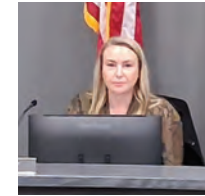




Business
New
telehealth
company; **16**

 TOWN OF PARADISE VALLEY
INDEPENDENT



Education
SUSD board
approves
budget; **18**

July 15, 2026 Volume 43 Issue 28

Your Nonpartisan Community Newspaper • YourValley.net

COMMUNITY NEWS

Coffee with a cop focuses on water safety

Police and safety experts remind residents how to prevent water-related tragedies

Allison Kotzbauer
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

Paradise Valley Police Department hosted a Coffee with a Cop event open to the public on July 1, where community members learned about water safety.

PVPD partnered with Phoenix Children's Hospital Foundation Injury Prevention Specialist Lexi Benner to educate residents on ways to reduce the risk of water-related injuries and drownings.

Paradise Valley Police Department Community Resource Officer Vasilije Sagovnovic said the presentation emphasized the importance of designating a distraction-free adult to supervise children around pools, installing pool fencing, using U.S. Coast Guard approved life jackets and knowing lifesaving measures

• See **Water Safety** on page 12

ACOPS reviews bicycle and e-bike safety concerns in Paradise Valley



Police chief, sergeant and councilmember weigh in

By Allison Kotzbauer
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

Sgt. Michael Unger presented an update on bicyclists in Paradise Valley at the Advisory Committee on Public Safety meeting June 22 following complaints about speeding, riding more than two abreast and other safety concerns.

Unger presented body camera footage from Cam-

elback Manor Drive, a 20-foot wide road where residents have frequently complained about cyclists.

The footage showed cyclists riding early in the morning no more than two abreast and traveling below the 25 mph speed limit.

"You wouldn't expect me to enforce traffic on a vehicle at 23 miles an hour. I'm not going to enforce speeding rules with a bicycle at 23 miles an hour," Unger said.

• See **E-Bikes** on page 12

Paradise Valley Advisory Committee on Public Safety members during a meeting on June 22. (Independent Newsmedia/Allison Kotzbauer)

Be Invisible



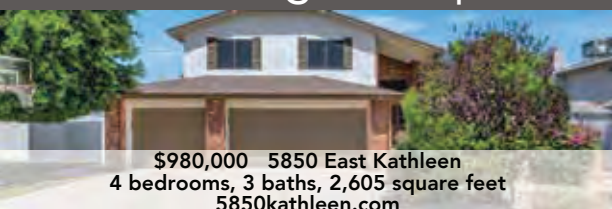
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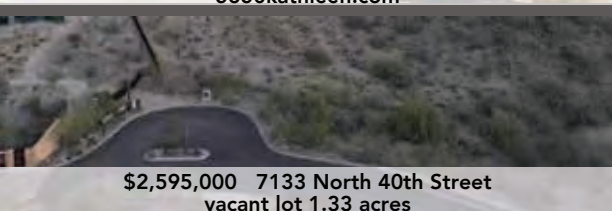
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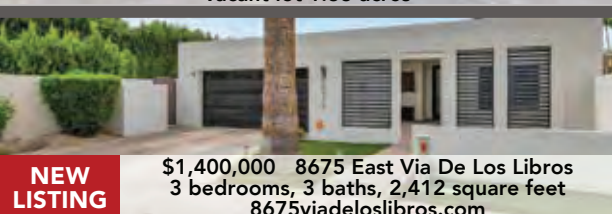
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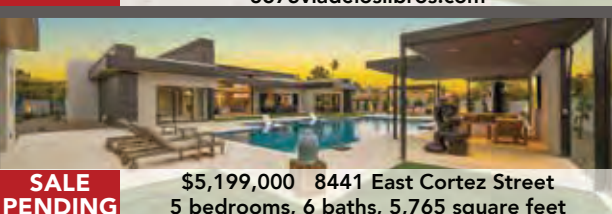


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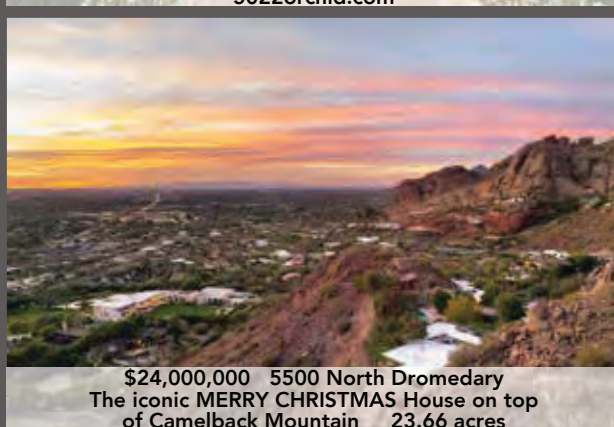
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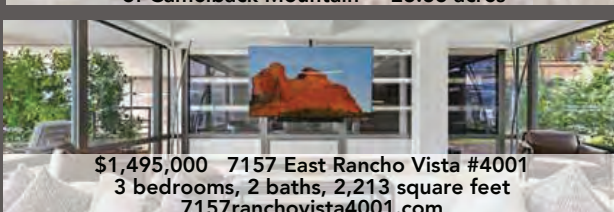
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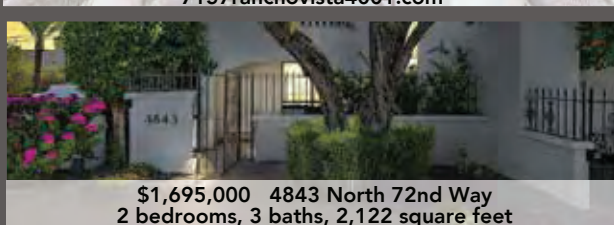
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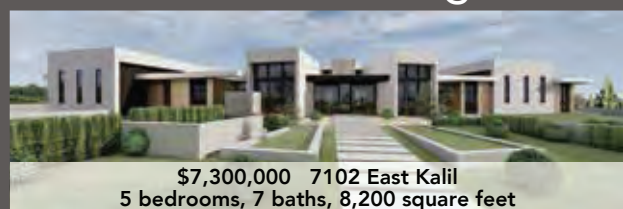
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Robert Joffe



Jonah Joffe



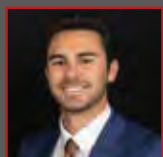
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WE THOUGHT THE NFL WAS THE OCEAN

I spent the summer watching the World Cup and got curious about the money behind it. What I found turned my whole sense of American sports upside down.

