



## Gila River Indian Community Responded to Federal Shutdown

**GRIN Staff**  
**Gila River Indian News**

SACATON, Ariz. — The federal government shutdown stretched to 43 days, becoming the longest in U.S. history. On the 31st day, Gila River Indian Community Gov. Stephen Roe Lewis declared a Declaration of Emergency, enabling access to reserved funds for unprecedented crises and mobilizing resources to protect essential services and vulnerable families.

Community-run programs, including health care, public safety, education and cultural services, remained fully funded. But federally supported programs faced disruption. November benefits from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program were not delivered, and leaders warned of looming interruptions to the Women, Infants and Children program and the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program.

Governor Lewis and Community leadership closely monitored the impacts and advocated for the Community's needs. He maintained regular contact with Arizona's congressional delegation, federal officials and Gov. Katie Hobbs' office.

A special meeting of the Governance and Community Council recommended unlocking one-time resources to offset food insecurity, missed paychecks and delays in federal services.

The council approved an extraordinary financial assistance program: most members received a one-time payment of \$1,000 to sustain households and support those most affected by the shutdown. The emergency declaration also enabled access to reserved funds for unprecedented crises.

Community departments and schools stepped forward as well. Casa Blanca Community School launched a food backpack program for students, and additional food distributions were organized. Updates on food bank locations and assistance programs were shared through Community social media.

Gov. Lewis emphasized that the Community would not allow its most vulnerable members — elders, families with newborns and those furloughed from federal jobs, to bear the brunt of federal inaction.

"We will continue to advocate in Washington and ensure our members are supported during this difficult time," Gov. Lewis said, urging members to look out for one another throughout the shutdown.

Thanks to proactive leadership, direct financial assistance and the solidarity of its members, the Gila River Indian Community demonstrated resilience and capacity to protect its people during an unprecedented national crisis.

## Gila River New Youth Council Sworn In



(L-R): Azule Wahpeta, Souhaila Lewis-Moreno, Neveah Blackwater, Nathan Weisman, Shoshanna VanHardenberg, Georgia Zamorano, Destiny VanDusen, Associate Judge Sunshine Manuel.  
Jeston Morris/GRIN

**Jeston Morris**  
**Gila River Indian News**

### *Gov. Lewis and Tribal Leaders Welcome New Youth Council*

CHANDLER, Ariz. — The newly elected youth council and their family members attended the Akimel O'odham-Pee Posh Youth Council (AOPPYC) inauguration at Rawhide Event Center. The 38th AOPPYC president and elected officials were sworn in.



**President Landon Martinez giving an inauguration speech.**  
Jeston Morris/GRIN

Victoria Quintero, an AOPPYC advisory board member, emceed the event and delivered the welcome remark. Secretary

Zyanna Flores gave the invocation, followed by opening remarks from former Gov. Gregory Mendoza, a former District 4 representative and co-founder of AOPPYC. Outgoing President Evelyn Enos offered a farewell address.

Judge Sunshine Manuel of District 3 administered the swearing-in ceremony for the newly elected officials. The 38th president, Landon Martinez, gave an inaugural address. Lt. Gov. Regina Antone gave the benediction. Gov. Stephen Roe Lewis greeted the new officers. Lunch was served following the ceremony, and the youth council posed for a group photo on the Rawhide stage.

According to Mendoza, the Gila River Community has progressed over the years. The youth conference story begins in 1987. The inaugural event was called the Akimel O'otham Youth Conference. Over 300 youth attended the two-day conference. A clear message from the conference was young people need a formal voice to assist in solving problems.

This clear call sparked a movement in the Gila River Community even though, at the time, the Community resources were limited but the spirit of service was strong. This is AOPPYC's humble beginning during the BC (before casinos) era. AOPPYC's accomplishments came from the hands and hearts of volunteers.

They had popover sales to raise funding to attend the UNITY conference, buy office supplies and polo shirts.

AOPPYC's teamwork, determination, and perseverance laid the foundation for what became one of the most respected Native youth leadership councils in the country. The AOPPYC leadership is grounded in culture. They can lead, organize, and contribute.

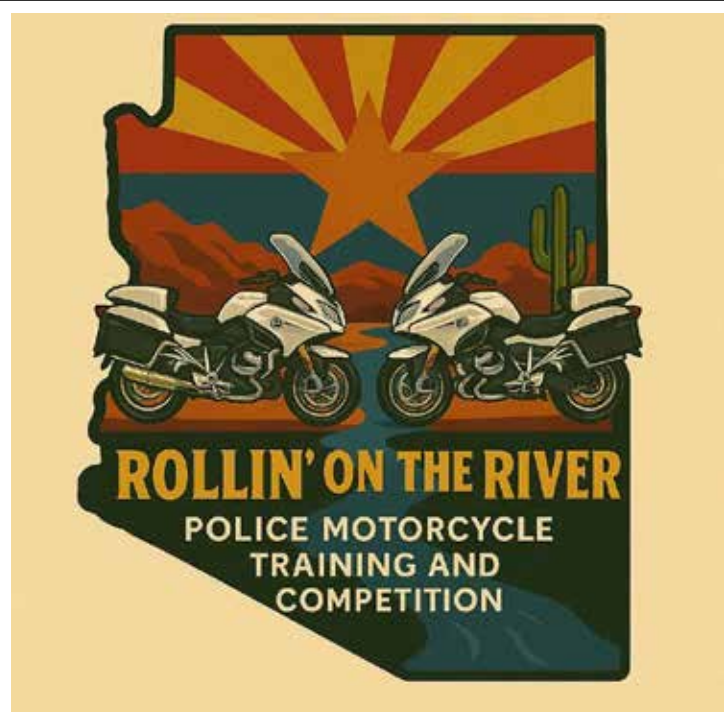
"Former members of the Youth Council have testified before Congress, spoken at national conferences and returned home to serve as leaders. Council Representatives Duane Jackson Jr. (District 1), Joseph Manuel Jr. (District 3) and Terrence B. Evans (District 6) are all former youth council members," said Mendoza.

District 5 Council Representative Donovan K. Kyytan gave an impromptu speech, congratulating the newly elected officials and emphasizing the importance of youth leadership. He shook hands and communicated with each of the elected youth officials.

"First, I want to say congratulations to each one of you. You're all starting a new endeavor with your new role.

"The inauguration is a new beginning," Kyytan said.

**SEE | New Youth Council Page 5**



## Gila River Police Department Competed In Motorcycle Skills Event. *See Page, 8*

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**District 2**  
Ann M. Lucas  
**District 3**  
Kristina D. Morago  
Joseph Manuel Jr.  
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# Tribal Nations Gather in Seattle for NCAI’s 82nd Annual Convention



Honoring heritage, shaping tomorrow. NCAI’s 82nd Annual Convention brings voices into action. Roberto A. Jackson/CPAO

## CPAO/GRIN

SEATTLE, Wash. — The National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) concluded its 82nd Annual Convention & Marketplace on November 21, 2025, after six days of policy discussions, cultural exchange, and leadership elections at the Seattle Convention Center.

More than 2,400 Tribal leaders, Native youth, advocates, and federal partners attended the gathering, which is considered one of the largest annual events

in Indian Country. Plenary sessions featured dialogue with federal officials, while workshops addressed issues including land stewardship, climate action, healthcare access, violence against women, Native languages, and economic development.

The Marketplace drew significant attention, with Native artists, entrepreneurs, and organizations presenting their work. Attendees described it as both a cultural showcase and a networking hub, highlighting the economic opportunities within

Tribal communities.

Running alongside the main convention, the Native Youth Convention offered leadership training, cultural programming, and policy discussions for young participants. Organizers emphasized the importance of youth voices in shaping the future of Tribal nations, underscoring NCAI’s commitment to intergenerational leadership.

Elections were a central feature of the week. Registered members cast ballots to select new NCAI leadership, setting

the organization’s course for the coming years. The process reinforced NCAI’s role as a representative body accountable to Tribal nations.

By the close of the convention, participants left with renewed energy and a unified vision. The Seattle gathering reaffirmed NCAI’s position as a cornerstone of advocacy, collaboration, and sovereignty defense, strengthening nation-to-nation relationships and amplifying the voices of Indian Country.

# FlightSafety Breaks Ground on Mesa Learning Center

**Emma Hughes**  
Gila River Indian News

MESA, Ariz. — A groundbreaking ceremony for the construction of a new FlightSafety International learning center in Mesa was held on Oct. 21 near Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport. Gila River Indian Community Lt. Gov. Regina Antone was among the elected officials in attendance.

FlightSafety International, a global leader in aviation training, supplies of flight simulators, visual systems and displays to educational, commercial, government, and military organizations. The company elevates safety standards across the aviation industry through rigorous training for pilots, technicians, and other professionals from 167 countries and territories, with one existing in Tucson.

“It is a great pleasure on behalf of the board to welcome FlightSafety International to our Mesa Gateway family,” said Lt. Gov. Regina Antone, who also



Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport Board of Directors and partners for the construction break ground for the new FlightSafety facility. Emma Hughes/GRIN

serves as chair of the board of directors for the Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport Authority. She anticipates that the Gila River Indian Community will benefit from the new facility’s proximity, as it is anticipated to generate substantial economic impact for the region and create about 100 jobs, with potential for expansion.

