



Congress

Candidates want to fill open seat; **3**



CHANDLER INDEPENDENT



Sports

Parents set up a new league; **6**

July 2026 Volume 4 Issue 12

Your Nonpartisan Community Newspaper • YourValley.net

Chandler district's slimmer budget OK'd

By Jason W. Brooks
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

Chandler Unified's Governing Board didn't need much time to discuss its overall 2026-27 school year overall budget at its June 24 meeting.

That's partly because its chief financial officer had just presented a great deal of information — and partly because there isn't that much to discuss when going through state-mandated procedures on a deadline.

The board unanimously approved its slimmer \$393.9 million budget for publication at the meeting, which was its last before the state's June 30 deadline for budget approvals.

Unlike last year, when the Arizona legislature went to the end of June without approving a state budget and the many school finance formulas and dollar amounts that go with it, Arizona Gov. Katie Hobbs signed the state's fiscal 2027 budget

• See **Budget** on page 9



Chandler's ribbon-cutting the first of many planned housing moves

By Jason W. Brooks
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

Chandler's City Council provided direction to two managers on two topics during a June 11 work session.

Council told staff what it wants to see happen with

"Site 2," as well as on the "Missing Middle" project that helps create more townhomes, condominiums or other housing that isn't either single-family houses or apartments.

City Manager John Pombier praised Chandler Development senior manager Amy Jacobson for her hard work over the past few years in helping make The Villas on McQueen happen.

• See **Housing** on page 12

The city of Chandler celebrated its first newly constructed public housing in 54 years June 9 with a ribbon-cutting for the 157-unit Villas on McQueen apartments, but there is much more slated in the years ahead in city's housing plans. From the left are Deputy City Manager Leah Powell, Chandler City Council member Jane Poston, Stonehenge Managing Director Steven LeBlanc, Vice Mayor Angel Encinas, Mayor Kevin Hartke (scissors in hand), Chandler City Council member Christine Ellis, Maricopa County District 1 Supervisor and former Chandler City Council member Mark Stewart, state Rep. Stacey Travers, Gorman & Co. CEO Brian Swanton, Chandler Development senior manager Amy Jacobson, Sally Schwenn of Gorman & Co., Teresa Gutierrez Rubio of Capital One and Arizona Department of Housing Director Ruby Dhillon-Williams. (Independent News-media/Jason W. Brooks)

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**YOUR GATE NEED
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LOCAL FAMILY OWNED & OPERATED

PAGE 7

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Elizabeth Lee takes questions after the June 3 Clean Elections debate for the Democratic primary candidates for U.S. House District 5. Three candidates are hoping to win the July 21 primary and face either Daniel Keenan or Mark Lamb in the general election in what's currently Rep. Andy Biggs' district. (Jason W. Brooks/Independent Newsmedia)

CD5 Dems all say they can beat GOP in race for Biggs' seat

Three Democratic Congressional hopefuls hoping to face the GOP's Daniel Keenan or Mark Lamb in November for the seat being vacated by Andy Biggs as he runs for governor found so much to agree on in a June 3 debate, one candidate turned toward another's finance reporting.

Brian Hualde, Chris James and Elizabeth Lee made their cases June 3 in Arizona Clean Elections' Congressional District 5 Democratic primary debate as to why they should be the ones to try to flip a House district that's gone to Republicans for the past 15 years.

The three candidates' views on major issues all matched each other and the Democratic Party's larger aims.

About the only time during the 1-hour debate where things got heated was

when James brought up what he described as a campaign finance reporting delay by Lee.

Read more at tinyurl.com/yne7p9x7

Council approves \$1.86B budget, property tax rate drops again

The Chandler City Council is approved a \$1.869 billion fiscal 2027 budget for the year that starts July 1, at various recent meetings, along with dropping its primary property tax rate for the 10th consecutive year.

Budget Director Matt Dunbar said the budget is about \$719,000 greater than the draft budget presented May 1. He also said with the late direction from mayor and council to go with the property tax drop, as opposed to the initial idea of leaving it flat, that gives the city about \$253,000 less to spend in the year ahead.

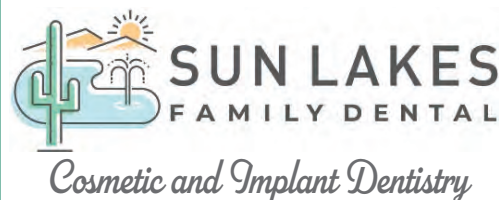
Read more at tinyurl.com/47vczx2

Romance Lover's Book Club: American Historical

Join a group that will celebrate America's 250th birthday by hosting a discussion on American historical romance texts.

Come to discuss any romance book involving any historical American era: colonial, the Wild West, Victorian or Civil War or Revolutionary wars, just to name a few examples.

This free discussion takes place from 5 p.m. to 6 p.m., Tuesday, July 21 at the Hamilton Library, 3700 S. Arizona Ave., south Chandler.



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West Chandler gets 180K-square-foot 'ten56' industrial building

INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

The city of Chandler has announced a new project known as Ten56. It's a 180,000-square-foot speculative industrial building on a currently vacant corner in west Chandler.

Developed by STAG Industrial and Becknell Industrial, the building will be located less than a mile from the I-10-Loop 202 interchange at the southwest corner of 56th Street and Chandler Boulevard.

Construction is anticipated to start after the project gets through the city's development plan review process, with delivery to tenants targeted for August 2027.

