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Spoiler alert: Freeway snarls due in 2021

ADOT to start its 3½-year widening project on the Broadway Curve. Page 12.



Precious gifts for precious, tiny heads

Knitted caps were warmly welcomed in Dignity's neo-natal intensive care unit. Page 4.



Stolen once is bad. But twice in the same store? Victim tells her story. Page 8.

Familiar face, new goals for Kyrene schools leadership

Laura Toenjes takes the reins Jan. 1 when Dr. Jan Vesely officially retires. — Story, Page 3

WRANGLER NEWS



DECEMBER 5 - 18, 2020 • VOLUME 30, NUMBER 23

— Photo by Carolyn Wood for Wrangler News

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CHEVROLET 

FIND NEW ROADS™

Kyrene promotes asst. superintendent

New schools chief starts Jan. 1

Assistant Superintendent Laura Toenjes has been selected to succeed Dr. Jan Vesely as chief of the Kyrene School District following approval of her contract Nov. 24 by the district Governing Board.

She will take over the job on Jan. 1.

Toenjes brings 26 years of educational experience to the role, serving as a classroom teacher, a principal and a district administrator, as well as holding positions in both county and state education departments.

She joined Kyrene during the 2016-17 school year and currently oversees the School Effectiveness Department, which includes school supervision, curriculum and assessment, professional development, and federal programs and outreach.

Said Toenjes about what she sees as her priorities of the position:

"I believe in the power of education to change the life of every child. As educators, we each have a personal responsibility to ensure every child has equitable access to a high-quality."

Governing Board President Mike Myrick said he is pleased with the outcome of the search process and happy that the selection was a candidate from within the district.

"I think, most importantly, we did an internal search because we felt there was some pretty extraordinary talent on the executive committee for the superintendent, her board or cabinet, if you will, and so Laura stands out.

"What she brings to the table is the consistency that we've had in Kyrene under Dr. Vesely's leadership. She knows all the inner workings of what we've been doing, but more importantly still carrying out the vision and the strategic plan and we felt that was a critical component in making the decision of hiring someone internally versus going external and having the possibility of someone who isn't in Kyrene at all come in and maybe take Kyrene in a different direction. We feel like as a board that that was very important to continue the work that needs to be done under the strategic plan.

In addition to serving as a leader in Kyrene's equity initiatives, Toenjes was also chief architect of the Kyrene Mitigation Plan, which has served as the district's roadmap for campus safety during the COVID-19 pandemic.

She has worked collaboratively with Vesely on these and other critical initiatives, including the Kyrene Strategic Plan 2022, according to a district spokeswoman.

Vesely also said she is pleased with the selection.

"I have had the great pleasure of working with Laura Toenjes in two school districts and have seen firsthand that she is a gifted and accomplished educational leader. Laura cares deeply for the students and staff of Kyrene School District, and it is with great pride that I see her step into this well-deserved role."

Toenjes grew up in Gilbert and attended the University of Arizona. She holds a bachelor's degree in communications, a master's degree in elementary education, and a dual master's degree in administration/supervision and curriculum/instruction.

She has two sons who have careers that involve service, one as a wildland firefighter, the other as a member of the United States Marine Corps.

She said she intends to bring that family spirit of service to her role as superintendent.

"I am thrilled to continue serving this district I love so much," Toenjes said. "It is an honor to carry forward the Kyrene vision that all students achieve at their maximum potential to become the problem solvers, creators, and visionaries of tomorrow."



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I love Tempe too!



Chandler for the Holidays events now under way

Wrangler Staff report

Construction of the renowned Tumbleweed Tree is complete, holiday lights and decorations are up throughout Downtown Chandler and the holiday spirit is growing in anticipation of the month-long Chandler for the Holidays to celebrate the season.

Health precautions may limit the size and scope of some activities this year. Still, the holiday season is rolling on with a packed calendar, presented by the city, Downtown Chandler Community Partnership and a multitude of community partners and local businesses.

A list of Chandler for the Holidays events is below, and details can be found at chandleraz.gov/chandlerfortheholidays.

The Downtown Chandler Sugarland, an interactive display of holiday decorations designed for the whole family, is open and runs through Jan. 3. In the magic of Sugarland, visitors can snap a selfie or family photo in the candy sleigh next to the famous Tumbleweed Tree, take a ride down the fruit roll-up slide, climb over the giant marshmallows spilling out a huge cup of hot chocolate and dance through the shimmering candy canes.

Over the following five weeks, there will be many more events and opportunities for holiday fun and revelry across the city, including Chandler Fashion Center, Chandler Museum and Dr. A.J. Chandler Park. A Farmers Market in the park is every Saturday, 9 a.m.-1 p.m.

This year's Tumbleweed Tree Lighting on Dec. 5 will be virtual only. An online live-stream of "Tumbleweed Tree Lighting: A Reimagined Tradition" will be available on the city's official social media channels and broadcast on Chandler Channel 11. This holiday spectacular is chock-full of musical performances and stories about Chandler traditions. Santa and city employees also stop by to bring messages of goodwill and holiday cheer.

The unique Tumbleweed Tree is popular for keepsake photos with family and friends. On Dec. 8, 13, 17 and 20 you can have a free photo taken by a professional photographer that is available for download. Reservations are required at chandleraz.gov/special-events.

Chandler's most iconic and beloved holiday tradition is featured in "Tumbleweed Tree: A Very Chandler Christmas," a photography exhibition at the Chandler Museum beginning Saturday, Dec. 5. Admission to the museum is free. This exhibition will be on view through Jan. 10.

