

Arizona Coach Talker

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~ Spring Has Sprung! ~

But it feels like we have jumped right into summer!!! We have already reached the 100 degree mark!!! So, it's already time to be reminding our seasonal visitors to carry plenty of water when out on their activities....and hats and sunscreen guides, too!! Spring training games have probably had some heat exhaustion victims, too. Stay cool everyone!!!

~ PLAY BALL !! ~

Arizona Baseball Museum had its grand opening celebration on February 21. The historic Lehi Auditorium on the Mesa Historical Museum's Lehi Campus has been transformed into the Arizona Baseball Museum, opening just in time for Spring Training 2026. <https://www.arizonabaseballmuseum.org/events>

Built in 1909 Bisbee's Warren Ballpark is the nation's oldest multi-use stadium in continuous use. As the popularity of baseball grew right along with Arizona's mining towns, Warren evolved into a hub for mining-town recreation and a host for many teams and leagues. For example, in 1928, the class D Arizona State League was created with four teams: The Bisbee Bees, Miami Miners, Tucson Waddies and Phoenix Senators. Today, the park continues to host high school sports, the Copper City Classic Vintage Base Ball Tournament and community festivals.

The Friends of Warren Ballpark is an organization of baseball fans that recognizes the historic value of the field and its place in the history of America's National Pastime. Its purpose is to promote, restore and renovate the ballpark as a functioning community asset for the Bisbee Unified School District and the community at large. It has built new bathrooms that are ADA compliant, replaced the bleacher screening, and added signage and a new scoreboard. In 2022 the entire surrounding fence was replaced with new lumber provided by the Friends with labor provided by the awesome BUSD maintenance crew! <https://friendsofwarrenballpark.com/>

Dear AGA Members,

Know that we are all in the thick of tour and event work right now - long days, constant movement, and a lot of moving pieces. In the midst of it all, take a moment to keep these things in mind:

- *Take care of yourself as much as you take care of the work - rest when you can, hydrate, and don't hesitate to ask for support.*
- *Lean on each other. This is a team effort, and no one is expected to carry it alone.*
- *Celebrate the small wins. Even the things that seem minor are steps forward and worth recognizing.*
- *And most importantly, remember that intensity is temporary, but the impact you are making will last far beyond these busy days.*

We've got this - together!

Diane Schaeffler
President, AGA

In case you missed it in the news.....

A new freeway will be built south of Interstate 10 to connect the West Valley to Phoenix. State Route 30, the Tres Rios Freeway, will serve as a traffic reliever and alternate route to Interstate 10, crossing the cities of Buckeye, Goodyear, Avondale and Phoenix, according to the Arizona Department of Transportation.

The freeway will eventually stretch between Maricopa County Road 85 in Buckeye to the section of Interstate 17 known as the Durango Curve in Phoenix. But construction will begin first on the center section from Loop 202 to the future Loop 303 extension. The first phase of construction will be from Loop 202 to 97th Avenue.

Project elements include:

- 4.5-mile freeway with three lanes in each direction
- New system-to-system interchange at SR 30 and Loop 202
- Traffic interchanges at 91st, 83rd and 67th avenues
- Bridges at 91st, 83rd, 75th and 67th avenues on SR 30
- Bridges at Southern Avenue and Broadway Road on Loop 202
- Widening Loop 202 between Buckeye and Dobbins roads
- Widening existing bridges at Loop 202 and Baseline, Broadway and Lower Buckeye roads and the Roosevelt Irrigation Canal and Buckeye Road
- A multiuse path from 97th Avenue to 67th Avenue
- Noise walls where warranted

The construction will take place south of I-10 in the West Valley. Construction is expected to start in 2027 and take three years to complete. When completed, the freeway will have five lanes in each direction from MC 85 to Loop 202, including one HOV lane, as well as ramps connecting the HOV lanes between SR 30 and Loop 202.

The “Five C’s” don’t drive Arizona’s economy today, but they do mark when the State came into its own. The “Five C’s” — cattle, citrus, copper, cotton and climate - are a snapshot of Arizona history. While they aren’t the main sectors of the state’s economy today, they speak to a time when Arizona came into its own, and for that, they will always matter.

