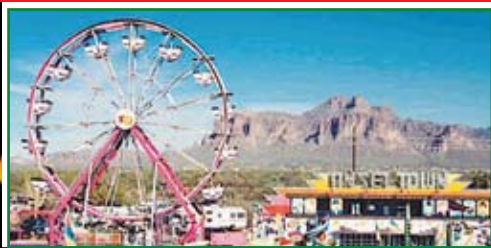


serving
Northern Pinal County
ARIZONA
Superstition Mountain Country



Lost Dutchman Days Special Section
see Section C



Marathon Results
see Sports, page B-1

Apache Junction
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State Senator Rebecca Rios to speak



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What Is 'Home Rule'?



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'Annie's Hotel'



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See The CLASSIFIEDS

Section B of the NEWS

Public Meetings

Apache Junction Planning & Zoning regular meeting
7 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 24, 2009
300 E. Superstition Blvd.

AJUSD Governing Board study session/regular meeting
6:30 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 24, 2009
1575 W. Southern Ave.

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Sheriff's Deputy Drunk On Duty

Blood alcohol content of .12 — Despite evidence, Sgt. not arrested or fired

By Ed Barker
The News

FLORENCE— A patrol sergeant in the Pinal County Sheriff's Office is under investigation for allegedly showing up to his weapons qualifications test under the influence of alcohol.

Sgt. Ronald Ryan was on duty at the time and was removed from the firing range early on the morning of Wednesday, February 18, after an instructor reported

smelling alcohol on Ryan.

According to sources in the sheriff's office, Ryan drove his patrol car to the range and several sports drink bottles that had been filled with alcohol were found in Ryan's patrol car at the scene. Sources also said Ryan took a breath test that registered a blood alcohol content of .12, more than one and a half times the legal limit for driving.

Despite the evidence, Ryan was not arrested.

Pinal County Sheriff Paul



Sgt. Ron Ryan of the Pinal County Sheriff's Office.

Babeu told reporters, "Somebody has to place you behind

the wheel or by the admission of that person who is suspected. We don't have all the facts or information at this point."

Asked bluntly if Ryan would be arrested or fired for being drunk on duty, Babeu hedged the question, saying only that blood tests and witness state-

ments will likely be the deciding factors in whether or not Ryan is arrested or fired from his job.

This was Ryan's third attempt to pass his weapons qualification test after failing the first two attempts.

False Alarms Pose Problem

Less than 10% are real incidents in 2008

By Christina Fuoco-Karasinski
The News

During the year 2008, the Pinal County Sheriff's Office received 3,995 alarm calls. Of those, only 32, or 0.8 percent, resulted in incidents.

Those numbers are disturbing to the PCSO.

"False alarms present a serious threat to the effectiveness of the Pinal County Sheriff's Office and to the safety of our citizens," said Lt. Tami Villar, the PCSO public information officer.

"False alarm calls are costly and dangerous because they divert sheriff deputies from proactive crime prevention efforts. They also delay response to calls which may be a true emergency."

A false alarm is any alarm caused by human error or equipment problems resulting in law enforcement response, with no evidence of an actual crime having been committed. Residents get three false alarm calls free annually. Afterward, the fine is \$71 for each false alarm.

The Pinal County Board of Supervisors adopted an alarm system ordinance, effective January 1, 2003, to regulate the amount of false alarms that occur. All alarm users are required to obtain an annual alarm permit, which costs \$10. Permits are renewed an-



With an estimated 25% annual increase in alarm systems nationwide, police departments and county sheriff offices are overwhelmed with false alarm calls.

nually for an additional \$10. The fee for failure to obtain or renew a license is \$25; failure to pay a fine adds \$10 per month charge.

With an estimated 25 percent annual increase in alarm systems nationwide, police departments and county sheriff offices are overwhelmed with false alarm calls, Villar said.

"This is resulting in stricter ordinances, severe fines and/or no-response policies," Villar said.

"The Pinal County alarm system ordinance will regulate the amount of false alarm calls the Sheriff's Office re-

ceives, by setting stringent guidelines to the alarm users on how to properly operate and utilize their alarm systems. This will assist the Sheriff's Office in reducing unnecessary responses and enhance the effectiveness of your alarm systems."

