TEMPE INDEPENDENT
@yourvalley.net
Volume 36 Issue 812

HiitZone
CELEBRATE THE 12 DAYS OF CHRISTMAS ALL MONTH LONG!
SEE PAGE 9

NOVEMBER 2026
Arizona's Nonpartisan Newspaper

Kyrene discusses teacher retention

By Madeline Bates
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

Kyrene discussed teacher retention and talent rankings at a recent governing board meeting.

Lisa Gibson, assistant superintendent of the district, presented the annual update on evaluations and teacher retention.

The governing board is required by state law to review this information annually at a public meeting. Teachers are evaluated three times throughout the year and ranked highly effective, effective, developing or ineffective.

"High teacher retention rates directly impact student achievement, school culture and overall continuity in learning," Gibson said.

In 2025, the Kyrene School board voted to close six schools due to low enrollment and budgeting challenges. This led to a shift in many positions but did

• See **Kyrene** Page **8**

Tempe budget changes needed with Prop. 424 failure

By Madeline Bates
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

Tempe voters in the midterm election did not support Proposition 424, which would have increased the sales tax on non-grocery items by 0.5% in the city.

Of the 0.5% proposed for non-grocery purchases, 0.1% would have been for transportation needs; 0.1% for TempePRE, a municipally funded preschool program; and 0.3% for "public safety," which covered fire, police and some infrastructure projects throughout the city.

The race was not finalized as of press time, but the measure earned more than 29,000 votes in opposition, with only 19,000 votes in support.

Now, Tempe elected officials are speaking on what's next.

During the regular city council meeting on Nov. 5, Mayor Corey Woods addressed the audience by calling for change but saying Tempe has overcome many challenges and that he is looking forward to taking on this one.

"We're going to need to get creative, roll up our sleeves, and determine how we can do even more with less. It's going to be a big challenge, but together I know that we can collectively accomplish what's needed because Tempe is a city that always meets the moment. We always have and we always will," he said at the beginning of the meeting.



A portion of the sales tax was for "public safety," which included fire, police and some infrastructure projects throughout the city. Pictured are three Tempe Fire Medical Rescue firefighters, John Land, Austin Houle and Chase Chaloupek, who recently completed 200 hours of training to join the department's Technical Rescue Team. (Submitted/Tempe)

At the end of what was a very brief council meeting, Councilmember Brooke St. George said she was looking forward to conversations about the budget and how the city can act in the best interests of the residents.

"We have an opportunity to over the coming months to really dig into our budget and make

• See **Fail** Page **11**

RENOVATE YOUR GATE
YOUR GATE NEED AN UPDATE?
LOCAL FAMILY OWNED & OPERATED
PAGE 7

ECRWSSEDDM
Postal Customer
PRSRT STD
US POSTAGE
PAID
Phoenix, Arizona
Permit No. 1424

FREEWAY CHEVROLET



TRADE OR SELL US YOUR VEHICLE – WE MAKE IT EASY!

I-10 & RAY ROAD FREEWAY CHEVROLET

1150 N. 54th St, Chandler
480-735-0399 • FreewayChevy.com

*Up to $12,500 off MSRP on new 2026 Silverado 1500 models in inventory. Savings include applicable manufacturer rebates and dealer discounts. Actual savings will vary by model, trim, equipment, and vehicle availability. Offer excludes tax, title, license, registration, and any optional dealer-added items. Purchase price includes $589 dealer doc fee. Offer cannot be combined with other incentives or special financing unless permitted by the manufacturer. Contact dealer for details. Offer may change without notice.

SCAN FOR SPECIAL OFFERS



ASPEN MEDICAL PLLC

NEUROPATHY PAIN RELIEF

Non-Surgical Treatment Options

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

Call 480-796-1136 Now to Schedule Your FREE Consultation!

Our neuropathy treatment may be right for you if you suffer from the following:

Numbness
Losing Feeling in your hands or feet and sometimes experiencing the pins and needles feeling.

Prickling/Tingling
Painful prickling and tingling in the extremities is experienced by some of those with Peripheral Neuropathy.

Sharp Electric Pain
Feeling like you are being electrocuted, or touching a battery or electric fence. This feeling can be shocking and very uncomfortable.

Burning Pain
The slow burn, and heat feeling that some people get in their hands and feet.

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
Inflammation and pain in the joints. This can impact almost any part of the body.

ASPEN MEDICAL PLLC

We accept Medicare and most major health insurance carriers

4540 E. Baseline Rd., STE 119 Mesa, AZ 85206
Appointments (480) 796-1136 | AspenMedAZ.com



TEMPE INDEPENDENT
@yourvalley.net

Get In Touch
888-665-3848
YourValley
TempeIndependentOfficial

Advertising
azads@iniusa.org

Press releases
aznews@iniusa.org

Opinions with Civility
azopinions@iniusa.org

Staff
Managing Editor
Richard Dyer

Newsroom
Madeline Bates, Tom Blodgett, Jason Brooks, Janet Perez

Editor-in-Chief
Patrick O'Grady

Advertising sales
Michelle Gavagan, Lori Steffensen

Marketing & Brand Manager
Barb Wandling

Graphic Designers
Erik Maurer, Mona Lisa Navarrette, Erica Odello, Chris Pitts, Chris Williams

Circulation Director
Terri Rodgers

President & CEO
Charlene Bisson

This publication is offered free of charge in an effort to keep our neighbors informed, as well as to support the local business owners who make up our community. Please support their business. Every effort is made to avoid errors, misspellings and omissions. If an error comes to your attention, please accept our sincere apologies and notify us.

This newspaper is recyclable, biodegradable and contains recycled materials. Copyright 2026. All rights reserved. No part of this publication can be printed or reproduced without the publication's permission. *Independent Newsmedia Inc., USA,* assumes no responsibility for unsolicited material.

NEWS IN BRIEF

MORE ONLINE
See more news at yourvalley.net



A Saving One Life volunteer feeds a cat colony on Feb. 20, 2024, at Tempe Marketplace. (Mariah Temprendola/Cronkite News)

Council discusses cat trap, neuter, return program

While the city of Tempe does not have a mascot, several residents regularly honor some of the community cats by caring for them.

Recently this has looked like sterilizing over 5,300 neighborhood cats through the city's trap, neuter, return program, commonly known as TNR.