In 1957, Chandler resident Earle Barnum and others spearheaded construction of cotton-boll wreaths and a tree made from tumbleweeds to decorate

Downtown Chandler during the Christmas season. The Tumbleweed Tree has since become a long-standing holiday tradition, attracting international renown and highlighting the community spirit and ingenuity of the city and its residents.

This Chandler Museum exhibition showcases photographs, postcards and memories of the 60-plus-year history of the tree. Guests will see how its construction has developed over the years, revel in some of the national attention this tradition has garnered and find out what happened one year when the tree burned down shortly before the lighting ceremony. Visitors can share their own memories of this tradition.

"Our Tumbleweed Tree is a proud tradition for the entire Chandler and East Valley community to enjoy, and a destination where families make memories each year," said Hermelinda Llamas, special events coordinator for the city. "This holiday season will be very exciting, thanks to the Chandler Museum hosting this exhibit. It's a must-see attraction."

Calendar of Events

Through Jan. 3: Downtown Chandler Interactive holiday decorations and Downtown Chandler Holiday Lights – Throughout downtown area.

Through Dec. 22: 'Tis the Season for Giving Food Drive – Drop-off locations at Sibley's West: The Chandler & Arizona Gift Shop, Farmers Market and Tumbleweed Recreation Center.

Dec. 4-20: S'more Holiday Fun, 10 a.m.-8 p.m., Chandler Fashion Center – Backyard campsite games, fireside stories, giveaways and s'mores, of course.

Dec. 5: Chandler Fire Department Toy Drive, 2-8 p.m., Chandler Fashion Center – Donate a new, unwrapped toy and get to visit the Enchanted Fire Village.

Dec. 5: Tumbleweed Tree Lighting: A Re-Imagined Tradition (Virtual only this year, but a video of it live streams on Chandler's social media), 6 p.m. – The Tumbleweed Tree will be lighted every evening Dec. 5-Jan. 10.

Dec. 5, 12 and 19: Downtown Chandler Farmers Market, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., Dr. A.J. Chandler Park West – Holiday music and food.

Dec. 5-Jan. 10: Tumbleweed Tree: A Very Chandler Christmas, Chandler Museum – Exhibit featuring the history of Chandler's Tumbleweed Christmas Tree.

Dec. 8 and 17: Family Memories: Pictures in front of the Tumbleweed Tree, 5:30-8:30 p.m., Dr. A.J. Chandler Park – Reservation only at chandleraz.gov/special-events.

Dec. 8 and 17: Give Back Night Food Drive Collection, 5:30-8:30 p.m., Dr. A.J. Chandler Park.

Dec. 12: Sippin' Santas Pub Crawl, 1-6 p.m., downtown Chandler – Drink specials, food and fun at the jolliest bars and restaurants in town.

Dec. 13 and 20: Family Memories: Pictures in front of the Tumbleweed Tree, 1-4 p.m., Dr. A.J. Chandler Park – Reservation only at chandleraz.gov/special-events.

Dec. 19: Under the Stars, Chandler Center for the Arts at the Museum, Holly Jolly Christmas, 7 p.m. (sold out).

At Dignity Chandler Regional, a common thread is stitched together between tiny humans and humankind

By Janie Magruder

As one would expect, many are pastel pink or blue with puffy white tassels on top. Others are boldly colored, rainbow-striped, checked or otherwise patterned. Some are as small as an egg. None is larger than a soda can.

All are precious.

In November, 300 of these hand-crocheted caps were delivered to Dignity Health Chandler Regional Medical Center in West Chandler for use by tiny infants in the neonatal intensive care unit and continuing care nursery. The conveyance, in honor of World Prematurity Day on Nov. 17, is a partnership between Dignity Health and Cigna, a longtime national sponsor of the March of Dimes.

The hats were produced by Cigna employees and other volunteers in A Common Thread, a project that began in 2012 in Cigna's Connecticut headquarters. Nearly 30 volunteers in four Arizona chapters, among 11 that exist nationally, have crocheted 16,000 tiny caps since 2014.

Across the country, others who knit and loom have created thousands of pillows, caps for children and adults battling cancer and shawls, too.

"The benefit is helping someone we don't even know," said Theresa Richards, a client-support executive for Cigna Global Health Benefits who joined A Common Thread in 2015.

"I can look at a little frog hat and smile, and know that the parent who chose that hat and put it on their baby smiled, too."

Richards has made nearly 900 warm caps for tots born prematurely. The tiny infants have trouble maintaining their body heat, and the caps are a perfect fit for their little heads, some measuring only three inches in diameter.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the national preterm birth rate has risen for past five years, to one in 10 babies born.

The March of Dimes estimates 33,000 infants will arrive early this month alone.

Premature infants don't have the stored body fat of a full-term infant, and they can't generate enough

heat to counteract what's lost through the surface of their bodies. If body temperature dips too low, an abnormally low core body temperature can result, potentially leading to breathing problems and low blood-sugar levels.

A Common Thread's caps are crocheted from warm, soft cotton and acrylic yarn, all donated, by volunteers who choose whatever pattern they like — from lacy curlicues and Mickey or Minnie Mouse ears to puppies and, yes, frogs.

Pre-pandemic, A Common Thread volunteers got together during their lunch hours to compare patterns, crochet and bond.

The recent delivery of bags of caps to the Chandler hospital was facilitated by its foundation to ensure safety.

Specialty laundry protocols were followed for the caps' handling before becoming available to new parents, said Meredith Hestand, senior director of maternal child health at Chandler Regional.

"It was very touching to receive

these precious caps, each so different and so soft, for our kiddos," Hestand said.

Before taking their babies home, the parents receive advice about not placing the caps on their heads during sleep because of the risk of overheating. Studies show an increased risk of sudden infant death syndrome in babies who become too warm, according to the American Academy of Pediatrics, which recommends over-bundling and covering of a baby's face and head be avoided. However, premature babies in the hospital nursery can safely wear the caps because they are monitored, she said.