For more information regarding the alarm permit program, contact the Pinal County Sheriff Office—Alarm Unit at (520) 866-5132 or (520) 866-5173. A copy of the ordinance and permit application are available at the PCSO's Web site, www.pinalcountyaz.gov.

Tips To Eliminate False Alarms

see page A-10

Technology Saves Hikers

GPS system & cell phone saves man, brother

By Christina Fuoco-Karasinski
The News

A GPS system and a quick phone call aided Superstition Search and Rescue in saving the lives of two brothers injured during an overnight hike in the Superstition Mountains Sunday, February 15.

"Last Sunday, two brothers, Richard and Chris (Stauber) with their dog (Loki) began hiking for an overnight trip from Lost Dutchman State Park up the northern face of the Superstitions to camp on an edge overlooking our beautiful city lights," said Robert Cooper of Superstition Search and Rescue.

"After a chilly night and campfire, morning came and they began preparing to hike down when Chris lost his balance and Richard grabbed hold only to send both of them over a 60-foot cliff."

The duo landed on jagged rocks, Cooper said, rendering them both unconscious.



The helicopter comes in for a landing after rescuing Richard Stauber of Phoenix.

dale, came to, screaming in pain, and realized his only hope was to "suck up" and climb back up to get his cell phone. Superstition Search and Rescue received the 9-1-1 call at 9:15 a.m.

"He was able to make that one call give a GPS coordinate when the battery went dead," Cooper said.

"I met with him yesterday and he told me that at the last minute, before leaving

his car, he grabbed his street GPS so he could get an altitude reading of their climb. It was because of this and his one phone call that helped us find them so quickly, saving their lives."

Cooper explained that the one phone call as well as the coordinates saved their lives.

"When Superstition Search and Rescue arrived, both brothers were in and out of see **Rescue**, page A-3

City Council OKs Lower Fees

Development rate dropped for project

By Christina Fuoco-Karasinski
The News

The City Council voted unanimously during its February 17 meeting to lower development fees for a remodeling project helmed by contractor/former city councilman Joe Severs.

According to the Economic Development Agreement between the City of Apache Junction and owner/developer Mehmood Mohiuddin, Mohiuddin must pay \$6,460 for police and general government development fees. That is about \$46,000 less than the original figure.

Severs is hired to remodel a 2,800-square-foot warehouse, attached to the Dash In Gas and Mini Mart at 2345 N. Apache Trail, to turn it into a pizza restaurant/pub called the Hitching Post. He said during the January 6th Call to the Public that the original development fee of \$52,948 was too high. The budget for his entire project, Severs said, was only slightly higher than that.

Development Services Director Brad Steinke said development fees are broken down into specific levels.

"Our development fee is broken down by library, parks, municipal, police and roads," Steinke said. "For businesses, only three apply—roads, police and municipal. The \$6,460 is the fee for municipi-

pal and police. The road portion is the portion that they exempted."

On January 12, Mohiuddin's representative requested a waiver of these fees and the same day the Development Fee Administrator, Brad Steinke, denied the request. Mohiuddin appealed the administrator's decision and requested a hearing before Mayor John Insalaco and the City Council.

At a January 20 public hearing, Insalaco and the City Council directed staff to negotiate a development agreement with Mohiuddin because there was a general feeling among the council that the City's commercial development fees for renovations of different uses within the same zoning category are generally too high compared to other municipalities and in view of the current recession.

Besides the development fee, Mohiuddin is obligated to improve the property in accordance with the site plans to include landscaping, parking stalls, building improvement and delineated driveway entrances.

Also among the requirements, Mohiuddin must install interior fire sprinklers of the fire marshal deems it necessary, and the construction plans must be stamped by a registered architect or engineer.

Complaint Filed Against Recall Team

Avoiding campaign finance laws

By Christina Fuoco-Karasinski
The News

An Apache Junction resident has filed a formal complaint against the "Recall Team" of Shannon Flynn, James Stephens, Ted Mueller and David Dowdle for violating state campaign finance laws

by running as a "team" but not properly registering as a committee and filing the proper forms as required by state law.

In her letter to Apache Junction City Clerk Kathy Connelly, 14-year Apache

see **Finance Laws**, A-5

The News Kidcast

Clear to partly cloudy with highs near 80 and lows around 60 degrees.

This week's Weather "Artoonist"

Kayleigh Albright Age 5

Four Peaks Elementary School

