



# THE GRIN



VOL. 29, NO.10

GILA RIVER INDIAN NEWS || [www.GRICNEWS.org](http://www.GRICNEWS.org)

JULY 10, 2026

## “Sonoran Sunset” Elder Prom Returns After a Yearlong Pause

**Miguel Sallard**  
Gila River Indian News

Blackwater District one. After a year of anticipation, the Gila River Indian Community welcomed back one of its most beloved traditions: the Annual Elder Prom. Elders from every district gathered once again, filling the District 1 Service Center with laughter, music, and the unmistakable joy of reunion. “We’ve been waiting for this for more than a year,” said Mary Antone, smiling beside her lifelong friend, Barbara Lucero. Their excitement echoed the feelings of many who had missed the event after last year’s unavoidable cancellation. Hosted by the Community Services Department, Elderly Services, and the Elderly Nutrition Program, this year’s celebration embraced the theme “Sonoran Sunset.” More than 250 elders attended, dressed in their best outfits — many in Western hats, boots, and bright colors — ready for a night of dancing and connection. For some, the evening held special meaning. Tina Notha Enas and Augustine Enas experienced their first prom night ever. “I couldn’t



**Dennis and Gail Coochyouma, King and Queen at the center stage, kicking off the coronation dance.** Miguel Sallard/GRIN

miss this,” Tina said with a smile. “We’re here enjoying this wonderful event.” One of the most heartwarming moments of the night came with the crowning of

the Elder Prom Queen and King, Dennis and Gail Coochyouma of District 3. Married for 53 years, the couple shared their secret to a lasting marriage.

Dennis summed it up simply: “Patience and communication.” The prom carried a lively, almost high school dance atmosphere — but with the wisdom, humor, and spirit that only elders bring. DJ music kept the dance floor full, especially during the cumbias. “The Senior Prom is meant to promote socialization for our elderly population — to help them come together, dress up, share a meal, and enjoy each other’s company,” said Lindsay Antone, coordinator for Elderly Services. Guests enjoyed a full meal, raffle drawings, and prizes throughout the evening. But the true highlight was the sense of togetherness — friends greeting friends, couples dancing, and elders celebrating the simple joy of being in the same room again. The night served as a reminder of the importance of honoring elders, nurturing social connections, and creating spaces where joy can flourish. As the music played and the dance floor stayed full, it was clear that the “Sonoran Sunset” Elder Prom was more than an event — it was a celebration of community filled with laughter, love and unforgettable memories.

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### The Heart Behind the Badge



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### 26th Annual Inter-Tribal Baseball Tournament



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## Stronger Minds, Stronger Communities

**Gila River Youth Gather for Annual Conference**

**Miguel Sallard**  
Gila River Indian News

MESA, Ariz. — The Gila River Indian Community’s 39th Annual Youth Conference was more than a gathering. It served as a reminder that when young people come together with purpose, culture and compassion, a community’s future grows stronger.

President Landon Martinez opened the event with “Skeg tas, hello,” setting a welcoming tone for attendees. His message; be kind, be safe, have fun, carried quiet weight. It was not just a greeting, but a call for youth to support one another at a time when mental health remains a critical concern across Indian Country.



**The Akimel O’odham/Pee-Posh Youth Council hosted the 39th annual Youth Conference on June 19-20.** Photos submitted by: Paul Molina

This year’s theme, “Stronger Minds, Stronger Communities,” was selected by Vice President Shayla Davis and At-Large Representative Evan Martinez. The

theme reflects a truth familiar to many Native communities: Mental wellness is not an individual pursuit. It is collective. It is cultural. And it is necessary.

The co-chairs spent six months planning a conference

**Continued on Page 9**

### SR 347 Improvement Project Construction now Underway



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**Regina Antone**

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**District 2**

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Anthony Villareal, Sr.  
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Charles Goldtooth

**District 7**

Jeanette Blasingim

Gary Mix, Community Treasurer  
Shannon White,  
Community Council Secretary

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LETTERS POLICY: GRIN welcomes letters and columns from readers. Letters *should be limited to 200 words* and be in good taste. Material that could be libelous or slanderous is not acceptable. All letters or columns should be signed with the writer's true name, address and telephone number in the event GRIN may need to contact the writer. *Only the name of the writer will be printed in the paper.* Letters or columns without a complete signature, name, address or phone number will not be acceptable to GRIN for publication. GRIN reserves the right to edit submitted materials for grammar, spelling, and content.

**Gila River Indian Community**

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# The Heart Behind the Badge

## Bailiffs Serving the Gila River Indian Community

**Miguel Sallard**  
Gila River Indian News

SACATON, Ariz. — The bailiff's work is part of the fabric of everyday life in the Gila River Indian Community, quiet and steady and very human. Their responsibilities extend far beyond maintaining order, they carry the weight of cultural respect, community trust, and personal dedication every time they step into the courthouse. "These officers are not just the enforcers of order in the courtroom, they are the protectors of people, culture and the stories that make this community whole," said Lorina Allison, a bailiff's officer with eight years with the Judicial Courts.

Officer Jerrod Valenzuela is one of the most recognizable and trusted presences among them. An 18-year veteran of the force, his commitment epitomizes the ethos of GRIC.

Every morning bailiffs walk into the courthouse with more than a badge. They have the duty to make the courtroom secure, the patience to take families through difficult situations and the humility to respect every elder, every youth, every guest. They have weight in a culture with strong history and identity. They help individuals feel safe, recognized and heard.

Officer Valenzuela stands motionless, talks softly. He listens to the scared or confused person. He recognizes that justice in Gila River is more than what

happens in the courtroom and in the law books; it is about restoring balance, respecting culture and making sure that when someone walks into the courthouse, they are treated with dignity.

18 years of service...so many stories, so many struggles, so many occasions when compassion made all the difference. Valenzuela and his fellow bailiffs are keepers of the law and the Community and remind us that justice is best served with heart.

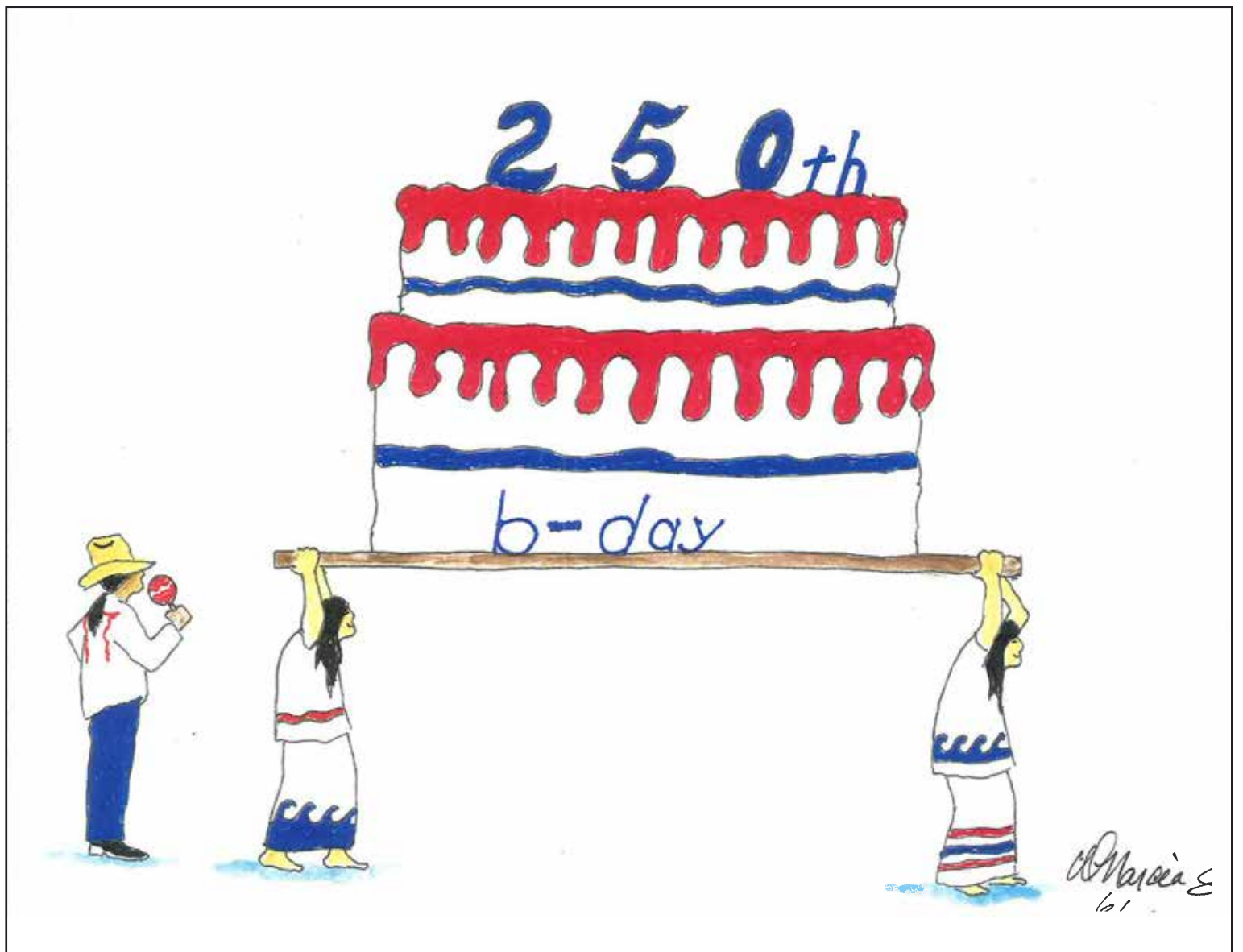
In Gila River Bailiffs Are More Than Officers They are the peacemakers, the keepers of respect, the quiet cornerstones of the Community they gladly serve.