It's been fun to watch the parents — who survived pregnancies during a scary pandemic and never dreamed their babies would come so early — choose caps for their tiny ones and hear about the volunteers who made them, Hestand said.

It's nice to reduce a bit of their worry. "It's a special outreach and comfort to these parents that people right in their community are thinking of them in a year that's been stressful all around," she said.



Volunteers from A Common Thread hand-crafted 300 caps for tiny infants in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit and continuing care nursery at Dignity Health Chandler Regional Medical Center. — Photo courtesy Dignity Health



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In Tempe

Grievances grow as parents confront schools' open-and-shut class schedules

Special report by Tony Gutiérrez

Amy Beeman is not a “COVID denier” by any means. When everything shut down in March, she and her family went on total lockdown, and her son, now a freshman at Corona del Sol High School, only left home to walk the dog, wearing a mask the whole time.

However, Beeman is among many parents upset with the recent decisions by the three school districts in Tempe to shut down their campuses to in-person classrooms (except for certain exceptions) Nov. 30 and another district Nov. 23.

“It wasn’t ideal, I wouldn’t say we were cheering it on, but we were supportive. We were willing to make adjustments to accommodate that thought process for that time period,” Beeman said of the first round of closures in March. But now, “but we do think there are priorities as to what does need to take place and what is a necessity versus what’s just frivolous.”

She’s not opposed to a virtual learning option for those who prefer it, either, Beeman said. It can also be useful for students who can’t go to school, such as those going through chemotherapy. But part of Beeman’s frustration is seeing other parts of society open up, such as gyms and restaurants, while schools are closed.

“I have to think we can do better than we are now,”

she said. “Our priority is not, ‘Can we go to bars, can we go to restaurants, can we go to movies?’ It’s, ‘Can we get our kids educated?’”

Sarah Richardson, who has a second-, fourth- and sixth-grader attending schools in the Kyrene School District, supports the decision to return to virtual learning in the district, but finds common ground with Beeman in believing that schools aren’t prioritized.

'Nothing in state is closed'

“I absolutely believe that schools should be the priority in reopening, but that also means closing other things. Right now, nothing in Arizona is closed,” she said. “If we want schools to be open, that means people need to be supportive of limiting restaurants or closing bars or closing gyms. We don’t get to have it all right now.”

While acknowledging that her children are also lacking socialization with their friends, she says that part of the reason schools are closing is because parents are allowing their children to practice unsafe social distancing, such as attending sleepovers and parties. She also noted that the schools are still providing in-person options for those who absolutely need it.

“Anyone else who doesn’t meet that legal

— SCHOOLS, Page 18

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Bashas' shopper victimized twice; 'Unfortunate,' says store of incidents

By Joyce Coronel

A cancer patient whose wallet was stolen while shopping at the Bashas' at McClintock Drive and Warner Road in Tempe was unharmed in the incident—at least physically.

The victim, who did not wish to be identified, frequently shops at the store and is known to employees there. Her caregiver, Fran Narayan, said it's not the first time the woman has had her wallet stolen while shopping at the store. A similar crime occurred about two months ago.

In the recent incident, as the victim stood talking with a butcher, she inadvertently took her eyes off her handbag in her shopping cart. The thief used the opportunity to steal the wallet and then went on a shopping spree with the woman's stolen credit cards, racking up \$2,000 at a Chandler Walmart and about \$1,800 in an online purchase.

"She said she didn't see anybody," Narayan said. "She said to me, 'Where's my wallet?'"

After making sure it hadn't fallen out in the car, Narayan returned to the car. She said she knew they had the wallet prior to entering Bashas' because they'd done some Christmas shopping first.

When her client realized her wallet was gone, "she went a different color," Narayan said. To have been victimized twice has taken a toll, especially as the woman undergoes monthly cancer treatments. "Yesterday she spent the whole day in bed—the day before she wasn't well. She said, 'I'm numb. I can't cry anymore because of what happened.'"

Same experience occurred twice

About two months ago, the woman was shopping at the same Bashas when someone engaged her in conversation while another person simultaneously stole the wallet from her bag.

"She's had enough," Narayan said. "She said she feels like going in there when she gets her new cards and saying, 'Which one of you is going to take them this time?'"

Even more worrisome is the fact that the woman's ID is now missing.

"They've got her address," Narayan said, adding that she's taken some anti-theft precautions at the home.

Ashley Schick, director of communications for Bashas', said the company is "aware of the unfortunate situation" and is "working closely with our Loss Prevention team to investigate.

"We are also working directly with local authorities to resolve the situation."

Det. Greg Bacon of the Tempe Police Department's media relations office said an uptick in theft is common this time of year.

"This is a very sad situation," Bacon said. "We're getting into the holiday season and shopping season and unfortunately this is when people ramp up targeting of others."

Bacon advises shoppers to be extra vigilant when shopping. It doesn't take long for a thief to spot a purse momentarily unattended in a shopping cart.

Police advise staying aware

"Take the extra second—it's probably not the most convenient—but pick up your purse and have it in front of you because this is a time of year when people are really looking to take advantage of other people."

Bacon also offered tips for men regarding their wallets. "A lot of guys still put their wallets in their back pocket which we don't really advise." You might not notice someone reaching into your pocket and but that will catch up with you when you go to pay for something.

"We encourage people to put their wallet in their front pocket if possible or to have a jacket with a zip-able pocket, something where you can have an extra level of protection."

So will fanny packs make a comeback this season? "There's nothing wrong with wearing a fanny pack," Bacon said, but "anything that's attached to your body, if somebody grabs it and hangs onto it, you're now involved in a much higher likelihood for injury.

