



## Gila River Resorts & Casinos CIO honored with 2026 Matriarchs of Indian Gaming Award

**Emma Hughes**  
Gila River Indian News

SAN DIEGO, Calif. — Robin Villareal, Chief Information Officer at Gila River Resorts & Casinos (GRRC), has been recognized as one of the Indian Gaming Association’s 2026 Matriarchs of Indian Gaming.

The Matriarchs of Indian Gaming award, established by the late Ernie Stevens, Jr., former chairman of the Indian Gaming Association, honors Native women whose leadership and dedication have strengthened tribal government gaming and supported tribal sovereignty.

“It’s a beautiful honor. I’m extremely humbled,” said Villareal. “There aren’t many of us [Native female CIOs], and I would like that narrative to change.”

The 2026 Matriarchs of Indian Gaming were recognized at a special ceremony during the In-

dian Gaming Tradeshow & Convention in San Diego, Calif., on April 2.

“It is with great pride and admiration that we recognize Robin Villareal, Chief Information Officer, on receiving the prestigious Matriarch of Indian Gaming award from the Indian Gaming Association,” said GRRC’s Chief Executive Officer Kenneth Manuel.

“Robin’s journey with Gila River Resorts & Casinos is a remarkable testament to dedication, resilience, and visionary leadership. Beginning her career in 1995 in food & beverage, she has steadily risen through the organization, exemplifying a commitment to excellence at every stage. Her progression to CIO reflects not only her deep expertise but also her ability to adapt, innovate, and lead in an ever-evolving industry.”

Manuel added, “Throughout



Gila River Resorts & Casinos Chief Information Officer Robin Villareal (center) receives 2026 Matriarchs of Indian Gaming Award during the Indian Gaming Tradeshow & Convention in San Diego on April 2. Photo courtesy of Robin Villareal

her tenure, Robin has played a pivotal role in advancing technology initiatives that strengthen operations, enhance guest expe-

riences, and position the Enterprise for long-term success. More importantly, she served as a role model and mentor, inspiring oth-

ers through her integrity and unwavering commitment to the Gila

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## Skyline Lady Mustangs Captured Their Second Flag Football Championship



The Skyline Gila River Mustangs bring home another flag football championship trophy. Jeston Morris/GRIN

**Jeston Morris**  
Gila River Indian News

PHOENIX, Ariz. — Skyline Gila River Mustangs defeated Flagstaff Christian School Warriors to capture their second flag football championship in three years at 91st Psalm Christian School Ranney Field on May 2. Fans pack the field and cheer on their team. Three Mustangs seniors—

Jayne, Kameryne, and Natalie—played their final game.

Indica, the quarterback, had a significant impact on winning the championship. She threw several long passes to the receivers to score touchdowns. Jazmyne caught a long pass, and the fans erupted in cheers. It

*Continued on Page 5*

## Ba’ban Secures Second Placed at Senior Chair Volleyball Championship



Team Ba’ban from Gila River Indian Community District 1 pose with their second-place chair volleyball trophy. Jeston Morris/GRIN

Thirty-two teams gather in Scottsdale for the annual Ske:gHimdag tournament,

celebrating elder athleticism and community.

**Jeston Morris**  
Gila River Indian News

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. — 32 teams competed in the Ske:g Himdag Senior Chair Volleyball Tournament at Salt River Community Building on May 1. Among the competitors were three Gila River teams: Ba’ban, JuJudum, and Gila River O’odham. —played in the two-day

*Continued on Page 8*

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Gary Mix, Community Treasurer  
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Community Council Secretary

Gila River Indian News

**Miguel Sallard**

Miguel.Sallard@gric.nsn.us  
Managing Editor  
Acting CPAO Director  
(520) 562-9719

**Emma Hughes**

Emma.Hughes@gric.nsn.us  
Community Newsperson  
(520) 562-9852

**Jeston Morris**

Jeston.Morris@gric.nsn.us  
Community Newsperson  
(520) 562-9718

**For more information**

GRIN@gric.nsn.us  
(520) 562-9715

Write to:  
**Editor, GRIN**  
P.O. Box 459  
Sacaton, AZ 85147

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**Gila River Indian Community**  
P.O. Box 459  
Sacaton, AZ 85147  
(520) 562-9715  
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# 2026-2027 Gila River Royalty Court Introduction to Community Council



The 2026–2027 Gila River Royalty Court was officially introduced during the Community Council meeting on May 20. Members of the Royalty Court, including Miss Gila River Eliana Rhodes, Jr. Miss Gila River Aubrey Gaitan, 1st Attendant Jr. Miss Gila River Ivory Soke, and 2nd Attendant Jr. Miss Gila River Julia Parra, each had the opportunity to introduce themselves to Community Council and meeting attendees. Community Council members congratulated the Royalty Court and shared words of encouragement as they begin their journey representing the Gila River Indian Community. Following the introductions, Council took a short break to celebrate the newly crowned royalty court and enjoy cake with attendees. Emma Hughes/GRIN

## From the Front Page

River Indian Community and Gaming Enterprise.”

Villareal, a Gila River Indian Community member from District 6, is the first woman to hold the chief information officer role at GRRC, where she began her career as a summer job in the food and beverage department. She then transitioned into a secretary position, where she learned of an opening in the information technology department and was encouraged to apply, working as a help desk technician.

At first, she felt like she didn't qualify, but as it turns out, she knew more about computers than she thought she did. She transitioned into the new position and learned more about how to build and fix computers, and through hard work and perseverance, she moved up in her career. Throughout the years, she's remained dedicated not just to her job but especially to her community.

“For me, this is our future for our community. This is going to last us for generations to come; I want to be part of that,” she said.

Villareal credits the many people who have supported her and helped her succeed, especially the women in her life who led by

example.

“I was very fortunate to have grandmothers who showed me what it's like to be a leader,” she said. “They're really the foundation.”

While this award marks a significant professional milestone, Villareal says the most meaningful impact of her career has been personal. As her expertise grew, so did the demand for insight.

She was featured on panels with G2E, a global gaming industry trade show presented by the American Gaming Association, and WEWIN (Women Empowering Women for Indian Nations), a national conference committed to strengthening tribal cultures and uplifting sovereign leadership.

“I never thought in a million years I would ever speak at a global gaming conference, and there I was, speaking on cybersecurity,” she said. Through these experiences, she discovered a new sense of confidence.

“I want to represent the casino and our community; that's always been my driver, representing our community in the best light,” said Villareal. “I'm just doing my job, and I would like to do it in the best way to support us, to elevate us, to make us innovative. That's why I like doing what I do.”

Now, she regularly participates in pan-

els and outreach events aimed at encouraging others to explore careers in IT, sharing her story and the accomplishments of GRRC and the Community.

“This well-deserved recognition celebrates not just her professional achievements, but also her impact as a leader and trailblazer in Indian Gaming. We are honored to have Robin as part of our organization and congratulate her on this outstanding accomplishment,” Manuel said.

Additional awardees for the 2026 Matriarchs of Indian Gaming include A. Gay Kingman, executive director for the Great Plains Tribal Chairman's Association; Elizabeth Lohah Homer, founder of Homer Law; Janie Dillard, chief executive of Choctaw Global; Pam Shaw, United Women of Tribal Gaming; Osage Nation Congressional Speaker; and Erica Pinto, chairwoman of Jamual Indian Village.

“As we celebrate the success of Indian gaming, it is especially important that we recognize the women who helped build this industry and continue to lead it today,” said current IGA Chairman David Z. Bean. “Their stories are not only a reflection of where we have been but also a roadmap for where we are going.”

# 2026 MMIP Awareness Day Event at the State Capitol

Emma Hughes  
Gila River Indian News

PHOENIX, Ariz. — In honor of Missing and Murdered Indigenous People Awareness Day, a local community-led event was held at the State Capitol's Wesley Bolin Plaza on May 5. Several people and advocates from tribal communities came together for the event that featured guest speakers, cultural performances, and informational booths.

Gov. Stephen Roe Lewis, Miss Gila River Eliana Rhodes, and Jr. Miss Gila River Aubrey Gaitan were among those representing the Gila River Indian Community. 'Safety is Sacred: Strength in Community' was this year's theme for the event and Dr. Robert Ornelas (Yaqui) served as the master of ceremony.

