

10 places to volunteer your time in Tempe

INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

For members of the community who have a few extra hours in their week or for someone looking to dive into a passion project, below are 10 Tempe nonprofits that are seeking volunteers year-round.

- **AZ HUGS:** This organization serves daily meals to the unhoused community at Moeur Park at Mill Avenue and Curry Road in Tempe beginning at 6:30 p.m. Volunteers should show up to the park at 6 p.m. to assist with setup. Go to azhugs.org.
- **City Hall Farmer's Market:** The city is still looking for volunteers for various tasks each Sunday through April. Volunteers can visit tempe.gov or fill out the Google form at tinyurl.com/2j7n8e7c
- **Tempe Community Action Agency:** Volunteers are needed Monday-Saturday for the food pantry and other opportunities include assisting with Meals on Wheels, neighbors helping neighbors, and special events. Those interested can visit tempeaction.org to sign up.
- **Aris Foundation.** Shifts begin at

• See **10 Places** Page 17



Tempe stakeholders deliberate Prop. 424

Business owners question the need for higher tax

By Madeline Bates
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

As ballots roll out to voters in Tempe, the over 87,000 registered voters will decide on Nov. 3 to approve or deny Proposition 424, a permanent sales tax that adds 0.5% to non-grocery purchases for public safety, transportation and municipally funded preschool.

The process is making many supporters skeptical.

"I've always supported the taxes and bonds but the poor legal language in this one is an immediate veto," said Elaine Joyal, a scientist and botanist with a doctorate from Arizona State University.

Joyal has lived in Tempe for over 35 years and raised her family here. She said she has almost always supported taxes and bonds to help schools and

• See **Prop. 424** Page 14

At right, Cassidy Lujan, owner of The Plant Mill, assists Arizona State University student Alex Sammarco, a regular at the store. (Independent Newsmedia, Madeline Bates)

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Cramping & Discomfort

Muscle cramping or general discomfort of the joints can happen throughout the body.



Hurts to Walk

Having trouble walking, moving your feet, and being mobile is a very common symptom of Neuropathy.



Balance Problems

Feeling off balance, not being able to stand for long periods of time, and just feeling off is a very common symptom.



Diabetic Nerve Pain

Pain caused by diabetes can impact the nerves and cause Neuropathy. This pain can come at any time and last for days, months or more.



Restless Leg

The inability to stop moving your legs or other extremities. Unwanted movement and pain in the legs.



Arthritis

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Fundraiser raises over \$5K for Alzheimer's support

Senior Helpers of Tempe brought the community together on Oct. 18 for its inaugural Paws for a Cause: Howl-O-Ween fundraiser at Kiwanis Park, raising over \$5,6000 for the Alzheimer's Association.

The family friendly event welcomed local businesses, families, and their four-legged companions for a morning of

Halloween fun while supporting a cause that impacts millions nationwide.

As a local veteran-owned home care company that supports families affected by Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia, this event was especially meaningful to Senior Helpers of Tempe.

Read more at yourvalley.net.

Tempe man faces \$1.6M federal tax fraud charge

A federal grand jury recently

returned a 17-count indictment against Nicholas Raymond Ponce, a 52-year-old Tempe man who authorities allege defrauded the U.S. of more than \$1.6 million.

The suspect filed fraudulent quarterly tax returns on behalf of his companies, Reduce My Card LLC and OPM Management Group LLC and falsely claimed that he was entitled to COVID-related tax credits based on wages paid to Form W-2 wage employees, according to a release from the U.S. Attorney's Office.

Read more at yourvalley.net.

Tempe to open park for older adults, dementia-diagnosed residents

By Madeline Bates
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

Tucked away off of Mill Avenue and All-American Way is what once was the Tempe Sister Cities Garden at Kiwanis Park. The city will be turning it into a space for older adults and those with dementia to be able to have safe sensory experiences.

The space is estimated to cost around \$700,000 budgeted through the Capital Improvement Plan and does not yet have an opening date. City staff said they are also pursuing grants to help fund the project.

City officials say the park is the first of its kind in the nation, with the city of Calgary in Canada announcing a similar concept in July.

"Tempe is setting an example, not only for Arizona but for communities across the country where they're looking for innovative ways to support peo-



Mayor Corey Woods gives remarks announcing the Dementia and Age Friendly Park space at Kiwanis Park in Tempe. (Pat Shanahan, City of Tempe)

ple as they age and ensure everyone feels included and valued," said Dana Kennedy, AARP Arizona's state director, at a press conference.

Tempe's council and some community members are excited to begin this

project as it has a personal element for many of them.

