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ARIZONA
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Kartchner Caverns
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Little League All Stars
see Sports, page C-1

APACHE JUNCTION
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Softball Results



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Flag Day Success



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Public Meetings

Apache Junction Planning & Zoning regular meeting
7:00 p.m. Tuesday, June 24, 2008
300 E. Superstition Blvd.

Pinal County Board of Supervisors
9:30 a.m. Wednesday, June 25, 2008
County Complex, Florence

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CAC Board Approves Bond Election For Fall

Nearly \$99 million bond proposal will be on November ballot

By Meghan McCoy
The News

PINAL COUNTY- A unanimous vote by the five-member Pinal County Community College District Governing Board at their meeting last Tuesday, June 17, 2008 approved the pursuit of a nearly \$99 million general obligation bond in the November 2008 general election for Central Arizona College (CAC).

The \$98,975,000 bond, if approved by voters in November, would continue to keep the district's tax assessment lower than 2007-2008, according to Russ Banta, CAC's Vice President of Finance.

"We have lowered our primary property tax assessment for the last five years," he explained. "This year, it went down 39 cents per \$100 assessed. If the bond is approved, taxpayers still will be paying less than what was paid in the year before."

Residents with a full cash value home of \$200,000 will see a reduction from \$360 to \$282 for the 2008-2009 fiscal year, which is an \$82 decline. If the bond is



Gloria Guzman, Dudleyville, District 5



Rita Nader, Casa Grande, District 3



Gladys Christensen, Coolidge, District 2



Richard Gibson, Casa Grande, District 1



Gary Jackson, Gold Canyon, District 4

passed, taxpayers would pay an additional \$33.86 on that same home, bringing the total to \$316.

The wording to be used for the ballot will say that the funds can be used for any additional capital improvements within the district along with needed improvements county wide, according to CAC officials.

The nearly \$99 million bond will allow the district to extend access to educational and training programs, as well as services throughout the county, which will reach large populations that are presently under served, accord-

ing to college administrators.

The bond will also allow the college to buy land and build educational facilities in the Maricopa and San Tan areas, as well as improving current facilities and building additional classrooms at CAC's Superstition Mountain campus in Apache Junction.

"New classrooms, laboratories and community meeting facilities at the Superstition Mountain Campus will expand our capability to offer additional programs, workforce training and community and continuing education programs," Vice President of Ac-

ademic Programs and Services at CAC John Irvine said.

The bond monies will also be used to modernize and renovate the 30-year-old educational facilities at the Signal Peak Campus located between Coolidge and Casa Grande; the Aravaipa Campus between Winkelman and Oracle and the Casa Grande Center.

Since the 2000 census, the county has grown by 146,671 people, or 81 percent.

"We are at a point where we need to better serve the students

of Pinal County by expanding educational, job training and lifelong learning opportunities for residents through additional programs, convenient locations and refurbished facilities," CAC President Dennis Jenkins said.

The bond is expected to be paid off in 20 to 25 years with an estimated interest of five percent.

The Pinal County Community College District has not secured a bond election since 1972. County voters rejected a \$435 million CAC bond proposal in May of 2007.

Teen Stabbed To Death

Identity of victim not released by press time

By Meghan McCoy
The News

APACHE JUNCTION — The body of an Apache Junction teen was found last week with multiple stab wounds to the chest. Police say the body was discovered in the 1000 block of North Tomahawk Road early Friday morning, June 20, 2008.

The Apache Junction Police Department, Pinal County Sheriff's Department and a helicopter from the Department of Public Safety were all being utilized to search the desert area around the scene and in the ongoing investigation on Friday, according to Captain Tom Kelly.

The deceased is described as a white male around 17 or 18 years old, Kelly said. Sources say authorities have actually identified the body but had not released the identity as of Friday afternoon. Sources also told the *News* that the teen had been involved with another male in an altercation over a female. That information was unconfirmed Friday.