BY GREG HAGUE

I've been watching the World Cup this summer like a lot of you, and somewhere in the second week I stopped wondering who would win and started wondering who was getting paid. Call it the businessman in me. So I went and did the research on the business of soccer, fully expecting to confirm what most Americans believe, that soccer is a nice little game that never quite made it big over here. Boy, was I wrong.

What I thought I knew

Everything I walked in believing was true. The NFL is the most valuable sports league on the planet. The average NFL team is worth about \$7 billion. The average Major League Soccer club, around \$767 million. The Dallas Cowboys, all by themselves, are worth nearly \$13 billion, which is more than all 30 MLS clubs put together. The NFL's television deal pays out roughly \$12 billion a year. MLS sold its rights to Apple for \$250 million. One number tells the whole American attitude: a single NFL team collects more in shared national media money, north of \$430 million, than every MLS club splits from Apple combined.

So the NFL wins. That's exactly what I thought. Then I stepped back and noticed the water.

Then I saw the water

Here's the thing nobody had told me.

The NFL is the biggest fish I have ever seen. It just happens to swim in a pond. Soccer is the ocean.

The NFL, for all its billions, is played in one country. Soccer is played and paid for on every continent, in more than 200 countries, and it throws off somewhere between \$30 and \$60 billion a year once



you add up clubs, broadcasts, sponsorships, and tournaments. Real Madrid, a club most Americans couldn't find on a map, is worth about \$7.5 billion, right in the neighborhood of an average NFL franchise. The NFL isn't small. It's colossal. It's just colossal inside a pond it dug for itself.

The Comparison	The NFL	The World's Game
Countries played professionally	1	200+
Estimated annual revenue	About \$23 billion	\$30 to \$60 billion
Most valuable single club	Cowboys, about \$13 billion	Real Madrid, about \$7.5 billion
Professional clubs	32	Thousands

Two ways to get rich

What fascinates me is that the two got rich doing the exact opposite of each other. The NFL is the most quietly socialist operation in American

capitalism. Thirty-two billionaires agreed to share their TV money almost down the middle, cap their payrolls, and never, under any circumstances, add a new team. Scarcity plus sharing. No new lots on the street, so every lot keeps climbing. Soccer did the reverse. Wide-open markets, no salary cap, thousands of clubs, and inequality that would make your eyes water. One is a stocked pond. The other is the open sea.

What America actually built

Now watch what we did. When America finally got serious about its own soccer league, it didn't copy soccer.

It copied football. MLS controls expansion like a velvet rope and sells its media as one national package, the NFL's playbook borrowed wholesale for the world's game. And it's working. \$23 billion in value, climbing 6% a year. Miami signed one 39-year-old Argentine named Messi and nearly quadrupled the club's revenue in three seasons. One player.

The ocean comes to the pond

Which brings me back to my couch this summer. The most valuable event in all of sports isn't the Super Bowl. It's the World Cup. And this year the ocean came to the pond, played out in the very stadiums the NFL built. The turf Jerry Jones poured billions into spent the summer hosting the one show on earth worth more than his team.

I keep turning that over. We were certain soccer was the small game and football was the empire. We had the balance sheet right and the map wrong. The scoreboard tells you who won each match. The ledger told me something I was slower to hear. The game we never bothered to love is the richest one there is, and it never needed us to notice.

ON YOURVALLEY.NET

Abortions rise in Arizona, nationally after Supreme Court scrapped Roe v. Wade

About 17,600 pregnancies were terminated in Arizona last year, according to the Guttmacher Institute, which tracks reproductive health. That's up from 13,910 in 2023, the first full year after the Dobbs ruling.

The nationwide total is up more than 20% from before Dobbs came down, thanks in part to the spread of telehealth services in response to restrictions in many states.

Read online: <https://tinyurl.com/2eh54why>

Phoenix intersections account for Arizona's most dangerous roads

For many drivers in the Valley, sitting at a red light on 67th Avenue or navigating a busy intersection during rush hour is just another part of the daily commute.

But traffic data shows some of these familiar crossroads are among the most dangerous in Arizona.

Read online: <https://tinyurl.com/46nzde6f>

CDC urges people to prevent mosquito bites as West Nile virus season hits a strong, early start

Health officials are encouraging people to use bug spray and mosquito-control efforts as West Nile virus season is off to its earliest and worst start in over two decades.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said Wednesday that it had confirmed at least 48 cases — 38 of them severe — as of June 30.

Read online: <https://tinyurl.com/4ndaaeyz>

Fresh Start fundraiser set for September

Held at the Fairmont Scottsdale Princess, 7575 E. Princess Drive, the Sip & Soirée fundraiser will take place on Saturday, Sept. 12, at 11a.m., according to a press release

Presented by Phoenix Lending Group and hosted by Fresh Start's Auxiliary Board, Sip & Soirée brings the community together to uplift women on the path to economic independence and personal empowerment. Every dollar raised helps fund Fresh Start's comprehensive services that empower women to overcome barriers, build career paths and achieve long-term self-sufficiency for themselves and their children, the release continues.

The event kicks off with an interactive Sip and Shop marketplace featuring local vendors, activity stations, mocktails, and wine. After exploring the marketplace, guests will be treated to a seated luncheon with live entertainment, heartfelt stories, and a few fun surprises along the way.

