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Gila River Indian Community Reflects on 2025

GRIN Staff Gila River Indian News

For many Community members, 2025 was a year defined by progress: new buildings rising, infrastructure strengthening, and elders gathering to guide the path ahead. Together, these moments told a larger story — one of a people building with purpose, honoring tradition while preparing the way for future generations.

Honoring Elders: Wisdom at the Center of Progress

Amid the year's construction and innovation, elders remained at the heart of GRIC's progress. Throughout 2025, district centers hosted gatherings where elders shared concerns, asked questions, and offered guidance on issues ranging from water and environmental safety to cultural preservation and community well-being.

These conversations were more than meetings, they were reminders that every new building, every pipeline, and every solar panel rests on the foundation of generations who carried the Community forward. Their voices shaped the year's priorities and ensured that progress remained grounded in cultural values. The Gila River Indian Community closed out 2025 with determination and major achievement and a



Gov. Stephen Roe Lewis shares a heartfelt Christmas message with the Community, offering blessings of peace, unity, and gratitude during the holiday season. CPAO

renewed sense of unity, purpose, and momentum. Across all seven districts, members witnessed historic milestones in water stewardship, infrastructure, cultural preservation, and youth leadership, each one reinforcing the Community's long standing commitment to sovereignty and collective wellbeing.

"This year reminded us that when we lead with our values, we lead with strength," Gov. Stephen Roe Lewis said during a December gathering. "Our progress in

2025 reflects generations of perseverance and the vision of our elders and youth alike."

Innovation on the Horizon: *Infrastructure & Energy*

One of the most celebrated

achievements of the year came on Dec. 11, when GRIC and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers unveiled the nation's first solar over canal project. The installation, stretching across a section of the Community's canal system, drew national attention for its dual impact: reducing water loss and generating clean, renewable energy.

The ribbon cutting ceremony brought together tribal leaders, engineers, and community mem-

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Superstition Fire & Medical District Thanks Gila River Indian Community for 2023 Grant Award

Superstition Fire & Medical District: Press Release

Sacaton, Ariz – December 17, 2025 – The Superstition Fire & Medical District (SFMD) proudly announces the deployment of a new frontline ambulance, made possible through a generous 2023 grant award from the Gila River Indian Community.

The grant was awarded in 2023, and due to the specialized build process and delivery timeline, it took just over two years to construct and deploy the ambulance. Today, the unit is fully operational and serving residents across SFMD's 71-square-mile service area. This new ambulance strengthens the District's ability to respond to emergencies, reduce response times, and provide life-



The Superstition Fire & Medical District unveils its new frontline ambulance, funded through a 2023 grant award from the Gila River Indian Community. Miguel Sallard/GRIN

saving care to a growing population that fluctuates from 65,000

full-time residents to more than 95,000 during the winter months.

"This ambulance represents not only an investment in equipment, but in the safety and survivability of our citizens," said John Whitney, Fire Chief of SFMD. "We are deeply grateful to the Gila River Indian Community for their support. Their generosity ensures that we can continue to meet the demands of our expanding service area and uphold our mission of emergency service delivery."

The addition of this ambulance comes at a pivotal time, as SFMD prepares for the construction of a sixth fire station and anticipates the impact of 17,000 new homes slated for development over the next decade. The new unit also ensures compliance with the Phoenix Auto Aid system, allowing SFMD to maintain high standards of service delivery.



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INDIGENOUS
Journalists Association

**GRIC Reflects on 2025
Continued from Front
Page**

bers. “This project shows what’s possible when innovation is guided by cultural responsibility,” Lt. Gov. Regina Antone said. “We’re protecting our water while creating energy for future generations.”

The project also positioned GRIC as a national model for climate resilient infrastructure, a theme that echoed throughout the year.

Meanwhile, Gila River Telecommunications, Inc. (GRTI) continued its multi year expansion of high speed internet, reaching 100% fiber to home coverage in District 4. The upgrade supported the effort to bring high-speed internet access to all GRIC households.

Water Stewardship: Honoring a Legacy, Shaping a Future.

In 2025, the Community marked the 21st anniversary of the 2004 Water Rights Settlement, one of the largest tribal water settlements in U.S. history. The anniversary served as both a celebration and a reminder of the decades long struggle to reclaim water that had been diverted away from the Community for generations.

“Our water is our identity,” said Community Council Representative Jeanette Blasingim, Distric 7, during a commemorative reflection. “The settlement wasn’t just a legal victory — it was a restoration of who we are as O’odham and Pee Posh people.”

The year also saw GRIC take a leading role in regional water policy. In partnership with the Colorado River Indian Tribes and the Central Arizona Water Conservation District, the Community signed a cooperative agreement to address drought, shortages, and long term river management. The pact represented a rare moment of unity in a region often divided by water politics.

Community & Public Safety

Public safety remained a



Solar panels over canal project located next to Phoenix Premium Outlets & I-10
Emma Hughes/GRIN

voices matter, and we’re not giving up.”

The Community Council also continued discussions on a proposed banishment/disenrollment ordinance aimed at addressing violent crime. The proposal sparked thoughtful debate across districts, with members weighing accountability, safety, and cultural values.

Youth Leadership & Cultural Strength.

Youth leadership flourished

from the Phoenix Suns and Mercury, which drew a large turnout and highlighted the Community’s commitment to youth wellness.

Health, Governance & National Recognition

Gila River Health Care celebrated 30 years of tribal self governance, marking three decades of expanding services, improving access, and strengthening culturally grounded care.

“We’ve grown from a small clinic system into a comprehensive

Rivers Relocation Center, the WWII Japanese American incarceration site located on Community land. GRIC continued to protect the site from trespassing and unauthorized exploration, emphasizing the importance of honoring the memory of those who suffered there.

“This land holds painful stories, and we protect it out of respect,” said Cultural Resource Management Program staff member.



Lt. Gov. Regina Antone at Gila River Health Care declaring October 1, 2025 as Gila River Health Care Tribal Self-Governance Day. Apphia Shirley/CPAO

in 2025 as a new cohort of the Gila River Youth Council took their oaths of office, continuing GRIC’s tradition of empowering young voices in governance and

sive healthcare network,” said Anthony J. Santiago, M.D, Gila River Health Care, Chief Executive Officer. “And we’ve done it by listening to our Community.”

Gov. Lewis also received national recognition for GRIC’s leadership in renewable energy and climate resilient infrastructure, further elevating the Community’s profile on the national stage.