The program started in 2020, Tempe's full-time Animal Welfare Specialist Kristin Gwinn explained, after many residents had conflicts involving community cats.

"We're not just here to help the people caring for and managing the cats, but also for the residents who live around them who may be impacted by negative behaviors," Gwinn said in a presentation to the council at the Nov. 12 work study meeting.

The city purchased several traps that were given out on a loan basis and educated several neighborhoods about best practices for TNR. Tempe contracted with clinics to provide surgeries to cats that were captured.

Since 2022, the city has added staff and worked with residents to help place cats in temporary or permanent shelters.

Though other cities provide funding for the issue, Gwinn said Tempe is the only city that provides education to residents looking to get involved.

Read more at yourvalley.net

Tempe ranks above national averages in satisfaction survey

The Tempe City Council recently examined a city survey that had Tempe above the national average on resident satisfaction.

The survey, conducted every other year by Kansas City-based ETC Institute, does research on economic and code enforcement issues and helps draft ordinances based on the public's responses.

"This is truly an exceptional city, and one of the reasons it is because when you see the priorities you respond to them," Chris Tatham, CEO of ETC Institute, told the council.

Tatham surveyed about 1,000 homes that received a survey in the mail. The survey asked about city services such as trash and sewer services as well as customer service, sustainability and growth.

He surveys around 400 cities annually, and said that the city's comparative data from 2021 was in the top margin of the over 1000 cities that he's surveyed before.

One item of high resident concern was the services for the homeless population.

Read more at yourvalley.net

Tempe celebrates Native American Heritage with Navajo councilmember

Councilmember Doreen Garlid is Tempe's first Native American representative elected to office. Garlid's great-grandfather was a Navajo Code Talker during World War II who helped communicate with officers around the world in combat.

Now, she joins Tempe to celebrate Native American Heritage Month, a nationally recognized time to explore the history and culture of the Indigenous communities from each state.

During the Tempe City Council meeting on Nov. 5, Garlid read the proclamation aloud while accompanied by members of Arizona's tribes and the Working to Empower Ancestral Vision and Equity program, better known as WEAVE, with city staff.

"The city of Tempe is dedicated to uplifting and amplifying Indigenous voices in our city, acknowledging that the work of healing and decolonization is ongoing, and encourages the citizens of Tempe to understand and recognize Native American heritage as we move forward towards a more inclusive and equitable future," Garlid read from the proclamation.

THIS MONTH IN HISTORY

November 1870:
Charles T. Hayden and partners established Hayden Milling & Farming Ditch Co.

Get The Primary Care You Deserve.

Affiliated physician

MDVIP biote

MDVIP Wellness Program
Expert comprehensive screenings and tests and a custom wellness plan designed for you.

Better Health Outcomes
Members have better control of chronic conditions like type 2 diabetes, high cholesterol and hypertension. Dr. Heavens has extensive training in care of menopause and hormone replacement therapy for women and men, he is also a certified Biote provider.

Available After Hours
The doctor is available by phone and after-hours and on weekends.

Better Doctor- Patient Relationship
97% of MDVIP members are satisfied with their relationship (vs 58% in traditional PCP)





Dr. Heavens is currently accepting new patients
Get Started Today
623.444.2734

HeavensMedical.com
4450 South Rural Road Suite A210 Tempe

LOVE BEAUTY WELLNESS

Beauty • Wellness Confidence

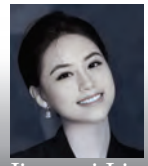


Our Services

- Customized Facials & Advanced Skincare Treatments
- Korean Lash Lift & Brow Lamination
- Full Body Waxing
- Permanent Makeup (Brows, Eyeliner & Lips)
- Gel Nails & Nail Art

Using all Professional grade skin products, TPO- free, HEMA-free nail products

New Clients 20% off



Jiaomei Liu
• Licensed Esthetician
• Licensed Cosmetologist
• PMU Instructor
• SPCP Member

Healthy Nail Care Matters
At LBW Wellness Spa, we prioritize nail health and client safety by using premium HEMA-free nail products whenever possible. We carefully select professional products that are formulated without many common irritants and unnecessary harsh ingredients, helping to provide a gentler experience for sensitive clients while maintaining beautiful, long-lasting results.

LBW Wellness Spa
lovebeautywellness.com • info@lovebeautywellness.com
(520)-280-6800 | Appointment Only



SOUTH TEMPE · SMALL-GROUP PERSONAL TRAINING

FEEL STRONG AGAIN.

Be the one who carries it, climbs it, finishes it — at 45, 55, 65 and beyond.

- **Sessions capped at six** — never a crowded class.
- **Personal, not one-size-fits-all** — every plan starts with you.

BOOK YOUR COMPLIMENTARY CONSULTATION
CALL OR TEXT 602.560.4336

ALLOY PERSONAL TRAINING

"I started after leaving physical therapy for surgery rehab — I've definitely noticed a difference in strength and endurance." **AMANDA N., MEMBER**

1720 E. Warner Rd. Ste 3, Tempe AZ 85284 · @alloy.southtempe

SCAN TO SCHEDULE

Sponsored Content



Primary Care is Getting a Makeover in Tempe. And it's About Time.

Longer appointments, less waiting, and no fees. Corner Health is rethinking how primary care works in Arizona

Finding a primary care provider close to home shouldn't be this hard. Yet, nearly one in five adults in the state doesn't have a personal doctor or healthcare provider, according to 2024 data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. For those who do, getting an appointment can mean waiting weeks or months, only to spend a few rushed minutes discussing their health concerns.

A growing network of local providers thinks Arizonans deserve better, and they're working with Corner Health to build a different kind of primary care practice to prove it.

Through Corner Health, more than 100 local practices are putting the focus back on the patient-provider relationship, including several right here in Tempe.

Their approach? Fewer patients. Longer appointments. And more time to actually listen.

Across the Corner Health network, appointments average 34 minutes and new-patient visits average 40 minutes. Instead of racing through a packed schedule, providers have time to ask questions, understand their patients' concerns and develop a plan together.

While this type of personalized healthcare is often associated with concierge medicine and expensive fees, practices on the Corner Health network accept major insurance plans, including Medicare, without requiring a membership fee.

