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Your Nonpartisan Community Newspaper • YourValley.net

Resident values valve innovation that saved his life

Garcia is first in U.S. to have new ring around his heart

By Jason Stone
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

Hector Garcia likes to joke that he is the “\$6 million Mexican.”

The longtime Surprise resident has undergone replacements on both knees and had major surgery to rebuild his neck.

But it was a procedure that most people have never heard of — let alone can pronounce — that saved his life.

In January, Garcia became the first person in the U.S. to receive a revolutionary heart procedure called percutaneous mitral annuloplasty to fix a leaky mitral valve.

The Litchfield Manor resident had been complaining of breathing problems and exhaustion and felt he

• See **Life** on page 6

Surprise waiting out MLB labor unrest



Major League Baseball released the 2027 spring training schedule that features 30 games at Surprise Stadium. (Independent Newsmedia/Jason Stone)

Schedule released for spring season that's now in doubt

By Jason Stone
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

Surprise is preparing for its 25th year of hosting the Texas Rangers and Kansas City Royals for spring training in 2027.

But labor unrest in Major League Baseball has the spring schedule MLB released last week a bit tentative.

The current collective bargaining agreement between MLB and the Major League Baseball Players Association expires on Dec. 1, and because owners want a salary cap

and players do not, a possible work stoppage is considered likely.

That has the city of Surprise preparing for its fourth spring training with disruptions this decade.

Councilmember Patrick Duffy said the city is waiting to see what happens.

“It’s hard to say because we are at the mercy of the talks between the owners and the players association, but we remain optimistic that they will be able to get this resolved and not have a lockout,” Duffy said. “We have had discussions, and because of the unknowns, we are going to be ready as if we will have spring training as normal.”

The COVID-19 pandemic affected spring training in 2020 and 2021, causing shortened seasons or sparse crowds those years. In 2022, another owners lockout delayed spring training by almost a month and cut the season short.

For the 2027 schedule, Surprise Stadium is slated to host games from Friday, Feb. 19 through Saturday, March 20.

All other 13 Cactus League teams are scheduled to make at least one appearance at Surprise Stadium, and games are scheduled for each of the 30 days of the season.

• See **MLB** on page 4

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YOUTH



Former Surprise City Councilmember Aly Cline, red shirt, speaks to students at the 2024 Surprise Teen Summit at City Hall. (Courtesy city of Surprise)

Surprise sets teen summit date for February

City needs presenters to lead sessions geared toward teens

The Surprise Parks & Recreation Department and Surprise Youth Council announced the next Surprise teen summit for Feb. 24, 2027.

The single-day event is designed to excite and motivate high school students about their futures, personal development, community and leadership. The summit will be hosted at Surprise City Hall and Ottawa University-Arizona.

The teen summit will bring together approximately 300 high school students for interactive workshops, empowering keynotes and hands-on activities led by professionals, educators and community leaders. Registration for participants will open in early 2027. Information will be sent to Surprise high schools and homeschool groups.

The city needs presenters and practitioners who can deliver,

teen-focused sessions on college preparation, leadership, networking, personal development, public speaking, résumé building, social media presence and digital citizenship, time management and stress management for teens and welcome to the workforce/career readiness.

Interested presenters and speakers should email Shelby Fenwick at shelby.fenwick@surpriseaz.gov with a brief bio, proposed session title/description and any audio/visual needs.

Local businesses and community partners are invited to support the summit.

Sponsors will receive on-site recognition with signage throughout the event, acknowledgment during public address announcements and brand visibility through approved, youth-appropriate giveaways and swag.

To inquire about sponsorships, email shelby.fenwick@surpriseaz.gov.

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Surprise pushing library card signups in September

Surprise Public Library System is celebrating library card signup month by inviting residents to sign up for one for free.

"Whether diving into a new hobby, searching for the next great read, brushing up on tech skills or helping a child succeed in school, it all starts with a library card," library officials wrote in a news release.

Library cards give patrons access everything from free programs and job resources to streaming media and cultural events and allow them to check out toys, telescopes, explorer and nature kits from the "Library of Things."

Those who register for a new library card this month will receive a free animal squishy for kids and a book-lovers pin for adults.

This year's celebration includes new community-designed library cards introduced this summer. Choose from a variety of unique card designs created by talented patrons.

Cards can be obtained at the city's three libraries — Hollyhock, Asante and Surprise Regional — or by visiting surprisepubliclibrary.gov.



PI BETA PHI GROUP GATHERS IN SURPRISE

Members of the Arrowhead-West Phoenix Pi Beta Phi Alumnae Club met for its "Lunch Bunch" gathering Aug. 5 at the Cooper's Hawk Winery and Restaurant in Surprise's Prasada neighborhood. Pictured are Sheryl Hamlin, Kristi Geiger, Amanda Weese, Kathie Bridges, Lolly Looman (co-president), Patty Nordahl, Pat Gittings, Anne Levig, Nancy Wright and Libby Maurer. Wright, who produces the club's website, westphoenixpiphis.com, designed a Lunch Bunch logo and each attendee voted on her favorite. (Submitted photo/Sheryl Hamlin)

FROM THE COVER

MLB

• From page 1

Notable games include stops from the Chicago Cubs (Feb. 24 and 28), San Francisco Giants (Feb. 27 and March 7 and 15), Los Angeles Dodgers (March 1 and 12) and Arizona Diamondbacks (March 5 and 9).

