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NOVEMBER 2026
Arizona's Nonpartisan Newspaper
FREE

City to consider $250K roundabout art agreement

By Richard H. Dyer
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

The Apache Junction City Council in November is to vote on a $250,000 professional services agreement with artist Karen Yank to design, purchase and install art within the roundabout at State Route 88 and Superstition Boulevard.

The council is to meet at 7 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 3, in the council chambers, 300 E. Superstition Blvd.

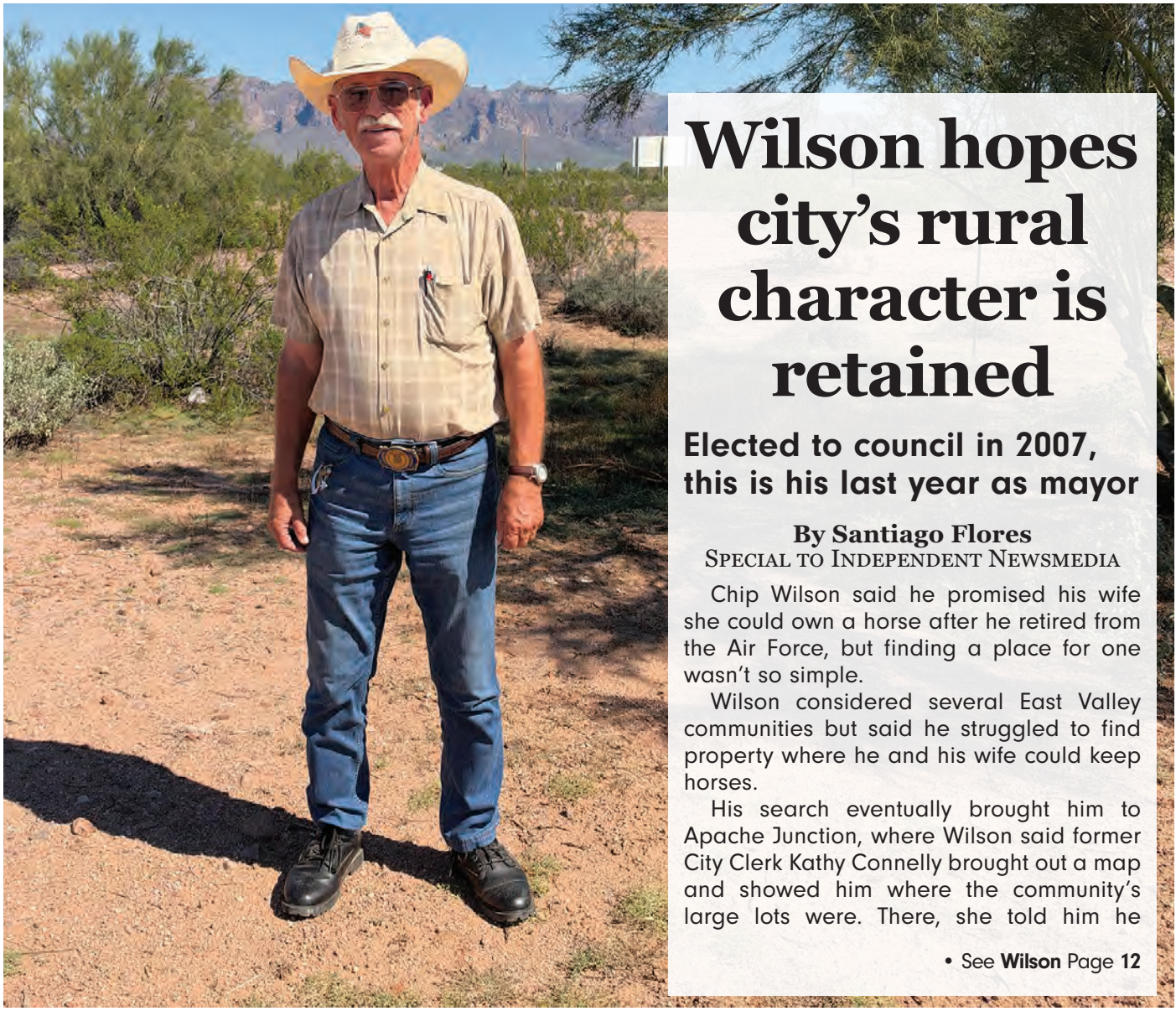
Community members and the city council have expressed interest in putting a sculpture at the roundabout, Planner Erika Hernandez said during an Oct. 19 council work session.

It would be paid for with Apache Junction's Art in Public and Private Development Program, which is funded by an art fee within qualified building permit fees.

"It is funded entirely by fees for new commercial, multifamily and mixed-use developments. No taxpayer funds are used for public art," Hernandez said.

"The total budget for this project

• See **Roundabout** Page **5**



Wilson hopes city's rural character is retained

Elected to council in 2007, this is his last year as mayor

By Santiago Flores
SPECIAL TO INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

Chip Wilson said he promised his wife she could own a horse after he retired from the Air Force, but finding a place for one wasn't so simple.

Wilson considered several East Valley communities but said he struggled to find property where he and his wife could keep horses.

His search eventually brought him to Apache Junction, where Wilson said former City Clerk Kathy Connelly brought out a map and showed him where the community's large lots were. There, she told him he

• See **Wilson** Page **12**

Apache Junction Mayor Chip Wilson, 78, who is preparing to leave public office after serving as a council member, vice mayor and now mayor (Submitted photo/Santiago Flores)

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NEWS IN BRIEF

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See more Business news at yourvalley.net

Fire district replacing ladder-truck engine

Independent Newsmedia

Ladder 264, a fire truck operated by the Superstition Fire and Medical District, will get a new engine under a recently approved $96,000 contract.

The SFMD governing board voted unanimously on Oct. 21 to approve a consent agenda with other items including paying $96,525.51 to Velocity Truck Centers.

Velocity is a sole-source authorized Detroit Engine dealer to provide the warranty-eligible installation, David Pohlmann, SFMD assistant chief for support services, wrote in a memo to the governing board.

The contract with Velocity Truck Centers shows the engine will be replaced in a 2013 Pierce Manufacturing vehicle.

Read full story at yourvalley.net.



Station 264's ladder truck is shown taking part in the 2025 Veterans Day parade in Apache Junction. (Independent Newsmedia/Richard H. Dyer)

AJPD getting its first electric police bicycle

Independent Newsmedia

The Apache Junction Police Department has received $83,800 in grants from the Arizona Governor's Office of Highway Safety that includes money to buy its first electric bicycle.

A Trek electric police bicycle will be purchased out of $11,800 awarded to fund bicycle and pedestrian safety enforcement overtime expenses, AJPD Lt. Seth Painter said during an Oct. 5 council work session.

"It will be the first electric police bicycle in Apache Junction history," he said. "So the bicycle — we were awarded $4,800 out of that amount. So it's essentially the cost of one complete police bicycle."

AJPD has 10 bike-certified officers, Painter, a bike officer, said.

Read full story at yourvalley.net.

Council approves $402K asphalt-crushing contract

Independent Newsmedia

The city of Apache Junction is paying more than $402,000 for a business to crush and size asphalt.

The Apache Junction City Council on Oct. 20 voted unanimously to approve a consent agenda with other items including awarding a contract to Viasun Corp. for asphalt concrete crushing services.

The work would be through Pinal County cooperative contract No. 175623 for $402,489.03, which includes a 10% contingency for unforeseen change orders.

The contract is budgeted for this fiscal year through Highway User Revenue Fund monies dedicated for the purpose of street construction and maintenance, Public Works Deputy Director Shane Kiesow wrote in a memo to council.

"The work involves crushing and sizing recycled asphalt into aggregates to be used for various new construction and maintenance projects," he said. "The work will

• See **Community** on page **6**

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

Nov. 6, 2010

With 28 freshmen on the roster and competing against larger schools at the Division II level for the first time, the Apache Junction High School Marching Band rose to the challenge, earning an "Excellent" rating at the Arizona Band & Orchestra Directors Association Marching Band Festival.

Roundabout

• From page 1

is $250,000 paid in phases," she said. "If you approve the agreement, we expect to have a preliminary design by January next year. And then if you approve the design then we expect to have the installation by January 2028."

A request for qualifications for artists was opened March 31 to select an artist to design, fabricate and install art at the SR88 roundabout. The RFQ closed on April 30 and 113 artists applied, Hernandez said.

Panel members to choose an artist included Apache Junction Public Art Commission Chairman Jeff Danford, artist and former Goodyear Arts and Culture Commission Chairman Alex Kohli, public artist Laurie Lundquist and Apache Junction Public Art Consultant Dianne Cripe.

