

El Mirage News

www.cityofelmirage.org

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Fire fighters homecoming: A nearly year-long journey

From 2000 to 2010, the City of El Mirage grew from a population of 7,609 to 31,797 residents, a growth of more than 319 percent. This substantial increase in population brought with it an increased demand for city services, including public safety services. In June 2008, the El Mirage Fire Department successfully applied for a federal SAFER [Staffing for Adequate Fire & Emergency Response] grant to fund the addition of six full-time fire fighters to the department to aid it in meeting the community's needs and expectations for public safety.

In December 2009, El Mirage's crew of front-line fire fighters was expanded to include the six new SAFER-funded fire fighters, bringing the Department's

total to 24 fire fighters. The SAFER grant allowed the Department to successfully accomplish the following objectives: fully staff three shifts at the fire station each day; deploy a second engine company when necessary; and conduct much needed inspections, investigations, and educational events in the community. The hiring of the SAFER-funded fire fighters also aided the City in lessening its dependence on other West Valley emergency responders as well as bring the Fire Department into compliance with NFPA and OSHA rules.

However, on August 5th, 2010 these six SAFER-funded fire fighters were abruptly laid off, placing the City in default of the federal SAFER grant program. One of these fire fighters



City Manager Dr. Spencer A. Isom, Mayor Lana Mook, Fire Fighter Steve Neal, City Grant Coordinator Pat Grogan, Fire Fighter Chris House and Fire Chief Howard Munding.

was subsequently rehired into a non-SAFER funded paramedic/EMT position and three more of these fire fighters were returned to their SAFER-funded positions by October 2010. Unfortunately, with three SAFER-funded positions still unfilled, the City continued to be in default of the

grant and at risk of losing its federal funding. The City's future ability to seek federal grants in this area was also jeopardized.

Recognizing the importance of public safety to the community's well-being, the El Mirage City Council and City Manager Dr. Spencer A. Isom made

it a top priority to bring the terminated fire fighters back to El Mirage and restore the City's compliance with its SAFER grant. Dr. Isom and city staff researched budget solutions that would enable the SAFER-funded fire fighters to be rehired and Grants Coordinator Pat Grogan researched and prepared an extensive briefing for the Department of Homeland Security, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) detailing the City's efforts to regain compliance and honor its SAFER grant, including a commitment to fill the three still-vacant SAFER-funded fire fighter positions. On April 25, 2011 FEMA notified the City of El Mirage of its acceptance of El Mirage's proposed remediation plan and that El Mirage's SAFER grant funding would remain intact.

June 20 marked the homecoming for former El Mirage fire fighter Chris House. House was one of the six new-hires under the SAFER grant in 2009 and after his termination, found work as a contract fire fighter overseas in Afghanistan, in support of the U.S. Military. His colleague, Darrell Tirpak, also went to work in Afghanistan after being laid off. Tirpak returned to work on June 28. Both men previously served nine years as fire fighters in the United States Air Force. "I am glad to be back at a job I worked very hard to get in the first place," stated fire fighter Chris House. "When I was laid off, no other fire department in the Valley was hiring so Darrell and I took jobs working overseas. It feels great to be home in Arizona and back with my

MORE FIRE FIGHTERS ON 6



L-R: Fire Fighter Union Rep. Tom Jury, Fire Chief Howard Munding, Police Chief Steve Campbell, City Manager Dr. Spencer Isom, Police Union Rep. Doug Jones, Mayor Lana Mook and Vice Mayor David Shapera

El Mirage: Unprecedented display of cooperation between city manager, police, fire, and council

City approves police and fire MOUs and calls for Nov. 8 election to bring proposed YMCA and police station facilities to voters

The Thursday, June 23 El Mirage City Council meeting marked the culmination of an unprecedented level of cooperation between the El Mirage City Manager's Office, police and fire unions and the El Mirage City Council.

The council meeting covered a number of topics, including the acceptance of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the City of El Mirage and the El Mirage Fire Fighters Association, acceptance of an MOU between the City of El Mirage and the El Mirage Police Employees Association, adoption of a resolution dedicating the City's primary property tax exclusively to the City's police and fire departments, and the call for a special bond election on Nov. 8. On each item, representatives from the City's police and fire unions spoke in unanimous support. The united front was significant as police and fire unions are typically at odds

with city management during budget talks and rarely work together on issues not directly impacting them.

MOUs with police and fire

Leaders from the Arizona Conference of Police and Sheriffs, known as AZCOPS, attended the June 23 meeting to show their support of the El Mirage Police Department and the City's efforts to work with its local police union. AZCOPS represents thousands of public safety officers and 96 local affiliates across the state.

"What happened here in El Mirage is almost unheard of in Arizona today," declared AZCOPS President Larry Lopez. "I had a speech prepared but that's out the window. Instead, I want to speak from the heart and tell you 'Thank You' for setting aside politics and working as a team with all parties to do what is best for the City." Lopez was referring

to agreements reached between public safety and city management after a six-month process spearheaded by Dr. Isom. During the six month talks, all parties met regularly; Mayor Lana Mook represented the Council while Police Officer Doug Jones represented the El Mirage Police Employees Association and Fire Fighter Tom Jury was the voice of the El Mirage Fire Fighters Association.