The Athletics are the first outside opponent at the stadium when they come to Surprise on Feb. 20.

Game times and promotional offers are yet to be announced. Individual game tickets will go on sale at SurpriseStadium.com on Tuesday, Nov. 17.

Call 623-222-2222.

Jason Stone can be reached at jstone@iniusa.org. Submit comments at yourvalley.net/letters or email them to AzOpinions@iniusa.org. We are committed to publishing a wide variety of reader opinions, as long as they meet our Civility Guidelines.

2027 SURPRISE STADIUM SPRING TRAINING SCHEDULE

Feb. 19: Texas Rangers vs. Kansas City Royals

Feb. 20: Athletics vs. Texas Rangers

Feb. 21: Los Angeles Angels vs. Kansas City Royals

Feb. 22: Cleveland Guardians vs. Texas Rangers

Feb. 23: San Diego Padres vs. Texas Rangers

Feb. 24: Chicago Cubs vs. Kansas City Royals

Feb. 25: Chicago White Sox vs. Kansas City Royals

Feb. 26: Seattle Mariners vs. Texas Rangers

Feb. 27: San Francisco Giants vs. Kansas City Royals

Feb. 28: Chicago Cubs vs. Texas Rangers

March 1: Los Angeles Dodgers vs. Kansas City Royals

March 2: Colorado Rockies vs. Texas Rangers

March 3: Milwaukee Brewers vs. Kansas City Royals

March 4: Los Angeles Angels vs. Texas Rangers

March 5: Arizona Diamondbacks vs. Kansas City Royals

March 6: Cincinnati Reds vs. Texas Rangers

March 7: San Francisco Giants vs. Kansas City Royals

March 8: Kansas City Royals vs. Texas Rangers

March 9: Arizona Diamondbacks vs. Texas Rangers

March 10: Cleveland Guardians vs. Kansas City Royals

March 11: Athletics vs. Kansas City Royals

March 12: Los Angeles Dodgers vs. Texas Rangers

March 13: Colorado Rockies vs. Kansas City Royals

March 14: Chicago White Sox vs. Texas Rangers

March 15: San Francisco Giants vs. Texas Rangers

March 16: San Diego Padres vs. Kansas City Royals

March 17: Seattle Mariners vs. Kansas City Royals

March 18: Kansas City Royals vs. Texas Rangers

March 19: Cincinnati Reds vs. Kansas City Royals

March 20: Milwaukee Brewers vs. Texas Rangers



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12759 W Ballad Dr., SUN CITY WEST

MLS# 7064685

Dir: Bell Rd./RH Johnson, Dr. N-RHJ, R-128th, R-Aurora, R-Ballad Dr.

Nicely maintained Gemini/Twin home just a half a block from SCW's Stardust GC club house. 1419 Sq. Ft., 2 Bdrms, 2 baths plus a large, screened patio. New HVAC 2023. Guest bath updated. Porcelain plank tile flooring. HOA allows pets (max 2) & rentals. Quick close of escrow possible. This one is one you'll want to see! Call today to view!



15192 W. Las Brizas Ln., SUN CITY WEST

MLS# 7059982

Dir: Bell Rd./RH Johnson, Dr. N-RHJ, R-151st, L-Corral Dr., R-Acapulco. L-Las Brizas Ln.

Highly desired Prescott model is located on the 7th fairway of Desert Trails GC. This 1856 sq. ft. home has 2 Bdrms (split), 2 baths plus a den. New roof underlayment 2022, HVAC in 2020 & kitchen appliances 2019. Quick close of escrow is possible. Home has been well maintained. This one is one you'll want to see! Call today to view!



14114 W Whitewood Dr., SUN CITY WEST

MLS# 7068961

Dir: Bell Rd./RH Johnson, Dr. N-RHJ, R-Meeker, L-Echo Mesa, L-Whitewood Dr.

Expanded Montero model with panoramic views of SCW's Trail Ridge GC 3rd fairway/ green & lake with fountain. Approx. 3000 sq. ft., 2 Bdrm suites, 3 baths plus a den/office & golf cart garage. The large, covered patio, dining/family/living Rm combination is designed for formal/casual entertaining. Quick close of escrow is possible. Centrally located & in SCW's lower tax area this home is one you'll want to see. Don't hesitate! Call today to view!



23100 N. Drifter Way, SUN CITY WEST

MLS# 7062138

Dir: Bell Rd./RH Johnson, Dr. N-RHJ, R-Meeker, L-135th, L-Deer Valley Rd., R-Dusty Trail Blvd., R-Drifter Way

Popular Rio Verde model (expended). This 1612sq. ft. home has 2 Bdrms (split), 2 baths plus an added den/office/craft studio. Both bathrooms updated including walk in/roll in showers (2023). Paid off solar lease. Quick close of escrow is possible. No neighborhood HOA fee. This one is one you'll want to see! Call today to view!



12635 W. Eveningside Dr, SUN CITY WEST

MLS# 7040339

Dir: Bell Rd./RH Johnson, Dr. N-RHJ, R-128th, R-Sunglow Dr. which becomes Eveningside Dr.

Fabulous panoramic view of Stardust GC's 4th & 5th fairways & greens. Home has 2599 sq. ft., 3 large bedrooms (split), 2 updated bathrooms, golf cart garage plus an added 175 Sq. ft. art/crafts studio or office. This home is truly special & an absolute must see! Call today to view!



FROM THE COVER

Life

• From page 1

was experiencing a slow death before finding out his heart valve was leaking.

