



## SRPMIC COVID-19 Memorial Unites All

BY JUAN YSAGUIRRE  
*O'odham Action News*  
juan.ysaguirre@srpmic-nsn.gov

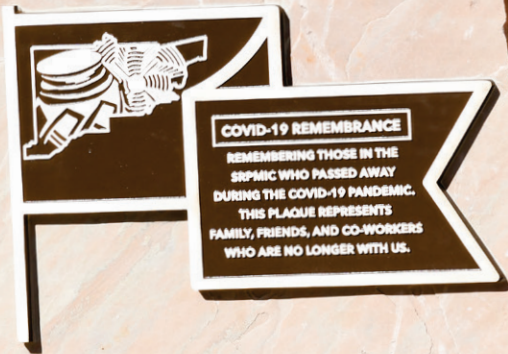
The lasting impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic still linger on in the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community, as the Community lost nearly 100 members during the pandemic.

To ensure they are never forgotten, on March 18, nearly five years to the date from the worldwide shutdown, the SRPMIC unveiled a COVID-19 memorial in the Two Waters Complex Courtyard.

The memorial plaque reads:

*Remembering those in the SRPMIC who passed away during the COVID-19 pandemic. This plaque represents family, friends, and co-workers who are no longer with us.*

*Continued on page 14*



The Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community COVID-19 Memorial is located in the Two Waters Complex Courtyard.

OODHAM ACTION NEWS  
10005 E. Osborn Road  
Scottsdale, AZ 85256  
CHANGE SERVICE REQUEST

PRESORTED  
STANDARD  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Phoenix, AZ  
Permit No. 319

Where You Can Find  
O'odham Action News  
Page 3  
\*\*\*

Rianna Tate Headed  
to Fargo Nationals  
Page 4  
\*\*\*

Navigating Digital  
Stress in Today's  
Digital Age  
Page 6  
\*\*\*

Meet the  
Environmental Health  
Program Team  
Page 6  
\*\*\*

Echoes of the Akimel  
Mural Festival  
Celebrates Art and  
Culture  
Page 8  
\*\*\*

Why Fast Fashion  
Should Not Be  
Tolerated  
Page 9  
\*\*\*

In Memory of Myles  
Francis Antone  
Page 9  
\*\*\*

Veterans Services  
Hosts Open House  
Page 13  
\*\*\*

Honoring Native  
Desert Shield/Desert  
Storm Veterans  
Page 13  
\*\*\*

Legal Notices  
Page 16  
\*\*\*

News and Events In  
and Around Indian  
Country  
Page 17  
\*\*\*

Inaugural  
Reunification Day  
Held by Social  
Services  
Page 18  
\*\*\*



On March 18, the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community temporarily housed 22 tribal flags from the Carl T. Hayden Veterans' Administration Medical Center.

## SRPMIC Becomes Temporary Sanctuary for Phoenix VA Tribal Flags

BY JUAN YSAGUIRRE  
*O'odham Action News*  
juan.ysaguirre@srpmic-nsn.gov

U.S. Army Veteran Michael Leon completed his duty on a recent March morning in the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community. The duty, unforeseen only months ago, overwhelmed Leon with emotion once it was completed.

Leon works for the Phoenix Veterans Affairs and was tasked to deliver 22 tribal flags from the VA to the SRPMIC on March 18. The alternative was placing the flags away in an anonymous warehouse somewhere in the Phoenix Valley for who knows how long.

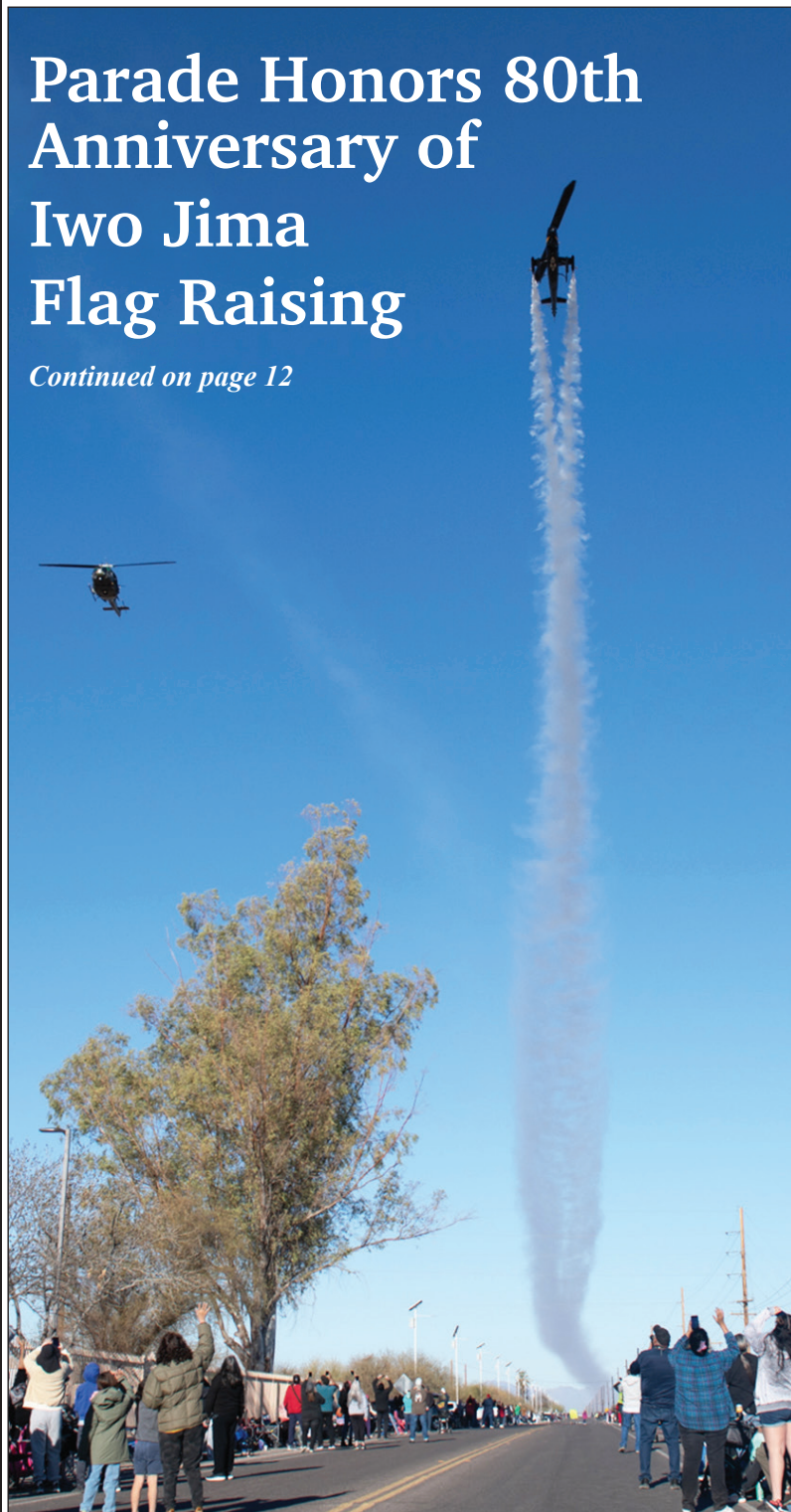
"These flags, to keep them in a storage locked far away, that's like putting chains on them," he said, once the flags were carefully placed in their temporary new home in the Community.