Ten56 will help meet demand for quality industrial products in west Chandler, the city stated in a news release. Industrial vacancy in the area is only 6.2% according to CoStar, the city states — well below the Phoenix



The city of Chandler has announced a new project known as Ten56. It's a 180,000-square-foot speculative industrial building on the currently vacant southwest corner of 56th Street and Chandler Boulevard. (Rendering courtesy of city of Chandler)

metro average of 11.4%.

There are advanced manufacturing, logistics, and semiconductor employers in the vicinity.

The development is designed to accommodate a wide range of indus-

trial users, the city states. The building will be delivered as shell space with an open layout and divisibility options to allow for multiple tenants.

"Successful economic development is about more than locating a

company in a building," said Micah Miranda, economic development director for Chandler, stated in the news release. "It's about creating an environment where capital partners and development teams can make investments with confidence."

STAG Industrial is a real estate investment trust focused on the acquisition, development, ownership and operation of industrial properties nationwide. As of March 31, the company states, its portfolio consists of 601 buildings in 41 states with about 120.3 million rentable square feet.

Becknell Industrial is a national purpose-built industrial real estate development, design, construction and long-term asset management firm, headquartered in suburban Chicago. Becknell has acquired or developed over 250 industrial buildings, occupying in excess of 41 million square feet.

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Azobits@iniusa.org

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Staff

Richard Dyer
Managing Editor
Tom Blodgett, Jason
Brooks

Newsroom
Patrick O'Grady
Editor-in-Chief
Michelle Gavagan, Lori
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FAITH

Bulk rescued produce at Holy Trinity

Borderlands is a program that allows people to receive as much as 70 pounds of rescued produce for only \$17.

The next distribution is set to begin at 6 a.m., Saturday, July 18, via drive-up /-take-away or DoorDash only. The site will be at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, 739 W. Erie St., Chandler — one of the many Borderlands host locations throughout Arizona.

Follow on-site signs for the drive-through process.

Volunteers are welcome if they can arrive by 4 a.m. to help sort and package. Volunteers who serve four hours or more take home 70 pounds of produce.

Learn more and register online at tinyurl.com/4kweut4m or at borderlandsproducerescue.org

Potluck family dinner July 29

Join the Full Life Church for a potluck family dinner, along with meaningful conversation, laughter and fun.

Bring a favorite dish to share and the church will take care of the drinks and desserts.

Whether it's a family recipe, a store-bought favorite or a "famous" casserole, every dish helps make the meal special

Register online for this 6:30 p.m., Wednesday, July 29 event at tinyurl.com/x7zem9n

Full Life Church is located at 532 W. Ray Road, north Chandler.

'Christmas in July' cookie decorating

First Baptist Church of Chandler's Women's Ministry is hosting its "Christmas in July" event from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m., Saturday, July 18 in B Main at the church, 3405 S. Arizona Ave., south Chandler.

The cost is \$15 for this professional cookie decorating class. Leave with fully decorated Christmas cookies and the skills to reproduce them for the holidays.

Sign up at the table in the lobby, on the FBC app or at this link: tinyurl.com/5d5zdsed

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INDEPENDENT NEWS MEDIA

Chandler parents organize kickball league



Warner Kellogg kicks as his father and coach, Dan Kellogg, looks on. A group of Chandler-area parents, led by Scott Smith, started Backyard Kickball, a league meant to be competitive but fun. (Courtesy of Mallory Kellogg Photography)

INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

A Chandler parent decided to not only to have his son play a lesser-known competitive out-of-school sport this spring, he decided to do more.

He decided to help start a whole new league.

Scott Smith is the CEO of Backyard Kickball. That's a new nonprofit kickball league for children in Chandler and the surrounding areas.

Smith told the Chandler Independent that he and a few parents formed the nonprofit.

"We were tired of the intense culture of youth sports, where performance overrides play, club fees break the bank, and burnout hits before high school," Smith said. "We wanted an alternative option for kids in our community to be kids again and just have fun."

Backyard Kickball's first season launched in the early spring, playing games on Saturday mornings at Tumbleweed Park in south Chandler before wrapping up the initial campaign the weekend of May 16.

Smith said it was his 8-year-old son's mention of kickball that pushed them both toward the sport, sometimes called soccer baseball and having some elements in common with dodgeball.

"My son had to try out for a youth baseball team and did not make the roster," Smith said. "I asked him what sport he wanted to try next. He immediately said he wished there were a kids kickball league because he and his friends play it every day at recess — and love it."

Smith said around the same time,

• See **Kickball** on page 15



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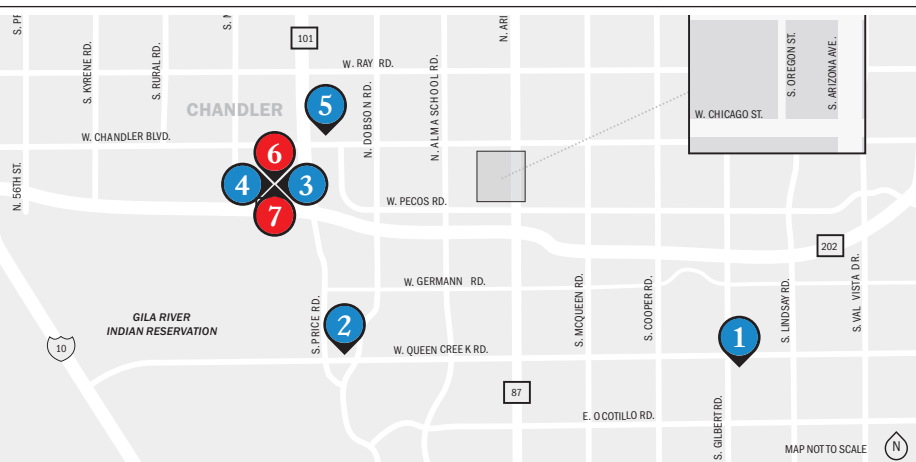