That is when the 68-year-old met Dr. Paul Sorajja, an interventional cardiology who changed his life.

Sorajja directed a surgery using Valcare's AMEND ring to repair Garcia's valve, which had been causing blood to leak backward instead of flowing forward, forcing his heart to work extra hard and causing his exhaustion and shortness of breath.

His heart was only beating at 20%, plus the color turned white instead of the normal dark pinkish.

"I was struggling there for a little while, and now I feel fantastic," Garcia said eight months after Sorajja led the procedure at Banner-University Medical Center Phoenix. "I'm just so



Surprise resident Hector Garcia is crediting a new heart valve procedure with extending his life and allowing him to spend more time with his 15 grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. (Submitted photo)

thankful for extra time I'm getting to be around with my family."

Sorajja, who recently moved to Arizona after three decades of practicing in Minnesota, inserted a small catheter through a blood vessel and repaired Garcia's valve on his beating heart without ever having to stop it.

He placed a small, straight tube into Garcia's heart, bent it back on itself to form a ring, then steered the ring down onto his heart to make it smaller.

"It's very ingenious," Sorajja said.

A new lease on life

Percutaneous mitral annuloplasty is designed for older patients or those who may have complications with traditional open heart surgery.

"If patients can have cardiac surgery, then they still tend to do cardiac surgery," Sorajja said. "But somebody who's a little bit older, somebody who may not be good for surgery, this is where these newer technologies tend to go."

Garcia's cardiologist recommended he see Sorajja, who had recently moved to Arizona after 32 years practicing in Minnesota. Once Garcia came in his office, Sorajja thought his new patient would be a great choice for the procedure that was developed in Israel but never done in the U.S. until Garcia.

"It's not an easy problem to solve at all," Sorajja said. "This is the first real technology that has made it work reliably and consistently, just like a surgeon would do with open heart surgery. You're talking about 25 years of world interest in this technology."

Garcia said God "totally answered my prayers" with the availability of the new procedure.

"It saved my life, really," Garcia said. "I don't know how much longer I would have been here. They were talking about open heart surgery, but I wouldn't have made it because I



Surprise resident Hector Garcia, left, says a procedure to fix a leaky heart valve has given him more years to spend with his wife, Luz Aydee, who was his teenage sweetheart. (Submitted photo)

was too weak."

He still has to take things easy as he recovers, he has been ordered to watch his water intake — drinking less, not more — and takes several medications.

"It reminds me when I was wrestling in high school dropping weight," Garcia said. "I just gotta think of something else and just stick to the portion of the portion I'm supposed to have."

For others who may want the procedure, note that insurance does not cover it because it is still so new.

Heart of the matter

Leaky mitral valves affect 3 million to 4 million people in the U.S., according to Sorajja.

He said a good sign of it is shortness of breath, unexplained tiredness or evidence of heart congestion.

He calls the problem just the luck of the draw since it can happen to anybody.

"These valves are beating since before you were born, and your heart is beating on the mitral valve your entire life," Sorajja said. "There is more pressure on your mitral valve per square inch than the pressure on the launching pad or the Saturn 5 rocket

that went to the moon."

An untreated mitral valve leak can be deadly, the doctor said.

"You cannot live with it because when they're leaking a lot, the lungs can't empty, and as a result, patients get congested, and they go into heart failure," Sorajja said.

The valves leak when they become enlarged over time. The ring that Sorajja put on Garcia's heart brought the valve size back to normal. The ring holds it there like a belt.

"Without that belt, the pants aren't going to stay on," Sorajja said. "They're just gonna continue to enlarge over time, and the leak will come back."

The ring used is about the size of a thumb and index finger together.

"The puzzle has been over past several decades, how do I put something that's the size of your index finger and thumb together and make that and collapse it into something that could fit inside a blood vessel,

pass it up to the heart and then magically sew it into the heart and leave it behind," Sorajja said. "It's really quite magical."

Garcia's procedure took about five hours from start to finish, but Sorajja said after 35 procedures done worldwide, surgeons have cut the time down to under two hours. And instead of recovery time in hospitals for up to two weeks after open heart surgery, patients of the ring procedure can go home in a day or two.

"Everything about it is more efficient," Sorajja said. "They can get back to their lives in a much faster way."

Jason Stone can be reached at jstone@iniusa.org. Submit comments at yourvalley.net/letters or email them to AzOpinions@iniusa.org. We are committed to publishing a wide variety of reader opinions, as long as they meet our Civility Guidelines.

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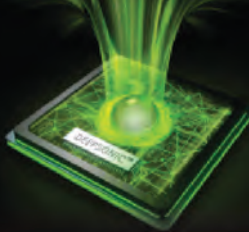


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Reader disagrees with Massie perspective

Regarding Jason Stone's article, Massie still waiting for closure 2 years after Surprise arrest: I'm sorry, my vantage point is a little different.

I saw this as a person's way to get attention and the attention that was received worked well to their advantage.

I saw it as purposely disruptive.

Some really good people who do care about our community took hits.

Others who may think of running might shy away because of this kind of litigation. In the meantime, what was accomplished? Did it help the city as seems to be the implied reasoning?

Scott Ciley
SURPRISE

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Voting is a right and a responsibility

I am writing in response to Jason Stone's front-page article in the Aug. 12, 2026, edition of the Surprise Independent titled: About 21% of eligible voters in Surprise cast a ballot.