The new 100,000-square-foot learning center will meet rising demand for high-quality aviation training and reflect FlightSafety’s continued commitment to advancing aviation safety and preparedness. It will feature full-flight simulators and advanced training devices for pilots, maintenance technicians and

cabin crew. The center is expected to open in 2028.

“I appreciate FlightSafety International for choosing Arizona, because we are committed to helping you be successful in all that you do,” said Mesa Mayor Mark Freeman.



# Gov. Lewis Receives National Recognition for Energy Leadership

Rural Renaissance  
Roadshow:  
PRESS RELEASE:

*Rural Power Award focused on rural resilience in energy, water, food and housing.*

OPELIKA, AL. — Governor Stephen Roe Lewis of the Gila River Indian Community has been named a recipient of the 2025 Rural Power Award, a national honor recognizing transformative leadership in clean energy and rural development.

Governor Lewis was selected for his pioneering efforts to restore the Gila River, expand solar and hydroelectric energy infrastructure, and strengthen education, housing, and public services across the Community. His administration’s work is deeply rooted in O’odham values and agricultural traditions, blending cultural stewardship with modern innovation.

“Within the Gila River Indian Community, we stand on the shoulders of those who came before us, our first irrigators and conservators,” Lewis said. “Each decision we make is guided by cultural values and the goal of responsible stewardship for future generations. By applying traditional knowledge to modern challenges, we create innovative opportunities that preserve our future and honor our past.”

The Rural Power Award, presented annually to leaders advancing energy equity in rural America, highlights Lewis’s success in securing federal resources through groundbreaking self-determination pro-



Groundswell Honors Governor Stephen Roe Lewis with 2025 Rural Power Award at the Rural Renaissance Roadshow.  
Photo Submitted by: Kelly Whitman

grams. His approach has positioned Gila River as a model for other tribal nations and rural communities seeking sustainable, culturally grounded solutions.

“Governor Lewis exemplifies how Indigenous leadership can drive energy innovation while reinforcing community

resilience,” said Michelle Moore a CEO of Groundswell. “His work demonstrates that honoring tradition and embracing technology are not mutually exclusive—they are powerful partners in building a better future.”

The Gila River Indian Community

continues to collaborate with local, state, and federal partners to expand its energy initiatives and share its roadmap for sustainable development. Lewis’s recognition marks a milestone not only for the Community, but for tribal leadership nationwide.

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# New Youth Council

From Front Page

“The outgoing youth council laid the foundation. The new council will continue to work on the foundation as well as completing the daily agenda items. The youth are important because they are the future, and they play a vital role in our community. Their voice and contribution are crucial. They will eventually become elected officials to lead our community,” he said.

leaders gives us hope. Each will grow in their own unique way. Our future is in good hands.”

Laylalanai Gocobachi, UNITY Earth Ambassador and Pascua Yaqui member, added: “The inauguration was wonderful. It was great to see the newly elected council gather with families and friends to celebrate with dignity and pride.”



AOPPYC and UNITY representative posing with a flag. Jeston Morris/GRIN

Lt. Gov. Regina Antone gave a speech and a benediction.

“As leaders, you set the example for others to follow,” she said. “Gila River is strong and self-governed. We are striving for higher goals. Our youth are eager to step up and lead. They’ll learn about the intergovernmental branches, such as executive, judicial, and legislative. More importantly, they will become our future leaders in the community,” said Lt. Gov. Antone.

**“Our future will be okay. It is in good hands with the new incoming Youth Council.” Amaya Escalante,**

Amaya Escalante, Western representative for United National Indian Tribal Youth (UNITY) and a member of Pascua Yaqui, reflected on the inauguration. “It is an honor to be here,” Escalante said. “Hearing from incoming and outgoing

The newly elected president, Landon Martinez, reflected on his swearing-in ceremony. “I have worked closely with the outgoing President Enos. She set a great example. I look up to her, and she is one of the reasons why I became president of the AOPPYC. Under my leadership, I would like to create a strong bond with our sister tribes’ youth council,” Martinez said. “The AOPPYC president carries Bob, a staff with feathers. We treat him as an elder, he guides us spiritually.”

The outgoing president Enos reflected on her tenure. “I had the honor of serving as the President of AOPPYC, said Enos. “I’m from District 4, Upper Santan. This year has been memorable. I served on the youth council in different capacities for over five years.”

Susanna Osife, former Miss Gila River and AOPPYC board member reflected on the newly elected officials and the in-

auguration. “This will be a wonderful year for AOPPYC. They all have bright minds and bright futures ahead of them. I am so excited for each one of them. They have a strong heart for their community,” said Osife.

Youth Council Coordinator Joseph Davis expressed his view of the incoming leadership and the inauguration. “It was very special to have UNITY representatives here because the youth council will get to present their report at the UNITY conference. The report addresses youth issues and topics during the conference meetings,” said Davis.

Judge Manuel expresses her view about the swearing-in ceremony. “It was an honor to be invited. I’m proud of each of them. Their leadership reflects our future, and our future is bright.”

Gov. Stephen Roe Lewis closed the ceremony with reflections on the council’s growth.

“The inauguration celebrates both incoming and outgoing leadership,” Gov. Lewis said. “The organization is growing. I spoke with many of the youth council. They are really focused on their projects in their own district as well as bringing back the tradition, culture, and language. They work with youth councils from our sister tribes. One of their highlights is when they go to the annual UNITY conference.”

Newly elected district representatives include:

- District 1: Philbert Jackson, Frank Ayala Jr.
- District 2: Odessa Thomas, Francisco Duran Jr.
- District 3: Virginia Rossel, Blake Morago
- District 4: Aiyana Jackson, Frances Martinez
- District 5: Ino Davis, Violet Ramon
- District 6: Watauna Verlarde-Alison, Devon Juan
- District 7: Vacant

Executive Officers:

President: Landon Martinez Vice President: Shayla Davis Treasurer: Ayana Jackson Secretary: Zyanna Flores

Associate Members:

Destiny VanDusen, Georgia Zamorano, Adriana Conko, Nathaniel Weisman, Soshanna VanHardenburg, Sayuri Jackson, Peyton Charles, Nevaeh Blackwater, Souhalia Lewis Moreno, Azule Wahpeta

Advisory Board:

Randel Curran, Susanna Osife, Kyle Flores, Aylse Marrietta, Hunter Nish



Evan Martinez, At-Large Representative, and his family, at the swearing-in ceremony.. Jeston Morris/GRIN

# Spooktacular Career Day at District 3



Community members were walking through the booths to gather information. Jeston Morris/GRIN

Jeston Morris  
Gila River Indian News

SACATON, Ariz. — The 31st Annual Career Fair drew nearly 40 booths and hundreds of community members to the Employment & Training Department (ETD) lawn on Oct. 31.

Miss Gila River Gabrielle Garcia

opened the event with a blessing, followed by an O’otham song from ETD driver Taras Johns. ETD Director Lana Chanda welcomed attendees. Speakers included ETD staff, who shared program updates, and Rodrigo Castellon, now an application developer for MIS, who told his success story. Castellon credited ETD for helping

him obtain his driver’s license, secure an internship as a videographer and enroll at the Conservatory of Recording Arts and Sciences.

The fair mixed career resources with festive activities. Training specialists Zephyr Conte and Andrea Rambo staged a “Spooktacular Fashion Showcase,” featuring counselors dressed as Dracula, Angel of Employment, Recovery Goblin and Lily the Lazy Sloth. Raffles and games added to the fun, with Angel White winning a pair of gourds. “I want to be a botanist. I am happy to win,” White said.

Gila River Resorts & Casinos provided lunch, while the Keli Akimel Dancers performed traditional basket and social dances accompanied by Johns’ songs. Johns explained that his music recalls O’otham history at Tempe Butte.

Local businesses also participated. Vanessa Tullie, CEO of Ahehee’ Shidine’e Home-care, highlighted her company’s seven years of service providing non-medical caregiving across Arizona tribal communities. She announced job openings requiring CPR, first aid and other certifications. Guest speakers included Lt. Gov. Regina Antone, who shared her own ca-

reer path in health care, and Gov. Stephen Roe Lewis, who emphasized the fair’s role in helping members pursue careers, not just jobs.

The Dress for Success mobile unit was on site, and costumes ranging from Elvis to Garfield closed out the day. Mitchell Goodman II, delivered the final remarks before the last raffle.

Gov. Lewis summed up the event: “One of the main goals is for our community members to get not just a job but rather a career.”







## S-uam Mashath 2025, Examples of Oob No’ok (Mountain Pima)

As we celebrate Native American Heritage Month, we tend to forget that a:chim Akimel O’otham belong to a larger family of other O’otham. Toward the east, we have S-Auppak O’otham (Florence village People). Up north, we have Onk Akimel O’odham (Salt River People). Toward the southwest, we have Ak-Chin O’odham (Mouth of the Wash People). Due south, we have the Toho-no O’odham Nation (Desert People), including San Xavier, Gila Bend, and Hia-Ched O’odham. Across the International Border there are Pimas de México who live in several lowland villages that include Magdalena, Altar, Caborca and Pitiquito.