Yank has designed, fabricated and installed more than 60 large sculptures including roundabouts in Carson City, Nevada, and Bend, Oregon. She mainly uses Corten steel, stainless steel and concrete, Hernandez said.



The cost of the sculpture in the roundabout would be paid for with Apache Junction's Art in Public and Private Development Program, which is funded by an art fee within qualified building permit fees. (File photo/Arianna Grainey)

Council discussion

Councilmember Bambi Johnson asked if Yank's ultramodern style of art would fit Apache Junction's brand of being a small Arizona Western town.

"I'm a little concerned whether this is going to be some abstract thing," she said.

The artist is to reach out to stakeholders, talk to them and get suggestions, Hernandez said.

"And she'll be happy to listen to you and have a discussion about her own ideas and what your ideas are and see if maybe they can commingle together. But yes that is part of her contract. She is supposed to talk to stakeholders," she said.

Councilmember Darryl Cross said he had similar concerns.

"Definitely concerned based on some of the artwork that was presented here and some of the artwork that I've looked up. Her artwork seems to be more of an abstract — not realism — and I would think that especially the gateway to the Superstitions, the gateway to our horse community, would be more something in line with representing that in a realistic form," he said.

Councilmember Peter Heck asked about phasing on the agreement including the city paying the artist before the council votes to approve or deny the proposed design.

"Does that mean we get to the point where she would have completed phase one, gotten paid $30,000, and then we say 'Uh-uh, that's not going to work.'" Heck said. "Tell me how that works."

The first phase is approving an agreement. The second phase is the artist providing a preliminary design, Hernandez said.

"That's where you can ask for changes or approve it. She cannot pass this stage until that point. So she would only be collecting up to $10,000," she said.

Richard H. Dyer can be reached at rdyer@iniusa.org, or on X @rhdyer. 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, yourvalley.net/civility-checklist/.

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Community
• From page 4

last for about two months within the October-December 2026 timeframe."

Read full story at yourvalley.net.

$1.3M contract OK'd for work on Lost Dutchman

INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

Sunland Asphalt & Construction will be paid more than $1.3 million for the reconstruction and paving of Lost Dutchman Boulevard between Ironwood Drive and Meridian Drive in Apache Junction.

The Apache Junction City Council on Oct. 6 voted 6-0 to approve a $1,353,113.47 contract with Sunland as part of a consent agenda with other items. Councilmember Darryl Cross was absent.

The work is through a 1 Government Procurement Alliance cooperative contract and includes a 10% contingency for unforeseen change orders.

The project is budgeted for this fiscal year through the Pinal County half-cent road excise tax monies dedicated for the purpose of street maintenance, Public Works Deputy Director Shane Kiesow wrote in a staff memo to council.

Read full story at yourvalley.net.

AJPD seeks public's help following arrest

The Apache Junction Police Department is asking for the community's help following the arrest of a 32-year-old man in connection with the kidnapping and assault of an 18-year-old woman.

At approximately 1 a.m. on Sept. 24 the woman was arriving home from work in the area of 16th Avenue and San Marcos Drive when a man allegedly approached her at gunpoint and forced her to leave with him. The man was later identified as Pedro A. Espinoza Torres, 32, police said.

The woman was held against her will for several hours and reportedly assaulted multiple times before being released. She suffered severe injuries and later sought treatment at a local hospital, where staff notified law enforcement.

Anyone who has had a similar encounter with Torres, recognizes the vehicle in connection with suspicious activity, or has information that may assist detectives is asked to contact Apache Junction Police at 480-982-8260 and reference Case No. 260924013.

Torres is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty in a court of law, police said.

Read full story at yourvalley.net.

Help shape the future of AJUSD schools

Apache Junction Unified School District is hosting an event in November to hear ideas on how to shape the future of its schools.

"We're inviting families, staff, community and business members to share their ideas through our Tomorrow's Schools Initiative. We want to hear your ideas for the future: what we should build on, what new opportunities we should explore, and what you believe will make the biggest difference for our students in the years ahead," it states in a release. "Your ideas will help us better understand our community's priorities as we plan for the future of AJUSD schools. We hope you'll consider being part of the conversation."

The "conversation" is 4:30-6 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 5, at the AJUSD District Office, 1575 W. Southern Ave. in Apache Junction.

To give everyone a chance to contribute, approximately 30-35 participants can be accommodated. To RSVP, go to ajusd.org/26122?articleID=81402.



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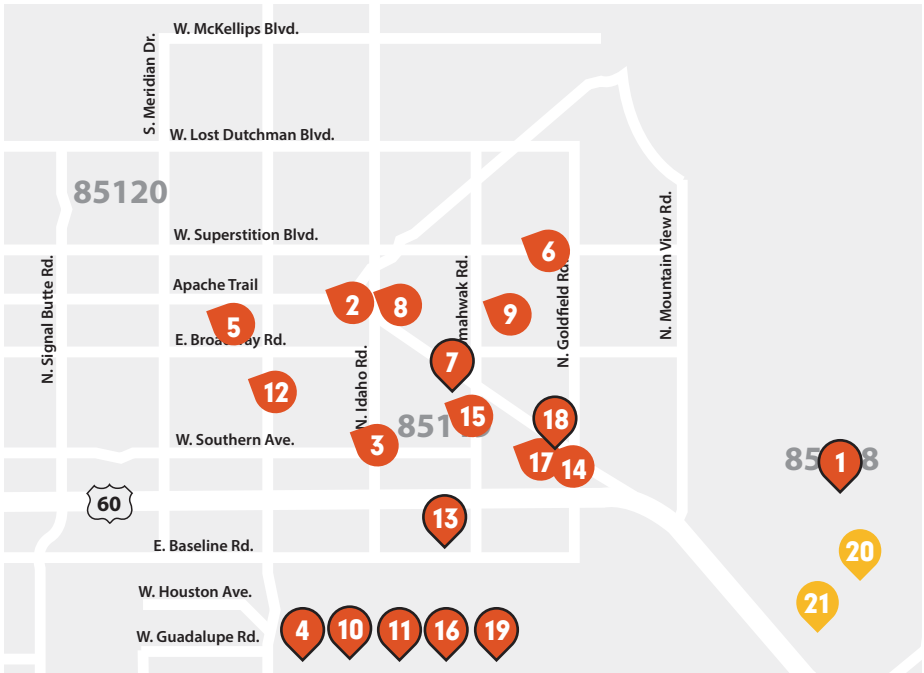
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BUSINESS MOVES



Compiled by Richard H. Dyer
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

BUSINESS LICENSES

There were 41 business licenses issued in September 2026 in the city of Apache Junction. The following business licenses from Apache Junction and Gold Canyon are listed by name — including doing business as or dba; address; city; contact name; and North American Industry Classification System (code). For the full list, go to yourvalley.net.

1 **Janet Guidry**; 3431 S. Edgemore Road in Gold Canyon; Janet Guidry; Other Technical And Trade Schools (611519)

2 Premium Velocity Auto LLC dba **Jiffy Lube Store No. 3364**; 428 W. Apache Trail; Pamela Lamont; Automotive Oil Change And Lubrication Shops (811191).

3 **Between The Trees Collective**; 471 W. 21st Ave.; Jacqueline Sayre; Marketing Consulting Services (541613), All Other Miscellaneous Schools And Instruction (611699).

4 **Petramath LLC**; 2435 W Stradling Ave.; Joshua Peterson; Software Publishers (513210)

5 **Dollface Thrift LLC**; 2125 W. Apache Trail Suite No. 104; Jaiden Coleman; Used Merchandise Stores (453300)

6 **Scoop Squad AZ LLC**; 2794 E. Superstition Blvd.; Ralph Hernandez; Other Nonhazardous Waste Treatment And Disposal (562219), Pet Care (Except Veterinary) Services (812910).

7 **Fabulous Automotive Specialist**; 1708 E. 17th Ave. Lot No. 9; Asmar Mako; Motor Vehicle Towing (488410)

8 Divine Guidance dba **End Of Life Support Doula**; 100 S. Idaho Road No. 2097 Cherokee; Lisa Vickery; All Other Personal Services (812990)

9 Anthony Ajamian dba **Toziels Wonderhouse**; 1639 E. Junction St.; Anthony Ajamian; Electronic Shopping And Mail-Order Houses (454110), Art Dealers (459920).

