Ho Rd. 22 & 23

What: Join the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office and the Town of Carefree to enhance communication between deputies and the community. The neutral space allows you to discuss community issues, build relationships, and drink coffee with emergency responders.

Info: carefree.org/events

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TECH

Cave Creek Unified discusses student tracking software on buses

By Maya McFall
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

Cave Creek Unified School District's governing board and transportation director discussed implementing technology that would allow administrators to track student locations during the March 17 board meeting.

The technology would use Radio Frequency Identification card tracking with student ID cards to ensure students board the correct buses.

The suggestion comes from an independent firm who conducted a comprehensive assessment of transportation services from October 2025 to February 2026. The firm also analyzed busing boundaries, HR data and historical records dating back to 2023.

Several challenges were identified in the assessment, ranging from staffing shortages to extended travel.

According to Dr. Ryan Pletnick, assistant superintendent of fiscal and business operations, the system is "overly efficient," meaning there are no gaps in driver schedules. Each driver is being fully utilized, with an average of 2.29 runs per route.

Extended travel is also an issue, according to director of transportation Linda Sutor. Students needing specialized educational services in the Phoenix metro area tend to spend four to 4.5 hours per day in transit.

The independent firm, after their assessment, outlined several recommendations to improve the department's efficiency. Among these



Cave Creek Unified School District's governing board and transportation director discussed implementing technology that would allow administrators to track student locations during the March 17 board meeting. (Submitted/Cave Creek Unified School District)

recommendations is fully utilizing the department's TransFinder to its fullest capacity to track idling and fuel usage, as well as implementing RFID card tracking.

TransFinder is the GPS system by Samsara that allows buses to monitor fuel consumption, route efficiency, and traffic. According to Sutor, the RFID tracking software would allow drivers to check if students are still on the bus or not. It

would also allow drivers to monitor if the students boarding the bus are scheduled for that route.

If there happened to be a change in routes, "the program would automatically build the route we needed to take those kids home," she said.

The tracking software could actively improve routing and populate a new report every day for drivers. Parents could also locate students at parent pickup.

"I think it would be a better, safer, smarter solution all the way around," Sutor said.

Governing board vice president Dan Moore supported the idea of implementing the suggested technology.

"Software, anything we can do to enhance it and make it faster and efficient and less taxing on the team, it's definitely a conversation," he said.

Sponsored Content

In 30 Minutes I Had a Plan for My Shoulder Pain that Didn't Require Surgery or Pills

**By Shoulder Pain Expert,
Dr. Matthew Hernandez**

ETHOS INTEGRATIVE MEDICINE

"I was losing sleep. I couldn't get comfortable at night and would wake up constantly. That was the most frustrating part. Everything I was told to do was not helping... the pain was only getting worse."

Tim, 46, came to us after exhausting every option outside of surgery. A competitive volleyball player, energetic entrepreneur, and father to two boys, Tim took pride in his active lifestyle and was determined to find a solution for his shoulder pain.

Ice packs and heat compresses were no longer helpful, and relying on pain-pills was not an option he wanted to take.

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

WHAT THE OTHER DOCTORS MISSED...

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

Using a detailed pain profile, 32-point shoulder inspection, MSK ultrasound scan, and diagnostic injection, we were able to confirm Tim's SC Joint injury and quickly develop a targeted treatment plan to heal the damaged tissue.

A COMPREHENSIVE SOLUTION, NO SURGERY OR PILLS

In just 4 weeks, the pain improved significantly, allowing Tim to regain his range of motion, sleep soundly at night, and return to the sport he loves:

"My body is performing better than before, and I have resumed playing volleyball — something I didn't think I would ever be able to do again! If you're tired of the 'just hope for the best' from many in the medical field, and want a complete set of options,

Ethos Integrative Medicine is the place to go."

YOUR NEXT STEP: THE DEEP DIVE FOR A PAIN-FREE SHOULDER

You're one step away from a pain-free shoulder, too! Imagine being able to comfortably sleep in your side again, play catch with your kid, or put on a t-shirt without pain...

Call 480-573-6171 to schedule your Deep Dive with our specialists at Ethos Integrative Medicine and scan the QR

code to access our free report, "Shoulder SOS: The Expert Guide to Decoding Your Pain."