This year's event highlights in-



The public is welcome to the Fresh Start Women's Foundation Sip and Soiree fundraiser Sept. 12. (Courtesy Fresh Start)

clude:

- Sip and Shop Marketplace – A curated selection of local businesses and interactive experiences, paired with refreshing wine and mocktails.

- Luncheon – Delicious lunch and live entertainment.

- Luxury Handbag and Super Raffle – Exclusive prizes including de-

signer bags and premium packages.

- Community Partner, Volunteer, and Fundraising Ambassador Celebrations – Recognition of dedicated supporters who champion Fresh Start's mission.

For more information, visit fresh-startwomen.org/events/fresh-start-sip-and-soiree.

SPORTS

Independent Newsmedia welcomes new sports reporter

Report for America partnership



Brittany Bowyer (Photo courtesy Brittany Bowyer)

Independent Newsmedia welcomes Brittany Bowyer to the team. Bowyer is joining as a corps member through a grant from Report for America and will cover high school sports in the Valley.

Report for America, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, helps train and support emerging journalists through its various grant programs. To learn more about Report for America, visit reportforamerica.com.

A Phoenix, Arizona, native with a passion for sports that runs deep, Bowyer has been covering high school sports across the state for the past 10 years with a focus on community impact, student-athlete stories and the evolving landscape of prep athletics.

Bowyer is a 2017 graduate of ASU's Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication with a master's degree in Sports Journalism. She also obtained her undergraduate degree at Arizona State University, majoring in

• See **Sports** on page 24



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SPORTS

WM Phoenix Open role in new PGA Tour format remains a mystery

By Addison Lenhart
CRONKITE NEWS

The role of the WM Phoenix Open in a newly announced PGA Tour restructuring remains a mystery.

The Tiger Woods-led Future Competition Committee unveiled a significant overhaul of the PGA Tour at the Travelers Championship in Cromwell, Connecticut, in late June. The tour will implement the new structure in 2028, which establishes a tiered system that includes promotion and relegation and two main player divisions: the PGA Tour Championship series and the PGA Tour Challenger Series.

Questions surrounding the Phoenix Open have come as a result of the unfinalized list of PGA tour events expected to be a part of the new championship series. Despite the uncertainty, the chairman of the 2027 tournament at TPC Scottsdale did not sound concerned.

"The WM Phoenix Open is far more than a golf tournament — it's one of Arizona's premier events and a powerful driver of economic impact, charitable giving, sustainability and community pride," Chris Camacho said. "The Thunderbirds have built something truly special alongside WM and the PGA Tour, and we remain confident in the tournament's continued success and long-term future."

The tour has finalized 10 of the 15 events that will make up the championship series. The remaining five sites will either be filled by existing PGA Tour events or host new tournaments in new markets. The markets under consideration are Boston, Denver, New York, Philadelphia, San Francisco, Seattle and Washington, D.C.

The PGA Tour plans to implement a season-long point system in each series.



Brooks Koepka hits out of the bunker on the 10th hole during the WM Phoenix Open on Feb. 5, 2026 at TPC Scottsdale. The PGA Tour announced a new plan for the 2028 season, and it could change the WM Phoenix Open's place in the golf rotation. (Cronkite News/Sydney Lovan)

The system will be used to determine who will be promoted, relegated and retained at the end of each season.

Players who finish top 20 in points of the challenger series will be eligible for promotion to the championship series. The change is meant to appeal to fans and media, providing more real-time and transparent player performance tracking.

"This work was bigger than any one player or person — it was about designing the strongest possible version of the PGA Tour for the future generations of fans and players," Tiger Woods, chairman of the Future Competition Committee, said in a press release. "From the beginning, the committee's focus was on delivering a better experience for our fans, while creating a model that best sets up the Tour, its players and its partners for long-term success and stability."

A new postseason format was also included in the plans. The tour will include match play for the first time.

"Match play is a format our fans have

been asking for, and I look forward to sharing more details about the postseason in my press conference at the Tour Championship in August," Rolapp said at the Travelers Championship. "There's great examples in the golf ecosystem for match play that's compelling and that works, not only for fans, but also, as I mentioned, that the players feel are compelling. Our focus was to make sure that the players felt it was authentic, and I think that's where most of the attention was."

The WM Phoenix Open has drawn golf and non-golf fans alike since 1932, with a more casual atmosphere that's helped appeal to the average sports fan. Its stop on the tour often coincides with the Super Bowl, and event leaders are confident it can withstand change.

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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.

We support Wastchak for Paradise Valley council

As residents of Paradise Valley for over 30 years, we have known Daran Wastchak and his family for 14 years. We have known him to be hard-working, reliable, extremely ethical and totally devoted to our community.

He seeks this office not for his own self-aggrandizement, but to make certain Paradise Valley continues to be the outstanding town we all know.

His six years of experience on the Paradise Valley Town Planning Commission (two as chairman) have acquainted him with the needs and issues facing our town. He also supervises the Paradise Valley Men's Breakfast Group where local issues are at the center of monthly discussions.

There are outside influences emanating from the State Legislature that would adversely affect Paradise Valley. Daran Wastchak would stand up to these issues and would not buckle in the face of political pressure. This is the type of individual we need on our town council. We totally support his candidacy and are proud to vote for him!

Christopher and Dianne Dean
PARADISE VALLEY

Proud to have Daran Wastchak represent me on town council

I have known Daran Wastchak for the past 15 years as my neighbor in Paradise Valley. I honestly cannot say enough good things about Daran as a candidate.

He is well informed and has a strong moral and ethical background. I have watched him raise his beautiful family with principles and values. Daran understands what makes Paradise Valley so special, and he cares very

much about the future of our amazing community.

My family and I have watched his dedication to Paradise Valley and to Arizona for over a decade and know he would be an excellent addition to our town council. Join me in voting for Daran Wastchak to represent all of us on the Paradise Valley Town Council.

Katie Herberger
PARADISE VALLEY

Looking back while planning for America's future

As America celebrates its 250th birthday, it's worth asking a simple question: What kind of nation do we hope it will be when it celebrates its 300th?