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BUSINESS MOVES



Compiled by Jason Brooks

NOW OPEN

1 Angry Crab Shack opened its 18th Valley location June 11 with first-day celebrations at its first Chandler store, 3033 S. Gilbert Road, at Queen Creek Road. The brand is Arizona-grown, with the first store opened in Mesa in 2013. Angry Crab Shack's seafood boil concept is considered casual dining, known for seafood boils, Asian-Cajun fusion flavors, shrimp, crab, lobster, and crawfish, with a variety of seasonings and classic accompaniments. Learn more at angrycrabshack.com or follow @AngryCrabShack on social media.

2 Lucca Coastal Kitchen & The Living Room held a ribbon-cutting in late May for its location along Queen Creek Road, at Ellis Street, between Price and Dobson Roads in south Chandler. The "Living Room" menu at the upscale restaurant offers salads, appetizers and pies. The "Coastal Kitchen" menu offers the same, plus seafood and pasta entrees and a list of wines served by the glass, bottle or in flights. Call 480-855-2848 or visit luccachandler.com to learn more.

3 Sip Fresh was part of a multi-business Chandler Fashion

Center grand-opening event June 13. The chain offers fruit bowls, juice and smoothies. The chain's ninth overall store is located on the lower level of the Fashion Center, just outside of Macy's. The mall is located at 3111 W. Chandler Blvd. Learn more at sipfreshjuice.com.

4 Swarovski was part of a multi-business Chandler Fashion Center grand-opening event June 13. The store is located on the lower level, near the Scheels sporting goods entrance. Swarovski sells jewelry, watches, accessories, decorations, gifts and Swarovski-created diamonds. The mall is located at 3111 W. Chandler Blvd. Hours are 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Mondays through Saturdays, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Sundays. Learn more at swarovski.com.

5 Brooker's Founding Flavors is a Utah-based ice cream chain themed around American Revolution-era history and premium fresh ingredients. The chain finally opened its long-awaited Chandler Festival location in June — the chain's first store in Arizona. The "drinking chocolate" menu includes one item named after each of the original 13 colonies. The ice cream menu for the Chandler

location includes many combinations; "Aaron Burr's Murderous Scoop" of Black Madagascar vanilla ice cream. There's also "Ben Franklin's Black Raspberry Republic, If You Can Keep It" and "Patrick Henry's Give Me Chocolate or Give Me Death." Hours are 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. Mondays through Saturdays; 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Sundays. The store is at 2560 W. Chandler Blvd., No. 3, west Chandler, in the same parking lot as Ross and T.J. Maxx. Learn more at brookersicecream.com.

COMING SOON

6 Wagyu House is a steakhouse coming to Chandler Fashion Center in the fall of 2027, with five locations already running in the U.S. The steakhouse specializes in all-you-can-eat yakiniku, a dish that involves small pieces of meat grilled over a charcoal fire and served with a dipping sauce.

7 Seafood City plans to hire more than 100 people for its Filipino supermarket and restaurants, set to open in mid- to late July, in part of the former Sears' space in the Chandler Fashion Center mall. Seafood City is hosting daily on-site interviews with interested applicants ages 18 and older. Applications can be completed in person at a mall hiring booth that's open daily, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday through Saturday, and 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Sunday, or online at seafood-city.com/careers. Hiring is being done for its grill market and its bakery, noodle-and-hotpot space and a new crab market concept. Many positions remain open across administration, seafood, meat, produce, front end, grocery and more. Chandler Fashion Center is located northwest of the Loop 202 / 101 interchange at 3111 W. Chandler Blvd.



ANGRY CRAB SHACK



LUCCA COASTAL KITCHEN



SWAROVSKI



WAGYU HOUSE



SEAFOOD CITY

FROM THE COVER

Budget

• From page 1

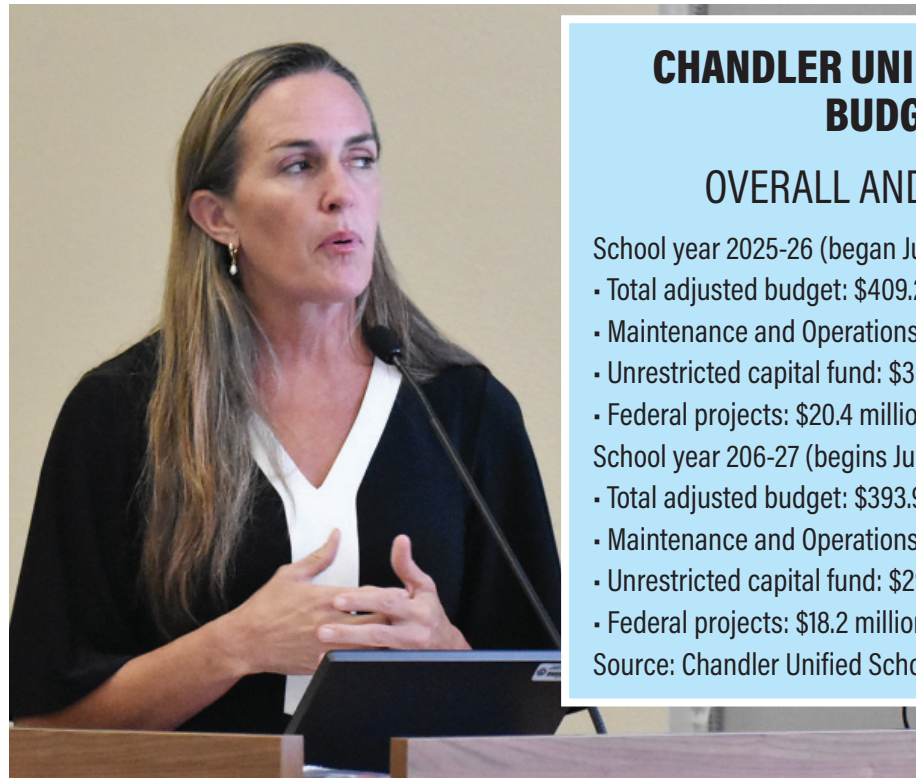
into law June 13 this year.