The five Cs were the early pillars of Arizona’s economy around the time it achieved independent statehood, but they’ve been largely superseded by other sectors. Given the makeup of Arizona’s economy today, it makes sense that things like citrus wouldn’t be people’s first guess of our main economic drivers if they don’t have the “Five C’s” memorized. So, what are the five main industries of Arizona today? Reports by the state commerce authority and the U.S. Department of Commerce point to a few modern industries: real estate, health care and manufacturing - which include the semiconductor and aerospace industries. Citrus, cotton and cattle make up less than 1% of the state’s economy combined today, even though they bring in billions of dollars.

Local radio station KJZZ, has an in depth overview of the “Five C’s” as we know them. Visit this site for the rest of the story and audio clips of each one and how they have evolved to their current status in Arizona’s economy.

<https://www.kjzz.org/business/2026-02-18/the-5-cs-they-dont-drive-arizonas-economy-today-but-mark-when-state-came-into-its-own>

Welcome to snake season Arizona’s unofficial warm-weather tradition. Snake season typically ramps up in spring and runs through early fall, when rising temperatures bring snakes out to hunt and mate. Arizona is home to more than 50 snake species, including several rattlesnakes, such as the Western Diamondback, Mojave, Sidewinder and Black-tailed rattlesnake. You’ll also find non-venomous species such as gopher snakes, kingsnakes and coachwhips.

Most snakes want absolutely nothing to do with hikers. They strike only when threatened, stepped on or surprised. That famous rattle? It’s basically nature’s polite warning system.

Peak rattlesnake season, and any other type of snake, in Arizona is typically March through September or October, when the warmth draws them out.

Rattlesnakes are found throughout Arizona, which has a diverse range of habitats suitable for these reptiles. Here are five places where rattlesnakes are frequently found in Arizona:

- Sonoran Desert.
- Chiricahua Mountains.
- Superstition Mountains.
- Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument.
- Grand Canyon region.

Commercial rattlesnake repellents are available, but their effectiveness is a topic of debate. But according to PETA, some smells can strongly discourage them, such as clove oil, cinnamon oil and even vinegar. Encountering a rattlesnake on the trail or in your yard can be nerve-wracking. Rattlesnakes are generally not aggressive and usually try to avoid confrontation, but they may strike if they feel threatened. Make sure to always keep your distance and simply back up and move away. When sticking to well-defined hiking trails in open areas, the risk of encountering rattlesnakes or any type of snake is very low, and snake bites are rare. There is a slightly higher risk of accidentally stepping on or near a hidden snake when hiking off-trail or amid vegetation or rocky terrain.

If you encounter a snake in your home or yard, do not attempt to capture or kill it. Engaging with the snake could lead to a bite. Do not attempt to handle the situation on your own. Call a professional snake removal service, pest control company or your local animal control agency. Running from a rattlesnake or making any other sudden movement is not recommended. It could provoke the snake and increase the likelihood of a defensive strike. Do not try to hit, kick or pick up the snake; it increases the risk of being bitten. Try to get to higher ground, but your best course of action is back away slowly and calmly while keeping your eyes on the snake. Maintaining a safe distance and allowing the snake a clear path to retreat reduces the risk of confrontation.

Snakes do not naturally “follow” people the way other animals might. They aren’t out to get you and they don’t chase out of aggression. What can feel like following usually comes down to either the snake happens to head in the same direction, moving from one hiding place to another and in some rare cases, a snake may move more boldly during mating season.

<https://www.azcentral.com/story/entertainment/life/2025/06/23/amazing-facts-about-snakes/84035330007/>

Airport News.....

The new Phoenix Airport Museum exhibition, *Fluoresce*, features artwork illuminated by a mesmerizing glow. *Fluoresce* is an art exhibition featuring seven local artists who utilize fluorescent paint and ultraviolet light to create artwork that comes to life under blacklight. This process accentuates the colors in each artwork, giving the paintings vibrancy and dimension. Each artist was inspired by color, nostalgia or nature in this exciting new exhibition. Check out *Fluoresce* in Terminal 4, level 3 just east of the food court. Visit the Sky Harbor website for exhibit information:

<https://www.skyharbor.com/at-the-airport/amenities/airport-museum/current-exhibitions/terminal-4-museum-exhibitions/>

Travelers moving through Terminal 4 now have a new way to experience Phoenix’s story of growth and problem-solving through a large-scale photo mural.