Every generation inherits a nation shaped by those who came before it. In turn, each generation has the responsibility to prepare those who will come next. The America we celebrate today exists because previous generations invested in developing citizens of character who were willing to lead, serve and contribute to something larger than themselves.

Every week, I have the privilege of watching young people learn to lead, solve problems together, serve their communities and accomplish things they didn't think they could do. Experiences like those remind me that leadership isn't something we're born with. It is developed through opportunity, encouragement and practice.

Every generation faces different challenges. Today's young people are growing up in a world that is

more connected, more complex and changing faster than ever before. But the qualities that define good citizens and good leaders haven't changed at all: integrity, resilience, courage, service and a commitment to improving the communities where they live.

Strong communities don't happen by accident. They are built one generation at a time. Every investment we make in a young person — in their character, their confidence, their leadership and their commitment to serving others — is ultimately an investment in the future of our communities and our country.

I have tremendous confidence in the next generation. What they need from us is the opportunity, encouragement and guidance to discover their path.

The future isn't determined only by elections, economic conditions or technological innovation. It is also shaped by whether we prepare young people to lead with character, integrity and a heart for service.

The future doesn't simply happen to us. It is shaped by the young people we choose to invest in today.

Andy Price is Scout executive of Scottsdale-based Scouting Arizona, Grand Canyon Council, which serves thousands of youths in the state. This opinion was edited for length and can be read in full online at <https://tinyurl.com/mv2vteus>.

Andy Price
SCOTTSDALE

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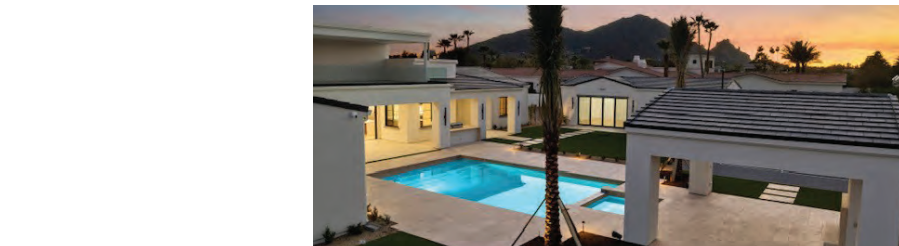
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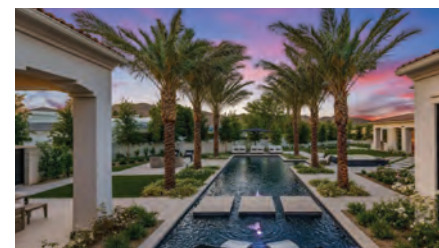
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FROM THE COVER

E-Bikes

• From page 1

The cyclists were cutting corners and swinging wide in some areas, but the body camera footage also showed vehicles doing the same thing, Unger said.

“Some of them were on the wrong side of the road, cutting the corners,” he said. “But also it’s important to realize that every vehicle that I saw go through there that morning was also cutting.”

He has previously spoken with cycling groups in Paradise Valley about the major complaints residents have raised, and they agreed to be more mindful of those concerns.

“They also asked that they don’t get targeted because some of the cyclists do try to abide by all the rules and laws,” he said.

Committee member Charlie Herf said he often sees bicyclists impeding traffic or maneuvering dangerously on residential streets.

Herf said he saw children riding e-bikes faster than legally allowed without driver’s licenses, doing wheelies and other stunts on Sunday, June 21.

Unger said children younger than 16 without a driver’s license cannot legally operate e-bikes that exceed certain speeds because they are legally considered motorcycles, allowing police to enforce those violations.

“We have stopped a couple of kids and we can actually 20 day (tow) their motorcycle,” he said.

Police Chief Freeman Carney said it can be difficult for officers to stop children riding motorcycles they are not legally old enough to operate because pursuits can become dangerous.

Officers have to decide when it is no longer safe to continue chasing because they do not want the riders to injure themselves, and many juveniles know officers will eventually stop pursuing them.

“One of the problems is if they take

off, we want to be careful if we chase them, which is our instinct, but they run a red light and get hit by a car and die that’s a major liability for the officer, for the town, but it’s not just about liability,” he said. “We just lost a life that’s unnecessary.”

Carney said one benefit of the department’s drone program is that a drone can safely follow a rider home, allowing officers to identify where they live rather than initiating a dangerous pursuit.

The Paradise Valley Police Department also has a cheat sheet officers use to determine what is required to legally operate different types of electric bikes based on the voltage displayed on the bike.

The department is also focusing on educating parents because they are the ones purchasing most of the bikes that are breaking laws, Unger said.

“We’re trying to deal with it the best way we can, which is enforcement by pulling them over, talking to parents,” he said. “The parents

are the ones buying them the motorcycles. So if we can outreach to the parents, that’s our best bet at stopping it.”

Councilmember Scott Moore said the issue will be discussed at a future town council meeting when they return to session in September.

Unger said that, based on what he has observed, most cyclists are following the law, but officers will continue monitoring and stopping those who are not.

Carney said the issue extends beyond Paradise Valley, as other East Valley police chiefs are experiencing similar problems.

He said they will continue discussing ways to address the issue within the law.

“It’s on our agenda to discuss as chiefs,” he said.

Allison Kotzbauer can be reached at akotzbauer@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

Water Safety

• From page 1

such as CPR.

“Arizona’s warm climate and the increased use of residential pools during the summer months, water safety education is especially important during this time” he said. “We were pleased to welcome that representative from Phoenix Children’s Hospital Foundation who’s really versatile regarding this topic and provided a really comprehensive presentation on drowning prevention, water safety awareness and practical measures for families.”

About 20 to 25 people attended the event, which Sagovnovic said is a strong turnout during the summer months.

“We had a great turnout,” he said.