It is disheartening that only some 21% of eligible voters exercised their right to vote, while Maricopa County's turnout was barely better at just over 25%. Voting is both a right and a civic responsibility, and those who choose not to participate are neglecting an important duty.

While I don't have exact statistics on how many non-voters complain about the government, it is frustrating to see people complain without taking the time to cast a ballot. If you choose not to vote, you shouldn't complain.

Joe Pasta
SURPRISE

This writer is using a pen name. Submit comments at yourvalley.net/letters, or email them to AzOpinions@iniusa.org. We are committed to publishing a wide variety of reader opinions, as long as they meet our Civility Guidelines.

Couldn't Dysart Unified sell assets to raise money?

This fall, Dysart Unified School District is attempting to obtain funding for their schools via Proposition 421.

I am not against a good-quality education, and I recognize it takes money for a good-quality education.

But I do wonder why the district keeps asking for additional funding when it has unused assets it could sell and minimize the time and monies spent in requesting these bonds.

One example is the property on the northwestern corner of 175th Avenue and Sweetwater in Surprise.

A few years back, Surprise investigated purchasing this land, but was refused.

Dysart Unified has reportedly stated it has no use for the land, yet it refuses offers to buy it.

Why not sell these assets and use that money, instead of expending time and money opting for a bond?

Rich Ozga
SURPRISE

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DUSD should share academic successes for bond request

I read Delarita Ford's front-page

article: DUSD teaches voters about latest bond proposition.

We have lived in Surprise for more than a decade and I believe few district propositions have been successful. Approximately one-half of all property taxes support DUSD. One of the major reasons for the failure to pass propositions is because taxpayers are kept in the dark regarding student academic scholarship.

I ask, what percentage of students are proficient in math, science and English? Where does DUSD rank against other school districts in the county and beyond?

Your newspaper is quick to cover news regarding DUSD athletics, clubs, theater, etc. I am pleased that some students have excelled and received university scholarships. But, what about the majority of students?

I suggest the best way for DUSD to succeed in winning propositions is to often share academic statistics proving that the district deserves additional funding.

Norm Lindstrom
SURPRISE

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Disappointed in Hamadeh's voting record

In preparation of the forthcoming midterm election, I reviewed the voting record of my 8th District Congressman and disappointingly found he had voted or "rubber-stamped" every Trump-backed expenditure.

The Republican party has repeatedly emphasized the need to curb reckless federal spending and address the national debt, but my congressman and all Trump Repub-

BROADCASTING

Broadcasting students add 'Drive for Excellence' to credits

By Delarita Ford
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

From the classroom to a local car dealership's showroom, and on the sidelines of football fields, more than 100 Dysart Unified School District students use their broadcasting knowledge and skills in various settings to produce award-winning videos and shows while pursuing their education.

The Dysart Student Broadcasting (DSB Live) participants produce "Toyota Game Day" on site at Toyota of Surprise, 13543 N. Autoshow Ave., highlighting each high school's football games, featuring students, sports teams and groups including the marching band, cheer and pom, etc.

Toyota of Surprise has partnered with the district so DSB Live can present, "Drive for Excellence," spotlighting Dysart High School, Valley Vista High School, Shadow Ridge High School and Willow Canyon High School games. Students produce the entire show, including setup, making graphics, running commercials, operating the camera, hosting on-camera interviews, livestreaming and post-production work.

"Our broadcasting program provides students with valuable hands-on learning experiences. Students learn all aspects of broadcasting, from camera set-up to production, graphics and

on-camera reporting. Through our valuable partnerships, we can provide real-world experiences for our students, and give them a glimpse in to possible career paths they may want to explore," stated Brian Yoder, Dysart Student Broadcasting coordinator.

Yoder noted over 160 Dysart students enrolled in the general grades 9-12 program and 73 advanced students who are media student interns. High school students also mentor middle school students through the Career and Technical Education Exploration classes. From camera set-up to production, students learn graphic design, animation, video production, on-camera reporting and color commentating. They will be prepared to enter the broadcasting field for positions in tricaster operations, sound technicians, floor supervisor, teleprompter and script writing and video content production used for slideshows, videos and YouTube streaming.

Meanwhile, the "Toyota Game Day" livestream is part of the "Drive for Excellence" partnership between Dysart Schools and Toyota of Surprise. The first game day, featuring Dysart High School, ran Sept. 4. Willow Canyon High School was featured Sept. 11; Shadow Ridge High School is Oct. 30; and Valley Vista High School is Nov. 6.



Dysart Student Broadcasting (DSB Live) will produce Toyota Game Day on its Drive for Excellence program sponsored by Toyota of Surprise. (Courtesy of Dysart Schools)

The partnership program supports education in the community for the 2026-27 school year, offers opportunities for students to celebrate their successes and a chance to earn a scholarship for post-secondary education with the Surprise Toyota Scholar-Athlete Award, which provides eight \$3,000 scholarships.

Funded by Surprise Toyota, a total of \$24,000 in scholarships will be donated to one male and one female at each high school for higher education purposes. Seniors can apply from January 1-March 1. They must have a 3.3 grade point average, earn two or more varsity sports letters in a Dysart high school, participate in community service, have good attendance, citizenship, and behavior and complete an essay question.

"To be able to provide this scholar-

ship and hands-on learning opportunity for our students is invaluable, and we are so grateful for the generosity of Toyota of Surprise," said Dysart Schools Superintendent Dr. John Croteau. "This partnership is a perfect example of the great things that can happen when the community gets involved."