Preserving Memory: Stewardship of the Rivers Internment Site

Throughout 2025, national media highlighted GRIC’s careful stewardship of the former

“It’s not a tourist site — it’s a place of remembrance.”

Looking Ahead

As 2025 ended, the Community reflected on a year defined by resilience, innovation, and unity. Whether advancing renewable energy, strengthening cultural traditions, or advocating for justice, the Gila River Indian Community continued to lead with purpose.

“Our strength comes from our people,” Governor Lewis said. “And as long as we move forward together, there is nothing we cannot accomplish.”



Family and friends gather at the Mul-Chu-Tha Fairgrounds for a Community support. Emma Hughes/GRIN

central focus in 2025. In the spring, hundreds of Community members marched from the Mul Chu Tha Fairgrounds to the Governance Center, calling attention to unsolved cases and advocating for stronger safety measures.

“We walked for our loved ones, for justice, and for healing,” said marcher and District 5 resident Angela Pablo. “Our

community service.

“Our youth aren’t just preparing to lead someday — they’re leading right now,” said Youth Council Advisor Victoria Quintero.

Cultural events also brought the Community together. Meanwhile, District 6 and District 3 hosted a high energy youth basketball clinic featuring coaches



Gila River Youth Council Sworn In on the 38th AOPPYC at the Rawhide. Jeston Morris/GRIN



St. Peter Robotics Teams Compete in the FLL Regional Qualifying Tournament

Jeston Morris
Gila River Indian News

BAPCHULE, Ariz. — Four robotics teams from St. Peter Indian Mission Catholic School competed in the Arizona First Lego League (FLL) regional qualifying tournament on Dec. 13 at Skyline Gila River High School.

Although the teams did not advance to the state championship, St. Peter students earned three honors: Robot Design, Rising All Star, and Coach/Mentor.

Twenty-one teams from across the Valley participated in this year’s qualifier. Students trained for three months in preparation for the event, which followed the FLL theme “Unearthed,” focusing on archaeology, history and discovering the past. The state championship is scheduled for January 2026.

Coach JoEllen Kinnamon said her students researched archaeological sites including Snaketown and Casa Grande Ruins, learning that Arizona has more than 16,000 documented sites — 59 of them located on the Gila River Indian Community, with two designated as national monuments.

“The kids love to build in Lego League,” Kinnamon said. “They learn that the Legos are not toys but tools — tools to move stuff.”

Team Results:
The Newbies placed 14th in their first competition. Team members are Lynn Jackson, Trusaline Gonzales and Maddy

Figueroa.
Vest Tribe finished ninth. Hayden Thomas and Evangeline Hayes served as team mentors, and Ms. Vest coached the group. Team members are Abrigail Hayes, Paolo Vest and Shdya Vest.

“I was nervous at the robotics competition,” said Paolo Vest. “Our robot was not working, so I thought we were going to lose. Then we got it to work.”

Snake Town Protectors placed 11th. Team member Muriah Miles accepted the Best Robot Design Award on behalf of the group. Members include Ruby Harrison, Benjamin Thomas, Ian Thomas and Jarrod Ramon.

“The presentation was challenging but fun,” Miles said. “The award we received is for robot design. It’s a big robot — hard to get around — but it makes it easier to get the mission done.”

Guardians of the Desert earned third place. Team member Lylonni Brown received the Rising All Star Award. Members include Emmett Miguel, Claire Crawford, Josiah Antone, Isiah Hernandez and Zachary Antone.

“I feel proud of my team,” Brown said. Miles also offered a simple explanation of the team’s coding process.

“Autonomous means it moves by itself,” she said. “We start with the motors for the two wheels. They’re all color coded. We code the speed and the rotation so it can get the mission done.”

Coach Recognition
Kinnamon received the Best Coach/Mentor Award.

“My kids nominated me for the Coach/Mentor Award,” she said. “That says a lot because I am a bear.”

Kinnamon said the teams scored 210 points, securing third place overall in robot performance.

“The kids put their heart and soul into the robotics,” she said. “Last year, we were selected to go to State. We were the only Native team that represented Arizona.”

Looking Ahead
The Gentle Giants did not compete this year but are preparing for next season. Despite not qualifying for State, St. Peter’s robotics teams remain optimistic. A post tournament press conference was held at St. Peter following the event.



Isiah Hernandez, Muriah Miles and Emmett Miguel setting up the robot on the mat. Jeston Morris/GRIN



L-R: Isiah Hernandez, Ms. JoEllen Kinnamon, Muriah Miles and Emmett Miguel
Jeston Morris/GRIN



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Teamwork Drives Awards and Success at Gila River Resorts & Casinos



Submitted By Gila River Resorts & Casinos: Public Relations

CHANDLER, Ariz—Gila River Resorts & Casinos, proudly owned and operated by the Gila River Indian Community, began over three decades ago and has since grown into one of Arizona’s premier hospitality and entertainment destinations. The Enterprise continues to earn local and national acclaim — but leadership is clear on one point: its success shines brightest because of the team members who bring it to life every day.

Chief Executive Officer Kenneth Manuel emphasized the company’s guiding principle:

“Hospitality is at the heart of everything we do. Our mantra, ‘guest service first,’ drives us to create memorable experiences that uphold our award-winning reputation.”

From the welcoming smiles at the front door to the behind-the-scenes experts who keep every detail running flawlessly, each team member plays a vital role in creating the memorable experiences that define Gila River Resorts & Casinos. Their passion, professionalism, and pride are what set the Enterprise apart.

This shared commitment has helped Gila River Resorts & Casinos earn praise across the industry — from customer service and hospitality honors to recognition as one of the region’s healthiest employers. Rooted in the Gila River Indian Community’s values of kindness, hospitality, and resilience, the Enterprise continues to foster an environment where teamwork, respect, and excellence thrive.

That spirit of collaboration has also placed Gila River team members in the spotlight beyond the Enterprise. Several individuals were recently recognized across the community and the gaming industry for their leadership, expertise, and contributions. These honors reflect not only their personal achievements but also the culture that Gila River Resorts & Casinos works to build every day.

As the Enterprise looks toward the future, its commitment to supporting and celebrating team members remains central to its mis-

sion. For both guests and employees, it’s clear that the true jackpot is found in community, collaboration, and shared success.

Leadership throughout the Enterprise emphasizes that this culture of teamwork has been the driving force behind Gila River Resorts & Casinos’ growth and reputation across the Valley. It is the team members who make the awards and recognition possible — and who represent the heart of the organization wherever they go.

Team members that bring passion, pride, and a sense of community to what they do.



