

# El Mirage News

www.cityofelmirage.org

Vol. 2, No. 4

623-972-8116

## Rising gas prices may fuel increase in El Mirage bus riders

El Mirage has a bus route? Six months ago, Valley Metro, the agency responsible for providing public transportation alternatives for the Greater Phoenix Metro Area, worked with El Mirage officials to add the City to its existing Grand Avenue Limited (GAL) bus service. At the time, officials envisioned a community need in El Mirage for public transportation through Glendale to downtown Phoenix and the connection to METRO light rail. However, while overall daily boardings average 106 people, the average daily boarding from El Mirage is an average of just nine individuals. This could be El Mirage residents' best kept secret in the battle against high gas



Area residents riding the bus.

prices. Climb aboard—there's plenty of room for you and your carry-on bags!

Transportation officials are unclear: Is ridership from El Mirage low only because residents and local employees are simply unaware of the Grand Ave. Limited (GAL) route? Or is there truly no need for a bus route in El Mirage? One thing is certain, with gas prices rising to nearly \$4.00 per gallon, commuting to and from El Mirage looks to become even more expensive. Residents may want to consider using the GAL route to save on gas, wear & tear on their vehicles, and to use the commute time to read, catch up on emails/work, or to simply prepare for the

day. Riders of the El Mirage Grand Ave. Limited can save gas, help the environment, increase their productivity and eliminate traffic headaches.

The cost to ride the Grand Avenue Limited is \$1.75 for one trip, or \$3.50 for an All-day pass purchased in advance. With the All-day pass you can transfer to other routes or the METRO Light Rail for no additional cost! A few of the retail outlets selling fare passes are 7-Eleven, Food City, Fry's Food Stores, Safeway and Valero. You can find a full list of retail outlets in your area that sell fare passes by going to: [www.valleymetro.org](http://www.valleymetro.org).

**MORE GAS ON 7**

## Voters trust cities and towns most with taxpayer dollars

### Statewide Poll: Strong Support for Protecting Vital City Services

A recent statewide poll shows Arizonans overwhelmingly trust local elected officials to use taxpayer money in the most effective manner, and they consider their mayors and council members the most fiscally responsible among all layers of government.

The survey was done by veteran Tucson pollster Margaret Kenski, who has worked with U.S. Sen. Jon Kyl and dozens of candidates and statewide issues over the years. It revealed that:

- By a 2-1 margin, Arizona voters are more confident that cities and towns do the best job among all levels of government in Arizona when it comes to balancing their budgets.

- A strong majority, more than 65 percent, supports protecting the state's longtime voter-approved shared revenue system that guarantees 15 percent of state income taxes

are shared with Arizona cities and towns.

- And an overwhelming majority of voters ranked city services like police, fire and emergency protection, as well as maintaining streets and roads as critical.

- Cities and towns are seen as the economic engine which generate revenue, create jobs and maintain quality of life across Arizona.

"This poll confirms what we already know very well: local governments are the closest to the people, they provide essential and cost-effective services, and are most responsive to their residents," said Tucson Mayor Bob Walkup, President of the League of Arizona Cities of Towns, which commissioned the poll.

Mesa Mayor Scott Smith, a member of the League's Executive Committee said, "Cities and towns play a vital role in recruiting and retaining high-paying companies that create jobs. We must protect the vital services that



Council Members Lynn Selby, Jim McPhetres and Joe Ramirez

local governments provide, which not only enhance a community's quality of life but improve its economic prospects."

The poll sampled 500 high-efficacy Arizona voters and had a margin of error of plus or minus 4 percent.

## Riff Raff Bar and Grill fundraises in memory of Scotty Hayes



A fundraiser was held at Riff Raff Bar and Grill in memory of Scotty Hayes. The amount raised was \$500.

In early March, local restaurateur Jeff Cantor conducted a fundraising drive in memory of El Mirage resident Scotty Hayes, who recently passed away. Well-known in the community, Hayes was an avid animal lover so after his passing friends and family collaborated with the Riff Raff Bar and Grill to collect donations to be made in his name to the Arizona Humane Society (AHS). \$500 was raised from Riff Raff patrons as well as Hayes' friends and family members. The funds go toward the care and protection of AHS animals.

### Arts in El Mirage - Fourth Fridays April 22

To accommodate more residents, families and participants, Third Thursday is now Fourth Friday! The popular, community and artist-based event has moved to Friday evenings so that more residents and visitors can take advantage of the local entertainment, food, artistry and performances. Look for exciting new additions to this popular – and free – community gathering.

Starting time for Fourth Friday is 5 p.m. and runs until approximately 9 p.m. For more information, contact Cristina Galto at 602-738-8107 or [cgalto@emag-az.org](mailto:cgalto@emag-az.org)

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El Mirage, AZ 85335

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# Message from Mayor Lana Mook: City continues to build community

When I took office in December, I had no idea how much work actually went into being Mayor of El Mirage. Don't get me wrong – I knew I had a tough job ahead of me – in fact my first Mayor's Message was about "when the going gets tough, the tough get going!" I just didn't know how tough things would be. Fortunately, I had a very good starting point: I knew our top priorities had to be repairing our relationship with our neighboring West Valley cities and Luke Air Force Base and focusing aggressively on economic development to begin bringing businesses and jobs to El Mirage. As soon

as I took office, I began working on these two critical issues immediately and can proudly report that in just a few short months, our City has made great progress. We have successfully reached out to our municipal neighbors as well as to Luke AFB and three new businesses will soon be opening in El Mirage.