The model gives highly vetted, experienced nurse practitioners the freedom to own and operate their practices, while Corner Health handles the behind-the-scenes work. Providers get to spend more time caring for patients and building lasting relationships instead of getting bogged down in paperwork and corporate red tape.

Meet Your Neighborhood Primary Care Providers in Tempe.
These locally owned practices on the Corner Health network are welcoming new patients:

Amberlyn Plath, APRN, MSN, FNP-BC
I Am Optimal Health
1425 W 14th St, Ste 206,
Tempe, AZ 85281
Book an appointment:

Salahudeen Jones Cook, FNP-C
Cook Family Medicine
Wells Fargo Plaza, 64 E Broadway Rd,
Ste 200, Tempe, AZ 85282
Book an appointment:

Elsa Cedillo, MSN, ACNPC-AG
Elite Medical Wellness Center
123 E Baseline Rd, Ste D204,
Tempe, AZ 85283
Book an appointment:

Services vary by practice but may include preventative care, annual wellness visits, chronic condition management and women's health. Appointments across the network are typically available in under two days.

To find additional providers, visit CornerHealth.com.

BUSINESS NEWS

MORE ONLINE
See more Business news at yourvalley.net.



Craig and Grant Logan, owners of Buffables Cafe in Tempe at 1325 W. University Drive. (Independent Newsmedia/Madeline Bates)

Tempe café strives for quality with affordability

By Madeline Bates
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

Scottsdale brothers Craig and Grant Logan have been in many rooms across the country, from East Asia to New York, Seattle and now Tempe, where they opened Buffables Café at 1325 W. University in Tempe.

But the brothers want to ensure that they aren't just opening another café, and are committed to bringing the highest quality of food from around the world to Tempe.

"The sourcing isn't easy," Craig said. "Time is something you have to sacrifice because if you want the quality and the better ingredients you have to spend the time looking for it."

The brothers grew up with their father in the hotel business and lived in parts of China, Thailand and Singapore. Craig can frequently be seen on the café's social media platforms speaking Mandarin and making drinks with their homemade syrups and authentic Japanese ceremonial-grade matcha.

His connections have taken him far as well.

Before opening, Craig worked for Boeing and would frequently go to Japan for his job. Now, he stays in touch with friends from high school when he lived in China and is connected to a small farm from outside Tokyo.

Buffables harvested all of its matcha this spring and summer

• See **Buffables** Page **12**

YOUR GATE NEED AN UPDATE?

RENOVATE YOUR GATE

MENTION THIS AD AND GET
20% OFF









- GATE EXPANSIONS
- PRIVACY WALLS
- NEW CUSTOM GATES
- DOG RUNS
- TRELLIS
- SECURE KEYPAD ENTRY

LOCAL FAMILY
OWNED & OPERATED

TEXT/CALL 480.331.3704 • RENOVATEYOURGATE.COM

CHANDLER CHAMBER

BBB

New Dental Patients Welcome
We accept Most
Insurance & Medicare plans

No Insurance? No Problem!
FREE Membership with our
in-house discount plan
$49
New Patient Exam. Cash Price

Same day
crown or veneer
$799

GET a New Crown
in Just ONE Visit
Want the most convenient way to get a new crown? With our single-visit dentistry services, you can get a new smile in just one appointment.

$1750
4 Wisdom Teeth Removal With Sedation
Discounted Cash Price

Invisalign
$500
OFF
INVISALIGN GOLD PROVIDER 2026

TOP DENTIST 2026
AZTopDentists
Sedation denitstry

8675 S. Priest Dr. #101 • Tempe
Call 480-961-0600
Text 520-428-7167
FamilyDentistryAZ.com

Warner Village
Cosmetic & Family Dentistry



Fourth grade teacher Sara Stecyk instructs her students on the first day of school. (Independent Newsmedia/Madeline Bates)

Kyrene

• From page 1

not result in a reduction in force.

Kyrene had 775 teachers, including teachers who only worked part of the school year or teachers who were on a one-year contract with no expectation to renew.

Over 86% of the teachers with continuing contracts renewed for the 2026-27 school year. The teachers that did not renew either retired, resigned or requested a release from the contract before the end of the year.

Gibson said many factors contribute to this, like family obligations or relocating. Superintendent Laura Toenjes said this was vital to preventing a reduction in force.

"If a declining school district has 100% retention, you are going through a RIF, or a reduction in force," Toenjes said.

Kyrene has not done a reduction in force following the vote for school closures as an estimated 12% have resigned or retired and some teachers have transferred to help other schools during the transition.

"While our goal is always to retain as many teachers as possible, some levels of natural attrition is important from a staffing perspective," Gibson said.

Kyrene is above the statewide average of retention at 86% with the statewide average at 82%.

Only one teacher was classified as "developing" and no teachers were classified as ineffective. All other teachers were given an effective or highly effective rating.

All of the 25 Kyrene principals received an effective or highly effective rating.

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/.

EDUCATION IN BRIEF

MORE ONLINE
Find education stories online at yourvalley.net

Kyrene discusses physical education curriculum

INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

The Kyrene school district recently discussed changes to the physical education curriculum, with staff saying an updated curriculum was needed for kindergarten through fifth grade.

Amy Gingell, director of academic equity and excellence, presented to the board about the findings of a group of teachers and staff who reviewed curriculum to help align with mental and physical health as well as social connections, equity and inclusion.

"We wanted to give the PE teachers a more robust plan to add to their curriculum," Gingell said.

She explained that the current curriculum is in alignment with both state and national standards for physical and mental health. However, the current state standards are from 2010 and the district last adopted the curriculum in 2007.

"We would like to pair this with our general education standards to help teachers layer those lessons instead of adding another curriculum that they have to do," she said.

Read more at yourvalley.net.



Be a legend.
Insure your life.

Mary Contreras, Agent
2145 E Warner Road
Tempe, AZ 85284
Bus: 480-775-7788
mary.contreras.gpdf@statefarm.com
Hablamos Español

With the right life insurance, you can leave a legacy for your family. I'm here to help. LET'S TALK TODAY.

StateFarm®

State Farm Life Insurance Company (Not licensed in MA, NY or WI)
State Farm Life and Accident Assurance Company (Licensed in NY and WI)
1708145 Bloomington, IL

HiitZone

CELEBRATE THE 12 DAYS OF CHRISTMAS ALL MONTH LONG!