Desert Innovation is a captivating installation of historic and contemporary images along the post-security passenger bridge between the A and D gates at Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport’s Terminal 4. Presented by the Phoenix Airport Museum, the mural celebrates the talent, industries and ideas shaping Greater Phoenix. The images invite travelers to explore how the region paved the way to become a corridor for creativity and resilience, from ancient canal systems to present day Semiconductor manufacturing.

“Phoenix Sky Harbor is the front door to our city, and this exhibition gives travelers a powerful first impression,” said Phoenix Mayor Kate Gallego. “We’re a region built on innovation and collaboration, and by highlighting the talent and industries driving our economy, *Desert Innovation* shows how Phoenix continues to lead with creativity, resilience and opportunity.”

The project is a partnership between Phoenix Sky Harbor and the Greater Phoenix Economic Council (GPEC). The exhibition honors Greater Phoenix’s past while spotlighting how far the region has come as a

thriving center for innovation. The museum team worked with GPEC to identify key industries and the impact they have locally and regionally, blending historic context with present-day imagery and data, to tell the story of Greater Phoenix's past, present and future.

"The story of Greater Phoenix is groundbreaking technologies, fruitful collaboration and a fierce determination to be leaders in industries that improve the lives of communities around the world," said GPEC President and CEO Christine Mackay. "We're honored to showcase our heritage and transformation into a world-class market to the millions of travelers welcomed by Phoenix Sky Harbor each year."

Desert Innovation highlights key industries that continue to drive the region forward, including: Aerospace & Defense, Biosciences, Advanced Manufacturing, Climate Tech/Sustainability; Startup Innovation. More information about Desert Innovation can be found at:

<https://www.skyharbor.com/at-the-airport/amenities/airport-museum/pastpresentandfuture/>

Phoenix Sky Harbor Airport consistently looks for ways to enhance the passenger experience. In partnership with U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), America's Friendliest Airport® is further making the travel experience more efficient and convenient for travelers with the implementation of Enhanced Passenger Processing (EPP). This initiative provides travelers with a quicker way to move through the international arrivals process.

Phoenix Sky Harbor is the 23rd airport to offer this free service. EPP is a voluntary process for U.S. citizens. No prior enrollment is required. Travelers simply arrive at the CBP inspection area where a camera matches their photo to the document information CBP already has on file. The seamless, touchless process only takes seconds, further reducing the time spent at the CBP arrival area, enhancing security by allowing the officer to focus on the travel.

- For those without TSA PreCheck, Phoenix Sky Harbor offers PHX RESERVE which provides travelers with an opportunity to reserve a time to go through the TSA security checkpoint line and avoid the wait.
- For those traveling internationally, biometric exit is also available. This CBP program uses facial recognition to verify the identity of departing travelers and helps to quickly process travelers boarding flights.
- In February, Early Bag Check returned to PHX. This free and convenient service allows travelers to travel lighter and more easily on the PHX Sky Train® by checking their bags before they get to the terminal. The service is available at the Rental Car Center and East Economy parking for select domestic airlines.

For more information on all these services as well as other amenities Phoenix Sky Harbor offers, visit: [skyharbor.com](https://www.skyharbor.com).

News from the Arizona Office of Tourism (AOT).....

Tribal lands make up one-quarter of Arizona's vast landscapes. With 22 sovereign tribal nations throughout the state, visitors have many opportunities for immersive cultural tours. Tribal communities invite visitors to attend ceremonies and festivals to witness their traditions firsthand.

Start your tour in Central Arizona at the "big house." Casa Grande Ruins National Monument preserves a massive adobe structure and remnants of a village inhabited by Ancestral Pueblo cultures of the desert Southwest. Head to the most remote access point of the Grand Canyon, where the Hualapai tribal community offers hikes and whitewater rafting tours of Grand Canyon West. On the Navajo Nation, native guides lead hikes to sacred canyons and monuments that most visitors do not get to see.

Museums throughout the state display artifacts that preserve the stories of Arizona's Indigenous communities. At the Heard Museum in Phoenix, see a staggering collection of traditional and contemporary American Indian artworks that spans centuries. The Museum of Northern Arizona and the Hopi Cultural Center up north display cultural artifacts that tell the stories of Ancestral Pueblo communities. In Southern Arizona, Amerind Museum interprets the culture and pathways of multiple Indigenous communities of the Southwest.