"It's a beautiful thing to see our community come together through hard times," said Rhodes. "This



Gila River Royalty visit informational booths during the event. Emma Hughes/GRIN

is a very hard topic; it's a beautiful thing that we're coming together as an Indigenous community and letting each other know that we're not alone and that we're all here for one another."

Gaitan also echoed the importance of solidarity. "Coming together, seeing everybody join hands and making our voices louder is so beautiful," Gaitan said. "Although many of our people have gone missing, it's beautiful to see that all of us can come out here and show our voices, be loud

for them."

Arizona's Deputy Director of Tribal Affairs Angela Willeford shared a proclamation on behalf of Arizona Governor Katie Hobbs designating May 5 as MMIP Awareness Day.

"We honor the lives lost and the families seeking answers. For too long, this crisis has been met with silence. We stand with Tribal nations to deliver justice, strengthen safety, and ensure no one is forgotten," said Hobbs in a statement.

"We have to do better," said Gov. Lewis. "Arizona ranks second with MMIP situations and numbers, across Indian Country, across the United States and that's just with the information that we have; we don't know for sure."

The event concluded with a march around the plaza, serving as a powerful reminder of unity and advocacy.



Attendees march along the Wesley Bolin Plaza. Emma Hughes/GRIN

# Interior Department Launches New Task Force to Combat Violent Crime in Indian Country

PRESS RELEASE  
U.S. Department of Interior

WASHINGTON — The Department of the Interior is launching a new Indian Country Violent Crime Task Force to strengthen law enforcement coordination, protect families in tribal communities, and crack down on violent crime and drug activity.

The Secretary's Order titled "Honoring Our Commitment to Protecting Indian Country Communities" builds on the first Trump administration's work to bring national attention and resources to the Missing and Murdered Indigenous People crisis, which included Operation Lady Justice. The new task force expands that work with a broader focus on violent crime prevention, investigations and public safety across Indian Country.

"Protecting communities in Indian Country is central to our trust responsibility, and under President Trump's leadership, we are taking a zero-tolerance approach to violent crime, drug trafficking and those who prey on vulnerable populations," said Secretary of the Interior Doug Burgum. "This order builds on the strong foundation of Operation Lady Justice and the Bureau of Indian Affairs Missing and Murdered Unit, delivering decisive action to restore law and order, strengthen tribal sovereignty and equip tribal law enforcement with the tools they need to protect their communities. We are committed to ensuring every family can live in safety and security."

The Secretary's Order directs the Bureau of Indian Affairs Office of Justice Services to lead a coordinated effort with federal, tribal and state partners. It also strengthens criminal investigations, increases deployments of mobile enforcement teams, enhances opioid enforcement efforts and establishes a new unit focused on crimes against children.

"This task force reinforces President Trump's tough-on-crime approach and Interior's efforts to bring justice, accountability and closure to families impacted by violence in Indian Country," said Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs Billy Kirkland. "By working closely with tribal communities, federal law enforcement and local partners, we are honoring victims, strengthening public safety, and helping prevent future crime by improving coordination, early intervention and community-based protection initiatives."

The order realigns federal investigative resources to improve case management and prosecution outcomes, while refocusing efforts on solving missing persons and homicide cases. A new Predatory Crimes Unit will target offenders who exploit children, and expanded training programs will help grow the law enforcement workforce serving tribal communities.

In addition, the department will use data-driven strategies to identify high-crime areas and deploy resources where they are needed most, working directly with tribal leaders to develop solutions tailored to their communities.

This effort continues to build on the Trump administration's efforts across the federal government to improve public safety in Indian Country.

May 5 is Missing and Murdered Indigenous Peoples Day. The Bureau of Indian Affairs's Missing and Murdered Unit works tirelessly to analyze and ultimately solve missing, murdered and human trafficking cases involving American Indians and Alaska Natives. Investigators and other specialists leverage tribal, federal, state and local law enforcement agencies and other stakeholders to enhance the criminal justice system and address the legitimate concerns of Native communities regarding missing and murdered people — specifically missing and murdered indigenous women and girls.

# May 5th Community MMIP Walk



Gila River Indian Community's Victim Services Department hosted the Missing and Murdered Indigenous People (MMIP) Awareness Day walk on May 5, at the Governance Center in Sacaton. Members of the Community, families, and employees joined together to honor and remember the lives of relatives impacted by the MMIP crisis. Miguel Sallard/GRIN

GRIC TRIBAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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**Skyline Flag Football Cont.**

gave the Mustangs a boost of confidence. They score in the next play. Jayne, center, delivered flawless snaps to the Indica on a consistent basis.

The Mustangs defense played a crucial role by stopping the Warriors from scoring. They capitalized on interception. Lucy caught an interception, and the Mustangs scored a touchdown. Natalie consistently stopped opposing players from advancing the ball. All the players made significant contributions in the game. The coaches led the Mustangs to a championship win.

Earlier that morning, the Skyline Gila River Mustangs played the Sequoia Charter School Stallions at NFL YET Academy Bill Bidwill Field. They dominated the semifinal game and advanced to the championship. The players and coaches reflected on the championship game.

“We did really good as a team. I liked the way we played. We all worked together very well,” said Kameryne.

“I am proud of my team for winning another championship. The players worked hard the entire season. They deserve this championship,” said Jayne.

“Winning the flag football championship is awesome. I want to give a shout-out to my team, quarterback, and coaches,” said Lexis.

“To get back to the championship and dominate the game from start to finish is great. Our girls truly believed in what they were doing. It’s the best feeling the players can have. I couldn’t do it without my players and coaches. We started the flag football program three years ago and won a championship that year. Our three senior players are going out with a bang by winning the second champi-

onship,” said Coach Turner.

“It was an overall team win. Our girls came out prepared to play. We took care of business and put the points on the board. This is the second championship for the Skyline Gila River Mustangs. This is my first state championship. I couldn’t be prouder of these girls,” said Coach Joe.

“Last year, we made it to the championship, but we lost. Our girls trained hard, and they made it back to the championship game. Lady Mustangs had a great year, 9-1. We lost to the Warriors earlier in the season. Our girls did an outstanding job capturing their second championship victory,” said Coach Taylor.

“This is a great win, especially to come back and avenge the loss from the last state championship. The Mustangs players stood up at the right time and made a lot of good plays. They stayed together as a team,” said Eddie Stoaks, assistant defense coach.

“It was a wonderful championship game. All the ladies trained hard. They played as a team. I am sad to see the seniors go. They’re graduating. Kudos to coaches for training and mentoring the players,” said Ardesa Gilder, food service director.

“I am super proud of the girls and the coaching staff. They fought hard. They came in with a mindset—we’re going to win. And that’s what they did,” said Coach Martin.

“We had a phenomenal year. We are a young team. We came into the state championship. We have played this team before. We had a close game with them earlier in the season. The championship game was a big learning point for our girls,” said Levi Daulton, head coach for the Flagstaff Christian School Warriors.



Jazmyne weaves pass defenders to advance the ball down field. Jeston Morris/GRIN



Indica is scanning the field for a touchdown pass. Jeston Morris/GRIN



Velocity and power: Kameryne Marion playing on her last game leaves two defenders in the dust. Jeston Morris/GRIN

## GRIC Member Competes in Ms. Indigenous ASU Pageant

**Emma Hughes**  
Gila River Indian News

TEMPE, Ariz. — Evelyn “Evie” Enos from District 4 of the Gila River Indian Community was recently named Ms. Indigenous ASU 1st Attendant. The coronation took place during the ASU Pow Wow on April 18 at the Desert Financial Arena.

10 contestants competed for the titles of Mr. and Ms. Indigenous ASU at the 47th annual pageant on April 17 at the ASU Desert Arboretum. The event included formal introductions, both professional and traditional attire, and a talent segment.

At the coronation, Candice Joe (Navajo) was announced as 2026-2027 Ms. Indigenous ASU, with Enos honored as 1st Attendant. Zach Ander Thomas (Navajo) received the title of 2026-2027 Mr. Indigenous ASU, and Wyndell Slim (Navajo) was named 1st Attendant.

Mr. and Ms. Indigenous ASU, along with their attendants, act as ambassadors for American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian students at ASU.