HiitZone From HIIT To Fit



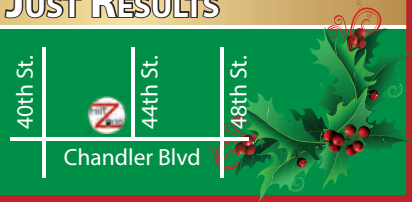




NEW MEMBER SPECIAL!
GET 12 CLASSES FOR ONLY $12!!

GIVE YOURSELF THE GIFT OF HEALTH
NO LONG-TERM COMMITMENTS, JUST RESULTS

(480) 231-2070
tammy@hiitzone.live
4232 E Chandler Blvd Suite 16 | Phoenix, AZ 85048
HiitzoneAhwatukee | Hiitzone.live



BUSINESS MOVES



Compiled by Madeline Bates
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

OPENINGS

1 **Jeni's Ice Cream** held its grand opening on Nov. 19 at 740 S. Mill Ave., Suite D110 in downtown Tempe. The shop is serving holiday flavors all month long.

2 A new authorized third-party auto license and title services facility, **Arizona Auto License**, opened at 1320 W. Elliot Road in south Tempe. MVD services include driver's license and ID card services, registration and tag services, vehicle titles, mobile home titles and vehicle verification inspections. It is open 8 a.m.-7 p.m. Monday-Saturday. azauto.biz

3 **Level One Arcade Bar** recently opened on the corner of Mill and University in downtown Tempe. The new bar with games and nostalgia has opened for those looking for more than just food and drinks. Find Level One at 4 E. University Drive.

4-7 Clothing brands **4F**, **Carhartt**, **KUIU**, and **Tommy Hilfiger** have opened at Tempe Marketplace at 2000 E. Rio Salado Parkway in north Tempe.

8 **Cabana Republic**, a coastal fast casual Mexican restaurant, opened at 921 E. University Drive in Tempe. Guests have options on protein for a burrito, bowls or tacos.

9 **Zaxby's Chicken** recently opened in south Tempe. The fried chicken chain Zaxby's brings its second Valley location further west to Tempe after opening in Queen Creek last year. The new location is at 8905 S. Harl Ave. in Tempe on the corner of Warner and Priest Drives. zaxbys.com.

10 **Carmen**, an elevated Mexican restaurant, has come to Mill Avenue with a large selection of agave based cocktails and Mexican dishes open late night on the corner of Mill and Sixth at 640 S. Mill Ave.

IN THE NEWS

11 The **Outback Steakhouse** at 1734 E. Southern Ave. in Tempe hit the market after the company filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy. Six other locations in the Valley will also be for sale.

12 At the State of the City address on Nov. 13 Mayor Corey Woods announced that the city would be restoring the historic **Hayden Flour Mill** at the north end of Mill Avenue. City staff and contractors are currently assessing the machinery and structural integrity of the building before moving forward.

13 **Honeywell Aerospace** has announced a $500 million facility spanning over 300,000 square feet. The facility will hold up to 600 employees and is expected to open in 2028. The Tempe campus is currently at the corner of Priest Drive and Warner Road at 1300 W. Warner Road in south Tempe.

14 Sun State Builders, a general contractor based in Tempe at 1050 W. Washington St. No. 214, started construction on a 100,527-square-foot addition to Chamberlain Group's distribution hub in Tucson.



JENI'S ICE CREAM



HONEYWELL AEROSPACE



ARIZONA AUTO LICENSE

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

Fail

• From page 1

sure that any cuts that we do have to make are done fairly and with our community's priorities at the top of mind," St. George said.

During a work study meeting, City Chief Financial Officer Lisette Camacho and Municipal Budget Director Robert Baer presented for the council ways to increase retail revenue and proposed cuts as the city is still in an over $25 million budget deficit.

Proposed cuts include deferring hiring three firefighters until 2030, eliminating vacant positions and changes to the Orbit bus route, as the transit fund runs a deficit.

Some council members disagreed on solutions, such as charging for rides on the Orbit bus service.

"I think a nominal fee may need to be reasonably assessed," said Vice Mayor Arlene Chin about the Orbit bus service, which is currently free to those who use it to get across Tempe.

She explained while cuts would hurt the city, it would be important for long term control.

The city will vote on a final adoption of the budget on June 3, 2027. Until then, the council will have several meetings that will include public hearings about the budget and city services before voting on a final adoption.

"We're going to be the ones that go out and the ones that get slammed on Facebook about the Orbit routes and when you do that there are repercussions. It's real," Chin said.

Councilmember Nikki Amberg asked Camacho about voting on any budget cuts in the future. Camacho said the city works with departments to examine individual budgets before asking the council for votes. The Orbit bus costs $15 million to operate annually.

Councilmember Brooke St. George agreed with Amberg and wanted to work with city employees before making major changes.

"I really appreciate your nod to our employees being the subject matter experts about our city and its services," St. George said. "Any cuts that are made need to be very surgical so that they do not affect the majority of our residents."

Woods said during a Nov. 12 work study meeting he was optimistic about new legislature and would like to see more legislation that would allow cities to tax different areas.

"There are certain services that we just have to provide as a city because other groups simply cannot provide them," he said.

Woods also commented on the proposition in his State of the City address and said the city respected the choice of the voters, but that this would require changes to the city budget.

"The permanent shortfall in our budget of this size will require difficult choices, but we will examine how we provide city services and where we can reduce costs and look for ways to minimize disruptions to the services you rely on," Woods said.

During a work study meeting the council discussed a possible fee to the Orbit bus route or making changes to fire personnel including deferring the hiring of three firefighters or not filling vacant positions until 2030.

Please submit comments at yourvalley.net/letters or email them to AzOpinions@iniusa.org. We are committed to publishing a variety of reader opinions, as long as they meet our Civility Guidelines, https://www.yourvalley.net/civility-checklist/.



Buffables

• From page 6

and flies it in directly from the farm, creating a farm-to-table drink unique to the brand.

Though the brothers are passionate about ingredients that come from crops to cup, Craig says that affordability is still a concern.

"I would rather make less money for a drink and have someone come multiple times a week than charge $12 for a drink and customers can only afford to come once a week," he said.

The café sits between downtown Tempe and State Route 143. Lots of commercial space is also in that area, which Craig says makes for many employees and business owners coming for lunch and looking for new flavors in the middle of their workday.