EXPERIENCE THE FREEDOM OF A PAIN-FREE SHOULDER:

- 1. Ethos Pain Profile:** Identifying the specific characteristics of your pain is the first step to pinpointing exactly where it's coming from.
- 2. 32-Point Shoulder Inspection:** We thoroughly inspect the movements causing pain, taking us one step closer to eliminating your discomfort.
- 3. Precision Shoulder Scan:** Our advanced in-office MSK ultrasound scan provides a detailed, real-time view of your shoulder's structures.
- 4. Ethos Pain Map:** A diagnostic injection to confirm the source of pain.
- 5. Easy-To-Understand Explanation:** No complex terms — Just an honest breakdown of your diagnosis, and a personalized strategy to achieve relief.
- 6. Leave You Better Promise:** If by the end of the visit you do not have a better understanding of your pain or what your options are moving forward we will give you a full refund on your visit.

Get Out Of Pain TODAY: Call 480-573-6171 to Get Started with your Deep Dive at Ethos Integrative Medicine!

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PUBLIC SAFETY

Cave Creek getting prepared for upcoming wildfire season

By Jeff Wendt

INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

Daisy Mountain Fire Department Fire Chief Brian Tobin and Cave Creek Town Manager Grady Miller made a presentation to the town council on March 3 about the Cave Creek's preparedness for the upcoming wildfire season.

Miller wanted to ensure residents were aware of a pair of upcoming events for disposal of brush and weeds that can become a major cause of some wildfires the town has seen in the past.

"One of the first things that is very important is for our residents to take advantage of the brush and weed removal and disposal event March 21 and April 18 at the Water Ranch taking place from 8 a.m. to noon," Miller said. "The staff will be staffing that. They have a chipper and they have large roll-off containers for the waste."

"We ended up having this go a little bit later this year because last year we did find that the first one that was in February didn't get the number of people," Miller added. "It just was not warm enough for people to really start paying attention to the warm weather and the need to do this."

The Water Ranch is at 4300 East Carefree Highway, where residents can drop off weeds and brush for free.

Along with the event scheduled,



Cave Creek Town Manager Grady Miller, left, and Daisy Mountain Fire Department Fire Chief Brian Tobin update the council on the preparedness for the upcoming wildfire season March 3, 2026 at the Cave Creek Town Council meeting. (Independent Newsmedia/Jeff Wendt)

Daisy Mountain resources are also available. Those include deployment of staffed brush truck (from April to October); the new fire station at 24th Street and Cloud Road; regional mutual aid; and the Tonto National Forest Fire Service.

"So, you know, five years ago, we didn't have Daisy Mountain as our provider, and now we have not only our local fire station, but also the deployment of the Daisy Mountain staff brush truck," Miller said. "And that is really great because that

is very nimble, it's located where it needs to be and it's able to immediately mobilize the first sign of any fire that might be taking place."

Miller also said the town will have extra water resources with the Phoenix interconnect coming online soon.

"So water resources are very critical in fighting fires, and one of the additions that we are going to have very shortly is the Phoenix interconnect water reservoir, a million gallons that we have extra that will be available for firefighting," he said.

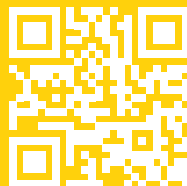
Miller also talked about how messaging will be important throughout the season, whether that is with the town's newsletter, social media channels, the town's website, the local media, and with digital street message boards throughout the town.

Jim Ford, the former director of community risk education/Fire and Medical Services, retired from his post in December and some of his responsibilities involved with wildlife preparedness has been dispersed amongst Cave Creek staff, including Fire Marshal Adam Hicks (Fire staging); Town Marshal Adam Stein (Emergency Management, Daisy Mountain liaison), Development Services Director Luke Kautzman (Neighborhood Firewise Program); and Communications Director Bo Larsen (Daisy Mountain liaison and Town Communications).

"I feel that we've done all the things that we've done in the past, and that nothing has changed," Miller said. "But I do think that there have been some significant enhancements. The fire station coming on board in the west side and then the Phoenix interconnect. I think those all add to I think a confidence level in the in the town that we are definitely going in the right direction."