10 **Superstition Sips LLC**; 1185 W. Treasure Trail; Kristi Manzer; Snack And Nonalcoholic Beverage Bars (From 722213) (722515)

11 **Big Mamas Thrift LLC**; 1724 W. Solstice Ave.; Bianca Wendell; Used Merchandise Retailers (459510)

12 **Foot And Ankle Specialists Of Arizona PLLC**; 850 S. Ironwood Drive No. 110; Sean Brown; Offices Of Podiatrists (621391)

13 **4RB Properties LLC**; 1256 E. Baseline Ave.; Vince De Sotomayor; Lessors Of Nonresidential Buildings (Except Miniwarehouses) (531120)

14 Cut Glass LLC dba **Cut Glass Auto LLC**; 2691 S. Prospector Point Road; Cheyanne Jamison; Automotive Glass Replacement Shops (811122)

15 **Pro View LLC**; 1544 E. 18th Ave.; Danielle Wheeler; Commercial And Institutional Building Construction (236220), Other Building Equipment Contractors (238290)"

16 **Vine Haven Assisted Living LLC**; 10255 S. Holandes Drive; Martha D Balambi; Assisted Living Facilities For The Elderly (623312)

17 **Lavender Touch Elder Care LLC**; 2328 E. 25th Ave. ; Sharon Ford; Services For The Elderly And Persons With Disabilities (624120)

18 **Fixwright RV LLC**; 2024 S. Cortez Road No. 25; Nick A Westendorf Jr; All Other Personal Services (812990)

19 Sharp Stixs LLC dba **Sharp Stixs**; 1806 W. Stanton Ave.; Samuel Shelton; Sporting Goods Retailers (459110)



BUSINESS LICENSES

A business license is issued to a person conducting business activity within the city of Apache Junction or any person or business having a privilege tax or use tax license listing Apache Junction per city code. The fee for a business license is $50. An application must be approved along with the fee paid before a business may lawfully engage in business in the city of Apache Junction. Call 480-474-5050 or email businesslicense@apachejunctionaz.gov. Applications are at apachejunctionaz.gov/997/Business-License.

LIQUOR LICENSES

The Pinal County Board of Supervisors voted unanimously Oct. 14 as part of a consent agenda with other items to recommend the Arizona Department of Liquor Licenses and Control approve:

20 an application for change of acquisition of control liquor license permit of Andrea Dahlman Lewkowitz for **Walgreens No. 06440**, 6951 S. Kings Ranch Road in Gold Canyon.

21 a series 9 liquor store license in an application and interim permit of Paramjit Singh for **Gold Canyon Liquor**, 6517 S. Kings Ranch Road in Gold Canyon.

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

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GOVERNMENT UPDATE

New solar array to lower electricity costs at sewer district

By Richard H. Dyer
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

The solar array that was recently connected at the Apache Junction Sewer District facilities on South Ironwood Drive is to shave 35% from the district's $25,000-a-month utility bill.

"Solar is operational... We've been testing it and (SRP) yesterday were also testing it some more so we hope to have more on that at the next meeting," Sewer District Manager Darron Anglin said during the sewer board's Oct. 27 meeting.

A letter of acceptance was received from SRP, a sewer official said.

"It will be fun to see the bill go swoosh," Chairman Kathleen Waldron said of it going down.

The solar array with a total project cost of $926,462 is on the northeast corner of the sewer district property. It is estimated to offset energy use at the water reclamation facility by 35%, it states in a board summary of projects.

Now that the solar array has been installed, the sewer district will seek rebates from the federal government for renewable energy, which is for 40% of the cost, Anglin said.

The board next meets at 8 a.m. Tuesday, Nov. 17, in the District Board Room, 5661 S. Ironwood Drive in Apache Junction. Go to ajsewer.org.

The sewer district is an independent, public, nonprofit entity developed solely for the benefit of its customers and the Apache Junction community to operate and maintain a regional system for the collection, transport and treatment of sewage from the properties existing within its boundaries.



The solar array with a total project cost of $926,462 is on the northeast corner of the sewer district property. It is estimated to offset energy use at the water reclamation facility by 35%, it states in a board summary of projects. (Metro Creative Services)

Members of the district board serve as volunteers who are responsible for setting policy and rates, adopting a budget and other high-level decision making regarding all aspects of the district's operation and on-going business affairs.

By state law, board members cannot own 40 acres in the district, cannot be an employee or agent of a landowner who owns 40 acres or more in the district, cannot be an employee of the city or the county and cannot be an elected official of the city or county.

Richard H. Dyer can be reached at rdyer@iniusa.org, or on X @rhdyer. 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, yourvalley.net/civility-checklist/.

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Wilson

• From page 1

could have as many horses as he wanted.

Apache Junction became home, and Wilson's involvement as president of the Superstition Horsemen's Association led to his election to the City Council in 2007.

For nearly two decades, Wilson worked to preserve Apache Junction's rural, equestrian identity while guiding the city through what he calls "controlled growth."

Apache Junction's population grew from about 38,500 in 2020 to an estimated 45,700 in 2025, an 18.6% increase, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

Wilson, 78, is preparing to leave public office after serving as a council member, vice mayor and now mayor.

Before entering local government, Wilson served 22 years in the Air Force, traveling around the world on assignments he said exposed him to different ways of life and how other countries operated.

Wilson said his proudest achievement in office was the city's acquisition of the Apache Junction Rodeo Event Center.

Apache Junction acquired the 20-acre property from the federal government in 2023 after leasing the land since 1986. The grounds host the annual Lost Dutchman Days Rodeo and other community events.

Wilson said his governing philosophy has focused on considering all sides of a decision.

"I love to talk to the community and get their views on whether it's good or bad," Wilson said. "I try to open my eyes to everything."

Robin Barker, a former council member and vice mayor, worked alongside Wilson for about 14 years and said Wilson's willingness to work through disagreements was evident during their time on council.

Barker said one of those disagreements involved equestrian issues. She felt some proposals gave too much consideration to the city's smaller population of horse owners compared with the general public.

"We did talk about things for as long as it took for everyone to reach a decision," Barker said. "Chip was very good at encouraging that kind of conversation."

In the 2020 mayoral election, Wilson emphasized economic development and job opportunities, while Barker focused on housing options and keeping commercial development on pace with residential growth.

Wilson won and began his first term as mayor, but Barker said the race didn't damage their relationship.

"We started from the podium one night and I demanded a recount," Barker said. "Chip laughed and I laughed, I mean it was funny. You know, it is what it is."

Barker said she saw Wilson's priorities expand from equestrian issues to the whole community.

"I think he grew tremendously from being pretty much what you would call the horse representative into the city representative," Barker said. "It grew to the point where the decisions that were made were made for, I feel, the community."

Wilson wasn't the only one changing. Apache Junction grew alongside him.

New homes and businesses have rapidly expanded Apache Junction southward and Wilson described his approach as "controlled growth."

City Manager Bryant Powell said longtime residents can become nervous about growth and specifically worry about development such as apartments reaching the rural areas near the Superstition Mountains.

He said he and Wilson have had to communicate that the development is intended for designated areas rather than everywhere in the city.

"He's been a steward of that unprecedented growth," Powell said.

Powell said he'll never forget traveling with Wilson to El Paso for the funeral of Apache Junction police Officer Gabriel Facio, who was killed in the line of duty.

What stuck with Powell was Wilson's compassion for Facio's family and the energy Wilson maintained throughout the trip.

"He just keeps going, like the Energizer Bunny," Powell said.

Powell said Wilson was always eager to attend meetings and community events. "He goes to everything," Powell said.

Apache Junction High School registrar and longtime resident Susan Orrantia said Wilson has supported the school by attending campus events and visiting classes.

"He's been in our school at different functions on campus, so that's always nice to see, and I think he's even come in and talked to our government classes," Orrantia said.

Wilson said commitment to public office has come with a personal cost.

Before meeting for an interview at City Hall, Wilson said he had taken his wife to a preoperative appointment and still had more to do that day, including helping her get a scooter she would need while recovering.

"It's cost me personal time with my family," Wilson said.

Time away from family and his own upcoming foot surgery contributed to Wilson's decision not to seek another term.

Wilson said he plans to have the surgery after leaving office. Recovery is expected to take six to eight weeks, time he didn't believe he could take away while serving as mayor.

Once recovered, Wilson said he wants to travel while he still can, including taking an Alaskan cruise his wife wants to go on.

Powell said Wilson often talks about his wife, Peggy, and has made a tradition of recognizing their anniversary during City Council meetings. He said Wilson would call her up and give her flowers.

Wilson said he hopes Apache Junction preserves what brought him here in the first place.

Wilson pointed to the rural character of northern Apache Junction. He said he's confident it will remain because of the way the city has planned for that area.

Wilson sarcastically put a hand over his heart and said what he'll miss most about holding public office.

"The criticism, oh I'm gonna break my heart," Wilson said.

Santiago Flores is a student at Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication at Arizona State University. 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, yourvalley.net/civility-checklist/.