"In January, we were facing a potential \$4.7 million budget deficit. To reach agreements with police and fire for the coming year, I knew the only way to be successful was for all of us to roll up our sleeves and truly work together," Dr. Isom stated. "Just like we did with every other city department, we had to honestly assess needs versus wants and prioritize the agreements with public safety in that light."

Lopez and other union officials praised City Manager Dr. Spencer Isom for establishing open lines of

MORE COUNCIL ON 6

Fourth Friday Art Fest July 22

Join the City of El Mirage and El Mirage Arts Group (EMAG) for Fourth Friday Family Art Fest 6 to 9 p.m. on the fourth Friday of every month. The *free* monthly event features local art, food, live music and entertainment and fun at the City Plaza, 14010 N. El Mirage Rd. June's Fourth Friday featured record attendance and outstanding live performances. Bring the family and come out for the July 22 Fourth Friday. Karen's Kreamery, Sweet Sensations, Brittles from Home and Windy City Dogs will provide delicious local food options.

City of El Mirage
12145 NW Grand Ave.
El Mirage, AZ 85335

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Mayor's Message: El Mirage residents have the right to vote

Six months ago, El Mirage welcomed a largely new City Council and City Manager. The City had experienced a significant amount of turmoil, negative publicity, and strained relations with both residents and neighboring West Valley cities. The newly-elected Council immediately faced resolving these issues along with a projected \$4.7 million budget deficit.

City Manager Dr. Spencer

A. Isom chose to tackle these challenges by conducting training sessions and workshops for the Council, implementing a highly transparent budget process that included input from staff, council and citizens, reorganizing the city administration into a streamlined and efficient structure, and studying ways to optimize the City's limited financial resources. Under his leadership, a balanced budget was adopted reflecting Council priorities and fully addressing the community's need without negatively impacting service levels. Through innovations and efficiencies, this year's budget was reduced by \$3,258,317 from the previous year, a 4% savings to the taxpayer. With a tremendous amount of effort led by Dr. Isom, we have successfully addressed many issues from the past in just a very short period of time.

On June 23, the El Mirage City Council turned its attention to our future. At that council meeting, Council Members voted overwhelm-

ingly to bring forward to El Mirage voters two important issues: (1) would residents like to see a YMCA with swimming pool locate in our community and (2) do the voters support providing our El Mirage Police Department with a secure, permanent police station? Currently, El Mirage has neither.

Residents, HOA's, and city staff have been working hard to implement the Council's goals of moving El Mirage toward a more vibrant future. I believe bringing a premier community recreational facility – with a swimming pool – to El Mirage would be a huge step in the right direction. A YMCA would give our residents (seniors and families alike) an affordable opportunity to make use community meeting space and take advantage of swimming and health and fitness opportunities as well as a number of recreational classes and programs. Building a new, secure police station is also a must. Right now, our men and women in uniform work out of trail-

ers and modular buildings in extremely inadequate and challenging conditions.

But you know what? I think you, the El Mirage resident, should have a say in this matter. You elected me to lead this City and part of being a good leader is being a good listener. As El Mirage citizens, you have the right to decide for yourselves if you would like the City to issue bonds to construct a community recreational facility with swimming pool and a police station for the men and women who put their lives on the line for us every day. As your Mayor, I don't believe in keeping you from exercising this right. You, the voter, should decide what level of services you want and are willing to support. You have a choice and you should be allowed to make it. That is why I, along with an overwhelming majority of my colleagues, called for an election this November. At that time, you can make your voice heard about the kind of future you want to see for El Mirage.

Council Corner – Sun City Elks Lodge awarded

Recently, the El Mirage City Council was reminded yet again about the substantial impact volunteers have on our community. A very large volunteer organization, the Sun City Elks Lodge, has been quietly making a difference in the lives of many El Mirage residents – young and old – for more than thirty years.

The Sun City Elks Lodge is the second-largest of its kind in Arizona and the sixth-largest lodge in the nation. Their more than 2,700 members have contributed a substantial amount of time, money and resources to El Mirage students, seniors, and veterans. For example, the Sun City Elks donate a dictionary reference book to every third grade student in the Dysart Unified School District. But first the students must "earn" the books through a fun and interactive session. The Elks also host



Mayor Lana Mook presents Proclamation to Dale Blomker, Exalted Ruler of the Sun City Elks Lodge

numerous drug awareness programs and last year, provided over \$19,000 in scholarships to area high school seniors. In addition, these wonderful volunteers provide service activities for our area's veterans and seniors.

A few weeks ago, the City Council presented an official Proclamation expressing the City's appreciation for the

Sun City Elks Lodge to Mr. Dale Blomker, Exalted Ruler, and Bill Hudson, Esteemed Lecturing Knight. We believe it is important to recognize and appreciate the men and women who give their time with no agenda other than to make a difference for the better in their community. Thank you once again to the Sun City Elks Lodge.

Use of fireworks illegal in El Mirage

On Oct. 28, 2010 the El Mirage City Council passed an ordinance banning the use of all fireworks within City limits. The use of fireworks was previously banned under the adopted City Fire Code; however, a new ordinance was required because of a new State Law that went into effect Dec. 1, 2010, which allows the sale of certain type of "consumer fireworks" throughout the State.

Highlights of the new fireworks ordinance are:

- The sale of fireworks is prohibited to persons under the age 16.
- The use of all consumer



fireworks within the city is prohibited.

Violation of the ordinance is a Class 1 Misdemeanor, punishable up to \$2,500 and/or 6 months in jail.