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STREETS

Cave Creek approves amended paving contracts

By Jeff Wendt

INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

The Cave Creek Town Council approved two amended paving contracts during its meeting on Tuesday night.

After awarding contracts earlier to Cactus Asphalt and National Pavement Partners, the town still had about \$500,000 to spend in street improvement projects.

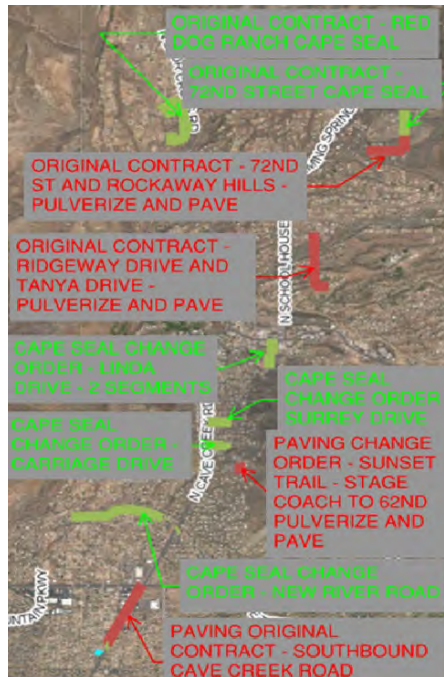
Town Engineer Hal Marron went back to both companies to see if they would be interested in bidding for additional street improvement projects, and both companies agreed to take them on.

“Rather than just say budget in the bank, we went back to the contractors who had given us favorable unit prices, and asked them to propose on using those same prices to give us some other roads we could get done this year,” Marron said.

Cactus Asphalt is picking up an additional five projects identified by the town as candidates for the Cape Seal project. Cactus Asphalt provided a proposal to complete these roads using the prices in the original contract bid for the project.

The new Cape Seal projects include: New River Road from 50th Street to the town boundary; Carriage Road from Cave Creek Road to Sunset Trail; Linda Drive from Cave Creek Road to Mark Way and from Mark Way to the end of the road; and Surrey Drive from Cave Creek Road to Sunset Trail.

The sum of the five projects to-



This map shows paving projects planned for 2026, including the amended locations approved in Tuesday's town council meeting. (Courtesy of the Town of Cave Creek)

als \$464,988, which will bring the total amount of the contract to \$769,949. The additional work will be performed at the same time as the original contract and will not require an extension to the contract.

National Pavement Partners will add Sunset Trail from Stage Coach Pass to 62nd Street. The street is in poor condition and requires complete removal, compaction of the base, and new asphalt. The change order is for \$63,639.49 to bring the total project cost to \$808,953.59.



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Maundy Thursday

7:00 p.m.*

Good Friday

7:00 p.m.*

Easter Sunday

6:30 a.m. Sunrise

8:00 a.m.
9:30 a.m.

Kids classes for preschool-grade 8
11:00 a.m.

*in-person and livestream



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VOTE

Cave Creek approves legislative policy agenda

Directs town manager to seek outside firm to represent town

By Jeff Wendt

INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

The Cave Creek Town Council unanimously voted March 4 to approve its 2026 legislative policy agenda and to hire a lobbyist to promote the town's interests at the Arizona Legislature.

The policy was drafted at the council retreat in February, and Town Manager Grady Miller and the staff came back with the final version to the council.