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Want to contribute to the conversation? Email us at **azopinions@iniusa.org**

SPORTS IN BRIEF

MORE ONLINE
See more news at yourvalley.net

Pickleball Hall of Fame to induct 5 in Gold Canyon, Mesa

Pickleball competitors Matt Wright, Lucy Kovalova and Dave Weinbach will be inducted into the Pickleball Hall of Fame at November ceremonies in Gold Canyon and Mesa.

Also to be inducted are contributors Marsha Freso and Linda Laymon.

The Class of 2026 honors five individuals whose extraordinary contributions have helped shape the growth, competitive excellence and integrity of pickleball, according to a release.

The Class of 2026 will be formally inducted during the Pickleball Hall of Fame Induction Banquet Nov. 13 at Gold Canyon Golf Resort & Spa, 6100 S. Kings Ranch Road in Gold Canyon as part of Pickleball Hall of Fame Induction Weekend.

The celebration is to include the Pickleball Hall of Fame Induction Banquet; Pickleball Hall of Fame Benefit Screening of The Power of Pickleball; on-court recognition during the APP Mesa Open event at the Arizona Athletic Grounds, 6321 S. Ellsworth Road in Mesa; and opportunities for fans to celebrate and interact with the inductees throughout the weekend.

With 36 distinguished members, the Pickleball Hall of Fame celebrates the individuals whose excellence, innovation, leadership, and service have defined the history of our sport. Representing both competitors and contributors, the Hall of Fame recognizes those whose lasting achievements have helped shape pickleball's remarkable growth while preserving its legacy for future generations.

The Pickleball Hall of Fame Selection Committee, co-chaired by 2018 Hall of Fame inductee Fran Myer, carefully evaluates each nomination submitted by the nomination committee to ensure every candidate meets the Hall of Fame's standards for sustained excellence, lasting impact, and significant contributions to the sport, the release states.

Web: pickleballhalloffame.global.

Archery lessons offered in Apache Junction for ages 8 and up

Learn how to shoot a bow and arrow taught by Rick McKinney, a four-time USA Olympian and two-time Olympic silver medalist with nearly 50 years coaching experience.

Lessons are held 2-3 p.m. Saturdays, Nov. 7-28 at the Apache Junction Rodeo Grounds overflow parking area, 1590 E. Lost Dutchman Blvd.

Cost is $60 for the lessons offered for ages 8 and up. Bows, arrows and needed accessories will be provided. For questions about class content, email gilbertarchery@gmail.com.

Register at https://tinyurl.com/msbafrks.

For questions about registration, call the Apache Junction Parks and Recreation Department at 480-474-5240.



Water kiosk, tobacco sales slated at businesses

By Richard H. Dyer
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

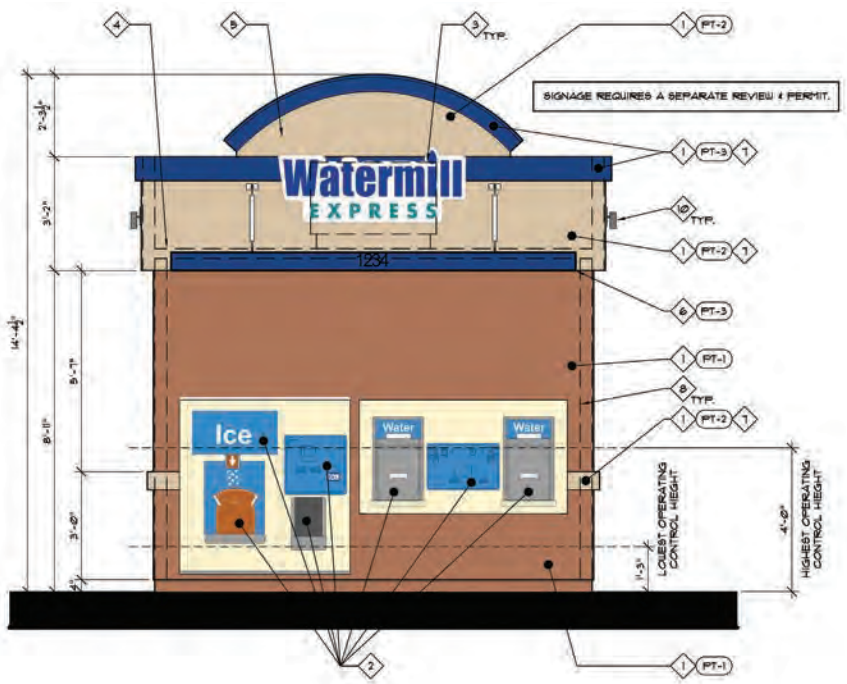
Water and ice vending machines and tobacco sales are being sought at two businesses in a shopping center west of the northwest corner of Delaware and Apache Trail in Apache Junction.

The Apache Junction Planning and Zoning Commission voted 5-0 Oct. 27 to recommend the council approve a request by Watermill Express, represented by Bob Kralicek, and Red Star Vapor & Smoke, represented by Michael Williams, to amend the existing palette of uses to permit vending machine and tobacco sales at 2540 W. Apache Trail. Commissioners Ari Kalan and Sandra Mykland were absent.

Council is to discuss the case during a 7 p.m. Monday, Nov. 16, work session, and hold a public hearing on the case at 7 p.m Tuesday, Dec. 1, in the council chambers, 300 E. Superstition Blvd.

The case is a proposed major amendment of an ordnance that created a planned development overlay for a 4.53-acre site, Associate Planner Liliana Valadez told the commission Oct. 27.

"The proposed amendment alters the existing palette of approved uses through a two-part request. The first part permits Watermill Express to operate vending machine sales and allow for the construction of a water kiosk. The second part permits the sale of tobacco products at the existing Red Star Vapor & Smoke site located within the same strip shopping center," she said.



The property owner is McLean Holdings LLC, according to a written project narrative.

"Watermill Express is a self-service water and ice kiosk that fits within the existing developed commercial site. Watermill Express LLC is the operator of the kiosk and specializes in purified-water refill stations and bagged or vended ice sales through unattended, self-service equipment designed for customer convenience and limited on-site duration," it states. "Red Star Vapor & Smoke has operated in the center since October 2018. It sells vapor, nicotine and tobacco products and accessories in a storefront location."

The kiosk is to operate 24 hours per day, seven days per week. Red Star Vapor & Smoke operates 9 a.m.-10 p.m. Monday-Saturday and 9 a.m.-9 p.m. on Sunday, the project narrative states.



Watermill Express LLC is the operator of the kiosk and specializes in purified-water refill stations and bagged or vended ice sales through unattended, self-service equipment. (Submitted photo/Apache Junction)

The primary duties of the planning and zoning commission include community contact regarding items including a zoning change request, to an application from a developer for a shopping center development or housing project. Also included are conditional use permits with the final decision being handled at the planning and zoning commission level, according to the city's website.

Richard H. Dyer can be reached at rdyer@iniusa.org, or on X @rh-dyer. Please submit comments at yourvalley.net.

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LEARN ABOUT SEWER DISTRICT

About: 10-11:30 a.m. Nov. 3 in the programming room at the Apache Junction Public Library, 1177 N. Idaho Road.

Info: Darron Anglin, Apache Junction Sewer District general manager, will discuss the district's role in aquifer recharge and explain the sewer management process as part of a water resources workshop series.

Web: onewateraj.com/special-events.

FREE ART CLASS FOR VETERANS

About: 1-3 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 4, at the Apache Junction Public Library, 1177 N. Idaho Road.

Info: A free art class for military veterans taught by Susan Paige and Lt. Col. Barry Rosenblatt, the artist/owners of the Paige Artists Gallery Studio Gifts in Apache Junction. Artwork by veterans will be on display at the library through the month of November.

Website: visitaj.com/listing/paige-artists-gallery-studio and ajpl.org.

'ANASTASIA, THE MUSICAL' AT ZAO THEATRE

About: November shows are 7:30 p.m. Nov. 6 and 7 and 2 p.m. Nov. 7 at Centerstage Church, 6338 S. Kings Ranch Road in Gold Canyon.

Info: The Zao Theatre show transports its audience from the twilight of the Russian Empire to the euphoria of Paris in the 1920s, as a brave young woman sets out to discover the mystery of her past. Tickets $40 for adults 13 and over and $25 for ages 6-12. Unsold seats will be available at the door 30 minutes before show time.



November shows of "Anastasia: The Musical" are 7:30 p.m. Nov. 6 and 7 and 2 p.m. Nov. 7 at Centerstage Church, 6338 S. Kings Ranch Road in Gold Canyon. (Kristy Velesko Photography LLC 2)

Website: zaotheatre.org.

STASHED NOT TRASHED COLLECTION DAY

About: 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 7, event at Shepherd of the Canyon Lutheran Church, 6499 S. Kings Ranch Road Suite No. 13 in Gold Canyon.