However...as many of our long-time residents already know, there is much, much more work to be done to keep our community moving in the right direction. Improvement projects are needed for our local roads, irrigation, traffic signals, wastewater treatment,

etc. In addition to improving our City externally by building positive relationships and bringing in economic development, we have numerous internal improvements that need to be made.

At our March 10 Council Meeting, the City Council voted to continue moving forward on 16 different Capital Projects that identify, create and/or maintain the crucial infrastructure that supports the citizens and businesses of El Mirage while fostering continued growth and development within the City. Just a few of the items residents can expect to see progress on in the coming months:

- Completion of the concession building at Gateway Park before summer. Exterior improvements will also be provided for additional seating adjacent to the concession building;

- Construction of solar power parking shade canopies at both Gateway Park and the Court/Senior Center/Library complex;

- Replacement of existing 4" asbestos cement pipe (ACP) waterlines with new 8" ductile iron pipe lines in the alleys between Poppy St. and Luna St.

A full listing of the projects we voted on can be found at [www.cityofelmirage.org/Archive.aspx](http://www.cityofelmirage.org/Archive.aspx)

by selecting the March 10, 2011 Council Meeting Report.

While researching options for local road improvements, paving projects and sewer rate studies isn't glamorous, these necessary items are the things that keep a city running efficiently. Efforts to bring local businesses, quality jobs, and workers to our community will only be successful in the long-term if we have a city infrastructure that supports them already in place. Therefore, we are hard at work on keeping El Mirage moving forward at the nuts-and-bolts level as well. It's a tough job but somebody's gotta do it!

## Council Corner: New leadership equals new business

In recent months, members of the El Mirage City Council met in a workshop setting to discuss ways to improve the City. They listed economic development as one of their top priorities. "It is imperative we bring new businesses and new jobs to El Mirage," stated Mayor Lana Mook. "With the ongoing recession and declining tax revenues, we believed strongly the City must step up its economic development efforts. And now, with the hard work of city staff, we are pleased to welcome three new, national business enterprises to El Mirage."

Coming soon to the northwest corner of Thunderbird and Dysart Roads are two new businesses – Aaron's Rents and AutoZone. "Aaron's stores are generally staffed with 6 full-time associates and they expect sales between \$1 and \$2 million," stated Vice Mayor David Shapera. "This represents real jobs and real dollars coming to El Mirage."

Aaron's Rents plans have already been submitted and reviewed for safety and code compliance by city staff. The Aaron's Rents facility will be a 7,000 square foot retail building offering furniture for the home or business, home appliances, computers, electronics and home accessories. Their unique "Lease to Own" format enables customers to lease

furniture, appliances, computers and televisions and own them in 12 months. Customers who prefer to purchase an item outright receive a 20% discount.

Council Member Jim McPhetres praised the new development. "Aaron's has over 1700 locations nationwide so we know they have a strong and successful business model which we believe will benefit their newest store in El Mirage. We are very pleased to welcome them into our community."

Aaron's Inc. describes their business as "the industry leader in serving the moderate-income customer, offering affordable payment plans, quality merchandise and superior service." The store is projected to open this summer, in either July or August, 2011.

An AutoZone store is the second new business coming to El Mirage. AutoZone is the nation's leading retailer and distributor of automotive replacement parts and accessories and has over 4,600 stores in the U.S., Puerto Rico and Mexico. Each store carries an extensive line for cars, sports utility vehicles, vans and light trucks. The store, which shares the same site as Aaron's Rents, also features a 7,000 square foot retail center. It



Design of proposed El Mirage Valero Store

will offer free testing of car batteries, free overnight battery charging and free recycling of used oil and batteries. Both buildings are scheduled for an 80 day build from start to finish, offer some exciting job opportunities and should be open for business by mid-summer.

"We stated from the very beginning that creating economic development in El Mirage was a top priority," said Council Member Lynn Selby. "These new businesses signal that the City's aggressive economic development efforts are starting to pay off."

Site preparations have also begun for a new Valero gas station and convenience store at the southeast corner of Dysart Road and Thunderbird/Waddell Road. Diamond Shamrock recently purchased the property from Park West Partners and received approval from the City for a 20-pump gasoline station and 5,560 square foot convenience

store. Construction should be completed within the year.

Longtime El Mirage resident and Council Member Joe Ramirez is excited at the recent business developments. "These new businesses will help the City to diversify its tax base, which ultimately benefits everyone. Plus we have the added possibility of more local jobs. This is a very good thing."

Council Member Roy Delgado credits the team-oriented City Council and responsive City staff for the new business development. "As a Council, we now have unified leadership who understands the importance of recruiting small businesses and jobs to El Mirage," stated Delgado. "Plus we have an increasingly customer-service oriented staff at city hall. I think potential businesses recognize that El Mirage is becoming a good place in which to do business and that means more job opportunities for our residents."

# CALENDAR OF EVENTS - APRIL 2011

**COMMUNITY WIDE SPECIAL EVENTS**

**American Cancer Society "Bark for Life" - A Canine event to Fight Cancer: April 2nd** - Come join the American Cancer Society "Bark for Life" event being held at Gateway Park's Dog Park. This canine event is 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. April 2 and is presented by the Luke Enlisted Spouses Club and the City of El Mirage. A registration fee of \$25 is required with each additional dog being \$5. For more information contact Ashley Watson at 623-399-6789 or barkforlifeAZ@yahoo.com. A signed waiver form is also required before participation.