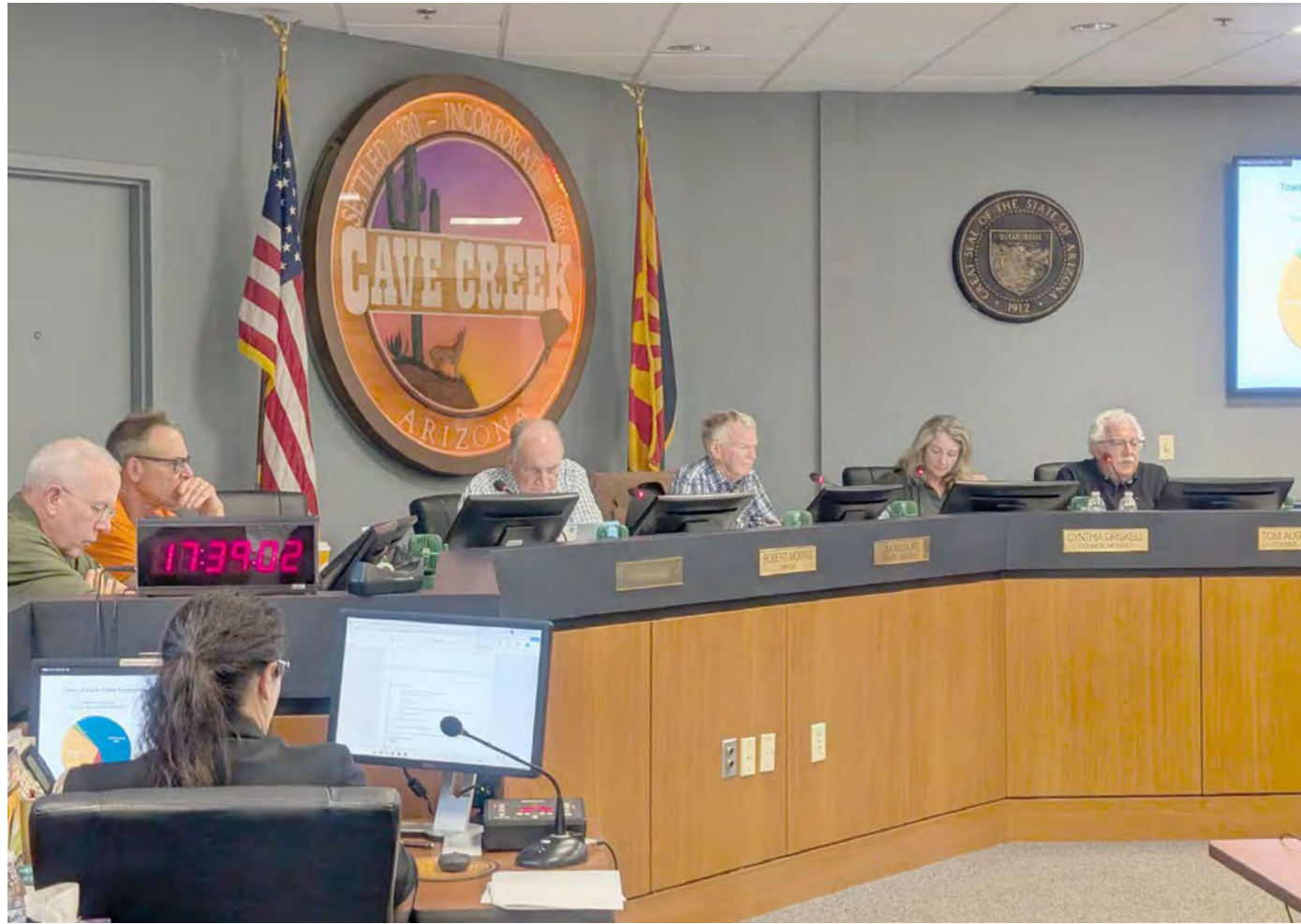
"This provides direction after council consideration and possible adoption to staff to either go support or oppose bills that will be out there," Miller said.

"So that way we ensure that the council is on the same page and we don't have individual council members giving direction to staff on individual bills.

"And the other thing that it also does is in the event that we had a legislative firm or government relations firm representing us down at the capital, they would have this document that would help provide guidance on the bills that touch upon these topics or these policy agenda categories," Miller added.

Councilmember Dusty Rhoades asked Miller if there would be a future line item in the budget for hiring a consultant or a firm.

"There's already money in the budget for consulting and things like that, so that I could tap if I need to," Miller said "I was also asked during



Cave Creek Town Council members listen to a legislative policy agenda presentation from Town Manager Grady Miller on March 3 in Cave Creek. (Independent Newsmedia/Jeff Wendt)

the retreat I believe, I don't know who it was, and I apologize, but there was a council member that suggested that I might seek Carefree to see if they want to go in on it, so I think that's a really good idea tonight."

Councilmember Cynthia Driskell asked if the firm or lobbyist group would be able to analyze items on behalf of the council.