Additionally, anyone using prohibited fireworks that results in an emergency re-

sponse will be charged for the full cost of the emergency response for providing police, fire, rescue, and emergency medical services at the scene of an incident.

"These actions were needed to preserve the safety of our community," said Fire Chief Howard Munding.

On Monday, June 20 a brush fire was started in Scottsdale by an individual illegally setting off fireworks while hiking. Every year thousands of fires are started and people are injured or killed as the result of using fireworks. In 2008, the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA)

documented 22,500 fires, resulting in 1 death and 40 injuries. That same year, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) reported more than 7,000 people were treated in emergency departments for injuries sustained from fireworks; more than half of those injured were children. "My recommendation is to leave the use of fireworks to the professionals," said Munding.

Please recycle your books to us

The El Mirage Chapter of the Friends of The Maricopa County Library District will accept donations of gently used paper back or hard cover books, CD's or DVD's. Donations can be dropped off at the El Mirage Library during normal business hours. A receipt for tax purposes can be supplied if needed. All monies raised are used right here in El Mirage to support things like the Summer Reading Program and speakers and programs at the library that may not be funded through the annual budget. Friends of the Library participate monthly in the Fourth Friday Family Art Fest with a book and music sale. Come on by and check out what we have for sale. We are also looking for new members and volunteers. The Friends meet monthly in the El Mirage library on the Fourth Tuesday of the month at 1:30 p.m.. For more information feel free to contact the library.

Citizens can help stop graffiti crimes

Graffiti is not a "victimless" crime. It is a crime that affects the entire community of El Mirage. It decreases property values, costs money to repair and even worse, invites other criminal activity into the community. Unfortunately, graffiti crimes are on the rise in El Mirage with a 10.9% increase over the same time frame last year.

The City of El Mirage and the El Mirage Police Department take graffiti crime very seriously and are committed to decreasing graffiti in the City. A free mobile application is available for download to iPhones and Droids where citizens can report graffiti straight from their smart phones. Users of these smart phones can go to the apps page on their phone, type in "My El Mirage" in the search function and obtain the free download.

Residents can also call the El Mirage Police Department at 623-933-1341 to report graffiti crime.

Pictures and data are collected to aid with prosecution of offenders; in recent months, four juveniles have been referred to the Mari-

copa County Juvenile Court for graffiti-related charges. Adult offenders are referred to El Mirage City Court for incidents under \$1000 and to Maricopa County Superior Court for those over \$1000.

MORE GRAFFITI ON 10



PARKS & SONS OF SUN CITY, INC.
 P.O. Box 1158 • Sun City, AZ 85372
 Phone: (623) 974-4791
 Email: service@parksandsons.com



CITY OF EL MIRAGE
 12145 NW Grand Ave. • El Mirage, AZ 85335
 Phone: (623) 933-1228
 Web: www.cityofelmirage.org

Weekly curbside recycling is coming to the City of El Mirage!

As we continue our efforts to help protect the environment, the City of El Mirage and Parks & Sons are proud to announce the new commingled, curbside recycling program, all at no additional cost to you! **This new program goes into effect September 1, 2011.**

WHAT IS CHANGING?

- In addition to your green 96-gallon barrel used for refuse, a 96-gallon blue barrel will be delivered for commingled recyclables. The blue recycling barrels will be delivered between August 1st and August 31st. **Do not set the blue barrel out for collection until the night before the first recycling day, September 1st, as it will not be serviced until then.**
- The blue recycling barrel will be used for papers, plastics, glass, aluminum/steel/tin cans, and boxes. This is a single-stream recycling program, meaning that all recyclable items are placed in the blue barrel together – *there is no need to sort or separate them before placing in the blue barrel.*
- Items that cannot be recycled in the blue barrel must be placed in the trash barrel(s) you currently have.
- Collection days will remain the same; **however**, trash will be collected on Mondays only, and recycling will now be collected every week on Thursday. You will need to set your trash barrel out for Monday collection, and the blue recycling barrel out for Thursday collection. All trash and recycling must be contained in your trash or recycling barrel and not on the ground. Items not placed in your City of El Mirage barrels will NOT be collected.

The first recycling collection in your blue barrel will be on Thursday, September 1, 2011.

WHAT WILL REMAIN THE SAME?

- Just as before, have your barrels out at the curb the previous night or by 5:30 am the day of collection (trash barrel on Monday, blue recycle barrel on Thursday).
- You will continue receiving service twice each week, but **now Monday is devoted to trash and Thursday to recycling.**
- Continue to bag and tie all trash before placing in the green barrel.** Bagging refuse is especially important now that the trash barrel will be serviced weekly. Abiding by this Maricopa County requirement will help reduce odors and prevent fly breeding. However, do NOT bag recyclables in the blue barrel).
- You will continue receiving the high-quality service from Parks & Sons at the same low rate!

We are excited about the new program and we are happy to be working with you in protecting our environment. Please use the recyclables guide to assist you in identifying and preparing your recyclables. By participating in this program, you will help decrease the volume of material taken to the landfill, ultimately reducing the negative impact on the environment and natural resources. We are committed to the success of this recycling program and the satisfaction of our customers. Additional information is available online at www.parksandsons.com/elmirage.html.

COLLECTION SCHEDULE

Please review the updated collection schedule reflecting the new trash and recycling days, which will go into effect Thursday, September 1, 2011. Trash will be collected on Mondays, and recycling (blue barrel) will be collected on Thursdays.