Blake Katsnelson.
Chief Operations Officer

With more than 17 years at Gila River Resorts & Casinos, Blake has steadily advanced through key roles within the Enterprise — from Director of Marketing to General Manager and now Chief Operations Officer. His leadership style centers on mentorship, guiding emerging casino professionals as they grow their careers.

Recent recognition: Named one of Global Gaming Business Magazine’s Emerging Leaders of Gaming 40 Under 40 and featured in Gilbert City Lifestyle Magazine as one of “The Men of Gilbert.”



Robin Villareal.
Chief Information Officer

Robin has spent over 20 years with the Enterprise and holds the distinction of being the first Native American female CIO for Gila River Resorts & Casinos. Her people-first leadership approach creates collabo-

rative, empowered teams where individuals feel valued and supported.

Recent recognition: Honored as one of the Women of Chandler, named among AZ Business Magazine’s Most Influential Women in Arizona, and recognized as a Business Leader. She has also been nominated for the IT industry’s prestigious Orbie Awards and for the Women in Sports + Events – Women of Inspiration award.



Crystal Rodriguez
Assistant Corporate
Director of Marketing

With more than two decades of gaming experience — including 10 years in management — Crystal has advanced her career through determination, collaboration, and a commitment to helping others grow. She plays a key role in supporting marketing innovation and enterprise-wide initiatives.

Recent recognition: Selected for the Enterprise’s two-year Mentorship Program and appointed Assistant Corporate Director of Marketing, reflecting her dedication to the success and future of Gila River Resorts & Casinos.



Kimberly Thompson
Corporate Director of
Event Operations

Over her eight years with Gila River Resorts & Casinos, Kimberly has become a rising star in event operations. Her meticulous planning and passion for experience design elevate every event she oversees, and her leadership serves as an inspiration to her team.

Recent recognition: Recipient of the 2025 Women in Sports + Events – Women of Inspiration award.

Gila River Gaming Enterprise Donates More Than 1,500 Toys to Tribal Social Services



Casino team members unite to brighten the holidays for children across the Community at the Annual toy drive. Emma Hughes/GRIN

GILA RIVER INDIAN COMMUNITY — Gila River Gaming Enterprise Chief Executive Officer Kenneth Manuel and casino executives met with leadership and team members from the Gila River Indian Community’s Tribal Social Services on Dec. 12 to present a donation of toys for children in their care.

The in-person gathering offered Enterprise leadership an opportunity to express appreciation for the dedication, compassion and year-round support that Tribal Social Services provides to the Community’s children. Manuel noted that the donation was the result of a collective effort across all casino properties, including the Enterprise’s annual toy drive and contributions from Bingo and Poker promotional events.

Together, team members helped gather more than 1,500 toys.

“We take great pride in the work we do across all of our casino properties,” Manuel said.

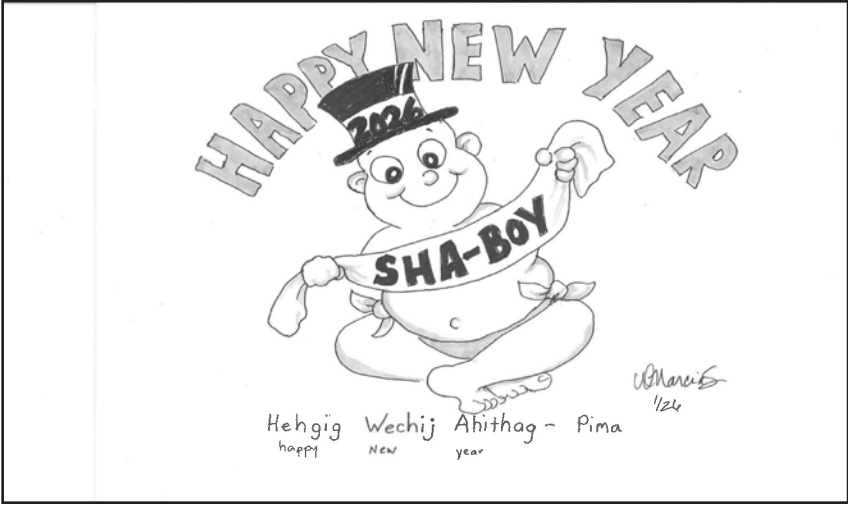
“Thanks to the combined efforts of our team members, we were able to support Tribal Social Services and help make the holidays brighter for the children they serve.”

One team member shared her motivation for participating in the toy drive, saying that while some families may have little during the holidays, others have even less. “We give what we can,” she said, adding that the drive is a reminder of the importance of community care.

Tribal Social Services staff expressed gratitude for the continued partnership, noting that the annual support from the Enterprise helps ensure that every child under their care receives a meaningful gift during the holiday season. All donated toys were distributed through the department’s annual holiday gift-giving event, which serves children across multiple programs and reinforces the Community’s commitment to nurturing its youth.



All donated toys were distributed through Tribal Social Services’ annual holiday gift-giving event, benefiting children under their care.



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January 26 | 5:30 PM

Komatke Boys & Girls Club

January 27 | 5:30 PM

E&T Office, Sacaton

January 29 | 5:30 PM

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February 9 | 5:30 PM

Komatke Boys & Girls Club

February 10 | 5:30 PM

E&T Office, Sacaton

February 12 | 5:30 PM

Virtual

February 23 | 5:30 PM

Komatke Boys & Girls Club

February 24 | 5:30 PM

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February 26 | 5:30 PM

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March 10 | 5:30 PM

E&T Office, Sacaton

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★ VETERANS ★ ANNOUNCEMENTS

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The Veteran ID card is a general card that verifies the status as a veteran. This card can be used at retailers/other places that offer veteran discounts and services. This card does not indicate that a veteran is or is not eligible for VA health care. To qualify for this card, veterans must have an honorable or general (under honorable conditions) discharge. If the discharge is uncharacterized, the VA will verify eligibility before issuing a card. Veterans will need a copy of the DD214 to apply. Other information or documentation needed includes the SSN, a copy of the DD214/NG22, a valid government-issued ID (driver's license/passport, etc.), and a photo with specific specifications. The VA website can be checked to determine the exact requirements.

The DOD cards are for active duty, retired, reservists, DOD civilians, contractors, and family members. It shows your DOD status for things like base privileges, commissaries, and exchanges.

Many states, including Arizona, allow the word "VETERAN" on the driver's license. Make sure to take the DD214 to the Motor Vehicle Department.

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From the Veteran and Family Services Office Staff—Have a Happy and Safe New Year!

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Veteran Service Officer—Kim Skelton, 520-610-7644.