The tribal flags represent the federally recognized tribes living in Arizona, including SRPMIC. The flags are over 20 years old and were a mainstay inside of the downtown Carl T. Hayden Veterans' Administration Medical Center, not far from Steele Indian School Park. That changed in March following the executive orders implemented by the Trump administration in his first few weeks in office. This is when SRPMIC stepped in and stepped up.

\*\*\*\*\* *Continued on page 19*

## Parade Honors 80th Anniversary of Iwo Jima Flag Raising

*Continued on page 12*



# REMINDER NEW RATES ON FIBERSPEED!



FIBERSPEED  
NOW COMES WITH  
MANAGED  
WI-FI!

Saddleback is Offering Cost-Effective & Simplified Internet Packages for Residential Customers

## Get FiberSpeed Internet from Saddleback

Pick the Internet Speed You Need At a Great New Rate

**Basic**

50 Mbps

**\$39.99**  
PER MONTH

**Standard**

100 Mbps

**\$59.99**  
PER MONTH

**Advanced**

300 Mbps

**\$69.99**  
PER MONTH

**BEST VALUE!**

**Elite**

500 Mbps

**\$79.99**  
PER MONTH



**Get Connected with Saddleback today!**  
Residential customers only. Call for details.

**480.362.7150**  
**800.611.9753**

[www.saddlebackcomm.com](http://www.saddlebackcomm.com)

## Family, Cosmetic & Restorative Dentistry



# OPEN SATURDAYS

No out of pocket cost to you!

**FREE ORTHODONTIC CONSULTATION**

Call to make appointment.

## FREE TEETH WHITENING FOR NEW PATIENTS

- GIFT CARD FOR NEW PATIENT WITH SR TRIBAL ID
- FREE IMPLANT CONSULT

**SRPMIC Employees pay \$0 dollars w/ Humana Insurance on following services**

- Exam/all X-rays
- Whitening
- Cleanings
- Bonding
- Fillings
- Tooth Colored Fillings
- Extractions
- Root Canals
- Periodontal Treatment (NON-SURGICAL Gum Treatment)

**A101 DENTAL CARE**

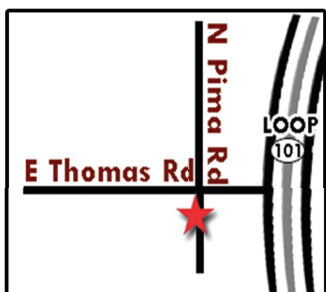
101 & THOMAS

**480-423-1000**

2899 N. 87 St.

Scottsdale (Thomas Rd. Exit)

[www.scottsdaldentaloffices.com](http://www.scottsdaldentaloffices.com)



**Emergencies and Walk-Ins seen on the same day!**

# Where You Can Find O'odham Action News

BY CHRIS PICCIUOLO  
O'odham Action News  
chris.picciuolo@srpmic-nsn.gov

This newspaper that you are reading right now – *O'odham Action News* – can be found at a variety of locations throughout the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community.

Your O'odham Action News team designs each issue of the newspaper that is published the first and third Thursday of each month and sends it out digitally to two places first: the printing press we contract with, and via .pdf file on the O'odham Action News website.

How does the newspaper get to you? Well, once printed, our printing press brings the newspaper to the Community in bundles before the sun comes up on delivery day.

O'odham Action News staff, with the help of Community members enrolled in the Human Resources' Day Worker Program, split the bundles into two different piles.

One pile goes inside to be labeled and sent out to Community members homes (via USPS mail) and to the addresses of the newspaper's other paid subscribers. OAN staff and Day Workers label the individual newspapers. The other pile is loaded up in a vehicle and driven to the following pick-up locations by O'odham Action News reporters.

"Delivery day reminds me of the people we write for. It feels good to hear people say they are excited to read the new issue because of all the hard work we put in," said Nalani Lopez, news specialist at O'odham Action News. "Everything we do is for the Community, so to hear positive feedback from Community members

means a lot. It makes my day to run into family, friends, and new people along the way."

Lopez said it is fun delivering the newspapers because "...it's like a mini-Salt River tour condensed into a couple hours."

"We visit the departments, schools, enterprises, and everyone else working early in the morning," she said. "Smelling the seniors' breakfast of eggs and bacon when we drop off makes me excited to get back to the Round House so I can get a burrito too."

The route begins at Fresenius Kidney Care and the Salt River Senior Center before heading off to the Way of Life Facility and the schools in the Community.

Community members and the public can get the newspaper at some of the next stops which include Discover Salt River, Residence Inn, Chevron, On-Auk-Mor locations, Beeline Gas Station, the River People Health Center and more (see graphic for a list of stops).