**Evelyn Enos is sashed as Ms. Indigenous ASU 1st Attendant during the coronation on April 18.** Photo Courtesy of Sherrie Logg Photography

They represent the university at cultural events on campus and across Indian Country.

Reflecting on the honor, Enos said, “I am so proud to represent my community at the collegiate lev-

el and at an institution on ancestral O’odham jeved. I hope to give back to my community in meaningful and lasting ways.”

Enos is the daughter of Anika Evans and Barney Enos. She attends ASU,



**Evelyn Enos performs a song by Billie Holiday for her talent portion.** Photo Courtesy of Charlie Leight/ASU News

where she majors in biological sciences and minors in American Indian studies and psychology.

“Being crowned as 1st attendant to our Ms. Indigenous ASU 2026-2027 Candice Joe is such an honor,” Enos said. “The amount of joy I felt being in the powwow arena with all of our contestants; I felt like I was surrounded by love and light.”

Enos received her sash from the outgoing 1st Attendant, Kaitlyn Yazzie (Navajo). “She was a big help in our preparation for the pageant, and I was happy to get to know her more, not even knowing that I’d be filling her shoes.”

She added, “I sometimes go back and forth of thinking that it was just by chance that I got this posi-

tion, but I have to remind myself that I also worked hard to be here and to not discredit my own work.”

Enos first wanted to run for Ms. Indigenous ASU as a freshman. She saw it as a way to connect with the Native community at ASU and to step out of her comfort zone.

Her platform focuses on empowering Native youth and encouraging them to reach their goals through community action and collaboration. She said the court is excited to organize events such as food drives, community gatherings, and garden-based activities that help revitalize tradition and bring Indigenous people together.

For the modern talent portion of the pageant, Enos performed “Summer-

time” by jazz singer Billie Holiday. She chose this song to honor the legacy of women in music and jazz trombonist and fellow GRIC member Russell “Big Chief” Moore.

“I learned so much about the work and resilience behind these artists. It made me very proud to sing in their honor,” she said.

For her traditional talent, she sang the O’odham song “Whodonig ñei.” She explained that it tells the story of a singer who dreams that, in the evening, the songs begin to rise from the ground like water. “This song is very special to me as it reminds me of the smoke that rises from the fire when we would have cu:dk at Aji mountain and dance under the stars.”

## The Success of Adult Education in Gila River

**Submitted By**  
Raven Lewis

The FACE (Family and Child Education) National Training Event, held April 21–23 in Oklahoma, brought together FACE programs from across the nation. This annual event provides an opportunity for collaboration, professional development, and the sharing of best practices to better serve Indigenous communities.

On Thursday, April 23rd, at the Oklahoma National Training Event, the Gila Crossing FACE Program was honored with the Adult Education Site of the Year award, recognizing the program’s outstanding service and impact.

As part of this recognition, Ms. Amiee Mestaz was acknowledged for her long-standing service as Adult Education Teacher and Coordinator. Throughout her 21 years of dedication, Ms. Mestaz has demonstrated a remarkable commitment to supporting families and strengthening the community through her hard work.

Her professionalism, compassion, and leadership have made a lasting impact on her students. Whether



**Gila Crossing’s FACE Program receives Adult Education Site of the Year Award and Ms. Amiee Mestaz, Adult Education Teacher and Coordinator is recognized for her service during the FACE National Training Event.** Photo Courtesy of Tamara Guerra

guiding individuals through GED preparation or supporting their pursuit of higher education, she consistently promotes a positive, empowering learning environment. Students often commend her for her encouragement, expertise, and unwavering support.

The Gila Crossing

FACE Program expressed its appreciation to Ms. Mestaz for her continued dedication, hard work, and commitment to supporting students and families of Gila River, as well as for the lasting and positive difference she makes in the lives of those she serves.

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# ★ VETERANS ★ ANNOUNCEMENTS

## Southern Arizona VA Health Care System receive top marks in 2026 CMS report

TUCSON, ARIZONA — Southern Arizona VA Health Care System (SAVAHCS) announced today that it received a 5-star rating in the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services’ annual Overall Hospital Quality Star Rating report. An improvement from the 4-star rating received the SAVAHCS received last year.

CMS’ Overall Hospital Quality Star Ratings are based on five categories: mortality, safety of care, readmission, patient experience, and timely and effective care. A higher star rating, out of five, indicates better performance along these quality measures.

“Receiving a 5-star rating from CMS is a reflection of the dedication our entire team brings to caring for Veterans every day,” said Dr. Leslie Lockridge, director of the SAVAHCS. “This rating underscores our commitment to delivering safe, timely and high-quality care, and we are proud to contribute to VA’s continued nationwide excellence.”

Nationwide, 78% of VA hospitals that received a rating received an Overall Hospital Quality Star Rating of four or five stars in 2026.

This is the fourth consecutive year that VA has outperformed non-VA care, and the second year in a row that no VA hospital received a one-star rating. The percentage of VA hospitals receiving four or five stars has grown dramatically in the last two years:

- 2023, 67%
- 2024, 58%
- 2025, 77%

- 2026, 78%

View the star ratings for each facility and methodology for the ratings.

For more information, please contact Luke Johnson at Luke.Johnson6@va.gov or (520) 792-1450, extension 1-6554 or visit [www.va.gov/southern-arizona-health-care](http://www.va.gov/southern-arizona-health-care).

This year’s CMS report is just one example of how VA is working better for Veterans. Among other improvements, VA has:

- Enrolled more than 125,000 new Veterans in VA health care in 2026.
- Opened 35 new VA health care facilities since Jan. 20, 2025, expanding health care access for Veterans around the country.
- Reduced the backlog of Veterans waiting for VA benefits by 70% since Jan. 20, 2025, after it increased 24% during the prior administration.
- Completed 82,083,918 direct care appointments in FY2025, up 4.1% from FY2024.
- Offered Veterans more than 2.5 million appointments outside of normal operating hours, giving Veterans more timely and convenient options for care.
- Permanently housed 51,936 homeless Veterans across the country in FY2025, the highest total in seven years.

Memorial Day is a day of remembrance to honor the brave men and women who have made the ultimate sacrifice in military service to our country. It is a poignant time to reflect on the sacrifices of our fallen heroes and to pay tribute to their legacy of courage, dedication, and selflessness.

This year marks the 250th birthday of America. In conjunction with this celebration, the VA National Cemetery Administration is collaborating with Carry the Load, the Travis Manion Foundation and Victory for Veterans to host events that honor and remember our nation’s Veterans. As we mark the 250th birthday of our nation’s founding, the sacrifices of these heroes remind us that liberty is never free and must be cherished and protected by every generation.

### ABOUT THE NATIONAL CEMETERY ADMINISTRATION:

Burial in a VA national cemetery is open to all members of the armed forces and Veterans who have met minimum active-duty service requirements, as applicable by law, and were discharged under conditions other than dishonorable. Members of the reserve components of the armed forces who die while on active duty under certain circumstances or who die while on training duty are also eligible for burial, as are service members and former service members who were eligible for retired pay at the time of their death. Spouses, minor children and, under certain conditions, dependent unmarried adult children are also eligible for burial even if they predecease the Veteran.

VA offers a new way to pay tribute to Veterans on the Veterans Legacy Memorial (VLM) website. The site, launched in 2019, contains a memorial page for each Veteran and service member interred in a VA national cemetery. The online tribute allows visitors to voice memories and appreciation for a Veteran’s service. All comments will be reviewed for appropriateness prior to being posted.



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## CARING FOR YOUR CULTURAL MEMORIES

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Family photos and are not sure how to store them?

Collections staff will give behind-the-scenes insight into the world of museum object storage and share knowledge on how you can care for your own collection of cherished family belongings at home.

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- SAT. 04/18 District 7 Service Center 1pm-2:30pm
- SAT. 06/13 District 5 Service Center 1pm-2:30pm
- SAT. 07/18 District 2 Service Center 1pm-2:30pm



**HUHUGAM HERITAGE CENTER**  
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Class of

# 2026

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Submit:  
June 19, 2026

## RECOGNIZING THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF 2026 GRIC GRADUATES

Congratulations On Your Achievement In Education!

Be on the lookout for a GRIN Special Edition recognizing all of the students who have graduated, promoted, or gained a certificate.