August 2011							September 2011							October 2011						
Su	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa	Su	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa	Su	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6					1	2	3							1
7	8	9	10	11	12	13	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
28	29	30	31				25	26	27	28	29	30		23	24	25	26	27	28	29
														30	31					
TRASH			RECYCLE				TRASH			RECYCLE				TRASH			RECYCLE			

Please note that both trash and recycling collections will be delayed one day due to the Labor Day holiday.

Parks & Sons of Sun City, Inc.

Commingled Recycling Program

Please use this guide to assist you in properly preparing and disposing of your recyclable materials. We appreciate your cooperation and participation in this program as we do our part to help protect the environment. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Customer Service at (623) 974-4791, or visit us online at www.parksandsons.com.

RECYCLABLE

PAPER



- Newspaper, junkmail, envelopes
- Magazines and catalogs
- Telephone books
- White or colored paper
- Brown paper bags

CANS



- Aluminum cans
- Steel/tin cans
- Aerosol cans (must be empty)
- Foil and foil baking pans

BOXES



- Cardboard without packing materials
- Chipboard

PLASTICS 1 & 2



- PET (plastic bottles)
- HDPE (plastic jugs, cartons)
- Look for triangle with 1 or 2

PLASTICS 3 - 7



- Plastic food packaging and cups
- Styrofoam cups, containers
- Look for triangle with 3 thru 7

GLASS



- Food jars
- Beverage bottles

NON-RECYCLABLE

- Plastic grocery bags
- Wax-coated paper
- Shredded paper
- Window or auto glass
- Diapers
- Hazardous waste containers (oil, anti-freeze, paint)
- Hangers (metal or plastic)
- Household trash
- Unnumbered plastics
- Tires
- Construction waste
- Appliances
- Landscaping/yard waste
- Carpeting
- Vehicle parts
- Paper towels, napkins, or facial tissues

PREPARATION OF RECYCLABLES

- Recyclables need to be relatively clean, dry, and empty. Examples of relatively clean include a mayonnaise jar wiped clean of residue with a spatula or emptying a soda bottle completely in the sink.
- Lightly rinse the recyclable container, if necessary, to remove food particles. Please be conscientious of your water use while rinsing the containers. The recyclables do not need to be run through a dishwasher, but simply cleaned of most residue.
- Do not place recyclables in a plastic bag – they should be uncontained when placed in the recycling bin. Continue to bag and tie your trash placed in the trash receptacle as doing so will help contain odors and reduce pests.
- Remove non-recyclable material from the recyclable item (such as plastic cereal inserts). Plastic and metal caps and labels do not need to be removed from the recyclable items.

Recycling receptacles must be out for collection the previous night or no later than 5:30 am the day of service.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

EL MIRAGE SENIOR CENTER
 14010 N. El Mirage Road
 623-876-4232

At the El Mirage Senior Center, we have created a warm and welcoming environment for all El Mirage seniors to come spend their time. Hours of operation are 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. Seniors 55+ and better are welcome.

Monthly On-going Activities:

Mondays 1st & 3rd of each month, 10 a.m. – Blood Pressure Checks.
 Mondays, 9:30 a.m. – Arts & Crafts.
 Mondays, Wednesdays & Fridays, 9:30 a.m. – Exercise. Tuesdays & Thursdays, 8:30 a.m. – Senior Strides walking club. Tuesdays & Thursdays, 9:30 a.m. – BINGO for prizes. Wednesdays & Fridays, 9:30 a.m. – Wii Bowling. Thursdays, 10:30 a.m. – Texas Hold'em. Fridays 1st & 3rd, 9:30 a.m. – Rummage Sale. Every Third Wednesday, 10 a.m. – Birthday Celebration. Once to twice a month – Fieldtrips to destination spots.

The Senior Center accepts donations for monthly rummage sells while all proceeds go towards the Senior Committee Group Events & Activities. Volunteers are also encouraged and welcomed.

EL MIRAGE BRANCH LIBRARY:
 14011 N. 1st Ave. 602-652-3000

Summer reading programs:

THINGS THAT FLY WITH GARY ALPERT: July 7 (Thursday) 1 and 2 p.m. Create paper planes, insect gliders, copters, catapult airplane gliders, and rubber powered airplanes. Seating is limited. Performance is at the Dysart Community Center, 14414 N. El Mirage Road.

SILK SCREEN T-SHIRTS FOR TEENS: July 14 3:30 p.m. Ages 11-19 can express their artistic side through the art of silk screen printing. T-shirts and supplies provided. Seating limited, registration needed and begins June 27.

CHILDREN: ONE WORLD STORY TIME: 10 a.m. July 5, 12, 19, 26 (Tuesdays). Ages 1 to 5 and their caregivers. Join the Summer Reading Program.

TEENS: TEEN ZINE WORKSHOP: 3 p.m. July 12. Ages 12 to 18 can find out how to submit an entry of poetry, stories, art, or photos for the 2010 Teen Zine Magazine. All supplies provided; Entry deadline is Sept. 19.

ALL AGES: FAMILY MOVIE: 3:30 p.m. July 21 and 28. Relax and take a break from the heat with a favorite family movie in the library.

FRIENDS BOOK SALE: 6 p.m. July 22. Great deals on used books and movies located at the El Mirage City Plaza, right next to the library. Space provided by Fourth Friday event.