Further south, in the mountain highlands, live the Oob (Mountain Pima). They live in the villages of Onavas, Yepáchi, Maycoba and Yécora. In 2013,

Mr. Marshall Sunna (D-4), escorted a special Delegation of Leaders northward to our community during Mul-Chu-Tha. During their visit, a Language Summit was held at the Huhugam Heritage Center. The Pimas de México Delegates provided

a Comparative Linguistics session, which was attended by community language teachers and Elders.

During the session, we learned a few sentence structures in Oob No’ok and realized how similar their language is to ours. A few basic grammar examples in Oob No’ok and Akimel O’otham: “In soi-ga gogsi.” (My pet dog/my dog). Akimel O’otham: “Eñ shoiga gogs.” (My pet dog/my dog). The possessive marker “ga” in shoiga is the same for both languages. Example of Personal Pronoun (PP): “Hosi hemak péeso iñ-maa” (Joe one peso me-give [PP]/Joe gave me a peso). Akimel O’otham: “Husi hemako pish eñ ma:k” (Joe gave me one dollar [PP]). Akimel O’otham call US currency bills (pish).

Grammatical spellings may be slightly different, but pronunciations and translations are the same. Subject Pronouns (SP) may be repeated after a statement for emphasis: “Aap si keeg vapkéhél aapi” ([SP] really good cowboy [SP]/You’re a real cowboy). Akimel O’otham: (’Ap s-ke:gaj vakial api/You’re a real cowboy). The deter-

miner marker (DM) “eg” is equivalent the “heg” in Akimel O’otham: “Eg Oob esi-m ek huun” (DM person planting object corn/The man is planting corn). “Eg okasi naati-m ek ha’a” (DM woman making object pot/The woman is making a pot). Predicate Adjectives (PA) are the same in Oob No’ok, as Akimel O’otham: “Eg ko’adaga si keega-d!” (DM food really good PA/The food is really good!).

This month’s word match will challenge you to remember a few phrases in Oob No’ok. Although we are separated by hundreds of miles, our families of Uto-Aztec languages are still spoken on both sides of the International Border. We encourage you to speak Akimel O’otham in your everyday lives. Continue to speak and learn from our Elders and Speakers.

A special Thank You to Pimas de México, whose shared knowledge of Oob No’ok that made this article possible. Additional source related from, An Overview of Uto-Aztec Grammar, Ronald Langacker, University of Texas at Arlington, 1977.

## GRTI celebrates 100% Fiber to Home Success at District 4 Service Center

Jeston Morris  
Gila River Indian News

SACATON, Ariz - On Nov. 14, Community members packed the Santan Service Center's gymnasium to commemorate 100% fiber-to- home. The celebration's main focus was on the 100% fiber network and preparedness. Gila River Indian Community leads the way for fiber network in Indian Country.

There were booths set up in the halls near the front door. Numerous individuals registered for the event and completed the customer experience survey. Digital Connect Initiative, Alluvion Communications, Native Tech Solutions, and GRBC are among the booths.

The event was hosted by Victoria Quintero, the executive assistant at Alluvion Communications. Two prayers were offered by Harry Antone, a U.S. Army veteran and community elder, one in O'otham and the other in English. He also performed the O'otham blessing song. As he sang, he shook his red

and yellow gourd and held an eagle feather.

A warm welcome was extended by Clarice Chiago-Jones, the CEO of GRTI. She has 28 years of dedicated service with GRTI. She started out as an intern and worked her way up to become CEO almost 30 years later.

“GRTI is 37 years old. The tribal leadership established GRTI in 1988. As of today, GRTI has successfully implemented a 100% fiber network along the Gila River. This is a noteworthy milestone. Furthermore, we are developing a backup battery called Power Defender in 2026. After a power outage, your internet and dial tone will continue to function for six hours. I would like to thank everyone who works at GRTI for their hard work and dedication. Chiago-Jones said, "Enjoy your evening and celebrate."

GRTI board member Lalena Jackson, who represents the District 4 community council, gave a special statement. "I want to sincerely thank all of the board members for their hard work and dedication in making 100% fiber to

home a reality," Jackson, said.

Rachael Wierson, the chief operating officer and chief technology officer, gave a brief statement. “I have been with GRTI for five and a half years. I like to introduce Enez Jackson for employee award and recognition,” said Wierson.

Before recognizing the worker, GRTI record specialist Enez Jackson made a brief statement. Jackson said, "I want to thank the special team and departments that worked on the fiber installation project." Nine people received recognition and acknowledgment. They were rewarded with a necklace made of O'otham seashells and posed for a picture.

After the recognition ceremony, live entertainment was provided by Gertie and the T.O. Boyz. Gertrude “Gertie” Lopez was inducted into the Tucson Musicians Museum in 2021. Old Waila music is the band's specialty. People in the community danced to Gertie's Waila music to celebrate.

# Tech 4 Elders GAME SHOW

Join us for our Tech4Elders game show where you can participate in an interactive, game-based class designed to help elders learn and reinforce essential technology topics such as Internet Safety, Cloud Storage, Artificial Intelligence, Streaming, and Brain Health through fun, engaging trivia.

### Game Show info for each district below...

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D1	Tues	11/04	10am-12pm
D3	Mon	11/10	10:30am-12:30pm
D4	Thurs	11/13	10am-12pm
D2	Tues	11/18	10am-12pm
D5	Thurs	11/20	10am-12pm
D7	Mon	11/24	12:30pm-3:00pm

For more info contact:  
Amanda MacDonald (520)-610-6689  
Website: [www.digitalconnect.org](http://www.digitalconnect.org)  
FB & IG: @digitalconnectinitiative



DIGITAL  
CONNECT  
SENIOR PLANET

Mountain Pima Word Match: Match the Oob No’ok phrase with its picture!

In soiga gogsi.

Hosi hemak péeso iñ-maa.

Aap si keeg vapkéhél aapi.

Eg Oob esi-m ek huun.

Eg okasi naati-m ek ha’a.

Eg ko’adaga si keega-d!



Photographs Courtesy Robert Johnson



★ VETERANS ★  
ANNOUNCEMENTS

# Three Gila River Combat Veterans Were Honored With Arizona Gold Star Medal

Jeston Morris  
Gila River Indian News

BAPCHULE, Ariz. — On November 7, people from the community, students, and staff went to St. Peter Indian Mission School for the Arizona Gold Star Medal ceremony and the Run for the Fallen.

The three Gila River combat veterans who were recognized. Among them are Pvt. Anthony Jose, PFC. Terry Joe, and Cpl. Johnston Peters. There were a World War II infantryman in the U.S. Army.

Retired Master Sgt. Gary Anderson said that in 2016, a project began to honor 25 Gila River soldiers who had died in battle. The twenty-five fallen soldiers served in the Korean War, Vietnam, Afghanistan, Iraq, World War I, and World War II.

The Arizona Gold Star Military Medal was made by the Arizona State Legislature. Cpl. Billy Farris was awarded the Arizona Gold Star Medal in 2016. The former student Farris went to St. Peter. Lance Cpl. Joe Jackson was honored in 2017.

The St. Peter Color Guard presented the colors, and Sister Martha delivered a warm welcome. The National Anthem and the Pledge of Allegiance were recited in both English and O’otham. Basket dancers and singers from St. Peter’s O’otham sang songs and songs to honor the fallen.

“The veterans who are being honored today were not allowed to speak their native language in schools back then, and that’s why it’s important to have O’otham language in the honoring ceremony,” said Anderson.

Lt. Gov. Regina Antone bestowed the Arizona Gold Star Medals on the families of the fallen warrior. “It’s a beautiful day to honor the fallen veterans. It humbles and honors me. The fallen warriors were brave, and they were strong and committed.” Lt. Gov. Antone declared, “We will always remember our fallen veterans.”

The event concluded with the Run for the Fallen. Both the attendees and the students from St. Peter took part in the run. Following the run, a luncheon was served. Attendees received Run for the Fallen t-shirts. On the navy blue t-shirt in white letters, it said, “Gila River Indian Community, St. Peter Indian Mission School, One Mile-One Marker-One Hero.”

Gunnery Sgt. Tommy Thompson, who is a USMC Force Reconnaissance Marine, reflected on the ceremony.



Lt. Gov. Regina Antone bestowed Cpl. Johnston Peters’ family with the Arizona Gold Star Medal and military award shadow case. Jeston Morris/GRIN

He is a member of the community from District 7 and lives in District 6. He wears a silver diver badge and a golden jump wings.

"The Arizona Gold Star Medal ceremony was great. I enjoy the program. I am looking forward to the next one," Thompson said. "The youth performance was outstanding, especially the color guard and basket dancing."

“Our project’s objective was to honor 25 fallen service members. We concluded with the final three of the 19 recipients who chose to accept the award. Six families have declined to receive the Arizona Gold Star Medal for various reasons. We recognized the fallen warrior’s family. They were very appreciative of the award,” Anderson said. “At the previous honoring ceremony, a woman stood up. She was very emotional. She was so glad that she heard her uncle’s name being said. Finally, someone recognized her uncle’s contribution and also acknowledged his loss of life during war.”