If you haven't received a 2026 Graduate Information Form, contact the Tribal Education Department or the GRIN so we can highlight your accomplishment in the upcoming Special Edition.

- Preschool to Kindergarten
- Kindergarten To First Grade
- 8th Grade to High School
- High School or GED
- College, University, Trade School, or Post High School Programs

Contact information: [grin@gric.nsn.us](mailto:grin@gric.nsn.us) or the Tribal Education Department 520-562-3662 / Email: [TEDEvents@gric.nsn.us](mailto:TEDEvents@gric.nsn.us)



Lynelle Blackwater hitting the volleyball in the champion game against Pala Turtle I. Jeston Morris/GRIN

### From the Front Page

tournament. Ba'ban hailing from Blackwater, advanced to the championship round.

In the championship bracket, Ba'ban defeated Pala Turtles 1 in the midday play-off. Although the Turtles 1 moved to the loser's bracket, they fought their way back to the final game. In the end, the Turtles 1 successfully defended their title for the fourth time, leaving Ba'ban with a second-place finish. Soboba 1 took third place in the double elimination tournament, which was held on the ancestral homeland of the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community.

The event drew teams from across the region. The Boston Ballers and Bosses traveled from the State of Washington, while California was represented by three Paula Turtles teams, two Soboba teams, two Morango Go Gettings teams, and Rincon Roadrunners. Participating teams from western Arizona included Fort Yuma Heat, CRIT United, and Mixed Blood.

The team captains, players, and staff reflected on the tournament.

"We work hard. We lost to team [Ba'ban] with the golden-yellow jersey earlier. We had to regroup and overcome our deficits," said Richard Lavado, team captain for Pala Turtles 1. "There's a lot of competition here. We enjoyed it."

Joyce Eddie, team captain for Ba'ban, expressed pride in her team's performance. "It was a good tournament. We beat Turtles 1 earlier today, and we end up playing them again for the championship game, and they beat us," Eddie said. "We did our best and came in second. Shout-out to my team; they did a wonderful job. We're looking forward to the Gila River tournament in July."

Participants also highlighted the health benefits of the sport. "We ran out of gas in the latter end of the tournament, but we had a lot of fun," said Joyce Placencia, a player for Soboba 1. "I like the fact that all the elders are playing. They are being active. You must stay active; otherwise you get sedentary. You don't want that."

Dennis Coohyouma, captain of the Gila River O'odham, noted the high interest in the event, mentioning that online reg-



istration filled up quickly. His team, composed of eight players from District 3, won both of their morning games.

Perry Galvan, captain of JuJudum from Gila River - District 5, shared a similar sentiment of perseverance. "We lost this morning. We won our last game, so we're still in the tournament," Galvan said, noting his six-players roster was prepared for

their next match against the Maverick.

Ske:g Himdag Senior Chair Volleyball Tournament results:

First place — Pala Turtles I (Pala Band of Mission Indians, Pala, Calif.)

Second place — Ba'ban (Gila River Indian Community, District 1, Blackwater)

Third place — Soboba I (Soboba Band of Luiseño Indians, San Jacinto, Calif.)



# 'To Be Put on a Shelf Is Not Where They Belong'

*SRPMIC relative comes home after resting for over a century in a museum in Edinburgh, Scotland*

**Submitted By**  
Chris Picciuolo  
O'odham Action News  
[chris.picciuolo@srpmic-nsn.gov](mailto:chris.picciuolo@srpmic-nsn.gov)

**Editor's Note: This article contains culturally sensitive information.**

### 3 Takeaways:

- The University of Edinburgh in Scotland has returned remains of relatives back to O'odham sibling tribes after over a century.

- An SRPMIC envoy of leaders and Tribal Historic Preservation Office staff traveled to the United Kingdom for the repatriation ceremony in April.

- Although frustration remains over why the ancestors were taken and held, SRPMIC Council member Su:k Fulwilder emphasized that the return is also part of a broader effort toward healing

Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community relatives, along with a relative from the Gila River Indian Community, has come back home to rest after over a century across the Atlantic Ocean in Edinburgh, Scotland.

Recently, the University of Edinburgh's Anatomical Museum invited representatives from the SRPMIC and the Gila River Indian Community to travel to their institution for a repatriation ceremony, as the museum wanted to return remains of O'odham ancestors kept on their premises that they believed to be from both communities.

Representatives from SRPMIC's Tribal Historic Preservation Office traveled to Scotland with Community leaders in April to bring the relatives home safely. The Tribal Historic Preservation Office operates under the Cultural Resources Department.

The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) is a federal law that provides for the protection and return of Native American human remains, funerary objects, sacred objects and objects of cultural patrimony to the tribal communities from which they came.

However, NAGPRA only applies within the United States. With no international repatriation law, Indigenous communities and countries around the world looking to repatriate their cultural artifacts and ancestral remains are usually at the mercy of an institution's voluntary return and ethical framework.

"It's just a matter of one entity, the international community, a museum and whatever tribe having an agreement," said Assistant Cultural Resources Department Director and Tribal Historic Preservation Officer Shane Anton.

Anton said that the historic preservation offices of sibling tribes often work closely together due to their proximity and relationship to each other.

According to Anton, the nonprofit Association on American Indian Affairs did much of the legwork, contacting museums throughout Europe ahead of the university's recent repatriations.

Professor Tom Gillingwater, chair of anatomy at the University of Edinburgh, shared the following statement:

"Repatriations are an important part of our efforts to address the University's historical and contemporary legacy. We work with many communities around the world to engage with our collections and to facilitate the return of remains and artifacts. Rather than being viewed as a diminishment of the University's collections,



**Representatives from the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community traveled to Edinburgh, Scotland, in April for a repatriation ceremony. The group, along with Gila River Indian Community Culture Resource Specialist Reylyne Williams, D4 Councilwoman Jennifer Allison and University of Edinburgh staff, pose for a photo outside of a university building. Those in photo from SRPMIC include Council members Jacob Butler, Mikah Carlos and Su:k Fulwilder, SRPMIC NAGPRA Coordinator Martha Martinez, Cultural Compliance Supervisor Angela Garcia and Assistant Community Manager Dawn Sinoqui. Photo courtesy of Martha Martinez.**

repatriations represent truly meaningful opportunities for us to build new relationships and deepen our understanding of our past. We are honoured to have been able to play a part in returning these ancestral remains."

The first repatriation from the University of Edinburgh was to Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka) in 1947. Since 1990, the university has had a formal policy in place to work with Indigenous communities around the world to engage with their collections and facilitate the return of ancestral remains and cultural artifacts.

This repatriation with the SRPMIC and GRIC is believed to be the second-ever international repatriation of ancestral remains to tribes in the mainland United States. The first was the return of six relatives to the Muscogee (Creek) Nation in Oklahoma, which took place during a formal ceremony in Edinburgh on Jan. 23. There has since been a third repatriation this year, to the Chickasaw Nation, according to the Anatomical Museum's website.

This was the SRPMIC's first international repatriation.

### Building a Positive Relationship

With an unprecedented opportunity for relationship-building, SRPMIC Council members were presented with an open invitation to attend the museum's April repatriation ceremony in Scotland. Mikah Carlos, Jacob Butler and Su:k Fulwilder represented Council.

Butler's understanding of pottery and other cultural items and how they're constructed was valuable in helping all parties understand some of the items in the museum's collection. He was proud to be part of the repatriation.

"We were there more as dignitaries to show that this repatriation has value and meaning to the people, and that it's the responsibility of the Community [to] bring home our ancestors," said Butler.

SRPMIC NAGPRA Coordinator Martha Martinez, Cultural Compliance Supervisor Angela Garcia and Assistant Community Manager Dawn Sinoqui were the Cultural Resources Department representatives for the Community.

"The relationship between [sibling tribes] and university representatives was refreshing because it was even more welcoming than we get sometimes in the

States," Martinez said of the Scottish university's staff.

"It was [a relief], because we don't know what's all going to happen in a whole different country, how they're going to act, how they're going to take us. But that relationship we built helped give us a good starting point to what international repatriation should look like."

This was Fulwilder's first time flying out of the country. She didn't think she would get as emotional as she did when the parties met.

"I was just realizing, [these are] our relatives, and they've been gone from our Community, our homeland, for so long," said Fulwilder.

