



Community

9/11 Tower
Challenge heads
to State Farm
Stadium; 4



INDEPENDENT

Sports

Mountain
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ready for
football; 16



September 2026

Volume 32 Issue 9

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COLORADO RIVER

City plans for potential 50% cuts to CAP water allocation

By Richard Smith
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

Glendale has a plan to compensate if the last bit of negotiations ends among the states connected to the Colorado River ends with with Arizona's water allocation is cut in half.

Arizona officials are awaiting final word from the federal government on an agreement that would reduce the state's allocation of Colorado River water by 760,000 acre-feet for two years.

The proposed reduction would primarily affect Central Arizona Project water users. While seemingly daunting, many Valley cities and towns have been preparing for decades for just such an event.

"A CAP reduction of 25% would require no changes to customer delivery as the CAP water supplied to

• See **Water** on page 19

Midwestern University campus grows, next phase begins



President, CEO inaugurated this month

By Richard Smith
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

Dr. Joshua Baker will be inaugurated as the 10th president of Midwestern University on Sept. 14 at the postgraduate medical school's North Glendale campus.

But he has been on that job a year and worked his way up the ladder for 13 years. During that time he witnessed the campus at 19555 N 59th Ave. grow and become a partner with the city and surrounding neighborhoods.

Campus housing continues to expand as Midwestern recently completed adding eight buildings that will account for 256 deluxe studio apartments. Prior to

this, about 350 students lived in campus housing. Now on-campus residences can host up to 690 students.

"We don't just grow by adding acreage. We really want to look at strategic development. Sometimes that might be adding student housing or a simulation facility that isn't going to necessarily translate into more students or more programs. But it's going to enhance the educational experience," Baker said.

Baker started with Midwestern on a Monday in 2013. The previous Friday was his last day with the U.S. Army stationed in Stuttgart, Germany.

Baker began as an assistant dean in the optometry program, then moved to associate dean of clinical affairs. He

• See **CEO** on page 5

Above, Dr. Joshua Baker, Midwestern University president and CEO, right, mentors an optometry student at the university's virtual reality optometry lab. Midwestern has a campus in Glendale, and a second campus in Downers Grove, Illinois. (Courtesy Midwestern University)

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FIRST RESPONDERS

Tower Challenge returns to stadium 25 years after 9/11

INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

Once again, thousands of Arizonans will gather, this time at State Farm Stadium in Glendale beginning at 7 a.m. Friday, Sept. 11, for the annual 9/11 Tower Challenge.

The event is a tribute to the first responders who lost their lives on Sept. 11, 2001, and to those who continue to serve. It will mark 25 years since the attacks.

Participants will climb 2,071 steps, the same number found in each of the Twin Towers, in remembrance of the 343 firefighters, 71 law enforcement officers and eight paramedics who died in the line of duty at the World

Trade Center. The public is welcome to join hundreds of firefighters, police and military, as well as veteran climbers and families in the climb.

There is not a deadline as far as signing up to climb. However shirts and coins tend to run out fairly quickly and will not be guaranteed after Aug. 17.

Photos of the fallen first responders will line the stairs, giving climbers a chance to pause on the sacrifice each one made in the service of others.

The 100 Club of Arizona organizes this annual event in Glendale. For information on the tower challenge, visit Events@100club.org



Climbers line up to walk the steps of Desert Diamond Arena in Glendale for a previous 9/11 Tower Challenge. This year's event is on Sept. 11 in State Farm Stadium. (Courtesy 100 Club of Arizona)

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FROM THE COVER

CEO

• From page 1

said that was more in his wheelhouse after 10 years in the Army, working in clinics and hospitals.

His next role at Midwestern was the associate dean of academic affairs, which focused on pedagogy and student success.

"It was kind of fun to dive back into some of that stuff. If I'm being honest, it's still the best job I've ever had," Baker said. "Every day you're in the trenches trying to pull a student across the finish line. It's pretty soul filling."

Next was a couple years as dean of optometry program, followed by a stint as dean of optometry at both Midwestern's Glendale and Downers Grove, Illinois, campuses.

Baker moved on to university vice president, then chief academic officer.

In May 2025, Midwestern University President and CEO Kathleen Goepinger retired and Baker was named her interim replacement. He accepted the full-time role in September 2025.

"The most shocking thing has been the pace, how quickly it has grown. Just from the time I joined in 2013, we didn't have a vet program or a vet building. We didn't have a therapy institute. We didn't have a graduate nursing program," Baker said. "So the pace is amazing that all these things have come along. That was the magic of Dr. Goepinger, the ability to keep this momentum moving forward."

Since 2018, most of the university's cabinet has traveled between the two campuses every other week, except during the COVID-era restrictions.

The two-campus university has one academic culture and expectations, which include giving back to the community. Baker said while the Glendale campus is in the fast-growing West Valley, Downers Grove is a more historic traditional Midwestern campus.

Much of his first year as university



Midwestern University president and CEO Dr. Joshua Baker smiles on the school's north Glendale campus. (Courtesy Midwestern University)

president was devoted to listening to students and faculty.

"Now we're ready to go. We feel like we have a good sense of where we want to go. We believe strongly we have the ability and capabilities to get there," Baker said.

Bringing the community in

Part of Midwestern's mission is to make lives and access to care better for surrounding communities.

The university gives away hundreds of thousands of hours and millions of dollars of care every year to the communities, Baker said.