Associate Judge Gwendolyn Morago presents Officer Valenzuela with recognition for his work in the Judicial Court. Miguel Sallard/GRIN



Bailiff Officers from L-R Ryan Linde, Jerrod Valenzuela, Lorina Allison, Jowan Friesson, Jared Williams, Shaquille Hayes, Ammucl Wycliffe. Miguel Sallard/GRIN



# AZ Native Elite Shines at the 26th Annual D-backs Inter-Tribal Baseball Tournament

**Jeston Morris**  
Gila River Indian News

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. — Nearly 1,500 fans and youth athletes representing 20 tribes across eight states attended the 26th Annual D-backs Inter-Tribal Baseball Tournament at Salt River Field on June 8-11. The 84-team tournament was presented by Talking Stick Resort, supported by Resolution Copper and Nike, and played on the ancestral homeland of the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community.

The AZ Native Elites captured the Triple A Championship. They are based out of Gila River Indian Community. The New Mexico Sundevils captured the Double-A Championship. The team is from New Mexico. The Bravettes captured the Triple A Softball Championship. The Double A and Triple A championship games were played at Salt River Field. Triple A Softball was played at the ALA Academy Field.

The Diamondbacks Foundation launched a tournament in 1999. It has grown to become the largest tournament for Native American youth. The Arizona Diamondbacks remain the only Major League Baseball organization to host a baseball tournament for Native American athletes.

The team coaches and players reflected on their championship.

“Our championship win is awesome. It’s a great experience for all our players. We have won multiple championships. This championship is special because this is our first championship with this group at this age level, 15-18. We got to keep pushing for all the young talented players from the reservation,” said Coach Raul Ruvalcaba, GRIC member from District 5.

“Our team, AZ Native Elite, has play-

ers from Gila River Indian Community and Pascua Yaqui in Guadalupe. They have been playing together for five years. I want to give a shout-out to all the parents. They make all of this happen.”

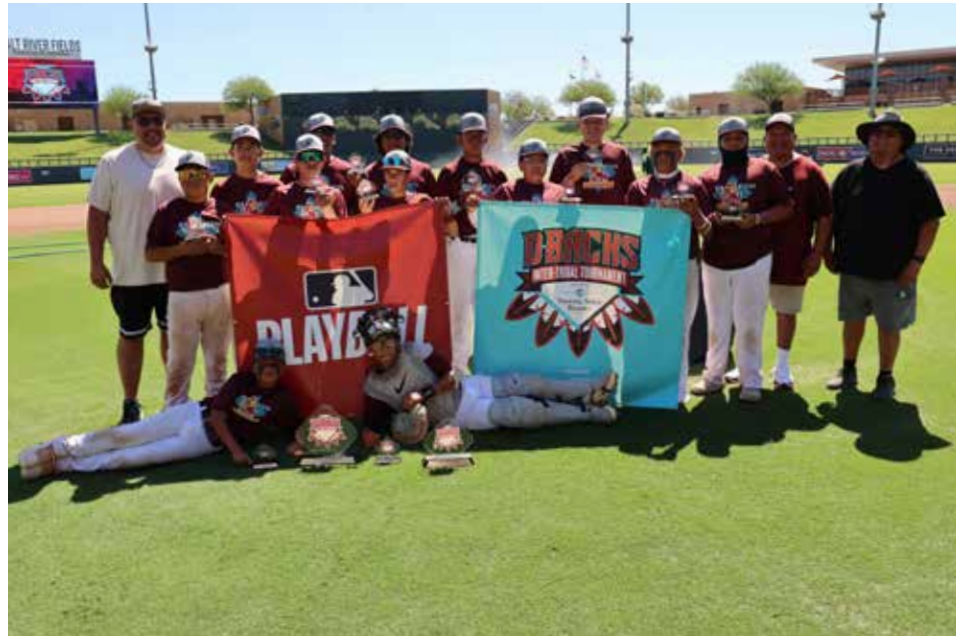
“I feel great about our championship win. Our team is very special. We have a lot of chemistry together. I feel great about my MVP award. It’s well deserved. I would like to give a shout-out to all my teammates, my mother and father, and especially God,” said Angel Anthony Rendon, defensive zone outfield player.

“Oh man, there’s a few time we came really close to winning. We finally won the championship. It feels awesome,” said Coach Joseph Suina, New Mexico Sundevils.

“I feel good about our championship win. We got the sticks going and we came through at the end,” said Ben Draper, MVP, catcher and second baseman.

AZ Native Elite 16U team  
Head Coach Raul Ruvalcaba  
Assistant coach Lorenzo Ruvalcaba  
Assistant Coach Anthony Ruvalcaba

- #24 Reyes Ruvalcaba
- #31 Uriah Perdro
- #8 Athyn Alphus
- # 4 Angel Rendon
- #18 Sir Hendrix Sneezy
- # 19 Abel Valenzuela
- #44 Justin “Ty” Andrews
- # 7 Nathaniel Amacio
- #42 Ruben McElroy
- #20 Angel “JJ” Medina
- #45 Tony Medina
- #23 Arturo Espino
- # 35 Jacinto Espinoza III
- #14 Gabriel Gutierrez



New Mexico Sundevils baseball team captured the Double A Championship. Jeston Morris/GRIN



AZ Native Elite baseball team captured the Triple A Championship. Jeston Morris/GRIN

## NABI 2026 Tournament Locations

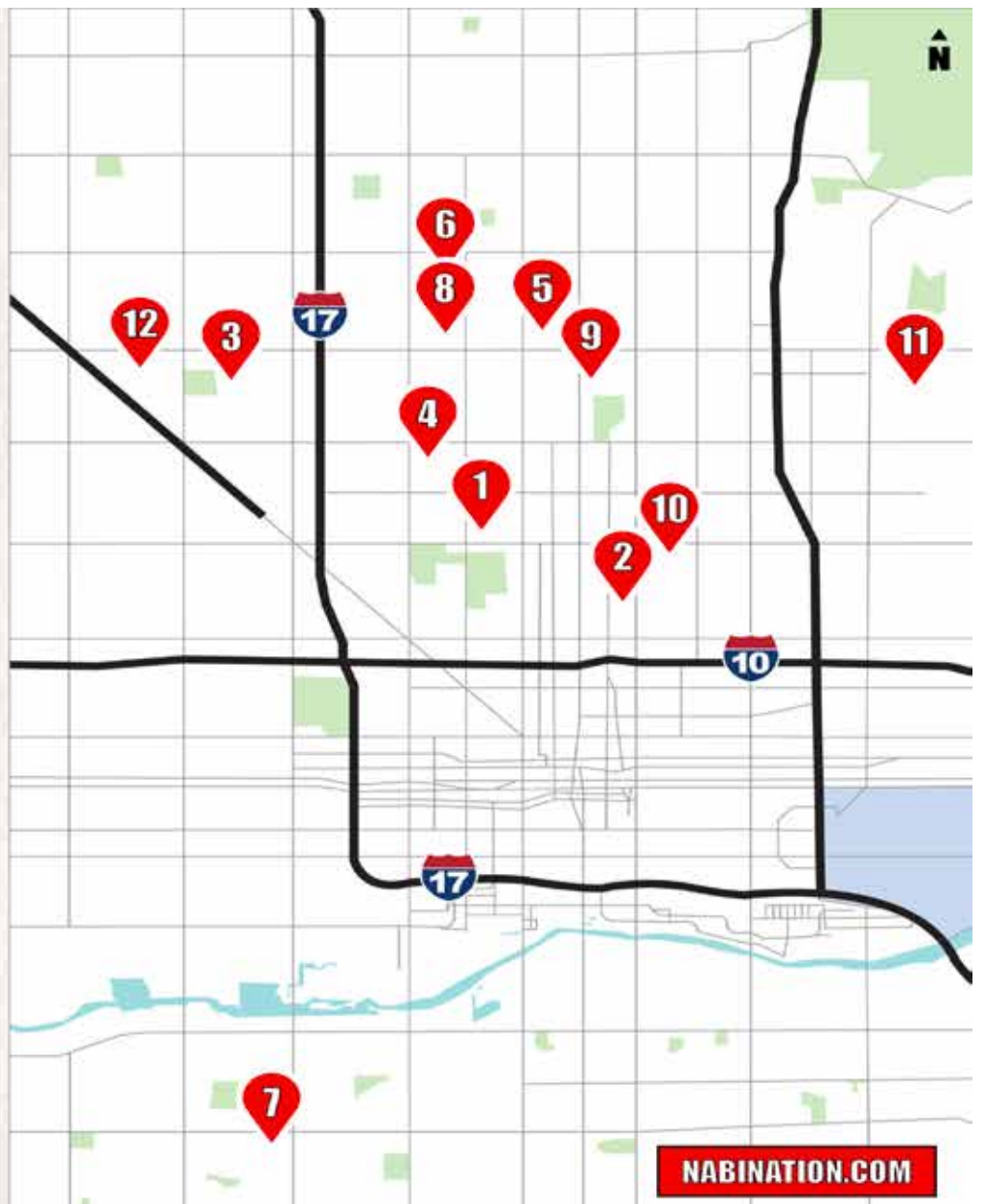
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**TWENTY-THIRD ANNUAL NABI**  
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### GYM LOCATIONS