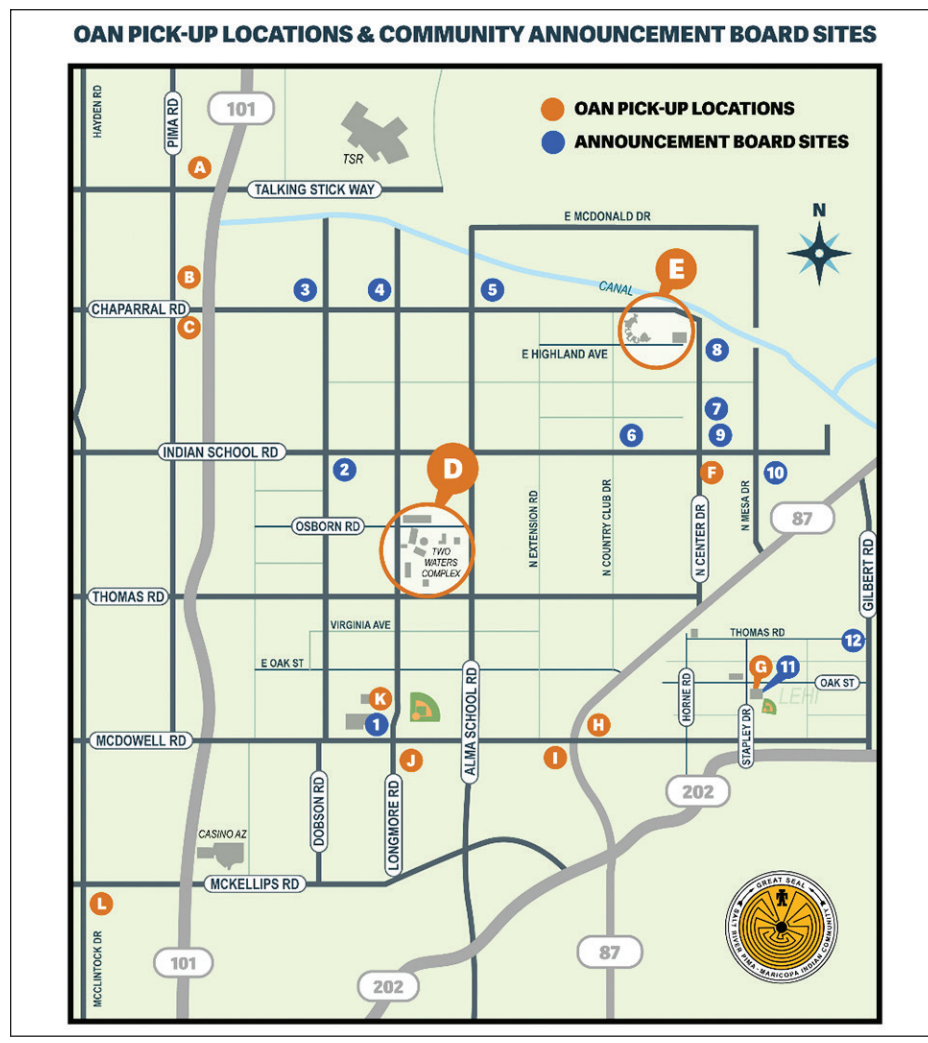
Driving around the Community, most news reporters agree about their must-have go-to jams coming through the speakers.

"If we're listening to the radio, it must be 104.3," said Lopez.

OAN news reporter Juan Ysaguirre concurs.

"Easy! 104.3 FM is all I need, until Christmas time and then I'll tune in to 99.9 FM," said Ysaguirre, who said he needs coffee, an unfrosted pop-tart and some slow jams while cruising the Community.

To have the newspaper sent to your home, head to the O'odham Action News website at <https://oan.srpmic-nsn.gov/subscribe/>.



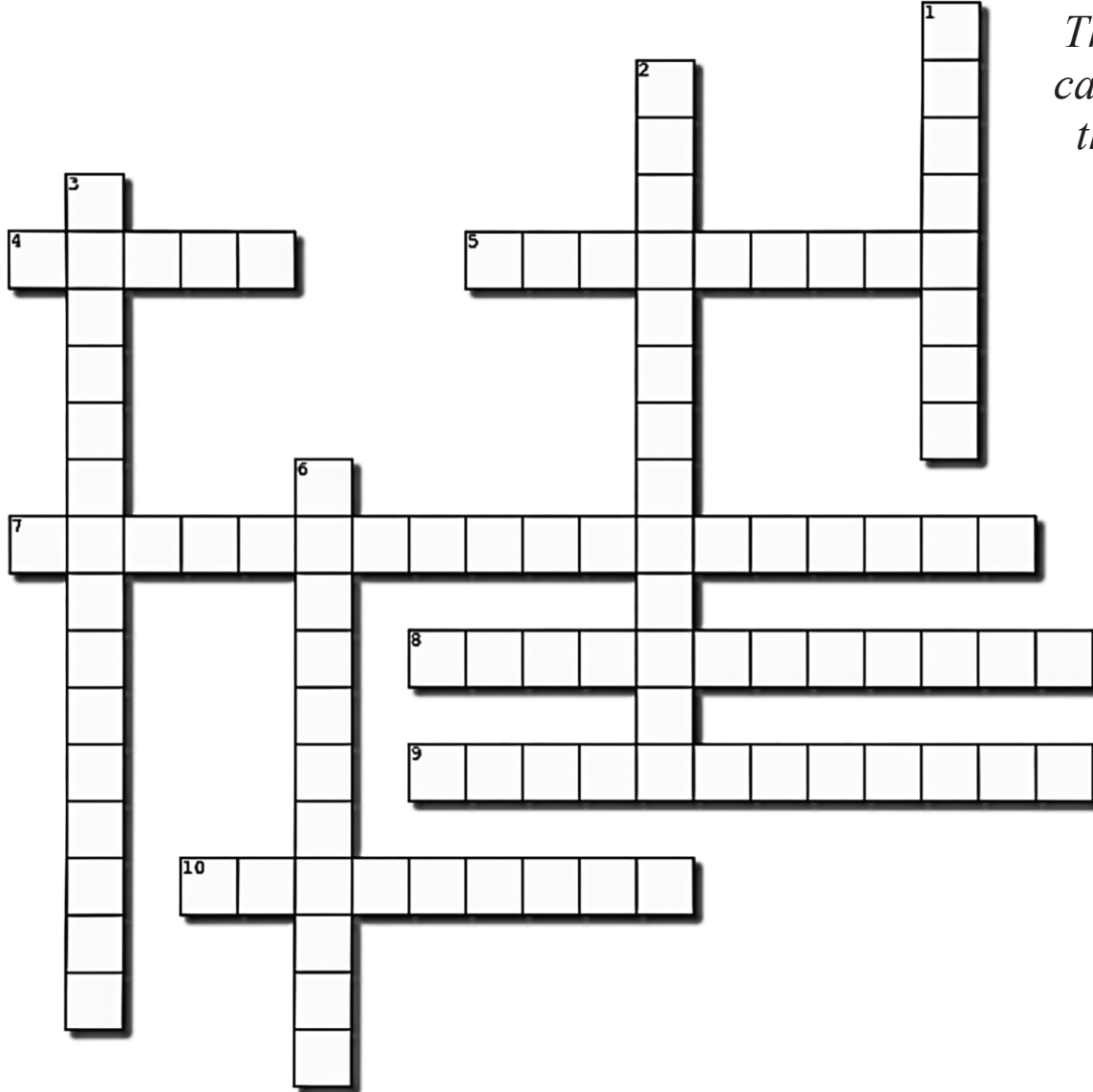
## O'ODHAM ACTION NEWS PICK-UP LOCATIONS