**Arts in El Mirage - Fourth Fridays Begin April 22** - To accommodate more residents, families and participants, Third Thursday is now Fourth Friday. Starting time for Fourth Friday is 5 p.m. and runs until about 9 p.m. For more information, contact Cristina Galto at 602-738-8107, or cgalto@emag-az.org

**West Valley Recreation Family Fun Expo** - 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., April 30, El Mirage Gateway Park, 10100 N. El Mirage Road. The free event will include various activities. For more information go to www.westvalleyrecreation.com or call 623-876-2951.

**People of El Mirage Raising Funds for City Tree** - Planting season is upon us and the people of El Mirage are raising funds to help the city go back to its roots...Christmas Tree roots, that is. Once upon a time, the City of El Mirage had a beautiful Christmas Tree on the grounds of the Courthouse along El Mirage Road. The people of El Mirage (POEM) is raising funds on behalf of the City to bring the tree back. For more information or to make a donation, call

Michele Palladino at 602-297-7796, or e-mail map1030@aol.com.

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

At the El Mirage Senior Center, we believe no one should ever feel lonely or bored. We have created a welcoming environment for El Mirage seniors to come spend their time. Come visit and see what the center has to offer you.

**April On-going Activities:**

Mondays 1st & 3rd of each month, 10 a.m. – Blood Pressure Checks

Mondays, 9:30 a.m. – Debbie's Craft Corner

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!

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

**AARP TAX-AIDE - FREE TAX HELP!**

Feb 5 to April 9 –Saturdays only from 8:30 to 11:30a.m.

For taxpayers with low – and moderate - income, with special attention to those age 60 and older. Attendees must bring last years tax return, bring amount of economic recovery rebate, bring about of real eastate taxes paid, social security I.D. cards, 1099's, W-2's., and check register before attending.

AARP Tax-Aide is a program of the AARP Foundation, offered in conjunction with the IRS.

For more information, call 623-975-0975.

**NORTHERN ARIZONA**

**UNIVERSITY**

April 8 – Get your Master of Administration degree online.

Northern Arizona University will hold an informational meeting regarding their on-line Master of Administration program for anyone interested in continuing their education toward obtaining a Master's Degree. A faculty member will present the program options, which include Community/Land Use Planning, Construction Management, Health Sciences, Project Management and Public Management, followed by a question and answer session. The event is 3 p.m. April 8 in the El Mirage Senior Center, 14010 N. El Mirage Road.

**EL MIRAGE HOMEBUYER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

April 12 - Need help purchasing a home? This federally funded program provides down payment and/or closing costs assistance to purchase a house in El Mirage.

Applications are available at El Mirage City Hall at 12145 NW Grand Ave. It is on a first come, first serve basis.

Monthly homebuyer assistance informational seminars are held the second Tuesday of each month at 6 p.m. at the El Mirage Senior Center, 14010 N. El Mirage Road. The next two seminars are scheduled for April 12 and May 10. Seating is limited, call 623-876-2959 to reserve a seat.

**NEW FRIENDS OF THE EL MIRAGE LIBRARY**

April 26 - The Friends of the Library are people like you, who are interested in supporting their local library and community through fund raising, service, and are committed to the success of the El Mirage Library.

Everyone is welcome to attend

monthly meetings on the 4th Tuesday of the month at 1:30 p.m. at the Library, 14011 N 1st Ave.

Topics of discussion include ways to support more programs, performers, summer reading programs, and any other items that help promote reading, literacy, and lifelong learning. The first initiative is to start selling donated books at the Fourth Friday Art celebrations at the El Mirage Civic and Cultural Center, 14010 N. El Mirage Rd.

Suggested donations for Membership are \$5 for Individuals or \$10 for a Family. To volunteer or to join the Friends of the Library, come by the library, or call 602-652-3000.

**MORE CALENDAR ON 9**

# 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



### El Mirage participates in multi-jurisdiction mass casualty exercise

In March, El Mirage Fire crews participated in a mass casualty exercise at Luke AFB. They were joined by crews from Sun City West, Peoria, and Glendale. The exercise was a simulated hazardous materials incident involving multiple patients.

When asked why El Mi-

rage Fire Crews participate in such exercises, Chief Howard Munding stated "These multi-jurisdiction exercises are extremely important in testing the capabilities of not just the El Mirage Fire Department but also area departments and their resources. In the event of a major incident all of these resources will be needed to stabilize the situation and mitigate the hazards."

El Mirage is very fortunate to be a member of the Automatic Aid System made



**Fire Fighters Participating in Mass Casualty Training**  
up of more than 22 area fire departments. In order to be a member of the Automatic Aid system, fire departments are required to equip and staff their fire trucks in a standardized way. This enables all firefighters to have similar

**MORE FIRE ON 10**

### Read Across America Day was held early March

In early March, El Mirage Fire Fighters participated in the National Read Across America Day at Riverview Elementary School. El Mirage Fire Fighters read "Stewie the Duck Learns to Swim" to students in five kindergarten classes, promoting reading and at the same time educating kids about water and life safety issues.