Each high school also receives a \$1,000 donation to use the funds how they want, and the dealership has exclusive educator discounts for DUSD teachers and staff. The dealership also sponsored the district's "Attendance Matters" contest the past two years to celebrate the winning school with the most increased student attendance throughout the year.

"We are incredibly proud to support these outstanding schools and the students, educators, coaches and families who make such a tremendous difference in the lives of our children. We believe in investing in our community and, most importantly, in the future of our students, the next generation of leaders," said Toyota of Surprise General Manager Larry Tabloff.

DSB Live is a self-sustaining program, which is funded through sponsorships and donations. Anyone interested in learning more or getting involved can visit Dysart.org/DSBLive, where DSB Live's event schedule, livestream and video links are found.

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PROP 421

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Tax Impact to the Community:
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Note: This is an estimate for an average property owner in Dysart based on an estimated \$0.17 tax rate on an average assessed home value of \$215,435.



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Election Day and
Ballot drop-offs



Information on Proposition 421 or the district budget
is available at Dysart.org/Prop421

SPORTS

Flag football season starts across Surprise

Compiled By Richard Smith
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

The high school girls flag football season began Sept. 14 at schools across the state. West Valley Preps and the Surprise Independent asked local high school coaches about their teams. Here are their responses:

ALA-West Foothills Guardians

Coach: Jaylen Blanco (first year)

2025 Record: First season of play

Region: 4A Independent

Who are some of the newcomers that may have an impact this year? We are a first year program but we have some great athletes. Victoria Rauzan, Chloe Oler, Daniella Meleandez, Addyson McFarland, Sahzira Schoby all bring a unique skill set and attitude to the game. I'm looking forward to Felicia Hickmond and

Alina Rea, my rushers and receivers to actually have big years.

What is your team's best attribute entering this season? IQ and discipline. I have smart girls who understand the game even for it being their first time out and they all do their jobs.

Which teams on this season's schedule are you most looking forward to and will be the toughest? I'm looking at Centennial and Cactus Shadows, they're typically a powerhouse in all sports. Bradshaw Mountain will be interesting. I'm ready to start a rivalry with Good-year. They're another first year program who isn't too far from where we are located so it's nice to get something brewing.

What are the primary goals for this year's team? To learn and have

fun and most of all show that we can compete. We aren't in a region this year so we don't have any playoffs to worry about but which means its a good year to learn have fun and more importantly build the foundation and the standard of what this team needs to look like next year.

Highland Prep Honey Badgers

Coach: Caleb Cajthaml (second season)

2025 Record: 6-7 overall, 3-1 region (3A first round)

Region: 3A West

Who are your top returning players?: We're super lucky to have almost all of our players from last year returning this year. I'm particularly excited to see our linebacking corps, Devynn McKnight and Emma Henry, continue to lead our defense.

They've put in a lot of work over the offseason, and have that unit poised to be one of the best in our conference. I also think Janaviah Gilmore is set to have a really big season playing rusher and wide receiver. She's the fastest girl in our conference, and changes the dimensions of the field just by being out there.

Who are some of the newcomers that may have an impact this year? Two new starters, Destiny Hernandez and Morgan Haynes, have been huge new additions to the team. They'll be immediate impact players. I also want to give a shoutout to two of our freshmen, Jo Jones and Jocelyn Mejia, who will contribute in a big way and set the foundation for the future of the program.

What is your team's best attribute?
• See **Sports** on page 22

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BUSINESS



Truman Ranch is in line for a self-storage development after Basis Industrial closed on land in Surprise. (Courtesy Basis Industrial)

Truman Ranch residents to get place to put their stuff

**Florida company is bringing
another storage facility to city**

Florida-based Basis Industrial recently announced the acquisition of land and closing of a \$20.5 million construction loan for a new self-storage development within the Truman Ranch master-planned community

The project at 17140 W. Waddell Road marks Basis Industrial's first self-storage development in Arizona, representing the company's expansion of its self-storage platform into a new state. The project in Surprise will encompass approximately 102,673 square feet with 707 climate-controlled storage units upon completion.

NexBank and NexPoint provided construction financing. Construction is expected to begin later this year, with completion and opening antici-

pated in fall 2027. , The project advances after more than four years of planning and entitlement efforts.

Basis Industrial has been advancing its portion of the Truman Ranch development since 2021. The community includes more than 600 new apartment units, creating an additional demand driver for self-storage as the surrounding area continues to grow.

"Securing construction financing and completing the land acquisition mark important milestones after years of planning and collaboration," said Anthony Scavo, chief executive officer and managing partner of Basis Industrial. "We believe there is a strong need for convenient, high-quality self-storage in this community."

The transaction closed on Sept. 2.

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Opinions

• From page 11

icans voted for the so-called One Big Beautiful Bill Act, which in fact reduced federal income by cutting taxes for the extreme wealthy. Since the vote, the national debt has reached \$40 trillion. So much for slowing the debt.

Here are a few things that the federal government has spent lavishly on with the full support of the MAGA Republicans — the Iran war (an estimated \$50 billion and counting), “beautification” of D.C. (ballroom, pool, arch, building fountains) to the tune of over \$1 billion and counting, bulldozing inside Big Bend National Park (\$1.7 billion), ICE operations (\$113 billion directed to the agency), \$12 billion in direct payments to farmers to offset losses incurred as a result of tariffs, \$46.5 billion for border wall construction to which Mexico has not contributed a dime.