JULY 14-18, 2026 | PHOENIX, AZ

<b>GYM #1</b> PHOENIX COLLEGE 1202 W Thomas Rd, Phoenix, AZ 85013	<b>GYM #7</b> ARIZONA LUTHERAN ACADEMY 6036 S 27 <sup>th</sup> Ave, Phoenix, AZ 85041
<b>GYM #2</b> SAINT MARY'S CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL 2525 N 3rd St, Phoenix, AZ 85004	<b>GYM #8</b> ARCH 1550 W Colter St, Phoenix, AZ 85015
<b>GYM #3</b> BOURGADE CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL 4602 N 31st Ave, Phoenix, AZ 85017	<b>GYM #9</b> CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL 4525 N Central Ave, Phoenix, AZ 85012
<b>GYM #4</b> PHOENIX CHRISTIAN HIGH SCHOOL 1751 W Indian School Rd, Phoenix, AZ 85015	<b>GYM #10</b> NORTH HIGH SCHOOL 1101 E Thomas Rd, Phoenix, AZ 85014
<b>GYM #5</b> VALLEY LUTHERAN HIGH SCHOOL 5199 N 7th Ave, Phoenix, AZ 85013	<b>GYM #11</b> CAMELBACK HIGH SCHOOL 4612 N 28th St, Phoenix, AZ 85016
<b>GYM #6</b> SOLANO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL 1526 W Missouri Ave, Phoenix, AZ 85015	<b>GYM #12</b> ALHAMBRA HIGH SCHOOL 3839 W Camelback Rd, Phoenix, AZ 85019

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# Democrats Secure Historic 3-Year Freeze on Data Center Tax Giveaways

**Arizona House Democratic Caucus PRESS RELEASE:**

*Save Healthcare for 40,000 Arizonans, and Cut Taxes for Working Families*

PHOENIX — In a first-in-the-nation move, Arizona House Democrats fought for and won a three-year suspension on new data center tax giveaways, the strongest such freeze in the country as part of a negotiated bipartisan budget plan announced today and that could be approved by Thursday.

“While Arizona families are struggling with the affordability crisis, billionaire-owned data centers should not be getting special tax treatment,” said House Democratic Leader Oscar De Los Santos, who, along with Assistant Democratic Leader Nancy Gutierrez and ranking Democratic Representative on Appropriations Stephanie Stahl Hamilton, led the House negotiation team.

“That’s why Democrats forced a historic freeze on data center giveaways and redirected this budget toward healthcare, food, public schools, and tax relief at a time when working families and those struggling to stay afloat need it the most,” De Los Santos added.

In May, Republicans passed a partisan budget that kicked off 40,000 Arizonans from their health insurance plans while protecting data center giveaways that are no longer necessary as the industry has proliferated. House Democrats forcefully fought back, and the final budget stops any new data center tax giveaways for the next three years and guarantees that no eligible Arizonan loses AHCCCS health coverage.

Additionally, the budget implements HB2531, the House Democrats’ Middle Class Tax Cuts Act, which eliminates taxes on tips and overtime, increases the standard deduction, and creates a new \$6,000 tax deduction for seniors 65+. And the plan extends free school meals for public school students and other food assistance programs for the next two years.

“Republicans tried to pass a budget that protected corporate giveaways and left working families behind,” said Gutierrez, House Democratic Assistant Leader and

top Democrat on the Education Committee. “House Democrats stuck together and forced a better deal: one that feeds kids, supports public schools, lowers childcare costs, and protects health care.”

Highlights and other wins secured by Democrats in the FY 27 budget:

- Invests \$235 million in food assistance for families struggling to pay for groceries,
- Funds \$48 million to reduce childcare costs for working families,
- Provides \$66 million in critical support for public school textbooks, technology and transportation,
- Fully funds AHCCCS—stopping the Republican plan to slash \$32 million from the agency—and invests millions to mitigate against the worst effects of Trump’s HR1,
- Guarantees two years of free school meals for students from working families,
- Blocks Donald Trump’s school privatization plan and cuts \$25 million from Arizona’s corporate STO program,
- Authorizes millions in legal aid to working families facing eviction,
- Expands access to healthcare for indigenous Arizonans,
- Supports Meals on Wheels and other programs for seniors, including an emphasis on Tribal communities,
- Provides millions in emergency funding for Gila and Mohave counties to recover from catastrophic flooding after the Trump administration denied federal disaster aid,
- Protects local businesses in southern Arizona after Republicans tried to defund the successful Rio Nuevo tax increment funded economic development district.

“No budget is perfect, but because House Democrats fought hard, and this budget delivers relief for working families instead of writing another blank check to corporations,” said Stahl Hamilton, the ranking Democrat on House Appropriations and a key negotiator for the plan. “The amount of damage that the Republican-only budget passed in May would have done to our economy is hard to calculate, but saving Rio Nuevo and programs that help our most vulnerable is huge for building an Arizona we can afford.”

# Supreme Court Protects Native Voter Who Rely on Mail Voting

*A press release from the Native American Rights Fund.*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** June 29, 2026

Today, the Supreme Court, in *Watson v. Republican National Committee*, upheld voters’ rights by allowing Mississippi ballots cast on time to be counted after Election Day, as permitted under state law. The decision respects longstanding absentee ballot receipt rules. It also protects Native voters who are disproportionately affected by a dearth of voter services and postal delays beyond their control.

The Native American Rights Fund (NARF) and Torey K. Dolan of the Great Lakes Indigenous Law Center submitted an amicus brief on behalf of the National Congress of American Indians, Alaska Federation of Natives, and Washington Conservation Action Education Fund in support of the petitioner in the case. The brief explained that Native voters often are forced to mail in ballots because in-person voting is made less available in their communities. Meanwhile, Native communities

often lack reliable mail delivery, have fewer postal services, and endure longer mail transit time, especially in Alaska Native communities.

NARF Senior Staff Attorney Jacqueline De León responded to the decision: “Today’s decision provides some protection to Native American voters, who should not lose their right to have their vote counted because their communities have less in-person voting opportunities and their mail takes longer to process and deliver than other communities. Native voters face several unique obstacles outside their control. For many Native communities, voting by mail is shaped by long distances to election offices, no home mail delivery, unreliable postal service, lack of access to transportation, and the realities of living in rural and remote areas. Ballots cast by election deadlines should not be discarded simply because substandard service or weather delays cause them to arrive after Election Day. Today’s ruling defends long-standing protections for Native voters and all Americans who depend on absentee voting.”

CONTACT: Native American Rights Fund, [media@narf.org](mailto:media@narf.org),

## Announcements & Notices

UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY COURT  
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

Franciscan Friars of California, Inc.  
Chapter 11 Reorganization Proceeding  
(Case No. 23-41723 WJL)

### NOTICE OF HEARING ON, AND OBJECTION DEADLINE FOR, CONFIRMATION OF THE SECOND AMENDED JOINT PLAN OF REORGANIZATION FOR THE FRANCISCAN FRIARS OF CALIFORNIA, INC. DATED JUNE 22, 2026

**PLEASE TAKE NOTICE** that the Franciscan Friars of California, Inc. (the “Debtor”), the debtor in bankruptcy case number 23-41723, in the United States Bankruptcy Court for the Northern District of California (“Court”) and its Official Committee of Unsecured Creditors (collectively, the “Plan Proponents”) filed the *Second Amended Joint Plan of Reorganization for The Franciscan Friars of California, Inc. Dated June 22, 2026*, [Docket No. 1731] (including any subsequent amendments there, “Plan”). A hearing on confirmation of the Plan (the “Confirmation Hearing”) will begin at **9:00 a.m. (prevailing Pacific time) on September 24, 2026.**

The Confirmation Hearing may be adjourned or continued from time to time by the Court or jointly by the Plan Proponents without further notice except as announced in open court or as filed on the Court’s docket. The Plan may be modified before, during, or as a result of the Confirmation Hearing, in each case without further notice to parties in interest.

Objections to confirmation of the Plan must: (a) be in writing; (b) conform to the Bankruptcy Rules and the Local Rules; (c) state the name and address of the objecting party and the amount and nature of the Claim or interest of such party; (d) state with particularity the basis and nature of any objection to the Plan; and (e) be filed, together with proof of service, with the Court and served so as to be received not later than **August 19, 2026** (the “Confirmation Objection Deadline”), by (i) counsel to the Debtor, Binder Malter Harris & Rome-Banks LLP, Attn: Robert G. Harris ([rob@bindermalter.com](mailto:rob@bindermalter.com)), Julie H. Rome-Banks ([julie@bindermalter.com](mailto:julie@bindermalter.com)), and Reno Fernandez ([reno@bindermalter.com](mailto:reno@bindermalter.com)); (ii) the U.S. Trustee, Attn: Jason Blumberg ([jason.blumberg@usdoj.gov](mailto:jason.blumberg@usdoj.gov)); (iii) counsel to the Committee, Keller Benvenuti Kim LLP, Attn: Gabrielle L. Albert ([galbert@kblklp.com](mailto:galbert@kblklp.com)), Lowenstein Sandler LLP, Attn: Jeffrey D. Prol ([jprol@lowenstein.com](mailto:jprol@lowenstein.com)) and Brent Weisenberg ([bweisenberg@lowenstein.com](mailto:bweisenberg@lowenstein.com)), and Burns Bair LLP, Attn: Timothy W. Burns ([tburns@burnsbair.com](mailto:tburns@burnsbair.com)) and Jesse J. Bair ([jbair@burnsbair.com](mailto:jbair@burnsbair.com)); and (iv) those who have formally appeared and requested service in this case under Bankruptcy Rule 2002. All objections not timely filed and served in accordance with the provisions set forth above are hereby deemed waived and will not be considered by the Court.