"I think that could be certainly in the scope for them to do," Miller said. "I will say though that the League of Cities does a really good

job of what I would call the legislative analysis of the bills, and you know they can't take on every bill, but I do think that there could be certain bills that they can go maybe beyond what the league does already."

Councilmember Tom Aughterton offered an analogy of the situation the town was in.

"Think of this as the fish market and you're basically looking to see what today's catch is and you're hiring a temporary fisherman to come in and give you what's going on,"

Aughterton said.

Councilmember Joe Freedman agrees someone is needed at the Legislature to represent the town's interests.

"I think we need to do this and the reason is everything's getting bigger and more complicated," Freedman said. "We don't have a presence down there at the state capital. This would give us a professional person who's there constantly who would look out for us for our best interest. So, I think it's a no-brainer."

FROM THE COVER

Krey

• From page 1

staff is, how strong our financial sheet is, the infrastructure we have, that's all a testimonial to Gary. After 24 years, he deserves to spend time with his family and follow up on other interests of life."

Crane said he is looking forward to Krey leading the town forward in the 21st century and making an impact on how government can run more efficiently.

"You can be anxious about change or you can be welcoming and embrace it," he said. "I certainly embrace it and I know she does. We're going to do well going forward."

He added that Krey understands the importance of economic development, which is critical to the town. She is going to play a big part in making key decisions like the development of the

northeast corner of Carefree Highway and Cave Creek Road, repurposing the town hall site and making improvements on Easy Street to enhance economic development.

It doesn't all fall on Krey's shoulders, however. She said she needs to rely on the people around her because she knows she doesn't know everything. She will also rely on the knowledge Neiss has left her with.

"People are replaceable, that's life," she said. "But what's not replaceable is 24 years of institutional knowledge at the time when the town grew the most. Gary has left me archives full of information so that I can figure it out without having to spend a lot of time... Recognizing the people that have been here, especially the people that have been here a long time, they have a perspective of they really rely on each other and they consider each other not just colleagues but friends and family."

She said another big responsibility she has as town administrator is making sure the town council has the ability to make the most informed decisions it can.

"I believe that as town administrator, my role is to make sure that we as staff provide the most information possible and the most vetted information possible with as many recommendations as possible so that the council can make informed decisions about where we need to go in the future," she said.

Krey is in the process of meeting with each employee individually to make sure everyone is on the same page about what her organizational philosophy is: that the town doesn't exist without its residents. Crane said it was extremely important to the council that the new town administrator came with experience and people skills. He believes Krey has both.

"In a small town, once you walk out-

side the town hall, the residents know who you are," he said. "We wanted someone who can relate well to people, can be empathetic and appreciate where they're coming from and where the town is coming from."

The town has posted the open town clerk position and will keep it open until it is filled. Krey said she wants it filled quickly, but wants to make sure she finds the right person for the job.

Residents can email Krey at kristen@carefree.org; however, she mentioned it is budget season and she will be working hard getting that in place.

Krey said she looks forward to meeting residents and learning from them.

Reporter Zev Black can be reached at zblack@iniusa.org. Please submit comments at yourvalley.net/letters or email them to AzOpinions@iniusa.org. We are committed to publishing a wide variety of reader opinions, as long as they meet our Civility Guidelines.



