

Education

Inspired by little brother, Glendale student founds autism nonprofit; **8**



INDEPENDENT

Sports

Eagles beach pair leads drive for 5; **16**



May 2026

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2026 ELECTION

Calles stays in race after court ruling

Richard Smith
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

Glendale will have two competitive city council races this summer following a legal challenge to one candidate's signatures.

Maricopa County Superior Court Judge Greg Como rejected Bart Turner's petition challenge against Glendale City Council candidate Michael Calles' signatures in a ruling April 16. Calles will remain on the ballot.



Calles

Turner challenged Calles' signature attesting that Calles had been the one collecting signatures on every page of his petitions. Barrel District residents signed those petitions for him to qualify for the July 21 primary election.

"Plaintiff has failed to prove by clear and convincing evidence that the candidate submitted fewer than the 217 valid signatures required by law," the ruling read.

• See **Ruling** on page 20

GOAL

Glendale hits lower recycling contamination targets — sometimes

Residents' recycling bins go under 20% contamination in a few quarters

By Richard Smith
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

In October 2022, the city of Glendale had a contamination rate of almost 30% of the recycled materials submitted by residents.

Glendale set a goal to get that number down to 20% regularly by 2025, and it has — sometimes.

Michael Carr began working as the city's deputy director of field operations around that time.

"I would say it's ambitious. Obviously, we want to do better than that," Carr said. "For me, 30% was shocking. We were hoping for better, and we set some goal for ourselves."

The first report card for city was at 29.5%. The second one was 25%.

The problem is almost always items that cannot be recycled.

"The system isn't designed to take

• See **Recycling** on page 12



Glendale employee Jeff Williams swings his city truck around to pick up a load of recycling April 22 in the Tanoan community in northern Glendale. (Independent Newsmedia/Richard Smith)

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ELECTION 2026

Glendale council candidates turn in financial reports

By Richard Smith
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

All five Glendale council election candidates turned in their campaign finance reports by the April 15 deadline.

Barrel District candidate Michael Calles brought in the most in contributions by a wide margin, with a total of \$23,194.65.

Cholla District Councilmember Lauren Tolmachoff, who is not facing an opponent in the upcoming election, was the only other candidate to receive more than \$7,000 in contributions from January through March.

Fundraising was a quieter quarter for Ocotillo District candidates Leandro Baldenegro and Rory Goree.

"When I opened the account with

my treasurer, I deposited \$100 of my own money," Baldenegro stated in an email.

That is it for the incumbent. He did not spend anything during the first quarter.

While he is the sitting council member, Baldenegro was appointed to the seat in 2024. When asked if donations and expenditures will pick up during the second quarter, Baldenegro indicated he is still feeling his way.

"Since this is my first time running an election campaign, your guess is as good as mine," Baldenegro stated.

Challenger Goree received \$1,450 in contributions during the first quarter. He also contributed \$11,292.22

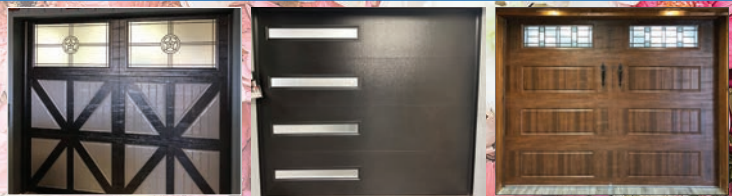
• See **Reports** on page 5



Rory Goree, left and Leandro Baldenegro, right, are seeking the Glendale City Council seat in the Ocotillo District for the July 21 primary election. (Independent Newsmedia/Jeremy Carr)

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Reports

• From page 4

of his own money.

Glendale resident Kathy Collins donated \$650 total, in three different installments. Bitz-ee Mama's owner Lourdes Rodriguez gave \$300 total, and 2024 candidate Lupe Encinas chipped in \$250.

"I'm focused on earning votes, not chasing donors," Goree stated in an email. "I made a commitment to largely self-fund this campaign because I've been clear about the negative influence money and special interests can have on our local government. We've seen millions spent on projects that don't benefit working families in the Ocotillo District, and those decisions are driven by money and influence, not what residents want or need."

He said he will not take corporate PAC contributions.

Goree said the early part of the calendar is focused on signatures, He also spent \$2,250.62 at Looks Good Printing, and \$9,000 for consulting services from Gumption Consulting LLC.

"I'm proud we collected more signatures than my opponent; in fact, we collected over the maximum allowed. That shows our support in the district is real and growing. You can see it in the number of homes that already have our yard signs.," Goree stated.