## Gila River Veterans Fallen Veterans and Arizona Gold Star Medal

	Name	Branch	Campaign	AGSM Year
1	Cpl. Billy B. Farris	U.S. Army	Iraq	2016
2	Lance Cpl. Joe Jackson	USMC	Afghanistan	2017
3	Sgt. Johnson Martin McAfee	USMC	Korean War	2018
4	Lcpl. Edgar Acunia	USMC	Vietnam	Feb. 2023
5	SP/4 Dudley N. Arlentino	U.S. Army	Vietnam	Feb. 2023
6	1st Lt. Dwight T. Blackwater	U.S. Army	Vietnam	Feb. 2023
7	PFC Gregory B. Chiago	U.S. Army	Vietnam	Feb. 2023
8	Sgt. Harold J. Marrietta	U.S. Army	Vietnam	Feb. 2023
9	PFC David D. Perkins	U.S. Army	Vietnam	Feb. 2023
10	SP/4 Franklin D. Pete	U.S. Army	Vietnam	Feb. 2023
11	PFC Harry Miguel	U.S. Army	Korean War	Oct. 2023
12	PFC Lloyd Miguel	U.S. Army	Korean War	Oct. 2023
13	Pvt. Mathew B. Juan	U.S. Army	WWI – Europe	Oct. 2023
14	PFC Willscott Anton	U.S. Army	WWII – Europe	2025
15	PFC Anthony Jose	U.S. Army	WWII – Europe	2025
16	PFC Richard N. Laws	U.S. Army	WWII – Pacific	2024
17	SSG. David Milda	U.S. Army	WWII – Pacific	2024
18	Cpl. Johnston Peters	U.S. Army	WWII – Europe	2025
19	Pvt. Joe Terry	U.S. Army	WWII – Europe	2025
20	PFC Robert E. Allison	USMC	WWII – Pacific	No Response
21	PFC Antonio Haskill-Osife	U.S. Army	WWII – Pacific	No Response
22	PFC David Lewis	U.S. Army	WWII – Pacific	No Response
23	Cpl. Richard Cregg Lewis	USMC	WWII – Pacific	No Response
24	PFC Joshua Morris	USMC	WWII – Pacific	No Response
25	Pvt. Leander S. Shelde	U.S. Army	WWII – Europe	No Response



Lt. Gov. Regina Antone posing with 3 recipients of the Arizona Gold Star Medal. Family from left to right: PFC Anthony Jose’s family, Pvt. Joe Terry’s family, and Cpl. Johnston Peters’ family. Joseph Morales/GRIN



# Incredible Turnout for the Suns and Mercury Clinic in District 6

*Arizona Tribes Celebrate Youth, Health and Teamwork Through Basketball*

**Jeston Morris**  
Gila River Indian News

KOMATKE, Ariz. — On Nov. 15, Native youth from Arizona tribes attended the Phoenix Suns Mercury Foundation Basketball Clinic at the Boys & Girls Club.

The clinic began at noon and featured a dozen stations where young players rotated to learn skills and life lessons. At Station 9, retired NBA player Mark West spoke with participants. At Station 10, Phefelia Nez, former first lady of the Navajo Nation, led a roundtable on healthy eating and nutrition. Her organization distributed fresh food as part of the Native Power Plate initiative.

“We have teamed up with La Planta to bring fresh produce into tribal and Hispanic communities,” Nez said. “We collaborate with the Mercury Foundation and the Phoenix Suns to offer nutrition information from Native and Hispanic perspectives. We want to get younger people interested in native foods again. Food is medicine,” added Jonathan Nez, former Navajo Nation president and candidate for Arizona’s 2nd Congressional District.

Victor Jesus Flores, executive director of La Planta, emphasized plant-based options: “We don’t need animal products to maintain our culture. We have beans, rice and so many different veggies we can incorporate into cooking. Our message is that you can be an athlete if you eat plant-based food.”



**Coach Ryan Brown is teaching teenage players the fundamentals of passing basketball to teammates.**  
Jeston Morris/GRIN

Shawn Martinez, senior director for the Suns and Mercury, highlighted the community impact: “We are very excited to be here. This is our third clinic this year, following events with northern and western tribes. Now we’re working with the central tribes at Gila River. Rez ball unites individuals, groups and communities.”

West underscored teamwork: “Sports teach you how to work hard, never give up and be strong. You cannot succeed as an

individual. Teamwork is the key to making the dream come true.”

Justin McQueen of the Boys & Girls Club of Komatke said, “The clinic is very important for kids to learn the game. At every stop, they’re having fun and learning fundamentals from the Suns and Mercury.”

Maurice Brown, head strength and conditioning coach for the Arizona Rattlers, added: “Connecting basketball, families and culture give young people hope.

They are learning values like discipline, hard work and good sportsmanship.”

Maria Dadgar, executive director of the Inter-Tribal Council of Arizona, noted the excitement: “The kids are telling us, ‘Today is the best day of my life.’ The youth are eager for activities and involvement in the community.”

*Continued on Next Page*



**Coach Ryan Brown is teaching kids 10 and younger the fundamentals of dribbling a basketball.** Jeston Morris/GRIN





# More Than 250 Youth Join Suns, Mercury Basketball Clinic

Terrence Peters, cultural director at the Boys & Girls Club Komatke, said, “It was great to see Arizona tribes work together. Youth were excited to participate, and their smiles showed the joy of the day.”

The clinic drew more than 250 young athletes. Participants received drawstring bags with treats, Suns game tickets and NBA or WNBA jerseys. Gov. Stephen Roe Lewis and Martinez expressed gratitude at the conclusion.

“This camp was great and very successful,” Lewis said. “We appreciate the Suns Mercury Foundation for setting up clinics across Arizona, from Parker to Tuba City. We appreciate your dedication to the development of our Indigenous youth. They are our future.”

Martinez added: “We are grateful for the opportunity. It’s only the beginning. We will continue to return and support tribal nations in Arizona. The Suns and Mercury plan to stay and help.”

The clinic was more than just a day of basketball—it became a celebration of community, culture, and youth empowerment. Families filled the stands, cheering on their children as they practiced drills, learned teamwork, and connected with professional coaches. The energy was palpable, with laughter and encouragement echoing across the gym. For many participants, it was their first time meeting NBA or WNBA representatives, an experience that left lasting inspiration.

Organizers emphasized that the clinic was designed not only to sharpen athletic skills but also to build confidence



Memories that last. Learning together, playing together.  
Jeston Morris/GRIN

and resilience. By providing jerseys and tickets, the Suns and Mercury created a bridge between Indigenous youth and the broader sports community, ensuring that these young athletes feel seen and valued. Parents expressed gratitude for the opportunity, noting that such events encourage healthy lifestyles and open doors to future possibilities.

Looking ahead, the Suns Mercury Foundation plans to expand outreach, continuing to partner with tribal nations across Arizona. Leaders hope these clinics will spark long-term interest in sports while reinforcing the importance of education and leadership. As Lewis and Martinez highlighted, the event was a reminder that investing in youth today strengthens the foundation for tomorrow’s tribal communities.



Youth participants learning discipline and teamwork  
Jeston Morris/GRIN



Building skills, building confidence on every drill. Jeston Morris/GRIN



Gov. Stephen Roe Lewis expressed gratitude to the the Suns and Mercury  
Jeston Morris/GRIN



Former Suns player and coach Frank Johnson gave some instructions to the participants. Jeston Morris/GRIN



# ROLLIN’ ON THE RIVER Police Motorcycle Skills Competition Draws 19 Agencies to Chandler



**Miguel Sallard**  
**Managing Editor**

CHANDLER, Ariz. (Nov. 14)—A police motorcycle skills competition brought together 19 law enforcement agencies over the weekend, including 18 from across Arizona and one from San Diego, California.

The two-day event, known as Rolling in the River, was sponsored by the Gila River Police Department and Pinal County Sheriff’s Office. More than 100 officers from across the state participated, among them four female officers. Competitors showcased their motorcycle handling and maneuvering skills on a course designed to



**GRPD Sgt. W.K. Elliot.**  
Miguel Sallard/GRIN

resemble the maze of the Gila River Indian Community.

Under the supervision of Sergeant W.K. Elliot, the Gila River Police Department had officers Cruz, Kennedy,

Travizo and Ward. Sgt. Elliot has served with the Gila River Police Department for more than 15 years, building a reputation as a dedicated officer and mentor. He has overseen the department’s involvement in the annual motorcycle skills competition, guiding riders through training and preparation. His participation has contributed to the consistent presence of Gila River at the event, ensuring that younger officers acquire experience while honoring the traditions of motor policing. Kennedy’s leadership reflects his commitment to both professional excellence and community service. This makes him a respected figure among law enforcement agencies in Arizona. Their participation highlighted the strong presence of tribal police agencies in statewide events.