**IF CONFIRMED, THE PLAN SHALL BIND ALL HOLDERS OF CLAIMS AGAINST AND INTERESTS IN THE DEBTOR TO THE MAXIMUM EXTENT PERMITTED BY APPLICABLE LAW, WHETHER OR NOT SUCH HOLDER WILL RECEIVE OR RETAIN ANY PROPERTY OR INTEREST IN PROPERTY UNDER THE PLAN, HAS FILED A PROOF OF CLAIM IN THIS CHAPTER 11 CASE, FAILED TO VOTE TO ACCEPT OR REJECT THE PLAN, OR VOTED TO REJECT THE PLAN.**

**ARTICLE XII OF THE PLAN CONTAINS CERTAIN RELEASE, EXCULPATION, AND INJUNCTION PROVISIONS THAT MAY MATERIALLY AFFECT YOUR RIGHTS AGAINST THE DEBTOR AND THIRD-PARTY NON-DEBTORS. YOU SHOULD REVIEW THESE PROVISIONS CAREFULLY.**

Susan Austin	)	Case Number: CV-2026-0158-RO
	Plaintiff(s)	)
Vs	)	
	)	
Amelia Shaylyne Pablo	)	TEMPORARY
	Defendant(s)	CIVIL RESTRAINING ORDER
	)	

THE ABOVE ENTITLED MATTER HAVING COME BEFORE THIS COURT, upon a motion for a RESTRAINING ORDER; and it appearing that a Restraining Order is needed and the Court finding good cause to issue and place into effect, this date, a Restraining Order against the named defendant, *AMELIA SHAYLYNE PABLO*.

THEREFORE IT IS HEREBY ORDERED THAT THE NAMED DEFENDANT IS RESTRAINED FROM COMING ABOUT THE NAMED *SUSAN AUSTIN, R. B. R. Y. B. R. B. R. B.* IN ANY MANNER:

UNTIL THE RESTRAINING ORDER HEARING SCHEDULED ON Wednesday, August 12, 2026 at 9:00 AM in Courtroom I, AKIMEL O’OTHAM LODITHA KUD KI, 721 West Seed Farm Road, Sacaton, AZ

FURTHER, A WARRANT OF ARREST WILL BE ISSUED, IF DEFENDANT VIOLATES THIS RESTRAINING ORDER.

Date: July 1, 2026

  
JUDGE of the Community Court



## Gila River Indian Community

# 2026 GENERAL ELECTION SCHEDULE



### Districts 1-7

June 24, 2026	GRIC members who possess the qualifications defined in Article VI of the GRIC Constitution and Bylaws, may file a <b>DECLARATION OF CANDIDACY (DOC)</b> for the Office of Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Chief Judge or Associate Judge
July 15, 2026	<b>DEADLINE DATE</b> to submit a completed Declaration of Candidacy (DOC) forms to the Tribal Elections Office by 5:00 p.m.
July 16, 2026	Declaration of Candidacy (DOC) forms are routed to ascertain qualifications to Enrollment, Law Office and Human Resources Departments.
July 21, 2026	Special Election Board meeting to verify candidate residency requirements
August 5, 2026	At the first Council meeting in August, the Community Council shall certify that all candidates for General Office meet the qualifications set forth in the Community Constitution and Bylaws of the Gila River Indian Community
August 10, 2026	<b>VOTER REGISTRATION CLOSSES</b> 5:00 p.m. for the Primary Election
August 13, 2026	<b>ABSENTEE VOTING OPENS</b> for the Primary Election; absentee ballots will be available upon request from your District Judge or the Tribal Elections Office.
September 14, 2026	<b>ABSENTEE VOTING CLOSSES</b> for the Primary Election all absentee ballots must be received no later than 5:00 p.m.
September 15, 2026	<b>GRIC PRIMARY ELECTION DAY</b> <b>Districts 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, &amp; 7; ALL POLLING SITES OPEN 6:00 A.M. - 6:00 P.M.</b>
September 16, 2026	<b>VOTER REGISTRATION OPENS</b> for the General Election November 3, 2026
September 21, 2026	<b>PROTEST PERIOD ENDS</b> any registered voter can file a protest to the election in writing to the Election Board Chairperson, by 5:00 p.m.
September 22, 2026	<b>VOTER REGISTRATION CLOSSES</b> 5:00 p.m. for the General Election
October 7, 2026	<b>Certification of the Primary Election results</b> shall be conducted by the Community Council
October 8, 2026	<b>ABSENTEE VOTING OPENS</b> for the General Election; absentee ballots will be available upon request from your District Judge or the Tribal Elections Office.
November 2, 2026	<b>ABSENTEE VOTING CLOSSES</b> for the General Election. All absentee ballots must be received no later than 5:00 p.m.
November 3, 2026	<b>GRIC GENERAL ELECTION DAY</b> <b>Districts 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, &amp; 7; ALL POLLING SITES OPEN 6:00 A.M. - 6:00 P.M.</b>
November 6, 2026	<b>DEADLINE TO PROTEST THE ELECTION:</b> any registered voter can file a protest in writing to the Election Board Chairperson by 5:00 p.m.
December 2, 2026	<b>Certification of the General Election results</b> shall be conducted by the Community Council
January 1, 2027	Newly elected candidates for the Office of Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Chief Judge and Associate Judges are sworn into office.

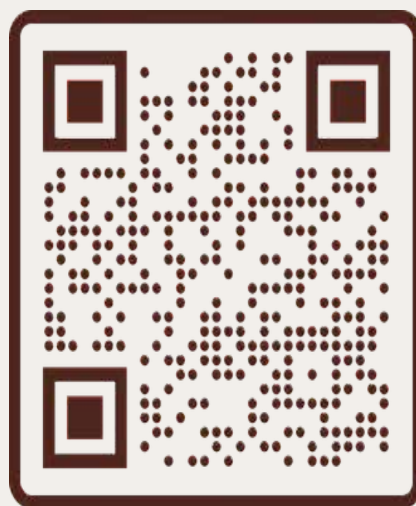


For questions regarding this schedule, call the Tribal Elections office at (520) 562-9735, 9758, or email at [TEP@gric.nsn.us](mailto:TEP@gric.nsn.us)

# Gila River Indian Community Department of Environmental Quality Public Notice

Pursuant to 40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) §58.10 Gila River Indian Community (GRIC) Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) Air Quality Program (AQP) will make its annual monitoring network plan available for public inspection prior to submission to the United States Environmental Protection Agency. The Annual Ambient Monitoring Network Review and Data Summary present changes to and data collected from the air quality monitoring network during calendar year 2025. This document will be available for review at the GRIC DEQ office located at 124 Skill Center Dr., Sacaton, AZ 85147, and on the AQP website at [www.gricdeq.org](http://www.gricdeq.org) under Public Notices.

Public comments may be submitted in writing to GRIC DEQ Air Quality, P.O. Box 2139, Sacaton, Arizona, 85147. For additional information, please contact Jay Johnson at 520-796-3783 or email [air@gric.nsn.us](mailto:air@gric.nsn.us).



# “Sonoran Sunset” Elder Prom Night



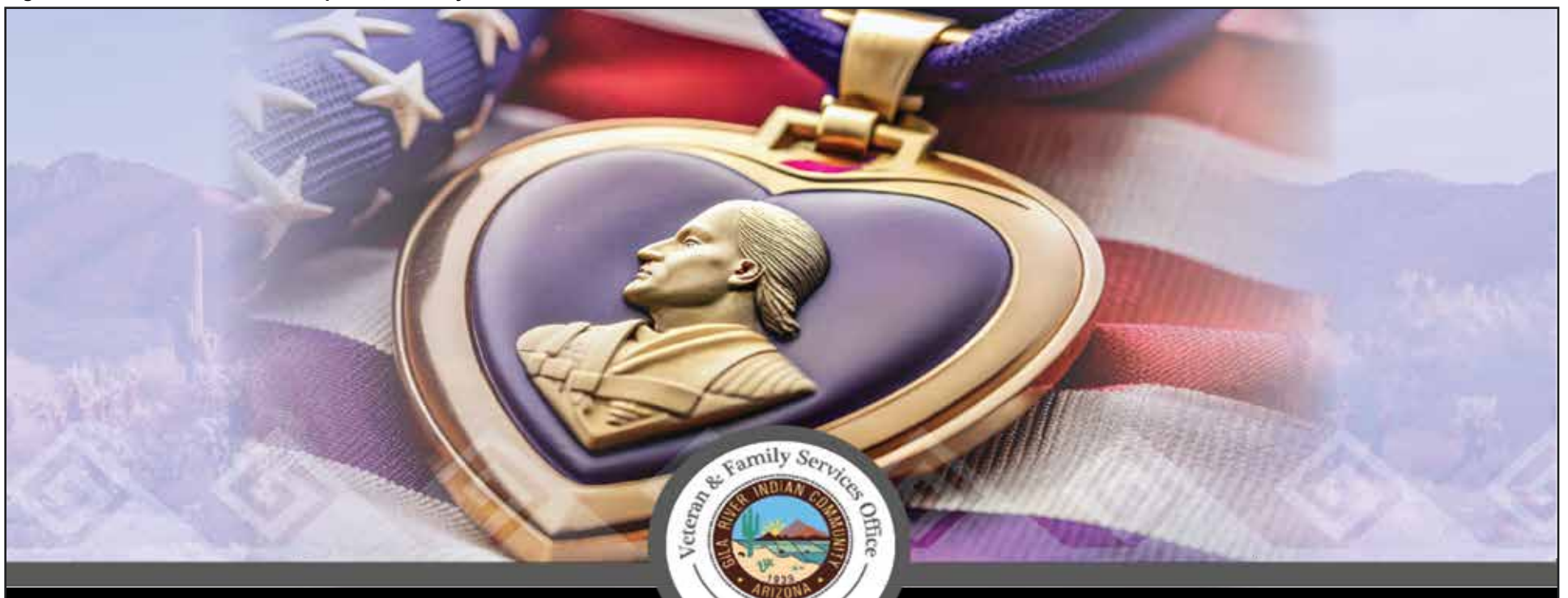
Lorraine Yaramata and her friends from District 6 enjoyed the prom night. Miguel Sallard/GRIN



Everyone hit the dance floor and loved the music. Miguel Sallard/GRIN



This was the first prom ever for Tina and Agustine Ennas. They attended different high schools and missed their own proms, but they made it to this one./GRIN



## PURPLE HEART DAY

AUG. 07

DAY

12 pm  
2 pm



DISTRICT 5 MULTI-PURPOSE BUILDING

3456 W Casa Blanca Rd, Bapchule, AZ 85121

For More Info Contact

DARRELL WHITMAN (520) 610-2037

WESLEY RHODES (520) 610-4384

KIM SKELTON (520) 610-7644

### Strong Minds, Strong Communities Continued From Front Page

that embraced difficult conversations. They created space for youth to learn coping skills, explore resources and understand that asking for help is an act of strength, not weakness.