Phoenix Children’s Hospital Foundation Injury Prevention Specialist Lexi Benner presents ways to reduce the risk of water related accidents and injuries at Coffee with a Cop on July 1, in Paradise Valley. (Photo submitted by Paradise Valley Police Department Community Resource Officer Vasilije Sagovnovic)

“It was well received, they enjoyed the information that was provided by Phoenix Children’s.”

Although Paradise Valley does not have mandated pool fencing requirements, installing pool barriers and self-latching gates can help protect

children, pets, older adults and anyone else who may not know how to swim, Sagovnovic said.

“You don’t know who can swim,” he said. “Having a gate in place will mitigate a lot of accidental things from happening...it provides a barrier

er between the child or pet or whoever it may be that doesn’t have that knowledge of swimming just to avoid any type of potentially fatal incident from occurring.”

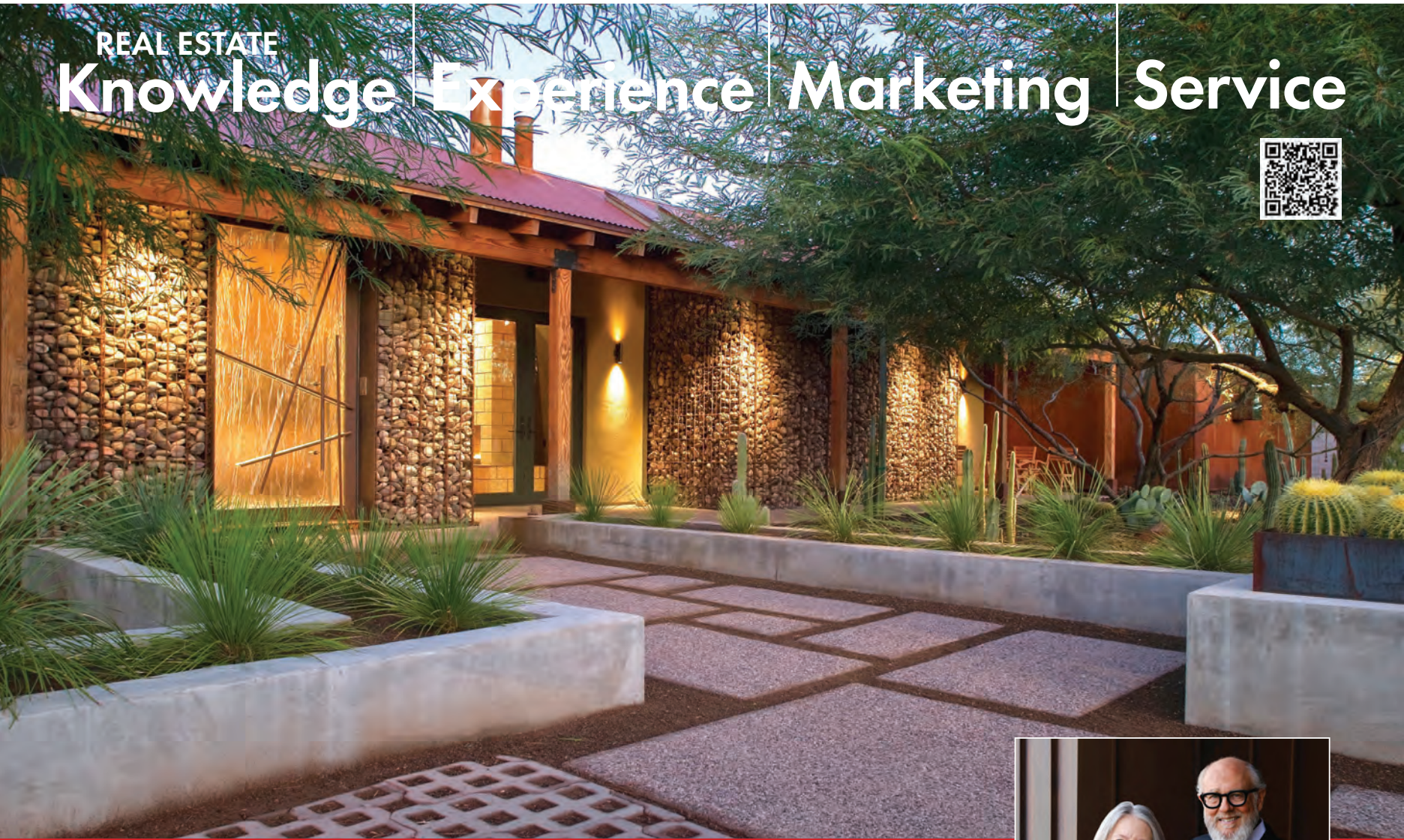
Benner also discussed the importance of using U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jackets and explained how they differ from arm floaties, which are often marketed to parents as safe alternatives, Sagovnovic said.

“A life jacket itself is meant to cover not just the arms of the minor or whoever is using it but also the whole torso so it will keep them afloat,” he said.

As a small municipality, Paradise Valley does not receive a significant number of water-related emergency calls, but it remains important to educate residents on water safety practices.

• See **Water Safety** on page 20

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Camelback Inn unveils new spa

A \$25 million renovation brings new wellness amenities

Allison Kotzbauer
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

After a year of construction and a \$25 million investment, the JW Marriott Scottsdale Camelback Inn Resort & Spa has reopened its newly renovated spa and wellness center with updated amenities.

The Spa at Camelback Inn aims to maintain the Southwestern atmosphere the resort has long been known for while updating to the best technology the wellness world has to offer, Terri Worthington, the resort's director of marketing, said.

The spa has long been a gathering place for locals and was deeply missed

during its closure, Worthington said.

During the time it was closed to guests who were not staying overnight, she said she was frequently asked when it would reopen.

"We've always enjoyed a wonderful relationship with the local community because we were one of the first spas here," Worthington said. "It wasn't unusual for a bunch of local people to say, 'well, I'm going to the spa this week', and they meant us."

The renovation marks the third update to the spa since it opened in 1989, but by far the most extensive, she explained.