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2025 NACO Summit: Promoting Tribal Sovereignty Through Tribal Building Codes

Submitted by:
Richard Hauffe

CHANDLER, Ariz. — With 30 Tribal Nations represented, the second annual Native American Code Officials (NACO) Summit took place Sept. 30 and Oct. 1, 2025. Sponsored by the NACO Chapter of the International Code Council (ICC), the summit focused on experiences and insights from tribal government representatives who have enforced building codes to protect the safety and property of Native Americans.

The event, Promoting Tribal Sovereignty through Tribal Building Codes, was held at the Wild Horse Pass Resort and Casino on the tribal lands of the Gila River Indian Community. Nearly 100 participants heard from certified building inspectors, fire service officials, permit technicians and tribal leaders who have used model building codes.

“We are together holding the torch so that others coming behind us will have the pathway forward,” said David Jackson, NACO Board President and member of the Gila River Indian Community. “I see my work as a building official as someone who impacts my community. My work protects the quality of housing and of care for the elders as a resource for my community. It builds sovereignty. We feature some young people here who are providing codes for their communities for the first time. Because of the resources they provide, others will follow and become involved, like CDFIs, banking, planners, engineering professionals, contractors and energy experts.”

Pairing Code Enforcement with Native Traditions

Matthew Beaudet, NACO Board Member and former Chicago Building Commissioner, led a panel discussion to encourage tribes to consider setting up a system of building code enforcement that fits Native traditions and priorities. Panelists included:

Rainer Shooter, Executive Director, Stockbridge-Munsee Band of Mohicans



L-R: David Jackson GRIC NACO board president and Building Inspectors Eric Donahue and Jose Muños: Photo by Daniel Jackson

Troy Parr, Economic Development Director, Oneida Nation of Wisconsin

Anthony Foerster, Building Official, Pokagon Band of Potawatomi

Daniel Burr, Project Manager, Stockbridge-Munsee Band of Mohican, and NACO Vice President

Anthony Foerster said his tribe has four counties in Michigan and eight in Indiana where developing a tribal building code had plenty of challenges. He is the second code official for the tribe and pointed to significant successes in enforcing codes and fostering positive economic growth. Many consider the tribe’s building safety codes to be superior to the codes adopted by non-tribal governments in the two states.

“We’ve amended our codes our way because our codes protect our families and we don’t want anybody in our families to get hurt,” Foerster said.

“If you say you build to code, what it really means is you are building to the bare minimum that is acceptable to protect our interests.”

Foerster said building codes have had a positive impact on his community. People are not spending money on repairs created by neglectful construction and high insurance rates. He said a clinic phy-

sician told him incidents of allergies have dropped significantly.

Burr, who started his work last winter in Wisconsin, said that he’ll run into builders who don’t expect to have their work inspected or flagged for defects. It’s a learning process for them.

“There are growing pains,” he said. “We’re going to get better. Codes empower my tribal community.”

Shooter and Burr advised attendees to adopt building codes for their tribes. He said NACO and presenters at the Summit can work with tribal nations to create a template and act as a resource through the code adoption process.

Burr added, “As NACO Vice President it is all about ‘Strengthening Sovereignty through Tribal Building Codes’ and empowering the next generations to come, putting community first.”

In their presentations, Damen Snow, Fire Marshal, and Tim Scott, Chief Building Official for the Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation in California, discussed conditions before and after building codes were adopted.

Without a tribal code for the reservation, it was chaotic to keep track of which codes had been used or ignored. Reliance on third-party inspections led to confusing

record keeping, nonuniform plan reviews and inspections, loose life safety standards, construction delays and frustration. They encouraged tribes to develop a network to “build bridges” and not allow tribal lands to become islands. They said tribal building codes can be amended to take cultures and customs into account and to reflect unique energy resources, water supplies and access and care for cultural sites.

They recommended tribes start with proven models of successful code enforcement and build a library of peer tribal ordinances, experiences and concerns. They encouraged tribes to “engage the ecosystem” of supportive groups like ICC, NACO, the National Fire Protection Association, the Federal Emergency Management Agency and other tribal governments that have enforced building codes.

They said the top priorities for Indian Country are health, housing, economic growth, education, employment, elder care and empowerment, and that they are all shaped by every tribe’s physical building environment.

Snow and Scott highlighted housing projects where contractors cut corners by installing inferior drywall, plumbing, electrical and other building products and by installing materials incorrectly. Poorly built homes lead to costly repairs, poor health environments, abnormally high energy costs and injuries or death. They pointed to research stating that children raised in sub-standard, unsafe housing can develop post-traumatic stress syndrome which could affect them as adults – furthering the need for building codes and code enforcement.

NACO Board Member Tawney Brunsch said the capacity turnout for the Summit indicates a great amount of progress since the 2024 Summit in Denver.

“Now is the right time to move this forward,” said Brunsch. “We are creating a pathway to sustainable development and safe homes where every Native community is empowered to build on its own terms. We see ourselves as bridge builders to stronger, safer communities.”

Announcements & Notices

Gonzalez, Denise Michelle
Initial Termination of Parental Rights Hearing
Case: JV-26-0025
Court Date: February 11, 2026 at 10 AM COURTROOM #3, 1ST FLOOR
FAILURE TO APPEAR CAN AFFECT YOUR RIGHTS
JURISDICTION: SALT RIVER PIMA MARICOPA INDIAN COMMUNITY COURT
ADDRESS: 10040 E. OSBORN RD. SCOTTSDALE, AZ 85256
CONTACT: (480)362-6315

Your attention to this matter is greatly appreciated,
Andrew Johnson – Court Clerk
(480)263-6811
Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community Tribal Court
10,040 E. Osborn Rd.
Scottsdale, AZ 85256

UNITY O’odham Cu:dk & Chicken Scratch Dance | Information Date: Saturday, January 17, 2026 Time: 7:00 PM – 11:00 PM Location: Sheraton Downtown Phoenix | 3rd Floor Ballroom

Event Description: UNITY is honored to host the annual O’odham Cu:dk during the UNITY Midyear Conference, recognizing and celebrating the aboriginal lands, culture, and traditions of the O’odham people. The O’odham Cu:dk is the traditional round dance of the O’odham, featuring songs, stories, and dances passed down through generations.

This cultural celebration is planned collaboratively by the following youth councils and partners: Ak-Chin Youth Council, Akimel O’odham/Pee-Posh Youth Council, Tohono O’odham Nation Youth Council, Young River People’s Council, Betty Fairfax High School Youth Council, Cesar Chavez High School Youth Council, and the Four Sister Tribes Royalty.