Lisa Zyriek, a longtime Tempe resident, said her father cared for her stepmother for years as she navigat-

• See **Park** Page 6



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Park

• From page 4

ed dementia and she wished there would have had a space outside of the house that was safe.

"My dad was on a mobility device and my stepmother had dementia, which made it hard for them to get out in nature. I really wanted them to find a spot where they could enjoy being in nature that would be safe for both of them," she said.

Councilmembers Doreen Garlid and Nikki Amberg said they both had a parent with cognitive decline and were excited to see this project come to life to honor them.

"When I first heard of this project I immediately thought of my mom and our family. This place would have been a safe haven for them and soon it's going to be that for so many other families," Amberg said.

Mayor Corey Woods says while this

project is in Tempe, he hopes people from across the Valley will enjoy it in its completion.

"I'm really glad that we have it here in this beautiful park in the center of the community, so the fact that we can make this accessible for people who live in north Tempe, south Tempe and all over the Valley makes me really excited," he said.

The space will also serve as a relaxing place for caregivers, with design elements that help aid safety and ensure that additional stress is not placed on the patient or caregiver.

Donations to fund the park will be operated through Tempe Diablos Charities.

Architect John Kane with Architekton said the firm will donate its time and design to the project.

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Housing, fire station planned at former Big Lots site

By Addison Beal

SPECIAL FOR INDEPENDENT
NEWSMEDIA

A former Big Lots property in Tempe could turn into a place where families live and firefighters answer their next emergency call.

The city is planning to combine affordable housing and a fire station at 950 E. Baseline Road. Before construction can move forward, officials must work out how the two would share the property and how the housing will be funded.

"We need housing. We need public safety," said Kyle Carman, Tempe's interim fire chief.

Irma Hollamby Cain, Tempe's deputy community health and human services director overseeing housing, said

the need for a fire station encouraged the search for property.

The purchase was the city's first use of its affordable housing bond, approved by voters in November 2024.

Finding available land in the area where the Tempe Fire Medical Rescue Department needed a station was a challenge, she said.

"The fact that we were able to find a property in the exact zone that fire needed to place a fire station was darn near miraculous," Hollamby Cain said.

Initial assessments showed both uses could fit on the property, she said. The city is now figuring out whether the project can be built and financed, as well as how the housing and fire station would run alongside each other.

• See **Housing** Page 9



A former Big Lots sits vacant at 950 E. Baseline Road in Tempe. The city plans to turn the property into affordable housing and a new fire station. (Special for Independent Newsmedia, Addison Beal)

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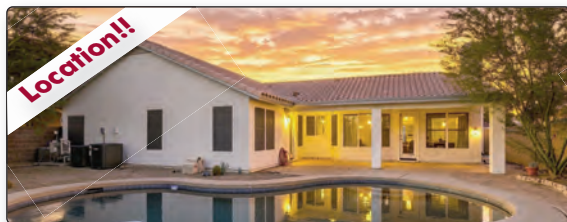
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Housing

• From page 8

For the fire department, the location is important to reduce emergency response times.

Sharing a property with housing raises questions about firefighters needing secure access to their station and residents needing separate entrances and ways to come and go.

Carman said streets along the front and back of the property help provide separate access. Officials also need to determine how utilities would work among the two uses and expressed concerns about noise and traffic.

As for the housing side, Hollamby Cain said the city expects a future developer to seek federal low-income housing tax credits. That funding would help build on the city's investment in the property.

She said income limits could be set at 60% or 80% of area median

income, depending on the financing.

The developer would manage the apartments, rather than the city, Hollamby Cain said.

Jennifer Dangremond, Copa Health's director of communications, said affordable housing projects require coordination between government agencies, developers and funding partners.

Although not involved in the Big Lots proposal, Copa Health's partnership with Tempe on La Victoria Commons gives an example of the amount of work involved in bringing affordable housing forward.

Dangremond said working families struggle to find housing they can afford, while seniors living on Social Security have similar challenges.

"Generally speaking, what we're seeing across the valley is seniors getting priced out of housing," she said.

She also warned that the time spent on planning, zoning and per-

mitting can increase development cost as work, materials and insurance become more expensive.

For the Big Lots property, the city's feasibility study will help guide decisions about the design, financing and shared operations.

Hollamby Cain said Tempe is looking into other communities that have combined housing and fire stations to learn what worked and what did not.

"We can learn from all their wins and their losses and hopefully avoid their losses and incorporate their wins," she said.