The importance of youth voices in shaping GRIC's future was underscored by the presence of Gov. Stephen Roe Lewis and Lt. Gov. Regina Antone. Their

remarks were not ceremonial; they were affirmations that the Community's leadership sees, hears and believes in its young people.

Keynote speakers Waylon Pahona Jr. and Jonathan Yellowhair brought honesty, cultural grounding and lived experience to the stage. Their messages reminded youth that healing is not linear and that vulnerability can be a source of strength.

Workshops throughout the conference reflected a deep understanding of what young people need — academically, professionally, emotionally, culturally and socially.

- Emergency Preparedness — Guidance on keeping families and communities safe.
- Student Services — Support with scholarships and college navigation.
- Elev8 Initiative — Pathways to culturally rooted healthcare careers.
- Air and Water Quality — Connecting environmental stewardship to community health.
- Healthy Relationships & Sexual Health — Culturally sensitive, honest guidance.
- Energy, Sleep & Mental Health — Addressing caffeine, screen time and stress.
- Vaping Prevention — A culturally based dialogue on an emerging concern.
- Nutrition & Confidence Bingo — Blending fun, self-esteem and healthy hab-



Gov. Stephen Roe Lewis proudly supporting the youth of our Community. Photo by: Paul Molina



AOPPYC Representatives Frances Martinez, Lt. Gov. Regina Antone, and Devon Juan. Photo by Paul Molina

- its.
  - Basic Budgeting — Tools for financial independence.
  - Shell Necklace Making — A celebration of tradition, creativity and cultural pride.
  - Law & Tribal Communities — Showing how legal literacy strengthens tribal sovereignty.
- These sessions were not simply informational. They were investments in GRIC's future leaders.
- Yet the conference's greatest impact was found between presentations — in the shy excitement of youth meeting one another, the proud gaze of elders, the encouragement of facilitators and the quiet hum

of community filling the room. There were laughs in the air during activities, thoughtful silence in the room during keynotes and a shared sense of purpose lingered long after the final session. In a world that often asks too much of young people, the conference offered something rare: a space where they could learn, connect and simply be themselves. It was more than a conference. It was a reminder that community is built through kindness, shared learning and the courage to show up for one another. "Be nice, safe and have fun," Martinez told attendees — a message that carried through every moment of the event.



L-R: Jr. Miss Gila River Aubrey Gaitan and her 1st Attendant Ivory Soke and 2nd Attendant Julia Parra. Photo By: Paul Molina



Staff from Gila River Health Care's Elev8 program attended the conference. Photo By: Paul Molina

# SR 347 Improvement Project Construction now Underway

## Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) PRESS RELEASE:

*As Phase 1 paving begins, drivers should plan for lane restrictions*  
July 7, 2026

PHOENIX – The pavement rehabilitation portion of the State Route 347 Improvement Project ramps up this week after the long holiday weekend, as the Arizona Department of Transportation begins work on 14 miles of roadway improvements along this busy commuter corridor. Some initial paving work began on June 29 before the holiday travel began.

The first phase of this three-and-a-half-year project will rehabilitate the existing travel lanes and outside shoulders along SR 347 between Interstate 10 and the City of Maricopa. This work will provide a smoother, more comfortable driving surface for motorists while preparing the roadway for the additional improvements, which include widening, interchange construction and intersection improvements. These phases are expected to begin this winter.

During the ongoing paving project, lane restrictions and closures will take place primarily during off-peak hours (weeknights and weekends) in order to minimize disruptions for drivers, especially those commuting in and out of the City of Maricopa. Two travel lanes will remain open in each direction during peak travel times.

The speed limit along the entire 14-mile project corridor is reduced to 55 mph. In the active construction zones, the speed limit is reduced to 45 mph. Drivers are encouraged to plan for extra travel time, slow

down, be patient and drive safely. Drivers can stay informed through the SR 347 Improvement Project website and sign up for weekly traffic alerts via the website. They can also stay up-to-date on travel conditions by using AZ511.gov.

The pavement rehabilitation phase is expected to be complete at the end of this year. The SR 347 Improvement Project also includes these upgrades, which are expected to be complete by the end of 2029:

- Adding a new third lane in each direction from I-10 to the City of Maricopa and constructing a concrete median barrier to physically separate the directions of travel
- Constructing new grade-separated interchanges at Riggs Road and Mammoth Way
- Adding turn lanes, acceleration and deceleration lanes, and signal improvements at Casa Blanca Road and Maricopa Road

ADOT is partnering with the City of Maricopa, Gila River Indian Community, Maricopa Association of Governments, Maricopa County and Pinal County on this \$396 million improvement project. The project corridor runs through Maricopa and Pinal counties and is primarily located within the Gila River Indian Community.

For more information about the SR 347 Improvement Project, or to sign up for traffic alerts and project updates, visit [azdot.gov/sr347](http://azdot.gov/sr347).

Real-time highway conditions are available on ADOT's Arizona Traveler Information site at [AZ511.gov](http://AZ511.gov), the [az511](http://az511) app (download for Apple or Android devices) or by calling 511. Drivers can set their own alerts on the AZ511 app in order to be notified when there is an incident, lane restriction or closure.



Night shift workers commencing scheduled roadwork on State Route 347. Photos submitted by ADOT



## I-10 | LOOP 202 TO SR 387 | WILD HORSE PASS CORRIDOR

### I-10 Gila River Indian Community Project Pre-Construction Virtual Public Meeting

Construction on the I-10 Gila River Indian Community Project segment between Loop 202 (Santan/South Mountain Freeway) and the Gila River (Mileposts 161-172) is scheduled to begin in September 2026. This is one of four segments that make up the I-10 Wild Horse Pass Corridor project to improve the 26-mile stretch of I-10 between Phoenix and Casa Grande.

#### Improvements to the segment include:

- Add a third general-purpose lane in each direction within the existing median
- Add one HOV lane in each direction between Loop 202 to Riggs Road within the existing median and install freeway lighting
- Upgrade the following traffic interchanges and bridges: Wild Horse Pass Blvd/Sundust Road, Queen Creek Road/SR 347, Riggs Road and Goodyear Road
- Construct a new traffic interchange at Koli Road

### Project Construction Limits: Mileposts 161 - 172



#### You Are Invited to the Virtual Pre-Construction Public Meeting

Join us for a virtual meeting to learn more about the I-10 Gila River Indian Community project. The project team will share details about the planned improvements to I-10 between Loop 202 and the Gila River Bridges and provide additional information about the construction timeline and impacts to those who travel through the I-10 Wild Horse Pass Corridor. The I-10 Gila River Indian Community Project is one of four segments in the I-10 Wild Horse Pass Corridor Project and is the next segment to begin active construction early this fall.

Wednesday, August 5, 2026 | 6 to 7 p.m.  
Attend the virtual meeting <https://bit.ly/4sgFw6p>



To learn more about the entire I-10 Wild Horse Pass Corridor Project, visit [i10wildhorsepasscorridor.com](http://i10wildhorsepasscorridor.com).



Pursuant to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other nondiscrimination laws and authorities, the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. Persons that require a reasonable accommodation based on language or disability should contact Marcy McMacken at 855.712.8530 or [mmcmacken@azdot.gov](mailto:mmcmacken@azdot.gov). Requests should be made as early as possible to ensure the State has an opportunity to address the accommodation.

De acuerdo con el Título VI de la Ley de Derechos Civiles de 1964, la Ley de Estadounidenses con Discapacidades (ADA por sus siglas en inglés) y otras normas y leyes antidiscriminatorias, el Departamento de Transporte de Arizona (ADOT) no discrimina por motivos de raza, color, origen nacional, sexo, edad o discapacidad. Las personas que requieran asistencia (dentro de lo razonable) ya sea por el idioma o discapacidad deben ponerse en contacto con Marcy McMacken al 855.712.8530 o por correo electrónico al [mmcmacken@azdot.gov](mailto:mmcmacken@azdot.gov). Las solicitudes deben hacerse lo mas antes posible para asegurar que el Estado tenga la oportunidad de hacer los arreglos necesarios.



**2ND ANNUAL MEN'S CHOP & GRILL EVENT**

Learn about the cultural significance of men chopping wood—a symbol of strength, tradition and community.

Join us for a hands-on morning of chopping wood for grilling and firing up some skewers. While also diving into physical wellness and nutrition education to support a healthy lifestyle.