Another candidate gave \$20 to the Goree campaign, Barrel District hopeful Lisa Baker.

Baker's campaign entered the quarter with \$2,443.35 in reserve, reported total receipts of \$3,528.14 and spent \$4,085.19 during the quarter. So she ends the quarter with a balance of \$1,886.20

Her biggest donor was Sun City West resident Richard Evangelini at \$1,500. Glendale resident Scott

Rothe gave \$519, and former Glendale Chamber of Commerce CEO and current Sacramento Metro Chamber CEO Robert Heidt gave \$259.

Her biggest expenses were International Print in Phoenix with \$1,077.56 for door hangers and yard signs, and \$477.39 at Costco for a printer.

Her opponent, fellow first-time candidate Michael Calles, brought in a wide range of donations to start the year.

Twenty-five individual donors each gave Calles the specific amount of \$104.48.

Scottsdale resident John Crow gave Calles' campaign the largest amount at \$6,000. Sharon Reece, David Schwartz. Mark Calles, Jeff Corbin each gave exactly \$1,041.98.

About \$20,000 of the donations came through a Kickstarter fundraising event in late January.

"The overwhelming support we

received at our kickoff fundraiser sends a clear message: the people of Glendale are ready for strong leadership, accountability, and real results," Calles said at that event. "I am deeply grateful for the confidence our community has placed in me, and I am energized to continue building campaign focused on public safety, economic opportunity, and better neighborhoods."

Calles spent \$13,562.21 during the first quarter. The campaign spent \$4,107.12 all told on its kickoff event.

Calles spent \$2,669.10 on campaign voter outreach and data from i360 LLC and another \$2,500 in consulting fees paid to campaign manager Darius Diggs.

"This campaign is about restoring trust in local government and ensuring every family feels safe, heard, supported," Calles stated. "Together, we are building a movement that puts people first and delivers real solutions for Glendale."



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7 In late March, **The Mangat Group** announced plans to expand its industrial development footprint to four flex industrial spaces, including a second project at its already announced Glendale site, at Glendale Avenue and New River Road. A second development in Glendale adjacent to the site will feature 31 units across 84,000 square feet. Each project will deliver small-bay industrial spaces featuring a small office paired with rear warehouse functionality.

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EDUCATION



Autism: Bringing Change has organized a number of events over the past year for families touched by autism, including a group hike up Thunderbird Mountain. (Photo provided by Autism: Bringing Change)

Inspired by little brother, Glendale student founds autism nonprofit

Anish Padiyar learned first-hand about the neurological condition: ‘It’s just a different ability’

By Steve Stockmar
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

What began as a personal challenge for one student at Mountain Ridge High School in Glendale has grown into a student-led effort to raise money — and awareness — for families navigating autism across the Valley.

For founder Anish Padiyar, the inspiration behind Autism: Bringing Change (ABC) is close to home. His brother, Avaneesh, 10, has nonverbal autism, a condition that has shaped his family’s daily life and revealed how difficult it can be for families to

access therapy.

It pushed him to act.

“It’s not some community service or community involvement topic,” said Padiyar, 17, and a senior at Mountain Ridge. “It’s doing something that I genuinely connect to, doing something that our team, the community of Autism: Bringing Change, we all genuinely connect to the topic.”

Autism, a neurological condition that exists on a spectrum, affects 1 in 36 children, according to national data. Advocates say awareness alone is not enough — acceptance and access to services remain key challenges, especially as many families struggle with the cost of care.

Launched in 2022, ABC is a student-run initiative aimed at helping families offset those costs while ed-

Autism

• From page 8

educating the community. The group is led by Padiyar as operations manager alongside finance manager and Mountain Ridge senior Charan Arveti, and outreach manager and Mountain Ridge junior Ichcha Pandey.

Raising awareness starts at the very beginning of the autism journey, the same way it did for Padiyar and his family.

"We had to really get to know him, beyond just that brother-to-brother-type of aspect," Padiyar explained. "It's seeing the world the way he sees it."

Over the past year, students organized multiple fundraising events, including a basketball tournament, a community hike and a tennis tournament at Rose Mofford Sports Complex. Together, the events drew more than 300 participants.

Planning wasn't simple. As a student-run effort without formal non-profit backing early on, organizers had to build credibility with sponsors, secure venues and ensure safety protocols, including liability waivers and first-aid readiness.

Despite those challenges, the results exceeded expectations.

The group set an initial fundraising goal of \$500. By the end of the cycle, ABC raised \$968.20, all of which was donated to AZA United, a non-profit that provides therapy and support services to families across Arizona.