Salt River officers Chad Herold, G. Villa, Q. Shoemaker and Lt. Wood joined the competition, while the Apache County Sheriff’s Office was represented by veteran officer Capt. Tommy Kirk, who has served more than 20 years in the department and 15 as a motor officer. He was the only participant riding a Harley-Davidson, a heavy, loud, classic machine, in sharp contrast to the rest of the riders, who chose lighter and more technologically advanced BMW motorcycles. His choice didn’t just stand out visually; it reflected who he is; an old-school officer, used to taking on challenges without following modern trends. Despite the technical disadvantage, Officer Capt. Kirk proved that experience, discipline, and determination can balance the scales against any mechanical innovation.

Organizers emphasized that the competition was not only about technical skill but also about building camaraderie among agencies. Officers were able to share experiences, exchange training techniques and strengthen ties across jurisdictions. The event also served as a public demonstration of the precision and discipline required of motorcycle officers, who often rely on these skills in traffic enforcement and escort duties.

This year’s winner received a symbolic award in honor of fallen Gila River Police Officer Joshua Briese, who died in the line of duty. The tribute underscored the event’s deeper purpose: to celebrate the dedication of officers while remembering those who made the ultimate sacrifice.

The event highlighted not only a competition and technical skill but also camaraderie, unity and respect among agencies, reinforcing the role of a motorcycle officers as both skilled professionals who have dedicated their lives to public safety and stewards of the community.



**Sgt. Elliot and Officer Ward, waiting to showcase their skill at the Rolling On The River motorcycle competition.** Miguel Sallard/GRIN



**GRPD Officer Cruz maneuvers through the precision course during the competition.** Miguel Sallard/GRIN



**Capt. Tommy Kirk of the Apache County Navajo Nation on his Harley-Davidson, demonstrating his skills.** Miguel Sallard/GRIN





# 37th Annual Red Mountain Eagle Pow Wow Shines at Salt River Baseball Field

**Jeston Morris**  
Gila River Indian News

SALT RIVER — On November 1-2, Salt River Baseball Field hosted the 37th Annual Red Mountain Eagle Pow Wow, which drew a sizable crowd. Perhaps the biggest pow wow in Phoenix's urban metro area, and it continues to expand with a substantial prize fund of \$35,000. Participating Indigenous dancers originated from various regions of Canada and Turtle Island.

Northern Cree and Southern Style serve the host drums. The special contest includes men's fancy, women's fancy shawl, team dancing, and hand drum. The pow wow featured several hundred dancers. Ruben Little Head and Bart Powakee emceed the event while Wayne Silas Jr. directed the arena.

Gourd dances were held at 11 a.m. and 5 p.m., Pow Wow grand entry took place between 1 and 7 p.m. Age categories encompass golden age, senior adults, junior adults, teens, juniors, and tiny tots. The night contest was done with stage spotlights. The head judge was Jeremy "Worm" Dearly.

Hundreds of vendors lined the baseball field, including nearly two dozen food stands on the south side. Among them were

Pima Frybread, Redhouse Pastry, That One Stand and C&H Food Stand.

Northern Cree kicked off the grand entry at 1 p.m., which lasted 45 minutes. Several hundred registered dancers joined the ceremonial procession. Southern Style and other drum groups contributed to the singing.

Northern Cree, from Treaty 6 Territory in Saddle Lake, Alberta, Canada, has served as host drum at Red Mountain on several occasions. Founded in 1982 by Steve Wood, the group has earned Grammy and Native American Music Award nominations. They are well known for their round dance song "Facebook Drama." "Red Mountain was a small pow wow when it started, but it has grown exponentially over the years. Pow wow is a good thing. It brings people together from all over Turtle Island. It has a lot of positive energy and healing," Wood said. "When we first debuted 'Facebook Drama,' everyone embraced it. The lyrics have a lot of truth. Social media can bring drama among First Nation peoples. The easiest thing to do to get away from the drama is to delete. 'Facebook Drama' resonates with many people," he said.

After daytime competitions, the eagle staff and colors were retired until the next grand entry. During breaks, attendees shopped



Jingle dress dancers performing a powerful and healing dance in grand entry precession.  
Jeston Morris/GRIN

and mingled. The food area was crowded, with Ach'ii' a popular delicacy sold by three vendors.

Emcee Ruben Little Head became available for an interview during break. "I am one of the emcees for the Red Mountain Pow Wow. Pow wow gives the Native youth a sense of identity, purpose, and belonging. Pow

wow has expanding concentric circles. The center of the arena is the main circle. During the pow wow break, there was O'otham singing and dancing and Kiowa gourd dancing. Harlan Barehand, a gourd dancer from Co-op Village in Districts 6 and 7, sang with the O'otham singers. "I am here for the gourd dance. I have

been gourd dancing for nearly 40 years. The west end of Gila River has always been involved with traditional O'otham singing and dancing. I got involved with gourd dancing at the PIMC hospital. Sammy 'Tonekei' White invited me to dance. I reflected on my own O'otham tradition and said, 'Why not?'

Stay Safe During  
Holiday Season

Boost Immunity

Include preventative vaccinations  
& stay hydrated

Practice Good Hygiene

Wash hands, sanitize, and stay home if  
feeling sick

Weather Readiness

Wear weather-appropriate clothing  
and keep warm indoors

Stay informed with weather events  
Text GRIC to 520-485-5040

WINTER BIRD COUNT

DECEMBER 6, 2025

7 AM: Meet Department of Environmental Quality  
staff members at each designated location

Gila Butte (Aji Mountain/ Nui Kosh)  
D4 Service Center: 557 Santan Rd, Sacaton, AZ 85147

Pee Posh Wetlands  
D7 Service Center: 8035 S 83rd Ave, Laveen Village, AZ 85339

Gila River Interpretive Trail  
Olberg Rd, Sacaton, AZ 85147

Wild Horse Pass Sheraton  
Aji Spa: 5594 W Wild Horse Pass Blvd,  
Chandler, AZ 85226

SCAN FOR SITE DETAILS

11 AM: Winter Bird Count Celebration

Huhugam Heritage Center  
21359 S. Maricopa Road  
Chandler, AZ 85226

Bird Singing/Dancing,  
Birds on Display, Guest  
Speakers, Raffles

PLEASE NOTE:

Transportation is not provided for this event.  
ALL MINORS must be accompanied by an ADULT.



# Project DreamCatcher Marks 10 Years of Empowering Native Woman Entrepreneurs

*Leadership on Motion  
Native Women Leading Change.*

**Jeston Morris**  
Gila River Indian News

PHOENIX — Native women alumni gathered Nov. 14 at the Sheraton’s Kave Ballroom to celebrate the 10th anniversary of Project DreamCatcher, a business program offered at no cost to Native American women entrepreneurs.

Since the launch, the program has graduated 356 women across 14 cohorts. DreamCatcher is a partnership between Freeport-McMoRan Foundation and Arizona State University’s Thunderbird School of Global Management, designed to build the capacity of women business owners from Arizona Tribes.

The celebration began at 8 a.m. with Mary Kim Titla serving as emcee. Former Lt. Gov. Roberto Stone gave a blessing, and Jacob Moore, associate vice president at ASU, gave the welcome remarks. Jason Chavez director of tribal affairs at the Arizona Governor’s Office, and Ondrea Barber, strategic Native relations manager at Freeport-McMoRan, also spoke.

The summit featured panels, networking sessions, workshops and a luncheon. Gov. Stephen Roe Lewis gave his remark during the luncheon, which included the featured panel, ‘Leadership on Motion—Native Women Leading Change.’

Candace Hamana, director of tribal relations at ASU, moderated the panel. Speakers included Judy Ferreira, executive director of Indian Gaming Association; Mary Kim Titla, executive director of UNITY; Tanya Lewis, former chairman of the Yavapai Apache Tribe; and Lynnann Yazzie, deputy superintendent for Indian Education at the Arizona Department of Education.

Hamana asked panelists what excites them about Native women leading in business, education, policy, arts and community development.

“We are witnessing how men lead. They have been in the leadership role for centuries. This is our reality. All the women on this panel are leading very successful organizations. The potential for women to lead is there. We have a choice and opportunity to lead. So just step up and become a leader,” said Yazzie, a member of the Navajo Nation.



Project DreamCatcher leadership (in the middle) Mary Kim Titla, Tanya Yazzie and Candace Hamana with participants, inspired strength, courage, hope, unity and perseverance. Jeston Morris/GRIN

“I see beauty before me. I see beauty behind me. I see beauty all around me. Not only that, but I see beauty in all that you are doing. You are all trailblazers,” said Titla, a member of the San Carlos Apache Tribe.

“There are a many choices out there. More choices create more opportunities. If you want to walk in tennis shoes, high heels, or moccasins, you do that. Make sure you take advantage of who you are and your unique story,” said Ferreira, also of the San Carlos Apache Nation.

“There is no limit to what you can reach. Always reach and reach farther. We are all here for each other. Set a goal, and we’ll cheer you on. Keep moving forward even if it’s baby steps, and don’t look back,” said Lewis, who is a member of the Yavapai Apache Nation.