**JULY 18, 2026 @ 6:30AM-10AM**

**SACATON FAIRGROUNDS**  
158 S BLUEBIRD RD.  
SACATON, AZ 85147

CLASS IS OPEN TO GRIC ENROLLED MEMBERS & RESIDENTS.

INCENTIVES FOR THE FIRST 50 REGISTERED PARTICIPANTS. CALL 520-562-5100 OR SCAN QR CODE.

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**Summer is for Techie Camps**

**GRIC Kids Create Core Memories with Computer Components Crash Course.**

Ever taken apart a computer and rebuilt it with your own hands? These students have! Digital Connect hosted four Techie Camps in the Gila River Indian Community last month in partnership with AZ StRUT (Arizona Students Recycling Used Technology). Techie Camps are engaging half-day workshops that provide a fun, inviting, and interactive environment for teens to explore computer assembly, learn hardware basics, and discuss essential digital safety skills.

Guided by AZ StRUT's proven Hardware Techie Experience curriculum, each participant gains valuable hands-on experience identifying computer components, disassembling a real working computer, and putting it back together again. Best of all, each student takes home a refurbished laptop to support their continued learning and future success.

Last month, we served a combined 77 youth participants in the Gila River Health Care Summer Scrubs Program and the Employment & Training Department's WIOA Youth Program.

We'd like to send a big THANK YOU to our partners at AZ StRUT, GRHC, and E&T and to our host locations the Gila River Police Department and Gila Crossing Community School for investing in the future of our community and supporting workforce readiness training for our next generation of leaders.

**Summer Scrubs**

**WIOA Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act.**

**AZ StRUT** Training and curriculum provided by AZ StRUT.

**DIGITAL CONNECT** an initiative of Gila River Telecommunications Inc.

DIGITALCONNECT.ORG | @DIGITALCONNECTINITIATIVE

# ★ VETERANS ★ ANNOUNCEMENTS

## VA Community Care contributed more than \$36B to local economies in FY 2025

### PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release  
June 25, 2026  
10:30 am

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs today announced it made more than \$36 billion in payments to local healthcare providers across the country in fiscal year 2025 as part of the bipartisan VA MISSION Act.

President Trump signed the MISSION Act in 2018 after it passed Congress with widespread bipartisan support. The law created a benefit that lets eligible Veterans choose care from authorized local, non-VA healthcare providers at VA expense. VA pays for that care under the Veterans Community Care Program, which is the fourth largest healthcare payer program in America and provides healthcare services supporting more than 8.62 million enrolled Veterans.

With the enactment of the bipartisan Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act in 2025, Congress reaffirmed its commitment to Veterans' healthcare choice by requiring VA to ensure that Veterans and their referring clinicians can choose

community care without any additional review when it's in the Veteran's best medical interest. Under current law, Veterans can also choose community care in other circumstances, including if their average driving time or wait time exceeds certain thresholds or when they need a service that is not provided by VA.

While community care is an important option for many Veterans, VA is also spending record amounts of funding on direct care — a record high \$101 billion was spent on direct care in FY 2025, when VA completed a record high 82,083,918 direct care appointments, up 4.1% from FY 2024.

Federal healthcare payer programs — like the Veterans Community Care Program, Medicare, Medicaid and TRICARE — are critical to the operation of every healthcare system in the country and help ensure patients get the care they need. That is especially true in rural areas, where millions of America's Veterans live. Rural healthcare providers sometimes operate on margins of less than 1%, which means VA community care payments help ensure these providers remain open and able to care for Veterans, their families and others in the community.

Providing Veterans the ability to receive care from non-VA healthcare provid-

ers at VA expense has widespread bipartisan support. A March 2026 survey from Rasmussen Reports found that 90% of likely military voters support the policy.

In FY 2025, the top ten states that benefited from VA community care were:

- Texas, \$3.3 billion
- Florida, \$2.8 billion
- California, \$2.1 billion
- North Carolina, \$1.5 billion
- Ohio, \$1.3 billion
- Tennessee, \$1.2 billion
- Pennsylvania, \$1.1 billion
- Michigan, \$1.0 billion
- Georgia, \$1.0 billion
- Arizona, \$1.0 billion

See the full list of states here.

"When it passed the MISSION Act and the Dole Act, Congress promised all eligible Veterans the ability to choose the healthcare that's best for them — whether at a VA facility or a community provider. Under President Trump, VA is delivering on that promise each and every day," said VA Secretary Doug Collins. "VA community care is a vital benefit that ensures the health of both Veterans and the local economies where they live."

Under the second Trump Adminis-

tration, VA continues to make major improvements in the way care and benefits are being delivered to Veterans:

- VA opened 36 new health care clinics since January of 2025, expanding access for Veterans around the country.

- The backlog of Veterans waiting for VA benefits is down 72% since Jan. 20, 2025, after it increased 24% during the Biden Administration. In February, this backlog fell to less than 100,000 claims for the first time since 2020.

- VA will spend nearly \$5 billion in FY2026 to modernize, repair and improve health care facilities, the largest non-recurring maintenance investment in VA's history.

- As of June, VA has enrolled more than 180,000 new Veterans in VA health care in 2026.

- Since Jan. 20, 2025, VA has offered Veterans more than 2.8 million appointments outside of normal operating hours. These early-morning, evening, and weekend appointments are giving Veterans more timely and convenient options for care.

- VA permanently housed 51,936 homeless Veterans across the country in FY25, the highest total in seven years.

## Post 84 Honors Community Heroes During Annual Memorial Day "Trip Around the Block"



Post 84 recognizing fallen GRPD Officer in Sacaton Police Department  
Photo By: Tony McDaniel/IHPOST

### Submitted By Tony McDaniel

The Ira H. Hayes American Legion Post 84 carried on its longstanding tradition of remembrance with its annual Memorial Day "Trip Around the Block," a solemn tour of significant memorial sites throughout the Gila River Indian Community. At each stop, members offered prayer, Auxiliary Unit 84 placed wreaths or flowers, and Post 84 delivered a 21 gun salute followed by the sounding of Taps.

### Honoring Sgt. Kevin Lewis in Blackwater

The day began at the GRPD Sgt. Kevin Lewis monument in Blackwater, where Leslie Jackson opened with prayer. The monument, designed and directed by a Post 84 member, was built through the combined efforts of Post 84, Gila River Sand and Gravel, the Gila River Department of Transportation, and District 1 staff and maintenance crews.

### Remembering Matthew B. Juan and Col. Cook

The second stop was Sacaton Presbyterian Church, where the graves of Matthew B. Juan and Col. Cook were honored. Chesley Juan Jr. offered the opening prayer.

### Tributes at the Veterans Memorial Park

At the Matthew B. Juan / Ira H. Hayes Veterans Memorial Park, Steve Case led the prayer. Auxiliary Unit 84 placed wreaths at monuments honoring Matthew B. Juan, Ira H. Hayes, POW/MIA service members, Purple Heart recipients, Women Veterans, and Japanese American soldiers who enlisted from the Gila River Internment Camp during World War II.

### Recognizing Fallen GRPD Officers

The fourth stop brought the group to the Gila River Police Department, where Bill Dixon offered prayer. Post 84 honored Sgt. Kevin Lewis, Officer Recruit Arman-

do D. Reyes Jr., and Officer Joshua Briese, all of whom died in service to the Gila River Community. Members emphasized the importance of remembering emergency responders who continue to serve and protect the community every day.

### Japanese Internment Camp Memorial

At the fifth stop, the Japanese Internment Camp, Bobby Flowers offered prayer. Post and Unit 84 honored the Japanese American internees who enlisted in the U.S. Military from within the camp, forming what would become the most decorated military unit of World War II.

### Vah Ki Presbyterian Church in Bapchule

The sixth stop was Vah Ki Presbyterian Church, where Leonard Enos led prayer. The church, once attended by the family of Ira H. Hayes, is home to the original Ira

H. Hayes Monument, built by parishioners and still standing today.

### Saint Peter's School and Mission

At Saint Peter's School and Mission, Sister Martha offered prayer. The monument there honors District 5 World War II veterans, whose names are visible to all who exit the front doors of Saint Peter's Church.

### Honoring Billy Ferris

The final stop was the home of Billy Ferris, where Tony McDaniel offered prayer. Ferris was killed in action, giving his life in service to God, Country, Community, and family. His relatives have erected a memorial at the home of Liz and Larry Antone to ensure his sacrifice is never forgotten.

Post 84 extends its gratitude to all who continue to remember, honor, and memorialize those who gave everything for their community and their country.



Post 84 members at the Japanese Internment Camp Memorial.  
Photo submitted by: Tony McDaniel/IHPOST

# COMMUNITY COUNCIL ACTION SHEETS

Courtesy of the Community Council Secretary's Office • June 3, 2026

## 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, June 3, 2026, in the Community Council Chambers at the Governance Center in Sacaton, Arizona was called to order by Governor Stephen R. Lewis at 9:11 a.m.

## INVOCATION

Provided by Councilwoman Lalena Jackson

## 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 (9:14); D3- Joseph Manuel, Jr., Kristina Morago; D4- Leah Williams, Amy Morago (10:28); D5- James De La Rosa (9:18); Verna Sunna (10:28); Donovan Kyitan, Gordon Santos, Jr.; D6- Anthony Villareal, Sr., Charles Goldtooth, Terrance Evans; D7- Jeanette Blasingim

## APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION MADE AND SECOND TO ACCEPT REPORT #1 ON THE CONSENT AGENDA AND APPROVE THE REGULAR AGENDA AS PRESENTED  
SWEARING-IN CEREMONY FOR NEWLY ELECTED & RE-ELECTED COUNCIL MEMBERS

District 1 – Joey Whitman

District 3 – Joseph Manuel, Jr.