Event Details: UNITY O’odham Cu:dk & Waila (Chicken Scratch) Dance

Saturday, January 17, 2026 | 7:00 PM – 11:00 PM Sheraton Downtown Phoenix | 3rd Floor Ballroom

Draft Program Agenda

7:00 PM – 7:15 PM | Opening Ceremony

- Land Acknowledgement
- Introduction of Tribal Royalty
- Introduction of Tribal Leaders
- Introduction of Social Dances
- Procession led by Singers and Dancers

7:15 PM – 8:45 PM | O’odham Cu:dk (Social Dancing) – Four Sister Tribes

Special Dance Performances include:

- O’odham Basket Dance ● Ho’ok (The Cripple Dance)
- What Kind of Flower Dance ● Coyote Dance
- Pee-Posh Dances ● O’odham Social Dances (Suggested: 4 rounds)
- O’odham Giveaway

9:00 PM – 11:00 PM | Waila (Chicken Scratch) Dance

Featuring: Group Passion (Tohono O’odham Nation)



Media Release for Non-Pricing Programs

Sponsoring Organization's NameGILA RIVER HEAD START/DISABILITIES PROGRAM

Street Address112 W SEED FARM RDCitySACATONZip Code85147

Contact PersonLOUVINA ESTELLPhone Number520-562-6901

Media Outlet(s) ContactedGRINDate10/24/2025/12/15/25

Prior to submitting to a media outlet, attach or complete the Income-Eligibility Guidelines chart below by inputting the guidelines for the current year, which are available on www.azed.gov/hns/cacfp/programforms/.

Note: Emergency shelters and at-risk only programs should omit references to income prior to sending to media outlets.

Please print the following, including the non-discrimination statement on the following page, as a free public service announcement.

Today, GRIC HEAD STARTS announced its sponsorship of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Child and Adult Care Food Program administered by the Arizona Department of Education, Health and Nutrition Services. Meals will be made available to enrolled participants at no separate charge without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. Household income determines the amount of money institutions will be reimbursed to provide meals to enrolled participants. The income-eligibility guidelines listed below are used to determine the amount of reimbursement.

Household Size	Weekly		Bi-Weekly		2x Month		Monthly		Annually	
	Free	Reduced	Free	Reduced	Free	Reduced	Free	Reduced	Free	Reduced
1	392	557	783	1114	848	1207	1695	2143	20345	28953
2	529	753	1058	1505	1146	1631	2292	3261	27495	39128
3	667	949	1333	1897	1444	2055	2888	4109	34645	49303
4	804	1144	1608	2288	1742	2479	3483	4957	41795	59478
5	942	1340	1883	2679	2040	2903	4079	5805	48945	69653
6	1079	1536	2158	3071	2338	3327	4675	6653	56095	79828
7	1217	1731	2433	3462	2636	3751	5271	7501	63245	90003
8	1354	1927	2708	3853	2934	4175	5867	8349	70395	100178
Additional Members, Add:	138	196	275	392	298	424	596	848	7150	10175

Meals will be provided at the site(s) listed below:

Site Name: SACATON D/3

Site Address: 112 W SEED FARN RD

City, Zip: SACATON, AZ 85147

Phone Number: 520-562-6901

Site Name: SANTAN D/4

Site Address: 1467 SANTAN RD

City, Zip: SACATON, AZ 85147

Phone Number: 520-418-3471

Multi-Site Sponsors: Complete one form and attach a list of names, addresses, and contact numbers for all operating sites.

COMMUNITY COUNCIL ACTION SHEETS

Courtesy of the Community Council Secretary’s Office • November 19, 2025

ACTION SHEET
Community Council; P.O. Box 2138; Sacaton, Arizona 85147; Phone (520) 562-9720; Fax (520) 562-9729
CALL TO ORDER
The Second Regular Monthly Meeting of the Community Council held Wednesday, November 19, 2025, in the Community Council Chambers at the Governance Center in Sacaton, Arizona was called to order by Lt. Governor Regina Antone at 9:07 a.m.

INVOCATION
Provided by Councilman Joey Whitman

ROLL CALL
Council Secretary Shannon White called the roll
Executive Officers Present:
Lt. Governor Regina Antone
Council Members Present:
D1- Joey Whitman, Duane Jackson, Jr.; D2- Ann Lucas; D3- Joseph Manuel, Jr.; D4- Leah Williams, Jennifer Allison, Nada Celaya, Lalena Jackson; D5- James De La Rosa(9:19); D6- Anthony Villareal, Sr., Charles Goldtooth (9:15), Terrance Evans(9:15); D7- Jeanette Blasingim
Executive Officers Absent:
Governor Stephen R. Lewis
Council Members Absent:
D3- Kristina Morago (Travel)
D5- Franklin Pablo, Sr. (Travel)
D5- Donovan Kyyitan (Travel)
D5- Gordon Santos, Jr.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA
MOTION MADE AND SECOND TO ADD MR. DENNIS MACHADO AS A PRESENTER FOR NEW BUSINESS #2; ACCEPT REPORTS #1, #2, AND #3; ACCEPT AND APPROVE RESOLUTION #1 ON THE CONSENT AGENDA
MOTION MADE AND SECOND TO APPROVE THE REGULAR AGENDAAS AMENDED

PRESENTATIONS/INTRODUCTIONS
1. Gila River Telecommunications, Inc. Contribution to the Gila River Indian Community

Presenters: Clarice Chiago-Jones, Craig Baumgartner, GRTI Board of Directors
MS. CLARICE CHIAGO-JONES, GENERAL MANAGER FOR GILA RIVER TELECOMMUNICATIONS, INC. AND COUNCILMAN ANTHONY VILLAREAL, SR. PROVIDED AN OVERVIEW OF THE MILESTONES ACHIEVED THROUGH GRTI. GRTI RECENTLY COMPLETED THE “FIBER TO THE HOME” PROJECT, WHICH IS A MAJOR TECHNOLOGICAL ACHIEVEMENT AND A POWERFUL INVESTMENT BY THE COMMUNITY AND FOR THE FUTURE. MS. CHIAGO-JONES PROVIDED A BRIEF HISTORY ON PAST LEADERSHIP IN CREATING THE TELEPHONE COMPANY AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS. GRTI HAS NEW PRODUCTS AND SERVICES BEYOND TELEPHONE AND INTERNET THAT WILL BE ROLLED OUT IN 2026. MS. CHIAGO-JONES PRESENTED THE COMMUNITY A CONTRIBUTION OF \$500,000.00. VARIOUS COUNCIL MEMBERS CONGRATULATED THE GRTI EMPLOYEES FOR THEIR HARD WORK AND DEDICATION TO THE COMPANY.
[10 MINUTE BREAK FOR PHOTOS; THE MEETING RECONVENED AT 9:37 A.M.]