Addison Beal is a student at the Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication. Please submit comments at yourvalley.net/ letters or email them to AzOpinions@iniusa.org. We are committed to publishing a wide variety of reader opinions, as long as they meet our Civility Guidelines, <https://www.yourvalley.net/civility-checklist/>.

Kyrene provides information on school transitions

In December 2025, the Kyrene Governing Board voted to approve a plan for school consolidation to preserve the Kyrene experience now and for generations to come.

The plan approved by the Kyrene Governing Board closed three schools in the 2026-27 school year and three additional schools will close in the 2027-28 school year. Kyrene's two Dual Language academies became open-enrollment-only schools, with no attendance boundaries.

Nine additional Kyrene schools are experiencing boundary changes as a result of school consolidation.

To learn more and to stay up to date with changes in the district, visit kyrene.org.



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BUSINESS MOVES



Compiled by Madeline Bates
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

OPENINGS

1 Part of Roman, God of Fire, a fine Italian restaurant at 52 E. Rio Salado Parkway, **Mea Culpa**, brings elements of the Vatican to Tempe. The speakeasy concept opened at the end of September and offers biblically themed signature cocktails and small plates.

2 Mesa brewery **Phantom Fox** partnered with Mesa pizzeria Goat and Ram to open a combined concept on 525 S. Mill Ave. in downtown Tempe. Customers can now get pizza and beer all in one place

3 A new café — **Buffables Café** — comes to 1325 W. University Drive, serving acai bowls, smooth-

ies, coffee and waffles.

CLOSINGS

4 **Café Lalibela** has closed after 30 years. The longtime Ethiopian restaurant at 849 W. University Drive closed at the end of September.

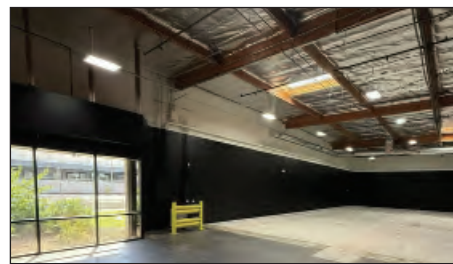
5 **Tempe Tavern** has closed after 15 years. The bar at 1810 E. Apache Blvd. was under fire following several incidents where police accused the bar of serving underage patrons. The business closed abruptly.

IN THE NEWS

6 A space of over 5,000 square feet in Tempe at 1140 W. Alameda Drive will soon be a baseball pitching training facility owned by **KNCT Athletics**. The new facility will feature two pitching mounds, a weight room, warm-up and cardio areas, open flex space, storage areas, and office space designed specifically for elite baseball training and player development. KNCT Athletics was founded by former Toronto Blue Jays pitcher Ben Baggett after battling an injury but eventually becoming a pro. The company will help aspiring pro pitchers reach their potential.

7 **Amazon** officials have confirmed a new delivery center will be located at 1501 E. Apache Blvd. and will offer delivery in 30 minutes to shoppers in the East Valley.

8 East Valley gastropub **Thirsty Lion** at 2000 E. Rio Salado Parkway. No. 1041 in the Tempe Marketplace will celebrate 15 years in business on Nov. 5. **Thirsty Lion** is a modern restaurant concept featuring an eclectic mix of multicultural cuisines, scratch kitchen recipes, craft cocktails, beer and wine. With lunch, dinner, weekend brunch, daily happy hour, group dining, and catering options,



KNCT ATHLETICS



THIRSTY LION



DUNMOR

It offers a lively, welcoming atmosphere for everything from casual meals to celebrations and events, a release states.

COMING SOON

9 **Dunmor**, a technology-enabled private real estate lender, will occupy one of four speculative office suites under construction at 1337 E. Rio Salado Parkway in Tempe on the west wing of the property's second floor and plans to relocate its corporate headquarters from Los Angeles to Arizona.

If you have a new business that has just opened, is under construction or is celebrating an anniversary, please email mbates@iniusa.org



The Arizona Animal Welfare League is hosting a Halloween Pet Walk event. (Submitted by Arizona Animal Welfare League)

28th Annual Walk to Save Animals returns

The Arizona Animal Welfare League, an Arizona no-kill shelter, is hosting its 28th annual Walk to Save Animals on Halloween, Saturday, Oct. 31 at Tempe Beach Park from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m.

This is AAWL's largest fundraiser of the year and is raising funds for its lifesaving programs, from adoptions and behavior support to rural rescue efforts and low-cost veterinary care for underserved communities.

General registration will be \$35 per person. Attendees can also register with their pet for an additional \$10 and receive a limited-edition leash cover. While pet registration is optional, leash covers are only available to the first 250 pets registered.