ADULTS: FRIENDS OF THE EL MIRAGE LIBRARY: 1:30 p.m. July 26. Join friends and help support the library. New members welcome.

DYSART COMMUNITY CENTER
 14414 N. El Mirage Road.
 623-974-4156

CHARLIE WILLIAMS, THE NOISE GUY! 1:30 p.m. July 5. At the Dysart Community Center Charlie Williams is the Noiseguy, a vocal sound impressionist who can imitate bubbles and flushes, splashes and slushes.
After School Program: Ages 5 to 14 can now enroll for the Aug. 1 start of the program. The program is 2 to 7 p.m. Mondays, and 3 to 7 p.m. Tuesday through Fridays. There is \$1 per day drop-in rate, or \$20 per month if paid by the first of the month. Contact Priscilla Pena at priscillap@

dysartcommunitycenter.org, or 623-583-2137.

GED Classes: 6 to 8 p.m. Tuesday, 5 to 9 p.m. Wednesday. Contact Susie Ratley at susier@dysartcommunitycenter.org, or 623-974-4156 to register.

Rosetta Stone English Language Learning Computer Program: Open from 3 to 8 p.m. Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. Cost is \$25 annually. Contact Susie Ratley at 623-974-4156 to register.

Volunteers Needed: Volunteers needed to teach English as a second language starting in September. Requirements are 2 hours per week, patience, and willingness to teach others. Contact Susie Ratley at 623-974-4156.

El Mirage sports activities Youth & Adult Sports

Coed, Men and Women Slow-Pitch Softball League: The City of El Mirage and NSA is seeking Coed teams for play during the Spring, Summer, and Fall Seasons for Friday or Sunday nights at Gateway Park. Each team is guaranteed eight season games with a single elimination tournament at the end. Entry fee is \$350 plus \$25 registration fee (does not include umpire fees). Teams interested can contact Chris Franciscus at 412-874-4074.

Over 30 - Coed Adult Soccer League: The West Valley's premier Adult Coed Soccer League has created a place where you can go to play the sport your body needs. For league information, call 1-800-BSA-0886.

White Tanks Little League: Although White Tanks Little League is in season you can get more information regarding summer and fall baseball and the league by visiting www.eteamz.com/whitetanksl. Volunteer Board Members are needed each season. If interested in volunteering for the White Tanks Little League Board, contact WTL at 623-241-4602.

Benfica Youth Soccer League: This on-going academy uses soccer education to bring out greatness in our community's youth and families. Registered participants in the Monday through Thursday (6 to 8:30 p.m.) academy will be taught the sport of soccer by professional trainers and coaches. For more information on upcoming soccer programs, call 1-800-BSA-0886.

El Mirage Martial Arts Academy: The City of El Mirage Martial Arts Academy is enrolling for Okinawa Karate classes offered Monday and Wednesday evenings, to all ages at the El Mirage Senior Center. Kids ages 6 to 12 are taught 6 to 7 p.m. in a traditional, structured setting, without forgetting that Karate can be very fun. Each class is available for a \$45 monthly fee. Adults age 13 and up train 7 to 8:30 p.m. at their own speed. Students work to develop into healthy, well conditioned individuals. For information, call Martial Arts Instructor Richard Gutkosay at 623-628-6725, or 602-721-4587.

Ladies Fitness Boot Camp: Ladies Fitness Boot Camp has landed in the El Mirage. Participants can join classes on any Monday. The classes run three days a week for four weeks. Monday, Wednesday and Friday classes are 5 to 6:10 a.m. All El Mirage residents get 50 percent off their first month. To get started go to www.ladiesfitnessbootcamp.com and fill out the registration form. For information, contact Tracey at 623-252-1FIT (1348).

Plaza Palooza: Businesses host open house

Join the fun at Plaza Palooza, 5 to 8 p.m. July 30, as area businesses host an open house for El Mirage residents featuring live music, free hot dogs, a bounce house for the kids, special discounts and raffle drawings. Plaza Palooza will be at Rancho El Mirage Shopping Center, 13915 Dysart Road.

City welcomes Karen's Kreamery Café to El Mirage

On Friday, June 17, the El Mirage City Council and City Staff welcomed Karen's Kreamery Café to El Mirage during an official ribbon-cutting ceremony. City Manager Dr. Spencer A. Isom kicked off the festivities by joking that his enthusiasm for the ribbon-cutting ceremony had nothing to do with the delicious free samples of ice cream being offered. "In all seriousness," he said "any time a new business locates in El Mirage it is worth celebrating."

Karen's Kreamery Café, which is located at El Mirage's Gateway Park, will feature award-winning

homemade ice cream along with Panini sandwiches, hot dogs, pizza, soft pretzels, and other food items. "This ceremony represents the continued efforts of the City of El Mirage to provide more choices to our residents. It also represents the City's ongoing efforts to maintain Gateway Park as a premier recreational park," stated Dr. Isom.

Mayor Lana Mook and five members of the El Mirage City Council were also on hand at the ribbon-cutting ceremony. "We are so pleased to have Karen's Kreamery open up in El Mirage," said Mayor Mook. "I know our



El Mirage city manager, Dr. Spencer Isom, and council have fun cutting the grand opening ribbon.

city staff has worked long and hard to help bring this project to fruition so this is a very good day for both El Mirage and Karen's Kreamery Café."