The Logan brothers were also inspired by flavors from across the country, as they sampled a pickle drink at a restaurant convention and decided to put their own spin on Lotus Energy drink, typically mixed with fruit flavors, by adding pickle and lime juice to make a less sweet and more salty concoction.

It was experiences like this, Craig said, that helped them come up with the name.

If something can be "buffed," it can be polished or made to look shiny. Craig said that this inspired them as every dish and drink on the menu can be improved by ingredients, presentation and taste — something that Grant Logan works endlessly to achieve.

Grant, who's two years younger than Craig, is often working in the back of house, experimenting with flavors and trying new recipes.

Grant lived in New York and Seattle before moving to Arizona, working corporate jobs and was stuck on what to do next.

"I quit my corporate job and I realized that I have always enjoyed going to coffee shops and I wanted to make a third space that people felt comfortable in," he said.

The space is full of pops of color with orange hues. It also has plenty of seating for the work-from-home crowd, or just to meet up with a friend.

Buffables is open 6 a.m.-6 p.m. Monday through Friday and 7 a.m.-4 p.m. on weekends.

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/.



Buffables Cafe in Tempe. (Independent Newsmedia/Madeline Bates)

MORE HAPPENS HERE

From students ready to soar ahead to those who need additional support, Kyrene helps all children reach their potential. Your child will be challenged to think bigger, find what inspires them, and learn just how far they can go.

KyreneSchoolDistrict

SCHEDULE A TOUR →
scan to take a tour

More Opportunity.
More Creativity.
More Discovery.
More Connection.

Now Enrolling Grades 6-12 for Fall 2027

Enroll by December 15 for 6th Grade Lottery

TEMPE PREPARATORY ACADEMY

VERUM PULCHRUM BONUM

ATHENAE HIERUSALEM ROMA

EST. 1996



TEMPE PREPARATORY ACADEMY

CLASSICAL EDUCATION
GRADES 6-12

Tuition-Free Public Charter School

SCHEDULE A TOUR TODAY!

Where the best minds of tomorrow are being educated today.

WWW.TEMPEPREP.ORG | 480.839.3402 | 1251 E SOUTHERN AVE TEMPE, AZ

LEARN MORE

CanDoGuy Expert Handyman
"Arizona's Best Handyman!"
(480) 395-5548 CanDoGuy.com
20 yrs. Experience
Saving You Money on:
• Everyday Expenses
• Home Repairs
& Having Fun!
Everything except: Roofs, Windows & Appliances! ROC#338712

YORK
ROOFING & PAINTING LLC
Senior & Military Discounts
Specializing in Repairs & Replacements
Roof Repairs • Roof Replacements • Flat Roofs Coatings • Tile • Shingles Foam Roofing • Mobile Home & Patio Roofs
Turbine Repairs • House Painting • Water Proofing • Roof Tiles • Roof Shingles
John York - Owner/Operator
602-705-5209
Licensed • Bonded • Insured
ROC #188602 #327991, #327992, #327993
FREE ESTIMATES

40 YEARS OF TEMPE REAL ESTATE EXPERIENCE
THINKING ABOUT SELLING?
GET YOUR TEMPE SELLER CHECKUP
Home Value • Improvements • Timing
Scan to Start
480-705-9600
Call or scan for your seller checkup.
Weichert REALTORS
Courtney Valleywide
Independently Owned & Operated
Randy Courtney
Broker/Owner

SPORTS NEWS

MORE ONLINE
Find sports online at YourValley.net

Join a league with the City of Tempe

For a weekly activity and to meet people from around the Valley, Tempe offers adult leagues for basketball, volleyball, softball and soccer.

All players must be 18 or older and must register at tempe.gov/sports-adults and pay the registration fee.

Leagues often meet weekly and different sports are hosted year-round.

Take a hike

With temperatures dropping below 100 degrees, hiking season is back in the Valley.

Hayden Butte, better known as A Mountain, is one of the most popular hiking spots in Tempe and most of the trail is paved, offering an easy walkway for a difficult climb.

Places near Tempe include South Mountain, with trailheads in South Phoenix and Ahwatukee and Camelback Mountain in Paradise Valley.

All hikers should bring water and turn back before the water runs out.

To learn more about hiking safety or where to hike, go to azstateparks.com/hiking-safety.

RELIGION IN BRIEF

MORE ONLINE
See more religion news at yourvalley.net

University Presbyterian Church hosts 'UPC Café'

University Presbyterian at 139 E. Alameda Drive wants members to join on the patio for conversation at 10:30 a.m. following Sunday service at 9:30 a.m.

For events or to access Zoom worship visit upctempe.org

Menorah lighting ceremony in downtown Tempe

On Dec. 9, Arizona State University Chabad will hold a menorah lighting ceremony at 24 E. Sixth St. in downtown Tempe at 5:30 p.m.

Kosher treats and activities will be provided during the event.

All ages are welcome to celebrate.

Prayer service at Tempe Town Lake

Grace Community Church in Tempe is holding a prayer service on the pedestrian bridge at Tempe Town Lake 6:30-8 p.m. Dec. 7.

Grace Community Church is at 1200 E. Southern Ave in Tempe.

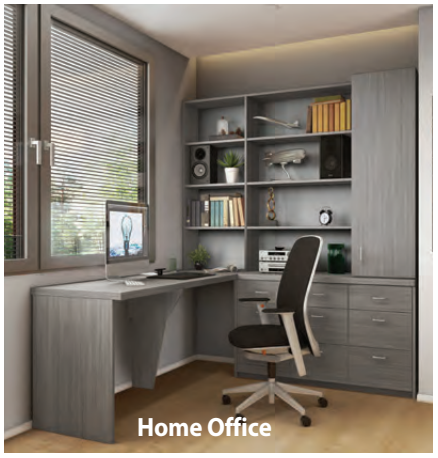
All are welcome.

Imagine your home, totally organized!

Custom Closets, Garage Cabinets, Home Offices, Laundries, Pantries, Wall Beds, Hobby Rooms and more!


Reach-In Closets


Garage Cabinets


Home Office


Laundry Room


Hobby Room

40% Off Plus Free Installation

PLUS TAKE AN EXTRA 15% Off

Terms and Conditions: 40% off any order of $980 or more, 30% off any order of $680 or more, on any Everyday™ Closet, Garage, Home office, or other products with any complete unit purchase. Take an additional 15% off any order of $980 or more. Free installation with any complete unit order of $850 or more. Not valid with any other offer. Offers and prices are subject to change without notice. With incoming order, at time of purchase only. Offer Expires on 12/26/26. Offer not valid in all regions.