This year's Halloween-themed celebration invites walkers and their

four-legged companions to dress up in their favorite costumes while enjoying a morning of family-friendly fun. Throughout the event, guests can stop by trick-or-treat stations designed for both people and pets.

The first 500 attendees will receive a limited-edition Walk to Save Animals trick-or-treat bucket. Participants can choose between a 2K or 5K walk, with proceeds directly supporting AAWL's life-saving programs.

The event will feature pet-friendly activities for the entire family, including a play zone, on-site adoption center, local vendors, a bubble party, food trucks, and more. ABC15's Nick Ciletti will return as the emcee for this year's event.

To register for the Walk to Save Animals, go to WalktoSaveAnimals.org.



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'PROOF'

ABOUT: Oct. 24 - Nov. 8
Arizona Theatre Co. is hosting several shows this year at Tempe Center for the Arts, 700 W. Rio Salado Parkway in Tempe.

INFO: The latest show tells of the daughter of a mathematician who finds a discovery following his death.

WEB: Tickets at
tempecenterforthearts.com

'WATER FOR ELEPHANTS'

ABOUT: Oct. 27 - Nov. 1
The Arizona State University Gammage Theater's next show for the season is a drama and romance about circus workers in the 1920s.

Gammage, 1200 S. Forest Ave. in

Tempe

INFO: Upcoming shows are:
Dec. 1-6: Dr. Seuss' "How the Grinch Stole Christmas!" The Musical
Jan. 1-3, 2027: "Beetlejuice"
Jan. 26-31, 2027: "The Outsiders"
Feb. 23-28, 2027: "Operation Mincemeat"
April 20-25, 2027: "Buena Vista Social Club"

May 18-23, 2027: "BOOP!" The Musical

June 22-27, 2027: "The Sound of Music"

Aug. 24-29, 2027: "Death Becomes Her"

WEB: Tickets for all shows at
asugammage.com

TARDEADA

ABOUT: Nov. 1

To celebrate Dia de los Muertos or Day of the Dead, Tempe is holding the annual event from noon to 8 p.m. at the Tempe Community Complex at 3500 S. Rural Road.

INFO: Live music, games, crafts and food trucks will be available to celebrate this holiday as well as the end of Hispanic Heritage Month.

TEMPE JAM

ABOUT: Nov. 14

This free event brings live music, local art and food and drinks to the Tempe Sports Complex at 8401 S. Hardy Drive in Tempe. The event is 6-10 p.m. and all are welcome. Space-themed outfits encouraged.

YOUR EVENTS, PLEASE

We welcome your events for our neighborhood To-Do List page. Please send the following for publication in our calendar: name of the event, time, date and location with address and if there is a cost to attend.

Email us: aznews@iniusa.org



EVENTS

The Mesa Independent will

host the Mesa Senior Expo Friday, Nov. 13. Individuals wishing to participate may reach out to the sales team.

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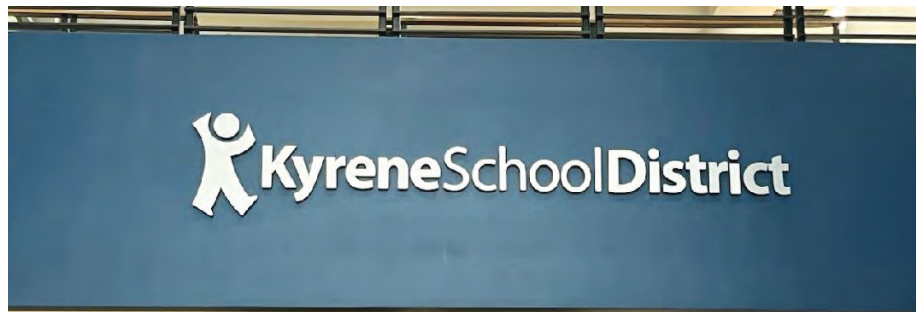
School Board discusses Prop. 320 on November ballot

By Madeline Bates
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

Voters in the Kyrene School District will have the chance to vote to approve or deny Proposition 320, an initiative that originated at the Arizona State Legislature that would require schools to spend 60% of their budget in direct instructional expenses beginning in the 2027-28 school year.

Superintendent Laura Toenjes said many school districts across the country do not reach the 60% threshold, and that Kyrene was also below that line. Many Arizona schools are also below this threshold. Kyrene is currently over 2% under the threshold, even as one of the top 101 districts in the state for classroom funding.

"There's no guidance as to why 60% was chosen as the number, but we do know that it is a very small number of schools that are reaching that and the



A sign that reads 'Kyrene School District' on a blue wall of a balcony at the Kyrene Administrative Building. (Independent Newsmedia, Madeline Bates)

ones that are have as few as six kids in the building," she said.