Info: Drop off unused Bibles, eyeglasses, hearing aids, U.S. flags and expired drugs. Also a raffle, live music and a barbecue cookout with free burgers, brats, hot dogs and sodas are also planned.

Web: shepherdofthecanyon.org

ROCK AND GEM SHOW

About: 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Nov. 7 at the Apache Junction Rock and Gem Club, 2151 W. Superstition Blvd.

Info: Rocks, minerals, gems, fossils, jewelry, cabachons, gemstone knives, used lapidary equipment and more will be available. Plenty of parking available at the church at Superstition and Ocotillo.

Web: ajrockclub.com

DÍA DE LOS MUERTOS AT CEMETERY

About: 4-7:30 p.m. Nov. 7 at Mountain View Funeral Home and Cemetery, 7900 E. Main St. in Mesa.

Info: A lively celebration of color, culture and remembrance at the free event. Families are invited to the event at to explore vibrant ofrendas, enjoy folklórico dancing and music, grab a bite from local food trucks, and celebrate the loved ones whose stories still bring people together.

Web: mountainviewfuneralhomeandcemetery.com

LEARN ABOUT ROOSEVELT WATER DISTRICT

About: 10-11:30 a.m. Nov. 10 in the programming room at the Apache Junction Public Library, 1177 N. Idaho Road..

Info: Russell Rea, Roosevelt Water Conservation District general manager, will explain how the district delivers water to customers across the valley and manages its canal systems as part of a water resources workshop series.

Web: onewateraj.com/special-events.

HAVE AN EVENT?

Have something happening in or near Apache Junction or Gold Canyon? We welcome submissions from clubs and groups, as well as nearby nonprofits, churches and community organizations. Include the event name, date, time, location, a brief description and contact information. Events must be open to residents or the general public. Email rdyer@iniusa.org.



Clockwise from top left are Orland I. Adams, Bambi Johnson, Janet Snyder and Justin B. Orange, grand marshals for the 2026 Apache Junction All American Veterans Day Parade. (Submitted photos)

VETERANS DAY PARADE

About: The opening ceremony for the annual Apache Junction All American Veterans Day Parade starts at 9:15 a.m. Wednesday, Nov. 11, at Phelps Drive and Apache Trail. The parade starts at 9:30 a.m. and heads west on Apache Trail, U-turning at Gold Drive and heading east on Apache Trail back to

• See **Things To Do** Page **20**

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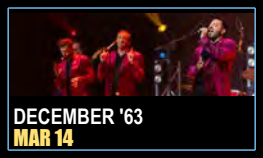


MAR 28


AMERICAN HIGHWAYMEN
JAN 30



MAR 18


DECEMBER '63
MAR 14



JAN 29


MARGARITAS IN PARADISE
JAN 24



MAR 25

JANUARY

Thu 07	TOBY
Fri 08	One Of These Nights
Sat 09	The Olivia Show
Wed 13	Hot August Night
Thu 14	Randy Linder - CCR
Fri 15	Listen To The Music
Sat 16	Strait Outta Texas
Thu 21	3 International Tenors
Fri 22	Candle In The Wind
Sun 24	Margaritas In Paradise
Wed 27	Project Presley
Thu 28	One More Night
Fri 29	Springsteen: Born To Run
Sat 30	American Highwaymen
Sun 31	What A Night

FEBRUARY

Wed 03	Family Tradition
Sun 07	Peace, Love and Harmonies
Wed 10	Revisiting The Orbison Years
Thu 11	Uptown
Fri 12	Turn The Page
Sat 13	Voyager
Fri 19	Crystal Stark's Tribute to Whitney Houston
Sat 20	Ultimate Bon Jovi
Sun 21	VEGAS!
Thu 25	Forever Everly
Fri 26	Queen Nation
Sat 27	Garth Live

MARCH

Wed 03	Good Vibe Nation
Thu 04	Britain's Finest
Fri 05	Midnight Train
Sat 06	Rock Revisited
Sun 07	Soultown Train
Wed 10	Exciting concert to be announced
Thu 11	Shine On Floyd
Fri 12	The Spouse Whisperer
Sat 13	Simply The Best
Sun 14	December '63
Wed 17	Almost Folsom
Thu 18	Piano Men: Generations
Wed 24	The Big Easy Live
Thu 25	Let It Ride
Fri 26	Magic Of Manilow
Sat 27	One Of These Nights
Sun 28	AbbaFab!

APRIL

Sat 10	Yachtzilla
Wed 14	TOBY

Tickets also available beginning November 12th at the AJ Chamber of Commerce 567 Apache Trail, Apache Junction, AZ 85120

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Things To Do

• From page 18

Phelps.

Info: Four grand marshals for 2026: Orland I. Adams, Bambi Johnson, Justin B. Orange and Janet Snyder. Parade entries are $15, with staging beginning at 7 a.m. Parade entry and sponsorship forms are available on Facebook @ AJVeteransParade. Following the parade, celebrate our veterans at Apache Junction Elks Lodge No. 2349 at an open house and BBQ at 2455 N. Apache Trail in Apache Junction. Meet the parade grand marshals. Information: call 480-560-8863 or email thetimbesfamily@gmail.com

PRO WOMEN'S ULTIMATE FRISBEE SHOWCASE

About: 6 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 14, a AJHS, 2525 S. Ironwood Drive.

Info: The Arizona Sidewinders, Arizona's professional women's ultimate Frisbee team, is bringing its Sixth Annual Desert Collegiate All-Star Showcase Game to Davis Field at Apache Junction High School. Annual showcase brings together some of the Southwest's top collegiate athletes from Arizona State, University of Arizona, Grand Canyon University, Northern Arizona University and University of New Mexico to take the field alongside Sidewinders professional players. It's a unique opportunity to see the next generation of talent share the field with established pros, all while celebrating the growth of women's sports in Arizona. $5 for students and $10 for adults.

Website: arizonasidewinders.com.

'BACK TO THE FUTURE' MOVIE IN THE PARK

About: Feature film will begin at 7 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 14, at Flatiron Park, 100 N. Apache Trail.

Info: The Apache Junction Parks and Recreation Department's free November Movie in the Park is "Back to the Future." All movies are brought free by the city of Apache Junction Parks and Recreation and SRP.

Website: facebook.com/ajparksandrec or apachejunctionaz.gov/parks.

VETERANS FUNDRAISER

About: Doors open at 6 p.m. and the concert, which is open to the public, begins at 7:30 p.m. Nov. 14 at VFW Post 9399, 133 N. Saguaro Drive in Apache Junction.

Info: Voyager, a Journey tribute band, is performing at Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 9399's annual veterans fundraiser concert in Apache Junction.

All proceeds are used to assist area veterans and their families. Tickets for adults are $25 at VFW Post 9399, 133 N. Saguaro Drive in Apache Junction. Tickets for youth 14 and younger may be purchased at the gate for $15. A 50/50 raffle is planned. Bring your own lawn chair to sit on. Food and beverages will be available for purchase. ID required for alcohol. No coolers allowed. No outside food permitted.

Web: voyageraz.com.

LEARN ABOUT STORM WATER

About: 10-11:30 a.m. Nov. 17 in the programming room at the

• See Things To Do Page 21



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Hours: Thurs, Fri, Sat 11-4pm susanpaige@susanpaige.com

Things To Do

• From page **20**

Apache Junction Public Library, 1177 N. Idaho Road..

Info: Matthew McClure, City of Apache Junction floodplain and stormwater coordinator, will discuss how storm water moves through the community and why preventing pollution is important for groundwater recharge as part of a water resources workshop series.

Web: onewateraj.com/special-events.



Fandango! performs at 7 p.m. Friday, Nov. 20, at Gold Canyon United Methodist Church, 6640 S. Kings Ranch Road in Gold Canyon. (Gold Canyon Arts Council)

FANDANGO!

About: Gold Canyon Arts Council presentation at 7 p.m. Friday, Nov. 20, at Gold Canyon United Methodist Church, 6640 S. Kings Ranch Road in Gold Canyon. Adult tickets for $35 and students (K-12) for $5

Info: From Chicago's exciting music scene, this quartet is a spicy mix of Latin, Spanish, Sephardic, Balkin and Classical sounds. These four award winning virtuosi hail from Spain, France, Bosnia and Taiwan, and have appeared on the world's most prestigious stages.

Web: goldcanyonarts.org.

BILL OF RIGHTS CELEBRATION

About: Dec. 5 at Central Arizona College's Superstition Mountain Campus, 805 S. Idaho Road in Apache Junction.