18 MONTH SPECIAL FINANCING!

With approved credit. Call or ask your Designer for details. Not available in all areas.

Call for a free in home design consultation and estimate

602-536-6221 IN

www.closetsbydesign.com

Locally Owned and Operated.
Licensed and Insured: ROC 365768

Closets byDesign

2026 © All Rights Reserved. Closets by Design, Inc.

PET OF THE MONTH:
WE LOVE OUR PETS



JOIN THE FUN & SUBMIT YOUR PET TODAY

Email Richard at rdyer@iniusa.org or use the QR Code to save a step.

BERNIE IS LOVED

This is Bernie who belongs to the Lloyd family (Kristina, DJ, Dylan and Remy) in Tempe. We love him very much and he deserves to be featured for the pet of the month, they said.





Taste of Tempe

Discover the Flavors of Mexico at La Casa de Juana in Tempe

Some restaurants serve great food. Others create an experience that keeps you coming back. At **La Casa de Juana** in Tempe, you'll find both. From the aroma of freshly prepared Mexican dishes to the welcoming atmosphere that makes every guest feel like family, La Casa de Juana offers a taste of Mexico that's both authentic and unforgettable. Whether you're stopping in for a quick lunch, gathering with friends, or celebrating with loved ones, every visit is an opportunity to enjoy bold flavors and genuine hospitality.

The menu is packed with traditional favorites made from fresh ingredients and time-honored recipes. From street-style tacos and flavorful enchiladas to sizzling fajitas, homemade tamales, and house specialties, every dish is crafted to deliver the rich, comforting flavors that have made Mexican cuisine loved around the world. Pair your meal with a refreshing handcrafted margarita or a traditional Mexican beverage for the perfect finishing touch.

What truly makes La Casa de Juana special is the feeling you get the moment you walk through the door. Friendly smiles, attentive service, generous portions, and an inviting atmosphere transform every meal into something worth remembering. It's the kind of place where first-time visitors quickly become regulars. Whether you're introducing someone to authentic Mexican cuisine or satisfying a craving for your favorite comfort food, La Casa de Juana invites you to slow down, enjoy great company, and savor every bite.

Come hungry, leave happy, and discover why so many people proudly call La Casa de Juana one of Tempe's favorite places to enjoy authentic Mexican food.

1805 E Elliot Rd
Tempe AZ 85284
480-820-0837







SPONSORED CONTENT

Long time Tempe jeweler turns business to a personal jeweler experience

By Aubrey Maya
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

Lorin and Ginger Jones have more than 40 years of custom jewelry design experience.

Lorin found his passion for making jewelry in high school, which turned into 12-plus years of mentorship from top designers, craftsmen and artisans from across the nation. During that time, he perfected the craft of designing and making custom jewelry.

Lorin garnered many Arizona state titles and won three national design awards.

"We used our work experience knowledge and started 'Jewelry Unique LLC,' designing jewelry for jewelry stores," he explained. In 2019, Jewelry Unique, acquired Day's Fine Jewelry."

Day's Fine Jewelry is located at 1849 E. Guadalupe Road, #103, Tempe.

"We prioritize the customer experience based on their wishes. We follow the customer-first philosophy," he added. "Ginger's professional attitude toward customers always makes them feel welcomed and turned them into longtime clients who we appreciate immensely."

The Jones' thrive on customer satisfaction when they design custom jewelry.

"We listen to our clients, and they trust that they are heard when we present them with their final pieces that are professionally made and created a memorable experience and a quality piece they will enjoy wearing."

While Ginger has been a big part of growing their retail business, she had to recently take a step back to care for her parents' medical needs. Due to that, Lorin prioritized what he did best, which was designing exquisite and unique customer jewelry pieces.

Day's Fine Jewelry will be moving locations in mid to late January to a private office offering a luxury custom-design experience. Lorin's unforgettable craftsmanship skills and their friendly personality will make a one-of-a-kind appointment-only event.

The experience will be like no other when they open their private office with a luxurious office space for clients to relax in soft, plush chairs while they discuss and brainstorm their vision of their custom piece. It can also be done in a call, text or email.

"We will design what our clients ask for, we have a long history in beautiful engagement and wedding rings, restoring family heirlooms and antique jewelry and we'll still offer specialized jewelry repairs," Lorin added. "It's exciting to open a new chapter in our careers. We could not have done this without our loyal clients."



Lorin and Ginger Jones (Day's Fine Jewelry)

For more information, or to contact them personally, visit daysfinejewelry.com or call 480-831-6086.



Snap your passport photo at City Hall

Applying for a passport just got easier. The City Clerk's Office now has a self-service passport photo booth on the first floor of Chandler City Hall, and no appointment is needed. Retake as many times as you like and pay $14.99 only when you're happy with your photo.

The booth only accepts credits cards and contactless payments. Adults and children must be able to sit on their own in a small enclosed raised booth with a height-adjustable seat.

Learn more at chandleraz.gov/**passports**.

CHANDLER arizona








Tempe Union
HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT
ENROLL TODAY
FOR THE 2027-2028
SCHOOL YEAR!
www.tempeunion.org/enroll
6 Schools. 1 District.
The Right Choice for your Student.

YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD TO-DO LIST

HAVE AN EVENT?

Have something happening in or near Tempe? 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 mbates@iniusa.org.

LIGHT DISPLAY

ABOUT: Free event runs nightly 5-10 p.m. at 101 S. LeSueur in Mesa

INFO: The Mesa Arizona Temple gardens will welcome visitors for the 2026 Christmas lights display Nov. 27 through Dec. 30, continuing a Valley holiday tradition that began in 1979. The temple grounds feature hundreds of thousands of twinkling lights illuminating palm and citrus trees, cacti, hedges, shrubs and flower beds. The display attracts more than 1 million visitors annually, making it one of the Southwest's largest Christmas lighting displays, Free parking is available nearby, including designated parking for visitors with disabilities east of the temple's north grounds on Hobson.