Hamana reflected on the celebration. “First, Project DreamCatcher turning 10 years old is a significant milestone. Second, the program had a significant impact on Native women entrepreneurs in the state of Arizona and across the country. Last, this program is very empowering for Native women,” said Hamana, who is Hopi and Navajo.

Gov. Lewis praised the program’s impact.

“You don’t let anyone define who you are as a human being, especially as an Indigenous woman. You don’t let the mainstream define who you are. You define yourself based on your family, culture and tradition. Be true to yourself. Each one of you is a trailblazer,” said Gov. Lewis.

“DreamCatcher is an incredible movement in which you will lead your people and your nation in difficult and challenging times. You have the tools, and you have the gift given to you by the Creator to make a difference,” he added.



Gov. Stephen Roe Lewis praised the program. “DreamCatcher, an incredible movement.” Jeston Morris/GRIN

Mountain Pima Word Match: Match the Oob No'ok Solution!

In soiga gogsi.

Hosi hemak péso iñ-maa.

Aap si keeg vapkéhl aapi.

Eg Oob esi-m ek huun.

Eg okasi naati-m ek ha'a.

Eg ko'adaga si keega-d!

Photographs Courtesy Robert Johnson





# COMMUNITY COUNCIL ACTION SHEETS

Courtesy of the Community Council Secretary’s Office • November 5, 2025

**ACTION SHEET**

Community Council; P.O. Box 2138; Sacaton, Arizona 85147; Phone (520) 562-9720; Fax (520) 562-9729

**CALL TO ORDER**

The First Regular Monthly Meeting of the Community Council held Wednesday, November 5, 2025, in the Community Council Chambers at the Governance Center in Sacaton, Arizona was called to order by Governor Stephen R. Lewis at 9:09 a.m.

**INVOCATION**

Provided by Councilwoman Ann Lucas

**ROLL CALL**

Council Secretary Shannon White called the roll  
Executive Officers Present:  
Governor Stephen R. Lewis  
Lt. Governor Regina Antone  
Council Members Present:  
D1- Joey Whitman(9:54), Duane Jackson, Jr.; D2- Ann Lucas; D3- Kristina Morago, Joseph Manuel, Jr.; D4- Leah Williams, Jennifer Allison, Nada Celaya, Lalena Jackson; D5- Franklin Pablo, Sr., Donovan Kyyitan, Gordon Santos, Jr.; D6- Anthony Villareal, Sr., Terrance Evans; D7- Jeanette Blasingim  
Council Members Absent:  
D5- James De La Rosa  
D6- Charles Goldtooth

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

MOTION MADE AND SECOND TO ACCEPT AND APPROVE REPORTS #1, #2, #6 AND #7: ACCEPT AND APPROVE RESOLUTIONS #2 THROUGH #8 AND #11: ACCEPT AND APPROVE NEW BUSINESS #3 ON THE CONSENT AGENDA  
MOTION MADE AND SECOND TO APPROVE THE REGULAR AGENDA AS PRESENTED

**PRESENTATIONS/INTRODUCTIONS**

1. Gila River Health Care Introduction of Macaria Greco, Purchase Referred Care Director  
Presenters: GRHC Board of Directors, Macaria Greco, Max Haake, Judith Roth, Dr. Anthony Santiago

MR. MYRON SCHURZ, BOARD CHAIRMAN OF GILA RIVER HEALTH CARE INTRODUCED MR. MAX HAAKE, ASSISTANT CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER INTRODUCED MS. MACARIA GRECO. MS. GRECO HAS BEEN EMPLOYED WITH GRHC FOR OVER 20 YEARS IN VARIOUS POSITIONS IN THE PURCHASE REFERRED CARE DEPARTMENT. MS. GRECO HAS PROGRESSIVE EXPERIENCE IN CLAIMS PROCESSING, MANAGED CARE, AND LEADERSHIP WITHIN THE PURCHASE REFERRED CARE DEPARTMENT. MS. GRECO IS APPRECIATIVE OF THIS OPPORTUNITY. VARIOUS COUNCIL MEMBERS CONGRATULATED MS. GRECO ON HER NEW POSITION AND LOOK FORWARD TO THE UPCOMING IMPROVEMENTS TO THE DEPARTMENT.  
2. Introduction Of Danielle Allen, Adult Education Manager Tribal Education Department Student Services  
Presenters: Danielle Allen, Sherilyn Analla  
MS. SHERILYN ANALLA, TRIBAL EDUCATION DIRECTOR INTRODUCED MS. DANIELLE ALLEN. MS. ALLEN IS HONORED TO HOLD THIS POSITION. MS. ALLEN IS A COMMUNITY MEMBER AND HOLDS A BACHELORS OF ARTS IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF DUBUQUE AND MASTER OF LEGAL STUDIES IN INDIGENOUS PEOPLES LAW FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA. MS. ALLEN SHARED HER PLANS FOR IMPROVEMENT FOR THE DEPARTMENT WITH ALL AVAILABLE RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS THE DEPARTMENT WORKS WITH. IT IS HER GOAL TO CONTINUE TO ENCOURAGE STUDENTS TO ACHIEVE THEIR EDUCATIONAL GOALS. VARIOUS COUNCIL CONGRATULATED MS. ALLEN AND PROVIDED WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT.

**REPORTS**

>1. American Legion Post 51 Haskell Osife Antone 2025 4th Quarter Budget  
Presenter: Gary Rodriguez  
ACCEPTED AT APPROVAL OF AGENDA  
>2. Community Technology Center FY2024/2025 4th Quarter and Annual Report  
Presenters: Connie Jackson, Camille Miguel  
ACCEPTED AT APPROVAL OF AGENDA  
3. 2025 Yellow-Billed Cuckoo Survey Report

Presenters: Lisa Gover, Alexander Greenwood  
**REPORT HEARD**

4. Bald Eagle Nestwatch Program - 2025 Program Data Analysis Report  
Presenters: Lisa Gover, Alexander Greenwood  
**REPORT HEARD**  
5. NAFIS Impact Aid  
Presenter: Duane Jackson, Jr.  
**REPORT HEARD**  
>6. Canton Indian Asylum Memorial, THPO Report No. 2015-050  
Presenters: Reylynne Williams, Darius Enos, Larry Benallie, Jr.  
ACCEPTED AT APPROVAL OF AGENDA  
>7. Vassar College Repatriation Ceremony, THPO Report No. 2025-015  
Presenters: Reylynne Williams, Darius Enos, Larry Benallie, Jr.  
ACCEPTED AT APPROVAL OF AGENDA  
MOTION MADE AND SECOND TO ACCEPT REPORTS #8 AND #9  
8. Gila River Gaming Commission Department Report to the Community Council September 2025 (Executive Session)  
Presenters: M. Scott Sanderson, Gila River Gaming Commission  
ACCEPTED  
9. Gila River Gaming Enterprises, Inc. Monthly Report September 2025 (Executive Session)  
Presenters: Kenneth Manuel, Dominic Orozco, Blake Katsnelson, Tony DeMark, Majdi Kayyali, Interim Oversight & Planning Committee  
ACCEPTED  
[GOVERNOR LEWIS CALLED FOR A 15 MINUTE BREAK; THE MEETING RECONVENED AT 11:28 A.M.]

**RESOLUTIONS**

1. A Resolution Establishing A Task Force On Evolving Economic Developments In The Entertainment Industry (Executive Session) (G&MSC motions that the title read “A Resolution Establishing A Task Force On Evolving Economic Developments In The Entertainment Industry”) (G&MSC forwards to Council in Executive Session with a recommendation for approval with correction; EDSC concurs)  
Presenters: Javier G. Ramos, Gabe Dowell  
APPROVED  
MOTION MADE AND SECOND TO APPOINT COUNCILWOMAN JEANETTE BLASINGIM TO THE TASK FORCE  
>2. A Resolution Approving And Ratifying The Non-Capital Operating Lease Agreement Between The Gila River Indian Community (Lessee) And DLL Finance LLC (Lessor) For Lease Of Equipment For Whirlwind Golf Club, And Including A Limited Waiver Of Sovereign Immunity (G&MSC forwards to Council with a recommendation for approval and placement on the consent agenda; EDSC forwards to Council with corrections)  
Presenters: Lorenzo Sierra, IV, Duncan Wiston  
ACCEPTED AND APPROVED AT APPROVAL OF AGENDA  
>3. A Resolution Of Consent To Grant A Temporary Special Event Liquor License To Chemo Companions For Use At The Wild Horse Festival Grounds On December 6, 2025 (G&MSC forwards to Council with a recommendation for approval and placement on the consent agenda)  
Presenters: Kaleb Lester, Duncan Wiston  
ACCEPTED AND APPROVED AT APPROVAL OF AGENDA  
>4. A Resolution Requesting The Secretary Of The Interior Place The Blackwater Trading Post Lands Into Trust Status Pursuant To The Blackwater Trading Post Land Transfer Act As A Mandatory Acquisition (G&MSC forwards to Council with a recommendation for approval and placement on the consent agenda; NRSC concurs)  
Presenters: Javier G. Ramos, Michael Carter  
ACCEPTED AND APPROVED AT APPROVAL OF AGENDA  
>5. A Resolution Approving And Authorizing An Agreement Between The Gila River Indian Community And Gabriel, Roeder, Smith & Company Benefits Consulting LLC For Fiscal Year 2026 (G&MSC forwards to Council with a recommendation for approval and placement on the consent agenda)  
Presenters: Treasurer Gary T. Mix, Sharon Harvier  
ACCEPTED AND APPROVED AT APPROVAL OF AGENDA  
>6. A Resolution Approving And Authorizing An Agreement Between The Gila River Indian Community And Gabriel, Roeder, Smith & Company Benefits Consulting LLC For Fiscal Year 2026 (G&MSC forwards to Council with a recommendation for approval and placement on the consent agenda)  
Presenters: Treasurer Gary T. Mix, Sharon Harvier  
ACCEPTED AND APPROVED AT APPROVAL OF AGENDA  
>7. A Resolution Amending The Service Agreement (C7618) Between The Gila