While that allowed Chandler finance staff to plug in nearly all information, there were a few exceptions, CUSD Chief Finance Officer Lana Berry said, such as free-and-reduced lunch state supplemental aid.

“Right now, that shows up as a decrease, because there isn’t a way to enter it on a form,” Berry said. “So when this comes back to you in December (for a state-required mid-year budget revision), you should see about \$1,954,000 put back into that space.”

The 2025-26 budget that the CUSD board approved for publication in June of last year was about \$393.3 million, which was about \$16 million less than the 2024-25 budget. But the big change the district had to make this past year was one it knew was coming — cutting about \$7 million from its maintenance and operations fund.

The M&O is an Arizona district’s largest fund, as it’s the most versatile pool of money used to pay nearly all salaries and benefits. The 2026-27 M&O for Chandler will be about \$346.3 million, or about \$7 million less than the 2025-26 M&O, as of a



Chandler Unified Chief Finance Officer Lana Berry presents to the CUSD Governing Board at a June 24 meeting. The board unanimously approved its slimmer \$393.9 million 2026-27 budget for publication at the meeting, which was its last before the state’s June 30 deadline for budget approvals. (Independent Newsmedia file/Jason W. Brooks)

May 6 board-approved revision.

As enrollment has been dropping among public school districts around the state, including in CUSD, schools have been closed and districts have made major staffing adjustments.

Berry’s calculation uses a CUSD

average daily membership loss of 1,150 students, which affects district funding in M&O and with other funds. For example, the enrollment decrease cost the district \$824,000 in the upcoming year’s unrestricted capital funds.

Berry said the East Valley In-

CHANDLER UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT BUDGET CHANGES

OVERALL AND SELECT CATEGORIES

School year 2025-26 (began July 1, 2025):

- Total adjusted budget: \$409.2 million
- Maintenance and Operations (general) fund: \$353.4 million
- Unrestricted capital fund: \$35.6 million
- Federal projects: \$20.4 million

School year 206-27 (begins July 1, 2026):

- Total adjusted budget: \$393.9 million
- Maintenance and Operations (general) fund: \$346.3 million
- Unrestricted capital fund: \$29.4 million
- Federal projects: \$18.2 million

Source: Chandler Unified School District

stitute of Technology is “holding us hostage” for about \$6 million in career and technical education funds to get districts to sign new intergovernmental agreements. She said a court date related to ongoing litigation between school districts and EVIT would resolve at least the base funding aspect of those issues.

The June 24 meeting was the last for Superintendent Frank Narducci, who’s retiring after five years in that role and almost 40 years in K-12 education. Dr. Anna Battle takes over July 1.



J Jamie Swan
4 reviews ★★★★★ 6 days ago

Highline is fantastic! I moved to AZ from Maine 3 years ago and was lucky to find Highline because the are all professionals who know exactly what they're doing and - get this - they never try to 'up-sell' or convince you to buy something you don't need! I am very wary of shops who do that and can say from experience, whether you're in ME or AZ, a vast majority of shops are very underhanded in that way. I trust Highline completely.

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WAY TO GROW

Garden supplies, donated by Jewish War Veterans Copper State Post 619, will be used by the Phoenix VA Phoenix Medical Center as an alternative therapy for patients recovering from substance abuse. From the left are Carol Tucker, V.A. peer support specialist; Gabe Forsberg, VA Representative for JWV Post 619; and Dustin Delcours, director for VA Voluntary Services. (Courtesy of Jewish War Vets Post 619)



WITH A SMILE

Jewish War Veterans Copper State Post 619 volunteers raised \$18,587 to help hospitalized, homeless and at-risk veterans in their two-day Memorial Day weekend Poppy Campaign. Happy to make her contribution at a Fry's grocery in Gilbert was Josephine Thomas, age 6, of Chandler. Post 619 members Stuart and Maria Davis welcomed donations at Fry's. (Courtesy of Jewish War Veterans Post 619)



'MIKE WOODS FIELD'

Mike Woods and his wife Ellen pose with a proclamation renaming the Hamilton High School baseball field in Mike Woods' honor at the June 10 Chandler Unified Governing Board meeting. Woods, who retired this spring after almost 30 years as Hamilton's baseball coach, led the varsity to 10 state titles and helped hundreds of players succeed in baseball beyond high school. (Independent Newsmedia/Jason W. Brooks)



TITAN TUTELAGE

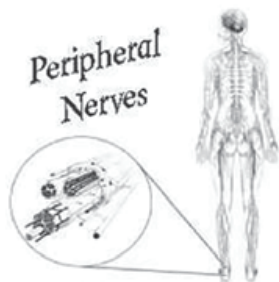
Four Chandler Prep seniors announced their college athletics commitments at a May ceremony. From the left, Avery Hamler is signing to play football with Norwich University in Vermont; Dani Scott will play women's soccer for Mesa Community College; Dominic "Dom" Steineke will play baseball for Glendale Community College and baseball player Robbie Hirsch becomes the first Titan student-athlete to commit to a Division I college program, selecting the University of Dayton in Ohio. (Courtesy of Chandler Prep)

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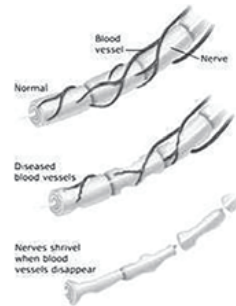
PERIPHERAL NEUROPATHY AND CHRONIC PAIN WARNING!