WEB: mesatemple.org/Christmas



The Mesa Arizona Temple gardens light display, which is free of charge and open to the public, began Friday, Nov. 27 and runs through Wednesday, Dec. 30. Lights are turned on nightly at 5 p.m. and turned off at 10 p.m. (Mesa Temple Events)

JAZZ GROUPS

ABOUT: 7-9 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 1 at Mesa Community College — PAC, 1520 S. Longmore Road in Mesa.

INFO: An evening of jazz featuring the ASU Latin Jazz Band, MCC MPJE and the MCC Jazz Band. $12.

WEB: mesacc.edu/arts

FESTIVAL OF THE ARTS

ABOUT: Get a start on holiday shopping and celebrate local art in downtown Tempe Dec. 4-6.

INFO: The festival will take place on Mill Avenue and surrounding areas and host over 300 artists with woodworking, clothing, ceramics and more. Live music and food will also be available. This is a dog friendly event.

WEB: tempefestivalofthearts.com/

BOAT PARADE

ABOUT: Tempe Town Lake will soon light up with dozens of boats and watercraft Dec. 12.

INFO: The event will also feature a firework show with a chance to do some holiday shopping and eat festive treats. The event is free and open to all. A clear bag policy is enforced.

WEB: tempetourism.com

MOCKTAILS , MISTLETOE

ABOUT: Enjoy mocktails and all things plants at The Plant Mill 6-8 p.m. Dec. 6.

INFO: Tickets to the event are $39 and come with a drink and a plant to take home.

WEB: sunbrewedme.com

'GRINCH STOLE CHRISTMAS'

ABOUT: ASU Gammage Presents: How the Grinch Stole Christmas Dec. 1-6.

INFO: Arizona State University's Gammage theater will host day and night performances of Dr. Suess's "How the Grinch Stole Christmas! The Musical."

WEB: asugammage.com

WREATHS

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.

WEB: wreathsacrossamerica.org/AZ0316P

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.

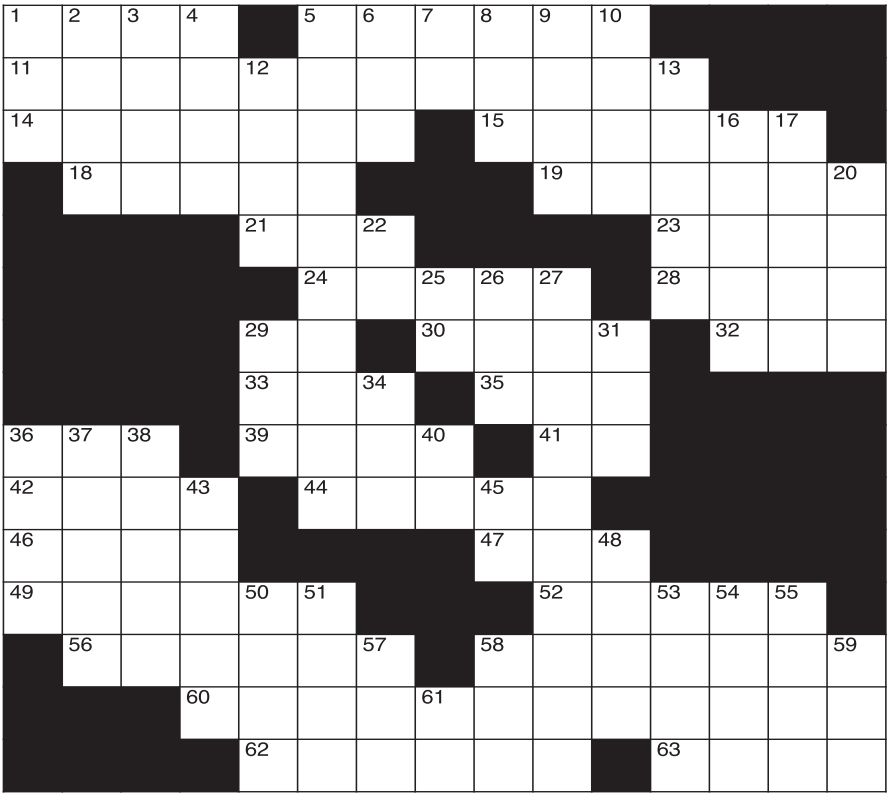
Email us: **aznews@iniusa.org**

IN EVENTS

The Independent will host a senior expo Jan. 6, 2027 at Central Arizona College in Apache Junction. Businesses wishing to participate may reach out to the sales team.

Email us: **azad@iniusa.org**

CROSSWORD BY METRO CREATIVE SERVICES



CLUES ACROSS

1. Dough made from corn flour
5. Rise
11. Gratitude
14. A low wall
15. Kidnap
18. A cup golfers want to win
19. Outgoing
21. "Partner" to flow
23. Former Michigan coach Brady
24. Proverb
28. Gasteyer and de Armas are two
29. Helps a body recover
30. Baseball Cy Young winner
32. Very fast airplane
33. Offensive baseball stat
35. Body of water
36. Record of one's heartbeat
39. Signs a contract
41. Atomic #24
42. Bind securely
44. French Jesuit theologian
46. Fragrant brown balsam
47. Post office box
49. Sells tickets at inflated prices
52. Places to hang coats
56. Jewish salutation
58. Yellow fruits
60. Poorly educated
62. Microorganism
63. Talk show host Barrymore

CLUES DOWN

1. A way to plan
2. Three-banded armadillo
3. Mobile
4. Romanian city
5. Making sour
6. Take a seat
7. "The Golden State"
8. When you hope to arrive
9. Pointed ends of pens
10. Extinct flightless bird
12. Sharp-pointed dueling sword
13. Nape of neck
16. Problems (Spanish slang)
17. Narrow carpet
20. To avoid the risk of
22. Spiritual academic degree (abbr.)
25. Equally
26. Traditional cars still need it
27. Eligible voters
29. Greek alphabet letter
31. Body part
34. Referee-declared outcome
36. Means to moving money
37. Popular footwear brand
38. Cockatoo
40. NFL's big game
43. Botswana currencies
45. News-reporting organization
48. Batman villain
50. Urgent request
51. Not all
53. Hallmark's specialty
54. Knot in a tree
55. Satisfy
57. Notable space station
58. Baby's dining accessory
59. Stitch clothing
61. __ and behold

SOLUTION ON PAGE 23

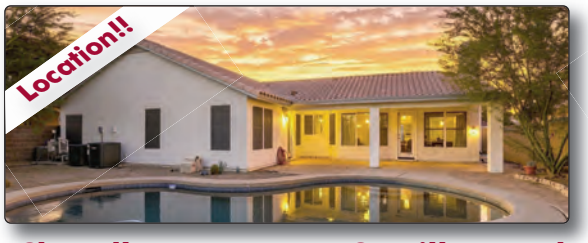
LUCAS Real Estate

5 STAR Google REVIEWS COMPANY

LUCAS - your trusted, local experts for over 30 years!