The El Mirage Fire Crew also held an interactive session with Riverview's fourth and seventh graders, discussing and fielding questions on fire safety, life-saving activities, calling 911 and the importance of kids growing up to be good role models, regardless of their chosen profession. "This was a very meaningful activity on a number of levels," stated local fire fighter Morgan McGuire. "We shared several important life-saving messages while promot-

ing reading and literacy at the same time. Plus, these interactions teach kids in our community that we are here for them. They can rely on us and call on us if needed."

President Obama proclaimed March 2 as Read Across America Day marking the birthday of Theodor Seuss Geisel, better known to the world as Dr. Seuss. His stories have helped generations of young Americans enjoy reading and sharpen basic reading skills – vital tools for their future success.



# THE BLUE BYLINE



**News from the El Mirage Police Department**

14405 N. Palm St. • 623-933-1341 • [www.cityofelmirage.org/police](http://www.cityofelmirage.org/police)

Follow us on Facebook. Sign up for emergency notifications at [www.nixle.com](http://www.nixle.com)

## National Take Back Initiative – safely dispose of medication

On April 30, the El Mirage Police Department will be participating in a one-day nationwide event to collect unwanted or expired medications from our residents. The collection site will be at

the El Mirage Police Department, 14405 N. Palm St., from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. The Police Department will collect all over the counter and prescription medications. However, glass containers,

intra-venous containers, injectables, syringes and needles will not be accepted.

The El Mirage Police Department believes that removing unwanted and/or expired medications helps

make our community safer, healthier and drug free. Anyone with questions can call the El Mirage Police Department's Community Action Officer at -623-433-9536.

## New Chief in Town

City Manager Spencer Isom announced at the Thursday, March 10 city council meeting that he had named Interim Police Chief Steve Campbell as the new official head of the El Mirage Police Department. Campbell, once the deputy director for the Arizona Department of Public Safety, has more than three decades of law enforcement experience and had been serving on an interim basis after the departure of former Chief Mike Frazier in February.

Frazier, who now leads the Surprise Police Department, said Campbell is "a man of unquestioned integrity with a long and distinguished career in the

Arizona law enforcement community. El Mirage is fortunate to have a man of Chief Campbell's stature as their police chief."

Isom said he hired Campbell without conducting a national search or interviewing other candidates because he was the clear choice, with a track record in law enforcement, an intimate knowledge of the city and a proven ability to manage the department. "He's done an excellent job as the assistant chief and then as the acting chief," Isom said before the council meeting.

Chief Campbell listed numerous priorities for his department, among them keeping his officers and



**It's Official - El Mirage Police Chief Steve Campbell**

department on the cutting edge of training and technology. The El Mirage Police Department will soon apply for a grant from the state-run Arizona Criminal Justice Commission to implement

**MORE CHIEF ON 11**

## Building a sense of community in El Mirage

The City of El Mirage has been aggressively seeking economic development to provide more local services and amenities to residents as well as to broaden the city's tax base. The more residents can shop and do business in El Mirage, the more local tax dollars and jobs can stay within the community.

As El Mirage slowly emerges from the grips of what is now being called the Great Recession, it is important to recognize those businesses that have been and continue to be strong partners to the City. Since it opened, the El Mirage Walmart store has been not just a major business operation providing important goods and services to El Mirage but also a valuable community ally.

In 2009, Walmart stores, Sam's Club locations and the Walmart Foundation gave more than \$10.6 million in cash and in-kind donations to local organizations in the communities they serve in the state of Arizona. Through additional funds donated by customers, and Walmart and Sam's Club associates throughout the state, the retailer's contributions in Arizona totaled more than \$11.5 million.

In the last year, Walmart's Arizona State Giving Program has donated more than \$865,000 to local organizations, including Be a Leader Foundation, Fresh Start Women's Foundation, Arizona Quest for Kids, Special Olympics Arizona and Boys & Girls Clubs, to name a few.

And how about the El Mirage



Walmart? In 2010, the local Supercenter donated more than \$20,000 to El Mirage organizations, including the following:

- El Mirage Police Department
- El Mirage Fire Department
- Dysart Community Center
- The City of El Mirage
- Dysart Unified School District
- Willow Canyon High School

In addition, the El Mirage store participates annually in a food drive for St. Vincent de Paul and raises money

for Children's Miracle Network.

The Supercenter store employs up to 300 individuals from the area, a large percentage of who call El Mirage home. The average wage of regular, full-time hourly associates in Arizona is \$12.40 per hour and eligible associates receive an annual incentive based on the company's performance. Associates that contribute to the 401(k) Plan receive a dollar for dollar match from Walmart of up to 6 percent of their pay.



**Sage Species restored back to its natural shape and flowering cycle during the month of July.**

## Landscaping practice

The City of El Mirage is located in a low-desert climatic zone where most shrub and groundcover plant species will have at least a nine month growing season. Since a large amount of the plant material in this climate is fast growing and landscape maintenance budgets are limited, The Public Works Department contracted with a landscape architect to develop a site specific maintenance program (guidelines) for the City of El Mirage landscaping. The purpose of these guidelines is to educate the landscape maintenance contractors who are responsible for maintaining City landscaping and any property managers or homeowners associations in the City who are responsible for landscape maintenance.