"It's kind of weird being off the reservation and going to a whole other country, but, like, willingly. Just thinking about how our relatives were taken and stolen."

During the closing ceremony with Edinburgh university staff, Carlos had an overwhelming feeling to express. She spoke with O'odham Action News about it when she returned home.

At the ceremony, she felt, "I've been here (in Scotland) not even a full week at this point, and my yearning to go home is so strong, I can't even imagine being here for hundreds of years. A hundred years and being so far away from home," said Carlos.

Carlos said it was an honor to be able to bring these ancestors home and give them a dignified resting place. While she said the university took great care of the relatives, "to be put on a shelf is not where they belong."

### Tracing a Journey to Scotland

A pseudoscience called phrenology gained popularity in the early to mid-1800s among some individuals in Europe and the United States. The practice involved feeling the contours of a person's head, using the characteristics of an individual's skull to supposedly predict their mental traits and character. Phrenology played into racist theories of inferiority that were being spread at the time.

"The two major countries that [practiced] phrenology were Scotland and the United States," said Anton. "[The remains of] a lot of Native people were given by museums or archeologists to Scotland."

Although phrenology was founded in the late 1700s by German physician Franz

Joseph Gall, the world's first phrenological society, the Edinburgh Phrenological Society, was established in 1820. The society closed in 1886, and items in its collections were transferred to the Department of Anatomy at the University of Edinburgh.

"Phrenology was never proven. It was always disavowed," said Anton.

The university maintains that while not officially taught as an academic subject at Edinburgh, phrenology was supported by several influential figures, whose connections with the university gave it legitimacy and prestige.

And while the university believes phrenology played a role in how the relatives ended up in the museum, they maintain that the person who sent the remains to the university did so of his own accord.

We can start with a doctor born in Austria named Julius Silberstein, who worked at the Pima Agency in Sacaton for the U.S. Office of Indian Affairs during the late 1800s and early 1900s.

According to the university, Silberstein wrote to university staff in Edinburgh asking if they were interested in remains to be used for research. This is likely how the relatives ended up across the pond.

The Standard Medical Directory of North America of 1902 places Silberstein in Sacaton at that time.

To put his job into context, records found in the Carlisle Indian School Digital Resource Center dated Aug. 1, 1899, show that Silberstein was actively practicing medicine on tribal members when he signed off on medical records that cleared the transfer of eight children and young adults from the SRPMIC to the Carlisle Indian School in Carlisle, Pennsylvania.

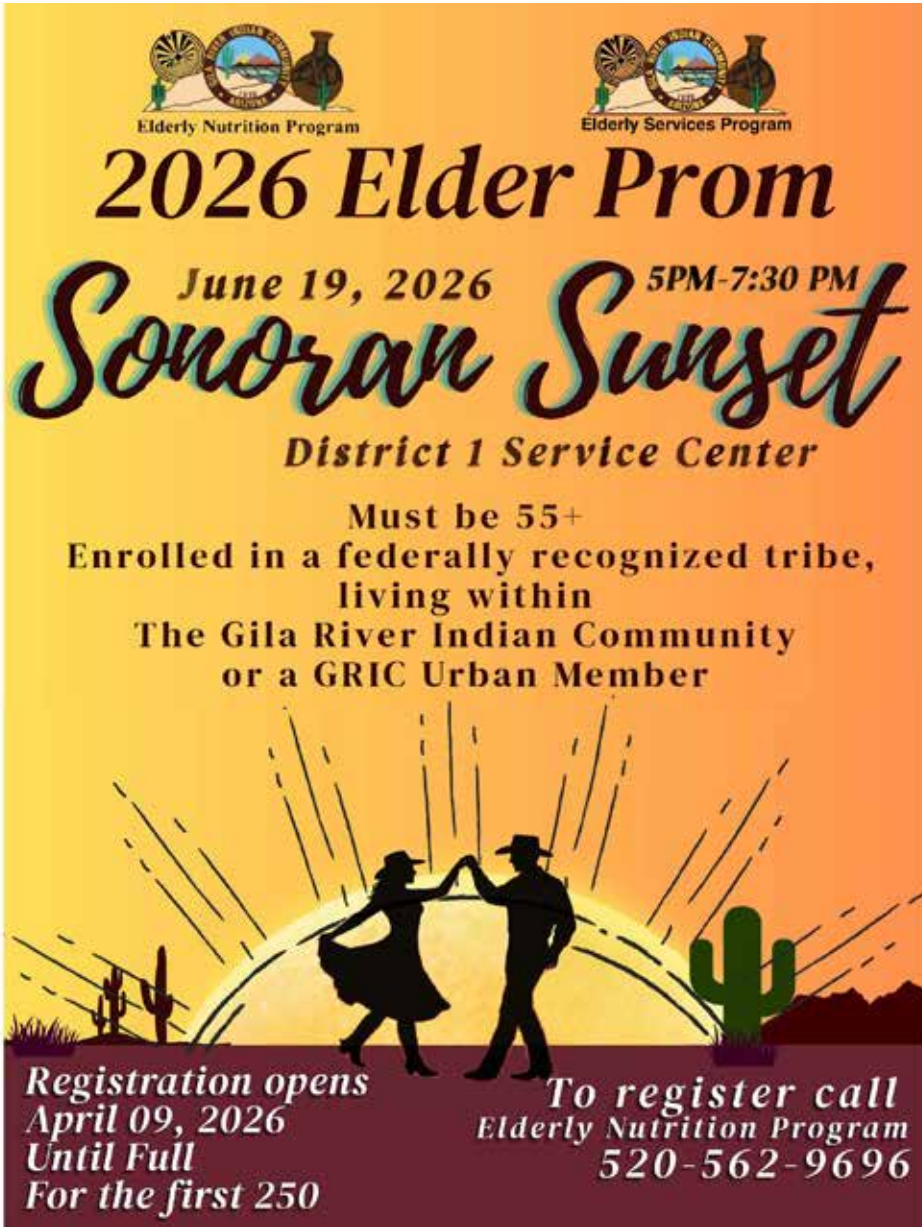
Silberstein died in Sacaton in 1913.

### Coming Home in Healing

Over a century later, the SRPMIC and GRIC are reclaiming their story and people on their own terms.

While there is a lingering feeling of frustration about the relatives being at the Edinburgh university in the first place, Fulwilder said that the repatriation was also about healing.

"We're here for a reason and not to be angry about those things, because the past is the past. We can't change how it is or what happened. But we're here to try to make it right."



**2026 Elder Prom**  
**June 19, 2026 5PM-7:30 PM**  
**Sonoran Sunset**  
 District 1 Service Center

Must be 55+  
 Enrolled in a federally recognized tribe,  
 living within  
 The Gila River Indian Community  
 or a GRIC Urban Member

Registration opens  
 April 09, 2026  
 Until Full  
 For the first 250

To register call  
 Elderly Nutrition Program  
 520-562-9696

## Tohono O’odham Nation Member Runs for State Legislature

**PRESS RELEASE**  
 Naomi Miguel

Naomi Miguel, an enrolled member of the Tohono O’odham Nation, qualified for the ballot to run for one of two seats representing Arizona’s 23rd Legislative District, which covers most of southern Arizona, including part of the U.S.–Mexico border and the Tohono O’odham Nation.

Ms. Miguel brings rare federal and Congressional experience to this race. Most recently, she served as Executive Director of the White House Initiative on Advancing Education Equity for Native Americans and Tribal Colleges and Universities under the Biden Administration, where she helped shape national tribal education policy and was featured in

USA TODAY’s inaugural Native American Heritage Month magazine. Prior to that, she served as Staff Director for the U.S. House Subcommittee on Indigenous Peoples of the United States, where she played a key role in drafting tribal provisions of the American Rescue Plan Act. A 2021 Native American 40 Under 40 honoree, she holds a B.A. in Political Science from Mount St. Mary’s University and an M.P.A. in Public Administration and Policy from American University.

Her work centers on community and incorporates O’odham values of consensus, while bringing a wealth of knowledge and experience in legislative policy, advocacy, and Indigenous leadership.

“With a deep commitment to our community, I

am announcing my candidacy for the Arizona State Legislature to represent District 23. At this pivotal moment in history, we must come together to raise our voices and vote courageously for representation at all levels of government.