Tempe • 85284 • Warner Ranch
3 BR, 2BA, upgraded, newer roof, comm pool
See Info and Video at TempeAzHome.com



Chandler • 85226 • Carrillo Ranch
4 BR, 2BA, 2536 sf, pool, great value!!
See Info and Video at HomeInChandlerAZ.com



Phoenix • Totally Remodeled
3 BR, 2BA, great location, pool, wow!
See Info and Video at 8829n17th.com

Call or Click (480) 598-8800 • TheLucasGroup.com

BUSINESS DIRECTORY & CLASSIFIED ADS

VISIT US: INIUSA.ORG/CLASSIFIEDS | EMAIL US: AZADS@INIUSA.ORG | OFFICE HOURS: MONDAY THROUGH THURSDAY 9AM-4PM

EMAILS:
azads@iniusa.org
legals@iniusa.org

TO PLACE YOUR AD CALL US AT
888-665-3848

AUTOMOTIVE, GARAGE SALES & MERCHANDISE RATES
$20 PER MARKET - 30 WORDS
Your ad appears in the newspaper of choice plus online
$5 for color and each additional photo
25¢ extra per additional word

BUSINESS/SERVICE DIRECTORY RATES
STARTING AT $45
for one column by three-inch advertisement
$15 per inch after
(maximum size 8.55 inches)
Logo and photos included
4-weeks minimum

EMPLOYMENT ADS
STARTING AT $60
for one column by three-inch advertisement
$15 per inch after
(maximum size 8.55 inches)
Logo and photos included
No minimum commitment requirement

Announcement

NOTICE
Independent Newspapers
will not knowingly accept any advertisement that is illegal or considered fraudulent. In all cases of questionable value, such as promises of guaranteed income from work-at-home programs - if it sounds too good to be true, chances are that it is.
If you have questions or doubts about any ad on these pages, we advise that before responding or sending money ahead of time, you check with the Better Business Bureau at 877-291-6222 for previous complaints.



Classifieds **WORK**
To advertise call 888-665-3848

Auto Repair/Accessories



Electrical



Remodeling



Beauty Salons



Landscaping



Aging Care



CROSSWORD SOLUTION

PUZZLE ON PAGE 22

M	A	S	A	■	A	S	C	E	N	D	■	■
A	P	P	R	E	C	I	A	T	I	O	N	■
P	A	R	A	P	E	T	■	A	B	D	U	C	T
■	R	Y	D	E	R	■	■	■	S	O	C	I	A	L
■	■	■	■	E	B	B	■	■	■	■	H	O	K	E
■	■	■	■	■	A	D	A	G	E	■	A	N	A	S
■	■	■	■	P	T	■	S	A	L	E	■	S	S	T
■	■	■	■	H	I	T	■	S	E	A	■	■	■	■
E	C	G	■	I	N	K	S	■	C	R	■	■	■	■
F	R	A	P	■	G	O	B	A	T	■	■	■	■	■
T	O	L	U	■	■	■	■	P	O	B	■	■	■	■
S	C	A	L	P	S	■	■	■	R	A	C	K	S	■
■	S	H	A	L	O	M	■	B	A	N	A	N	A	S
■	■	■	S	E	M	I	L	I	T	E	R	A	T	E
■	■	■	■	A	E	R	O	B	E	■	D	R	E	W

Gutters



Handyman



Your Ad Goes Here! To advertise call 888-665-3848

LOCAL NEWS MATTERS.
TAKE THE PAPER WITH YOU.
Scan to read the latest edition online.
YourValley.net
LOCAL SERVICES. LOCAL CUSTOMERS.
Get noticed in Classifieds
888-665-3848
iniusa.org/classifieds

BEST CHOICE Dental Care for YOU & your Family in Arizona

NEW Patients DENTURE & IMPLANT SPECIAL

Free Exam, CT Scan & Consultation ($500 Value)

NEW PATIENT SPECIAL
$49 CLEANING EXAM & X-RAYS
NEW PATIENTS ONLY. Non-insured. In the absence of periodontal disease. Cannot be used with insurance or other discounts. Insurance will be billed if applicable. If you would like a copy of your x-rays, an additional fee will apply. Limited time offer. Call for details. Mention this ad.

TRU SNAP DENTURE
STARTING AT $3,999
Includes 2 Implants & Denture
Payment plan is available and starting from $105/month

TRU PERMANENT (FIXED) DENTURE
STARTING AT $14,999
Includes 4 Implants & Denture
Payment plan is available and starting from $289/month

SINGLE RESTORED IMPLANT*
$2,798

ZIRCONIA CROWN*
STARTING AT $849

*New patients. Non-insured only. In the absence of periodontal disease (other-wise known as gum disease). Subject to insurance limitations and exclusions, cannot be applied towards insurance co-payments. Call for details.

- ✓ CROWNS & BRIDGES
- ✓ DENTURES
- ✓ ROOT CANALS
- ✓ IMPLANT DENTISTRY
- ✓ TOOTH EXTRACTIONS
- ✓ COSMETIC DENTISTRY
- ✓ FREE EMERGENCY EXAM
- ✓ FREE SECOND OPINION



- *Friendly professional staff*
- *Over 20 years experience in general & implant dentistry*
- *In house dental laboratory*
- *Payment plan and sedation dentistry available*

Proudly accepting Medicare Part B as a form of coverage!
Based on medical necessity. Ask us for details.



Come experience why our patients rate us 5 STARS on Google!

CHANDLER
2900 W. Ray Road #3
Chandler, AZ 85224

AHWATUKEE
4530 E. Ray Road #170
Phoenix, AZ 85044

480-470-0391

TRUSMILENOW.COM

Find us in a flash! Scan the QR code for directions.

now!
TRUSMILE