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>A</b> Discover Salt River Visitors Center  | <b>E</b> SCHOOLS<br>- Salt River Elementary School<br>- Accelerated Learning Academy |
| <b>B</b> Residence Inn Scottsdale Salt River  | <b>F</b> Way Of Life Facility  |
| <b>C</b> Chevron  | <b>G</b> Lehi Community Building   |
| <b>D</b> Two Waters Area<br>- Salt River Courts<br>- Huhugam Ki: Museum<br>- Salt River Department of Corrections<br>- Public Works<br>- Salt River Fire Department - Station 291<br>- Social Services<br>- Fresenius Kidney Care | <b>H</b> Shell (Beeline Hwy Pit Stop)  |
|   | <b>I</b> River People Health Center  |
|   | <b>J</b> On-Auk-Mor Trade Center   |
|   | <b>K</b> SRPMIC Food Distribution Program  |
|   | <b>L</b> On-Auk-Mor Chevron  |

## Can you solve the crossword puzzle?

The answers to this crossword puzzle can be found in the stories throughout this issue of *O'odham Action News*.

Enjoy!



### Across

4. Hosting city of the 2025 16U & 18U (Junior) National Championships.
5. Canadian actor who portrayed Ira Hayes in 'Flags of Our Fathers.'
7. Location of the inaugural 'Reunification Day'
8. Ak-Chin Indian Community's newest Chairman
9. The former U.S. representative for southern Arizona's district 7.
10. Author of 'Why Fast Fashion Should Not Be Tolerated'

### Down

1. April 12 is the date of this community environmental celebration
2. The term for excessively browsing the internet while searching for small surges of serotonin
3. Organizer of the Echoes of the Akimel Mural Fest.
6. U.S. Army Veteran from the Phoenix VA who assisted with the transport of the 22 tribal flags to the SRPMIC

# Rianna Tate Headed to Fargo Nationals

BY CHRIS PICCIUOLO  
O'odham Action News  
chris.picciuolo@srpmic-nsn.gov

Rianna Tate is headed to The Fargo Nationals in July. The Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community member and MMA (mixed martial arts) fighter qualified for the biggest freestyle wrestling tournament in the country by defeating Arizona state champion Madelyn Oliver and other seasoned wrestlers on March 1, at the regional Freestyle National Qualifier at Red Mountain High School in Mesa.

The qualifier recognized the top three wrestlers from each weight class. Top wrestlers earned a spot on Team Arizona to compete at the 2025 16U & 18U (Junior) National Championships in Fargo, North Dakota at the Fargo Dome.

Tate, a blue belt at 17 years old, went head-to-head with Oliver in the first round, matching point for point, until Tate's takedown widened the lead; and she won the match 11-6.

She dominated her second-round matchup against Ashlyn Young with takedowns and kept that energy going into the final championship matchup with Mia Johnson. Tate controlled that fight and took home the gold.

"...now time to get back to the mat to improve and get better," said Tate.

Tate took some time away from Muay Thai (striking/boxing) training to focus on the grappling/wrestling aspect of her MMA, a strategy sure to help her to be more well-rounded as she trains for future fights. She trains in Brazilian jiu-jitsu, a self-defense style that includes grappling on the ground and submission holds.



Rianna Tate shows off her medals at the ADCC Submission Fighting World Federation US Open. Photos courtesy of Rianna Tate.

"I'll be fighting in the cage some time next year so I'm starting to get prepared for that," she said. "That's [when] I'll be making my adult amateur debut."

In January, Tate competed in the ADCC Submission Fighting World Federation US Open in San Diego, California. She entered her own division, the women's adult intermediate blue/purple belt 70kg (under 154 pounds), as well as the women's adult advanced brown/black belt +70kg (over 154 pounds).

Tate placed first in her division and second in the advanced division.

"I wrestled lot at this tournament and got the job done and went against very tough well-decorated grapplers," said Tate. "I was very happy with my performance that day, and [I am] still continuing to improve get better."

Tate's father and coach, MMA fighter Joe "Tomahawk" Tate, said to stay tuned for his daughter's future matchups.

"Ona [Rianna's nickname] is greatly improving in skill and mindset. She makes me proud," her father said. "I know she will continue to proudly represent the Community."

Tate's other coaches are Jonathan Van Buren and Adrian Nez (jiu-jitsu), Ray Waters (wrestling) and George Casto (strength and conditioning). Her current sponsors are CTRL Industries and Living Lotus.



ABOVE: Rianna Tate sports her MMA gear and apparel.

BELOW: Rianna Tate wins her match at Red Mountain High School.



Food, Fun, and Games!!