River Indian Community, Gila River Gaming Enterprises, And Moss Adams, LLP (G&MSC forwards to Council with a recommendation for approval with correction)  
Presenter: Treasurer Gary T. Mix  
ACCEPTED AND APPROVED AT APPROVAL OF AGENDA  
>8. A Resolution Authorizing The Publication Of The First Things First Gila River Indian Community Combined 2022 And 2024 Regional Needs And Assets Report (H&SSC forwards to Council with recommendation for approval and placement on the consent agenda; ESC concurs)  
Presenters: Ember Tahy, Candida Hunter  
ACCEPTED AND APPROVED AT APPROVAL OF AGENDA  
9. A Resolution Approving The Petition For Membership For Angelina Maria Sotelo Into The Gila River Indian Community (LSC forwards to Council under resolutions with a recommendation of approval)  
Presenter: Sara Duenez  
APPROVED  
10. Resolution Approving The Petition For Membership For Luke Jacob Lasiloo Into The Gila River Indian Community (LSC forwards to Council under resolutions with a recommendation of approval)  
Presenter: Sara Duenez

APPROVED  
>11. A Resolution Approving A Memorandum Of Understanding Between The Tribal Education Department Of The Gila River Indian Community, St. Peter Indian Mission Catholic School, And The Roman Catholic Diocese Of Phoenix (ESC forwards to Council with recommendation for approval and placement on the consent agenda)  
Presenters: Todd Araujo, Alyana Jimerson  
ACCEPTED AND APPROVED AT APPROVAL OF AGENDA  
ORDINANCES  
UNFINISHED BUSINESS

**NEW BUSINESS**

1. Gila River Health Care Community Needs Assessment Project for approval (H&SSC forwards to Council as information)  
Presenters: GRHC Board of Directors, Dr. Viji Murugavel, Dr. Thomas Rowe, Jaime Lee, Yvonne Bueno, Amanda Hunter, Dr. Anthony Santiago  
ITEM HEARD  
2. Verbal Update: SNAP Benefits (H&SSC forwards to Council for Executive Office to develop a report with their plan regarding SNAP Benefits and whatever entities they are working with)  
Presenters: Executive Office, Office of the Community Manager, Community Services Department, Nutrition Assistance Program

MOTION MADE AND SECOND TO DEFER THIS VERBAL UPDATE: SNAP BENEFITS TO GOVERNMENT & MANAGEMENT STANDING COMMITTEE AT THE NOVEMBER 10, 2025 MEETING AND REQUEST A COMPREHENSIVE GANTT CHART BE PRODUCED FOR EACH OF THE FOLLOWING: WIC, COMMODITY FOODS PROGRAM, AND SNAP, AND TRANSPORTATION

MOTION MADE AND SECOND TO HAVE THE EXECUTIVE OFFICE FORWARD TO COUNCIL ANY INFORMATION THAT DIRECTLY AFFECTS THE GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN AND THE PROGRAMS REGARDING GILA RIVER INDIAN COMMUNITY MEMBERS  
>3. FEMA Emergency Management Overview For Tribal Leadership (L0583) (LSC forward to Council as an FYI and placement on the consent agenda)  
Presenter: Bruce Harvey

ACCEPTED AND APPROVED AT APPROVAL OF AGENDA  
4. FY2025 Internal Audit Department 4th Quarter Report (Executive Session) (G&MSC forwards to Council under New Business in Executive Session with a recommendation to accept)  
Presenters: Dena Thomas, Kyromi Martinez-Pablo

MOTION MADE AND SECOND TO ACCEPT THE FY2025 INTERNAL AUDIT DEPARTMENT 4TH QUARTER REPORT  
MOTION MADE AND SECOND TO GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION

5. GRIC District Three WRA Funds Special Audit Report (Executive Session) (G&MSC forwards to Council under New Business in Executive Session with a recommendation to direct the Treasurer to freeze the WRA Account with Chase Bank until such time they can satisfactorily complete two (2) recommendations by Internal Audit)

Presenters: Dena Thomas, Kyromi Martinez-Pablo

HEARD IN EXECUTIVE SESSION  
MOTION MADE AND SECOND TO DIRECT THE TREASURER TO FREEZE THE WRA ACCOUNT WITH CHASE BANK UNTIL SUCH TIME DISTRICT THREE SATISFACTORILY COMPLETE TWO (2) RECOMMENDATIONS BY INTERNAL AUDIT  
MOTION MADE AND SECOND TO ALLOW INTERNAL AUDIT AND THE TREASURER RELEASE A REDACTED REPORT TO DISTRICT 3

6. GRIC District Five Agricultural Program Special Audit Report (Executive Session)(G&MSC forwards to Council under New Business in Executive Session with a recommendation to direct OCM, Community Services Department, and District 5, implement the seven (7) recommendations from Internal Audit. In addition, directing Internal Audit and OGC to provide the audit to GRPD for an investigation)  
Presenters: Dena Thomas, Kyromi Martinez-Pablo

HEARD IN EXECUTIVE SESSION  
MOTION MADE AND SECOND TO DIRECT OCM, COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT, AND DISTRICT 5, IMPLEMENT THE SEVEN (7) RECOMMENDATIONS FROM INTERNAL AUDIT. IN ADDITION, DIRECTING INTERNAL AUDIT AND THE OFFICE OF GENERAL COUNSEL TO PROVIDE THE AUDIT TO THE GILA RIVER POLICE DEPARTMENT FOR AN INVESTIGATION  
MOTION MADE AND SECOND TO DIRECT INTERNAL AUDIT TO CONDUCT A FINANCIAL, INVESTIGATIVE, AND PERFORMANCE AUDIT AS APPROPRIATE OF THE DISTRICT 5 UNDER THE COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT

7. GRIC Tribal Health Department Special Audit Report (Executive Session) (G&MSC forwards to Council under New Business in Executive Session with a recommendation to direct the Tribal Health Department and OCM to implement the four (4) recommendations from Internal Audit, and to direct OGC and the Tribal Health Department to contract immediately with a licensed certified Veterinarian)  
Presenters: Dena Thomas, Kyromi Martinez-Pablo

HEARD IN EXECUTIVE SESSION  
MOTION MADE AND SECOND TO DIRECT THE TRIBAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT AND OFFICE OF THE COMMUNITY MANAGER TO IMPLEMENT THE FOUR (4) RECOMMENDATIONS FROM INTERNAL AUDIT, AND TO DIRECT THE OFFICE OF THE GENERAL COUNSEL AND THE TRIBAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT TO CONTRACT IMMEDIATELY WITH A LICENSED CERTIFIED VETERINARIAN, I SO MOVE  
MOTION MADE AND SECOND TO EXIT EXECUTIVE SESSION  
MINUTES

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- DISTRICT 2 WILL BE OPENING UP A FOOD PANTRY AND IS OPEN TO ANYONE IN NEED
- LEGISLATIVE STANDING COMMITTEE WORK SESSION WILL BE HELD ON FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2025 AT 9:00 A.M.
- THE RUN FOR THE FALLEN WILL BE HELD AT ST. PETER'S ON FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2025
- GRICUA CUSTOMER APPRECIATION DAY, THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 2025 AT 10:30 A.M.
- DISTRICT 4 NATURAL RESOURCES STANDING COMMITTEE PUBLIC HEARING IS CANCELED FOR SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2025 DUE TO DEATHS IN THE DISTRICT
- THE SMALL BUSINESS OWNER'S SHOWCASE WILL BE HELD ON FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2025 AT 9:00 A.M. TO 1:00 P.M.
- DISCUSSION WAS HELD REGARDING THE PAYOUT TO THE COMMUNITY MEMBERS SHARED ON MEDIA OUTLETS AND UNAUTHORIZED USE OF THE GRIC SEAL ON THE UNOFFICIAL SOCIAL MEDIA PAGE LABELED AS GILA RIVER INDIAN COMMUNITY

**ADJOURNMENT**

MEETING ADJOURNED AT 3:06 P.M.  
\* Denotes TABLED from previous meeting(s)  
> Denotes a CONSENT AGENDA ITEM



Announcements & Notices

IN THE COURT OF THE  
GILA RIVER INDIAN COMMUNITY  
IN THE STATE OF ARIZONA

COURT DATE NOTICE

In Re Case: *Joshua Spencer Mejia vs. Alicia Quintero*

Docket Number: *FM-2025-0067-PT*

This case has been scheduled and YOU ARE ORDERED TO APPEAR on the date, time and place designated below. IF YOU FAIL TO APPEAR your hearing may be held in absentia and a warrant may be issued for your arrest, forfeiture of your bond, judgment in favor of the other party, or jail time may be ordered.