Beyond fundraising, students focused heavily on outreach. Social media efforts generated more than



Anish Padiyar, 17, and his brother Avaneesh, 10.
(Photo provided by Anish Padiyar)

46,000 impressions, helping spread awareness about autism and the importance of early intervention and support. During the holidays, ABC members also created handmade cards to thank therapists statewide.

Community partnerships played a key role, with support from organizations including Sewa International, Phoenix Jewel of the East Lions and ACE Tennis Academy.

Now, the group is looking ahead.

ABC plans to launch its next phase this spring, expanding into city-based chapters in an effort to grow its reach and impact.

For Padiyar and his team, the mission remains personal — and ongoing.

"They say there's no cure for autism, but if we really look at it this way, the cure is the people that they spend the

time with," he said. "For my brother, it's not that autism needs a cure, it's that if his family, the people he loves, is around him, we're spending time to be spending time with us. What more do we want?"

Visit autismbringingchange.xyz to learn more.

"There's so many older brothers out there and older sisters out there that have siblings of autism, parents with children, parents who have autism. But when they all spend time you hear the same things: they see that different ability. It's a different level of fun being with them. They really make it more emotional."

Anish Padiyar, 17, Mountain Ridge High School senior

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

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

Speak Up

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

Corrections

We will promptly correct all factual errors.

We offer a "right of reply" to the people about whom we write.

Readers who disagree with a news story are welcome to respond with a letter.

Arizona must develop an immigration policy with empathetic values

Emma Lazarus is most known for words associated with Lady Liberty: "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to be free..."

It's nothing new to most readers, but worth recalling for the pride and compassion conveyed by those words.

Arizona has been experiencing an influx of immigrants. The large number of undocumented immigrants and the "huddled masses" are housed in detention facilities in Mesa and Phoenix.

We think of being housed as an acceptable remedy. "Housed" implies that there is room to sleep safely, food to eat, clean water to drink and adequate sanitation facilities. After all, we are the United States of America, a country who prides itself in humane treatment for all who are here.

Recent surprise visits to the Mesa facility contradict the values we hold dear. Rep. Adelina Grijalva, our newest Congressperson, found overcrowding by more than 100 (274 in a place meant to hold 157) detainees. People were sleeping on cement floors. Due to overcrowding, sanitation is disgustingly lacking. Close interpersonal proximity has led to inappropriate contact, even resulting in pregnancy.

Is this America?

Arizona is a border state with unique immigration problems, but we are part of the USA. We should represent our country as the place of open arms, not locked holding tanks.

There are humane ways to

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.

handle immigration, but I ask that policy be developed with empathy and the values we've always held. Martin Luther King, Jr. said: "Ultimately, a great nation is a compassionate nation."

Please help make it so in Arizona.

Julie Skrzypek
GLENDALE

Arizona public school hiring should be more transparent

At a time when public confidence in school oversight is under increasing scrutiny, even routine decisions — like hiring teachers — deserve greater transparency than they often receive.

Public education operates on trust. Parents trust that the individuals standing in front of classrooms are not only qualified but also selected through fair, consistent processes grounded in objective standards. Taxpayers trust that decisions within publicly funded institutions are made with accountability and oversight.

What happens when that trust is questioned?

After nearly a decade of teaching in a public school district, I wasn't retained following a hiring process that appeared to rely heavily on a brief, compressed interview, despite a documented history of strong performance, including a recent "highly effective" evaluation.

• See **Letters** on page 11

Speak Up

Read what local residents are saying about hot-button issues:

Below is a list of comments from people on Nextdoor who are speaking up on a number of topics from VAI Resort delays to schools closing and a drive-thru opening.

Glendale approves giving 95th Avenue right of way to VAI Resort

"Giving away more" — to a project that is still unfinished, started in 2021 (I believe). Was that what was voted on awhile back and the taxpayers did not approve of "giving away the land?" I don't remember all the details. Personally I think it's wrong — what have they (VAI Resort) given us/city of Glendale? — **Shelia Jocewicz**

They need to launch an investigation on certain council members and the mayor of Glendale, and you will learn where the money went. — **Mark S.**

Seriously all you complainers. Amazing work Glendale! It takes a lot of money and time to build a resort like that. Phoenix area and the West Valley especially is starved for entertainment, why do we have to go all the way to Scottsdale to do anything fun? Do you even know how much business this resort will bring not only to the city but all the surrounding area businesses? — **Jennifer MW.**

• See **Speak** on page 11

Letters

• From page 10

While any individual hiring decision may involve multiple factors, the broader concern is whether objective performance data is appropriately considered or whether subjective processes are allowed to override established records of effectiveness.