## Earth Day Celebration Environmental Fair

**Saturday,  
April 12, 2025**

**9am—1pm**

**Accelerated Learning Academy  
(Salt River High School)**

**4827 N. Country Club Dr.,  
Scottsdale, AZ 85256**

*Attendees are encouraged to recycle previous years' SRPMIC Earth Day shirts.*

**New Location!**

SALT RIVER PIMA-MARICOPA INDIAN COMMUNITY

# EASTER

# EGG HUNT

**SALT RIVER BALLFIELD • 9-11AM**

**SATURDAY, APRIL 19**

**9:15AM**  
Egg Hunt (2-3 yrs)

**9:30AM**  
Egg Hunt (4-6 yrs, 7-9 yrs & 10-14 yrs)

**9:50AM**  
Easter Dress Parade (0-1 yrs & 2-3 yrs Boy & Girl)

**10:00AM**  
Field Games

**10:30AM**  
Egg Eating Contest (Adults)

**EGG HUNT - CONTESTS - DRESS PARADE - GAMES**

**NEW YEAR, NEW BENEFITS...TAKE ADVANTAGE TODAY!**

# PIMADENTAL.COM



DR. BRET STANDAGE

**DR. STANDAGE  
DR. STANDAGE  
DR. SANTORO  
DR. WILLMAN**



DR. CRAIG STANDAGE

**For Humana/AmeriBen holders**

## **IN NETWORK! LOWEST COST FOR OUR SALT RIVER PATIENTS!**

### Increase Your **Smile Power**

- EMERGENCIES seen the same day (Root Canals & Extractions)
- ROOT CANALS
- Wisdom Teeth Extractions
- IMPLANTS to replace Missing Teeth
- INVISALIGN Orthodontic teeth straightening for Teens & Adults.
- Family, Cosmetic & Implant Dentistry
- Mercury free fillings & ceramic restorations
- Digital X-Rays (Less Radiation)
- FREE DENTURE CONSULTS (Humana covers a new set every 5 years)

**WE NOW OFFER  
3rd Molar Extractions  
With Sedation**

**3 Hygienists  
available to  
clean your teeth**

**COME VISIT OUR NEW  
STATE OF THE  
ART OFFICE!**

**INVISALIGN  
\$1000 off**  
for Salt River Patients  
**FREE CONSULTATION**

**FREE CONSULTATION**  
\*WISDOM TEETH  
REMOVAL  
\*IMPLANT TOOTH  
REPLACEMENT

**Hours Open:**

**Monday - Thursday  
7:00 am-6:00 pm**

**Friday  
7:00 am-4:00 pm**

GO TO  
**www.PIMADENTAL.COM**  
to see for yourself.

**480.657.6357**

PIMA Dental Center for Family,  
Cosmetic & Implant Dentistry

10850 N 90th ST | Scottsdale AZ 85260





BY JUAN YSAGUIRRE  
O'odham Action News  
juan.ysaguirre@srpmic-nsn.gov

the subject of digital stress. Nearly 100 individuals, comprised of Community members and staff, attended the presentation.

"Digital stress can be a broad statement because there are many things we can learn about it, which include mental and physical health," began Nosie. "There's so much technology, we have it at our fingertips. Our smart phones, tablets, nooks, apple watches, we have technology around us constantly. We can become overwhelmed."

It was during the introductions that one of the attendees mentioned that many individuals, including themselves, use their cell phones as their alarms in the morning. Nosie stated that this can attribute to additional digital stress for an individual. What would be a good alternative to cell phone alarm? Since so many people rely on it, individuals might consider utilizing non-digital options for their morning alarms.

"We're constantly processing information on our devices and watches. Our brains are processing information, and too much contributes to addiction and stress," said Nosie.

Digital stress is caused by information overload. Our brain is constantly reading and processing information. This is especially true when a person works a desk job and utilizes a computer. Nosie reiterated that information overload causes stress and can result in a person shutting down and isolating. "It can be too much," she said.

Additionally, social media can add to a person's digital stress. Comparing yourself to others can lead to feelings of inadequacy and increased feelings of shame and guilt. Because we are all responsible for our own individual well-being, it was suggested that individuals should limit their time on social media.

However, that may be easier said than done.

While Nosie researched the topic of digital stress

for her presentation, she uncovered a stat that surprised her. "On average, we unlock our cell phones 85 times a day," she said. "It's probably even more, it depends on the person. The average person spends five hours a day on their phone."

Furthermore, the digital age has now affected areas outside of cell phones and tablets, such as grocery stores. "When I go to a store and they ask me if I have an account with them [for rewards points], I tell usually them I don't know, because we're retaining so much info and it's easy to dismiss it and say whatever."

The constant need of remembering passwords, usernames, phone numbers and other online elements attributes to the anxieties of digital stress.

To help ease the harms of digital stress, Nosie suggested implementing mindfulness while using technology. Some ways to do so include utilizing mindful breathing exercises, limiting screen time, going for walks, avoiding "doomscrolling," using time management apps, rediscovering hobbies, spending time outdoors and more.

The term, 'doomscrolling,' is excessively browsing the internet while searching for small surges of serotonin, a neurotransmitter and hormone located in the body which regulates mood, sleep, appetite, digestion and more.

As the webinar presentation neared its conclusion, Nosie recalled how quickly technology advanced. "I remember watching television shows in the 1980's and the car phones they had back then looked super cool," she said.

"Today, we have cell phones, and we can do any and everything on them. We have access to technology around the clock, sometimes too much for our own good. It's important to remember we have to take care of ourselves first."

For quite some time now, the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community's Department of Health and Human Service Prevention and Intervention Service webinars have seen a gradual increase of attendees.

When you look at it one way, the continued growth of the webinar class sizes can be possibly attributed to the variety of subjects the health educators facilitate. Previous classes have covered topics such as gratitude, combating holiday stress, helpful tips for parents as their children begin to date, among other topics.

The March 11 webinar, presented by SRPMIC Health Educator Melanie Nosie, LMSW, was about

# LAW DAY

May 1, 2025  
4PM - 6PM

SRPMIC JUSTICE CENTER

500 meals provided

Ice Cream

Department tables with informational pamphlets

DEFENSE ADVOCATE OFFICE      LEGAL SERVICES OFFICE  
OFFICE OF GENERAL COUNSEL      OFFICE OF THE PROSECUTOR  
AND MORE!!!!