The spa's 32,000 square-foot property has allowed the resort to continue adapting the space as wellness trends have evolved over the de-

• See **Camelback Inn** on page 26



The newly renovated spa at JW Marriott Camelback Inn in Paradise Valley, Ariz. (Submitted by JW Marriott Scottsdale Camelback Inn Resort & Spa)

HEALTH

Riovie launches in Scottsdale area



Nicola Lewis launches holistic telehealth business after her own health scare. (Photo submitted by Nicola Lewis)

Founder Nicola Lewis says personal health crisis inspired a more comprehensive approach to telehealth.

By Allison Kotzbauer
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

A new Valley-based telehealth company is entering the growing virtual healthcare market with a model that combines online medical care with nutrition, education and lifestyle resources.

Riovie, which launches in July 2026, will offer access to licensed providers for weight management, hormone optimization, gut health, metabolic peptide programs and laboratory testing.

The Scottsdale-area company was founded by entrepreneur and Cer-

tified Functional Nutrition Coach Nicola Lewis after a personal health crisis prompted her to rethink how patients access and understand healthcare.

Lewis said the turning point came after a severe viral illness, believed to have been COVID-19, left her with significant vision loss and weeks of uncertainty.

"I was terrified," Lewis said. "I didn't know why it had happened, whether my vision would return, or what life was going to look like."

Becoming the patient instead of the coach changed her perspective on what people experience while navigating the healthcare system, Lewis said.

"I remember thinking, 'If this feels overwhelming for me, how much harder must it be for someone who

doesn't have this background?'" she said.

That experience led Lewis to believe patients need more than access to healthcare, they also need help understanding it.

"Patients don't just need access to healthcare," Lewis said. "They need someone to help them understand it. To me, education isn't separate from healthcare. It's part of good healthcare."

As she recovered, she wanted to build a model that looked beyond treating individual symptoms and instead focused on the whole person, Lewis said.

"I wanted someone to help me make sense of the whole picture, not just one appointment or one treat-

• See **Riovie** on page 26

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SUSD Board approves \$398 million budget for school year 2026-27

By J. Graber

INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

The Scottsdale Unified School District Governing board unanimously approved during its June 23 meeting an approximately \$398 million budget for school year 2026-27.

According to district CFO Shannon Crosier, the budget includes a reduction of \$2.7 million from the 2025-2026 school year budget due to a predicted reduction in enrollment next year, which lowers state funding, and a continued reduction in budget carry forward.

The district is also moving positions and expenses previously paid from cash accounts back to the Maintenance and Operations fund. In order to address a shortfall in funding this year, the budget includes moving \$9.6 million from the capital account to Maintenance and Operations, an increase of \$5.4 million from the prior year, as well as closing Pima Elementary and Echo Canyon K-8 Schools which save approximately \$1 million each.

All school districts across the state will receive approximately \$5,216



Roughly \$77.2 million of Scottsdale Unified School District's budget for school year 2026-27 will go toward salaries for teachers and other certified staff. Overall, the budget was approved by the governing board at \$398 million. (J. Graber/Independent Newsmedia)

per student from the state for Maintenance and Operations.

Other reasons for the need to push money from cash accounts into the Maintenance and Operation account is a 2% across the board raise for district employees and transferring some positions from cash accounts side of the ledger to the Maintenance and Operations account, according to Crosier.

The \$9.6 is a significant increase over last years push of approximately \$4.2 million from capital accounts to Maintenance and Operation.

That transfer amount from one-time cash accounts to Maintenance and Operations should go down in future years as phase II of school closing and repurposing program picks up again in the 2027-28 school, Crosier said. .

“The additional transfer there and making that higher, we know that right now, unless some things change and we bring down our spending with capital (accounts), we know that’s not sustainable,” Crosier said. “That being said, we know we are moving forward to more multi-year approach to addressing schools and declining enrollment and full and thriving schools, so part of this is anticipated to be addressed with phase II and whatever happens with, I don’t know if phase III is the right word.”

The Maintenance and Operations account is where the funding for the district’s day to day operations comes from.

It makes up just over 48% of the budget, or roughly \$199.9 million.

To break that down even further, just more than \$126 million goes to salaries, of which \$77.2 million goes to teachers and other certified employees.

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ENTERTAINMENT

Polo Party comes to WestWorld of Scottsdale

Bentley Scottsdale Polo Championships are back with new activities and a 15th anniversary to celebrate.

International polo rivalries, a new Arizona wine tasting event, new rugby and sports bar elements, Burning Man-style nightlife, a Nashville-infused “Cow-

girl Couture” fashion show and a full day of luxury experiences will converge on the polo field at WestWorld of Scottsdale, 16601 N. Pima Road, this fall.

On Saturday, Nov. 7, the nation’s most-attended polo event will deliver its biggest and most entertainment-packed edition

yet, with three polo matches, two fashion shows, luxury lounges, an on-site sports bar where guests can catch college football and an array of new experiences set to draw one of its biggest crowds to date.

Tickets start at \$45 and are on sale now at ThePoloParty.com.



The Bentley Scottsdale Polo Championships returns for its 15th Anniversary at WestWorld of Arizona Nov. 7. (Courtesy Bentley Scottsdale Polo)

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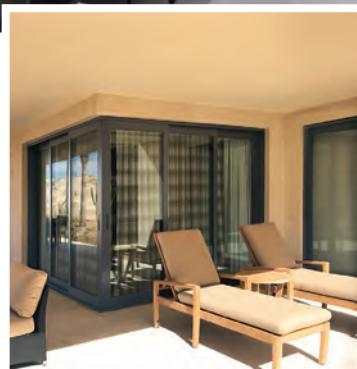
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Two Pups Wellness Fund reaches across state lines

Two Pups Wellness Fund is introducing its lifesaving "Project Get Out" program beyond state lines.

The Scottsdale-based nonprofit is working with Riverside County Department of Animal Services to establish a pilot program for Project Get Out in Southern California, made possible through a grant from the Jason Heigl Foundation, according to a press release.