This isn't simply a personal matter. As a taxpayer and community member, I have a vested interest in ensuring that public institutions operate transparently and accountably. Hiring decisions in education aren't administrative formalities — they directly affect the quality of instruction students receive.

When decision-making processes lack clarity or consistency, it raises important questions:

Are the most qualified candidates being selected? Are established evaluation systems being meaningfully applied? Is there sufficient oversight to ensure accountability in these decisions?

These aren't abstract concerns. They go to the heart of public confidence in our education system.

Transparency doesn't require

disclosure of confidential personnel matters, but it does require that systems be structured to ensure consistency, fairness and accountability. Public education deserves nothing less.

If we expect excellence in the classroom, we must also expect integrity in the processes that determine who is permitted to teach.

That's not just an employment issue — it's a public issue.

Rod Wielkie
CHANDLER

Editor's note: The author is a retired federal agent, military veteran and a former middle school social studies teacher.

Hamadeh's approach to leadership of no benefit to 8th District

Is Abe Hamadeh truly the person Arizona's Congressional 8th District needs right now to represent us in Congress?

He, along with the majority of other GOP colleagues in the House, continue to silently stand by even as Trump once again bulldozed over

their congressional authority.

Here we are submerged in an unauthorized war, which had no imminent threat to begin with, and no clear groundwork or exit strategies.

We're all experiencing the fallout with even-higher prices on top of those created by illegal tariffs. As Hamadeh and his cronies in Congress shirk their constitutional responsibilities in order to appease the Oval Office, we all suffer.

And, while we still await the full release of the Epstein files, the probable Epstein-Trump-Russian connection remains buried with them. With Pam Bondi gone, her replacement will be likely to cover it up even deeper.

I just don't see how continuing this congressman's kowtowed approach to leadership will be of further long-term benefit to any of us.

We deserve better!

Karen Jones
SUN CITY WEST

Editor's note: Congressional District 8 includes parts of Glendale, Peoria, north Phoenix, Sun City, Sun City West and Surprise.

them out for private Prenda style teaching! — **Debbie Kelly**

much closer to me. — **Michelle Bellows**

I'm giddy over every single piece of land being used for a temporary building/business that benefits nobody! — **Anna Frevila**

ON YOURVALLEY.NET

Animal shelter's sudden closure leaves employees in shock

Sun Valley Animal Shelter, a longtime staple of the West Valley's rescue community, has closed amid financial challenges and employees saying they were given little warning.

The shelter at 7150 N. 110th Ave. in Glendale had a meeting with employees March 25 and informed them Phoenix-based HALO Animal Rescue would be taking over.

Read online: <https://tinyurl.com/yxpy37xj>

Conchas councilman wins SRP board seat in sign of trend

While the highest profile races for Salt River Project board president and vice president saw Turning Point Action-backed candidates Chris Dobson and Barry Pacey win, a group of candidates SRP Clean Energy team won an 8-6 majority on the board for the SRP power utility, including Glendale Councilmember Lupe Conchas.

Read online: <https://tinyurl.com/2bx7he39>

Speak

• From page 10

Fate of Peoria Unified schools to be closed comes into focus

Would love to see Prenda rent

Whataburger plans Glendale opening later this month

Love Whataburger, this will be


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FROM THE COVER

Recycling

• From page 1

out dirty items,” Carr said. “We even met with Waste Management and talked about things like pizza boxes. They’ve told us the pizza boxes are fine. If it’s super greasy and disgusting, yeah it should go away. But for the most part, that material is going to dry out and get processed and it’s going to be fine.”

Glendale publishes quarterly updates and they tend to vary wildly.

“We’ve had months where we’ve been at 8%, 12%, 16%, and then it kind of goes back up. We’re now fluctuating between that 20% and 27%. The last three quarters, we were at 20%. Then this last quarter, we were 27%,” Carr.

Along with reducing contamination, another major objective is to raise the participation rate.

Participation is fairly consistent around the city, with about 60% of Glendale homes regularly recycling.

“I think the national average is less than 40% so we’re pretty good as far as the number of people putting containers out. It’s the weight that isn’t up there, so we need more volume in the containers,” Carr said. “Then the contamination. Are they putting out a full recycling can or are they putting out an extra trash can?”

The Wrong Stuff

That increase to 27% for January through March seems like an anomaly, since contamination percentage usually jump during the holidays and dips to start the year, Carr said.