## Meet the Environmental Health Program Team



Environmental Health Program Staff (Left to Right) Anthony Phillips, Naomi Evanishyn, and Christopher Henke.

SUBMITTED BY HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT

Hello! Here is a description of one program here at the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community called the Environmental Health Program (EHP). The program operates under the SRPMIC Department of Health and Human Services Public Health Division; the goal is to promote health and wellness within the Community. The EHP consist of a staff of three, Christopher Henke, R. S., Program Manager; Naomi Evanishyn, R. S., Environmental Health Specialist; and Anthony Phillips, Environmental Health Technician. Anthony recently became an R. S., Registered Sanitarian, and will so be an Environmental Health Specialist, he is also an enrolled Community member.

What are the duties of the Environmental Health Program?

The EHP was developed in 1996 to create a program similar to services provided by the U.S. Public Health Service (PHS) Indian Health Service (IHS). With the development and growing food operations in the Community, EHP conducts all food and restaurants inspections. The program also inspects all the special events that occur in the Community, with the majority held at Salt River Fields. Any public event where food and drinks are to be sold or provided, the EHP ensures they meet the highest standards for public food safety.

There are approximately 200 permitted food establishments in the Community.

Each year all food establishments are required to submit a new application and appropriate fees to renew their food permit. Some establishments have more than one permit per location. Example: Casino AZ, located on 92nd Street and McKellips has ten separate permits, each requiring their own inspection. Another example is WalMart, they have three permits, for Food (Deli), Bakery, and Retail. Are you wondering about the Subway in WalMart? They have their own permit, it is operated by private business; so four permits under one roof.

Other key services provided by EHP are swimming pool inspections, animal vaccinations and pet owner licensing for canines-which shows proof of rabies vaccinations, mosquito control and testing, providing instructions on food handling, home safety assessments requested by other tribal entities, assisting Injury Prevention Program by administering car safety seats and bike safety helmets and participating at public events to provide health and safety information.

The EHP recently relocated to a new site off site, their office is now at 8800 E. Chaparral Suite 110, Scottsdale, AZ. We are requesting that if you have any questions to please contact us at 480-362-5706 to see if how we can best provide service to you. Or you may send an email to: EnvironmentalHealth@srpmic-nsn.gov.

2025 MARICOPA COMMUNITY COLLEGES

# American Indian Convocation

Friday, May 2, 2025 | 6pm - 8pm

Salt River Fields at Talking Stick  
7555 N Pima Rd.

SCAN TO RSVP

American Indian MCCC students must RSVP by April 25, 2025: [tinyurl.com/MCCAIC2025](https://tinyurl.com/MCCAIC2025)

For more information, please contact [2025convocation@srpmic-nsn.gov](mailto:2025convocation@srpmic-nsn.gov)

Proudly hosted by the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community



# *Celebrating 15 Years in the Making*

**SATURDAY, APRIL 12 • 2PM- 7PM • MAIN POOL**

- SRPMIC Tribal ID required upon entry (SRPMIC members and their immediate family)
- Program begins 2:30pm

Gift Giveaways & Raffles • Live Music with Surprise Guest 5-6:30pm

Children & Youth Activities • Food Served 3pm - 5pm • Pool Party



Giveaway and raffles are eligible with SRPMIC Tribal ID.\*

\*Giveaway items available while supplies last. Must be present to win raffles. Questions Contact: Juleigh Burke 480.291.5623

Locally owned and caringly operated by the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community.



## Echoes of the Akimel Mural Fest Celebrates Art and Culture

BY ANDREEA MIGUEL  
*O'odham Action News*  
 Andreea.miguel@srpmic-nsn.gov

Gaining inspiration from the Cheyenne River Youth Project's RedCan Graffiti Jam in South Dakota, Natasha Martinez created a Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community version of the popular event.

The Community's first ever Echoes of the Akimel Festival was hosted by Youth Services and gave youth the opportunity to paint murals around the Community during March's spring break. The festival was an exciting event that celebrated the connection between art and culture.

"In July 2024, we brought three of our youth through the program to experience Red Can firsthand," said Martinez, who works for Youth Services, "after seeing how much it resonated with them – it felt exciting to think we could bring back that sort of energy back to Salt River."

The Cheyenne River Youth Project is a nonprofit that works with Lakota youth and families. It celebrated Red-Can's 10th year in 2024 on the Cheyenne River Reservation.

The Echoes of the Akimel Festival created a space where art, mentorship and culture came together to connect



Blank walls were set for anyone to spray paint and show their art.

with the next generation of artists. "This festival was about giving them that opportunity, introducing them to mural work in a safe place where they could learn from experienced artists who understand their journey," said Martinez.

From March 12-13, Community youth gathered to turn ordinary spaces into expressions of creativity and culture by painting murals. "It gave



One of the several murals shown at the Red Mountain Community Center.



Beeline Highway Pitstop displays a mural for anyone who passes by.

them the chance to create something lasting, something they could walk by and say, 'I helped make that.'

Murals can be seen at Dobson Heights, the E.C.S. Building across from the Way of Life Facility (WOLF), Red Mountain Neighborhood Community Center, Beeline Hwy Pit Stop and the Salt River Baseball Field.

On the last day of the event, art, vendors, traditional singing and dancing, and open walls where all were welcomed to pick up a can of provided spray paint at the WOLF. APACHE Skateboards also ran demos at the skate park. In addition, SRPMIC departments were present, offering resources and crafts.

"Beyond spray-painting techniques, this festival was about helping youth connect painting with culture and storytelling," said Martinez. "Art has a way of bringing people together... murals foster a sense of identity and belonging, especially when the design reflects culture and stories that resonate with our Indigenous people.

"Art is the way we share our culture, through song, dance, storytelling, weaving, painting and so much more."

### Message from Natasha "Rezmo" Martinez

Special recognition for: ACM Dawn Sinoqui, Public Works in facilitating collaborative communication between various departments in providing their crucial involvement in successfully seeing this project through.

Additional thank you to Public Works, Community Recreation Services, Human Health Services, Engineering and Construction Services & the Casey Foundation for providing guidance, space, materials and funding to display these murals.