REPORTS
>1. Lone Butte Development, L.L.C Annual Report
Presenters: Christina Waquie, Fathi Ezwebti, Jim Dean
ACCEPTED AT APPROVAL OF AGENDA
>2. Gila River Telecommunications, Inc. and Subsidiaries FY2025 Third Quarter Report
Presenters: Clarice Chiago-Jones, Craig Baumgartner, GRTI Board of Directors
ACCEPTED AT APPROVAL OF AGENDA
>3. S-Frame Consulting Council Update Report
Presenters: Treasurer Gary T. Mix, Steve Olkewicz, Shima Arab
ACCEPTED AT APPROVAL OF AGENDA
MOTION MADE AND SECOND TO GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION
4. Schedule of Investments ending September 30, 2025 (Executive Session)
Presenter: Treasurer Gary T. Mix
HEARD IN EXECUTIVE SESSION
5. Financial Activity Report ending October 31, 2025

(Executive Session)
Presenter: Treasurer Gary T. Mix
HEARD IN EXECUTIVE SESSION
MOTION MADE AND SECOND TO EXIT EXECUTIVE SESSION
RESOLUTIONS
>1. A Resolution Approving A Memorandum Of Agreement With The Sacaton Elementary School District To Provide Services To Children With Disabilities Ages 3 Through 5, And Their Families (ESC forwards to Community Council with a recommendation for approval and placement on the consent agenda)
Presenters: Tamara Thompson, Sherilyn Analla, Lance Reyna
ACCEPTED AND APPROVED AT APPROVAL OF AGENDA

ORDINANCES
UNFINISHED BUSINESS
NEW BUSINESS
1. 2025 CRWUA Annual Conference Attendance (G&MSC forwards to Council for any other interested Council member to attend on December 16-18, 2025 in Las Vegas, NV under Dues & Delegations)
Presenter: Javier G. Ramos
MOTION MADE AND SECOND TO ALLOW ANY OTHER INTERESTED COUNCIL MEMBER TO ATTEND ON DECEMBER 16-18, 2025 IN LAS VEGAS, NV UNDER DUES & DELEGATIONS
2. Lone Butte Development L.L.C FY2025 Audited Financial Statements, Required Communications Document and Signed Management Representation Letter (G&MSC forwards to Council under New Business with a recommendation to accept; EDSC concurs)
Presenters: Chris Bitakis, Fathi Ezwebti, Christina Waquie, Dennis Machado
MOTION MADE AND SECOND TO ACCEPT
3. SNAP Benefits Update (G&MSC forwards to Council under New Business)
Presenters: Governor Stephen R. Lewis, Lt. Governor Regina Antone, Suzanne Jones, Laurie Thomas
ITEM HEARD
MOTION MADE AND SECOND TO GO INTO EXECUTIVE

SESSION
4. Committee Concerns Office of the Prosecutor (Executive Session) (G&MSC forwards to Council under New Business in Executive Session for action)
Presenters: Government & Management Standing Committee
ITEM HEARD
MOTION MADE AND SECOND TO EXIT EXECUTIVE SESSION
5. Gila River Sand & Gravel Board Vacancy (EDSC forwards to Council to declare (1) GRSG Board Vacancy and advertise for (60) days subject to a background check)
Presenter: Shannon White
MOTION MADE AND SECOND TO DECLARE ONE (1) GRSG BOARD VACANCY AND ADVERTISE FOR 60 DAYS SUBJECT TO A BACKGROUND CHECK MINUTES
1. October 15, 2025 (Regular)
APPROVED

ANNOUNCEMENTS
• SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 22, 2025 THE URBAN MEMBER ASSOCIATION WILL BE HAVING THEIR MONTHLY MEETING ALONG WITH THEIR THANKSGIVING DINNER
• AN UPDATE ON HIRING A POLICE CHIEF AND A VETERINARIAN WAS PROVIDED
• THE AUTISM AWARENESS WALK WILL TAKE PLACE ON SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 22, 2025 IN DISTRICT 6 AT 8:00 A.M.
• THE REVOLT RUN WILL TAKE PLACE ON SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 22, 2025 IN DISTRICT 2 AT 7:00 A.M.
• THE CARING HOUSE WILL BE HAVING THEIR THANKSGIVING DINNER ON SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 22, 2025

ADJOURNMENT
MEETING ADJOURNED AT 11:59 A.M.
* Denotes TABLED from previous meeting(s)
> Denotes a CONSENT AGENDA ITEM

Courtesy of the Community Council Secretary’s Office • December 3, 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, December 3, 2025, in the Community Council Chambers at the Governance Center in Sacaton, Arizona was called to order by Lt. Governor Regina Antone at 9:04 a.m.

INVOCATION
Provided by Councilman Donovan Kyyitan

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, Duane Jackson, Jr.; D2- Ann Lucas; D3- Kristina Morago(9:14), Joseph Manuel, Jr.; D4- Leah Williams, Jennifer Allison, Nada Celaya, Lalena Jackson; D5- James De La Rosa, Franklin Pablo, Sr., Donovan Kyyitan, Gordon Santos, Jr.; D6- Anthony Villareal, Sr., Charles Goldtooth; D7- Jeanette Blasingim
Council Members Absent:
D6- Terrance Evans

APPROVAL OF AGENDA
MOTION MADE AND SECOND TO ACCEPT REPORT #1; ACCEPT AND APPROVE RESOLUTION #2 THROUGH #5, AND #9 THROUGH #10; AND ACCEPT AND APPROVE NEW BUSINESS #6 AND #7 ON THE CONSENT AGENDA
MOTION MADE AND SECOND TO APPROVE THE REGULAR AGENDAAS AMENDED