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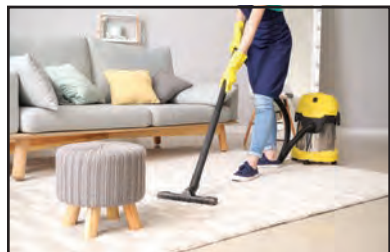
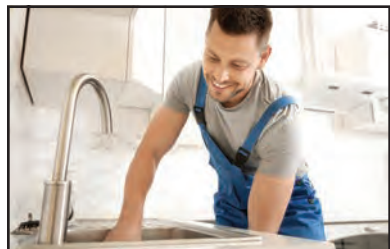
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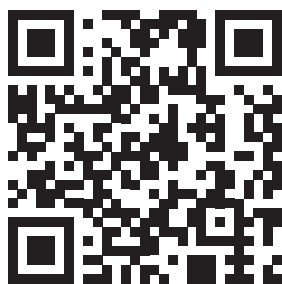
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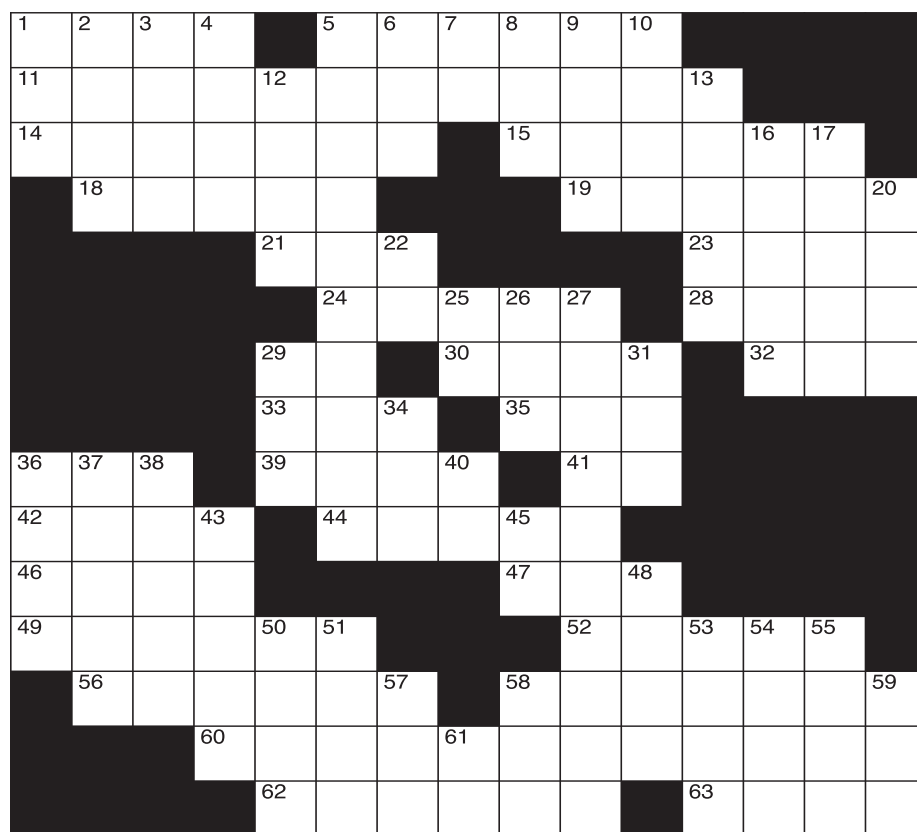
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CLUES ACROSS

1. Absence of difficulty
5. Preserve a dead body
11. Gratitude
14. The act of coming together again
15. More cushy
18. Visionaries
19. Large fish-eating bird
21. Indicates near
23. Former CIA and CIA critic
24. Icelandic poems
28. Pop
29. Hammer is one
30. Selves
32. Thyroid-stimulating hormone
33. Nowhere to be found
35. Electronic data processing
36. Drivers' licenses and passports are two
39. Snake-like fishes
41. Air Force
42. Popular personal computers
44. Stages in ecological succession

46. Wings

47. In the center
49. Pleasantly smooth
52. Jeweled headdress
56. In slow tempo
58. ___ Falls
60. Reiterations
62. Eras
63. Hyphen

CLUES DOWN

1. Body part
2. Mimics
3. Expel or eject (variant sp.)
4. Sea eagle
5. Taxonomic category
6. Chinese languages
7. Mr. T's "A-Team" character
8. Consumed
9. Chinese dynasty
10. NFL legend Randy
12. Ireland
13. Palm trees with creeping roots
16. Fungal disease
17. Tall, slender-leaved plants
20. Affirmative! (slang)

22. It says who you are
25. Atlantic coast state
26. Grow older
27. Associations
29. Woman (French)
31. Sunscreen rating
34. Brew
36. Leader
37. Indigo bush genus
38. Burn with a hot liquid
40. Junior's father
43. Mackerel genus
45. Morning
48. Straight line from side to side (abbr.)
50. Type of molding
51. Small, thin or twisted bunch
53. Worn by exposure to the weather
54. Mars crater
55. Humanities
57. Relating to the ears
58. "To the ___ degree"
59. Residue when something is burned
61. It cools a home

SOLUTION ON PAGE 30

SUDOKU BY METRO CREATIVE SERVICES

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

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SOLUTION ON PAGE 30

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Mesa • November 13, 2026 • Mesa Marketplace Swap Meet

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FROM THE COVER

Utility

• From page 1

can run a water system, I know we can do it well. We've been working on that for a long time, but we've got a ways to go."