"We wouldn't discourage somebody from wearing a fanny pack but we'd also

tell them to very cautious about who is around you.”

If you feel that someone is following you or appears to be too close, seek out a store employee and tell them, Bacon said.

Bacon also advises shoppers to park under a light if possible if they are out at night and to park near other vehicles.

As for Narayan, she's thankful her client wasn't injured in either incident at Bashas'.

“Luckily she wasn't hurt, but that doesn't mean that somebody's not going to be that desperate when they've pushed people and pulled them out of their cars to steal their cars.

“She told me, ‘I don't want anybody else to go through this.’”

As this reporter was filing her story, she received a call from someone claiming that her Apple ID had been stolen and encouraging her to download an app that would allow the caller access to her phone.

The scam was thwarted but the call begs the question: How many Tempe and West Chandler residents will fall victim to robbery, theft and fraud this holiday season?



A Tempe woman was a victim of theft twice at a Bashas' near Warner and McClintock, with the more recent crime occurring near the butcher block in the South Tempe store. — Wrangler News Photo

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BRIEFLY

League of Cities appointee

Tempe City Councilmember Robin Arredondo-Savage has been appointed by the National League of Cities to a 14-member nominating committee that will be responsible for recommending officers and board members to lead the group in 2021.

“It is an honor to serve...in a new role for this year’s committee,” Arredondo-Savage said.

“One of the most important roles of elected officials is to leverage regional and national support and ensure that we can bring back resources and best practices to our communities.”

Now in her third term on the City Council, Arredondo-Savage is credited with successfully building regional partnerships and collaborating on initiatives that have delivered positive outcomes for Tempe residents.

She was raised in Tempe and graduated from Arizona State

University.

She served honorably in the U.S. Army and has is said to have turned that experience into a strong advocacy for veterans by leading the way for Tempe to become the first Veteran Supportive City in the state.

Free flu shot clinics

Tempe and Passport Health are partnering to bring the community free flu-shot clinics at several Tempe locations through January 2021.

Clinics are free and open to all Maricopa County residents ages 6 months and older.

Insurance is accepted, but not required.

Upcoming clinics are Dec. 5-6 at Pyle Adult Recreation Center, 655 E. Southern Ave., and Dec. 19-20 at Redemption Tempe, 2150 E. Southern Ave.

Walk-ins will be accepted; however, to help ensure proper staffing and safety protocols, registration is strongly encouraged at passporthealthglobal.com/ClinicSignup/Registration/MaricopaFlu.

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Sharing some of my South Tempe favorites . . . Commentary by Jennifer Adams

As a longtime resident of south Tempe, it is no secret that I am a frequent shopper and diner at our great local establishments. In 2020, that looks more like online shopping and takeout food at home, but I am still diligent about patronizing our homegrown options.

So I want to offer you a few of my local favorites – they may be yours too! – and remind you about how our local Tempe charities need us more than ever this season.

Black Friday and Cyber Monday may be behind us, but the holiday shopping season has just begun – and so has the season of patio dining and home-delivered deliciousness. Consider picking up gift cards for friends, family and yourself, too. Here are just a few of my very favorite south Tempe go-to places:

Sweetest Season, 1835 E. Guadalupe Road, Unit D-111 — If you are hungry for fresh, homemade breakfast and lunch, this place is the best around. I love their loaded waffles – they are amazing!

Vincitorio's, 1835 E. Elliot Road, C-109 — Owners Mario and Ginger are very welcoming – they create an atmosphere that is like dining with old friends.

Postino, 8749 S. Rural Road — What else can I say besides artichoke bruschetta, meatballs and their crispy cauliflower? They hit it out of the park each time we go.

Cotton & Copper, 1006 E. Warner Road, #113 — Director of Operations Tiffany Fowler told me they have continued to support local farmers and meat and seafood shops during the pandemic, and are adapting their menu frequently to what is fresh and available. I plan to try a creation from their new cocktail menu very soon!

Sole Sports Running Zone, 1006 E. Warner Road, #104 — I recently purchased a new pair of hiking shoes and it was a great experience. What I like best about this store is that there are so many knowledgeable employees, plus a treadmill to test out shoes. They have holiday sales going on right now – do not miss out!

The City of Tempe has launched a holiday shopping and charitable giving campaign and the details are at tempe.gov/holidays. You can buy three gifts from your favorite spots, take a photo of you shopping virtually or in-person, and email it to business@tempe.gov or post it to Instagram and tag @tempegov. You know you need to shop anyway this month, right? Why not try to get a prize for yourself as part of this contest!

Tempe's very own Hownd is an option for finding out about online coupons and digital gift cards to about 100 local businesses. Visit www.howndfortheholidays.com.

Our local nonprofits need us, too, during this holiday season.

A few weeks ago, I discussed the successes of GAIN Night 2020 and how our own neighbors pulled together for “Tempe Gains by Giving,” and collected 3,400 pounds of food to the Tempe Community Action Agency (TCAA) food pantry. That was an incredible effort and I hope we can keep it going.

Donations are still needed because COVID-19 has hit hard among local families. TCAA is doing its Annual Giving Tree Program to benefit 500 local adults, children and seniors.

You can donate money that will be used to buy gift cards for clothing, food or family outings. Visit www.tempeaction.org for details.

As always, please reach out to me with your feedback, ideas and questions.

I value your input and want to hear it. In addition, if there are local people, places or issues you would like me to explore in these Wrangler News columns in 2021, I am all ears.

Please email me at jennifer_adams@tempe.gov, call me at 480-350-8835 and follow me on Facebook at JenniferAdamsTempe.