The district defines instructional expenses as teaching expenses and staff, curriculum materials, and field trips.

All public school districts in Maricopa, Pima and Pinal counties will vote on the measure and districts larger than 7,500 students in other parts of

the state qualify to vote on the measure. The proposition does not apply to charter schools.

There is no new funding that comes with the measure.

Chris Hermann, chief financial officer for the district, said that to achieve a 60% threshold, the district would need to make budget cuts or reallocate funds to meet the requirement.



MORE ONLINE
Find more education stories online at yourvalley.net.

"Arizona ranks 49th in the country for per-pupil spending, and Prop. 320 puts zero additional funds into districts," he said.

Should a district not comply with the proposition, it would see a funding decrease of 25% from the Classroom Site Fund for the first year, with a 25% increase every year after until meeting compliance.

Kyrene is expected to receive \$12.1 million for the 2026-27 school year, which would mean noncompliance would cost the district over \$3 million.

To voice your opinion on this story, connect with us at AzOpinions@iniui-sa.org.

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Prop. 424

• From page 1

transportation and is willing to support measures that improve the city, but is skeptical about the legal language on public safety and is concerned about the recent police activity with incidents of force and lawsuits costing the city millions of dollars.

"Until they can demonstrate professional restraint, I am loath to give them more money," Joyal said.

In July, Arizona State University senior Eryn Bonner was out with friends when police intervened after her friend and a passerby on Mill Avenue clashed. Police bodycam footage and business security footage show Bonner being pushed to the ground and punched while being put in handcuffs. The interaction made national headlines after the city pressed charges for resisting arrest and interfering with police.

Tempe Police also have a \$3 million lawsuit against them after Tucson resident Kathleen Tierney posted an image from the television show Game of Thrones on social media with the caption referring to that night's council meeting. The meeting was canceled with officers citing a "social media threat." Tempe Police arrested Tierney in her home and brought her to a Tempe jail. She is suing for wrongful arrest and defamation.

Other residents have similar concerns.

Ron Tapscott is also a longtime city resident and says that he's skeptical about the amount of funding, as the city claims that the deficit is around \$25 million and the first year of the tax could bring in over \$50 million.

"They are not good fiduciary agents to protect people's tax money," Tapscott said.

The city recently spent over \$2 million on a sign above Mill Avenue that says "Mill Ave." The sign has gained controversy as it was part of the Down-

WHAT IS PROPOSITION 424?

Proposition 424 is a measure referred to voters by the Tempe City Council.

If approved, it would establish a new 0.5% transaction privilege (sales) tax and use tax, excluding the sales tax on food for home consumption purchased from stores such as grocery and convenience stores.

The proposed tax revenue would be allocated as follows:

- 0.3% for public safety and programs to strengthen the overall security of Tempe's parks and neighborhoods.
- 0.1% for the operation and improvement of Tempe's public transit system, including pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure.
- 0.1% for early childhood care and preschool education programs. Program eligibility and enrollment priority would be provided first to qualified Tempe residents, followed by teachers employed by Tempe school districts, City of Tempe employees, and individuals employed by Tempe-based businesses.

If approved by voters, Tempe's sales tax rate would increase from 1.8% to 2.3% beginning Jan. 1, 2027. The proposed increase would not apply to food for home consumption purchased from stores such as grocery and convenience stores; those purchases would continue to be taxed at the current 1.8% rate.

The proposed 0.5% tax would add an estimated \$0.05 in tax for every \$10 spent, or \$0.50 for every \$100 spent on taxable purchases.

Source: City of Tempe

town Tempe Refresh Project and did not require a public discussion before approval.

"They are substantially clear about the symbolic value that the city does not honor taxpayer money and that they wastefully spend this money on the various different projects that they have," Tapscott said.

Supporters of the tax, like the chair of the Tempe Forward PAC, Tom Duensing, say the state Legislature's ban on residential rental tax and a reduction of state revenue will create a deficit that could negatively impact city services.

"Tempe suffered the most significant loss of revenue of any other city in Arizona," Duensing said. "Prop. 424 is an equitable solution because it exempts food for home consumption."

He explained that Tempe businesses and visitors will also be contributing, as the tax applies to anything bought in the city.

"It should not be a debate. This is a strictly business decision," Duensing

• See **Prop. 424** Page 16

VOTING LOCATIONS IN TEMPE

Ballots have been sent and debates have been finalized as Arizona voters prepare to make decisions for Election Day 2026.