Many sites on tribal lands require permits to visit, and others require visitors to schedule tours guided by tribal members. Learn more about visiting tribal communities, including tips for purchasing authentic arts and crafts. <https://www.visitarizona.com/experiences/arts-culture/american-indian>

Scottsdale Tourism Updates....

Scottsdale continues to build on its \$47 million committed investment in Old Town with additional paving, infrastructure upgrades, business support, and a new, coordinated economic development and tourism strategy designed to strengthen the area's long-term vitality.

Recent pavement improvements to roads and alleys throughout Old Town are improving safety, accessibility, and aesthetics while supporting daily business operations and major events. The paving work complements ongoing infrastructure investments, including sewer improvements near Stagebrush Theater and the recently completed Second Street and Goldwater Boulevard sewer project, helping modernize essential systems in one of Scottsdale's most active areas.

Additional Old Town enhancements are either underway or proposed as part of the city's FY 2026/27 budget, including a second phase of streetscape beautification with expanded tree planting, street furniture, and wayfinding, along with new Fifth Avenue monument signs to strengthen district identity. Plans also include improvements to the Horseshoe Falls installation at Marshall Way and Indian School Road and landscape and lighting upgrades at Solstice Park.

Old Town continues to serve as a hub for community gatherings and signature events. The Scottsdale Farmers Market will relocate to a larger space outside City Hall, while events such as Scottsdazzle, Western Week, weekly ArtWalks, and weekend activations continue to draw residents and visitors year-round. The city has also expanded marketing support for Old Town merchants through matching funds, a dedicated website and events calendar, social media, newsletters, and event banner programs.

With the Colorado River..... supplying 72% of Scottsdale's water and Lake Mead sitting at less than half capacity, the city is seriously considering a major pivot: turning recycled wastewater into drinking water. The idea isn't new. Scottsdale has recycled water for golf courses and groundwater recharge for decades and there's already an advanced water purification facility near the 101 and Pima Road, that ran a small pilot program before pausing at the end of 2024.

But, it's actually drinking it that's a whole different conversation. Here's the catch - the price tag ballooned from an estimated 15 to 20 million to nearly 100 million. City manager, Greg Caton, says the money isn't even in next year's preliminary budget yet because the council needs to make a policy decision first.

Supporters say the purified water is cleaner than some bottled water. Critics are calling it 'toilet to tap'. Either way, stay tuned this spring when the consultants deliver their findings.

Sedona News

A major wellness development is coming to Red Rock country. The Arabella Hotel Sedona is set to build a \$25 million hydrothermal spa, adding a large-scale wellness destination to one of Arizona's most popular tourist cities. The project will be financed through a construction loan arranged by Arriba Capital.

The planned spa will span more than 21,000 square feet across four buildings and include 14 treatment rooms, a spa café, patio bar, retail boutique, and multiple indoor and outdoor relaxation spaces. The hydrotherapy circuit will feature heated vitality pools, cold plunges, steam rooms, saunas, a snow room, and a salt scrub room, all designed around centuries-old European bathing traditions focused on the therapeutic use of water.

Developers say hydrothermal spas are still relatively rare in the U.S., even as wellness-focused travel continues to grow. The Sedona project aims to blend luxury hospitality with experiential wellness — an approach that has been more common in Canada and Europe.

The Arabella property also carries deep Arizona history. The 144-room estate once supported Western film productions in the mid-20th century, hosting stars like John Wayne, Elvis Presley, and Marlon Brando. One of the hotel's existing pools is even rumored to have been built at Elvis' request during a filming visit. With Sedona already known for hiking, stargazing, and spiritual tourism, the new spa could further cement the city's status as a national wellness destination.

Sedona City Council heard an update in January on the \$26.4 million Uptown Parking Garage, which will add about 270 new public parking spaces. The project is about 70% complete, and anticipated to open in June.

Transit Administrator Amber Wagner said her Transit Department staff is planning to use automatic license

plate readers for parking enforcement at “the Uptown Parking Garage and other city managed parking facilities where appropriate,” the draft Parking Data Governance Policy and Standard Operating Procedures for the Sedona Parking Management Program wrote. Additionally “handheld or vehicle-mounted LPRs may be used by parking enforcement staff ... for on-street parking and city managed lots,” the document reads.