"The relationship has been amazing. So much of why we've been able to grow into what we are is because we've had this relationship with the Glendale community," Baker said. "We have this core value about our mission. We have to be an organization that the communities we are in feel we're a benefit."

Midwestern's clinics recorded nearly 140,000 patient visits, expanding access to affordable health care while providing hands-on training for future health care professionals, Glendale Economic Development Director Dan Henderson stated in an email.

In addition to its more than 3,500 students, the university has more than 1,000 people total who are faculty or professional staff members.

"Beyond its economic impact, Midwestern provides significant communi-

ty value through health care and workforce development," Henderson said. "Midwestern is also helping build the skilled health care workforce Arizona needs. Its ongoing research, education, and investment further strengthen Glendale's position as a healthcare and bioscience hub."

In particular, the university's dental institute — which sees thousands of patients every year, Baker said — and its animal health institute are a boon to the community. Often they are lower-cost dental and veterinary service options.

The veterinary program launched in 2014. Its diagnostic pathology clinic gives the university the ability to do all kinds of research on an animal's history and what's happening to it.

Midwestern tries to tie students to the local high schools, as well as middle and elementary schools.

"Students have a chance to talk to somebody that maybe walked the same path they're walking right now. They realize, 'Those doors can be open for me as well,'" Baker said.

A quiet, powerful economic engine

An independent analysis by Applied Economics, commissioned by the university, estimated the Glendale campus generates about \$767 million in economic impact across Maricopa County, Henderson stated.

"But the impact goes beyond that headline number. Every day, more than 3,000 students commute to the north Glendale campus, along with faculty, staff and visitors, while hundreds of students live in Glendale. That creates a steady stream of people who spend money at local restaurants, retailers, housing and other businesses," Henderson said.

Midwestern, as an entity, also spends with local vendors and employs thousands of people, which means its economic impact reaches well beyond the

• See **CEO** on page 18

ON YOURVALLEY.NET

Electrical fire shuts down Velma Teague library

City Manager Patrick Banger said at a Aug. 11 City Council workshop that a late July fire caused damage at Velma Teague Library.

Glendale Field Operations Director Michelle Woytenko said the electrical wiring fire was caused by an arc event where that system has moved and the ground system is compromised. Shocks are a possibility if this electrical system is not replaced. Repairs will take six to 12 months.

Read online: <https://tinyurl.com/2kuz2mpk>

Man, 59, dies after shootout with Glendale Police

A man identified Aug. 13 as Jeffery Peters, 59, died Aug. 12 after barricading himself inside a Glendale house and exchanging gunfire with Glendale Police for hours.

The man shared the home near 76th and Nicolet avenues with his adult daughter until recently, but she had obtained an order of protection against him, which barred him from entering the house.

She was not at home but noticed him trespassing when checking surveillance and called police.

Read online: <https://tinyurl.com/37h4e6b4>

Glendale Fire crew stops Fry's fire, delivers cakes

On Aug. 4 the crew of Glendale Fire Engine/Hazmat 157 responded to a exterior fire at Fry's Food Store at 5116 W. Olive Ave. Captain Jocelyn Galligan, engineer Kyle Port firefighter Tim Webb and Captain Connor Healy purchased the store's birthday cakes and made sure they were delivered.

Read online: <https://tinyurl.com/cs5drz8k>

Meet Your Business: Daisy North Phoenix

INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

Name: Ray Tamasovich

Age: 56

Business: Daisy North Phoenix

Hours of operation? 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday-Friday; Weekends by appointment

Personal background: I moved to Arizona 3 ½ years ago with my fiancé Maggie. This is a place I've wanted to be for a long time and happy to make it my home. I have a daughter that graduated college last year (with honors) and is entering the workforce. She is currently living in Atlanta. We have 2 fantastic dogs that we consider children. On weekends you can usually find us on one of Arizona's many golf courses.

Professional background highlights: I spent more than 25 years in networking and Cybersecurity working for various companies. My clients included Wells Fargo, E*TRADE, Delta Airlines, Humana, and many others. I brought that experience and knowledge to my smart home business.

What I do: I am the branch owner of Daisy North Phoenix. Daisy is a national organization that sells, installs, and supports technology for the home. That covers a lot of areas including audio and video, security, lighting and shades, smart home tech, wi-fi and networking, and home automation. We also cover areas outside such as landscape lighting, outdoor audio, and wi-fi. Daisy North Phoenix is licensed, bonded, and insured ROC 362520.

What do you like the most about doing business here? I absolutely love what I do. Home automation and smart home technology has been a passion of mine for 27 years. Phoenix is a perfect place for this business for the following reasons:

1. There is a lot of building and progress happening in the valley. De-



Ray Tamasovich leads Daisy North Phoenix, which includes service in Glendale. (Courtesy Daisy)

velopers are starting to realize that homeowners want a better experience in their living spaces. That could mean whole home audio, great wi-fi coverage across the property, increased security, better lighting options or some of the many benefits that home automation provides such as never having to come home to a dark, scary home after a night out.

2. The area has a lot of snowbirds that live here part time but would still like to be attached to their home even when they are far away. Our solutions allow them to manage their investment and stay connected. They can check in to see what is happening with security cameras, control temperature, lights, shades, answer the front door, lock and unlock doors, even monitor for water leaks just as if they were there.

3. Phoenix is a retirement destination. Smart home tech can extend the time people can live independently in their homes by years. By providing simple controls (including voice activation) to do many of the things around the house without the need to be mobile, smart home tech allows the elderly to age in place.