Info: Ten constitution scholars, music, food and prizes planned. Event begins at 2 p.m. for food and music, 3:30 p.m. for constitution scholar presentations and 5 p.m. for presentation of awards to Apache Junction High School Bill of Rights essay contest winners .

Event admission: $10-$15, free with CAC student ID. Food purchases are separate..

Web: 2026BORFuture.eventbrite.com

SONORAN BELLS

About: 2 p.m. Dec. 6 at the Gold Canyon United Methodist Church, 6640 S. Kings Ranch Road in Gold Canyon.

Info: Step out of the everyday and enter Wintertide, a musical celebration of the winter season with the handbell ensemble performing a free concert. Moving from quiet, shimmering moments to exhilarating bursts of energy, Wintertide brings together familiar carols and unexpected sounds, capturing winter in all of its stillness, motion and celebration. $15 suggested donation.

Web: sonoranbells.org.

WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA REMEMBRANCE DAY

About: Saturday, Dec. 19, at both Mariposa Gardens Memorial Park, 400 S. Power Road in Mesa, and Mountain View Funeral Home and Cemetery, 7900 E. Main St. in Mesa.

Info: Volunteers needed to set wreaths at veterans graves.

• See **Things To Do** Page **24**





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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 Apache Junction, closed sales dropped 9.1% while new listings increased 6.5% in September 2026 compared to September 2025, with pending sales remaining the same with no change.

For Gold Canyon, closed sales increased 7.7% while new listings decreased 19.2% in September 2026 compared to September 2025, with pending sales nosediving 45.8%.

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 in Apache Junction in September was $424,995, which is down 4% from September 2025. The median sales price in Gold Canyon in September was $453,500, which is down 3% from September 2025, according to Phoenix Realtors. (Independent Newsmedia, Arianna Grainey)

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."

Learn more about Phoenix Realtors at PhoenixRealtors.com.

APACHE JUNCTION HOUSING BY THE NUMBERS

New listings: 82 (+6.5%)
Pending sales: 55 (0.0%)
Closed sales: 60 (-9.1%)
Days on market until sale: 55 (+5.8%)
Median sales price: $424,995 (-4.0%)
Average sales price: $467,677 (-2.8%)
Percent of list price received: 98.6% (-0.5%)
Inventory of homes for sale: 220 (+12.2%)
Months supply of inventory: 3.3 (-2.9%)
(Percent change reflects year-over-year data for the indicated month).
Source: Phoenix Realtors market report for August 2026

GOLD CANYON HOUSING BY THE NUMBERS

New listings: 59 (-19.2%)
Pending sales: 13 (-45.8%)
Closed sales: 28 (+7.7%)
Days on market until sale: 90 (-9.1%)
Median sales price: $453,500 (-3.0%)
Average sales price: $588,872 (-0.3%)
Percent of list price received: 98.3% (+0.2%)
Inventory of homes for sale: 161 (-16.1%)
Months supply of inventory: 4.3 (-20.4%)
(Percent change reflects year-over-year data for the indicated month).
Source: Phoenix Realtors market report for August 2026

2027
Apache Junction/
Gold Canyon
SENIOR EXPO
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

Wed., January 6, 2027
9:00am-Noon

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INDEPENDENT

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Things To Do

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Web: wreathsacrossamerica.org/AZ0316P

TUCSON ARIZONA BOYS CHORUS

About: Gold Canyon Arts Council presentation at 3 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 13, at the Apache Junction Performing Arts Center, 2525 S. Ironwood Drive in Apache Junction. Adult tickets for $35 and students (K-12) for $5.

Info: This joyful holiday show will be performed by the world-renowned boy chorus from Tucson. The chorus has performed at Carnegie Hall, the White House, the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade and Super Bowl XXX, along with the "Children of the World in Harmony" choir festivals in Europe, Asia and the Americas.

Web: goldcanyonarts.org.



Take3 performs at 7 p.m. Friday, Jan. 15, 2027, at Gold Canyon United Methodist Church, 6640 S. Kings Ranch Road in Gold Canyon. (Gold Canyon Arts Council)

TAKE3

About: Gold Canyon Arts Council presentation at 7 p.m. Friday, Jan. 15, 2027, at Gold Canyon United Methodist Church, 6640 S. Kings Ranch Road in Gold Canyon. Adult tickets for $35 and students (K-12) for $5

Info: Seamlessly merging hits from rock and oldies to Americana and country, this genre smashing vocal/instrumental trio lives at the intersection where art and pop culture collide. Described by fans as a mini-Trans Siberian Orchestra experience, Take3 has electrified audiences at venues across the U.S. and abroad including symphony halls, festivals and community theaters.

Web: goldcanyonarts.org.



Frisson Ensemble performs at 7 p.m. Friday, Feb. 5, 2027, at Gold Canyon United Methodist Church, 6640 S. Kings Ranch Road in Gold Canyon. (Gold Canyon Arts Council)

FRISSON ENSEMBLE

About: Gold Canyon Arts Council presentation at 7 p.m. Friday, Feb. 5, 2027, at Gold Canyon United Methodist Church, 6640 S. Kings Ranch Road in Gold Canyon. Adult tickets for $35 and students (K-12) for $5.

Info: Named from the French word for "exciting and thrilling," this group features today's brightest stars in classical music, offering dynamic repertoires that span an array of ensemble combinations from winds, strings, piano trios, etc. They

• See **Things To Do** Page **25**

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Eggs

YOUR GIFT HELPS NEIGHBORS CELEBRATE THANKSGIVING WHO MIGHT OTHERWISE GO WITHOUT

Things To Do
• From page 24

are praised as "The classical group that does it all."

Web: goldcanyonarts.org.

THE SPANISH BRASS QUINTET

About: Gold Canyon Arts Council presentation at 7 p.m. Friday, March 5, 2027, at Gold Canyon United Methodist Church, 6640 S. Kings Ranch Road in Gold Canyon. Adult tickets for $35 and students (K-12) for $5.

Info: Founded in 1989, this is a dynamic and sought-after brass group on the international musical stage, performing in the U.S., Germany, Switzerland, Spain, Greece, Italy and Asia. The quintet has been awarded the National Music Prize of Spain's Ministry of Culture, the country's highest musical honor.

Web: goldcanyonarts.org.



The Spanish Brass Quintet performs at 7 p.m. Friday, March 5, 2027 at Gold Canyon United Methodist Church, 6640 S. Kings Ranch Road in Gold Canyon. (Picasa, Gold Canyon Arts Council)

IN EVENTS

The Mesa Independent will host the Mesa Senior Expo Friday, Nov. 13 at 10550 E. Baseline Road, Mesa. Businesses wishing to participate may reach out to the sales team.

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RELIGION IN BRIEF



The Rev. Julie Tregloan, minister of Unity of Gold Canyon, 6021 S. Kings Ranch Road in Gold Canyon. (Nancy Salk

Unity of Gold Canyon church opens

A new church — Unity of Gold Canyon — held its official opening Oct. 4 in Gold Canyon.

A total of 45 people attended the event, the Rev. Julie Tregloan, minister of Unity of Gold Canyon, 6021 S. Kings Ranch Road in Gold Canyon, said in an email.

"Beginning in June in a living room, then moving into a beautiful location on Kings Ranch Road in August, a vibrant community is gathering together and expanding," it states in a release.

Along with existing congregants, leaders and members of other churches in the area were to be in attendance. A blessing by the Unity minister for the southwest region was slated and refreshments were to be served, including a celebration cake, following the service, according to the release.

Services are held at 1:30 p.m. Sundays and 6 p.m. Wednesdays. Unity of Gold Canyon is also open 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Wednesday-Friday for anyone who wishes to stop by.

Future events include special Sunday service on Nov. 1, "Honoring Our Ancestors: A Celebration of Life and Legacy."

The church is on Facebook at https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61590740127316.

Vitalant blood drive planned at local church

An Apache Junction church is hosting a Vitalant blood drive in December.

Donors of all types are needed to help patients in emergencies and for planned treatments for cancer and blood disorders. The need is greatest for type O, the most transfused and most compatible when there's no time to test a patient's blood type, it states at https://www.vitalant.org.

It is 2-5 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 2, at Mountain View Lutheran Apache Junction's Family Life Center Gym, 2122 S Goldfield Road in Apache Junction.

Sign up for a time at https://donors.vitalant.org/dwp/portal/dwa/appointment/guest/phl/findDrives

American Red Cross blood drive in November at Gold Canyon church

Gold Canyon United Methodist Church Mission Center, 8330 E. Sunrise Sky Drive in Gold Canyon, is hosting an American Red Cross blood drive 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 8.