Kelly added that there is a possibility of one or two more individuals involved, but officers are not sure if they are witnesses or participants in the murder. Officers were also in the process of conducting interviews in Gold Canyon on possible leads they were following last Friday, according to Kelly.



This was the scene on Friday morning as police blocked off traffic in the 1000 block of North Tomahawk Road during the initial investigation of the murder.

The murder is the second of 2008 in Apache Junction. The first took place on Sunday, March 9, 2008 in the parking lot of Walgreens Drug store at 2440 S. Ironwood Drive as a man was slain in his car by a gunshot wound.

County Adopts Tentative Budget

At \$484 million, budget is \$24 million less than last year

By Ed Barker
The News

FLORENCE—The Pinal County Board of Supervisors approved a tentative budget last week for fiscal year 2008-09 totaling \$484.4 million, calling for a 54-cent reduction in the property tax rate. If approved, the rate would drop to \$3.48 per \$100 assessed valuation, the lowest in 31 years.

In reaction to a tightening economy, the budget trims \$24.4 million from the current year's budget.

Highlights of the proposed budget include:

- A net tax decrease of 54 cents, thus establishing the lowest primary property tax rate in 31 years. The proposed primary tax rate is 86 cents less than the 2006 rate.
- Establishing Superior Court Division X to handle the in-



County Manager Terry Doolittle

creased caseload stemming from the county's rapid growth.

- Ensuring public safety by providing adequate funding for the Sheriff's Office, Detention and the Courts.
- Minimizing the use of the county's rainy day fund by making

expenditure reductions across multiple departments and divisions.

The proposed budget is \$24.39 million less than the prior year's approved budget.

In December 2007, Standard & Poor's upgraded its debt rating for Pinal County to "A". Standard & Poor's said the upgrade was earned as a result of "continued economic growth and diversification and maintenance of a strong financial position with strong reserves."

The tentative budget will be under review for potential adjustments over the coming weeks.

"Significant impact for the county may come when we learn how the state plans to balance its budget," County Manager Terry Doolittle said.

The Board of Supervisors will vote on the final budget at their July 30, 2008 meeting.

Council Appoints 4 To City Boards

Severs votes against all nominees

By Christina Fuoco-Karasinski
The News

APACHE JUNCTION- Four Apache Junction residents were individually appointed to city commissions and boards during the regular City Council meeting on Tuesday, June 17.

Charles Buntun, a five-year Apache Junction resident, and Gary Grounds, who has lived in the city for more than 10 years, were named Planning and Zoning commissioners, both with a 6-1 vote. Without comment, Councilman Joe Severs voted against all four council appointments last week. Severs did not nominate anyone for a board or commission himself and did not return calls from the *News* for comment.

Buntun works for the Federal Aviation Administration and attended Long Island Agricultural and Technical Institute.

A graduate of Wentworth Military Academy, Grounds works for the state's Department of Fire, Building and Life Safety. He said he yearns to contribute his knowledge and skills in making decisions and suggestions for the progress of the city.

Retired from the U.S. Army, Michael Weller was appointed to the Board of Adjustments and

Appeals on a 6-1 vote. Severs voted against him. Weller has lived in Apache Junction for seven years.

Jason Russell was also named to the board on a 6-1 vote. He has lived in Apache Junction for three years. A former student at University of Colorado — Boulder, Russell graduated from the University of Phoenix in 2007 with a bachelor of arts degree in business. He said he is planning on raising his family in and moving his business to Apache Junction.

After the vote, resident Shannon Flynn spoke out against the new appointees.

"I'm appalled by who you appointed," she said without elaborating. Flynn added that she thought the City Council appointed people who would better the city.

Appointees are nominated from a list of volunteers who submit talent bank applications for consideration. Other than the four people approved by the council last week, no nominations were made from the list of applications for boards and commissions.

In other council actions, an application for a liquor license for Fox Tobacco and Liquor

see **City Council, A-5**

The News Kidcast

Sunny and hot with highs around 108 and lows around 77 degrees.

This week's Weather "Artoonist"

Katy Cafaro

Age 5

Desert Vista Elementary School