Council Member Joe

Ramirez added "I've been a life-long resident of El Mirage. For the first time ever, I can bring my family over here to enjoy the park and grab dessert. My kids are going to love it."

"I live just down the street," stated Council Member Jack Palladino. "Now, instead of driving all the way to Surprise, I can drive down the street to grab a cup of coffee or some home-

made ice cream. The more that business locates to El Mirage the more choices we have as residents and the stronger our local economy becomes. These are all very good things."



Grant Coordinator Pat Gregan worked tirelessly on the effort to regain compliance with the SAFER grant and bring these two fire fighters back home to the El Mirage Fire Department.

FIRE FIGHTERS: SAFER grant, From 1

teammates at the El Mirage Fire Department. This is a long-awaited homecoming and I'm looking forward to the next 20 years," he added.

A third fire fighter, Steve Neal joined House and Tirpak as a new-hire to the final SAFER-funded position. "June 20th was an exciting day for me. I chose to apply to the El Mirage Fire Department because of the camaraderie and the quality of the people working here. It's an honor to join them in serving the community."

Effective June 28—nearly a year later—the El Mirage Fire Department will once again have a full staffing of 24 fire fighters and the City will be in full compliance with the FEMA SAFER grant. The additional staff will allow the department to once again have two units available

for emergency response 24/7 on a consistent basis, improving overall public safety services and public safety. Fire Chief Howard Munding highlighted an additional benefit to filling the three vacant SAFER positions: "the additional staff, along with changes in staffing policies, also has a direct result of decreasing overtime costs to the City by more than \$150,000 from the FY 2009-2010 budget."

City Manager Dr. Spencer Isom expressed his appreciation for the considerable effort made to bring the El Mirage fire fighters back home. "City staff and leadership should be congratulated for all of their hard work on behalf of these fire fighters and ultimately, on behalf of residents of the City of El Mirage."

COUNCIL: Meeting addresses many topics including MOU's, From 1

communication between management, elected officials and representatives from public safety to achieve the MOUs. "This meet and confer process has been unlike any other," explained police union representative Doug Jones. "The Association's Executive Board has forged a strong working relationship with City Manager Dr. Spencer Isom during this process and there have been many open, candid discussions that in turn created a high level of trust and confidence between us." Jones added "Likewise, Chief Steve Campbell has been instrumental in this negotiation process. He has been attentive to policy and process changes which impact our members in a very positive way and he enjoys the full support of the El Mirage Police Employee Association."

Jones' comments were echoed by fire fighter representative Tom Jury. "The MOUs before you tonight reflect a positive partnership we've been able to have with the City Manager," Jury told the Council. "I've never experienced such open and honest communication before this."

didn't stop after the Council voted unanimously to accept the police and fire MOUs. A few minutes later, the Council took up a final vote on allowing the state-authorized 2% increase in local primary property taxes. Before each Council Member cast their vote, they received additional comment from public safety representatives.

"We know Dr. Isom and staff worked hard to achieve a balanced budget for El Mirage without negatively impacting city services," said Tom Jury. "In light of that, our guys were willing to make sacrifices as well. For example, we voluntarily supported budget reductions, gave up pay raises, and sacrificed our uniform allowance to show our commitment in doing our part for the community."

The Council passed a balanced budget on June 9 after Dr. Isom and city staff re-

searched and implemented numerous efficiency measures to resolve the deficit. "One of my first priorities as City Manager was to determine the City's financial picture," stated Dr. Isom. "Especially in light of the fact the City was losing state shared revenues. The June 9 budget reflects a reduction in spending of more than \$3.2 million."

Council Member Jack Palladino offered his thoughts on the state-authorized 2% increase. "A few weeks ago, we passed a balanced budget. However, for the past several years both our police and fire have been hit with severe cuts in resources and manpower. Despite these limitations, they've been struggling mightily to continue to provide excellent public safety to our community. I think I can afford an extra \$2.23 a year to help them out," he declared. "An additional \$2.23 is not even half

the cost of a Big Mac and it covers the entire year."

Council Member Joe Ramirez agreed. "These guys put their lives on the line for us every day. My family and I can handle \$0.19 per month to support our police and fire services. That's like giving up a can of soda from a vending machine just two times a year." The Council approved the state-authorized increase to support funding for public safety by a vote of 6-1.

November election

The future of the City was the next hot topic of discussion, as the Council considered holding a Nov. 8 special election to request voter consideration for the issuance of bonds. If approved by voters, the bonds would be used to bring a recreational facility with swimming pool to the community and construct a secure, permanent police station facility to house

the El Mirage Police Department. Staff explained the City's population had grown by more than 319% over the past ten years and residents currently had to leave the City to use community recreational facilities and pay higher non-resident rates when they did so. For example, the closest YMCA, which offers swimming, meeting space, community activities, health and fitness opportunities and recreational classes and programs, is 25 minutes away.

Staff also explained the conditions of the current El Mirage Police station, which is housed in trailers and modular buildings. "These facilities are old, cramped, and inadequate and do not provide the proper space for law enforcement personnel to function in a safe, secure environment," described city staff. "For example, there are no public restrooms, no locker room

facilities for male or female police officers, and the lobby for visitors to the station is 35 square feet. Police evidence is housed in a trailer rather than in permanent, well-secured building. The facilities lack proper heating, cooling and protection from roof leaks and water damage. These are just a few of the many deficiencies with existing police station facilities."