My work in public service has always prioritized uplifting the voices of the people, the O’odham.”

Arizona is home to 22 tribal nations. District 23, roughly the size of Maryland, deserves representation rooted in community and grounded in real legislative experience. With the Primary Election on July 21, 2026, volunteers and donations are crucial to help build the groundwork for Miguel’s campaign.

To support or learn more, visit: [www.Miguel-ForArizona.com](http://www.Miguel-ForArizona.com)

## Jeved Construction Helps to Build Stronger Communities

**Emma Hughes**  
 Gila River Indian News

A local construction company is breaking barriers in a traditionally male-dominated field. Jeved Construction, a Native American woman-owned general contracting company, is proving that leadership and community-driven values are the foundation of success.

Jeved Construction makes an impact through quality work, cultural representation, and a commitment to stronger communities. President Molly Sanchez, an enrolled member of the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community (SRPMIC), manages the company while attending Arizona State University and raising her family.

“Everything I do is rooted in wanting to create a better future for my children and for the community that helped raise me,” Sanchez explained. “My goal has always been to contribute in a meaningful way and help support the growth and development of our tribal communities.”

She began working in her community’s Engineering and Construction Department at around 19 years old. Witnessing projects develop from the ground up sparked her curiosity and



**Jeved Construction President Molly Sanchez, a member of the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community.** Photo Courtesy of Molly Sanchez

passion for construction. “Seeing an idea turn into something real, something that people in the community will use for years to come, showed me how meaningful this work truly is,” said Sanchez.

Founded in 2022 and based in Phoenix, Jeved Construction prioritizes quality and strong relationships with the communities it serves, including SRPMIC, Havasupai, White Mountain Apache, Colorado River Indian Tribes, Navajo Nation, and the Gila River Indian Community.

“From the very beginning, our goal was to approach projects with respect, professionalism, and genuine commitment to

the people who live there,” said Sanchez. “To us, construction is about more than completing a project, it’s about building something that will serve the community for years and creating partnerships that continue long after the project is finished.”

The company has grown to specialize in new building construction, tenant improvements, and civil infrastructure projects.

“These types of projects play an important role in supporting the growth and long-term success of communities,” Sanchez said. “Whether we are helping build a new facility, improving an existing building, or devel-



AKIMEL O'ODHAM PEE-POSH YOUTH COUNCIL & GILA RIVER HEALTH INITIATIVE PRESENTS

# O'OTHAM NEW YEAR CELEBRATION

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oping infrastructure that supports daily life, our goal is always to deliver projects that are built to last and that serve the needs of the community.”

Jeved Construction completed a new sidewalk and three Valley Metro Bus bays along Baseline Road in District 7 of the GRIC. Earlier this year, the company began renovations to the District 2 ballpark, which will include expanded amenities such as park grills, ramadas, a walking trail, a skatepark, basketball courts, and more.

“This project is very meaningful to us because it is about creating a safe and

welcoming space for families in the Hashan Kehk District, as well as the Gila River Indian Community,” Sanchez stated. “Parks and places where families gather, children play, and communities come together, and we are honored to be part of creating a space that will serve the community for many years to come.”

Beyond construction, the company prioritizes working with tribal businesses and communities whenever possible. “Collaboration allows us to support each other and create opportunities within our communities.”

The company’s suc-

cess highlights the growing presence of Indigenous-owned businesses and the resilience of women leaders in industries with limited representation.

Sanchez stated, “As someone who grew up in the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community, being able to build projects that will serve our people for generations means everything to me. Construction is not just about building structures; it’s about building relationships, creating opportunities, and investing in the future of our communities.”

# GILA RIVER INDIAN COMMUNITY



## VOTER RALLY & RESOURCE FAIR

PRIMARY ELECTION 2026

**May 30, 2026 | 10:00am – 2:00pm**

Governance Center Lobby  
525 N. Access Road,  
Sacaton, AZ 85147

**June 6, 2026 | 10:00am – 2:00pm**

Gila Crossing Community School Gym  
4665 W Pecos Rd,  
Laveen Village, AZ 85339

Join us for speakers, voter registration information, exhibit booths, Voter Trivia! Free lunch and prizes!

**For more information call, (520) 562-9713**



# The Lifeline Program & Link-Up for Tribal Lands

Consumers may qualify for the Lifeline program if they have a gross household income at or below 135% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines.

Household Size	48 Contiguous States, DC, & Territories	Alaska	Hawaii
1 person	\$21,546	\$26,933	\$24,786
2 people	\$29,214	\$36,518	\$33,602
3 people	\$36,882	\$46,103	\$42,417
4 people	\$44,550	\$55,688	\$51,233
5 people	\$52,218	\$65,273	\$60,048
6 people	\$59,886	\$74,858	\$68,864
7 people	\$67,554	\$84,443	\$77,679
8 people	\$75,222	\$94,028	\$86,495
For each additional person, add	\$7,668	\$9,585	\$8,816

## Reduce Phone & Internet Costs Get Discounts with Lifeline.

The Lifeline Program helps eligible households save up to **\$34.25** per month on phone and broadband services.

**You may qualify if you:**  
Meet income guidelines  
(see chart)

OR participate in  
programs like SNAP,  
Medicaid, SSI, etc.

## Monthly Benefits include

GILA RIVER TELECOMMUNICATIONS, INC.  
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**\$9.75 Discount**  
on broadband service



**\$24.50 Discount**  
on phone service

Additional qualifications may apply. Visit website or call for full details.



**ONLY ONE LIFELINE BENEFIT**  
is allowed per household.

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# COMMUNITY COUNCIL ACTION SHEETS

## Courtesy of the Community Council Secretary's Office • May 6, 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, May 6, 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 Councilman Joey Whitman

### 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- Joseph Manuel, Jr.(9:30); Kristina Morago; D4- Leah Williams, Jennifer Allison, Nada Celaya, Lalena Jackson; D5- James De La Rosa(9:25), Franklin Pablo, Sr., Donovan Kyiitan, Gordon Santos, Jr.; D6- Anthony Villareal, Sr., Charles Goldtooth, Terrance Evans; D7- Jeanette Blasingim

### APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION MADE AND SECOND TO ADD ON RESOLUTION #2 IN THE RECOMMENDATIONS "AND EDSC" AND ON RESOLUTION #3 IN THE RECOMMENDATIONS ADD "ESC CONCURS"

MOTION MADE AND SECOND TO TABLE REPORT 1, RESOLUTIONS #1 AND #7 FOR NON-SUBMITTAL OF MATERIAL

MOTION MADE AND SECOND TO APPROVE REPORTS #2 THROUGH #5 AND RESOLUTIONS #2 THROUGH #5 ON THE CONSENT AGENDA

MOTION MADE AND SECOND TO APPROVE THE REGULAR AGENDA AS AMENDED

### PRESENTATIONS/INTRODUCTIONS

REPORTS

>1. Community Technology Center FY 2025/2026 2nd Quarter Report

Presenter: Connie Jackson

TABLED AT APPROVAL OF AGENDA

>2. Pee-Posh Veterans' Association 1st Quarter Budget Report

Presenters: Arnie Bread, Sr., Veronica Kinsel

ACCEPTED AT APPROVAL OF AGENDA

>3. Pee-Posh Veterans' Association 2nd Quarter Budget Report

Presenters: Arnie Bread, Sr., Veronica Kinsel

ACCEPTED AT APPROVAL OF AGENDA

>4. BGCGRIC Quarter 2 Reporting 2026 Presenter: Mark Clavell, Jason Jones

ACCEPTED AT APPROVAL OF AGENDA

>5. GRICUA FY26 Q1 Report

Presenter: Ken Stock

ACCEPTED AT APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

Presenters: Gila River Gaming Commission, Jerry Higginson

ACCEPTED

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

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

ACCEPTED

### RESOLUTIONS

\*1. A Resolution Authorizing The Signing And Execution Of A Public Law (P.L.) 93-638, Title V Construction Project Agreement With The Indian Health Service (Project No. PH-24-G06, IHS Identification No. DES-26-V-0002) For The Installation Of Sewer And Water Services For 113 Houses Throughout The Community (G&MSC forwards to Council with a recommendation for approval and placement on the consent agenda; NRSC & H&SSC concurs)