4. It's fun! I love seeing the look on a clients face after we've installed

their new TV and sound system. Clients get excited about the enhancements we can make to their lives. It's great to see that joy!

What was your previous occupation and why did you leave? I had a great career in Cybersecurity. I thought that I would continue with it until I decided to retire. For the past few years, I'd been getting a feeling that I was not where I was supposed to be. That could have been related to burnout or frustration. Corporate life had become more about managing CRM systems and spreadsheets rather than developing relationships and solving customer problems. I started thinking about what I wanted out of life and if it was possible to use my skill set to get it. It came down to three basic points: First, I love technology and have been implementing it personally and professionally most of my life. Second, I enjoy consulting with people to understand their needs and problems. Finally, educating on what is possible.

What are some changes you would like to see in the area? I'll say there are changes I'd like to bring to this area. There are a lot of business that are in smart home tech custom integration. Those that have been around for a while most likely got their start in the audio/video space installing TVs, sound systems and home theaters. The industry has changed a lot and the smart home systems we are installing today require a solid home network to run reliably. That network needs to be built to scale and, above all else, needs to be secure. This should be priority number 1 of any smart home system. I'm not seeing that as the norm currently. Servicing after the sale — most integrators today want to get a job done and move on to the next one. I've interviewed so many homeowners that had a tech

• See **Daisy** on page 11

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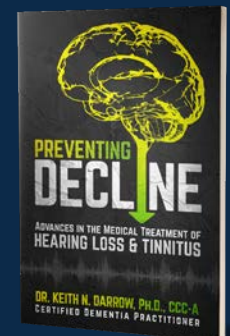
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BUSINESS MOVES



Compiled by Richard Smith
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

NOW OPEN

1 The new **Marshalls** opened Aug. 20 at 7974 W. Bell Road, just west of Arrowhead Towne Center.

2 Earlier this year, **Karibu Restaurant** opened at 4945 W. Glendale Ave. It offers authentic African food, including egusi soup, stewed goat meat, beef suya and pondu cassava.

3 This summer, **Body Alive Glendale** pilates studio offering hot yoga opened at 18561 N. 59th Ave., Suite 118

4 Studio 67 Salon and Beauty Suites welcomed **The Cove Skin Lounge** in March at 6760 W. Deer Valley Road. It specializes in corrective acne treatment, microneedling and chemical peels.

OPENING SOON

5 On Aug. 11, the Arizona Cardi-

nals Football Club announced **Spina-to's Pizzeria & Family Kitchen** will become the new restaurant partner inside the BetMGM Sportsbook at State Farm Stadium, replacing Flanker Kitchen + Sports Bar. is scheduled to have its grand opening ahead of the Cardinals home game against the Denver Broncos Oct. 25 with a soft opening on Oct. 5.

CLOSED

6 Along with the other locations, the **Salad and Go** drive-thru restaurants at 18573 N. 59th Ave., and 9121 W. Glendale Ave., in Glendale closed Aug. 4. The Dutch Bros. and 7 Brew coffee chains are battling to buy up the Salad and Go stores and convert them.

LAND DEALS

7 Rockefeller Group, a New York



MARSHALLS



WEST OLIVE LOGISTICS CENTER

City-based real estate developer, owner and operator, announced Aug. 6 that it purchased a 34.1-acre logistics site in Glendale from IndiCap and their capital partner. Rockefeller Group and IndiCap will partner to develop **West Olive Logistics Center**, a 552,000-square-foot industrial building at the northwest corner of West Olive Avenue and North Reems Road. Cushman & Wakefield's Mike Haenel, Andy Markham, Phil Haenel and Justin Smith will be the exclusive leasing agents for the project.

8 The first speculative industrial building of more than 1 million square feet developed locally in more than three years has been fully leased before completion. VanTrust Real Estate's **VT 303 North**, a 1.14 million square foot facility, is under construction at Northern Avenue and Reems Road in Glendale. The buyer has not been named. Butler Design Group designed the facility, with Layton Construction serving as the general contractor.



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OPINION

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Your Opinion

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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.

Mayor urges pool safety as temperatures remain

Glendale residents must stay vigilant around water. Each summer, you see on TV, hear on the radio and read in many stories throughout the news media about tragic events that occur when pools go unmonitored, even for just a few brief seconds.

It's because of this that I want to share reminders with the community as you get ready to jump into pools to escape this Arizona heat.



Jerry P. Weiers

As a parent and a grandfather, I have always stressed safety to my family. It only takes a moment for a fun day to turn into a tragic one. I urge all of our residents to be present when your

children are around water. We all hope it will never happen to our family, but the truth is that it can.

When adding a pool to your home, there are several safety precautions to keep in mind:

- ♦ Install a secure fence with latching gates.
- ♦ Use a pool cover and install pool alarms.
- ♦ Keep a stocked first-aid kit nearby, along with an AED, if possible.
- ♦ Maintain clean and clear water so that swimmers are always visible.
- ♦ Never leave children unattended in or near the water, even for a moment.

Glendale Park and Recreation Director John Kennedy reminds us that pool safety is a top priority.

"Our city has two aquatic centers and five splash pads. Every one of our lifeguards train extensively to respond in seconds; but the truth is, a lifeguard or a parent can't watch

LETTERS TO THE NEWSROOM

Please send your comments to AzOpinions@iniusa.org.