Jennifer Adams is a member of the Tempe City Council.

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TRAFFIC ON THE BROADWAY CURVE has been a nightmare for years. ADOT is about to fix that.

— Wrangler News photo

Bumper-to-bumper headaches

Upcoming freeway work to snarl traffic for 3-plus years

By Lee Shappell

Your hands are seared to your steering wheel. It can't be more than 114. Traffic is moving about as fast as water down the Salt River in August.

You're not sure you're going to get to the airport in time for your flight, or downtown on time for the start of work.

You're steamed.

You're on the Broadway Curve at rush hour.

And if you think it's bad now, it's going to get worse before it gets better.

And it *is* going to get better, the Arizona Department of Transportation promises, but it's

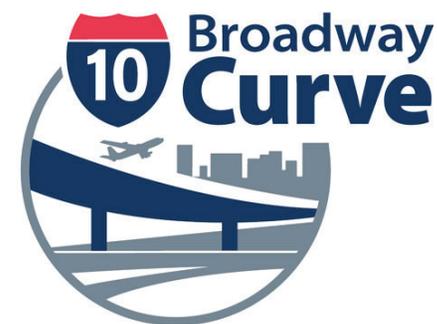
going to take about 3½ years.

It won't be pretty during a \$700 million Broadway Curve rebuilding project on Interstate 10 that is to begin next summer, funded in part by Maricopa Association of Government's Proposition 400, a dedicated sales tax for transportation that was approved by Maricopa County voters in 2004.

The 11-mile reconstruction is along one of the busiest freeway segments in Arizona.

"It's gonna be a big one," said Tom Hermann, a spokesman for ADOT's Major Projects Group.

The one place where the wheels are turning smoothly on the



Broadway Curve is in the project planning room. A contractor has been selected. Negotiations are to be finalized and a contract signed by January.

Provisions are being made to alert

affected businesses and drivers of freeway restrictions, closures and alternate routes during construction, which ADOT hopes to complete by fall 2024.

“This is the first major freeway reconstruction project in the Valley where we’re taking what we built years and years ago and preparing it for the future with all the people that continue to move to the Valley,” Hermann said. “We’re trying to schedule restrictions and closures to nights and weekends to minimize the impact on weekday commuters. Hopefully this won’t be too big of a challenge for folks.

“We have been working for more than a year on that to minimize it.”

Pulice-FNF-Flatiron Joint Venture has been chosen as the preferred developer by representatives of ADOT, Phoenix, Tempe and Maricopa Association of Governments. Key members of the development team include Pulice Construction, Inc., FNF Construction, Inc., Flatiron Constructors, Inc., and T.Y. Lin International.

The Broadway Curve Project, in partnership among ADOT, Federal Highway Administration and Maricopa Association of Governments, begins just south of Ray Road on Interstate 10 and continues north through West Chandler, South Tempe, Ahwatukee and Guadalupe, and then around the curve to the I-10 split at Interstate 17 near Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport. Along the way, there will be a total rebuild of the interchange at State Route 143 to the airport and alterations on U.S. 60 from Priest Road approaching the I-10 interchange.

The project gets a downtown-Los Angeles freeway twist with the debut of collector-distributor lanes for drivers entering or exiting I-10 at Baseline Road, U.S. 60, Broadway Road and State Route 143 that separate local traffic from through traffic. That is designed to reduce congestion on the high-speed through lanes and eliminate tight lane changes on the curve. Collector-distributor lanes will look and act much like frontage roads.

“But on a frontage road, you would stop every mile,” Hermann said. “These collector-distributor lanes are freeway lanes, however they are connected to the exits between Baseline and 40th Street. This is new to Arizona. If you’re trying to

get on or off at those interchanges, you’ll be driving on the collector-distributor lanes. If you’re going straight through, you stay on standard lanes. The idea is to get local traffic off of the standard lanes.”

The project also includes:

- A fourth general-purpose lane in each direction on I-10 from south of Ray north to U.S. 60 while retaining the HOV lane. Current overpasses at Ray, Warner, Elliot and Guadalupe roads are wide enough to accommodate the additional lane below, according to Hermann.

current structure will work just fine,” he said.

- Three pedestrian bridges over I-10 will be constructed, all of them south of Broadway.

- Modifications of the I-10/U.S. 60 interchange will include improvements on 60 from Priest Road to 10.

“Those are relatively minor, Hermann said. “We will be adjusting ramps to the distributor-collector lanes, but we will not be tearing things down. We’re not adding lanes there.”

“One of the things we hope will happen as we build those collector-distributor lanes and as we add two HOV and six standard lanes on Interstate 10 is it increases capacity,” Hermann said.

“Part of the challenge is congestion on Interstate 10 and that backs up. If we can keep traffic moving on Interstate 10 with added capacity there won’t be as much backup in the area on U.S. 60.”

“This will not be a magical cure for congestion. There’s just too much traffic in that area right now, about 300,000 vehicles a day. But what it will do, as the county continues to grow, is this will accommodate that growth. Early on, we hope traffic will be lighter and this will prevent it from becoming gridlock. In the long term, as people continue to move to Chandler, Tempe, Ahwatukee, Mesa and Gilbert and those people are trying to go to work downtown or in other parts of the Valley we think this will be a real strong benefit to those folks.”

Among the benefits expected from the opening of the Loop 202/South Mountain Freeway late last year was reducing traffic on I-10 through the Broadway Curve.

However, the COVID-19 pandemic hit shortly after that opening, people began staying home, and consequently ADOT does not yet have statistics on how much that has benefitted Broadway Curve traffic, which still hits a standstill during rush hours.