Police Officer Doug Jones and Fire Fighter Tom Jury expressed strong support for both projects and asked the Council to hold a special election to bring the issue to the voters. Said Jones "We must evaluate these choices based on our common goals of providing better services and making El Mirage a desirable location for business and families. The Police Department has been working out of temporary facilities for several years now and our voters should have a chance to decide if they support providing us with a more secure, permanent facility."

Jury expressed enthusiasm for the proposed recreational facility with swimming pool. "From what I understand, bringing this proposed YMCA facility with swimming pool to El Mirage would cost the average homeowner an additional \$0.58 per month and in exchange, residents would have access at a reduced rate to a world-class community



Vice Mayor David Shapera, Mayor Lana Mook, City Manager Dr. Spencer Isom, Police Chief Steve Campbell, Fire Fighter Tom Jury, Fire Chief Howard Munding, and Police Officer Doug Jones pose after a successful meeting.

Budget

However, the show of unity between the groups

FOCUS ON THE FIRE DEPARTMENT



News from the El Mirage Fire Department

13513 N. El Mirage Road • 623-583-7968 • www.cityofelmirage.org/fire

Operations and administration open 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday

Scorching summers equal heat emergencies

Summer is officially here with temperatures and humidity continuing to rise. Unfortunately, as the temperatures increase, so do incidents of heat-related illnesses such as heat cramps, heat exhaustion, and heat

stroke. In 2009 there were 74 heat-related deaths in Maricopa County.

People suffer heat-related illness when their bodies are unable to compensate and properly cool themselves. The body normally cools itself by sweating. But under some conditions, sweating just isn't enough. In such cases, a person's body temperature rises rapidly. Very high body temperatures may damage the brain or other vital organs.

Several factors affect

the body's ability to cool itself during extremely hot weather. When the humidity is high, sweat will not evaporate as quickly, preventing the body from releasing heat quickly. Other conditions related to risk include age, obesity, fever, dehydration, heart disease, mental illness, poor circulation, sunburn, and prescription drug and alcohol use. Some people are at greater risk than others.

Summertime activity, whether on the playing field or the construction site, must

be balanced with measures that aid the body's cooling mechanisms and prevent heat-related illness. During heavy exercise in a hot environment, drink two to four glasses (16-32 ounces) of cool fluids each hour; avoid drinks containing alcohol or large amounts of sugar. Above all, do not leave children or pets in an automobile. Even with the windows cracked open, interior temperatures can rise almost 20 degrees Fahrenheit within the first 10 minutes.

Fire Department in the Community



El Mirage Fire Fighter teaching young girl.

El Mirage fire fighters made an appearance at the Valley Childcare and Learning Center to read to children about Water Safety. As summer temperatures increase so does the number of water-related accidents. Parents, caregivers and children should know that it's not just pools that are dangerous but things like bath tubs, toilets, buckets of water, irrigation canals, and any other area where there is water deeper than a couple inches. Kids don't float so you have to always be vigilant when kids are around water.

Analysis of incidents for May 2011

El Mirage Fire Units responded to the following incidents during the month of May 2011:

- Structure fires - 9
- Other fires - 9
- EMS calls - 197
- False Alarms - 13
- Other service calls - 62
- TOTAL - 290

Dollar Value Saved & Loss:

- Total Fire Loss = \$24,000
- Total Property Value \$344,000/
Fire Loss \$24,000 = 93.03% saved

Public Education and Community Activities

- 1- Station Tour
- 2- Public Relations Events
- Total Public Attendance
 - o 41 - Adults
 - o 22- Children

Training Hours = 579 hours

Fire Prevention

- Conducted 51 fire inspections

Statistics for May 2011

- Permit Applications received- 25
- Permits issued- 26
- Plan Reviews Completed- 22
- Building Inspections - 177 at 85 Stops

THE BLUE BYLINE



News from the El Mirage Police Department

14405 N. Palm St. • 623-933-1341 • www.cityofelmirage.org/police

Follow us on Facebook. Sign up for emergency notifications at www.nixle.com

What goes up must come down; Stop random gunfire

As the Fourth of July holiday approaches, the El Mirage Police Department reminds residents that it is a felony to recklessly discharge a weapon into the air. In 1999, a fourteen year-old Phoenix girl was killed by a stray bullet while standing in her backyard. Shannon Smith had been an award-winning athlete and honor

student who had just graduated from the eighth grade before being struck in the head from random gunfire. Smith's parents, after being informed that the assailant's activity constituted, at most, a misdemeanor offense, advocated for stronger penalties which came about when "Shannon's Law" was enacted the following year.

Random gunfire can bring tragedy to our community: what goes up must come down. After a gun is recklessly discharged into the sky, bullets must come down somewhere and can result in property damage or injury to others. This year, please join the El Mirage Police Department in spreading the word to stop random

gunfire. When you celebrate America's independence, leave firearms out of the equation. To report incidents of random gunfire, call 9-1-1 (the El Mirage Police Department will be out in full force over the holiday).

Officers provide burglary prevention tips

School is out and summer vacation season is here. Residential burglaries often occur during the day when residents are gone to work or when there is evidence of the residents being out of town. Here are some tips to help keep your property safe:

- Keep your doors & windows closed and secure. Utilizing anti-theft products on the inside of doors and windows and an alarm system can also be helpful.
- Use a timer so that lights, radio, or TV turn in inside your home. This helps give the appearance that the house is occupied.

- Suspend your newspaper service until you return home.