Trump famously bankrupted casinos; now he’s apparently using the federal treasury as a personal piggy bank and MAGA republicans, the supposed conservative stewards of our money, rubber-stamp what I believe is a wanton mismanagement of our tax dollars.

I believe a vote for the MAGA Republican really is a vote to continue this robbery and raise the national debt further.

I encourage all voters, especially independents, to listen to all candidates, explore your values, the importance of our democracy and your conscience when voting. Vote what you believe is right, not what this Republican administration is forcing on us.

Karen Jones
SUN CITY WEST

Rep. Abe Hamadeh represents Congressional District 8, which includes parts of Glendale, Peoria, north Phoenix, Sun City, Sun City West and Surprise. Submit comments at yourvalley.net/letters, or email them to AzOpinions@iniusa.org. We are committed to publishing a wide variety of reader opinions, as

long as they meet our Civility Guidelines.

Vote this November to calm political environment

Getting old is not a lot of fun, even here in the Valley of The Sun. It is almost daily visits to either my primary physician, cardiologist, urologist, nephrologist or neurologist. My pain specialist wants me to go for 20 sessions of physical therapy, but it is hard to schedule these visits around my eye exams and ENT appointments.

I finally had a free day and sat down to watch the news on TV and discovered the president and Congressional District 8 Rep. Abe Hamadeh appear to think I have a fatal personality disorder just because I do not believe anything they say and I will not follow their every whim and fancy.

Most of their dictates are about stolen elections, starting needless wars, the Epstein files, the Big Beautiful Bill and ballrooms, etc.

On the night of the primary election, I took two aspirin and went to sleep. When I woke up the next morning I realized I had found the cure for this so-called personality disorder. It was called having a conscience.

For anyone else in CD 8 who wishes to cure themselves of the “disorder,” there is a simple cure. Get out and vote Nov. 3, or do it by early mail-in balloting if POTUS and Abe allow you to do so.

Either way, I urge everyone to vote for Bernadette Greene-Placentia and to calm the political environment. I am sure you will all feel better when you wake up the morning of Nov. 4.

Philip Eller
SUN CITY WEST

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DEVELOPMENT



A map shows the potential placement for single-family homes in the Surprise 160 land the Surprise City Council rezoned on Sept. 1. (Courtesy city of Surprise)

Homes, roads coming to far NW Surprise area

Council OKs rezone, enters agreement for development

By Jason Stone
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

The Surprise City Council is making way for hundreds of new homes in the far northwest part of Surprise, where roads are still being built for the awaiting masses in future decades.

Having that infrastructure in place before people live there is music to the ears of Nick Haney, who represents the area on the city council.

The council on Sept. 1 voted to change 160 acres of land on the southwest corner of Deer Valley Road and 231st Avenue from rural residential to medium density residential to help make way for hundreds of single-family

homes — as many as 960, although the final number will be known in further stages of the process.

"We're learning from some of the challenges that we're facing in other parts of my district, where it's important that we have that infrastructure already there to support that growth, rather than trying to be reactive," Haney said before the council unanimously voted for the zoning change. "I see it every day of what the cost of that is."

Haney also serves the north area along 163rd Avenue, which has been plagued with traffic issues because of several key roads that were being built after residents moved into homes.

The council on Aug. 4 passed the

• See **Homes** on page 19

Homes

• From page 18

Surprise 160 development agreement to detail the owner obligations, traffic-signal contribution at Sun Valley Parkway, right-of-way requirements, and water and wastewater infrastructure responsibilities. Transportation responsibilities for the developers include the building of 231st Avenue from Beardsley Road to Deer Valley Road; Deer Valley Road to Foothills Parkway; and Foothills Parkway to Sun Valley.

At that same council discussion, Water Director Michael Boule said the projected demand of the Surprise 160 area, which was annexed into the city in 1989, had already been factored into future demand and was not expected to negatively affect water supplies for the city.

The planned community of Surprise Foothills is to the north and west, and Mesquite Mountain Ranch is to the east. The land is predominantly desig-

Meal-packing event in need of local volunteers

The city of Surprise invites residents to give back during a meal-packing event with Meals of Hope and the Rotary Club of Surprise and Sun City West 9 a.m.-noon Saturday, Sept. 19, at OUAZ's Faith Arena Lobby, 14470 W. Tierra Buena Lane. The family-friendly event is open to ages 14 and older. There are a variety of simple yet impactful volunteer roles, including pouring ingredients, sealing and labeling meal bags and boxing up completed meals. Volunteers will help pack 25,000 meals to support Valley View Community Food Bank and directly serve local individuals and families facing food insecurity. All meals packed at this event will stay in the community. No prior experience is necessary. Registration is required at surpriseaz.gov/DayOfService. Call Daisy Vargas at 623-222-1612.

nated neighborhood character area.

The development will be required to provide two points of access and maintain two points of access — Deer Valley Road on the north side of the property and 231st on the east.