District 4 – Amy Lynne Morago

District 4 – Alicia M. Ochoa

District 5 – James De La Rosa

District 5 – Verna M. Sunna

District 6 – Terrance B. Evans

CHIEF JUDGE ANTHONY HILL ADMINISTERED THE OATH OF OFFICE TO EACH OF THE NEWLY AND RE-ELECTED COUNCIL MEMBERS

(15-minute reception to follow in the Governance Center lobby)

[GOVERNOR CALLED FOR A 15-MINUTE BREAK; THE MEETING RECONVENED AT 10:28 A.M.]

THE NEW COUNCIL HAS BEEN SWORN IN AND ARE NOW DULY SEATED

PRESENTATIONS/INTRODUCTIONS

1. Presentation – Tribal Historic Preservation Office

Presenters: Reylynne Williams, Darius Enos, Jennifer Allison

MS. REYLYNNE WILLIAMS, MR. DARIUS ENOS, AND MS. JENNIFER ALLISON PRESENTED THE COMMUNITY THE SCOTLAND'S CUP OF FRIENDSHIP THE QUAIH FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURG. THE QUAIH WAS PRESENTED TO THE COMMUNITY FROM MR. TOM GILLINWATER, PROFESSOR OF ANATOMY & HEAD OF DEPARTMENT EDINBURG MEDICAL SCHOOL. THIS WAS TO COMMEMORATE THE FRIENDSHIP THAT WAS BUILT DURING THE CONSULTATION AND REPATRIATION OF ANCESTRAL HUMAN REMAINS. THE GIFT WAS ACCEPTED ON BEHALF OF GRIC BY MS. REYLYNNE WILLIAMS, TRIBAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER. MS. WILLIAMS EXPLAINED THAT THIS ITEM IS A DRINKING VESSEL THAT IS PASSED AROUND A GROUP IN THE SPIRIT OF FRIENDSHIP, PEACE AND CAMARADERIE. THE COMMUNITY COUNCIL THANKED MS. WILLIAMS FOR THE PRESENTATION, ACCEPTING THE GIFT, AND FOR HER DILIGENT WORK WITH THE TRIBAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE TO BRING THE REMAINS HOME.

REPORTS

>1. GRSG FY26 Quarter 2 Report

Presenters: Michael H. Morago, Donna Stowell

ACCEPTED AT APPROVAL OF AGENDA

2. International Repatriation, THPO Report No. 2026-003

Presenters: Reylynne Williams, Darius Enos, Jennifer Allison

REPORT HEARD

## RESOLUTIONS

### ORDINANCES

### UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Community Treasurer Appointment (G&MSC forwards to Council under Unfinished Business with a recommendation to appoint Gary T. Mix by acclamation and to appoint at the June 3, 2026 Council Meeting)

Presenter: Community Council

MOTION MADE AND SECOND TO APPOINT GARY T. MIX BY ACCLAMATION

2. Community Council Secretary Appointment (G&MSC

forwards to Council under Unfinished Business with a recommendation to appoint Shannon White by acclamation and to appoint at the June 3, 2026 Council Meeting)

Presenter: Community Council

MOTION MADE AND SECOND TO APPOINT SHANNON WHITE BY ACCLAMATION

3. Government & Management Standing Committee Appointment Two (2) Council Seats

Presenter: Community Council

MOTION MADE AND SECOND TO APPOINT CHARLES GOLDTOOTH AND AMY MORAGO TO THE GOVERNMENT & MANAGEMENT STANDING COMMITTEE

4. Health & Social Standing Committee Appointment Two (2) Council Seats

Presenter: Community Council

MOTION MADE AND SECOND TO APPOINT JOEY WHITMAN AND AMY MORAGO TO THE HEALTH & SOCIAL STANDING COMMITTEE

5. Natural Resources Standing Committee Appointment One (1) Council Seat

Presenter: Community Council

MOTION MADE AND SECOND TO APPOINT VERNA SUNNA TO THE NATURAL RESOURCES STANDING COMMITTEE

6. Legislative Standing Committee Appointment Five (5) Council Seats

Presenter: Community Council

MOTION MADE AND SECOND TO APPOINT GORDON SANTOS, JR., AMY MORAGO, ANTHONY VILLAREAL, SR., KRISTINA MORAGO, AND JEANETTE BLASINGIM TO THE LEGISLATIVE STANDING COMMITTEE

7. Education Standing Committee Appointment Two (2) Council Seats

Presenter: Community Council

MOTION MADE AND SECOND TO APPOINT ALICIA OCHOA AND JOEY WHITMAN TO THE EDUCATION STANDING COMMITTEE

8. Economic Development Standing Committee Appointment One (1) Council Seat

Presenter: Community Council

MOTION MADE AND SECOND TO APPOINT JAMES DE LA ROSA TO THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STANDING COMMITTEE

9. Cultural Resource Standing Committee Appointment Three (3) Council Seats

Presenter: Community Council

MOTION MADE AND SECOND TO APPOINT JEANETTE BLASINGIM, AMY MORAGO, AND ALICIA OCHOA TO THE CULTURAL RESOURCE STANDING COMMITTEE

10. Gila River Farms Board of Director's Two (2) Appointments

Presenter: Community Council

MOTION MADE AND SECOND TO APPOINT JOSEPH MANUEL, JR. AND AMY MORAGO TO THE GILA RIVER FARMS BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S

## NEW BUSINESS

1. Law Enforcement Citizens Advisory Board Appointment For District 6 (LSC forwards to Council under New Business with a recommendation for approval and to include the motion sheet with the packet)

Presenter: Shannon White

MOTION MADE AND SECOND TO APPOINT SHELBY FRANCISCO TO THE LAW ENFORCEMENT CITIZENS ADVISORY BOARD FOR DISTRICT 6

## MINUTES

1. January 21, 2026 (Regular)

APPROVED

2. May 20, 2026 (Regular)

APPROVED

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

- CONGRATULATIONS TO THE NEWLY ELECTED AND RE-ELECTED COUNCIL

- PRAYERS WERE REQUESTED FOR THE HILL FAMILY IN THE PASSING OF JANET HILL

- THE NRSC/H&SSC WORK SESSION WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY WILL BE HELD ON JUNE 5-7, 2026 IN TUCSON, AZ

- THE GILA RIVER INDIAN COMMUNITY GRADUATION BANQUET WILL BE HELD AT WILD HORSE PASS ON SATURDAY, JUNE 6, 2026 AT 1:00 P.M.

- THE "YOUR VOTE MATTERS" EVENT WILL BE HELD ON SATURDAY, JUNE 6, 2026 AT THE GILA CROSSING COMMUNITY SCHOOL FROM 10:00 A.M. TO 2:00 P.M.

## ADJOURNMENT

MEETING ADJOURNED AT 11:35 A.M.

\* Denotes TABLED from previous meeting(s)

> Denotes a CONSENT AGENDA ITEM

# COMMUNITY COUNCIL ACTION SHEETS

Courtesy of the Community Council Secretary's Office • June 17, 2026

## 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, June 17, 2026, in the Community Council Chambers at the Governance Center in Sacaton, Arizona was called to order by Governor Stephen R. Lewis at 9:06 a.m.

## INVOCATION

Provided by Lt. Governor Regina Antone

## ROLL CALL

Council Secretary Shannon White called the roll

Executive Officers Present:

Governor Stephen R. Lewis

Lt. Governor Regina Antone

Council Members Present:

D1- Duane Jackson, Jr.; D2- Ann Lucas; D3- Joseph Manuel, Jr., Kristina Morago; D4- Leah Williams, Amy Morago, Nada Celaya, Alicia Ochoa; D5- James De La Rosa, Verna Sunna, Donovan Kyitan, Gordon Santos, Jr.; D6- Anthony Villareal, Sr., Charles Goldtooth, Terrance Evans; D7- Jeanette Blasingim

Council Members Absent:

D1- Joey Whitman (Personal)

## APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION MADE AND SECOND TO REMOVE RESOLUTION #5 FROM THE CONSENT AGENDA; ACCEPT REPORTS #1, #2, #3, #4; ACCEPT AND APPROVE RESOLUTIONS #2, #3, AND #4 ON THE CONSENT AGENDA

MOTION MADE AND SECOND TO APPROVE THE REGULAR AGENDA AS AMENDED

## PRESENTATIONS/INTRODUCTIONS REPORTS

>1. 2nd Quarter Budget Report for American Legion Haskell Osife Antone Post 51

Presenters: Gary Rodriguez

ACCEPTED AT APPROVAL OF AGENDA

>2. FY 2026 1st Half Report Ira H. Hayes American Legion Post 84

Presenters: Luis Federico, Bill Dixon

ACCEPTED AT APPROVAL OF AGENDA

>3. FY 2026 1st Half Report Ira H. Hayes American Legion Auxiliary Unit 84

Presenter: Carletta McDaniel

ACCEPTED AT APPROVAL OF AGENDA

>4. Gila River Health Care Tobacco Tax Grant FY26 Second Quarter Report (Jan. 1, 2026 – March 31, 2026)

Presenters: GRHC Board of Directors, Deborah Tinsley, Executive Leadership Team

ACCEPTED AT APPROVAL OF AGENDA

5. Gila River Health Care Annual Report (4/1/2025-3/31/2026)

Presenters: GRHC Board of Directors, Executive Leadership Team

REPORT HEARD

MOTION MADE AND SECOND TO ACCEPT REPORTS #6, #7, #8, AND #9

6. Gila River Gaming Commission Department Report to the Community Council April 2026 (Executive Session)

Presenters: Gila River Gaming Commission, Jerry Higgins

ACCEPTED

7. Gila River Gaming Enterprises, Inc. Monthly Report April 2026 (Executive Session)

Presenters: Kenneth Manuel, Dominic Orozco, Blake Katsnelson, Tony DeMark, Majdi Kayyali, Interim Oversight & Planning Committee