Mesa, AZ — The most common method your doctor will recommend to treat your chronic pain and/or neuropathy is with prescription drugs that may temporarily reduce your symptoms. These drugs have names such as Gabapentin, Lyrica, Cymbalta, and Neurontin, and are primarily antidepressant or anti-seizure drugs. These drugs may cause you to feel uncomfortable and have a variety of harmful side effects.

Chronic pain and/or peripheral neuropathy is a result of damage to the nerves often causing weakness, pain, numbness, tingling, and the most debilitating balance problems. This damage is commonly caused by a hands and feet which causes the nerves to begin to degenerate due to lack of nutrient flow.



As you can see in Figure 2, as the blood vessels that surround the nerves become diseased they shrivel up which causes the nerves to not get the nutrients to continue to survive. When these nerves begin to "die" they cause you to have balance problems, pain, numbness, tingling, burning, and many additional symptoms. The main problem is that your doctor has told you



to just live with the problem or try the drugs which you don't like taking because they make you feel uncomfortable. There is now a facility right here in Mesa that offers you hope without taking those endless drugs with serious side effects.

(See the special neuropathy severity examination at the end of this article) In order to effectively treat your neuropathy three factors must be determined.

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- 2) How much nerve damage has been sustained?

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Aspen Medical will do a chronic pain and neuropathy severity examination to determine the extent of the nerve damage as a public service to you and/or your family and friends. This neuropathy/pain severity examination will consist of a detailed sensory evaluation, extensive peripheral vascular testing, and a detailed analysis of the findings of your neuropathy.



Aspen Medical will be offering this chronic pain and neuropathy severity examination from now until August 31, 2026. Call 480-796-1136 to make an appointment to determine if your chronic pain and peripheral neuropathy can be successfully treated.

Due to our busy office schedule, we are limiting this FREE consultation to the first 15 callers. **YOU DO NOT HAVE TO SUFFER ANOTHER MINUTE, CALL. Call 480-796-1136 ... NOW!**

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FROM THE COVER

Housing

• From page 1

That's Chandler's first newly created public housing in 54 years; a ribbon-cutting for the 157-unit apartment complex was held June 9.

Next up in terms of new construction will be The Haven on Hamilton.



Deputy City Manager Leah Powell

That's a complex of as many as 250 apartments to be built at 73 S. Hamilton St., along the eastern edge of downtown Chandler, at what Jacobson and staff call "Site 3."

The residents of 40 units in the bungalow-type units currently at that site, once called Casa Bonita, will be relocated by August, Jacobson said, followed by demolition. Completion of

The Haven on Hamilton is slated for winter 2028.

Deputy City Manager Leah Powell said a financial packet for the \$88 million Haven project is due to be completed by July 29. Council approved a development agreement with Brinshore Development LLC in December 2025 for the project.

The Haven on Hamilton will give priority to seniors and families, Jacobson said.

"Site 1," or the Casa de Esperanza apartments at 130 N. Hamilton St., will be where residents of the later-vacated properties are relocated to.

"Site 2," or the 38 units at 210 N. McQueen Road, are located just north of Chandler Boulevard. The complex is somewhat within sight of The Villas on McQueen, which is where many residents are moving by August, as Site 2 is due for demolition

beginning in September.

Jacobson said Chandler Development wants to start taking bids in early 2027 for Site 2; the council didn't object.

"Site 4" is 32 units located at 660 S. Palm Lane, near San Marcos Park, southwest of downtown. That's set to be addressed last in the sequence, with a plan to move residents out and "significantly rehab" the units, but not until at least 2030.

Council directed staff to proceed with the early 2027 request for information from developers and financiers to see what the market will support in terms of building on Site 2.

The "Kingston Site" is 37 apartments at 127 N. Kingston St., just southwest of McQueen and Chandler Boulevard, not far from The Villas and Site 2. The plan is to move residents out by 2029 and go in a new direction.

Regarding the city's comprehensive housing plan, Powell said, one of the goals is to create 2,000 "attainable" units, through private partnerships or other means.

"Attainable housing means more than simply affordable," Powell clarified. "It's being able to get housing that meets one's needs, without having to spend more than 30% of monthly income on it."

Powell said part of planning involves determining "what can be built where," and Council members had varying views as to whether to spend money on consultants to help complete such a plan.

Jacobson, who has one assistant, did say that once her department is managing both an active Haven on Hamilton construction and permitting and all the other mentioned projects

• See **Housing** on page 13

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FOOD AND WATER

Two Valley businesses, including one founded in Chandler, provided food and water during a recent sporting event. Taco Spot, a Chandler-founded restaurant, provided 1,000 complimentary meals and Valley Toyota Dealers sponsored an onsite misting cooling system at the Copa Univision Arizona youth soccer tournament the weekend of May 23 in Glendale. (Courtesy of Valley Toyota Dealers Association)

FROM THE COVER

Housing

• From page 12

ects in flux, that could become a staffing challenge.