PRESENTATIONS/INTRODUCTIONS
REPORTS
>1. GRSG FY25 Quarter 4 Report
Presenters: Michael H. Morago, Donna Stowell
ACCEPTED AT APPROVAL OF AGENDA
MOTION MADE AND SECOND TO GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION
2. Gila River Gaming Commission Department Report to the Community Council October 2025 (Executive Session)
Presenters: Gila River Gaming Commission, Jerry Higginson
HEARD IN EXECUTIVE SESSION
3. Gila River Gaming Enterprises, Inc. Monthly Report October 2025 (Executive Session)
Presenters: Kenneth Manuel, Dominic Orozco, Blake Katsnelson, Tony DeMark, Majdi Kayyali, Interim Oversight & Planning Committee
HEARD IN EXECUTIVE SESSION
4. October 31, 2025 Investment Report (Executive Session)
Presenter: Treasurer Gary T. Mix
HEARD IN EXECUTIVE SESSION
5. The Caring House Quality Assurance and Performance Improvement Quarterly Summary – July-September 2025 (Executive Session)
Presenters: GRHC Board of Directors, Russell Goddard, Linda Soto, Sarah Ramon, Owen Ayres, Susan Kelley, Dr. Anthony Santiago
HEARD IN EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION MADE AND SECOND TO EXIT EXECUTIVE SESSION

RESOLUTIONS
1. A Resolution Authorizing And Approving The Center For Disease Control And Prevention (“CDC”) Grant Award For Strengthening Public Health Systems And Services In Indian Country CDC-RFA-TO-23-0001 (G&MSC forwards to Council with a recommendation for approval; H&SSC concurs)
Presenter: James Tree
APPROVED
>2. A Resolution Of Consent To Grant A Temporary Special Event Liquor License To Almost There: A Mom And Pups Rescue, For Use At The Rawhide Parking Lot On December 20, 2025, And December 21, 2025 (G&MSC forwards to Council with a recommendation for approval and placement on the consent agenda)
Presenter: Kaleb Lester
ACCEPTED AND APPROVED AT APPROVAL OF AGENDA
>3. A Resolution Approving The Professional Services Agreement Amendment #1 Between The Gila River Indian Community Department Of Environmental Quality And Jill Grant & Associates (G&MSC forwards to Council with a recommendation for approval and placement on the consent agenda; NRSC concurs)
Presenters: Lisa Gover, Ryan Eberle
ACCEPTED AND APPROVED AT APPROVAL OF AGENDA
>4. A Resolution Approving And Granting Four Temporary Construction Easements Located Near Seed Farm Road To The State Of Arizona, Arizona Department Of Transportation In Connection With The I-10 Widening Project (G&MSC forwards to Council with a recommendation for approval and placement on the consent agenda; NRSC concurs with corrections)
Presenters: Javier Ramos, Denten Robinson
ACCEPTED AND APPROVED AT APPROVAL OF AGENDA
>5. A Resolution Authorizing The Gila River Indian Community Services Department To Submit The Title VI 2026-2029 Older Americans Act Grant Application To The United States Department Of Health And Human Services, Administration Of Aging (G&MSC forwards to Council with a recommendation for approval and placement on the consent agenda; H&SSC concurs)
Presenters: Mary Dixon, Laurie Thomas
ACCEPTED AND APPROVED AT APPROVAL OF AGENDA
[REMOVED FROM THE CONSENT AGENDA]
>6. A Resolution Approving Membership Of The Gila River Indian Community In The Indian Gaming Association For Calendar Year 2026 And Authorizing Twenty-Five Thousand Dollars (\$25,000.00) For The Community’s Annual Dues (G&MSC forwards to Council with a recommendation for approval and placement on the consent agenda)
Presenter: Shannon White
APPROVED WITH A CORRECTION
7. A Resolution Approving The Development And Refresh For The Vee Quiva Hotel And Casino, The Wild Horse Pass Resort And Casino, And The Santan Mountain Casino And Directing Akimel-Xiil To Undertake The Planning, Design, Development And Construction And Other Improvements Necessary To Support The Projects, And Approving The

Attached Planning Budget (G&MSC forwards to Council with a recommendation for approval; NRSC concurs)
Presenter: Barney Enos, Jr.

APPROVED
[REMOVED FROM THE CONSENT AGENDA]
>8. A Resolution Approving A Ground Lease Between The Gila River Indian Community And Gila River Asset Management, Inc. To Construct, Maintain, Operate, And Repair A Communication Facility In District Three And To Sublease Any Portion Of The Leased Premises To A Sublessee And Related Uses Pursuant To The Gila River Indian Community Leasing Regulations (EDSC forwards to Council with a recommendation for approval and placement on the consent agenda; NRSC concurs)
Presenters: Clarice Chiago-Jones, Joan Burke, Teresa Mandelin, John Martin, Todd Araujo, GRTI Board of Directors
APPROVED
>9. A Resolution Approving The Relinquishment Of Donald Roe Beckham From The Gila River Indian Community Membership Roll (LSC forwards to Council with a recommendation for approval and placement on the consent agenda)
Presenter: Sara Duenez
ACCEPTED AND APPROVED AT APPROVAL OF AGENDA
>10. A Resolution Approving The Petition For Membership For Sky Feather Morgan Into The Gila River Indian Community (LSC forwards to Council with a recommendation for approval and placement on the consent agenda)
Presenter: Sara Duenez
ACCEPTED AND APPROVED AT APPROVAL OF AGENDA
[GOVERNOR LEWIS CALLED FOR A 15-MINUTE BREAK; THE MEETING RECONVENED AT 11:55 A.M.]
ORDINANCES
1. The Gila River Indian Community Council Hereby Enacts The 2025 Amendments To The 2011 Code Of Conduct For Community Officials (LSC forwards to Council with a recommendation for approval)
Presenter: Michael Carter
APPROVED
UNFINISHED BUSINESS
NEW BUSINESS
1. Housing Advisory Committee Appointment – District One (G&MSC forwards to Council under New Business with a recommendation to appoint Arzie Hogg)
Presenters: Derwin Cooper, Trina Fasthorse
MOTION MADE AND SECOND TO APPOINT – DISTRICT ONE, ARZIE HOGG
2. FY2025 Annual Performance Report (APR) (G&MSC forwards to Council under New Business with a recommendation for approval)
Presenters: Derwin Cooper, Trina Fasthorse
MOTION MADE AND SECOND TO APPROVE THE FY2025 ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT
3. FY2025 Annual Performance Report (APR) – Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) (G&MSC forwards to Council under New Business with a recommendation for approval)
Presenters: Derwin Cooper, Trina Fasthorse
MOTION MADE AND SECOND TO APPROVE THE FY2025 ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT (APR) – CORONAVIRUS AID, RELIEF AND ECONOMIC