The guidelines recommend trimming the majority of individual shrub and ground cover plants back just once a year at a specific time of year for each plant species. Every plant species has a "time sensitive" season in regards to being pruned back and having the ability to recover quickly without affecting their flowering cycle, or having long term effects on the life of the plant. Trimming shrubs and ground cover back just once a year will allow each plant species to retain their natural shape and flowering capacity while balancing the annual landscape maintenance requirements throughout the year.

The frost sensitive plant material will typically be cut back during the month of February or March each year after the threat of frost has diminished. Although a large number of the remaining shrub species are evergreen, some of these plants still need to be severely pruned back at least once a year. This maintenance approach will prevent these

**MORE LANDSCAPING ON 8**

# GAS: Increase in bus riders, From 1

## GAL Route Information

The Grand Avenue Limited (GAL) provides limited stop bus service between El Mirage and downtown Phoenix via Grand Avenue. This limited stop service replaced a local bus route in 2003 that served the same corridor. The GAL currently runs only on weekdays, with four trips outbound (toward downtown Phoenix) and four trips inbound. Residents and potential riders can park & ride at the Walmart at Thunderbird and 129th Avenue in El Mirage.

• Grand Avenue Limited AM/Eastbound - From El Mirage (Thunderbird Road at 129th Avenue) to Central Avenue/Camelback Transit Center (Weekdays only):

• Grand Avenue Limited PM/Westbound - From Central Avenue/Camelback Transit Center to El Mirage (Thunderbird Road at 129th Avenue) (Weekdays only):

**The Route operates as a Limited Stop Service, with stops at the following locations:**

- El Mirage, Thunderbird Rd. at 129th Avenue (Walmart Entrance)

- Thunderbird Rd. at Primrose Ave.
- Peoria Park & Ride
- Peoria Avenue & 84th Ave. (Westbound trips only)
- Glendale Park & Ride at 59th Ave. & Myrtle Ave.

• Encanto Blvd. & 21st Ave.  
 • 19th Ave. & Van Buren St.  
 In the morning, regular pick up and drop off at all stops in the Phoenix downtown area begins at 19th Ave. and Jefferson St. to Central Station

In the afternoon, regular pick up and drop off at all stops in the Phoenix downtown area begins from Central Station to 19th Ave. and Adams St.

- Central Ave. & Roosevelt St.
- Central Ave. & McDowell Rd.
- Central Ave. & Encanto Blvd.
- Central Ave. & Thomas Rd.
- Central Ave. & Osborn Rd.
- Central Ave. & Indian School Rd.
- Central Ave. & Campbell Ave.
- Central Ave./Camelback Transit

For more information, please visit [www.valleymetro.org](http://www.valleymetro.org) or call Valley Metro Customer Service at 602-253-5000.

## The Census and El Mirage

On March 10, Maricopa County received its official 2010 census data, along with the news that the Maricopa County region grew by 24.2% over the last decade. The U.S. Constitution requires a complete count of the population every 10 years. Official census fig-

ures released by the U.S. Census Bureau included population, housing, and ethnicity data for all of Arizona, including specific numbers by county and municipality. Additional information is available on the Census Bureau's website at 2010.census.gov/news/releases/

operations/cb11-cn76.html  
 The numbers reflected that Maricopa County continues to gain population but at a slower rate than in past decades. According to the numbers, the 10 largest cities in Maricopa County include Phoenix

**MORE CENSUS ON 8**

**Something Fun for Everyone**

**Family FUN EXPO**

**Saturday, April 30 11am - 2pm**

**Gateway Park**  
**10100 N. El Mirage Road**

**Events:**

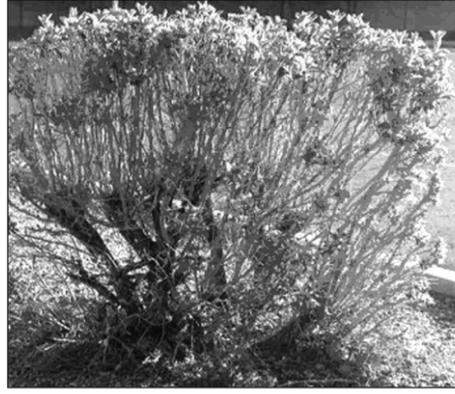
- Pet Expo adoptions, vaccines, Microchips & more
- Kids Zone Bouncers, Peffing zoo, Pony Rides
- Youth Art Contest "Me and My Pet"
- Pulse Boardshop Skateboard Contest
- Aquafina Pitch, Hit and Run
- Police K9 Demos
- Best of the West Firehouse Chili Cookoff
- Pet Events: Weiner & Chihuahua Races, Fashion Show, Flyball Contest

For more information visit [www.westvalleyrecreation.com](http://www.westvalleyrecreation.com)

# LANSCAPING From 6

plants from outgrowing their intended space while protecting them from being sheared on a monthly basis. When shrubs and groundcover are sheared on a monthly basis, which is a common maintenance practice today, it will not only destroy the plants natural shape and flowering capacity, but eventually limit its ability to produce new growth and become woody. This is an unhealthy landscape maintenance practice that will slowly diminish the plants health and will result in the plants premature death.

A copy of the City's Land-



**Pruning with hedge clippers forces the new growth to the outside of the shrub canopy at the branch tip..**



**If shrubs are sheared on a monthly basis for an extended period of time, they eventually will lose their ability to produce new growth and become woody.**

scape Maintenance Guidelines is available on the City's website at <http://www.cityofelmirage.org/DocumentCenter.aspx> under the folder "Public Works". The guidelines go be-

yond shrub and groundcover maintenance with additional sections on turf and tree care.