Parking enforcement will be done by the Sedona Police Department, most likely by non-sworn Community Service officers.

For all tourism activities in Sedona for 2026, you can always visit the Chamber of Commerce website: <https://visitsedona.com/events-calendar/annual-events/>

News from the Grand Canyon.....

This month-by-month trip planner for 2026 is designed to help you choose the best time to visit Grand Canyon based on your interests and comfort level. Whether you’re planning a flexible itinerary or timing your visit around hiking conditions, events, or learning experiences, this guide highlights what each season has to offer: <https://www.grandcanyon.org/about/news/grand-canyon-trip-planner-2026-your-month-by-month-guide>

Effective immediately Grand Canyon National Park is implementing water conservation measures on the South Rim following a power outage that impacted the SCADA system at the Havasupai Gardens pumphouse. As a result, water is currently unable to be pumped to the South Rim.

- All park residents and visitors are required to conserve and reduce water usage wherever possible in homes, hotel rooms and campgrounds.
- Water conservation measures include:
- Reducing toilet flushing
- Running dishwashers and washing machines only with full loads or in eco-mode
- Shortening shower times and turning off sinks while brushing teeth and shaving
- Reporting and repairing drips, leaks and other sources of water loss
- Using only reclaimed water to wash vehicles

Park crews are actively working to repair the water system. The park appreciates the public’s cooperation in conserving water during this time.

Arizona Water

The CAP Trail provides a recreational opportunity throughout the state. The trail is for multiple non-motorized recreational uses: walking, jogging, equestrian, cycling and roller blading. The vision for the CAP Trail started when CAP construction began in the early 1970s, and development of the trail is dependent on partnerships with local jurisdictions.

CAP does not have legal authority to build or maintain the trail; in fact, cooperation and partnerships among municipal, county, and tribal agencies determine the outcome of the trail. There are more than 30 organizations that have been, or will be involved in, getting the trail constructed, each sponsoring a portion of the trail that runs through their jurisdiction.

CAP facilitates these recreation agreements between the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation and city or county sponsors to help with the prospective sponsors’ councils or boards, planning commissions, and trail committees.

Looking for the CAP Trail maps for your GPS device, mapping software, or an outdoor activity app? Click on the link below to download a GPX file of the trail you’re looking for:

<https://www.cap-az.com/about/cap-trail/>

Water, Water, Water! We are entering a critical phase regarding the future of the CAP and Arizona’s share currently being negotiated. Visit the Colorado River Conditions Dashboard:

<https://www.cap-az.com/colorado-river-conditions-dashboard/>

Items of Interest

Southern Arizona is becoming a key link in America's tech infrastructure. Global mining giant Rio Tinto is partnering with Amazon Web Services to supply copper from an Arizona mine for Amazon's expanding network of U.S. data centers. Under a two-year agreement, copper used by Amazon will come from the Johnson Camp Mine in Cochise County, which is owned by Gunnison Copper. The deal was first reported by The Wall Street Journal. Copper plays a critical role in modern data centers — powering electrical cables, transformers, circuit boards, motors, and cooling systems that keep cloud computing and AI infrastructure running.

What makes this mine different is how the copper is produced. Johnson Camp uses Nuton's bioleaching technology, a process that relies on bacteria and acid to extract copper from ore that would otherwise be too costly to mine. Rio Tinto says the method uses less water and produces lower carbon emissions, a major factor in Amazon's supply-chain strategy.

Executives say sourcing copper domestically helps strengthen U.S. supply chains while reducing reliance on foreign materials critical to data infrastructure.

The Johnson Camp Mine began producing copper in August 2025, finished construction ahead of schedule, and has the capacity to produce 25 million pounds of finished copper per year, making it one of the newest copper producers in the country. As demand for data centers accelerates alongside AI and cloud growth, Arizona's mining industry is positioning itself at the center of the digital economy.