Sign up for a time at https://www.redcrossblood.org/give.html/find-drive

Every day, blood donors help patients of all ages: accident and burn victims, heart surgery and organ transplant patients, and those battling cancer. In fact, every two seconds, someone in the U.S. needs blood.

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SLEEPING BEAUTIES

Rosie, left, and George enjoy their favorite pastime. Independent Newsmedia journalist Janet Perez loves her dogs.



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Chess Club meets 9-11 a.m. Saturdays at Fatman's Pizza, 2430 W. Apache Trail in Apache Junction. It is open to kids of all ages. (Submitted by Jeff Struble)

Rhino ReCreation Center working with youth

By Jeff Struble
Special to Independent Newsmedia

The Rhino ReCreation Center, a 501(c)(3) designated entity, has been serving the youth of Apache Junction/Gold Canyon since 2015.

We are always accepting donations and volunteers. We do not take government funds. You can find more information at rhinorecreation.com or call Jeff at 480-694-5100.

We work with the youth through several activities and events:

• AJ Kids Idol — This is our flagship event. This year's performance will be held Jan. 23 at the Apache Junction High School Performing Arts Center, 2525 S. Ironwood Drive. If you have a child K-12 who lives in or goes to school in AJ/GC and would like to perform on stage, please contact me to set up an audition.

• Building America Club — We now have clubs at Peralta Trail, Four Peaks and Cactus Canyon. We work with kids to develop communication, relationship, leadership and entrepreneurial skills. We also have the kids prepare and implement service projects for the community.

• Chess Club — We meet 9-11 a.m. every Saturday at Fatman's Pizza, 2430 W. Apache Trail in Apache Junction. It is open to kids of all ages. We teach new players and hone the skills of more advanced players. Our next tournament is Nov. 7 at the Apache Junction Public Library, 1177 N. Idaho Road.

• Buddy Benches — We have provided over 150 Buddy Benches to our local schools in the last 10 years. These are used for kids to have a safe place. If children are feeling lonely, depressed or need to talk, they can sit on the bench and an adult or child can sit with them. The purpose is to lower the number of child suicides. The local Rotary and Apache Junction Mounted Rangers assist with this program.

• Rhino Rising Homes — This is our newest project. We are currently raising funds to get it started. It will be a home for youth aging out of foster care or coming out of unstable homes. We will serve young people between the ages of 18-24. We will provide subsidized rent, job locating and education placement assistance and also assist with transportation. There will be mental health and mentoring services provided.

Jeff Struble founded the nonprofit Rhino ReCreation Center. Please submit comments at yourvalley.net/letters or email them to AzOpinions@iniusa.org.

2 honored for volunteer work as longtime sewer board members

By Richard H. Dyer
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

Kathleen Waldron, the longest-serving volunteer board member for the Apache Junction Sewer District, is stepping down and was recently thanked for her service by city and district officials.

She was first appointed by the Apache Junction City Council in 2002 when the governmental entity was called Superstition Mountains Community Facilities District No. 1. Waldron said she hopes to continue volunteering in the city, such as at the library.

Also leaving the board is Jim Reynolds, who was appointed in 2016 and is moving out of Arizona.

Sewer District Manager Darron Anglin thanked Waldron and Reynolds for their efforts through the years including helping to plan the expansion of the district's water reclamation facility. It is to go online in summer 2028.

The district is using a $110 million loan from the Water Infrastructure Finance Authority to help finance the expansion by 3.5 million gallons per day to a new 6.5 million gallons per day.

"Looking back, so much has changed during these times and your guidance was critical in all of the decisions and directions to get us to where we are today," Anglin said. "One big example is the plant we have right outside. The ground-

• See **Volunteers** Page **30**



Kathleen Waldron accepts an award thanking her for 24 years of volunteer work on the Apache Junction Sewer District Board. At right is District Manager Darron Anglin. (Independent Newsmedia/Richard H. Dyer)

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Volunteers

• From page 29

work for this was laid years ago," he said.

"We're not responsible for the growth of the city but we have to be prepared to grow with the city to provide that service and we are set up in a great position to do that going forward," Anglin said. "Kathleen and Jim, thank you for your time, dedication and service to the district and to this community."

He presented awards to both Waldron and Reynolds in appreciation for their dedication and commitment, and said Waldron was the longest-serving board member in the district's history.

"Wow, 24 years. It has been interesting, it's been fun," Waldron said. "I want to thank the staff, Darron and board for supporting me as the chairman... I want to thank the city for picking me to be on the district board."

Reynolds said he and his wife bought a condo in Illinois and are moving there.

"We increasingly were spending time there and it's not fair to AJ folks and the board to be away from meetings and go by Zoom," he said.

City Manager Bryant Powell thanked Waldron and Reynolds for their dedicated volunteer service to the district and to the city.

"(W)hat greater effort of charity and love then to come here and express and work on things for our residents," he said.

Mayor Chip Wilson thanked Waldron and Reynolds for their time and efforts on the board.

"It's something that has really shown up ... in how smoothly we've been able to ... absorb the new growth that's going on and is something that is fantastic for you and all of staff and I want to say 'thank you,'" he said.



Jim Reynolds accepts an award thanking him for 10 years of volunteer work on the Apache Junction Sewer District Board. At right is District Manager Darron Anglin. (Independent Newsmedia/Richard H. Dyer)

The sewer district is an independent, public, nonprofit entity developed solely for the benefit of its customers and the Apache Junction community to operate and maintain a regional system for the collection, transport and treatment of sewage from the properties existing within its boundaries.

Members of the district board serve as volunteers who are responsible for setting policy and rates, adopting a budget and other high-level decision making regarding all aspects of the district's operation and on-going business affairs.

By state law, board members cannot own 40 acres in the district, cannot be an employee or agent of a landowner who owns 40 acres or more in the district, cannot be an employee of the city or the county and cannot be an elected official of the city or county.

Richard H. Dyer can be reached at rdyer@iniusa.org, or on X @rhdyer. 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/.

Fire district chairman dies; new director appointed

By Richard H. Dyer
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

Superstition Fire and Medical District Chairman Kathleen Ann Chamberlain, who was first elected to the board in November 2018, has died.

In addition to years of public service, Chamberlain worked for the city of Ann Arbor, Michigan, Fire Department as fire marshal, she said in an Apache Junction/Gold Canyon Independent story in October 2018.

The SFMD board on Oct. 21 appointed Traci Polk as a new director to complete Chamberlain's term and approved a process for selection of a new director for her next term, SFMD Fire Chief John Whitney said in an email.

"Director Polk is completing the current term. Not until the next election technically; Kathleen was elected to a new term by acclimation before her passing," he said.

SFMD Director Connie Van Driel was selected as the new chairperson on Oct. 21, Whitney said.

"Unfortunately, Kathleen Chamberlain has passed away. Kathleen was a proud and private person who made it very clear that she did not want a formal announcement of her passing," he said. "We have honored those wishes in our handling of the board vacancy, announcing the vacancy without referencing her passing."

In the 2018 article, Chamberlain said she had served in public office including city of Ann Arbor planning commission (including plan and concept review of all new development, construction, and renovation within the city and potential impact within the county); Building Board of Appeals, city of Ann Arbor; Housing Board of Appeals, city of Ann Arbor; Fire District Fire Prevention and Investigation Commission, Washtenaw County, Michigan; Hoarding Task Force Commission, Washtenaw County, Michigan; and University of Michigan Planning Commission.


Kathleen Ann Chamberlain

"I've been active in the fire/medical service for 30 years as a firefighter, paramedic, driver/operator, line officer, fire inspector/investigator, and retiring as fire marshal," she said in the article, available online at yourvalley.net.

Superstition Fire and Medical District, which is primarily funded by property taxes, provides fire suppression, fire prevention, wildland protection, advanced life support, rescue, extrication and medical transportation services out of five fire stations in Apache Junction and Gold Canyon.

SFMD board meetings are generally held at 5:30 p.m. the third Wednesday of the month at the SFMD Administrative Office, 565 N. Idaho Road in Apache Junction. Agendas are at sfmd.az.gov.

Richard H. Dyer can be reached at rdyer@iniusa.org, or on X @rhdyer. 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/.

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NEIGHBORS IN BRIEF

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Tab picked up at local business by credit union

To celebrate Arizona Credit Union Week, OneAZ Credit Union picked up the tab for customers at an Apache Junction business on Tuesday, Oct. 13 until it covered $2,000 worth of drinks.

The surprise at Boba Shack, 183 W. Apache Trail Suite No. 107 in Apache Junction, was part of Pay it Forward Day during the fourth annual Arizona Credit Union Week, Oct. 12 to 16. OneAZ was one of 18 Arizona credit unions taking part in the statewide celebration of "people helping people" through acts of kindness, volunteer service and financial education, according to a release.