Voting locations across the Valley are now open for registered voters to vote in person or drop off their ballots.

In-person voting is open in Tempe at Sun Devil Fitness Center, 400 E. Apache Blvd. Open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday-Saturday.

Ballot drop box locations now open: Tempe City Hall

Locations opening Oct. 23:

- Pyle Adult Recreation Center, 655 E. Southern Ave. in Tempe. Open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday-Saturday. Closed on Sundays. Open 6 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Nov. 3.
- Knights of Pythias Lodge, 1606 E Apache Blvd.

The following locations are open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Nov. 2 and 6 a.m. to 7 p.m. Nov. 3:

- Dayspring United Methodist Church, 1365 E. Elliot Road
 - Tempe Mountain Park Health Center, 1840 E. Broadway Road
 - University Presbyterian Church, 139 E. Alameda Drive
- Opening Nov. 3 6 a.m. to 7 p.m. All voters must be in line by 7 p.m.:
- Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1111 E. Knox Road and 6001 S, Lakeshore Drive
 - University Lutheran Church, 340 E. 15th St.
 - Escalante Community Center, 2150 E. Orange St.



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Jeremiah Dempster

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Prop. 424

• From page 14

said.

But business owners have concerns as well.

Cassidy Lujan, owner of The Plant Mill in downtown Tempe, is a Scottsdale resident and has considered moving the business to Old Town Scottsdale for cheaper rent and higher foot traffic.

"It sort of feels like giving the people a little bit of what they need but I think a lot of people in Tempe are tired of giving more money to public service and then not having a better understanding of how that money's actually used," Lujan said.

Other businesses have considered a move as well to downtown areas that have free and subsidized parking, less nightlife activity and other benefits for small business owners.

Kira Gullion, owner of the Lizard Head Trading Co. next door to The

Plant Mill, has similar concerns. She says she's considering moving the business to Mesa to help curb rising costs.

"I've already considered moving and this would give me another reason to do so," Gullion said.

In a debate on the issue with state Sen. Mitzi Epstein, Tempe Mayor Corey Woods and president of the Tempe Forward PAC Tom Duensing, the three disagreed on how it would impact consumers.

Duensing claims that a household income of \$93,000 would only spend \$13 a year toward the tax. He also claimed that the tax was not "regressive" since it impacted everyone who bought goods in Tempe.

Epstein pushed back.

"It's this moment in America when we need to say no, gosh darn it. I am not going to vote for even one more unfair regressive sales tax," Epstein said.

According to the U.S. Census Bu-

reau, Tempe's median household income is around \$78,000, and more than 15% of residents live at or below the poverty line.

But supporters argue that the benefits could help those in need.

Part of the sales tax would fund TempePRE, the city's subsidized preschool program that is currently only eligible to Tempe residents who qualify by income. Should the proposition pass, the service could become available to Tempe business owners and people who work in Tempe regardless of residence.

Lujan and Gullion are not Tempe residents but could qualify under these proposed changes.

Lujan said that as the proposition is written to include transportation, preschool and public safety, it creates a distraction for voters who may oppose one item but support another.

"Asking for more money with a discrepancy about how funds are used feels icky," she said.

Ballots have been sent to voters on the early voting list and polling places across the Valley are open for voters. Voters are encouraged to mail their ballots no later than Oct. 27 and all in-person voters must be in line to vote by 7 p.m. on Nov. 3.

Should the tax pass it would go into effect beginning in 2027.

To voice your opinion on this story, connect with us at AzOpinions@inivsa.org.

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10 Places

• From page 1

4:30 p.m. on Tuesday nights at University Presbyterian Church, 139 E. Alameda Drive. Volunteers can sign up online at arisfoundation.org.

• Feed My Starving Children: Individuals and groups can sign up to pack nonperishable items to feed children worldwide. Two-hour time slots are open from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday-Saturday, at 1100 W. Grove Park-way in Tempe.

• Lost Our Home Pet Rescue: Anyone over the age of 8 can volunteer to help a shelter that takes in pets when their owners need short-term, round-the-clock care for them. Training is required for all volunteers. Times vary, and volunteers are asked to commit to six hours per month. To sign up go to lostourhome.org.

• Hackett House: This historical property in the heart of downtown Tempe is entirely volunteer-based,



TCAA Volunteers Cindy Cross and Katelyn Pickett stand with full boxes for distribution. TCAA helps distribute food and offers shelter to those in need. (Submitted by TCAA)

with events year-round and open to the public to sell goods at 95 W. Fourth Street in downtown Tempe. To learn more or sign up go to hacketthouse.org.