SECURITY (CARES)
4. FY2025 Annual Performance Report (APR) – American Rescue Plan (ARP) (G&MSC forwards to Council under New Business with a recommendation for approval)
Presenters: Derwin Cooper, Trina Fasthorse
MOTION MADE AND SECOND TO APPROVE THE FY2025 ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT (APR) – AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN (ARP)
5. Tribal Health Animal Control Concern (G&MSC forwards to Council under New Business as information)
Presenters: Government & Management Standing Committee
HEARD AS INFORMATION
>6. Blackwater Community School Tribal Education Allocation Written Plan For School Year 2025-2026 (ESC forwards to Council under New Business with a recommendation for approval and placement on the consent agenda)
Presenter: Misty Lopez
ACCEPTED AND APPROVED AT APPROVAL OF AGENDA
>7. Casa Blanca Community School Tribal Education Allocation Written Plan For School Year 2025-2026 (ESC forwards to Council under New Business with a recommendation for approval and placement on the consent agenda)
Presenter: Kim Franklin
ACCEPTED AND APPROVED AT APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MINUTES
ANNOUNCEMENTS
• THE TRIBAL SOCIAL SERVICES CHRISTMAS PARTY WILL BE HELD ON DECEMBER 7, 2025 AT 12:00 P.M.
• MS. MISTY LOPEZ IS THE NEW PRINCIPAL FOR BLACKWATER COMMUNITY SCHOOL
• UPDATE ON SNAP BENEFITS
• GILA RIVER DEVELOPMENT BOARD MEETING WILL BE HELD THURSDAY, DECEMBER 4, 2025
• WATER RIGHTS DAY EVENT AT RAWHIDE EVENT CENTER WILL BE HELD ON WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2025 AT 9:00 A.M.
• WINTER BIRD COUNT WILL BE HELD ON DECEMBER 6, 2025 IN VARIOUS AREAS IN THE COMMUNITY WITH A LUNCHEON ENDING AT THE HERITAGE CENTER
• S-FRAME EVENT THURSDAY, DECEMBER 4, 2025
• DEMOCRATIC GOVERNORS ASSOCIATION RECEPTION ON FRIDAY, DECEMBER 5, 2025; GOVERNOR WILL BE A SPEAKER ON WATER RIGHTS AT A PANEL FOR THIS EVENT
• BOYS & GIRLS CLUB CHRISTMAS PARTY WILL BE HELD ON FRIDAY, DECEMBER 5, 2025
• MR. RAMOS WILL BE OUT ON LEAVE DECEMBER 11-12, 2025

ADJOURNMENT
MEETING ADJOURNED AT 1:46 P.M.
* Denotes TABLED from previous meeting(s)
> Denotes a CONSENT AGENDA ITEM



SAVE THE DATE

MARCH
13-15
2026



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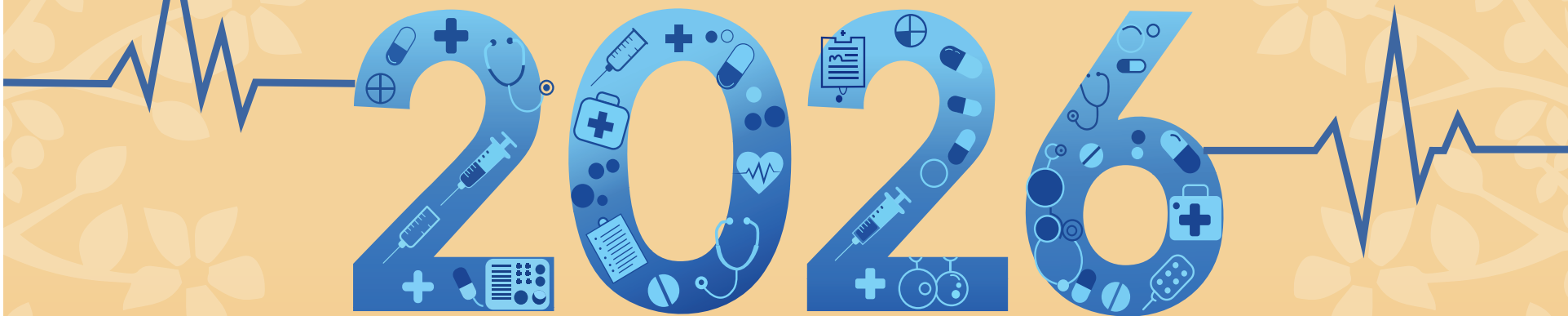
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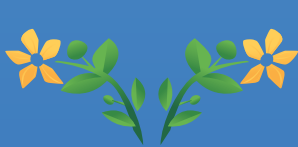
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HAPPY NEW YEAR



We want to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued trust and support in serving the Gila River Indian Community.

May your year be filled with triumphs, health and happiness. Wishing you and your family a healthy and prosperous New Year!



***Thank you for your continued trust.
Gila River Health Care***



We encourage you to keep your health in mind in the new year. Scan QR code to see all our upcoming events and classes to help you.

JANUARY 2026						
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	
Stop by our substance use awareness RV info booths on Fridays!			Happy New Year!		Strong Mind, Strong Me Vision Board District 3 New Beginnings Building 10:00AM - 12:00PM	
Current Drug Trends 11:00AM - 12:00PM	Healthy Relationships District 3 Multipurpose Building 6:00PM - 7:00PM	Crumble Cookies & Narcotics District 6 51st Ave. & Pecos Rd. 11:00AM - 1:00PM	Family Equine Learning Multi-Chu-Tha Rodeo Grounds 5:00PM - 7:00PM			
Active Parenting (0-5 Years) 9:00AM - 12:00PM		Crumble Cookies & Narcotics District 3 Ocotillo & Seed Farm Road 11:00AM - 1:00PM	Substance Use Awareness Info Booth District 6 Shogel Building 9:00AM - 11:00AM	Old New Prevention Coalition District 3 Multipurpose Building 10:00AM - 12:00PM	Family Equine Learning Multi-Chu-Tha Rodeo Grounds 9:00AM - 12:00PM	
Marijuana Awareness 11:00AM - 12:00PM		Alcohol Awareness District 5 Service Center 6:00PM - 7:00PM		Substance Use Awareness Info Booth District 5 Gas Station 10:00AM - 12:00PM		
Vaping Awareness 11:00AM - 12:00PM			Family Equine Learning Multi-Chu-Tha Rodeo Grounds 5:00PM - 7:00PM			
QPR Suicide Prevention District 7 Service Center 6:00PM - 7:00PM						
Active Parenting (General) District 3 New Beginnings Building 9:00AM - 12:00PM				Substance Use Awareness Info Booth District 6 Gas Station 10:00AM - 12:00PM	Mental Wellness Block Party Hu Hu Kam Campus New Beginnings Building Front Parking Lot 9:00AM - 12:00PM	