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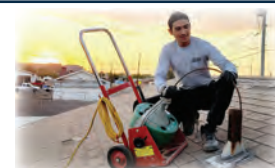
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DEVELOPMENT

NW Surprise land rezoned for future homes

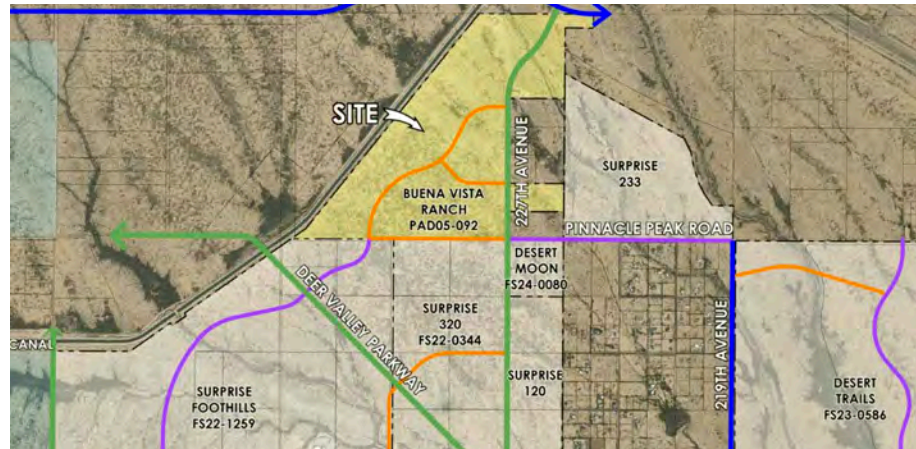
Buena Vista Ranch rezoned to align with transportation plan

By Jason Stone
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

Hundreds of new homes in the planned far northwest Surprise Buena Vista Ranch neighborhood are still years away from development.

But the Surprise City Council still helped make way for them on the land north of Sun Valley Parkway with the approval of a rezone at its Sept. 1 meeting.

The council voted to rezone approximately 422 acres at the northwest corner of 227th Avenue and Pinnacle Peak Road to a combination of residential low density, residential medium density, residential high density, open space conservation and general industrial.



A map shows where Buena Vista Ranch is located, in yellow, among the planned developments on land north of Sun Valley Parkway in far northwest Surprise. (Courtesy city of Surprise)

It was done to align the land with the updated regional transportation plan the council has passed since its initial rezone as rural residential and a planned area development in 2025.

Buena Vista Ranch is at the north

end of the several developments planned along Sun Valley. Surrounding zoning districts include rural residential to the west, north and east, as well as a variety of residential zoning districts to the south.

The new Surprise Foothills Boulevard that snakes up from Sun Valley and then 227th Avenue will provide two points of access to Buena Vista Ranch.

Because Buena Vista Ranch is at the north part of the developable land, it is expected to go in last as Surprise Foothills' development starts at Sun Valley to the south. Developers have agreed to construct their portions of the road, which needs to be finished before Buena Vista Ranch can be developed.

The property has three different character area designations on it: neighborhood, employment and open space.

Neighborhood plans include a site for a proposed school, a large regional park and other amenities throughout.

• See **Land** on page 21

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Land

• From page 20

The council approved a development agreement in August and OK'd a conceptual lotting plan that shows how the property could potentially develop in the future.

Councilmember Jack Hastings called the plans "proactive and not reactive" before the council unanimously voted to accept the rezone and praised the use of development agreements for projects such as this.

Those agreements set forth the infrastructure obligations or offsite improvements that the developer needs to build on a project that is beyond what city code could require.

"If you approve something in south Surprise where it's developed, the road's already in place, the water's hooked up," Hastings said at the council meeting. "The development agreement expands the bene-

fits."

Developers Buena Vista Holdings and 100 Acres Partners must contribute to their share of the traffic signal at 227th Avenue and Sun Valley Parkway, construct offsite improvements along Surprise Foothills Boulevard and 227th Avenue and provide an assured water supply, among other obligations.

"Going forward with the way we're structured today with the rezone and development agreements, most rezones would have to have the surrounding infrastructure placed in around it to support the development," Surprise Assistant City Manager Lloyd Abrams told the council.

Since hosting 10 residents at an outreach meeting in January 2025, the developers have added an open space corridor that is a minimum of 400 feet wide that leads right to an animal crossing of the Central Arizona Project.

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Sports

• From page 14

ute entering this season? I think it's their dedication and ability to handle adversity. We had a rough start to the season, but finished the year 4-1 to secure a playoff spot. Going through that and recognizing what they're capable of when they play together as a group was really transformative for us as a team. They practiced the entire month of June, two weeks in July, and every week since school started. That level of dedication is extremely rare, and makes me feel extra lucky to be their coach.

Which teams on this season's schedule are you most looking forward to and will be the toughest? I think all of us have our home game against St. John Paul II circled. We also play the reigning champs Scottsdale Christian Academy. I have an incredible amount of respect for Ryan Fisher and what he's built with that program. We know that team is the standard against which all teams in our conference will be measured.

What are the primary goals for this year's team? Last year we lost our playoff game by three

points. This year, I'd love to win and even host a playoff game. I think it'd mean a lot to our school if we could play a playoff game in front of our student body. Most importantly though, I just want these girls to have fun playing football together. I think we've done a good job of that so far.

Paradise Honors Panthers

Coach: Adrian Paredes (first round)

2025 Record: 11-4 overall, 4-0 region (first round of 4A playoffs)

Region: 4A West Valley

Who are some of the newcomers that may have an impact this year? Berlyn Hoyt (senior), Brooklyn Packer (senior).

Who are some of the newcomers that may have an impact this year? Ellie Carey (sophomore), Treasure Courtney (sophomore).

What is your team's best attribute entering this season? This team is young and hungry. We do have some veterans leading the way to help guide our younger varsity players.