Contaminated items are almost always those that residents incorrectly include in the can, led by anything in a plastic bag. At times, objects like electrical cords and Christmas lights are mixed in.

“A few of our biggest contamination

WHAT TO RECYCLE

- Paper
- Plastic (not plastic bags)
- Cardboard
- Aluminum
- Tin

issues are with bags, plastic bags. Some of the messaging we tried to put out early was everything needs to be unbagged. Once you throw everything into a bag, the system sees that as trash, when it could be a bag full of recycling,” Carr said.

It fits into a category Carr calls “wish-cycling,” like pieces of metal or other household items that can’t be recycled at the city’s facilities. That includes stuffed animals.

On the flip side, Glendale employees see big cardboard boxes out for bulk trash collection frequently, because people do not take the time to break them down and fit it in the recycle bin.

Field operations works with the city’s geographic information systems team to tag containers that have the highest contamination level.

Glendale recently completed an ed-

ucational outreach over the course of three weeks with new fliers and information packets on every container in the area.

“There is a recycling education manager who is in schools educating kids,” said Lesley Miller, Glendale’s media relations and community programs manager.

In two years of its “blue barrel” program, new containers are in targeted areas and homes with broken, old containers. These reminders are rarely necessary in the residences north of Bell Road.

“In that particular area we have lower contamination and higher participation, so it’s not somewhere that we focus a lot of attention on,” Carr said.

Less Waste

A fire closed Glendale’s materials recovery facility in 2022. The city processed and sold its own materials.

• See **Waste** on page 20

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SPRING TRAINING

Camelback Ranch posts best box office since COVID

By Richard Smith
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

Fans of the dominant Los Angeles Dodgers showed up at Camelback Ranch in 2026 even if the temperature pushed 100 and Shohei Ohtani was playing for Team Japan in Tokyo or Miami.

And the spring training ballpark's other team, the downtrodden Chicago White Sox, were the surprise of the spring. According to Cactus League officials, the White Sox saw the biggest jump at the gate, averaging 5,155 per game at Camelback Ranch-Glendale, a 12.9% increase over 2025.

Along with the Dodgers' home average attendance of 10,322 — third highest in the Cactus League behind the Chicago Cubs and Arizona Diamondbacks — the 2026 spring training average at Camelback Ranch was 7,739 per

game for a total attendance of 232,155.

"The White Sox drew about half of what the Dodgers did and a lot of that starts with this young, exciting product on the field," Camelback Ranch-Glendale President and General Manager Matt Slatius said. "The White Sox have really become a nice opportunity for the local market to catch a game. The Dodgers fans come in droves and often buy the seats before we can make those West Valley Resident Pass seats available."

All told, it is the ballpark's best spring since the COVID-19 pandemic wiped out nearly two weeks of play in 2020. Only Salt River Fields at Talking Stick, home of the Diamondbacks and Colorado Rockies, drew more total fans this spring.

Ohtani did not play his first game at Camelback Ranch until March 18 and

Dodgers opening day starter Yoshinobu Yamamoto also was with Team Japan during the bulk of spring training.

Visitors from Asia have been a significant, and previously unexpected, boon since Ohtani signed with the Dodgers in late 2023.

"I don't think the city could expect every single kid in Tokyo knowing where Glendale is," Slatius said.

Yet the dropoff from 11,065 fans per game in only 12 games in 2025 to 10,322 in 15 games this year was not steep, thanks to the Dodgers' traditional fan base.

Slatius said many metro LA residents were willing to drive to the West Valley for a weekend to see the two-time defending champs.

Older Valley fans grew up listening to Dodger games on KTAR 620 or KOY 550 before the Diamondbacks debuted.

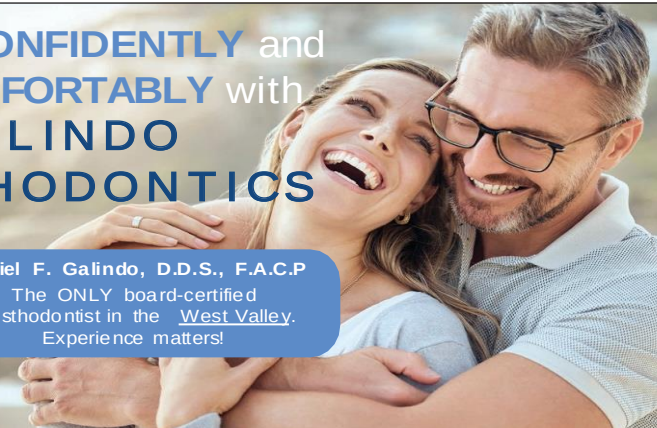


Glen Aveson, left, and Kevin Denney are the respective superintendents for fields for each club that shares space at Camelback Ranch-Glendale. (Steve Stockmar/Sun Life Magazine)