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

every second, unless they're paying attention," he says. "that's why we encourage families to enroll in swim lessons early and to keep water safety part of every visit to one of our two aquatic centers or five splash pads."

Mayor Jerry P. Weiers
GLENDALE

The author has served as Glendale mayor since 2013.

Will voucher reform bring sanity back to K-12 education?

November will have a large impact on the future of Arizona's educational system when the voters pass the reforms to rein in the grifting.

They voted against vouchers a decade ago and will do it again. Once the billion-dollar welfare-for-the-wealthy program is reduced to its origin, sanity will return to the K-12 educational system with more accountability and transparency.

Dr. Curtis Finch
PHOENIX

The author has been the Deer Valley Unified School District superintendent since 2017.

Retired power plant operator OK with APS rate hike

I've lived in the Valley since 1970 and retired from the power company. I have been reading the concerns from folks about the potential APS

Speak Up

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

Below is a list of comments from people on social media, including the death of a Deer Valley High School student and the Peoria Unified School District 'no DEI policy':

Deer Valley High School community, football team mourns loss of student

"My heart goes out to his family, friends, classmates and beloved football team. Fly High #33!" — **Anthony Santana**
"Prayers for Baxter. RIP. And prayers for his family and friends." — **Tracy LeClair**

Peoria Unified prohibits literature works based on 'No DEI' policy

"This anti-DEI crusade is deplorable. About half of the children in our schools are not white. They need to be able to read about people like themselves. Why are people so afraid of diversity anyway?" — **Laura C.**
"All DEI bs should be gone and replaced with 'are you qualified for the job?'" — **Anne Wojick**
"Banning books? Does this have anything to do with Rooks?" — **Jill Baker**

rate increase.

I'm a former power plant operator with many years of hands-on operating experience here in Arizona and I'd like to provide some feedback. Power plant generating equipment, the support system equipment and the downstream electrical distribution equipment all run nonstop 24/7.

Just like things at home, equipment reaches end of life due to constant use, wears out or breaks due to the loads placed on them. Some equipment needs to be replaced regularly to prevent power outages from happening at the worst times, especially noteworthy during the

Daisy

• From page 6

person but, they can't get in touch with them. Something in their system has stopped working but they can't get the help to correct the issue. What many folks don't realize is that technology is just like your yard or pool. If you don't maintain it regularly it will lead to problems. We provide regular quarterly visits to our clients to dust off their equipment, provide updates, and to make sure everything is working as it should. Finally, home services tend to leave clients hanging for hours on end while they wait for their technician to arrive. We schedule appointments for a specific time so that homeowners know when we will arrive. I couldn't imagine telling my corporate clients I'd be there sometime between the hours of 8 a.m. and noon. Why should home services be any different? When we say we will be there at 9 a.m. you can expect us at 9 a.m.

What are you promoting? A better experience! Smart home tech is not about technology. It's about the experience the user gets when they press that button. The space transforms into something different. Maybe that is turning the kitchen from a functional cooking space where the light is bright, the shades are open, the music is loud and upbeat into an intimate dining area where the lights

dim to a soft glow, the shades are lowered for privacy and the music is lowered and changed to something much softer. That experience continues after the initial install with the regular service visits to keep things running for years to come.

What are you excited about? I love how technology has started to integrate with design. The industry has recognized aesthetics are as important as functionality, maybe more important. We are collaborating with interior designers more than ever to make sure technology is not taking away from the designer's creation. Lighting controls now come in a variety of beautiful finishes. TV's turn into pieces of art when they are not being used.

Speakers are placed into walls and invisible to the eye. Lighting has advanced more in the last 10 years than in the previous century. This industry moved from the man cave to the entire home.

What is your favorite local cause and why? There are so many great causes that do amazing things. It's hard to pick a favorite. I would have to go with causes that support animal rescue. I've had dogs in my family for many years and it's still impossible for me to describe the amount of unconditional love and devotion they bring. I can't imagine life without them. I'm in support for any organization that helps them get out of a bad situation into a loving home.

tained so we can count on it when we need it the most. I worked hard for many years to maintain our system and now I can enjoy having a reliable electrical system.

I understand what I'm paying for and am willing to pay the increased operating and maintenance cost. You get what you pay for.

Mel Meter
SUN CITY

OPINION

Letters

• From page 20

peak season when we all need ac to live here in the Valley.

It's true that it's not going to be easy on the wallet at times, but we all chose to live here and we are all are using the local electrical system unless you are off the grid.

The system needs to be main-

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Summer enrollment bucks DVUSD long-term trend

Data, family feedback to shape expanded 2027 summer slate

By Steve Stockmar
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

While Deer Valley Unified School District is facing long-term enrollment headwinds, several of its summer programs are moving in the opposite direction.

The district's online high school summer program reached a record enrollment of nearly 2,000 students in 2026, highlighting demand for flexible academic opportunities even as overall district enrollment has steadily declined in recent years. District leaders pointed to the milestone during the governing board's first meeting of the new school year.

"This multi-year view illustrates the continued growth and changing needs across our summer programs

from 2022 through 2026," Deputy Superintendent of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment Dr. Gayle Galligan told the board. She noted that the online high school program reached "a record high of nearly 2,000 students in 2026," while the district's gifted summer camps also achieved their highest participation to date.

Jumpstart, Deer Valley's elementary academic intervention program, continued to maintain strong enrollment as a pathway for targeted learning support and academic recovery.