Mt. Graham near Safford is home to "the Pope's Telescope" operated by the Vatican, and Tucson is home to an official "seat of the Vatican," where researchers live and work. Officially it falls under the category of miscellaneous 'foreign government office.' So, right in Tucson, is a miscellaneous foreign government office," said Fr. Paul Gabor, Vice Director of the Vatican Observatory. Gabor is explaining why when you step into a mid-century modern home near the U of A, you are considered to be in a foreign government office of Vatican City.

A photo of Pope Francis on the wall might be your first clue that this is an official seat of the Vatican. A small chapel off the living room is another strong clue. But why Tucson, and why the Vatican? It's actually home to Jesuit priests, like Gabor, who are studying astronomy for the Vatican. While they live in Tucson, and spend time doing research and teaching at the U of A, they travel to Mt. Graham to do their observations at the VATT: the Vatican Advanced Technology Telescope.

Why here? First, you have to understand why the Catholic Church is interested in astronomy. The mission statement put forth in 1891 by Pope Leo XIII stated "To show to the world that clergy can do science." That's also when the Vatican established an observatory to show the world how the Church supports science. But the telescope wouldn't stay in Vatican City for long.

"This is a story of light pollution and how it persecutes poor astronomers." In the 1930s, Pope Pius XI relocated the Observatory to Castel Gandolfo, southeast of Rome. Within a few decades, light pollution forced the Vatican to look to the dark skies of Southeast Arizona. "In collaboration with the University of Arizona we moved here so that we could use the facilities of the university for astronomical observations."

That's how the *Vatican Observatory Foundation* established a presence east of Tucson on Mt. Graham. By 1993, the Vatican had a telescope of its own, thanks to the U of A's Mirror Lab and a new process of spin casting. They had the very first mirror made that way, the prototype. They got it simply because it was there and somebody needed to build a telescope around it. Four million dollars later and the Vatican Observatory Foundation had the VATT on Mt. Graham, taking advantage of our near-perfect dark sky.

Springtime in Arizona there's so much to love! One of them is the arrival of thousands of beautiful hummingbirds. The world's smallest bird will soon begin its annual journey northward. When do hummingbirds return to Arizona? They typically begin their journey at the end of winter and into the spring. So, expect to see these graceful creatures from late February to May.

At a maximum of five inches long, hummingbirds are by far the smallest type of bird on earth. Some weighing as little as a penny! Every year, they embark on their spring migration and pass over the Grand Canyon State in astounding numbers. There are several species that are common in Arizona and although their migratory path doesn't pass directly through Arizona, the birds spread out and fly over our state on their way to the Northern U.S. and Canada for the breeding season.

Because of their small size and quick wing speed, hummingbirds can fly up to 1,300 miles in one stretch, so it's no surprise they cover so much territory during their migration. Hummingbirds come in many different colors, shapes, and sizes. Their coloring includes bright pinks, reds, emeralds, light yellows, and grays. The color patterns vary depending on the gender, but the male hummingbirds are typically the most colorful.

Arizona, particularly the southeastern corner of the state, is home to more hummingbird species than almost anywhere else across the country. At least 13 varieties of hummingbirds have been spotted in the Phoenix area alone, most of which migrate from Central and South America. The most prevalent type, known as Anna's hummingbird, actually lives in the Southwest year-round, as does the Black-chinned hummingbird. Many hummingbird names, like Black-chinned and Ruby-throated, are pretty straightforward descriptions of the birds.

Peak migration activity typically occurs in April, at least with regard to our state. Oftentimes, they're still arriving in May as well. In recent years, hummingbirds in Arizona have been migrating earlier than usual due to the overall warming of the climate, so you can even spot these creatures as early as late February. To recap, the best time to see hummingbirds in Arizona is from late winter to early spring.

Arizona Game and Fish.....

South Dakota bison find new home in Arizona. /n December, Arizona Game and Fish (AZGFD) personnel translocated 15 bison from Wind Cave National Park (WICA) in South Dakota to Raymond Wildlife Area near Flagstaff.

Wind Cave National Park maintains one of the few bison herds in North America with no detectable cattle gene introgression, making it a critical herd in keeping the bison gene pool as genetically pure as possible. To safeguard this lineage, the herd is closely managed and monitored, with animals distributed across multiple sites as insurance against future population losses.

AZGFD partnered with WICA in 2015 to help maintain these genetics at Raymond Wildlife Area, with animals first introduced in 2017. A recent translocation became more complex after Johnne's disease was detected in the Wind Cave herd, requiring extensive testing, new quarantine protocols, and a two-phase translocation process.