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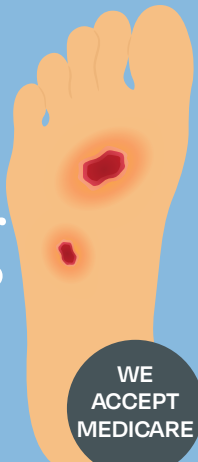
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SPORTS

Eagles beach pair leads drive for 5

By Richard Smith
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

O'Connor could not win four straight team Division I titles without elite beach volleyball players.

But they do not always arrive on campus that way.

Take this year's top pair of seniors Kaylee Woodruff and Delaney Singleton. Woodruff was, and is, an elite youth swimmer that did not play beach volleyball until she was a sophomore. Singleton played beach from the beginning but thought of herself as an indoor volleyball player.

"I was originally a swimmer," Glendale resident Woodruff said. "Then I quit club swim and I eventually came to finding sand volleyball because it was such a good environment and culture. They've won so many titles and it was an experience I was hoping to be a part of."

Now Woodruff and Singleton are leading the Eagles' drive for five. Both will play Division I college sand volleyball next year.

Singleton's older sister, Kinsley, went to O'Connor and won both indoor and beach state titles as a senior in 2023-24. Kinsley Singleton now plays indoor volleyball at Oklahoma University.

Delaney Singleton said she learned quickly how good the coaching was and what a family environment the beach volleyball program has.

Singleton made the varsity her freshman year and had her first experience at Casteel High for the state finals.

"It was crazy to be part of that big environment," Singleton said. "It's very different from club because you're playing in tournaments with your partner and it's just you two. It's the first college-like environment you see."

That was O'Connor's second state title in 2023.



Coach Jamey Spartz has led O'Connor beach volleyball to four straight state titles. (Courtesy DVUSD)

Jamey Spartz is in her 11th year as the Eagles' beach volleyball coach.

"You have to have all skills in beach. Kaylee is probably our full time blocker and Delaney is a split blocker, where she can block and play defense. In college she probably will be more of a defender. Kaylee has this crazy big reach in front and makes it hard for others to go around her."

New to the sport as a sophomore, Woodruff said her coaches and college coaches saw her potential before she did.

She watched state title three in 2024, which featured both Singleton sisters and lost two points all year.

"It was my junior year that I realized I'm playing D1 volleyball in college and I realized I really loved the sport," Woodruff said.

The 2025 Eagles lost five points all season and swept Phoenix Xavier Prep in the Division I finals. Singleton was in the No. 1 pair while Woodruff elevated to the second pair.

The seniors were looking forward to being the top pair. It would have to wait, as Woodruff missed the first six matches with a broken wrist.

Fellow top senior Kaiya Kearney tore her ACL before the season started.

• See **Eagles** on page 17

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Eagles

• From page 16

That led into a 3-2 loss at Xavier March 4. It was the Eagles' first loss since a 3-2 defeat at Millennium in 2022.

Spartz said the timing of Xavier loss was great for this team long term.

"It's a humbling feeling," Spartz said, "For us it was, 'We lost but we know we can do this if we do A, B, C and D.' It's good for them to be motivated and now we can be the underdog."

Junior Logan Sutton took on a bigger role, as did sophomore Lara Hoppenworth in the fifth pair.

Woodruff came back for the March 25 match at Horizon. She and Singleton have only seven matches together.

They have not lost a set.

"We've connected really well, just playing the last six games together," Woodruff said April 17, before the playoffs started.

Spartz said pairs two through five are



The top pair for four-time defending beach volleyball champion O'Connor, seniors Delaney Singleton, left, and Kaylee Woodruff smile as practice starts on April 17. (Independent Newsmedia/Richard Smith)

flexible depending on the matchup.

The top pair is not up for debate.

"They're both humble kids. They really understand the value of what it takes to be a leader," Spartz said. "In a season, they got so much better. And then the next season they got so much better. It's breathtaking to see where they are now."

After her freshman year, Singleton said she realized she loved the environ-

ment of beach volleyball. She started playing in more club tournaments.

She set her sights on playing for the University of Hawaii, and signed with the Rainbows this year.

"Hawaii was definitely the dream from the start," Singleton said. "When they reached out, it definitely was like a fever dream. The coach that recruited me is no longer there. But the coach that's there now is amazing and I'm su-

per excited to go and learn from him."