• Treasures 4 Teachers: Treasures 4 Teachers helps connect educators with resources and tools for the classroom and beyond. Volunteer activities and times vary, but the organization

welcomes all ages and abilities as well as groups or individuals. The offices and warehouse are at 3025 S. 48th St. in West Tempe. Go to treasures4teachers.org.

• City Hope Tempe: City Hope Tempe is a food pantry that allows all guests to shop at no cost for food and hygiene items. Distribution hours are 9-11 a.m. every Saturday. To learn more about how to apply to volunteer, visit cityhopetempe.org

• The Salvation Army: The Salvation Army is looking for volunteers to help with the holiday season and the food pantries in Tempe and Mesa. The Tempe offices are at 2621 S. Rural Road in Tempe. To find a volunteer opportunity, visit volunteer.usawest.org.

• Keep Tempe Beautiful: Keep Tempe Beautiful hosts monthly park cleanups where all are welcome to join. Events are 8 a.m.-11 p.m. on Saturdays monthly at different parks in Tempe. To find a cleanup event visit keeptempebeautiful.org.



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REAL ESTATE



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Housing market hits a September speed bump

INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

Greater Phoenix's single-family housing market held onto year-to-date sales gains through September, but the month brought a sharper slowdown in new contract activity, according to data from Phoenix Realtors. Closed sales dropped 4.9%, and new listings dropped 3.7% in September this year compared to last year, but pending sales plummeted 40.1%.

For Tempe, closed sales dropped 19.3% while new listings increased 8.5% in September 2026 compared to September 2025, with pending sales nosediving 44.1%.

Year over year, national closed sales were down 1.2% in September and Greater Phoenix was down 4.9%

for the month. Nationally, inventory of homes for sale rose to its highest level in more than 10 years, up 5.9% from last year, according to the data. In the local region, inventory rose 6.7% despite fewer new listings hitting the market.

"September often marks the start of increased fall activity, but this year people are navigating more affordability pressure and rate uncertainty," said Sammy Glassman, board president of Phoenix Realtors. "Buyers and sellers are still active, but when rates keep moving, it can cause people to pause before making a major financial decision."

Year-to-date trends tend to smooth out the statistical highs and lows, and compared to last year's numbers, the

first nine months are pretty close to even. Year-to-date closed sales rose 2.9% while pending sales dropped 2.2% compared to last year. New listings were down 2.1%.

The median sales price of a single-family home slipped 2.1% year over year in September from nearly \$485,000 to \$475,000. The year-to-date median sales price was essentially flat, rising from \$480,000 to \$482,000, up 0.4%. Homes sold slightly faster in September, with days on the market dropping from 79 to 77. Year to date, that number rose from 74 to 78 days.

"Affordability today is often more about the monthly payment than the purchase price alone," Glassman said. "Seller concessions can be a strategic tool for both sides. Buyers may use them to buy down their rate or reduce upfront costs, while sellers can use them to help address affordability concerns and compete more effectively, especially when resale homes are being compared with new construction."

Single-family homes received 98.1% of list price in September, unchanged from last year, even as buyers continued to negotiate concessions to help address the overall cost of the transaction.

Even with fewer new listings in Sep-

HOUSING BY THE NUMBERS



New listings: 89

(+8.5%)

Pending sales: 38 (-44.1%)

Closed sales: 67 (-19.3%)

Days on market until sale: 79

(+16.2%)

Median sales price: \$525,000

(-1.9%)

Average sales price: \$621,107

(+4.4%)

Percent of list price received:

97.7% (+0.5%)

Inventory of homes for sale:

288 (+25.2%)

Months supply of inventory:

3.9 (+21.9%)

(Percent change reflects year-over-year data for the month of September).

Source: Phoenix Realtors

tember, the inventory of homes for sale increased 6.7%, with the months supply at 4.3 months, compared to four months last year.

Learn more about Phoenix Realtors at phoenixrealtors.com.



