

serving
Northern Pinal County
ARIZONA
Superstition Mountain Country

Evening Riding...
AJ Rodeo Grounds

Saddle Up! - page A-9



Wolfpack Spring Scrimmage

see Sports, B-1

Apache Junction
Gold Canyon

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Money Saving Monday



The Monthly Coupon Page

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Arboretum Summer Walks



see page A-7

Public Meetings

Apache Junction City Council joint meeting with Apache Junction Main Street/Community Development Corporation Board
5:30 p.m. Monday, June 1, 2009
300 E. Superstition Blvd.

Apache Junction City Council work session
7 p.m. Monday, June 1, 2009
300 E. Superstition Blvd.

Water Utilities Community Facilities District
6 p.m. Tuesday, June 2, 2009
300 E. Superstition Blvd.

Apache Junction City Council regular meeting
7 p.m. Tuesday, June 2, 2009
300 E. Superstition Blvd.

Pinal County Board of Supervisors
9:30 a.m. Wednesday, June 3, 2009
Administration Building A, 31 N. Pinal St., Florence

Apache Junction City Council joint dinner with Chamber of Commerce
6 p.m. Wednesday, June 3, 2009
Crow's Nest, 185 N. Apache Trail, Suite 6

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School Budget Override May Appear On November Ballot

School district associate superintendent calls financial situation 'perfect storm'

Economic conditions as they affect the Apache Junction Unified School District were the central theme of the May 26 governing board meeting.

Dr. Jim Lockwood, associate superintendent of business services, explained to the board that the current economic situation facing the district has all of the earmarks of a "perfect storm."

"Take the current economic downturn, state budget deficits and subsequent reductions in state funding, then decrease the student counts, add further reductions resulting from the phase out of a Maintenance and Operating Budget Override, and you have all of the ingredients for a recipe that leaves us little recourse but to consider asking voters for their help in meeting these serious economic challenges," he explained.

That help would come in the form of a Budget Override, a ballot consideration AJUSD voters did not approve in



2007, but which now requires another look. Following a lengthy discussion, Governing Board members directed that the question be placed on the June 9 agenda for a decision that could place the issue before voters in November.

"We heard voters when they voted no on this issue," said Lockwood, "and that's why we did not call a special election in November of 2008. We understand what the peo-

ple of our district are experiencing in this downturn. Like them, we have been seriously impacted by the economic events of the past year and as a result we have taken all of the steps one would expect us to take to control spending and reduce operating expenses."

Last year (2008-09), the district reduced their budget by nearly \$1 million as part of the three-year phase out of

the current override by initiating a hiring freeze, reducing transportation costs by enforcing the one-mile walking rule, eliminating most field trips and by introducing activity fees for students.

The current situation is, however, unprecedented for not only the district but for the state and the nation. Before the budget year was

even over, the state ordered schools to reduce their 2008-09 budgets by 2 percent. For AJUSD, that meant an additional reduction of \$750,000.

In budget year 2009-2010, the economic outlook is no better, according to Lockwood. The district must reduce its budget by \$4.5 million, with nearly half (\$2 million) of that amount attributable to the drastic cuts in state funding for schools. Additional economies taken by the district include a salary freeze for all employees, and a significant reduction in staffing.

Fifty-one positions have been eliminated for the upcoming school year. Twenty-one of those are teaching positions and 30 are administrative and support personnel.

The forecasts for school years 2010-11 and 2011-12

see **Override, A-5**

Man Receives Purple Heart After 64 Years

Wounded on Iwo Jima in 1945—

Apache Junction's VFW Post 7968 made it happen

By Christina Fuoco-Karasinski
The News

A retired U.S. Marine recently received his Purple Heart in the mail 64 years after he sustained injuries at the Battle of Iwo Jima. The East Mesa man gives credit to Apache Junction's VFW Post 7968, to which he belongs.

