



Former AJHS Golfers Moving On
see Sports, B-1

Apache Junction NEWS 50¢

Gold Canyon

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AJ Post Office Staying Open



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Seriously Electric



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Football Is Back!



see Sports, page B-1

Public Meetings

- Apache Junction Planning & Zoning work session**
7 p.m. Tuesday, August 11, 2009
300 E. Superstition Blvd.
- AJUSD Governing Board (school board) regular meeting**
6:30 p.m. Tuesday, August 11, 2009
1575 W. Southern Ave.
- Pinal County Board of Supervisors**
9:30 a.m. Wednesday, August 12, 2009
Administration Building A, 31 N. Pinal St., Florence
- Apache Junction Library Board**
6:30 p.m. Thursday, August 13, 2009
1177 N. Idaho Road

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State Gives AJ Schools Highest Rankings Ever

AZ LEARNS ranks three schools as 'Highly Performing'

Superintendent Dr. Chad Wilson has announced that AJUSD schools have posted AZ LEARNS labels this year that are better, in totality, than they have posted before. "Never in our history have we had three schools ranked as 'Highly Performing,'" Dr. Wilson said. "Never in our history have we had all sites either maintain their labels or improve their ratings."

Overall, three schools—Desert Vista Elementary School (DVES), Gold Canyon Elementary School (GCES) and Four Peaks Elementary School (FPES)—all showed significant upward movement while other schools maintained their current ratings. This year's AZ LEARNS ratings are as follows:

- Desert Vista Elementary School—Highly Performing (up two rankings)



Superintendent Dr. Chad Wilson reports that never in the school district's history has it had three schools ranked as "Highly Performing."

- Gold Canyon Elementary School—Performing Plus (up one ranking)
- Superstition Mountain Elementary School—Performing Plus (maintained)
- Desert Shadows Middle School—Performing Plus (maintained)
- Four Peaks Elementary School—Performing Plus (up two rankings)
- Peralta Trail Elementary School—Highly Performing (maintained)

(maintained) • Thunder Mountain Middle School—Performing Plus (maintained) • Apache Junction High School—Performing (maintained) • Mountain Shadows Education Center—Performing (up one ranking)

AZ LEARNS is a statewide school assessment system utilized annually by the Arizona Department of Education to give communities and schools themselves an indication of how they are doing compared to other schools in Arizona.

The achievement profile is based on the AIMS' test scores of the students—compared to the previous years' scores—and several other point factors including the scores of English-language learners and improved graduation rates at high schools.

Dr. Wilson also pointed out that two of the AJUSD schools—Desert Vista and Gold Canyon—jumped up two levels from last year's scores ("Performing") to "Highly Performing" this year and Peralta Trail Elementary School (PTES) missed the top "Excelling" label by .02 of a point.

PTES Principal Larry LaPrise plans to use this as a rallying point next year and said, "We are proud of our label, but we will not be satisfied until every student at Peralta Trail meets or exceeds the state standards and we earn the 'Excelling' rating we so narrowly missed this year."

GCES Principal Brenda Farris, commenting on her see **AJ Schools, A-3**

New Boys & Girls Club Set To Open Wednesday

New location is in former Four Peaks School



Judy Borey, branch executive for the Boys and Girls Clubs of the East Valley, Apache Junction Branch, said she believes the new teen center (above), at 5,000 square feet, is one of the biggest in her district.

By Christina Fuoco-Karasinski
The News

The Boys and Girls Clubs of the East Valley, Apache Junction Branch, will be bustling with kids on Wednesday, August 12, as the facility is slated to open its new location in the former Four Peaks Elementary School. Starting Tuesday, August 11, parents can register their children at the new, 15,000-square-foot location at 1755 N. Idaho Road.

"This is the center the community built," said Judy Borey, branch executive. The furniture for the teen center was donated by the Chandler Public Library. Borey cited numerous volunteers—Goldfield Ghost Riders, the Apache Junction Mounted Rangers, Christa Rizzi, John Kantowski, Janice Stenglein, Shannon Flynn, Clint Frisbie, Toyota Financial, board members—who helped bring the new building to life. Carole Bailey donated a 36-inch color TV to the center. "It just takes so many hands to make this happen," Borey said. "We love our kids and we want a really good, safe place for them to be. I always say, it's better to build children than to repair adults."

The center will offer numerous programs ranging from drama to Jazzercise. Some of the programs that were offered outside of the former location at 1215 S. Winchester Road, will be held indoors on a giant stage that the building houses.

see **Boys & Girls, A-3**

Police Warning

Men knock on doors, rob victims

By Christina Fuoco-Karasinski
The News

The Apache Junction and Mesa police departments are warning residents of current scams that involve strangers knocking on doors and robbing victims.

There are three scenarios:

- A suspect knocks on the door of a residence and asks the victim if they would like to sell their car. The victim's car is not for sale, so suspect asks if they can use their bathroom. Two suspects then enter the home and one waits with victim while first suspect heads to bathroom, but actually sneaks into a bedroom to look for items to steal. Second victim discovers suspect in bedroom and both suspects immediately leave the residence. They get into a black four-door passenger car which contains two more suspects.
- A suspect knocks on the door of a residence and tells the victim that they recently moved into neighborhood and needs to use their phone to call SRP. The suspect is accompanied by two more suspects whom he claims to be his sons. Suspect again asks to use bathroom, but goes into bedroom where he is discovered and all suspects leave the residence. They get into a black four-door passenger car.
- The victim is in garage working when three suspects approach and ask to use bathroom. The victim allows them into home and two suspects



One of the suspects in a ring of scams.

stay with him in living room while first suspect heads to bathroom. He comes back and they all leave in newer-model black Chevy Silverado with chrome rims and temporary tags. The victim goes into bedroom and discovers missing items.

The suspects are described as:

1. Dark-skinned, non-Hispanic male, approximately 40-45 years old, 6 feet tall, 230-250 pounds. Curly black hair, missing some front teeth.
2. Dark-skinned, non-Hispanic male, approximately 20-25 years old, 6 feet tall, 180-200 pounds.
3. Dark-skinned, non-Hispanic male, approximately 17 years old, 5 feet 6 inches tall, 180 pounds
4. Unknown, driver of vehicle.

The vehicles are described as a new model black four-door passenger car, and a see **Robberies, A-5**

Assessor Warns Of Mailed Offer To Appeal Taxes

Larkin: Never a fee to appeal

Pinal County Assessor L. Paul Larkin has joined Attorney General Terry Goddard in warning residents to be wary when receiving a notice offering them a chance to reduce their property taxes. "First of all," Larkin stressed, "the time to appeal 2010 property taxes passed nearly three months ago. Second, when the time is appropriate to appeal, residents can file for free. There is never a fee

to appeal." A press release from the Arizona Attorney General's office said the notice will arrive by mail claiming a property has qualified for a "property tax reduction review." The mailer comes with a "notice number" along with a deadline for filing. The press release also said the solicitation does not come from a government recognized entity. "We have received a few calls about the notice," Larkin said. He went on to add that once an appeal is filed, an appraiser will personally visit the property. If the property owner has any questions, the appraiser will be happy to answer them. If you have any questions about property taxes or the notice, please contact the Pinal County Citizen Contact Center at (520) 509-3555 or 1-888-431-1311.

The News Kidcast

Sunny to partly cloudy with thunderstorms forecast after Thursday. Highs 108, lows 80.

This week's Weather "Artoonist"
Jacob Russell
Age 5
Peralta Trail Elementary School