“With the scale of this project, the scope of this project, there will be some discomfort for folks as we’re doing work,” Hermann said. “This is a long project. This is a very busy area. But the work is very much needed. Our intent is to do everything we can with planning and scheduling closures and restrictions to minimize that discomfort. In the end, when this project is complete, drivers will see some real benefit and it will help everybody in the East Valley who comes in on Interstate 10 or U.S. 60 headed toward downtown or the airport.

“We really think this will be a big boost for those drivers. We just ask them to bear with us as we get there.”

More information on the Broadway Curve Project: azdot.gov/i10broadwaycurve.

More information on distributor-collector lanes: <https://bit.ly/34W3En7>.



“There will be some acquisition of property,” Hermann said. “We’ve already started that process, however there are no residential properties involved, nobody’s home is in danger.”

Hermann said there are no plans to create an interchange at Guadalupe Road.

- I-10 will be expanded to six general-purpose lanes and two HOV lanes in each direction from U.S. 60 west to 24th Street. The current I-10 bridges over the Salt River are wide enough to accommodate the additional lanes, according to Hermann.

- At the State Route 143 interchange, three bridges will be demolished and replaced by five new bridges. Among the new ones are a dedicated HOV-lane bridge over westbound 10 onto northbound 143, a “flyover” bridge from southbound 143 onto southbound 10, and a collector-distributor-lane bridge from northbound 10 onto northbound 143. The 143 will be three lanes over the bridge at University, where it currently squeezes down to two lanes. A new bridge will not have to be built there, according to Hermann.

“We will be adding a lane, but the

Among the current headaches on the Broadway Curve is the roughly half-mile stretch where U.S. 60 merges onto I-10 westbound lanes and vehicles are changing lanes to the left quickly. That occurs where Sky Harbor-bound traffic on westbound 10 is switching lanes to the right quickly. It often is like a rolling blender.

“That’s the purpose of the collector-distributor lanes,” Hermann said. “I’ve driven that. I know what that can be like. This should eliminate that and make it a lot safer by allowing traffic to move a lot smoother because you’re not having to have your head spin around to look at the person changing lanes from the left, and the person changing lanes from the right.”

A trouble spot on westbound U.S. 60 during the afternoon-evening commute will not be addressed directly in the project but should benefit indirectly from it. There are rear-end collisions nearly every afternoon in the dip near Mill Avenue. Drivers can’t see into the dip until they are nearly on top of it. Traffic at freeway speed then must slam on the brakes because traffic is backed up to a standstill from the 10/60 interchange.

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Corona had 12 swimmers from the boys team and one diver qualify for the state swim meet at the McClintock State Qualifier Meet, held Oct. 29. Team included, from left, front: Deniz Bagis, Cabhan Kelleher, Colin Campbell; back: Justin French, Ryan La Ra, Reed Lucero, Tristan Lo, Adam El-Rabaa, Andres Esparza, Cedric Brooking, Radek Brocki, Lorcan Kelleher, Dusten Crosswhite, Walter Moffatt, Eric Herrera. Not pictured: Ramsey Otis, Joel Valdes.

Corona swim, dive teams take medals at state meet

Corona del Sol High's swimming and diving team qualified 12 boys and one diver plus 15 girls for the Division I Swimming and Diving

State Championships at Skyline Aquatic Center on Nov. 6 despite several obstacles, including COVID-19 restrictions required by the Arizona Interscholastic

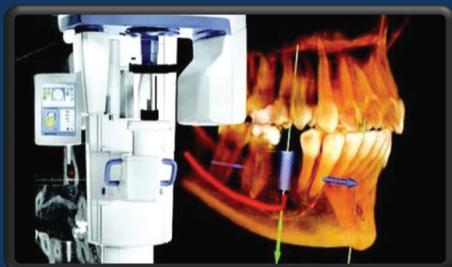
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Association for practices and meets.

“Considering the COVID-19 restrictions and that we started the season about three weeks later than normal, I thought our season went well,” said Aztecs head coach Ron Musgrave.

Among the restrictions that had the biggest impact was a limit of 32 swimmers in the water at the same time during practices.

“We had to adjust our practice schedule to accommodate all of our swimmers and still stay within the 32-swimmer limit,” Musgrave said. “We figured out a way to split lanes and divide daily practice times using a signup Genius app, where our swimmers every weekend reserved their practice times for the upcoming week.

Meet restrictions

“The first hour, we typically designed practices for our elite-level swimmers and the second hour was for the more developmental swimmers. The Genius app helped us coaches know exactly who was coming and when.”

Competition was limited to four meets, one state-qualifying meet and one state-championship meet for all schools. Corona’s season started with a home meet against Chandler on Sept. 17.

Meet restrictions stipulated that no more than 100 people could be on deck at a time, only volunteers allowed within pool gates and swimmers had to arrive in suits with no opportunity to change, according to Musgrave.

“Chandler coach Bob Chen and I communicated for weeks on how to execute the meet with the COVID-19 restrictions,” Musgrave said. “We ended

letting Chandler camp on the pool deck, as a show of good sportsmanship, while our team set up camp in the parking lot. We then had to shuffle different swimmers into the pool deck for each event and have them exit immediately following the completion of their individual event.”

Additional requirements at swim meets included everyone wearing masks at all times, temperature checks on everyone before entry, COVID-19 questionnaires completed, team areas spread out and swimmers exiting the far end of the pool after completing each event.

“After each individual event, the swimmers typically exit the pool where they start,” Musgrave said. “This year, we decided to give them additional time to swim to the north end of the pool and exit there and walk around while we started the next event off the starting blocks (south side of the pool).”

The swimmers probably missed the cheering crowds at the meets the most because parents were not allowed into the swimming-pool complex or deck. Most watched outside the pool fence, if possible, trying to provide some support for the swimmers during races.