Fifteen disease-free bison were ultimately selected and transported more than 1,000 miles from South Dakota to Arizona following a nonstop 17-hour drive. After a short acclimation period, the bison were released and have successfully integrated into the Raymond herd. The translocation was completed through strong collaboration among Arizona Game and Fish staff and Wind Cave National Park personnel, whose dedication kept the project on track despite significant challenges.

Volunteers really showed up to help make the Arizona Game and Fish Department's Apache Lake fish habitat project a success! More than 1,660 Christmas trees were tied to cinder blocks and placed in strategic locations into Apache Lake during the two volunteer work days in January. The more than 60 volunteers donated 530 hours of service. The trees will provide much-needed cover and nutrients to the lake ecosystem. Christmas trees were donated to the department through municipal collection sites, or were un-sold trees from nurseries and tree lots.

Arizona Game and Fish Department's (AZGFD) wildlife biologists are going to great lengths to learn more about the state's mountain lion population - collaring and tracking dozens of mountain lions and using this science to inform wildlife management decisions about the species. The Department's collection of mountain lion information from hands-on research is also designed to mitigate the impact of potentially dangerous conflict between these large carnivores and humans.

In 2020, the Department launched the Mountain Lion Survival and Cause-Specific Mortality Study to better understand the different causes and rates of mortality, reproduction and survival, and how mountain lions use the landscape across the state. They are tracking 30-plus mountain lions at all times. "The size of our work area makes this project more comprehensive in understanding all aspects of mountain lion ecology," said Dr. Brian Jansen, a senior wildlife biologist for the Department and mountain lion expert who has studied mountain lions in Arizona for more than 20 years.

Arizona's mountain lion population has rebounded since its low point in the early 1970s due to AZGFD's management of this species to include reclassifying mountain lions as a big game species and establishing the regulatory protections that come along with that designation. Current regulatory protections and close

management for mountain lions include established legal season dates, legal methods of take, mandatory physical check outs, and annual bag limits for hunter harvest. Mountain lions are not endangered, threatened, at-risk, or listed as a sensitive species in Arizona. Rather, they are widely distributed throughout the state and have expanded into the southwest region of the state where they were once only transient.

In 2025, AZGFD responded to 531 mountain-lion related calls from the public. Wildlife officers are guided by the Department's human-wildlife conflicts policy which describes acceptable or unacceptable wildlife behaviors and the appropriate responses related to large carnivores. Various factors, such as habitat fragmentation, drought and growing human populations, may increase the likelihood of encounters with mountain lions, especially in urban-wildland areas.

As Arizona's human population expands and the mountain lion population remains healthy, human-wildlife conflicts are inevitable. The Department's accumulation of mountain lion information from hands-on research and science-based management efforts are designed to keep the public safe. Learn about living with mountain lions on AZGFD's website:

<https://www.azgfd.com/wildlife-conservation/living-with-wildlife/living-with-mountain-lions/>

Did You Know.....

Ajo's name translates as garlic, though it has a deeper meaning. It actually comes from a Tohono O'odham word (au'auho) for paint. When Latino miners came to the area to mine copper, the name was contracted to the familiar Spanish word.

Chloride was founded in 1863 and was once the largest city in Mohave County. The town was named after the ore's they mined, which were heavy in silver chloride.

Crown King, which is located northwest of Black Canyon City, was named after the nearby [Crowned King Mine](#). Over time, the town's name was shortened to simply Crown King.

Tortilla Flats in eastern Maricopa County was named after nearby rock formations, which early settlers said looked like tortilla.

Wikieup is a small community in Mohave County. It's name comes from the Mohave word for "shelter" or "home." As the town's founders settled in the area there was a small shelter near their post office site. Thus, Wikieup was selected as the town's name, beating Owens, Neal and Sandy.

Tuba City was settled in 1875, by early settlers from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. They named the community they built near the Hopi communities of Moenkopi after the Hopi leader, Tuvi. However, the settlers' pronunciation was wrong, giving rise to the name Tuba City. In the early 1900s, the Mormons left the area as they had settled on land reserved for the Native American use. However, the Navajo people who have lived there since the late 1800s refer to the area as "Tó Naneesdizi", which translates as "tangled waters" due to underwater springs.