Regarding “missing middle” housing, Powell presented a map of 44 city-owned properties, saying four vacant downtown parcels — one on California Street and three on Dakota Street — in the Pueblo Viejo neighborhood would be ideal for prototypes of new types of housing, using different developers, for sale using a community trust model.

Two of the parcels are connected and could be built as one, with Powell mentioning an “cottage courtyard.”

“We’d like one to have a live-work option for at least one of the sites,” Powell said. “This is our chance to be really creative.”

Powell asked council if staff could commit those four parcels in upcoming

community land trust discussions with a Tempe-based nonprofit called the Newtown Community Development Corporation. Council agreed, and wants Powell to return soon with more information.

Powell also said the Washington Street realignment plan is currently still in the design and feasibility study stage, awaiting decisions from the Salvation Army, as the parking area of its center would be affected by extending Washington between Saragosa and Morelos streets.

Powell also plugged a “legacy owner academy.” That’s a budding city education and mentorship program that helps owners of family-held land unlock its development potential, she said.

“Multiple families we’ve spoken with are already excited about this academy,” Powell said.

Monsoon safety tips and reminders

June 15 through Sept. 30 is the official Arizona monsoon a time when we can expect high temperatures, dust storms and heavy moisture. Find tips to keep you safe at chandleraz.gov/Monsoon. And remember, only rain in the storm drain. Help keep gutters and streets clear of debris so rainwater can flow smoothly. Visit chandleraz.gov/Stormwater to learn more.



Arizona men win gymnastics nationals again

INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

OKLAHOMA CITY — The Arizona Men's College Gymnastics Team once again stood atop the national stage, capturing its 26th national team championship in early May.

The team won the GymACT National Championships in Oklahoma City, further cementing its place as one of the premier programs in collegiate gymnastics history in emphatic fashion, according to a news release.

Arizona defended its 2025 national title by defeating runner-up Minnesota by more than six points, 315.500 to 308.800, in one of the team's strongest performances of the season, the release states.

Arizona delivered a 92% hit rate while recording eight "stuck" landings — the team's highest total of the year.



The Arizona Men's College Gymnastics Team once again stood atop the national stage, capturing its 26th national team championship in early May. The team won the GymACT National Championships in Oklahoma City on May 9. (Courtesy of Arizona Men's Gymnastics)

"This was a complete team victory," Arizona coach Evan Shaw stated in the release. "The athletes trusted

each other, stayed focused all week-end, and competed for something bigger than themselves. I couldn't be

Final Team Results

1. Arizona - 315.500
2. Minnesota - 308.800
3. Washington - 301.100
4. Iowa - 298.650
5. Indy-Hio - 297.400
6. Temple - 296.950
7. Bay Area Bandits - 296.800
8. New York Alliance - 273.150

more proud of this group."

The team also produced a haul of individual honors, earning 14 All-America honors, three national individual championships and two prestigious annual coaching awards.

National champions include Eliot Foster for All-Around and for the parallel bars and Aidan Myers on the

• See **Gymnastics** on page 21



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Kickball

• From page 6

several parent friends were sharing similar frustrations about tryouts, high costs and the stress that can show up in youth sports earlier than it should.

"We decided to team up, form a 501(c)(3) nonprofit and launch our first youth kickball season this spring."

Smith said 50 children registered for the first season.

There were two age-group divisions of four color-named teams each, playing a five-game season. Team Blue went 5-0 in the age 7-9 division; Team Purple was 5-0 in its age 10-12 division.

He said a list of parents and families interested in a second season is already growing. The plan currently is to play on Fri-

day nights in August and September in a league for ages 7-12.

Smith acknowledged the league is meant to be alternative fun, rather than to be worked around more-competitive sports. For example, any young people involved in high school varsity football games aren't going to be available most Friday nights in the late summer and early fall.

But Smith said the emphasis on fun has made Backyard Kickball rewarding.

"The stories and feedback from families have been incredible," he said.

To learn more, including costs to register, visit backyardkickball.org.

To learn more about the next season, click here: tinyurl.com/yut8nw6v



Carson Hesler, left, looks on as his sister, Emersen, pitches, with coach and father Erik Hesler observing on the right. A group of Chandler-area parents, led by Scott Smith, started Backyard Kickball, a league meant to be competitive but fun. (Courtesy of Mallery Kellogg Photography)

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THINGS TO DO

Center for Arts tickets on sale despite renovations

Tickets for many 2026-27 season shows at the Chandler Center for the Arts are or will soon be on sale to the general public, even as the center's ticket office plans to temporarily relocate.

As CCA prepares for its major theatre renovations this summer, including new seating and other venue enhancements, staff encourages patrons who prefer to purchase tickets in person to plan ahead and buy early for the upcoming season.

Starting July 28, the box office will temporarily relocate to the Vision Gallery at Chandler City Hall during construction. The office will operate with modified hours while continuing to offer ticketing assistance and customer support at that gallery through about Sept. 21.

The Wailin' Jennys international folk trio, flamenco artist Siudy Garrido, International Guitar Night XXVII, harmonic singing group Ladysmith Black Mambazo, island musician Taimane and vocalist Kalani Pe'a and Jose James Sings Sinatra are among the performances on sale now.

Visit chandlercenter.org to learn more.

Mystery Round Table: Pick a book in Counterfeit Lady Series

"Mystery Round Table: Pick a



book in the Counterfeit Lady Series" is one of two historical "America250" events announced by the city of Chandler for later this month.

The event that serves as drop-in of the July meeting of the Mystery Round Table book group.