In addition, the swimmers were divided at the McClintock State Qualifier Meet and the state meet with boys swimming in the morning and girls in the afternoon.

“With only half the team present at these last two meets, the swimmers missed the comradery of cheering each other on when they were split up in this manner,” said

Musgrave.

Corona’s swimmers and divers who did qualify for the state championships had only one opportunity to be eligible, the McClintock State Qualifier Meet, on Oct. 29.

“Before COVID-19, a swimmer or diver had four opportunities to meet certain state-qualifying times to compete at state,” Musgrave said. “This year, the top 30 swimmers in each individual event and the top 24 relay teams in each relay event at just the one qualifying meet was eligible for the state meet.”

Corona’s boys team finished the state meet ninth out of 28 teams that competed.

Campbell excels

The top male swimmer at Corona, according to Musgrave, was sophomore **Colin Campbell** who took fifth place in the 200-yard individual medley with a time of 1 minute, 57.49 seconds, sixth place in the 100-yard breaststroke with a time of 59.13 seconds and was part of the 200-yard medley relay team that placed seventh among 24 teams.

The 200-yard medley relay team included **Reed Lucero, Lorcan Kelleher** and **Dustin Croswhite**.

“Croswhite, a senior, finished out his swimming career this season, surviving the passing of his father, with a fantastic year in the pool by getting his personal best time of 58.74 and finishing 24th in the 100 backstroke at state and helping the boys 200 medley and 200 freestyle relay teams,” said Musgrave.

— ZENER, Page 16



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Corona's 200-yard freestyle relay team of **Deniz Bagis, Tristen Lo, Kelleher** and **Joel Valdes** came in 10th while the 400-yard freestyle relay team of Kelleher, **Andres Esparza**, Bagis, and **Cedric Brooking** took eighth place at the state meet.

New to the team this season but earning the second-most points at state, which included an 18th place in the 200 yard freestyle and 21st place in the 100 yard freestyle, was sophomore Bagis, according to Musgrave.

Other results from the state meet for the boys team included a ninth place for Brooking and an 11th for Reed in the 200-yard individual medley, a 9th place for Lucero and 26th place of **Eric Herrera** in the 100-yard breaststroke, an 11th place for Brooking in the 500-yard freestyle, a 22nd place for Esparza in the 100-yard butterfly, and a 27th place for Valdes in the 50-yard freestyle.

Freshman **Gavin Buttram** was the only Corona diver on either team to qualify for the state meet.

Buttram battled a broken hand but still finished in eighth place in 1-meter diving with a score of 366.20. He was coached by Corona's new diving coach, Kacee Olson.

"As only a sophomore, **Cabhan Kelleher**, won the Joe Selleh award because of his teamwork and effort. He should be one to watch the next two seasons," said Musgrave.

Musgrave is also looking forward to the opportunity to see what 2021 brings the talented young swimmers on Corona's boys team, including sophomores Lucero and Esparza and juniors Brooking and Herrera.

Watch for coverage of Corona's girls swimmers at state in our next edition, or visit wranglernews.com for details of the Aztecs' swimming and diving performances at the state championship meet.

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Schools

From Page 6

requirement, I say do everything you can to stop COVID so we can send our kids back to school," she said. "I am just thankful that the district is being extra cautious, and I have a lot of empathy for families, because this is very difficult right now, no matter what your choice is. I much hope that we can get the cases back down so that everyone can get back to their choice for learning."

In statements sent to Wrangler News, Christine Busch, superintendent for Tempe School District No. 3, acknowledged the challenges being faced by parents with these decisions.

"Parents are truly heroes trying to balance work, caregiving and life with the uncertainties of the science and danger of COVID-19, choosing virtual or in-person instruction for their precious children and the inequities of what's mandated for public schools with private and charter schools," said Busch. "Although our metrics guide us back to returning to 100 percent virtual instruction, we are blessed to have options for our children whose families are essential workers, first responders or who don't have the option to learn virtually from home or from a safe place."

Dr. Jan Vesely, superintendent for the Kyrene School District, said in a statement that despite the challenges, her primary responsibility is for the safety of all students,

teachers, staff and the community at-large. She noted that more than 800 students in the district had been quarantined because of potential exposure to the coronavirus on campus within the previous two weeks.

"The COVID pandemic has challenged all of us in ways we could not have imagined. The stress of the pandemic — the disruption of normal activities and isolation from friends — is taking a toll on our children," Vesely said.

"We have made significant improvements in our delivery of online instruction since the spring, and many of our students have adjusted well to distance learning. I want to assure families that our school administrators, teachers and staff are all committed to providing not just instruction but also social-emotional support for our students."

Some struggle with computerized learning

While Tonya Drew is able to take advantage of those exceptions, she is still concerned that her children aren't getting a proper education in that setting. When her children who qualify go to the school, she says, they're working on a computer in a large room socially distant from each other with a teacher or aide monitoring them. Part of that struggle is that her children don't do well with computers, saying that they spend that time playing games or visiting inappropriate websites. For that reason, the family only has one computer for Drew's husband, and even with the use of chrome books loaned from the

school, the extra usage slows the internet speed.

"Being on a computer is not good for them at all," she said.

"The district can only get a report when they do something live, not stop it before it happens. The kids know how to do things, and they share with each other. The district can't even keep up with what the kids are able to do. What they had going on was working for those who wanted it with opening up the schools."

Beth Hagen, whose two daughters — a second grader and fifth grader — attend Fuller Elementary School, supports the closures, but she is also frustrated with the increase in screen time, saying her family is weighing that with the risk of contracting a virus. She also recognizes that many families don't have an extra computer for their children to use and the effect extra usage has on Wi-Fi.