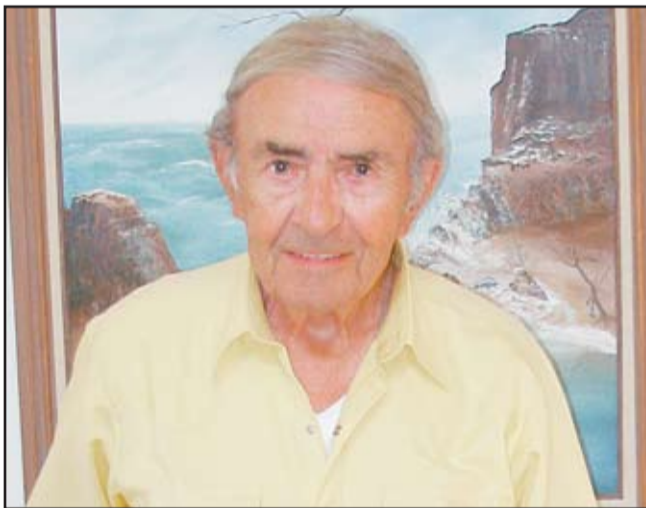
"We were at the VFW one night and they were honoring some fella," said Christ Andrews. "His daughter gave me a number to call and I called it and they traced it down. They got it for me. It was nice."

Andrews admitted he was surprised it actually arrived.

"I kind of gave up hope until (Veteran officials) called one night and said it was coming."

The Purple Heart medal is awarded to service members who have been physically wounded in combat.

Andrews explained he was



Christ Andrews received his Purple Heart, thanks to VFW Post 7968 in Apache Junction, 64 years after his injury.

injured during the battle, which took place in February and March 1945 against Japan over the tiny island. He served in the 3rd Division, 2nd Battalion, 21st Marines.

He was treated for his back injuries in Saipan, Hawaii and mainland United States

before being discharged from the U.S. Marines.

"When I got out of the Marine Corps, they asked me what I'd like to do," Andrews said. "I said, 'How do I know? I'm 18 years old.' (They said)

see **Purple Heart, A-9**

Change In AJ ZIP Codes

85218 and 85219 to change— begins July 1

By Christina Fuoco-Karasinski
The News

Some areas of Apache Junction will adopt a new ZIP Code beginning Wednesday, July 1, according to postal officials.

"As the state's population continues to increase, many Central Arizonans will be asked to make a simple one-digit change to their addresses' ZIP Codes starting on Wednesday, July 1, 2009," said Peter Hass, U.S. Postal Service spokesman.

The change is easy: If the current ZIP Code is 85219, the "2" in the ZIP Code will be replaced with a "1." Everything else stays the same. This applies to 85219 and 85218.

The new "851" ZIP Code

area will cover an area totaling just under 5,000 square miles, from Apache Junction at the north, to Red Rock in the south, Maricopa to the west and Winkelman to the east.

"The change is needed to provide expanded capacity as population growth is anticipated to continue in this part of the state, and the Postal Service was on the verge of using up all possible five-digit '852' ZIP Code combinations," Hass said.

"Each ZIP Code has a limited capacity of deliveries; making this change now will help USPS employees provide efficient, effective delivery of the mail for many years into the future."

A total of 30 existing five-

digit "852" ZIP Codes in Pinal County will become "851" ZIPs on July 1. Every postal customer in the affected area will receive a written notification of their address' specific new ZIP Code by May 30. Customers are asked to notify regular correspondents about their new ZIP Code as soon as possible.

In order to assist businesses and others make the transition, including depleting current supplies of stationery, there is a one-year grace period during which both ZIP Codes will be valid for mail delivery to these addresses. Even so, the Postal Service strongly encourages customers to begin using their new ZIP Code starting Wednesday, July 1.

City Council To Take Oath

Governing body to select vice mayor

By Christina Fuoco-Karasinski
The News

Newly re-elected Apache Junction City Councilmembers R.E. Eck Jr., Rick Dietz and Doug Coleman, along with Mayor John Insalaco, will take the oath of office during the governing body's meeting 7 p.m. Tuesday, June 2, in chambers, 300 E. Superstition Blvd.

The City Council will also elect a vice mayor; currently, Eck serves in that role. The governing body will discuss the procedures for the June 2 meeting during its 7 p.m. Monday, June 1, work session.

Also on the June 2 regular meeting agenda, Habitat for Humanity will make a presentation about the completion of Ironwood Trails.

Other items on the June 1 agenda include the Depart-

ment of Public Works' recommended denial of a project to improve Ironwood Drive. The council will also

see **Council, A-6**



Mayor John Insalaco



Vice Mayor R.E. Eck



Councilman Doug Coleman



Councilman Rick Dietz

The News Kidcast

Cloudy to mostly sunny with highs around 100, lows in the upper 60's.

This week's Weather "Artoonist"

Emily R. Swain
Age 10

Special To The News