For our first year, we anticipated a few bumps here and there, but in the end, everyone's help, dedication and love for youth and community made it thrive. From the very bottom of my heart, thank you to every artist, mentor, department, community member and supporter who made Echoes of the Akimel Mural Festival something truly special. Hopefully this is just the beginning.



ABOVE and BELOW: Murals just outside Dobson Heights.





# Why Fast Fashion Should Not Be Tolerated

BY COLE BURNS

Submitted by Salt River Schools

“Fast fashion is now a \$150.82 billion industry. It has grown by 10.74% from 2024 and is further estimated to reach \$291.1 billion by 2032” (Fast Fashion Statistics (2024), 2025). Fast fashion consists of lower quality, brand-name clothes that can still give people with a limited budget what they want. Some of the most popular fast fashion brands in the U.S. today are Shein, Zara, H&M, and Fashion Nova. While many argue that fast fashion makes trendy clothes available to all, its negative impact on the environment and the mistreatment of workers outweigh its benefits.

First, fast fashion does great harm to the environment. “The industry is responsible for ten percent of the annual carbon footprint” (Fast Fashion Statistics (2024), 2025). This is partially due to the manufacturing and transportation of goods. In addition, fast fashion leads to heavy water pollution. According to the United Nations Environment Programme and the Ellen MacArthur Foundation, “Of all the wastewater in the world, twenty percent is from textile dyeing and is highly toxic” (Hayes, 2024). Microplastic fibers that are used to manufacture clothing also enter the oceans,



*Editor’s note: Cole Burns is a student at the Accelerated Learning Academy and is expected to graduate in 2026. Cole is passionate about entrepreneurship and fashion, which is why he chose to write an essay about the negative side of the fast fashion industry. He is determined to start his own clothing line. Next school year, Burns will attend the East Valley Institute of Technology to study fashion design and merchandizing.*

amounting to approximately 500,000 tons” (Hayes, 2024). Fast fashion also causes extreme textile waste that ends up in landfills due to rapid production of low-quality clothing that quickly becomes discarded. In fact, most items cannot be recycled because they are usually made of synthetics.

Secondly, fast fashion is cruel to workers by putting them in unsafe conditions and paying them low wages. There are 75 million fashion factory workers worldwide, yet only 2% earn a living wage (Beneath the Seams: The Human Toll of Fast Fashion, 2024). “Garment workers are often forced to work 14 to 16 hours a day, 7 days a week” (What’s wrong with the fashion industry?, 2024). Child labor is also common in the fast fashion industry. In addition, workers are often subject to dangerous conditions. For example, many work without ventilation in unsafe environments and inhale toxic substances. Rana Plaza, an unsafe factory in Bangladesh that collapsed in 2013

killing 1,134 textile workers, demonstrates the type of conditions that laborers often face.

While many believe that fast fashion makes trendy clothes available to all, the costs exceed any benefits. For example, the demand for inexpensive, fashionable clothes drives exploitive labor practices, causing female garment workers to be sexually harassed. In addition, cheap clothing is actually more expensive in the long run because the environment is necessary for survival, and the manufacture of inexpensive clothes is causing severe damage to the planet as a whole.

Overall, fast fashion should not be tolerated because it endangers the environment and workers’ health and safety. In addition, the low wages of fast fashion workers enable people to spend more money on fashionable clothes that are not needed. Rather than spending money on “cheap,” trendy garments made by manufacturers who harm the planet and exploit workers, people should seek out manufacturers who engage in sustainable practices and not jump on every new fashion trend that comes out. It might cost a little more, but, in the long run, it is worth it.

### Works Cited

- Beneath the Seams: The Human Toll of Fast Fashion. (2024, September 9). Retrieved from Earthday.org: [www.earthday.org/beneath-the-seams-the-human-toll-of-fast-fashion/](http://www.earthday.org/beneath-the-seams-the-human-toll-of-fast-fashion/)
- Fast Fashion Statistics (2024). (2025, February 3). Retrieved from Uniform Market: [uniformmarket.com/statistics/fast-fashion-statistics#](http://uniformmarket.com/statistics/fast-fashion-statistics#)
- Hayes, A. (2024, June 29). Fast Fashion. Retrieved from Investopedia: [Investopedia: Investopedia.com/terms/ff/fast-fashion.asp#](https://www.investopedia.com/terms/ff/fast-fashion.asp#)
- What’s wrong with the fashion industry? (2024). Retrieved from Sustainyourstyle.org: [sustainyourstyle.org/en/whats-wrong-with-the-fashion-industry](https://www.sustainyourstyle.org/en/whats-wrong-with-the-fashion-industry)

## In Memory of Myles Francis Antone

APRIL 10, 1923 - APRIL 22, 2000



Myles Francis Antone.



Myles Francis Antone and his wife, Alfretta.

lifestyle. A team roper and cattleman who taught me and others a life of horses and cattle. A skill he passed on to me was that of horseshoeing, something I still practice today.

He was raised in the Blackwater village on the Gila River Indian reservation and as a young man he rode and worked cattle. He told me of

his experiences growing up and before enlisting in the Navy and how he felt when he came home. The hard times he and many Native veterans faced after the war, the difficulties he had in finding a job. I remember he told me of a time when he was on his own, he and his friends shared a loaf of bread because that was all they had.

He made a life for himself by learning the butcher trade, married our mother, Alfretta, and raised five children. He shared with me many life stories and what he experienced and learned throughout his life. One life lesson that he passed to me, “Always remember who you are and where you came from.” He passed away nine days after doing a cattle drive and roundup at Red Mountain by the Verde River. I shared that day with him riding, sorting and branding. I’ll always remember the good time I had with him, that is the memory I will always keep.



Myles Antone and his wife, Alfretta.

**SAVE THE DATE**

**National Public Health Week**  
**APRIL 7-13, 2025**

**IT STARTS HERE:**  
**Weaving Prevention,**  
**Culture, and Connection!**

Join us for a week of exciting events in different locations!

Stay tuned for more information about the exciting events we have planned!

**CONTACT INFO:**  
Public Health Line:  
480-362-2603

# Horsin' Around in the Desert

BY NALANI LOPEZ  
O'odham Action News  
Nalani.lopez@sprmic-nsn.gov

Fresh air, damp earth, and the beauty of the desert welcomed Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community youth to the 2025 Spring Horse Camp.