"I think we need more top-down assistance. If we want to make education more accessible to everyone, given the current situation with this virus, we need to provide internet access for families free who need it," Hagen suggested. "We have lunch programs, free breakfast programs in schools. Can we have a program that provides internet access for families that are in need?"

Hagen has also expressed the challenge of trying to do her work while her 7-year-old sets up next to her. Recognizing the role schools play in a child's social and emotional development, Hagen said that via Zoom her

— SCHOOLS, Page 23

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Photography: Billy Hardiman . . . www.picturebilly.com

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Chandler Businesses! Apply for a free “I Choose Chandler PPE Kit”

**Must meet program qualifications*

\$240 value—Kit includes:

- 2 boxes of 50 non-medical surgical masks
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“Protecting public health has been Council’s top priority throughout the pandemic. The I Choose Chandler PPE Kit Program is another way the City continues to create innovative programs to keep employees and patrons safe, while providing much needed assistance to our business community.” ~ Chandler Mayor, Kevin Hartke

Chandler businesses must meet the following criteria to be eligible for a PPE Kit:

- Be a registered business with the City of Chandler
 - Have 100 or less employees
 - The following are excluded from qualifying: Non-Profits, home based businesses, vacation rentals, rentals of commercial property, internet based businesses, kiosks or vending businesses, car service provider (i.e. Uber, Lyft, other taxi service)
- Visit www.ChandlerChamber.com to fill out the application.

Schools

From Page 18

daughters take classes at Dance 101, and her 10-year-old participates in her Girl Scout troop.

"It's wonderful we live in 2020, and we have that ability to do that. Even though it's not the same, it's just not safe to have Girl Scout troop meetings," she said. "Two weekends ago, we did a Zoom campfire and smore night. The troop leader dropped off smore kits with graham crackers and marshmallows."

Lori Bastian, who has two freshmen and a sophomore at Corona del Sol, recently lost a Tempe Union High School District governing board election. Returning to school was her primary issue. Her biggest concern is what she describes is a lack of communication and transparency.

Different districts, different approaches

"Parents have felt in the dark the whole time; when we are given some information, and we have input to provide, they're not asking for our input. That was the big frustration for most parents, just the feeling of not being heard and acknowledged," she said. "How is it that

Chandler Unified can figure this out, but we can't seem to keep our schools open?"

Bastian also said the enforcement of mask-wearing seems to be arbitrary, pointing out that her sons had to wear a mask when they were on the sidelines at football games, but not when they were playing on the field.

"They keep making up the rules as they go."

Thanks for making 'a tough call'

Beeman said that because of her position, she's been accused on social media of not caring if she kills people. She also felt threatened when school board member Andres Barraza, after dismissing form emails sent by students as their parents playing politics during a Sept. 16 board meeting, said, "I know who you are."

"Despite all the other stuff going on, that just magnifies my anger and frustration to have parents concerned about providing an education for their kids, and to have a board member to say we're using a template and we know who you are, it's frightening as a parent, and it's appalling as a community member."

Danielle Pollett, who has a freshman and a senior at Mountain Pointe High School and a sixth- and seventh-grader at Pueblo Middle School in the Kyrene district, thanked the high school district for "making this tough

call" in her comments on a Facebook post from the district.

"I understand why a lot of parents are upset, but me and my kids approached the entire pandemic a little differently," she told Wrangler News. "It's more so my responsibility to monitor the online learning and address any concerns we have directly with the teachers instead of harping on the school district."

Pollett and her husband are trying to maintain a positive attitude to address their children's social and emotional needs. They try to acknowledge their feelings of grief, disconnectedness and frustration, and remind them that those feelings are being shared by kids and adults everywhere.

"That makes them feel a little bit more like, 'We're all in this together,' instead of, 'This is just happening to me,'" she said. She also expressed that part of the reason the schools are closed is because people aren't following guidelines. She noted a movement she discovered on Facebook encouraging parents to not get their kids tested for COVID or report cases to the schools.

"It's nobody's fault, it's just our reality right now," Pollett said. "If every family was following CDC guidelines, the schools would not have to shut down again."



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Real Estate News Update

by Real Estate Expert &
Local Radio Host, Carol Royse

Pricing Strategy to Sell Your Home



Carol Royse

When you decide to sell your home, setting your asking price is one of the most important decisions you will ever make. Depending on how a buyer is made aware of your home, price is often the first thing he or she sees, and many homes are discarded by prospective buyers as not being in the appropriate price range before they're even given a chance of a showing.

Your asking price is often your home's "first impression", and if you want to realize the most money you can for your home, it's imperative that you make a good first impression.

This is not as easy as it sounds, and pricing strategy should not be taken lightly. Pricing too high can be as costly to a home seller as pricing too low. Taking a look at what homes in your neighborhood have sold for is only a small part of the process, and on its own is not nearly enough to help you make the best decision.

With the continued lack of supply of existing homes for sale as well as the surge in buyer demand, most experts are predicting strong appreciation in 2021. Many homeowners look at this and reason, with a tight market and limited homes for sale, I can ask any price and get that "one" buyer. This reasoning usually ends in disappointment. One third of the homes listed for sale in Maricopa County in 2020 did not sell. They were either priced too high or the condition was not what buyers are looking for. Pricing is key to getting top dollar.

I have recently released a new report which compiles 10 years of industry research, entitled "Pricing Your Home: How to Get the Price You Want (and Need)". This FREE report will help you understand pricing strategy from three different angles. When taken together, this information will help you price your home to not only sell but, sell for the price you want. I offer the **100% of Asking Price Guarantee, or I Will Pay You The Difference.** Also ask about our **FREE Home Staging Service.**

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