Answer/Response Hearing

AKIMEL O'OTHAM LODITHA KUD KI,  
721 West Seed Farm Road,  
Sacaton, AZ 85147

15th day of December, 2025 at 10:00 AM\*  
in Courtroom I before the Honorable Gwendolyn Morago

Issued by: Williams      Date: Tuesday, October 21, 2025

Case  
AMENDED FILE COPY

IN THE COURT OF THE  
GILA RIVER INDIAN COMMUNITY  
IN THE STATE OF ARIZONA

COURT DATE NOTICE

In Re Case: *Marla D. Dixon vs. Luis Antonio Lopez*

Docket Number: *CV-2025-0241-RO*

This case has been scheduled and YOU ARE ORDERED TO APPEAR on the date, time and place designated below. IF YOU FAIL TO APPEAR your hearing may be held in absentia and a warrant may be issued for your arrest, forfeiture of your bond, judgment in favor of the other party, or jail time may be ordered.

Restraining Order Hearing

AKIMEL O'OTHAM LODITHA KUD KI,  
721 West Seed Farm Road,  
Sacaton, AZ 85147

9th day of January, 2026 at 9:00 AM  
in Courtroom I before the Honorable Sheri L Cassa

Issued by: Williams      Date: Friday, November 14, 2025

Case  
FILE COPY

NOTICE OF  
COMPLETED LEGISLATION

TITLE 1  
ADMINISTRATION OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

Chapter 4. Standards of Conduct  
And  
Chapter 5. Compliance, Sanctions and Penalties

1.401. Authority; Findings; Intent & Purpose.

A. **Authority.** The Constitution and Bylaws of the Gila River Indian Community (1960) were formed pursuant to the Indian Reorganization Act (25 U.S.C. § 461 *et seq.*) and were adopted for the common welfare of the Community and provide structure for the Community to enact laws governing conduct within the exterior boundaries of the Reservation (25 U.S.C. § 476). The Community enacts chapters 4 and 5 of this title under its inherent civil, legislative, adjudicative and regulatory authority.

B. **Findings.** Recognizing that the best interest of the Community is served by ensuring accountability, order, discipline and integrity in all matters of conduct by Community Officials, the Community Council finds:

- That the Community Council enacts chapters 4 and 5 to regulate the conduct of Officials pursuant to its authority under Articles VI, VII, and XII of the Constitution and Bylaws of the Gila River Indian Community (1960);
- That establishing and requiring adherence to standards of conduct to avoid conflicts of interest as to the use of public offices or property for private gain, and to avoid granting favored treatment to persons, businesses or organizations in situations where there is a conflict of interest, is necessary to ensure the integrity of the Community's political process and business decisions made on behalf of the Community;
- That providing for a more informed citizenry by requiring the disclosure of significant economic and business interests and affiliations of Officials which involve any potential for conflict with the primary interests of the Community and Community government is necessary to ensure the integrity of the Community's political process and business decisions made on behalf of the Community;
- That requiring Officials to abstain from using any function of their office or duties, in a manner which could place, or appear to place, their personal, familial, economic or special interests before the interests of the Community is necessary to ensure the integrity of the Community's political process and business decisions made on behalf of the Community; and

A copy of this ordinance in its entirety is on file and available for review at all District Service Center coordinators' offices and the Community Council Secretary's office.



Gila River Police Department  
Crime Analysis Unit (CAU)

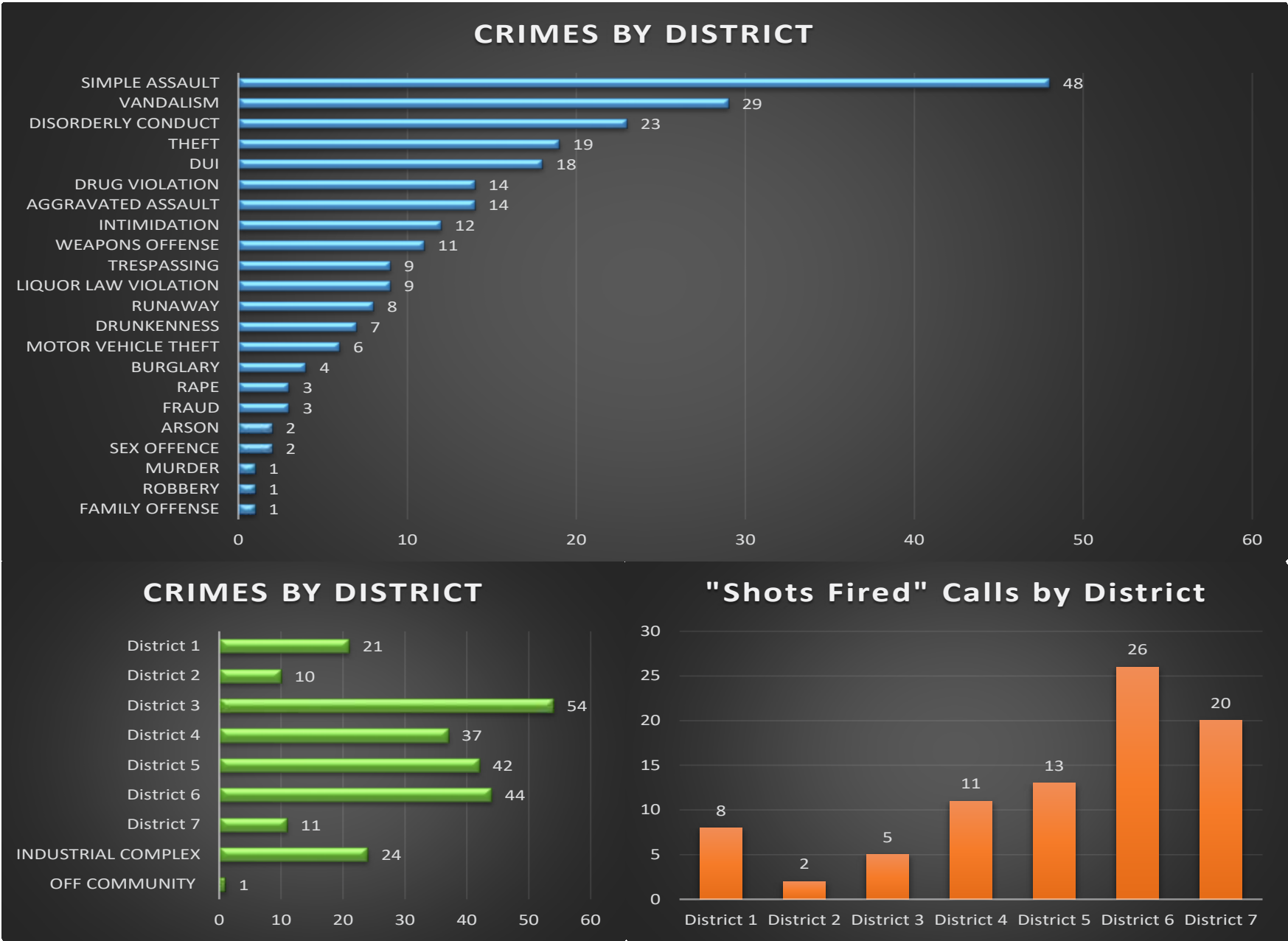


2025 OCTOBER CRIME REPORT

Crime Data Report

Summarizes crime and traffic incidents that were reported to the Gila River Police Department (GRPD). The metrics included in this report are the crimes by type, traffic related incidents and total calls by district. This report includes data from October 1- October 31, 2025.

\*Data is subject to change if new information or revisions are made\*





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2024 Nissan Kicks SV  
2022 Ford F-150 XLT

2021 Nissan  
Altima 2.5 SR  
2022 Chevy Trax  
2024 Chevy Equinox

2023 Kia Forte  
2022 Ford Edge  
2023 Nissan Versa



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## JUSTIN MOORE

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 22 | 8PM



## WAYNE NEWTON

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 22 | 7PM



## ROB SCHNEIDER

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 29 | 8PM



## WILD CHILD: A DOORS EXPERIENCE

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 5 | 8PM

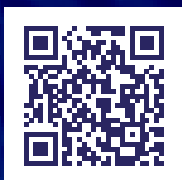


## GIPSY KINGS FEATURING NICOLAS REYES

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 6 | 8PM

### MORE UPCOMING SHOWS

DEC 7 | CLAY WALKER: DRIVE ME SMOOTH TOUR AT *WILD HORSE PASS*  
DEC 9 | BEERS WITH FRIENDS STARRING RUSSELL DICKERSON AT *WILD HORSE PASS*  
DEC 11 | RANDY HOUSER *WILD HORSE PASS*



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