Cave Creek is anticipating somewhere between 20% to 57% cut in water from the Central Arizona Project in January, which triggered the town to open up the invitation for bid on the Desert Hills system last November, Town Manager Grady Miller said during his presentation.

"An advantage potentially of selling the Desert Hills water system is that it would allow the town to retain approximately 550 acre-feet of (Central Arizona Project) water, which having gone through a recent consideration of purchasing outside water resources, that translates into about \$1 million in savings," Miller said.

That recent consideration of the purchase of an outside water resource was in the Harquahala Valley. The council explored the option but in January ended the process and terminated the contract for purchase.

The council also approved amending the professional services agreement with Raftelis for assistance with the invitation for bid to an additional amount not to exceed \$114,000.

"Raftelis is the firm that assisted the town with the invitation for bid for Desert Hills, and we would be wanting to continue with them," Miller said. "They did all that was asked of them, and we have a very high confidence level that they could perform this project.

"Raftelis will also evaluate and perform the financial analysis of a possible alternative, which is an IGA (intergovernmental agreement) with another municipality that would provide bulk treated water and distributed to customers by the Cave Creek



Cave Creek Utility System Director Shawn Kreuzwiesner, left, and Cave Creek Town Manager Grady Miller present to the Town Council during a special meeting March 24, 2026. (Independent Newsmedia/Jeff Wendt)

Water System. So those are the two aspects that Raftelis will be assisting the town with."

With the anticipated cut in water from CAP, Council Member Cynthia Driskell asked if the activation of dormant Cave Creek wells might be necessary to help gain some of the lost water back to the town.

"Our goal is to try and get of the three wells that we've tested, at least

two of them up and are operational by the end of this calendar year," Utility Services Director Shawn Kreuzwiesner said. "With the third leader, we actually have a fourth well, which actually had very high arsenic that we're trying to avoid having to equip because of high arsenic levels.

"But our goal is to have some of the old wells actually online by the end of this calendar year to allow us

to move forward into next year with the pending cuts," Kreuzwiesner added.

Council Member Dusty Rhoades asked Kreuzwiesner if the anticipated cuts come through if the town's drought management plan needs to be activated.

"I'm actually supposed to give you a number by October, which would be our projection of our supplies versus water resources for next year," Kreuzwiesner said.

"So, we believe by July is when the Bureau of Reclamation will issue their 24-month forecast, which usually kicks off how much water will be physically available for the Colorado River, all the users, and then falling to back to the CAP canal next year.

"So we'll know that midsummer, and then before October in the drought plan, I was supposed to be coming back and present to you as far as where we fall within our projections for available water resources to our demands."

Miller said he anticipates bringing back something to the council in either September or October for them to act upon.



The Cave Creek Town Council listens to a presentation on changing the scope of the Invitation for Bid for its water systems in a special meeting March 24, 2026. (Independent Newsmedia/Jeff Wendt)

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1. No food in bowl
2. Bookcase in back
3. Gerbil by cat
4. Crow outside of window

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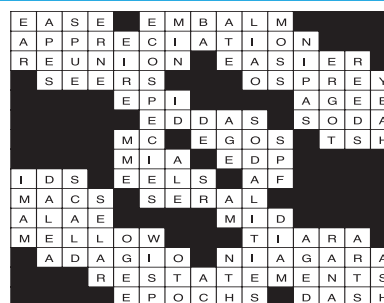


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3	4	6	7	9	1	5	2	8
1	8	7	5	6	2	4	9	3
4	3	9	8	5	7	2	1	6
8	7	1	6	2	4	9	3	5
6	5	2	1	3	9	7	8	4
7	1	8	2	4	6	3	5	9
5	2	3	9	7	8	6	4	1
9	6	4	3	1	5	8	7	2

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