The growth stands in contrast to the district's broader enrollment picture.

Deer Valley Unified has experienced declining K-12 enrollment over the past several years as demographic trends have reduced the number of school-age children living within district boundaries.

Deputy Superintendent Heather

Mock in June reported the district's actual student count for 2025-26 was 29,419. A look back at previous years' actual student counts shows that marks the first time Deer Valley Unified's enrollment has dipped below 30,000 since registering a count of 29,812 in 2003-04.

Despite the continuing drop, population growth projections — particularly in the north end of the district where residential developments are rapidly coming online and will be for the coming years — show that enrollment is expected to grow due to an influx of new residents in the district footprint spurred by the arrival of TSMC in north Phoenix and Peoria.

Galligan said the multi-year participation data is helping district leaders determine where future investments may be needed as they prepare next

• See **Enrollment** on page 14

ON YOUR VALLEY.NET

2 Deer Valley Unified students appointed to Governor's commission

Two Deer Valley Unified School District students have been selected to serve on the 2026-27 Governor's Youth Commission, joining high school students from across Arizona who will advise state leaders on issues affecting young people. Mountain Ridge High School junior Amit Taduri and Sandra Day O'Connor High School senior Olivia Hsu were among the newly announced appointees.

Commission members participate in leadership development and volunteer initiatives during their yearlong terms.



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Medicare And You™

Medicare's New GLP-1 Bridge: Weight-Loss Help for \$50 a Month



Jim Schmidt, Medicare And You™

By Jim Schmidt
MEDICARE AUTHORITY,
ADVOCATE & ADVISOR

For most of Medicare's sixty-year history, one thing stayed firmly off the table: coverage for weight-loss medication. By law, those drugs simply weren't part of the deal. This Summer, that changed. On July 1, 2026, Medicare launched a first-of-its-kind program called the Medicare GLP-1 Bridge, and for the right person, it can be a real game-changer. For anyone who has watched these medications from the sidelines, wishing they were within reach, this is welcome news indeed.

Here is how it came about. The GLP-1 medications you have seen in the headlines, the pens, pills, and injections that help people lose weight, have been costly and largely out of reach for

older Americans. After years of debate, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services created the Bridge as a temporary program to open that door. It runs nationwide, in every state and territory, from July 1, 2026 through December 31, 2027, offering these medications for a flat \$50 a month vs. prior costs of \$250 to \$300 and higher monthly costs.

That \$50 stays the same every month, even as your dose goes up, which is a rare bit of predictability in the world of prescriptions. One honest note: this \$50 does not count toward your Part D deductible or your yearly out-of-pocket limit, and the Extra Help program cannot lower it. This program is unilateral to your Medicare Part D plan either as a stand-alone PDP or incorporated within your MAPD plan. Insurance guidelines and benefits are absent here.

Who does it benefit? To qualify, you first need Medicare drug coverage, meaning Part D, either on its own or built into a Medicare Advantage plan. From there, you must be 18 or older and meet one of these health guidelines: a body mass index, or BMI, of 35 or higher; a BMI of 30 to 34.9 along with a condition such as heart failure, high blood pressure, chronic kidney disease, prediabetes, or a past heart attack or stroke; or a BMI of 27 to 29.9 with prediabetes, a past heart attack or stroke, or peripheral artery disease. In plain terms, it is aimed at folks whose weight is affecting, or threatening, their health.

Just as important is who is not eligible. You cannot use the Bridge if you already receive a GLP-1 drug through your Part D plan. And if you have type 2 diabetes, moderate-to-severe sleep apnea, or fatty liver disease, you are

steered elsewhere, though the good news is your regular Part D plan may already cover a GLP-1 for those conditions. When in doubt, it is worth a conversation to sort out which path is yours.

If you think you qualify, here are the steps to get started.

First, talk with your doctor. If a covered medication is right for you, your doctor sends the prescription to your pharmacy and, when asked, completes a short approval form called a prior authorization. Your doctor also confirms that you are pairing the medication with healthy eating and exercise.

Second, pick it up. Your pharmacy may ask for your Medicare number or the last four digits of your Social Security number. You will pay your \$50 and receive your medication.

Third, watch your mailbox. Medicare will send a letter confirming your coverage under the Bridge, and your approval lasts through December 31, 2027. Questions along the way? You can call me, 480-296-3900, or 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227) any time, day or night.

The three specific medications covered under the program are **Foundayo**, a tablet you take by mouth; **Wegovy**, available as an injection or a tablet; and **Zepbound**, the KwikPen version only, as the single-dose vials and pens are not covered.

A word of encouragement to close. Medicare can feel like a maze, and a brand-new program like this only adds to the questions. Please do not let that stop you from finding out whether it could help you or someone you love. If you are unsure about your eligibility, your coverage, or your next step, reach

out to someone you trust to walk you through it. You do not have to figure it out alone. After a lifetime of hard work, you deserve clear answers, honest guidance, and the genuine peace of mind that comes with knowing someone has your back.