# CENSUS: El Mirage update, From 7

(1,445,632), Mesa (439,041), Chandler (236,123), Glendale (226,721), Scottsdale (217,385), Gilbert (208,453), Tempe (161,719), Peoria (154,065), Surprise (117,517), and Avondale (76,238).

In terms of total growth by percentage, Buckeye was the fastest-growing community in the Maricopa region, adding 44,339 people since 2000 for a growth rate of 678 percent. Surprise moved into the top 10 Maricopa County cities by population, while Chandler moved up in rank to number three on the list.

Of the 20 largest cities in Arizona, 12 are in Maricopa County, including Goodyear, which ranked 14th in the state (11th in the region), and Buckeye, which ranked 16th in the state (12th in the region).

What did the census reveal about El Mirage?

In 2000, the official census counted 7,609 individuals living in El Mirage, residing in 3,162 housing units. The new 2010 census indicates this population has grown to 31,797 living in 11,326 residences. That equates to an overall addition of

24,188 new residents and 8,164 homes throughout the past ten years. Currently, census figures show approximately 1,910 vacant housing units within the City.

While overall growth from 2000 to 2010 was up, the numbers actually represent a slight decline in the City's most recent years. Because funding is distributed to cities and towns based on population, El Mirage officials anticipate a reduction in the shared revenues it receives from monies the state collects on behalf of Arizona cities. El Mirage, along with all other municipalities, relies on residents to complete and turn in census questionnaires. The more individuals participate in the census, the more the City of El Mirage can work to ensure that thousands of tax dollars are returned to the community in critical services ranging from safety and health programs to parks and transportation facilities. Census numbers are also used for future infrastructure planning and to guide critical business and community decisions.

# CALENDAR: April 2011 events From 3

**EL MIRAGE BRANCH LIBRARY**  
14011 N. 1st Ave., 602-652-3000  
-All Maricopa County Library District libraries are closed April 15 for Staff Development Day.

**CHILDREN**  
**SKIP ALONG STORY TIME**  
- April 5, 12, 19, 26 (Tuesdays) 10 a.m..

Ages 1-5 and their caregivers. Join us for fun books and silly songs.

**TEENS**  
**MAKE A SPRING SCRAPBOOK PAGE** - April 28 at 3:30 p.m.

Ages 13 +. Make a spring-themed scrapbook page and learn about scrapbooking. All supplies provided. Registration required.

**ALL AGES**  
**POEM IN YOUR POCKET DAY** - April 14 (Thursday).

Celebrate National Poetry Month! Select a poem you love, and then carry it with you today to share with co-workers, family, and the library staff.

**ADULTS**  
**FRIENDS OF THE EL MIRAGE LIBRARY** - April 26 (Tuesday) 1:30 p.m.

Join the Friends and help support your library. New members welcome.

**COMPUTERS**  
**BASIC COMPUTER CLASS, ENGLISH & SPANISH** - April 6 (Wednesday) 9:30 to 10:30 a.m.

For new computer users, no experience needed. Registration needed.

**DYSART COMMUNITY CENTER, 14414 N. El Mirage Road. 623-974-4156**  
**GED classes at Dysart Community Center.**

Monday-Tuesday 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Tuesday 6 to 8 p.m.

Wednesday 5 to 9 p.m.  
Contact Susie Ratley at susier@dysartcommunitycenter.org, or 623-974-4156 to register.

**Citizenship Preparation Classes at Dysart Community Center.**

Mondays, 7 to 9 p.m.  
Contact Susie Ratley at susier@dysartcommunitycenter.org, or 623-974-4156 to register.

**Dysart Community Center After School Program.**

Enrollment offered 2 to 7 p.m. Mondays.

Tuesday – Fridays, 3 to 7 p.m.

\$5/month per child  
Contact Priscilla Pena at priscilap@dysartcommunitycenter.org, or 623-583-2137

**Dysart Community Center Summer Program.**

Enrollment begins May 2nd. First come, first serve.

Open to 100 youth.

\$10/week for El Mirage Residents, \$20/week for non-El Mirage residents

8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Monday through Thursdays

June 6- July 14

Contact Priscilla Pena at priscilap@dysartcommunitycenter.org or 623-583-2137

**Attention Volunteers! Dysart Community Center Wants You!**

The Dysart Community Center provides educational and developmental opportunities for low-income children and adults in our community. The Center offers 1-on-1 ESL and GED programming for adults, after school and summer programs for youth, and a variety of special interest programs for everyone. The Dysart Community Center is a nonprofit organization and accepts new supporters. Give us a call at 623-583-0016 to schedule some time so we can show you around and let you know about all of the things we have going on.

Dysart Community Center is also looking for interested residents to volunteer their time to start a community garden. All levels welcome. Contact Jessie Singer at jsinger@dysartcommunitycenter.org, or 623-583-0016.

**YOUTH & ADULT SPORTS**  
**Coed, Men & Women Slow-**

**Pitch Softball League** - The City of El Mirage and NSA is always seeking Coed teams for play during the Spring, Summer and Fall Seasons for Friday and/or Sunday nights.

The coed adult softball leagues will have teams playing games at the El Mirage Gateway Park. Each team will be guaranteed 8 regular season games with a single elimination tournament at the end of each season. NSA rules apply for all leagues.