The pilot begins in June to help dogs that have been in Riverside County Department of Animal Services' care for 21 days or longer and transfer them to a dedicated rescue partner.

Two Pups Wellness Fund introduced Project Get Out in Maricopa County in 2023 to directly address overcrowding in shelters and help move long-stay dogs into rescue placements. The program grants financial assistance directly to vetted rescue organizations taking dogs from the shelters to provide needed care and find them permanent homes. Two Pups



Buckaroo was the first dog to benefit from the Scottsdale-based Two Pups Wellness Fund expanding its help into Riverside County, California. (Courtesy Riverside County Department of Animal Services)

Wellness Fund currently works with animal rescues throughout Arizona.

The expansion into Riverside County marks the first time the proven program will operate outside of the state, bringing the initiative to one of the nation's largest shelter systems.

For more information, or to donate, visit twopups.org.

Water Safety

• From page 12

tices to help keep those numbers low, Sagovnovic said.

"It is a problem everywhere across the Valley," he said. "We have responded to those type of incidents in the past but it wasn't..anything excessive."

Coffee with a Cop is held on the first Wednesday of every month, with each meeting focusing on a different topic affecting the Paradise Valley community, Sagovnovic said.

"It provides an informal setting where residents can meet their local officers; they have the opportunity to not just learn about these essential topics we try to provide them with but also for the opportunity to ask

questions, discuss community concerns (and) strengthen relationships with the police department."

The Coffee with a Cop events are an important part of the department's relationship with the community, Sagovnovic said.

"These conversations foster trust, encourage collaboration and reinforce our commitment to community with our policing," he said. "Programs like Coffee with a Cop allow us to connect residents with subject matter experts and provide valuable information to help aid safety throughout our community."

Allison Kotzbauer can be reached at akotzbauer@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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Nike exhibition coming to Phoenix Art Museum in 2027

By Mark Carlisle
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

An exhibition about the history of athletic apparel brand Nike is coming to the Phoenix Arts Museum next year.

Jeremy Mikolajczak, the museum's director and CEO, announced the exhibition in a presentation to the Phoenix Economic Development and Arts Subcommittee in April, calling it "probably the biggest announcement coming forward" for the museum.

"Nike: Form Follows Motion" will run April 14, 2027 - Sept. 26, 2027, at the Phoenix Art Museum, 1625 N. Central Ave.

The exhibition was developed by the Vitra Design Museum in Weil am

Rhein, Germany. Phoenix will be the fourth city on the globe to see the exhibition. After being displayed at that museum, the exhibition just finished a run in Madrid and will next be on display in New York before coming to Phoenix next year.

Glenn Adamson, curator of the exhibition and curator-at-large for the Vitra Design Museum said in a video posted by the museum that the exhibition's name refers to both Nike's scientific design of their shoes and their broader cultural impact.

"They are about speed, and so always thinking about the body and motion, body mechanics... However, it also has a double meaning because we're interested in the way sport and design accelerate culture at large," Adamson said in the video.

The exhibition looks at the ways Nike has historically engaged with issues of gender, ethnicity and technology.

"We're really telling a very big story about this very big company," Adamson said in the video.

Mikolajczak indicated the Phoenix Art Museum would be looking to partner with local athletes and ownership of local teams for the exhibition, "really merging and really thinking about how we expand the rich cultural community that we have," Mikolajczak said.

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"Nike: Form Follows Motion" will run April 14, 2027 - Sept. 26, 2027, at the Phoenix Art Museum. (Courtesy Vitra Design Museum)

LIVE MUSIC

Darius Rucker bringing summer tour to Valley



Darius Rucker performs. (Photo by Christie Goodwin, provided by Live Nation)

Old Crow Medicine Show, Austin Williams join Arizona Financial Theatre stop

Three-time Grammy winner Darius Rucker hits the road this summer and is heading for Phoenix.

His 20-city Songs of Summer Tour will make a stop downtown at Arizona Financial Theatre on July 23. Old Crow Medicine Show and Austin Williams will join him.

"For me, it's not summer if we're not playing music outdoors," Rucker shared in a press release. "When I think of the concerts I love attending, it's the people, the hits and the hot summer air... there's nothing that compares."

Tickets go on sale starting at 10 a.m. Friday, March 6 at DariusRucker.com. The Songs of Summer Tour will also offer different VIP packages.

Rucker also recently announced a one-

night-only Big Band Gala at Charleston's Gaillard Center on April 7. The performance offers fans a rare opportunity to experience Rucker in an elevated, intimate concert setting backed by Robert Lewis and the Charleston Jazz Orchestra, conducted by Peter Graves.

Rucker first achieved multi-platinum status as lead singer and rhythm guitarist of the Grammy-winning Hootie & the Blowfish, who have sold more than 25 million albums worldwide including their Double Diamond-certified debut "Cracked Rear View," which remains among the top 10 best-selling studio albums of all time.

Since releasing his first country album in 2008, Rucker has earned a whole new legion of fans with four No. 1 albums on the Billboard Country chart plus 10 No. 1 singles at country radio and 11 gold, platinum or multi-platinum certified hits.

Rucker was inducted as a Grand Ole Opry member in 2012.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Homeless count numbers hold steady in Paradise Valley, across Maricopa County

Point-in-Time from Maricopa Association of Governments

The Maricopa County Association of Governments on May 18 released the results of the 2026 Point-in-Time Homelessness Count, which were nearly unchanged year over year.

In Paradise Valley, the unsheltered count from 2023 was two individuals. In 2024, 2025 and now in 2026, the number held steady at zero.

A similar trend has been seen across Maricopa County.

“Flat numbers in a growing region are themselves a meaningful sign,” a MAG release stated. “As the Maricopa region’s population continues to climb, holding the overall count steady and reducing the unsheltered population demonstrates important progress.”

The changes from 2025 to 2026 showed the total PIT count was down less than 1 percent, the unshel-

tered count dipped 12 percent, and the sheltered count rose 14 percent.