Next Month's Article:

Come September, we will cover the 2027 Annual Enrollment Period, **(AEP)** which starts October 1st for reviews & discussion of your current coverage and what the Market Offerings are for 2027, and October 15th thru December 7th for plan change applications if appealing. A gentle tap on your shoulder; there most definitely will be considerable movement come the new year. That is not to say that you would need to change or experience any unwarranted stress! A trusted professional should be on your side with honest evaluation predicated on your review and current wants and needs conversations. Don't let anyone ever talk to you just about those "shiny add-ons". A health plan should stand on its own as a health plan and perform as expected when called upon. Extra's are nice, however what is nicer are no surprises, disruptions, peace of mind, and of course an Advocate on your side and always available throughout the year and the years to come. A longer paragraph than I set out to inform Thrust- take it from this seasoned professional, that is how important this period is.

About the Author:

Jim Schmidt has been a trusted Medicare Authority, Advisor, and Advocate in Arizona since 2006. Jim never charges a fee to those who reach out. Contact him any time at 480-296-3900 or JimSchmidt@MedicareAndYou.Reviews.

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Students from Copper Creek Elementary School, at 7071 W. Hillcrest Blvd., return to the Glendale campus for the first day of school on Aug. 3. The school will host a Patriot Day assembly at 9:15 a.m. on Friday, Sept. 11. (Photo courtesy of DVUSD)

Enrollment

• From page 12

summer's offerings.

"Overall, these trends demonstrate the continued demand for a broad range of summer learning options and help us identify where opportunities may be needed to be sustained or expanded to meet student needs," she said.

Looking ahead to summer 2027, the district plans to continue focusing on enrichment, intervention and academic success. Galligan said administrators will use participation data,

student outcomes and family feedback to refine programs.

The presentation also underscored the overall reach of Deer Valley Unified's summer programming.

During a 55-day period this summer, the district offered 38 programs serving 5,466 students, who collectively completed nearly 24,000 hours of learning and enrichment while receiving more than 48,000 free meals. Administrators said those programs are designed to help students recover credits, strengthen academic skills, explore career interests and return to school better prepared for the year ahead.

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2025: record: 1-9
Playoffs: Did not qualify
Region: 6A Desert Valley
Coach: Andy Johnson (Third year)

Mountain Ridge leans on leaders to change trajectory

By Richard Smith
 INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

If Mountain Ridge football is to put together its first winning season since 2021 — and its second winning season since 2010 — it will do so via in house growth.

Following a 1-9 record last year, the coaching staff and returning senior and junior classes seemed to reach a similar conclusion — we are all we have.

What that means on the field in 2026 is the best and most dedicated Mountain Lion players are going to

play — a lot — on both sides of the ball. That's true for five to eight returning players.

"I think we've done the opposite this year. I think we've tried to set a roster that was more one way the last few years. We really set an offseason culture to say we want guys that will buy in to help this team any way we can," third-year Coach Andy Johnson said. "We're doing some more evening practices this year so we can split time and those kids can get an install on offense and an install on defense."

Senior linebacker/running back Nick Motz, offensive guard/nose tackle Cooper Quintin, offensive tackle and defensive tackle Bryson Olney epitomize this two-way ethos, which is fairly rare in 6A.

Johnson also mentioned senior cornerback/receiver Lukas Hindle and senior kicker Taelon Morris, who asked to play on the field too, will see time at cornerback.

"We even had to re-circle what that looked like in the offseason, as far as accountability and showing up and being a part of it. We have a small senior class, but they've really taken charge of what that looks like," Johnson said. "The biggest thing we noticed that we were not getting to where we needed last year was competition."

Most of this senior class decided to go to Mountain Ridge in 2023 fol-

lowing the departure of Coach Doug Madoski that April and the hire of Coach Gavin Lutman as spring ball was ending. They then stuck around after Lutman left for a college assistant job and were without a coach until Johnson's hire in June 2024.

Buy-in is not much of a question with these guys.

"As seniors, we're really connected. Everyone here has been here and played youth together and been through three different coaches. We want to show the younger kids that no matter what — even if there's newer coaches — we just keep going as hard as we can." Quintin said.

Quintin, Olney and a few linemates knew they would play a lot of snaps this season.

"It's a lot of work but I love every

• See **Football** on page 17

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Mountain Ridge junior linebacker Nick Motz lines up on the perimeter of the defense during an Aug. 29, 2025 home game against Cactus. Motz is a captain this season. (Courtesy Ed Russell Photography/For Independent Newsmedia)

Football

• From page 16

second of it. It's an honor to be able to help the team as many times as I can," Olney said. "Last year we really knew a lot of our starters were seniors so a lot of us juniors were going to have to step up on both sides."

It is a smaller team but a few big boys are emerging. Junior Brody Lima is the most experienced returning defensive end.

Junior Layne Scarbrough was a 6-6, 230-pound quarterback. Now he is more of a defensive end/tight end.

"The college coaches come out and say, 'Who's that guy,'" Johnson said.

Junior left tackle Brandon Thorne also has some college interest. Lanky junior defensive end Maurice Farnstrom impressed the captains.

Junior Deklan Johnson switched from linebacker to defensive tackle and end plus a blocking tight end.

"We have a lot of talented d-line-man, and I'm trusting those guys to go if I can't," Quintin said.

Motz leads the returning players in tackles, sacks and respect, judging from teammates interviews.

Unfortunately, a torn ACL in mid-August will wipe out Motz's season.

"This offseason we conditioned a lot more. We were in the film room a lot more. We studied plays and went over things," Motz said. "At camp we kind of stepped it up a notch but we were running through plays and doing it better. We had more buy-in I'd say."

Motz said he is impressed by sophomore linebackers/running back Ben Rich.

Junior safety Mason Weedman is a proven defensive back, and junior Luke Weber will be in the secondary more this year.