Entry fee is \$350 plus \$25 registration fee (does not include umpire fees).

Teams and or individuals interested, contact Chris Franciscus at chris@playn-saaz.com, or 412-874-4074.

**Over 30 - Coed Adult Soccer League** - West Valley's premier Adult Coed Soccer League. For league information go to www.azcoedsoccer.com or call 1-800-BSA-0886.

**White Tanks Little League**

- The City is continuing to work with the newly established White Tanks Little League with their new home beginning in El Mirage. Although White Tanks Little League is in season you can get more information regarding fall baseball and the league by visiting www.eteamz.com/whitetanksl.

Volunteer Board Members are also needed each season. If you are interested and able to be part of the established White Tanks Little League Board, contact WTLI directly at 623-241-4602.

**Benfica Youth Soccer League**

Benfica Youth Soccer Academy is an on-going academy that will use soccer education to bring out greatness in the youth and families of our community. We are proud to provide year round developmental soccer in a festive environment for the whole family.

Registered participants in the Monday - Thursday (6 to 8:30 p.m.) academy will be taught the sport of soccer by professional trainers and coaches.

For more information regarding upcoming soccer programs please call 1-800-BSA-0886 or go to www.azbenfica.org

**EL MIRAGE MARTIAL ARTS ACADEMY**

The City of El Mirage Martial Arts Academy is enrolling for Okinawa Karate classes to all ages at the El Mirage Senior Center – 14010 N. El Mirage Rd.

Kids ages 6 to 12 learn effective self-defense skills through diligent training. Each class is available for a \$45 monthly fee.

Adults age 13 and up train at their own speed.

Monday & Wednesday Evenings - 6 to 7 p.m. - (Ages 6 - 12) and 7 to 8:30 p.m. - (Ages 13 - Up)

For more 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 from 1 to 1.5 hours. Monday, Wednesday and Friday classes take place from 5 to 6:10 a.m.

All El Mirage Residents get a 50% off for their first month. This is a \$100 value. To get started go to www.ladiesfitnessbootcamp.com and fill out the registration form.

For more information on the camp visit www.ladiesfitnessbootcamp.com or contact Tracey at 623-252-1FIT (1348).

**Westside Wrestling Club – Enrollment still available!**

Sponsored by the Dysart Wrestling Club, the Westside Wrestling

Club (Ages 8-14) has formed for the 2011 USA Freestyle Wrestling Season. Come learn the art of freestyle wrestling from a coaching staff with over 50 years of wrestling experience and a committed and winning attitude. For more information, call 623-221-7227 or 602-390-4543, or email coachkayle@gmail.com



**Vice Mayor David Shapera attends local Wrestling Banquet**

Where: Dysart High Wrestling Room

When: March 8 thru May 15  
Times: 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. Tue, Weds and Thur.

Cost: \$100 for training and Tournament Wrestling; registration during practice in the Wrestling room. \*You must provide proof of medical insurance at time of registration.

# Water-related accidents expected to rise

Spring is here and so is the beginning of Arizona's Drowning Season. Although drownings occur all year long, the number of water-related accidents begin to rise as temperatures also increase, typically around April 1st.

Drowning is one of the leading causes of death to children under the age of four in Arizona. Children drown in pools and spas but they also drown in buckets, toilets, bathtubs, fish tanks, and ponds. While pools and spas are the most common source of child drowning, large five-gallon size buckets filled with water or other liquids also present a drowning hazard to small children. Nationally, about 25 children drown every year in buckets and many

more are hospitalized. Nationally, many of the containers involved in drownings were 5-gallon buckets used for mopping floors or other household chores. Several were less than half full. A young child's curiosity, along with their crawling and pulling up while learning to walk can lead to danger when buckets are used around the house. Curious children lean forward to play in the water and when they topple into the bucket, they are unable to free themselves and drown.

The good news is that drowning and near drowning can be prevented! To prevent a drowning or near-drowning, El Mirage Fire Chief Howard Munding recommends you take the following actions:

- Never leave any bucket of water or other liquid unattended when small children are around.
- When doing household chores, immediately empty out buckets when finished, or move them to a safe place.
- Always watch your children around water, inside the home, around the pool and around the yard.
- Always empty any bucket when it is not in use – even a near drowning can be tragic and cause brain damage.
- Make sure your pool or spa has an effective barrier, such as a fence to help guard against unauthorized access – even if the pool or spa has a cover.
- Door and windows leading to the pool areas should be locked.
- Fence gates should have self-closing, self-latching mechanisms. Latches need to be out of reach of children.
- Never leave your child unattended in or near a swimming pool, hot tub, spa, not even for a second. There is No substitute for adult supervision.
- Keep toys, tricycles, and other children's play things away from the pool or spa.
- Don't consider your children to be "drownproof" because they have taken swimming lessons.
- Learn how to administer CPR, mouth-to-mouth resuscitation, and other lifesaving techniques.

## Dryer fire sends four people to the hospital

In late February 22 a dryer in an El Mirage home caught fire. The occupants controlled the fire using a portable fire extinguisher. Fire crews removed the smoldering dryer from the home and insured that the fire was completely extinguished.

The fire produced a large volume of smoke that caused respiratory problems for the four occupants of the home. Fire crews treated and transported the occupants to local hospitals for further evaluation.