Presenter Ronald Gritman

TABLED AT APPROVAL OF AGENDA

\*2. A Resolution Approving A Grant Of Right-Of-Way To GRICDOT For A Transportation Road And Utility Corridor

Along Gilbert Road Within The Exterior Boundaries Of The Gila River Indian Reservation (Allotment 4520-B) As Described In LUPZ Survey #25-0047 (G&MSC forwards to Council with a recommendation for approval and placement on the consent agenda; NRSC concurs)

Presenter: Steven Johnson

APPROVED

>3. A Resolution Approving A Memorandum Of Agreement Between The Tribal Education Department Of The Gila River Indian Community And The Chandler Unified School District (G&MSC forwards to Council with a recommendation for approval and placement on the consent agenda; ESC concurs)

Presenter: Lance Reyna

ACCEPTED AND APPROVED AT APPROVAL OF AGENDA

>4. A Resolution Consenting To A Non-Transferable Fifty Year Residential/Homesite Lease On Allotment 718 Located On Allotted Trust Land In District Four Of The Gila River Indian Reservation (G&MSC forwards to Council with a recommendation for approval and placement on the consent agenda; NRSC concurs)

Presenters: Talia Apkaw, Sara Lucas

ACCEPTED AND APPROVED AT APPROVAL OF AGENDA

>5. A Resolution Consenting To A Non-Transferable Fifty Year Residential/Homesite Lease On Allotment 3126 Located On Allotted Trust Land In District Six Of The Gila River Indian Reservation (G&MSC forwards to Council with a recommendation for approval and placement on the consent agenda; NRSC concurs)

Presenters: Talia Apkaw, Sara Lucas

ACCEPTED AND APPROVED AT APPROVAL OF AGENDA

6. A Resolution Approving The Petition For Membership For Antonio Lane Parrales Into The Gila River Indian Community (LSC forwards to Council with a recommendation for approval)

Presenter: Sara Duenez

APPROVED

7. A Resolution Approving The Petition For Membership For Quincy Roy Parrales Into The Gila River Indian Community (LSC forwards to Council with a recommendation for approval)

Presenter: Sara Duenez

TABLED AT APPROVAL OF AGENDA

8. A Resolution Approving The Petition For Membership For Serena Rose Parrales Into The Gila River Indian Community (LSC forwards to Council with a recommendation for approval)

Presenter: Sara Duenez

APPROVED

9. A Resolution Approving The Petition For Membership For Arianna Leticia Zepeda Into The Gila River Indian Community (LSC forwards to Council with a recommendation for approval)

Presenter: Sara Duenez

APPROVED

10. A Resolution Approving The Petition For Membership For Sage K Stayce Telestine Etsitty Jr. Into The Gila River Indian Community (LSC forwards to Council with a recommendation for approval)

Presenter: Sara Duenez

APPROVED

11. A Resolution Approving The Petition For Membership For Archie Jarvis Miguel Jr. Into The Gila River Indian Community (LSC forwards to Council with a recommendation for approval)

Presenter: Sara Duenez

APPROVED

12. A Resolution Approving The Petition For Membership For Dabrina Rochelle Miguel Into The Gila River Indian Community (LSC forwards to Council with a recommendation for approval)

Presenter: Sara Duenez

APPROVED

13. A Resolution Approving The Petition For Membership For Amanda Verdie Beeson Into The Gila River Indian Community (LSC forwards to Council with a recommendation for approval)

Presenter: Sara Duenez

APPROVED

14. A Resolution Approving The Petition For Membership For Anthony Richard Valenzuela Into The Gila River Indian Community (LSC forwards to Council with a recommendation for approval)

Presenter: Sara Duenez

APPROVED

15. A Resolution Approving The Petition For Membership For Jeffrey Harold Pablo Into The Gila River Indian Community (LSC forwards to Council with a recommendation for approval)

Presenter: Sara Duenez

APPROVED

16. A Resolution Approving The Petition For Membership For Valentino Ethan Mcleod Into The Gila River Indian Community (LSC forwards to Council with a recommendation for approval)

Presenter: Sara Duenez

APPROVED

**ORDINANCES**  
COUNCILMAN JAMES DE LA ROSA RECUSES HIMSELF FOR UNFINISHED BUSINESS #1  
COUNCILMAN DONOVAN KYIITAN RECUSES HIMSELF FOR UNFINISHED BUSINESS #1

### UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Gila River Gaming Commission Three (3) Gaming Commissioner Appointments (two full terms and one unexpired term)

Presenter: Community Council

MOTION MADE AND SECOND TO CERTIFY AND APPOINT JULIA JONES TO THE GAMING COMMISSION FOR A THREE (3) YEAR TERM

MOTION MADE AND SECOND TO CERTIFY AND APPOINT JACQUELINE STEVENS TO THE GAMING COMMISSION FOR A THREE (3) YEAR TERM

MOTION MADE AND SECOND TO CERTIFY AND APPOINT DENISE MILDA TO AN UNEXPIRED TERM ENDING APRIL 2027

### NEW BUSINESS

1. G&MSC Work Session – Performance Based Budgeting Quarterly Update – May 28-30, 2026 – Scottsdale, AZ (G&MSC forwards to Council under New Business for any interested Council member to attend utilizing Dues & Delegations)

Presenters: Government & Management Standing Committee

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

2. BGCA Native Services 2026 Summit Invitation (G&MSC forwards to Council under New Business for any interested Council member to attend utilizing Dues & Delegations)

Presenters: Mark Clavell, Jason Jones

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

3. Request for a Special Council Meeting (G&MSC forwards to Council under New Business with a recommended date of May 14, 2026)

Presenters: Government & Management Standing Committee

MOTION MADE AND SECOND TO SCHEDULE A SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING TO BE HELD THURSDAY, MAY 14, 2026 AT 9:00 A.M. AT THE WILD HORSE PASS RESORT & CASINO

4. Chief Azul Citizenship Award Trip – Honolulu, Hawaii (ESC forwards to Council under New Business for any interested Council Member to attend utilizing Dues and Delegations)

Presenter: Lance Reyna

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

5. Government & Management Standing Committee Declaration of Vacancies to the Community Council – (2) Council Seats (G&MSC forwards to Council to declare (2) Council seat vacancies)

Presenters: Government & Management Standing Committee

MOTION MADE AND SECOND, TO DECLARE TWO COUNCIL SEAT VACANCIES FOR THE GOVERNMENT & MANAGEMENT STANDING

6. Natural Resources Standing Committee Declaration of Vacancy to the Community Council - (1) Council Seat (NRSC forwards to Council to declare (1) Council seat vacancy)

Presenters: Natural Resources Standing Committee

MOTION MADE AND SECOND TO DECLARE ONE COUNCIL SEAT VACANCY FOR THE NATURAL RESOURCES STANDING COMMITTEE

7. Health & Social Standing Committee Declaration of Vacancy to the Community Council – (2) Council Seats (H&SSC forwards to Council to declare (2) Council Seat vacancies)

Presenters: Health & Social Standing Committee

MOTION MADE AND SECOND TO DECLARE TWO COUNCIL SEAT VACANCIES FOR HEALTH & SOCIAL STANDING COMMITTEE

8. Legislative Standing Committee Declaration of Vacancies to the Community Council - (5) Council Seats (LSC forwards to Council under New Business to declare (5) Council seat vacancies)

Presenters: Legislative Standing Committee

MOTION MADE AND SECOND TO DECLARE FIVE COUNCIL SEAT VACANCIES FOR THE LEGISLATIVE STANDING COMMITTEE

9. Education Standing Committee Declaration of Vacancies to the Community Council - (2) Council Seats (ESC forwards to Council to declare (2) Council seat vacancies)

Presenters: Education Standing Committee

MOTION MADE AND SECOND TO DECLARE TWO COUNCIL SEAT VACANCIES FOR THE EDUCATION STANDING COMMITTEE

10. Economic Development Standing Committee Declaration of Vacancy to the Community Council – (1) Council Seat (EDSC forwards to Council to declare (1) Council Seat Vacancy)

Presenters: Economic Development Standing Committee

MOTION MADE AND SECOND TO DECLARE ONE COUNCIL SEAT VACANCY FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STANDING COMMITTEE

11. Cultural Resource Standing Committee Declaration of Vacancy to the Community Council - (3) Council Seats (CRSC forwards to Council to declare (3) Council seat vacancies)

Presenters: Cultural Resource Standing Committee

MOTION MADE AND SECOND TO DECLARE THREE COUNCIL SEAT VACANCIES FOR CULTURAL RESOURCE STANDING COMMITTEE

**MINUTES**  
**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

• CHIEF AZULE AWARDS BANQUET FRIDAY, MAY 8, 2026 AT THE SHERATON GRAND BEGINNING AT 6:00 P.M.