- Request vacation watch through the Police Department. This will notify officers that you are not home and when you will return.

- Document your valuables, including pictures and serial numbers. In the case of a theft, this will help identify your property and increase the chances of your property being returned to you should it be recovered. Many insurance companies provide tools to help you record this information.

El Mirage Police Department enforce curfew

Most children probably have heard the word "curfew" before. The El Mirage Police Department enforces a city curfew ordinance. The reason for curfews is to help keep kids safe and protected. For persons under the age of 18, curfew is 10 p.m., unless accompanied by a parent or other lawful adult. The police will enforce curfew laws. Any person who violates curfew provision shall be guilty of a misdemeanor, with a maximum fine of \$1,000 and/or imprisonment. Additional information can be found at www.cityofelmirage.org/police.

Police crack down on holiday traffic

El Mirage Police Officers will be participating in DUI patrols throughout the Fourth of July holiday weekend. Please remember to drink responsibly and not drive when under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Driving under the influence decreases your ability to safely and effectively operate a vehicle, putting yourself and others in danger.

COUNCIL, From 6

facility with swimming pool. A YMCA is not only a great amenity but also attracts outside visitors to our City and boosts property values. Your decision tonight is whether or not you want to bring this issue forward to El Mirage voters to see if they would like to have such a facility.”

El Mirage unique

Greg Schwartz of Piper Jaffray serves as the financial advisor to the City and

emphasized the uniqueness of the decision facing the Council. “El Mirage is the ONLY city in Maricopa County that consistently takes these issues to its voters for input. You are to be commended for that. Other cities find ways to raise non-voter approved taxes to finance whatever projects they want but in your case, all you are doing is asking the voters to decide what kind of future they want to have in El Mirage. This is a very open, citizen-oriented process where you are allowing the voters to make the ultimate choice.”

After hearing several public statements in support of bringing the bond election to the voters, the Council approved a Nov. 8, General Election. “This is a great move for El Mirage,” said Council Member Roy Delgado. “We

have a chance to offer an outstanding amenity at an affordable cost to our residents. Our community should absolutely have a chance to vote on this issue.”

Vice Mayor David Shapera agreed. “In addition to the many amenities the YMCA offers, they also provide preschool care, before and after school care, education and teen leadership opportunities, etc. As a teacher for the past 14 years, I have heard over and over from our kids that they have nothing to do. And that is how kids end up getting into trouble. Bringing a facility like the YMCA to El Mirage will give our seniors, families and kids so many opportunities they are missing out on right now. It also helps reduce crime because we’re keeping our kids busy in a positive environment doing things they

love to do. I say let’s bring this issue to the voters.”

At the conclusion of the council meeting, City Manager Dr. Spencer Isom thanked city staff, residents, public safety representatives and the Council for their hard work and consideration of the lengthy agenda. “What happened tonight is unprecedented in the City’s history and extremely rare in most other cities,” stated Isom. “Tonight we saw our police and fire unions, staff and an overwhelming majority of our Council present a united front to move El Mirage forward in a very positive direction. Police and fire coming together in support of broader community issues is very significant and proof that all parties involved truly have the best interest of our residents at heart.”

GRAFFITI: Help stop vandalization, From 3

El Mirage Police and Code Enforcement Officers continue to vigilantly patrol the City and work closely with other city departments and property owners to ensure new graffiti is removed quickly.

The City of El Mirage utilizes an outside contractor, Graffiti Protective Coatings, to respond to legitimate El Mirage graffiti crimes, document the crime for prosecution, and implement the necessary repairs. Graffiti Protective Coatings handles graffiti response for the Arizona Department of Transportation

(ADOT), the Cities of Avondale, Goodyear and Tucson, and the Disney Companies.

Citizens can help El Mirage turn the tide on graffiti, saving vital tax dollars and protecting property values in the process. To report graffiti vandals or suspected vandals, residents can call the graffiti hotline at 602-262-7327. If you have information that leads to the arrest of a known graffiti vandal, you may be eligible for a reward of up to \$250.00!! To report graffiti crimes, call the El Mirage Police Department at 623-933-1341.



Local Cub Scouts excited to participate at City Hall.

Cub Scouts learn city government

On June 9, the El Mirage City Hall was taken over by young Cub Scouts as they descended en masse to learn firsthand how local government works. The interactive tour for the young leaders-in-training was organized by Cub Master Bob Jones with the help of city management and staff. “I wanted our Cub Scouts to experience what city government was really like and show them in terms they could understand some of the important services cities can provide.”

Cub Master Jones kicked off the special tour by bringing the Cub Scouts to the Waste Water Treatment Plant where they learned how street sweepers and back hoes operated and actually painted parking stalls. Then, Scouts learned what happens to waste when the toilet gets flushed and where raw

sewage goes to get processed via machinery. City staff took Scouts on a tour of City Hall where they met Building Official Mary Dickson and received bird house blue prints and building permits for a future bird house building project. Their visit to City Hall also gave them an opportunity to meet Payroll Clerk Valerie Ojeda, who paid each of them for their work in painting parking stall stripes. Unfortunately, the Scouts learned that providing city services to residents costs money when they had to use their newly-earned money to “pay” their water bills to the City. However, the Cub Scouts wrapped up the tour on a high note with “Excel by Being Well” lunch bags, official City lapel pins and a visit from City Manager Dr. Spencer Isom and Mayor Lana Mook.