The El Mirage Fire Department recommends that homeowners take the following precautions to prevent a tragedy in a home:

- Do not use the dryer without a lint filter.
- Make sure you clean the lint filter before or after each load of laundry. Remove lint that has



collected around the drum.

- Rigid or flexible metal venting material should be used to sustain proper air flow and drying time.
- Make sure the air exhaust vent pipe is not restricted and the outdoor vent flap will open when the dryer is operating.
- Once a year, or more often

if you notice that it is taking longer than normal for your clothes to dry, clean lint out of the vent pipe or have a dryer lint removal service do it for you.

- Keep dryers in good working order. Gas dryers should be inspected by a professional to make sure that the gas line and connection are intact and free of leaks.
- Turn the dryer off if you leave home or when you go to bed.

### Analysis of incidents for Feb.14 to March 14

Structure fires - 6	El Mirage by FS121 =00:04:43	inspections	at Pueblo El Mirage
Other fires - 5		• Conducted 3 special inspections	• Handed out Senior Fire Safety Brochures
EMS calls - 166		• Conducted 3 fire station tours	• Performed Blood Pressure Check
False Alarms - 9	<b>Training</b>	• Taught 5 CPR classes	• Participated in the National Read Across America Day at Riverview Elementary
Other service calls - 72	• Training Hours = 594.50	• Total Public Attendance 526 - Adults	• Provided emergency medical support for the Music Festival at Gateway Park
TOTAL = 258	• Live Fire training with Goodyear Fire Department	430 - Children	
Total Fire Loss = \$14,250	• Multi-Jurisdictional Exercise with Luke AFB		
<b>Response Times</b>	<b>Fire Prevention</b>	<b>Significant Incidents/Activities</b>	
• Overall Average response times to calls in El Mirage by all Departments = 00:04:49	• Conducted 4 annual fire	• Participated in a Safety Fair	
• Average Response times in			

## FIRE: Multi-jurisdiction exercise, From 4

equipment and the same number of firefighters on all fire trucks. The number of firefighters on a fire truck translates to the number and types of work that can be performed. Standardizing tactics, training, equipment, and staffing ensures each citizen receives a comparable level of service regardless of which fire department actually responds to their emergency

“The Automatic Aid System is an excellent example of working together to provide a standard level of service in the most economi-

cal and efficient manner possible,” stated Chief Munding. “These are challenging times for Fire Departments and their budgets. This system provides small and large communities with the added value of shared resources so that cities such as El Mirage do not have to invest limited resources to duplicate emergency resources.” He added “Were it not for the Automatic Aid System, the El Mirage Fire Department would need to be substantially larger to provide the same level of service that our community currently enjoys.”

## Annual Auto Theft Prevention & Awareness Week

On March 5, El Mirage Police Department participated in the 6th Annual Auto Theft Prevention & Awareness Week in an effort to promote auto theft and burglary prevention in Arizona. The free event brought in ten residents who had their vehicle etched with their 17 digit Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) and two who enrolled in the Watch Your Car program.

Last year, Arizona achieved another year of declining auto theft rates. Arizona reported 25,986

stolen cars in 2009, a 30 % decrease from 2008 and the 7th consecutive year for a statewide decrease. Overall, Arizona ranked fourth in the nation for vehicle thefts per capita and 7th for total stolen vehicles.

In 2009 El Mirage Police Department was awarded a Public Awareness Grant from the Arizona Automobile Theft Authority which purchased VIN Etching equipment, Steering Wheel Locks and supplies. The El Mirage Police Department plans to host several more



**El Mirage Detective Mike Henige with Volunteer Bill Criteser**

events throughout the year. Check out the AATA Events Calendar for more information about VIN Etching and the Watch Your Car decal

program at [www.azwatchyourcar.com](http://www.azwatchyourcar.com) or contact El Mirage Officer Monica Rios at 623-433-9536.

### Looking for a Few Good Men and Women

Do you have a few extra hours a week and want to serve the citizens of El Mirage? The El Mirage Police Department is looking for a few good men and women willing to volunteer and help make a difference in our community. Police Department volunteers can assist with many programs including Vacation/Vacant Home Patrol, VIN Etching, fingerprinting, data entry/office assistance, traffic control, and community outreach.

Volunteers must be at least 18 years old with no felony convictions and willing to volunteer a minimum of 8 hours a month. Applicants must be able to pass a background and polygraph. An orientation session is scheduled for Friday, April 15th, from 6 to 8 p.m. For more information, check the department web page at [www.cityofelmirage.org/police](http://www.cityofelmirage.org/police), our Facebook page, or contact Officer Monica Rios, 623-433-9536 or [mrrios@cityofelmirage.org](mailto:mrrios@cityofelmirage.org)

### **POLICE:** Chief Steve Campbell, From 5

a \$35,000 to \$50,000 record management system which would allow the department to replace its antiquated paper-based system with one that is computer based. Campbell also wants the department to join Coplink, an intelligence-sharing network ran by a private Virginia-based firm that allows police agencies to share information across jurisdictions. The technology can help officers identify suspects using limited information

such as a vehicle's color or partial license plate number. That kind of information is compared to data stored with other police departments to narrow down a list of possible suspects.

Chief Campbell also wants to educate non-residents and business owners on the fact that El Mirage is one of the Valley's safest cities, boasting one of the lowest crimes per capita in the Valley.