• THE OFFICER MEMORIAL CEREMONY WILL BE HELD ON FRIDAY, MAY 8, 2026 AT THE GILA RIVER POLICE DEPARTMENT AT 9:00 A.M.

• G&MSC WORK SESSION MAY 28-30, 2026

• LITIGATION TEAM MEETING WILL BE HELD ON THURSDAY, MAY 7, 2026 AT 3:00 P.M.

• CONGRATULATIONS TO THE RE-ELECTED COUNCIL AND WORDS OF GRATITUDE TO THE OUTGOING COUNCIL

• DISCUSSION ON A NON-PERMITTED DANCE HELD OVER THE WEEKEND AND PROPOSED PENALTIES ENFORCED TO THE INDIVIDUAL

• DISCUSSION ON SNAP BENEFITS

• PRAYERS REQUESTED FOR THE FAMILY OF MR. PHILBERT JOSE OF DISTRICT 2

• DISCUSSION ON GOVERNMENT TO GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION AND LIAISON REPORTING

**ADJOURNMENT**  
MEETING ADJOURNED AT 10:35 A.M.

\* Denotes TABLED from previous meeting(s)  
> Denotes a CONSENT AGENDA ITEM

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

<p>VALENTINA ROSE MORENO, Petitioner/Plaintiff</p> <p>VS.</p> <p>NINA RAQUEL JONES, Respondent/Defendant</p>	<p>CASE Number: CV-2026-0104-RO</p> <p style="text-align: center;">CIVIL NOTICE OF HEARING</p>
--	--

Please take notice that a(n) **Review Hearing** has been scheduled in the Gila River Indian Community Court.

**This matter has been scheduled at the place and time set forth below:**

Wednesday, May 27, 2026  
at 9:00 AM in Courtroom I,  
AKIMEL O'OTHAM LODITHA KUD KI,  
721 West Seed Farm Road, Sacaton, AZ.

GIVEN under my hand and the seal of the Gila River Indian Community in the State of Arizona.

DATED this 8th day of April, 2026

/s/ Katherine Search  
Clerk of the Gila River Indian Community Court

Copy of the foregoing served by  
 1<sup>st</sup> Class Mail  Certified Mail  
This 8th day of April, 2026 to:  
  
Nina Raquel Jones

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

<p>IN THE MATTER OF :</p> <p>GERALD HAYES, Subject.</p>	<p>CASE Number: CV-2022-0278-ZGA</p> <p style="text-align: center;">CIVIL NOTICE OF HEARING</p>
---	---

Please take notice that a(n) **Review Hearing** has been scheduled in the Gila River Indian Community Court.

**This matter has been scheduled at the place and time set forth below:**

Monday, June 1, 2026  
at 11:00 AM in Courtroom VII,  
Westend Judicial Center,  
4751 West Pecos Road, Laveen, AZ 85339.

GIVEN under my hand and the seal of the Gila River Indian Community in the State of Arizona.

DATED this 25th day of March, 2026

/s/ Dorthene E Silver  
Clerk of the Gila River Indian Community Court

Copy of the foregoing served by  
The GRIN, Gila River Indian Newspaper Publication  
This 25th day of March, 2026 to:  
  
Loretta Marie Felix

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

<p>MYRA A DIAZ, Petitioner/Plaintiff</p> <p>VS.</p> <p>JESSE MANUEL DIAZ, Respondent/Defendant</p>	<p>CASE Number: FM-2026-0032-DV</p> <p style="text-align: center;">CIVIL NOTICE OF HEARING</p>
--	--

Please take notice that a(n) **Answer/Response Hearing** has been scheduled in the Gila River Indian Community Court.

**This matter has been scheduled at the place and time set forth below:**

Monday, June 15, 2026  
at 10:30 AM in Courtroom VII,  
Westend Judicial Center,  
4751 West Pecos Road, Sacaton, AZ.

GIVEN under my hand and the seal of the Gila River Indian Community in the State of Arizona.

DATED this 6th day of May, 2026

/s/ Danielle Lewis  
Clerk of the Gila River Indian Community Court

Copy of the foregoing served by  
The GRIN, Gila River Indian Newspaper Publication  
This 6th day of May, 2026 to:  
  
Jesse Manuel Diaz  
Jesse M Diaz, G176983  
Maricopa County Jail 4th Avenue Jail  
201 S. 4th Ave  
Phoenix, AZ, 85003



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(2) Chevy Traverse  
18/27 mpg

2021 Ford EcoSport  
27/29 mpg

2018 Honda Accord Sport  
29/35 mpg

2018 Mazda CX5 25/31 mpg

(3) Nissan Altima 26/34 mpg

(2) Toyota Camry 28/34 mpg

2018 Hyundai Santa Fe  
83K Miles

2021 Nissan Kicks  
31/36 mpg

2020 Dodge Gr. Caravan  
17/25 mpg

2023 Ford F-150 4x4  
EcoBoost

2022 Kia K5 29/38 mpg

2019 Nissan Rogue  
26/33 mpg

2023 Chrysler Pacifica  
19/31 mpg

2016 Hyundai Tucson  
25/30 mpg

**2023 Chevy  
Malibu LT**



**27 CITY  
35 HIGHWAY**

**2017 Ford  
F-150 FX4**



**3.5L ECOBOOST  
47K MILES • SHOW STOPPER**

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# JUNE IS MEN'S HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

Source: <http://menshealthmonth.org/>



## MEN'S HEALTH WEEK

JUNE 15 - 21, 2026

## FATHER'S DAY

JUNE 21, 2026

June is Men's Health Awareness Month and a great time to check in on your physical and mental health. Get your screenings, stay active, eat well, and reach out if you need support. Small steps today can make a big difference tomorrow. Gila River Health Care Primary Care Departments are here to help.

## Men's Health Tips

**Eat Well** - Prioritize a balanced diet rich in fruits, vegetables, lean protein, and whole grains to fuel your body.

**Know Numbers** - Keep track of key health indicators like blood pressure, cholesterol levels, and body mass index (BMI) through regular check-ups.

**Stay Hydrated** - Drink Plenty of water throughout the day to support organ function, maintain energy levels, and aid digestion.

**Prioritize Mental Health** - Take care of your mental well-being by practicing stress management techniques and seeking support when needed.

**Limit Alcohol and Avoid Smoking** - Moderation is key when it comes to alcohol consumption, and quitting smoking can reduce the risk of health problems.

**Regular Check-ups** - Don't skip routine health screenings and check-ups, including prostate exams and screenings for conditions like diabetes and cardiovascular disease.

**Stay active** - Engage in regular physical activity to maintain a healthy weight, reduce the risk of heart disease, and improve overall well-being.

## Wear Blue Days

**Wear Blue Days** continue to raise awareness and support men's health initiatives while reinforcing that care for men's mental & physical health is a shared responsibility.

**Wearing blue** is a visible reminder that men's health matters - not just to men, but to families, workplaces, & communities.

## Wear Blue Fridays

- Friday, June 5, 2026
- Friday, June 12, 2026
- Friday, June 19, 2026
- Friday, June 26, 2026



## Why Wear Blue?

For Husbands, Fathers, Brothers, Uncles, Partners, Friends, Co-Workers, and Sons.



## Memorial Day Closure

Gila River Health Care Administrative, Outpatient Clinics, and Pharmacy will be closed Monday, May 25, 2026. Normal business hours will resume on Tuesday, May 26, 2026.

## Health Update Newsletter

Stay informed! Scan the QR Code to view this month's Newsletter with articles on Mental Health Awareness, Memorial Day Safety, and Heat Safety and Prevention.

## Scan Me



**988 SUICIDE & CRISIS LIFELINE: CALL OR TEXT 988**

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