She plans to study biology and enter the medical field when she is older.

Woodruff did not expect to stay close to home. But she said she liked how Grand Canyon University coach Abra Rummel looked at her potential.

"Her program really can level me up and help me overall," Woodruff said.

She will start as a business major but is also minoring in nutrition and sports medicine. Before that, though, the duo wants to help win title five, this time as the No. 2 seed. O'Connor beat Gilbert Perry 4-1 April 20 in the first round and Mesa Red Mountain 5-0 in the second round April 22.

As Spartz said, the Eagles cannot go through the playoffs arrogant. Top seed Xavier is very talented and deep. No. 3 seed Notre Dame Prep won one of match against O'Connor April 8.

"It gives us a reality check of how hard we need to work to get where we want to be," Singleton said. "We all know we have the potential and the skills."

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ARTS

City offers performing arts grant application all May

INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

Glendale recently announced the opening of the 2026–27 Performing Arts Grant application window.

Continuing through Sunday, May 31 artists and organizations are invited to apply for funding to support vibrant and diverse performing arts programming within Glendale city limits.

This grant opportunity is open to projects in music, theatre, dance and spoken word, with funded performances scheduled to take place between Sept. 1, 2026, and Aug. 31, 2027.

“There’s much more that unites us than divides us, and the arts are a great connector to the moments that bring us together,” Christopher Taylor, Glendale’s Arts and Culture Ad-



Partners that Heal are a past recipient of a Glendale city performing arts grant. (City of Glendale)

ministrators, stated in a press release. “The Office of Arts and Culture is honored to be leading this program.”

Applicants can access full guide-

lines and submission materials here.

Artists seeking performance venues within Glendale, such as the Glendale Main Library Auditorium

or Murphy Park, may request partnership opportunities. A Partnership Agreement Form is available.

There is a new requirement for 2026–27. All grant recipients must either:

Be registered with the Arizona Corporation Commission, or provide an exemption letter confirming independent contractor status.

This requirement has been incorporated into the application process to ensure clarity and compliance. Applicants with questions are encouraged to reach out.

For information about the Performing Arts Grant program or application requirements, contact the Glendale Arts & Culture Division at publicart@glendaleaz.com or call 623-930-3557.



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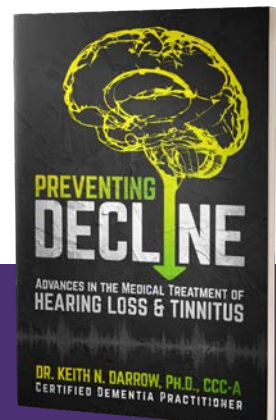
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FROM THE COVER

Ruling

• From page 1

The court found Calles submitted 319 valid signatures, above the 217 required to solidify his place on the ballot. Turner released a statement April 17 and pointed out Como ruled Calles falsely signed 17 of the 49 petition sheets he submitted and invalidated the signatures on all 17 pages.

"I had hoped to convince the judge to throw out all 49 pages because Calles had committed election fraud by knowingly submitting false documents to our city clerk, but once Mr. Calles' wife and attorney had both expressed that they felt Calles was simply ignorant, not fraudulent, I guess the judge went with that," Turner

stated.

Turner is the current Barrel District council member and decided not to seek a fourth term in November 2025.



Turner

In its statement, the Calles campaign reiterated its belief the challenge brought about by Turner, who it calls Calles' original opponent, was an attempt to shield Lisa Baker, his

actual opponent, from facing Calles in the election.

"We want to be explicit. We cannot corroborate these claims and are not presenting them as fact. That said, the optics here are concerning and, at minimum, give the appearance of a potential coordinated effort by Mr. Calles' opponent that raises legiti-

mate questions for the public," stated Darius Diggs, campaign manager for Calles.

Baker is also a first time candidate. She is a global real estate advisor for Russ Lyon Sotheby's International Realty and has worked as a Realtor for more than 20 years.



Baker

"The Calles campaign can make all the baseless claims it wants. It won't change the truth," Baker stated.

Turner stated he believes Calles, after being a police officer for more than 25 years, would know better than to put his signature to a false affirmation.

"The residents of Glendale want and deserve honesty from candidates for public office. Clearly they will

need to look elsewhere on their ballot to find it," Turner stated.

This is Calles' first campaign.

"I've spent my entire career serving my community with integrity as a police officer, as a neighbor, and as someone who genuinely cares about the people of the Barrel District. I'll be honest, this experience has been deeply disappointing. I never imagined that stepping up to serve in a new way would be met with this kind of political attack. I believed this process would be about ideas, about service, and about earning the trust of voters, not about trying to take someone off the ballot. It's disheartening, but it won't shake my commitment to fight for a better, more honest kind of leadership for our community," Calles stated.