"We want to make sure we're fin-

MOUNTAIN RIDGE MOUNTAIN LIONS

KEY RETURNEES: Nick Motz, Sr., LB/RB; Cooper Quintin, Sr., OG/DT; Bryson Olney, Sr., OT/DT; Lukas Hindle, Sr., CB/WR; Taelon Morris, Sr., K/DB; Luke Weber, Jr., WR/DB.

NEWCOMER TO WATCH: Layne Scarbrough, Jr., DE/TE.

ishing, and that's why we do a lot of conditioning. We want to make sure we play through that fourth quarter. That's part of the culture thing. We want to make sure we change that mindset from, 'Oh we're down right now, it's the third quarter. We can't get it,' to 'It's the third quarter. Let's run them over,'" Motz said.

Seniors Amar Sutkovich and Colton Benson are competing for the starting quarterback job.

Mountain Ridge will not play Phoenix Pinnacle and Shadow Ridge this season, picking up games against Mesa Desert Ridge and Scottsdale Saguaro — the same Saguaro where Johnson, offensive coordinator Nyles Outley and defensive coordinator Gary Ornelas were once on staff.

"Our goal is to win region and make a run at the playoffs," Johnson said.

The players' goal is to change the perception of Mountain Ridge football.

Quintin said the Mountain Lions do not want to be known as that 1-9 team. The seniors want to leave having changed this program, even if its by only a couple more wins.

"We want to get rid of that image that Mountain Ridge is going to turn over every single time it gets hard. We're here to stay in the game," Olney said. "We want to make sure that mentality of, 'We're losing. We suck,' is gone. It's not here any more."



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LIVE MUSIC

Pentatonix to bring their Christmas show to arena

SPECIAL TO INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

Three-time Grammy-winning vocal quintet Pentatonix will bring their Christmas In The City Tour to Glendale.

Pentatonix will bring their harmonies and festive spirit to 28 arenas across North America this November and December and will make a West Valley stop at Desert Diamond Arena on Saturday, Dec. 19.

General sales began at 10 a.m. Aug. 14. On the tour Pentatonix will partner with the music education nonprofit Save The Music. Due to its connection with preserving music education in schools, fans can make



Pentatonix plays at Desert Diamond Arena in Glendale Dec. 19. (Courtesy Republic Records)

a charitable donation to the organization during the ticket purchase process. The vocal quintet — Scott Hoying, Mitch Grassi, Kirstin Maldonado, Kevin Olusola, and Matt Sallee — emerged in 2011.

CEO

• From page 5

campus.

The Applied Economics analysis estimated the university's activity generates more than \$22 million in state and local tax revenue.

"Midwestern is not just a university campus in Glendale. It's a year-round economic engine that brings people, jobs and spending into the community and supports businesses throughout the area," Henderson said.

Now the goal is to develop more and better pathways from this economic engine to the state healthcare system.

Midwestern is for graduate students, and many can graduate and go right into practice. Medical students still need to complete a residency program after graduating the university as medical doctors.

Soon-to-be graduates apply for residencies at hospitals based on what they want to specialize in.

"Particularly in primary care there's a shortage everywhere. Us graduating

students and doing a good job of educating them is going to help, but the rate-limiting step is the number of residency programs. If we want more physicians staying in Arizona, we have to create more residency programs," Baker said. "We try to work closely with any hospital partner that's interested in launching more residency programs."

Other medical universities face similar problems, Baker said.

Most of the U.S. probably has enough medical school grads to meet healthcare needs.

However it is harder to get in the hospital system for clinical rotations.

The elimination of new Grad PLUS loans on July 1 under the One Big Beautiful Bill Act creates a new challenge, as Baker said a large portion of students pursuing medical health education use grad-plus loans.

"Right now, the applicant pool is still very robust and healthy. Something we've taking very seriously is affordability. We're looking very hard at how we ensure we're providing great value at the best cost we can," Baker said.

FROM THE COVER

Water

• From page 1

Glendale would meet current consumer demand. If cuts reach 50% or more, Glendale will draw on additional water supplies, including groundwater, stored water at Roosevelt Dam, and long-term storage credits," stated Glendale Water Resource Program Manager Zac Richards in a press release. "The city will also ask customers to conserve water to reduce demand."

Richards said the city's long-term plans to secure additional water supplies include expanding Bartlett Dam on the Verde River to increase reservoir capacity and treating reclaimed water through an advanced purification process to produce quality, potable water.

The 760,000 acre-foot reduction is

right around 50%.

"In a non-shortage year, CAP will convey roughly 1.5 million acre-feet, and a 760,000 acre-foot cut is around half of the water that would be conveyed in the CAP. It's significant, but the good news is that we haven't built out demand for all of the water in the CAP. So that cut doesn't necessarily translate into a cut for every city in the way that you might imagine," said Sarah Porter, director of the Kyl Center for Water Policy.