This free event will be an American history-themed read. Victoria Thompson's Counterfeit Lady series is set in the early 20th-century U.S., at the time of World War I and the women's suffrage movement.

For this month's meeting, attendees will pick one of the books in the series to read, then share which one they read with the group.

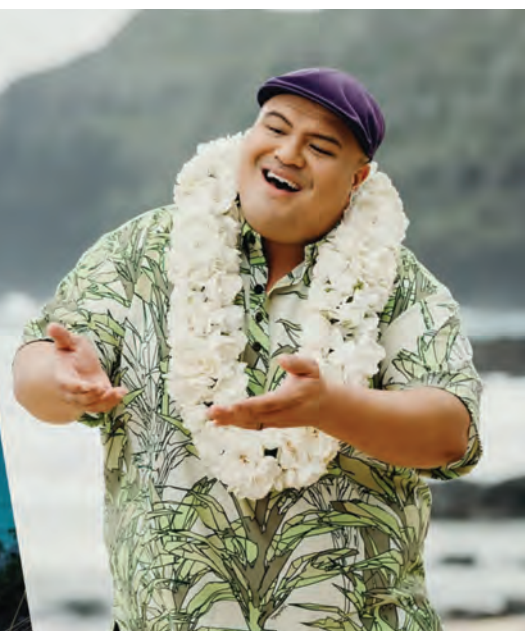
The hour-long event is from 6:45

p.m. to 7:45 p.m., Monday, July 20 at the Sunset Library, 4930 W. Ray Road in west Chandler.

Also, join a group that will celebrate America's 250th birthday by hosting a discussion on American historical romance texts.

Come to discuss any romance book involving any historical American era: colonial, the Wild West, Victorian or Civil War or Revolutionary wars, just to name a few examples.

This free discussion takes place from 5 p.m. to 6 p.m., Tuesday, July 21 at the Hamilton Library, 3700 S. Arizona Avenue, south Chandler.



Tickets for many 2026-27 season shows at the Chandler Center for the Arts are or will soon be on sale to the general public, even as the center's ticket office plans to temporarily relocate. The 2027-28 season includes many performances, including one from island musician Taimane, left, and vocalist Kalani Pe'a. (Courtesy of Chandler Center for the Arts)

'Bass Music Halloween Experience' festival at Rawhide in October

Aftershock, the bass sub-brand of Relentless Beats, is bringing a new musical festival to the Rawhide Festival Grounds in Chandler in late October.

HEX, also known as the "Bass Music Halloween Experience," will be on two outdoor stages over two nights, Oct. 30-31.

Two-day tickets start at \$119 and can be purchased at summonthehex.com.

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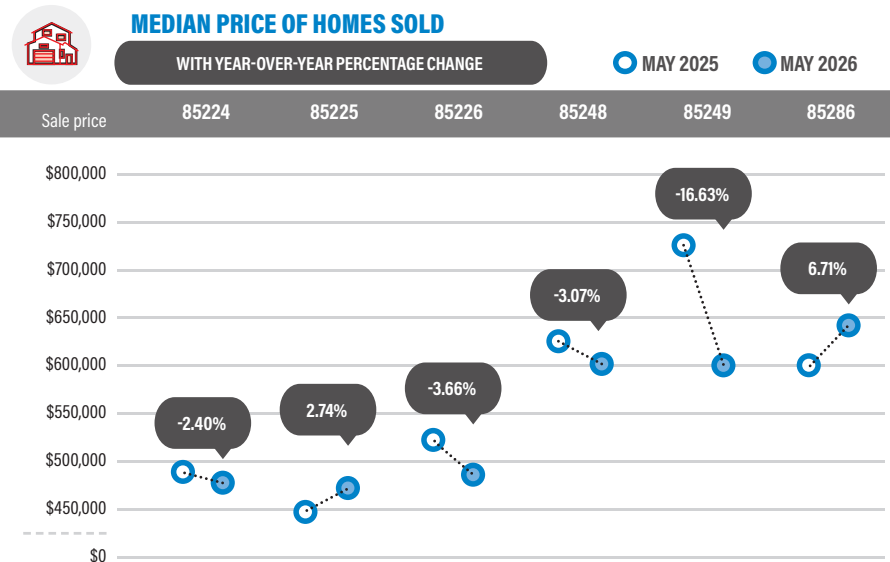


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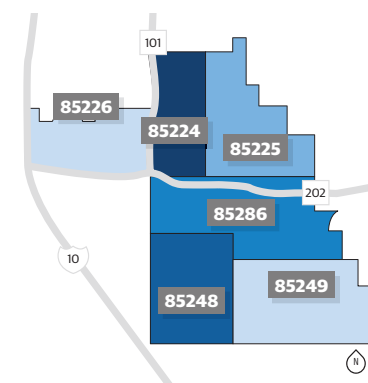
	MAY 2025	MAY 2026
85224	83	87
85225	177	124
85226	81	66
85248	115	89
85249	216	178
85286	121	108

AVERAGE DAYS ON THE MARKET

	MAY 2025	MAY 2026
85224	42	40
85225	48	69
85226	48	46
85248	85	88
85249	63	72
85286	60	50

NUMBER OF HOMES UNDER CONTRACT

	MAY 2025	MAY 2026
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85225	65	55
85226	32	32
85248	28	43
85249	68	78
85286	49	54