Waste

• From page 12

Glendale entered into a contract with Waste Management in December 2022 to deliver materials to a facility in northwest Surprise.

"The city delivered 8,972 tons of recyclable material to the WM recycling facility in 2025 — those materials were diverted from the landfill and given a second life as new products through the recycling process," stated Clark Landrun, Waste Management's public sector solutions manager, in an email.

It allowed Glendale to get information about its contamination rates, Carr

said.

"They can audit the loads and tell us how much residue is in each load," Carr said. "It's kind of a three-pronged thing. That effects how much we pay them for processing. It also effects what our goal is as far as reducing contamination and how much of that material actually winds up in a landfill because of the contamination."

Previously, city employees were driving to several locations causing more fuel use and wear and tear on trucks to Phoenix's transfer station near Anthem. Glendale opened its own transfer station. Now all city trucks dump recycling loads there. The material is loaded into

one semi truck that takes material to the WM landfill. Carr said the change saves more than 1,000 miles a week. Waste Management invested \$25 million to upgrade optical sorters at the Northwest Regional Recycling Facility in Surprise, Landrun stated. Optical separators use image sensors, light waves and jets of air to separate paper or plastic. This technology improves efficiency and accuracy in sorting recyclable materials.

"Bagged material is the most pervasive contaminant — recyclables should be emptied loosely (not bagged) into the recycling cart. After bagged material, plastic bags/film, textiles (clothing), landscape debris, food and liquid are

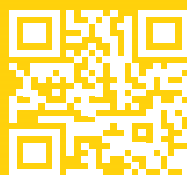
common contaminants," Landrun stated.

These items are also at the forefront of what retailers are shipping and what residents are putting in their recycling containers.

"I think the industry has adapted to the new style of waste stream. Everything is now being shipped to your home, so you're seeing cardboard bags because Amazon likes to send you things in plastic bags. We're seeing a lot more materials from home and the packaging is a little different — you know, clamshells and different things. So the industry is trying to adapt to that new material type," Carr said.

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Be a Civility Advocate!



Civility Checklist

How to engage in respectful, honest & civil dialogue about public issues

☐ **Take the high road.** Respond to the topic — not the person. Refrain from demonizing others for their opinions. Assume those you disagree with are, like you, genuinely interested in improving the community.

☐ **Be respectful.** Bullying, public humiliation, insults, name-calling, harassment, and threats directed at another person — or that person's race, gender, religion, ethnicity, etc. — have no place in civil discussions. Find ways to respectfully disagree without questioning someone's character or motives.

☐ **Be truthful.** Base your opinions/arguments on facts. Value honesty. Make only accurate statements when making your point and avoid exaggeration and stereotypes. When appropriate, cite your sources of information that others may question.

☐ **Don't misrepresent.** Always identify your opinions as opinions (not stating opinions as facts). Never misrepresent the views of others or falsely claim your opinions represent someone else. If quoting the words of others, identify and credit the source.

☐ **Listen & learn.** It's both polite and respectful to listen to those we disagree with (as well as those we support) and be genuine in our attempts to understand their point of view. Expand your mind by thoughtfully seeking out views that don't agree with your own.

☐ **Look for common ground.** When disagreeing with others, look for even small areas of agreement — which can be the gateway to working together for the greater good.

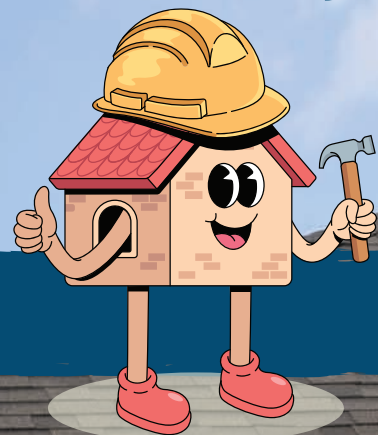
☐ **Respect privacy.** Keep private things private — whether it involves your own information or those with whom you disagree. Revealing private information about someone else is rude, unethical, potentially harmful and, in many cases, illegal.

☐ **Set a good example.** Practice civil behavior online as well as in public and in your interaction with others. Encourage others to practice these civil behaviors. And it's OK to challenge disrespectful behavior — but be courteous, respectful and helpful in your approach.



Now that you've read the checklist, take the Civility Pledge at yourvalley.net/civility-pledge.

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