The Kyl Center for Water Policy is part of the Morrison Institute for Public Policy at Arizona State University. An acre-foot is enough water to cover 1 acre in 1 foot of water, or about

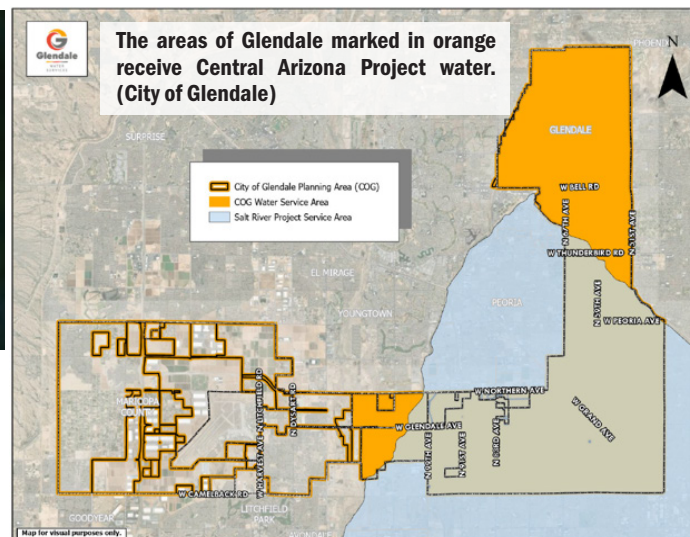


Sarah Porter is the director of the Kyl Center for Water Policy. (Courtesy Arizona State University)

326,000 gallons.

In a June interview with the Glendale Independent, Porter said the most salient question for the city is, "Does Glendale have the infrastructure needed to treat and deliver groundwater or other supplies to meet tap water demand in the parts of town that currently rely on CAP?"

Richards stated the answer is yes.



"Glendale has the infrastructure necessary to pump, treat, and deliver groundwater and other supplies. The city has a diverse water resources portfolio consisting of surface water, groundwater, reclaimed water,

• See **Water** on page 20

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Water

• From page 19

and underground, long-term storage credits. The Glendale Water Services Department maintains an expansive network of local wells to pump groundwater and recover long-term storage credits,” Richards said.

Glendale owns and operates four potable water treatment plants, two water reclamation facilities and five active city wells, with five additional wells in the design or construction phase.

Seven wells owned by the Salt River Project add to the city’s operational capacity.

Two CAP water delivery zones are in the city, primarily serving the northern and southwestern portions of Glendale, specifically the area north of the Arizona Canal and the area between 115th Avenue and New River.

“The annexed portions of the city west of 115th Ave are served

by various private water companies. In contrast, the region south of the Arizona Canal and east of New River is served by SRP,” Richards stated.

The Salt and Verde rivers, which are controlled by SRP, account for 55% of the city’s drinking water supply, while the Colorado River handles 41% and groundwater chips in 4%.

It was anticipated that the Bureau of Reclamation would issue a two-year plan of operations this week that would cement the details. But Porter said that now seems unlikely and the feds will probably only release a final environmental impact statement at this time.

“It’s going to say what the feds believe they have the authority to do over the next 10 years and it’s going to be designed to maximize their authority to respond to conditions on the river,” Porter said.

Janet Perez contributed to this story.

THINGS TO DO

SEPT. 6

Latin R&B and Soul

Westside Blues, Jazz & More welcomes Soulityfy back to the club again. Based in Phoenix and made up of seven core members, Soulityfy specialize in Latin, R&B, classic rock, country, and of course, today’s top hits, making them one of the Valley’s most versatile bands. Providing concert-like experiences that guarantee a shockwave of excitement and laughter, Soulityfy creates unforgettable memories. There is a two drink minimum for each guest (alcoholic and/or non-alcoholic). Also 20% automatic gratuity is applied to all checks. Reservations are only held until the start of the music. Specific seating is first come first served. All ticket sales final - no refunds/cancellations/substitutions.

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Doors open at 6 p.m.

SEPT. 12

Noche UFC

UFC, the world’s most recognized mixed martial arts organization, returns to Glendale for its first event at Desert Diamond Arena to celebrate Mexican Independence Day with NOCHE UFC. The card will be stacked with Mexican and Latin American talent, including former champions. Featured athletes include former UFC women’s flyweight champion and current No. 3 ranked contender Alexa Grasso faces No. 2 ranked Manon Fiorot. Joining them on the card will be former UFC flyweight champion Brandon Moreno, who faces The Ultimate Fighter season 33 winner Joseph Morales. Find tickets at ticketmaster.com/noche-ufc-rodriguez-vs-silva-glendale-arizona-09-12-2026/event/190064F6D2047F39

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Sun City - September 23, 2026 - Sundial Recreation Center

Sun City West - October 28, 2026 - SCW Foundation Center

Mesa - November 13, 2026 - Mesa Marketplace Swap Meet

Apache Junction - January 6, 2027 - Central Arizona College

Surprise - January 19, 2027 - The Colonnade

Litchfield/Goodyear - February 17, 2027 - Tuscany Falls Clubhouse(Pebble Creek)

Chandler - February 23, 2027 - Sun Lakes Country Club

Peoria - March 25, 2027 - Westbrook Village

Sun City West - April 13, 2027 - SCW Foundation Center

Sun City - May 3, 2027 - Sundial Recreation Center

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will not knowingly accept any advertisement that is illegal or considered fraudulent. In all cases of questionable value, such as promises of guaranteed income from work-at-home programs - if it sounds too good to be true, chances are that it is.

If you have questions or doubts about any ad on these pages, we advise that before responding or sending money ahead of time, you check with the Better Business Bureau at 877-291-6222 for previous complaints.

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Employment

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Employment

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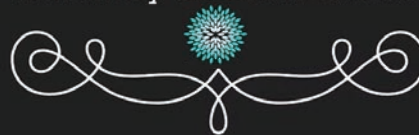
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