Top-of-the-World was initially a camping and recreation facility created in the 1920's along the old US 60 alignment between Globe and Superior. Its original name was Mason's Valley, for early settler, Charles G. Mason. It was renamed in the 1920's to highlight its scenic, high elevation location surrounded by pine forests.

Surprises's name according to the city's official website, was taken from a comment from its founder Flora Mae Statler. Statler's daughter said that when the city was just one square mile of farmland around 1938, her mother once commented she would be "surprised if the town ever amounted to much."

Show Low's name is the result of a card game. As the story goes Marion Clark and Corydon Cooley homesteaded a swath of land in the White Mountains in 1870 but had a falling out and decided to dissolve the

partnership with a card game. They played long into the night, until a weary Clark finally told Cooley “Show low and you take the ranch.” Cooley turned over the two of clubs, winning the land and providing the name of the future town. The local legend would also explain why the main drag through Show Low solo is called Deuce of Clubs.

Skull Valley has a somber story behind its name. It is said that when white explorers and settler first arrived at this valley 17 miles west of Prescott, they found a gruesome collection of skulls and other human bones scattered around the countryside town. The carnage was the result of warring Indian tribes.

Education its essential and what we do!

On February 15th a beautiful Sunday morning, 21 guests climbed aboard a new Via Motor Coach and headed south towards Picacho Peak. April Taylor and Henry Ward, both AGA Members, gave commentary. Our destination was Rooster Cogburn's Ostrich Ranch.

After arriving, we boarded the back of a monster truck, equipped with seating which made it possible to feed hungry birds over the sides of the truck. If you ask any AGA Guide about ostriches now, they will thoroughly inform you on the subject.

With a necklace around each neck and plastic cups filled with the correct food for each animal, we traveled the courtyard feeding the animals. My favorite animal was the kissing Boer goat that softly took the food from your mouth.

The parakeets were so sweet as they landed on you. You could see their little tongues lapping the sweet nectar from a cup in your hand. It took some bravery to feed squid to the Stingray with its flapping appendage above the mouth! But, once I overcame my natural fear, it was great fun.

We then headed to Caywood Farms in Casa Grande. We arrived at the small buildings in the middle of the farm, and Nancy Caywood, the owner of the farm, stepped onto our bus to greet us. We then enjoyed a delicious lunch from EEGEE's, a local Tucson business, which included a cake with artificial cotton decoration. Nancy gave a very interesting talk about cotton. Her enthusiastic presentation was given in one of the small comfortable buildings with seating for all. Later, we were treated to a hayride over the farmland. When was the last time you were on a hayride?

Thank you, April, for an engaging day with 21 people that included 11 AGA members and their guests. This day tour was in the spirit of the AGA's mission to promote continuing education about Arizona.

Sincerely,
Betsy Todd
Consultant and Member of the AGA since 1990

If you are interested in becoming AGA Certified for Arizona as a tour guide, and you have been a member for 1 year prior, you qualify to study for the test. The cost of the test information is \$10 and may be obtained from: Princely Nesadurai at pkntamil@yahoo.com. Your check should be payable to the Arizona Guides Association and marked for "Certification Test".

Benefits of AGA Certification:

- Gain confidence about Arizona history, geology, flora and fauna
- Become recognized by your peers as an exceptional source of information
- Heighten your visibility for career and job opportunities within the tourism industry

If there is a speaker or topic you would like AGA to bring to the membership please let the education committee know. Email: agaedprogram@gmail.com

Get Outside !!

With our local trails already closing due to extreme heat, it might be time to head out of town for some cooler hikes! Try Flowing Springs in the Tonto National Forest:

<https://www.fs.fed.us/r3/tonto/recreation/rogs/-camping/Payson/FlowingSprings.pdf>

Websites to visit

This new web-based app is designed to help users easily navigate all available parking options in Downtown Phoenix, including self-parking, valet parking, options with EV charging stations, and more.

<https://parkphx.com/>

Find the cleanest rest stops on your next road trip really!!

<https://americanriverwellnessrecovery.com/highway-hygiene/>

www.arizonaguides.org

AGA ~ P.O. Box 45302 ~ Phoenix, AZ 8064-5302