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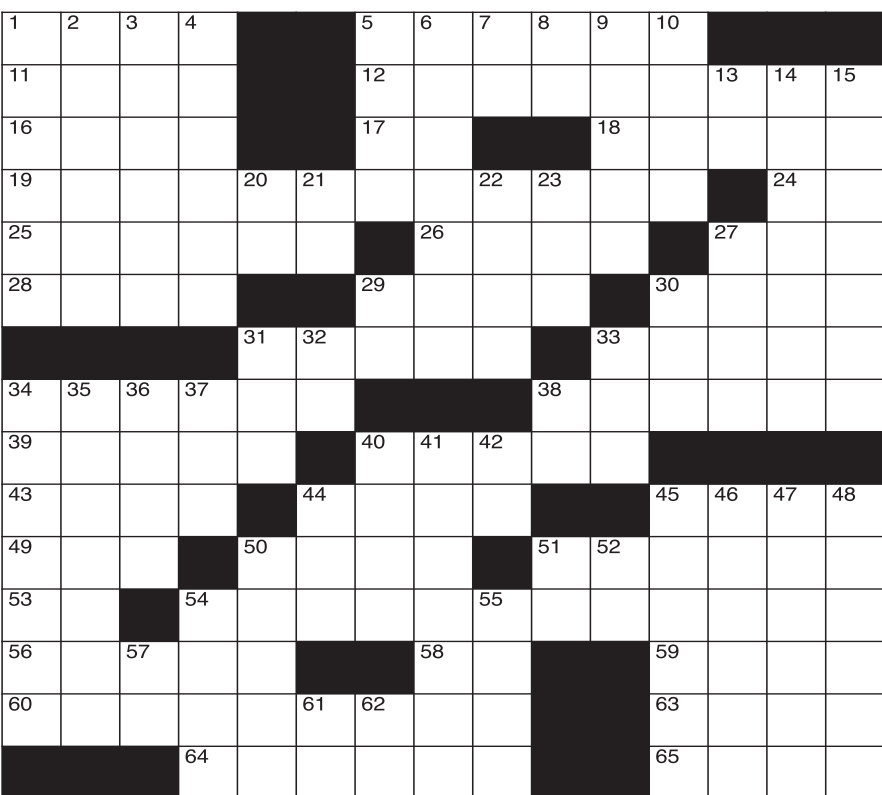
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1. Nocturnal rodent
5. Requesting
11. Give temporarily
12. Frivolousness
16. Military arm
17. "Westworld" actor Harris
18. Persian Gulf port city
19. Air hostesses
24. Partner to "Pa"
25. Percussion instrument
26. Raincoats
27. Lower the light
28. Asian mountain range
29. Every one of two or more
30. Lack of difficulty
31. A public announcement of a proposed marriage
33. Reduces in size
34. Make an impact
38. Serviceman
39. A French river
40. Prehistoric people
43. Messenger ribonucleic acid
44. "Layla" singer Clapton
45. Ancient Greek sophist
49. Largest English dictionary (abbr.)
50. "Top Gun: Maverick" actor Powell

51. A way to disentangle
53. Atomic #93
54. Manifesting approval
56. Indigo bush
58. Larry and Curly's pal
59. Off-Broadway theater award
60. Fencers
63. Masses of fish eggs
64. Passerine birds
65. Arrange systematically

CLUES DOWN

1. Colorless part of blood
2. Of a main artery
3. Photog's tool
4. Blues Traveler hit "But ___"
5. Grew older
6. Not the leader
7. ___ Lang: country singer
8. A driver's license is one
9. Nests of pheasants
10. Antelopes
13. One quintillion bytes
14. Japanese lute
15. A type of cat
20. It cools your home
21. Dorm official
22. Pouches
23. German trigraph

27. Form of Persian
29. ___ route
30. Upper body part
31. Bridge building degree
32. Indicates position
33. Political action committee
34. Edible nuts
35. Front part of a quadruped
36. Locate
37. Geological time
38. Of I
40. Northern Utah city
41. They work in the trenches
42. Hammer is one
44. Tall deciduous tree
45. Performers
46. Slang for mistake
47. More open
48. Most slick
50. Provokes
51. Home of the NCAA's Flyers
52. Sodium
54. Large fish of the mackerel family
55. Not one
57. ___ and behold
61. Atomic #21
62. "The Great Lakes State"

SOLUTION ON PAGE 22

Neighborhood Mediation Program launched

Chandler's residents now have a free, voluntary way to resolve neighbor-to-neighbor disputes without going to court.

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For more information on mediation services or to submit mediation interest form, visit chandleraz.gov/NeighborMediation.



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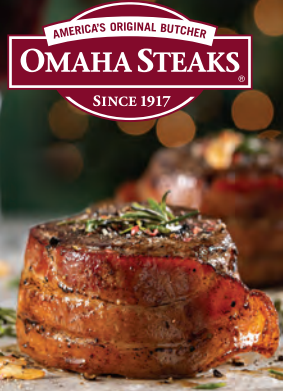
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PUZZLE ON PAGE 20

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S	T	E	W	A	R	D	E	S	S	E	S
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N	P			C	O	M	M	E	N	D	A
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Chandler • February 23, 2027 • Sun Lakes Country Club

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