ACCEPTED

8. Schedule of Investments April 30, 2026 (Executive Session)

Presenter: Treasurer Gary T. Mix

ACCEPTED

9. Financial Activity Report – May 31, 2026 (Executive Session)

Presenter: Treasurer Gary T. Mix

ACCEPTED

## RESOLUTIONS

1.A Resolution Approving And Authorizing Amendment #5 To The March 29, 2019 Agreement Between The Gila River Indian Community And UBS Institutional Consulting Program, An Investment Advisory Services Of UBS Financial Services, Inc. (G&MSC forwards to Council with a recommendation for approval)

Presenter: Treasurer Gary T. Mix

APPROVED

>2.A Resolution Approving An Authorizing Funding Between The City Of Phoenix And The Gila River Indian Community For Fixed-Route Transit Services For Fiscal Year 2026-2027 (G&MSC forwards to Council with a recommendation for approval and placement on the consent agenda)

Presenter: Steven Johnson

ACCEPTED AND APPROVED AT APPROVAL OF AGENDA

>3.A Resolution Approving And Authorizing The Transit Services The Gila River Indian Community And The

Regional Public Transportation Authority Providing For Fixed-Route Transit Services (G&MSC forwards to Council with a recommendation for approval and placement on the consent agenda)

Presenter: Steven Johnson

ACCEPTED AND APPROVED AT APPROVAL OF AGENDA

>4.A Resolution Of Consent To Grant A Temporary Special Event Liquor License To Active Family Development Foundation For Use At The Rawhide Event Center And Sonoran Lawn On August 29, 2026 (G&MSC forwards to Council with a recommendation for approval and placement on the consent agenda)

Presenters: Kaleb Lester, Bartley Harris

ACCEPTED AND APPROVED AT APPROVAL OF AGENDA

[REMOVED FROM THE CONSENT AGENDA]

>5.A Resolution Renaming The Gila River Gaming Enterprises, Inc. Interim Oversight And Planning Committee As The Oversight And Planning Committee (Executive Session) (G&MSC forwards to Council with a recommendation for approval and placement on the consent agenda; EDSC concurs)

Presenters: Kenneth Manuel, Dominic Orozco

APPROVED

6. A Resolution Approving The Removal Of Ryan Martinez AKA Ryan Allison From The Gila River Indian Community (LSC forwards to Council with a recommendation for approval)

Presenter: Sara Duenez

APPROVED

## ORDINANCES

### UNFINISHED BUSINESS

### NEW BUSINESS

1. Notice of Litigation Team Vacancy and Recommendation for Appointment (G&MSC forwards to Council under New Business with a recommendation to appoint Councilwoman Jeanette Blasingim)

Presenters: Javier Ramos, Michael Carter

MOTION MADE AND SECOND TO APPOINT COUNCILWOMAN JEANETTE BLASINGIM TO THE LITIGATION TEAM

2. Letter – Interim Oversight & Planning Committee Declaration of Vacancy (G&MSC forwards to Council under New Business to declare the (1) Council Seat Vacancy and appoint at the next Council meeting)

Presenters: Kenneth Manuel, Interim Oversight & Planning Committee

MOTION MADE AND SECOND TO DECLARE ONE (1) VACANCY ON THE INTERIM OVERSIGHT & PLANNING

COMMITTEE AND APPOINT AT THE NEXT MEETING

3. State Bar of Arizona Award (G&MSC forwards to Council under New Business for any interested Council member to attend utilizing Dues & Delegations)

Presenter: Michael Carter

MOTION MADE AND SECOND TO ALLOW ANY INTERESTED COUNCIL MEMBER TO ATTEND UTILIZING DUES & DELEGATIONS

4. Process for Request for Proposals (Executive Session) (G&MSC forwards to Council under New Business with a recommendation of approval and to direct the Office of General Counsel and the Procurement Department to issue an RFP for federal lobbying services, to be issued for 30 days, and in a form substantially similar to the version presented)

Presenters: Javier G. Ramos; Michael Carter

MOTION MADE AND SECOND TO AND TO DIRECT THE OFFICE OF GENERAL COUNSEL AND THE PROCUREMENT DEPARTMENT TO ISSUE AN RFP FOR FEDERAL LOBBYING SERVICES, TO BE ISSUED FOR 30 DAYS, AND IN A FORM SUBSTANTIALLY SIMILAR TO THE VERSION PRESENTED

5. A Motion to authorize PLFC to submit the proposed ranked tracts for GRIC Recommendation of Opportunity Zones 2.0 to the Arizona Commerce Authority and forward to Council for their consideration (EDSC motions to authorize PLFC to submit the proposed ranked tracts for GRIC Recommendation of Opportunity Zones 2.0 to the Arizona Commerce Authority and forwards to Council with recommendation for approval)

Presenters: Teresa L. Mandelin, John M. Martin  
MOTION MADE AND SECOND TO AUTHORIZE PLFC TO SUBMIT THE PROPOSED RANKED TRACTS FOR GRIC RECOMMENDATION OF OPPORTUNITY ZONES 2.0 TO THE ARIZONA COMMERCE AUTHORITY

## MINUTES

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

- A SPECIAL EDUCATION STANDING COMMITTEE WILL BE HELD ON THURSDAY, JUNE 18, 2026 AT 9:00 A.M. REGARDING SEMI-ANNUAL REPORTS

- A SPECIAL HEALTH & SOCIAL STANDING COMMITTEE WILL BE HELD ON FRIDAY, JUNE 19, 2026 AT 9:00 A.M. REGARDING SEMI-ANNUAL REPORTS

## ADJOURNMENT

MEETING ADJOURNED AT 10:14 A.M.

\* Denotes TABLED from previous meeting(s)

> Denotes a CONSENT AGENDA ITEM

**PBS KIDS**

**MOLLY OF DENALI**

June 2 - August 30, 2026

**An Alaskan Adventure**

The acclaimed PBS KIDS® series produced by GBH Kids and Atomic Cartoons in association with CBC Kids, MOLLY OF DENALI®, is brought to life in the Heard Museum's newest cultural experience!

Learn about Alaska and Molly's life in both the summer and winter seasons as you:

- pretend to fly a replica bush plane
- drive a snow machine
- navigate a snow maze in snowshoes
- visit the Trading Post and Tribal Hall
- explore the great outdoors of Alaska and Alaska Native life
- play an ice fishing simulation game
- care for plush sled dogs

**heard museum**

# MOLLY OF DENALI Comes to Life at Heard Museum

The Heard Museum's latest cultural experience gives families the opportunity to step inside the world of MOLLY OF DENALI, the popular series based in the fictional Alaskan village of Qyah. The exhibit is like stepping into an episode—full of curiosity, community and the everyday adventures that shape Molly Mabray's life.

It is rooted in Alaska Native values, traditions and language, and allows visitors to see Alaska through Molly's eyes, with wonder, humor and great respect for the land. Guests can step into a replica bush plane and imagine flying over snowy mountains, jump on a snow machine or shuffle through a snow maze in snowshoes. Each of the activities has a playful

feel to it and yet subtly teaches how people in rural Alaska get around in their world.

The Trading Post and Tribal Hall are the heart of the exhibit, recreating scenes from the show that will be familiar to fans. Families can pitch a tent, try their hand at ice fishing, marvel at shimmering replica ice sculptures, or learn the care of sled dogs—echoing the everyday rhythms of Molly's community.

This is more than an exhibit, it is a celebration of culture, of storytelling and of connection. Visitors enter Molly's world to see up close what life is like as an Alaska Native and the values that guide it: curiosity, respect and the joy of exploring the outdoors.



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**2022 Ram 1500 Big Horn**



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- 2025 Nissan Altima 27/38 mpg
- 2023 Nissan Murano 20/28 mpg
- 2023 Ford F-150 4x4 EcoBoost
- 2023 Chevy Malibu 27/31 mpg
- 2023 Chrysler Pacifica 19/31 mpg
- 2016 Hyundai Tucson 25/30 mpg
- 2017 Ford Explorer 19/27 mpg
- 2025 Chevy Trax 28/32 mpg
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- 2021 Chrysler 300 19/30 mpg
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### Crisis Support Specialist

Provides crisis counseling to patients during evenings, weekends, and holidays. Works to prevent violence, suicide, and other crises in this role and collaborates with patients and families to develop safety plans.

#### Required Qualifications:

- Master's Degree in Social Work, Counseling or related field
- Associate Licensure in good standing with the Arizona Board of Behavioral Health Examiners required (LAC, LASAC, LMSW, LAMFT), Independent Licensure preferred (LPC, LIAC, LCSW, LMFT)
- Experience with the Native American population preferred
- Arizona Department of Public Safety Level 1 Fingerprint Clearance Card required
- Current and continuing CPR/FA and/or BLS training and certification required
- State of Arizona driver's license with no significant violations during the last 5 years
- Demonstrates ability to relate to diverse cultures and specifically the Gila River Community and/or other Native American cultures and community health services



## News, Information, and Events

Visit our News, Information, and Events page to see the latest classes and special events at Gila River Health Care.

SCAN ME



## July Health Update Newsletter

Download this month's issue for articles on Summer and Pets, Grilling Safety, National Self-Care Day, and more!

SCAN ME



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Gila River Indian Community CRISIS HOTLINE: 1-800-259-3449