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CANDIDATES SET

Chandler Unified School District Governing Board President Patti Serrano won't seek reelection. July 6 was a county deadline for candidates to turn in the 400 petition signatures to run for school boards Nov. 3; incumbent Kurt Rohrs and challengers, Leanna DeKing, Zeyna Pruzhanovsky and Stacey Etherington will vie for the two seats up for new 4-year terms this year. (Jason W. Brooks/Independent Newsmedia)

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CHANDLER TRAVELERS

At least two Chandler Unified School District students were among the 250 awardees in the 2026 America's Field Trip contest. Zhenrui Gu, a senior-to-be at Hamilton High School, submitted original writing and the artwork shown here. Jason L., a fifth grader at Knox Gifted Academy, submitted his artwork. Both students, working with the topic question "What does America mean to you?" were selected for their entries. Both earned "field trip" experiences this summer, visiting iconic historic and cultural landmarks in honor of the nation's 250th birthday. (Courtesy of Chandler USD)



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EDUCATION

Perry H.S. student learning bioscience through immersion

Hannah Nough has been picked to be part of something special.

The Perry High School senior-to-be was selected from among more than 200 candidates to participate in the TGen Bioscience Leadership Academy this summer. This was after she was selected as one of 40 finalists invited to interview with a panel of community leaders and TGen scientists.

The 20 student selectees were chosen for a two-week camp in which they'll learn about genomic medicine and will collaborate with STEM professionals.

And she gets a \$1,000 scholarship after her summer experience.

Read more at tinyurl.com/4c9w8ysp



Hannah Nough participates in the University of Arizona's "Summer Scrubs" program last summer. Nough, a Perry High School senior-to-be, was chosen from among 200-plus applicants as one of only 20 attendees of this summer's TGen Bioscience Leadership Academy in Phoenix. (Courtesy of Hannah Nough)

District board argues over mental health services

Chandler Unified's Governing Board approved more than a dozen action items at its June 10 meeting, including four mental health and/or behavioral health contracts and one renewal of a substance-abuse program contract.

Board member Kurt Rohrs abstained from voting on the four contracts that mention mental-health services, which all were approved by 4-0 votes, saying his concern is students missing class time.

Read more at tinyurl.com/mab8h7bf

Elementary rebuild price tag grows by another \$400K

The Chandler Unified Governing Board unanimously approved a \$400,000 increase June 10 for design services and administrative costs related to Hartford Sylvia Encinas Elementary School's ongoing rebuild.

Grace Design Studios, then known as Orcutt Winslow, was approved in September 2023 by the board for a \$1.73 million design contract for the 1957-opened school. The board approved a main construction contract for \$42 million late last year after the district bond passed, with a groundbreaking held this April.

Read more at tinyurl.com/yc7wz4zm

Gymnastics

• From page 14

pommel horse.

Foster's All-Around title also secured him GymACT's first automatic berth to the USA Gymnastics Elite National Championships, which will be held in Phoenix in August.

All-American status was earned by Nicky Franz in floor exercise, Izaiha Mlay on the pommel horse, vault, parallel bars and high bar; Foster in All-Around, floor exercise, still rings, parallel bars and high bar; Myers on the pommel horse, Hunter Flechsig on the parallel bars and high bar and Sammy Walker Jr. on the parallel bars.

Flechsig, a team leader and Arizona State University senior, also earned the coveted GymACT N2 Award, presented annually to the nation's top senior collegiate gymnast for excellence in athletics, academics, leadership, and character. Flechsig carries a perfect 4.0 GPA.

More information on the N2 Award can be found by clicking here: <https://www.gymact.org/n2award>

[gymact.org/n2award](https://www.gymact.org/n2award)

Arizona's coaching staff was nationally recognized in the Head Coach of the Year going to Shaw and Assistant Coach of the Year going to Brian Kern. It's the first career honor for both.

More than 20 parents and family members traveled to Oklahoma City to support the team.

The Arizona Men's Gymnastics program consists of 43 student-athletes from across the country, including 36 athletes currently attending Arizona State.

"We are incredibly grateful to everyone who supports this program," stated Scott Barclay, owner/CEO of the practice facility Aspire Kids Sports Center and a longtime ASU coach. "This championship belongs not only to the athletes and coaches, but also to the alumni, families, donors, volunteers, and fans who continue to believe in the importance of collegiate gymnastics."

For more information about Arizona Men's Gymnastics, click here: www.azmensgym.com.



DIVERSITY SCHOLARSHIPS

Cruz Monreal, left, and Zan Saleem are Chandler residents and Arizona College Prep High School alumni attending Arizona State University. They are among the announced 2026 winners of the 2026-27 Empowering Diversity Scholarship. (Courtesy of HMA Public Relations)



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WEEKLY SPECIALS

AVAILABLE FOR ALL ITEMS
ASADA + \$0.50 | SURF AND TURF +\$1.00

Monday

BIRRIA COMBO DAY

BIRRIA COMBO #1 (3 BIRRIA
TACOS + CONSOME + DRINK)

\$14
(REG. \$17)

Tuesday

STREET TACO TUESDAY

STREET TACOS
(ANY MEAT. ALL DAY.
EXCLUDES SURF & TURF)

\$2
(EACH)

Wednesday

BURRITO MADNESS

ANY BURRITO
(CHOICE OF MEAT, INCLUDES BIRRIA
OR REGULAR BURRITO. NO DRINK.)

\$10
(EACH)

Thursday

THIRSTY THURSDAY

FOUNTAIN DRINK OR AGUA FRESCA
WITH PURCHASE OF ANY ENTRÉE.

\$1

Friday

FIESTA FRIES

LOADED FRIES
(BIRRIA OR REGULAR MEATS.)

\$10
(REG. \$13)