“The most encouraging part of this year’s count is that more people are sheltered,” Tim Burch, co-chair of the Maricopa Regional Continuum of Care and Tempe’s director of community health and human services.

“When someone is in shelter, they’re connected to services and case management, and that’s how people move out of homelessness. That’s the direction we want to keep moving.”

The PIT is an annual street and shelter count that determines the number of people experiencing homelessness in Maricopa County at a given point in time. The count is part of a national effort to identify the extent of homelessness throughout the country.

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Sports

• From page 4

communication with a minor in media analysis.

She said she’s enthusiastic about producing accurate yet engaging reporting to both inform and connect readers. Her work emphasizes thoughtful storytelling, accountability and people at the heart of every story.

In her spare time, Bowyer said she enjoys volunteering at Maricopa County Animal Care and Control, helping to care for the dogs by providing critical enrichment and time

outside of their kennels.

Bowyer’s hobbies include watching collegiate athletics and participating in 5Ks. She hopes to pick up her gloves and get back in the gym to practice Muay Thai once again. Participating in adult gymnastics classes is also on her bucket list.

In the meantime, you can look for her sports reporting across a variety of Independent Newsmedia communities online at yourvalley.net and in print.

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We seek the truth because it's so important that we, the people, know our rights and obligations to make our communities a better to place live, work and play. We won't give up on the notion that we, as nonpartisan, independent journalists, must be vigilant community watchdogs for our readers.

We are storytellers for all generations. We don't shy away from recalling unjust practices affecting the underprivileged, but we'll also highlight the fortunate and the good in our neighborhoods. All stories should be shared with each other.

We stay in a profession that is often criticized, but we remain hopeful because we believe knowledge promotes a stronger democracy.

I am grateful that the First Amendment remains today.

James Madison had the foresight to craft the Bill of Rights, keeping the people our Founding Fathers fought for in mind for generations.

We work for a news organization founded on principles to support independent thinkers. I am thankful for our first CEO, Joe Smyth, for creating a journalistic trust that keeps the First Amendment in mind.

I'm excited for the future when I hear new journalist Zev Black get pumped for a story in Sun City, or read an in-depth development or City Council piece written by James Goldmeer, Allison Kotzbauer or Andrew Lwowski.

It's humbling to see INI long-timers Jeremy Carr, Richard Dyer, Richard Smith or Steve Stockmar, to name a few, continue our love for celebrating and connecting our communities year after year with political, business and neighborly news. We welcome Brittany Bowyer to our Central and North Valley teams to cover high school sports thanks to a grant from Report for America.

Journalism continues to shrink in America, but there are community changemakers, like yourselves, keeping us viable even today among all the noise of the internet.

We are thankful for our Arizona readers for supporting Independent Newsmedia since 1970.

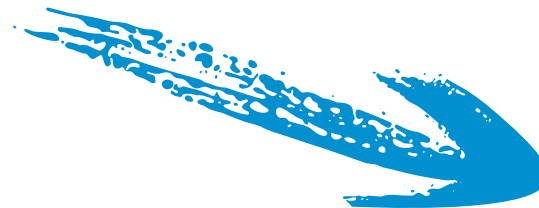
We promise to continue to strive to protect the First Amendment through our story coverage.

We appreciate your voluntary pay donations. Voluntary donations mean the world to us.



Charlene Bisson
President & CEO
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Camelback Inn

• From page 16

cares, she said.

“We just blew out the interior and reorganized the space and created some very special spaces that we didn’t have before that are more cutting-edge,” Worthington said. “This time we really gutted it.”

Guests now begin their spa experience before entering the building. A landscaped entrance lined with morning and afternoon incense welcomes visitors before they step inside.

The lobby features a boutique, a wellness studio for small fitness and wellness classes, calming music and an open design inspired by the natural colors of the Sonoran Desert.

The spa now includes 20 newly constructed treatment rooms, immersive hydrotherapy experiences, infrared Cleopatra chairs, a signature Wellness Circuit with hot steam, cold mist and a dry sauna, mind sync chairs to further relax after treatments and multiple indoor and outdoor relaxation spaces designed for guests to enjoy throughout the day.

“That’s really what the spa at Camelback Inn has always been known

for; you don’t just go for a treatment and leave,” said Tatum Luoma, public relations representative for JW Marriott Scottsdale Camelback Inn Resort & Spa. “You go and spend the entire day with all of this built in as part of that experience.”

The redesign blends the resort’s longstanding Southwestern identity with modern wellness amenities guests have come to expect, Worthington said.

“We’re so fortunate to have had this location the whole time, which is what everybody loves,” Worthington said.

Worthington said the spa has become a tradition for many Paradise Valley families over the years and the Camelback Inn is happy to welcome the new generation.

Young women who first visited with their mothers as children now return to celebrate birthdays, mothers day and other special occasions, Worthington said.

“It’s been a legacy in the community,” she said.

Allison Kotzbauer can be reached at akotzbauer@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

Riovie

• From page 16

ment,” Lewis said. “That’s the experience I wanted to create through Riovie.”

The company’s philosophy is based on the idea that health is shaped by multiple interconnected factors rather than a single treatment or medication.

“When we understand that everything is connected, we stop chasing quick fixes and start building a stronger foundation for lasting health,” Lewis said.

Riovie integrates educational resources alongside its medical programs to help patients better understand their health and treatment options.

“We don’t want their journey to end with a prescription or a treatment plan,” Lewis said. “We surround every program with practical education because we want people to understand why they’re doing what they’re doing.”

Allison Kotzbauer can be reached at akotzbauer@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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AVG SALE PRICE

(+17.6% from last year)

\$974.88

AVG SALE PRICE/SQFT

(+9.7% from last year)

\$4,625,000

MEDIAN SALE PRICE

(+12.8% from last year)

172

SOLD HOMES

(same as last year)

100

DAYS ON MARKET

(-7.4% from last year)