Go to oneazcu.com and bobashack.com/

Candidates sought for Apache Junction Citizen Leadership Institute

Apache Junction residents interested in learning more about how local government works and finding ways to get involved in the community can register for the 2027 Citizen Leadership Institute.

It kicks off its first of eight sessions on Jan. 20, 2027, for the opportunity to learn about municipal government, connect with community leaders and explore ways to serve the community.

Classes will generally meet 6:30-9 p.m. every other Wednesday, The program is encouraged for anyone who lives, works or volunteers within Apache Junction city limits.

Space is limited. Register at apachejunctionaz.gov.

Scratchers ticket worth $250K sold in Apache Junction

A Scratchers ticket worth $250,000 was sold in Apache Junction, Arizona Lottery officials announced Oct. 19.

The Perfect Gift ticket was purchased at the Pyramid Smoke Shop & Mini Market, 2130 W. Apache Trail.

In addition, a $100,000 CASH ticket worth $100,000 was purchased inside the QuikTrip at 21 E. Old West Highway, Apache Junction, lottery officials said Oct. 13.

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Four- and 14-hour courses were available for library staff members to take, Library Director Pam Harrison said. (Metro Creative)

Apache Junction Public Library receives autism certification

By Richard H. Dyer
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

The Apache Junction Public Library has earned the certified autism center designation from the International Board of Credentialing and Continuing Education Standards.

Almost all library staff completed specialized training on autism, sensory needs, communication differences and ways to provide positive and respectful interactions with autistic and neurodivergent patrons, Library Director Pam Harrison said at the Sept. 10 meeting of the city's library board.

"The great thing about this is that now that we're a certified autism center, not only does that satisfy one of our strategic plan goals that we've had over the last year, but also it gives us this formal recognition that gets put onto a special app that is called the accessibility app. Lots of people with autism and disabilities go to this app to see where there (are) friendly places for them to go for all different things that they need in their lives," she said.

The IBCCES accessibility app, which is free to download, is at https://ibcces.org/access-app.

Four- and 14-hour courses were available for library staff members to take, Harrison said.

"There were a couple different trainings that staff took. There was a four-hour training that probably 75% of the staff took that don't necessarily work with adults and children on a program level. And then all of our programming staff and all supervisors and managers, they all took a 14-hour course. It was a lot of fun and we learned a lot," she said.

New library hires will undergo training to ensure at least 80% of staff maintain certification, Harrison said.

Her comments were during the librarian's report portion of the meeting. The library board took no action. President Robin Barker and board member Catherine Meek offered their congratulations on the library earning its certified autism

• See **Autism** Page **35**

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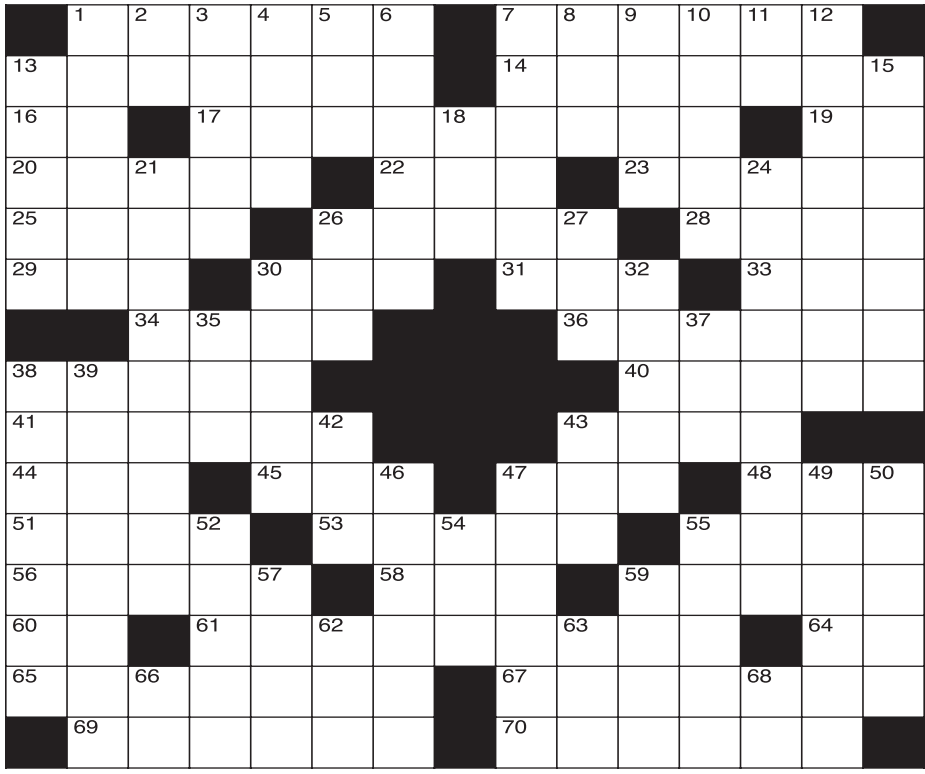




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Apache Junction • January 6, 2027 • Central Arizona College
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23. Very willing
25. __ ex machina
26. Satisfies
28. New Zealand mountain
29. A doctrine
30. Popular Dodge truck model
31. Dekagram
33. Naturally occurring solid material
34. Company higher-up
36. Villains
38. Cricket frog genus
40. Influential early psychologist
41. Endured
43. Servant
44. You can get stuck in one
45. __ and feather
47. Passive optical network
48. French ballet dynasty
51. Employee stock ownership plan
53. Forming a bottom layer
55. Sound
56. Yankees slugger Judge
58. Dickens character
59. Beloved late sportscaster Craig
60. "The Mount Rushmore State"
61. Sarcastic and critical
64. Atomic #79
65. Longtime Atlanta Braves pitcher
67. Humor
69. Shawl
70. Preliminary assessment of patients

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1. Animal disease
2. Commercial
3. Craft supplies
4. Containers
5. A way to save for your golden years
6. Common Arabic greeting
7. Bulged downward
8. Acquired brain injury
9. Lay about
10. Intestinal
11. Not yes
12. In a way, pleased
13. Messianic figure in Islam
15. Resulting from intense conviction
18. Not in
21. Number above the line in a fraction
24. Lawn pest
26. Pouch
27. Ancient language (abbr.)
30. Start anew
32. Wild flower
35. Fourteen
37. Graphical user interface
38. Facing the same way
39. Campaigns
42. Touch lightly
43. "Boardwalk Empire" actress Gretchen
46. Violent seizure of property
47. One who supports the Pope
49. Malaise
50. Body fluid
52. Inauthentic person
54. Title of respect
55. Moth genus
57. Central Japan city
59. Silk garment
62. Draw from
63. Automobile
66. A male
68. Powerful government lawyer

Answers on page 35

Autism

• From page 33

center designation. Board member Vera Walters was absent from the meeting.

A city press release about the certified autism center designation sent out Sept. 16 included a comment from Myron Pincomb, CEO and board chairman of IBCCES,

"Apache Junction Public Library's decision to pursue the certified autism center designation reflects a thoughtful investment in its team and its ability to serve the community," Pincomb said in the release.

The International Board of Credentialing and Continuing Education Standards provides access to resources such as accessibilitycertified.com and autismtravel.com, which are free tools for families that list certified locations and professionals.

The primary responsibility of the library board is to inform and advise the city council on matters of public interest and need in relation to the resources and services of the Apache Junction Public Library. The board also recommends the policy for governing, control and improvement of the library and promotes the public's awareness of the services available at the library.

The Apache Junction Public Library, 177. N Idaho Road, is open 9 a.m.-8 p.m. Monday-Thursday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Friday and Saturday, and closed Sunday, it states at https://www.ajpl.org.

Richard H. Dyer can be reached at rdyer@iniusa.org, or on X @ rhdyer. 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/.

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Answers from page 34



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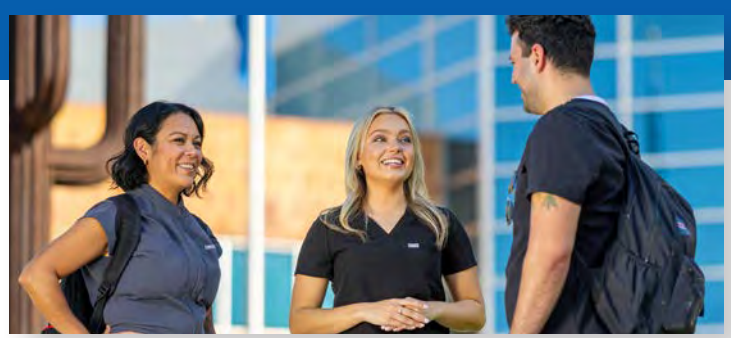
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