Which teams on this season's schedule are you most looking forward to and will be the toughest? Games looking forward to: ALA-QC, a fast team last year with



Shadow Ridge sophomore Milayna Turner bends to avoid the Willow Canyon defense Sept. 18, 2025 at Willow Canyon High School in Surprise. Turner is back for her junior season. (Courtesy Ryan McGinley/Dysart Unified School District)

good talent. Big test for us at game No. 2. Eastmark, with their great QB, will be a challenge to get them early in the season at game No. 3. Region matchup with Westview is always tough.

What are the primary goals for

this year's team? With such a young team, only three seniors and three juniors, we are looking at building confidence with a lot of our younger athletes. Our goal is to always be in every game to compete all four quarters. We need to build confidence in our young team. So each game will do just that.

Shadow Ridge Stallions

Coach: Theron Frazer (third year)
2025 Record: 3-11 overall, 0-6 region

Region: 6A West Valley

Who are your top returning players?: Senior Kylie Hammer and junior Milayna Turner

Who are some of the newcomers that may have an impact this year? Marina Yanes, Brielle Foster and Lilli Crabbs

What is your team's best attribute entering this season? Speed and quickness.

Which teams on this season's schedule are you most looking forward to and will be the toughest? The game we look forward to is Valley Vista. The toughest game will be Liberty.

What are the primary goals for this year's team? We want to make the playoffs this season.

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Senior Expo returns to Sun City

By Zev Black
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

Independent Newsmedia's Senior Expo is returning to Sun City 9 a.m.–noon Wednesday, Sept. 23, at the Sundial Recreation Center, 14801 N. 103rd Ave. Attendees can learn how to improve their daily lives by asking questions to the more than 50 expected vendors.

Attendees can also learn about products and services, access health screenings and connect with local and national vendors.

The event has been a success in the past for both attendees and vendors.

"We do these Expo shows because they're good for us," said Bob Madden, from Craft Body Scan, during the May expo. "It's a good fit. We're here to help people, save lives. Not all shows are the same. I don't know what these guys did, if it's the loca-

tion or how they advertised, but they did a pretty good job."

Craft Body Scan is once again expected to be in attendance.

Some other vendors residents can anticipate seeing include Arizona Broadway Theatre, Cardiac Solutions, SCAN Health Plan, Sunland Plumbing, Heating, & HVAC and Sunshine Services.

"There's a lot of information here," said Jim Malloy, a Sun City resident, during last year's expo event. "I'm here to look for information."

In addition to the vendors, attendees can look forward to a 10:30 a.m. performance from the Sun City Poms and an 11:30 a.m. show from the Razzle Dazzle Dancers.

There will also be giveaways and door prize drawings.

For more information, call 888-665-3848.



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News in Brief

Surprise resident graduates from Lee University

Amya Elizabeth Burley, of Surprise, graduated with the bachelor of science in pastoral ministry from Lee University during the 197th commencement exercises Aug. 1.

According to a press release, Burley was among more than 120 students who received undergraduate and graduate diplomas.

Her academic milestone is another for the records at Lee University, which is a private, Christ-centered university in Cleveland, Tennessee, located in the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains.

Visit leeuniversity.edu.

After- and before-school programs expand in Surprise

The city of Surprise is expanding its partnership with West Valley Community Center to offer one of the Valley's most affordable before- and after-school programs for local families.

The program provides transportation to and from Surprise Elementary School, West Point Elementary School and Thompson Ranch Elementary School.

Families can also apply for full and partial scholarships to help keep before- and after-school care affordable.

Program hours include early drop-off beginning at 6:30 a.m., and pickup is available until 6:30 p.m.

Schools follow the Dysart Unified School District calendar and schedule.

For rates, scholarship information and enrolment, contact West

Valley Community Center at 623-583-0016 or email info@westvalleycommunitycenter.org.

Surprise unveils 'Fun Friday Jam' for students without school that day

The Surprise Parks and Recreation Department is launching a new "Fun Friday Jam" program, which is designed for students who do not have school on Fridays.

Created as a fun-filled recreational program, it offers children ages 5 to 12 a safe and engaging place to spend the day.

Participants can enjoy a variety of activities throughout the day, including sports and active games, arts and crafts, board games and plenty of time in the recreation center's newly renovated arcade room.

Fun Friday Jam is available 7:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. at Sierra Montana Recreation Center, 14861 N. Spring Lane, through Dec. 18.

No programming will be available Oct. 16 and Nov. 27.

Registration is offered monthly, with fees prorated based on the number of program days scheduled for that month.

For example, a month with four Fridays is \$120 for residents and \$140 for non-residents.

A month with only three Fridays is \$90 for residents and \$110 for non-residents.

Parents should send their child with a morning snack, lunch and a water bottle. An afternoon snack will be provided.

Space is limited, and monthly registration is required. Families are encouraged to register early to secure their child's spot.

Visit surpriseaz.gov/SurpriseRec.

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Public Notice

Public Notice:

Dr. Sanjay Bommanati is no longer with CenterWell Surprise as of July 31, 2026. Current patients will automatically be transferred to another provider at the center. If you are a patient and you choose not to continue care at CenterWell Surprise, you can obtain your medical records by calling 623-428-8189.

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Public Notice

PUBLIC NOTICE

Dr. Hamidulah Fala is no longer with CenterWell Parkview as of October 1, 2026. Current patients will automatically be transferred to another provider at the center. If you are a patient and you choose not to continue care at CenterWell Parkview, you can obtain your medical records by calling 623-728-0440.

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