Held over the weekend of March 7-9, 40 youth learned the fundamentals of horsemanship, along with O'odham and Piipaash traditions, from the Salt River Rodeo Committee and special guests.

"There are many goals of Horse Camp," said Senior Environmental Specialist Brian Gewecke. "All are intended to improve the lives of Community youth through culture, history and education. Elders share knowledge, and different organizations, departments and businesses are invited to expose the youth to potential career paths."

This year marked the first Horse Camp since 2020.

The first day of the camp began on Friday, when spring showers greeted youth with camping bags and tents. Scattered puddles of rain filled the campsite of the Wild Horse Facility, located in the northern part of the Community. That night, under a blanket of stars, campers braved the chilly weather.

By Saturday morning, the warm sun dried Friday's rain, and woke the campers from the cold night. With brighter weather, more youth arrived for the day full of horse activities.

Camp organizers, Angie Silversmith and Andrea Stepp gathered the youth for a sunrise prayer.

"In the morning, the sun, or *tas* is so important. It brings life," said Tony Collins to the youth.

A homecooked breakfast prepared by volunteers filled the stomachs of all camp participants before they got to horsin' around.

David Antone and his family presented the youth with his share of calves. In a large trailer, calves of all sizes filled the corral for a castration demonstration.

Later in the afternoon, youth travelled offsite to the Butterfly Wonderland Conservatory. Back on site, they learned horsemanship and rode tamed horses. On the trail rides, they were surrounded by silhouettes of mountains, the stillness of the desert, and bands of wild horses.

The hands-on day ended with separate traditional Sweat lodge ceremonies for the male and female participants. Campers spent their last night once again under the stars.

Sunday mirrored Saturday with a sunrise walk, prayer and breakfast. Representatives from Midwestern Veterinary University shared knowledge about horse safety and handling. Between meals and sessions, youth rode, groomed and bonded with the horses.

At noon, the camp came to a close with a final gathering and appreciation for the attendees, volunteers, and presentors.

"Angie also has a core group of ladies that organize Horse Camp each year," said Gewecke. "Without these ladies of the Community volunteering their time and effort, Horse Camp would not happen."

Hand-in-hand, everyone at the Wild Horse Facility closed the weekend with traditional social songs.

With tents packed, and memories made, the attendees of the 2025 Horse Camp headed home.



## Scenes from OAN's Wild Horse Visit

Environmental Specialists Brian Gewecke and Justino Balderrama supervise and care for the Salt River wild horses. Earlier this year, OAN Staff Chris Picciuolo and Nalani Lopez followed the pair to catch a glimpse of horse care in the desert. Visit [oodhamnews.org](http://oodhamnews.org) for more photos of the horses.



How do you say horse in O'odham and Piipaash?

**KAVIYO (O'ODHAM)**

**QWAQT (PIIPAASH)**

Photos by OAN Staff: Nalani Lopez, Chris Picciuolo and Kari Haahr



# Parade Honors 80th Anniversary of Iwo Jima Flag Raising

BY CHRIS PICCIUOLO

O'odham Action News  
chris.picciuolo@srpmic-nsn.gov

During World War II, U.S. Marines raised the American flag atop Mount Suribachi amid the Battle of Iwo Jima on February 23, 1945. An iconic photograph by Joe Rosenthal, which won the 1945 Pulitzer Prize for Photography, captured the moment. One of the marines photographed planting the flag was O'odham Marine Cpl. Ira Hayes (bot).

To honor the 80th anniversary of the flag raising, the Gila River Indian Community gathered in Sacaton outside the Mathew B. Juan – Ira H. Hayes Veterans Memorial Park for a parade to pay tribute to Gila River's Hayes and other veterans.

"Thank you for converging on this sacred little piece of ground to honor Ira Hayes, the Marines and all the veterans that served from WWI all the way to the present wars," said Roberto Jackson, Gila River Indian Community director of Communications & Public Affairs and emcee of the event.

Hayes died in 1955 at the age of 32. The U.S. Marine Corps War Memorial in Arlington, Virginia, depicts Hayes and others in the 1945 flag raising. His legacy continues all these years later. A book called "Ira Hayes: The Akimel O'odham Warrior, World War II, and the Price of Heroism" was published in 2023. Famed musician Johnny Cash wrote a song called, "The Ballad of Ira Hayes" and First Nations actor Adam Beach portrayed Hayes in Clint Eastwood's 2006 film, "Flags of Our Fathers." Community members lined up on each side along Sacaton-Casa Blanca Road in their own fold-up chairs and in bleachers set up near the stage. The annual parade often attracts supporters from across Arizona, including the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community.

The alluring scent of cemait (tortillas in O'odham) lingered over to the parade route from the park.

Before and after the parade was a luncheon and gathering hosted by American Legion Auxiliary Unit No. 84 with St. Peter Indian Mission school and church. The whole event was sponsored by American Legion Ira Hayes Post No. 84.

"I want to thank the St. Peters children for being here. Sister Martha has helped Post No. 84 a lot," said Bill Dixon, post commander for the Ira H. Hayes Post No. 84.

Students from St. Peters Church performed the pledge of allegiance and the national anthem in both English and O'odham.

Also contributing his voice, singing the Marines' Hymn, was 100-year-old Navajo U.S. Marine veteran and Code Talker Thomas H. Begay, who spent 30 days on Iwo Jima.

As the parade began, the crowd gasped at the sights and sounds of the military flyovers, including the roaring B-25 Mitchell and the Douglas C-47 Skytrain airplanes and the Bell UH-1 Iroquois "Huey" and Bell AH-1 Cobra helicopters.

GRIC Gov. Stephen Roe Lewis and Lt. Gov. Regina Antone eventually joined the parade and took turns greeting Community members along the sidelines.

Notable parade entries included the Blackwater Community School Color Guard, Trickster Cultural Center Intertribal Youth Council, Gila River EMS, American Legion Yoeme Post No. 125, Keli Akimel Hua Modk Cudkdam (Gila River Basket Dancers), Gila River Health Care veterans and employees and Bushmasters Post No. 114 (Scottsdale).

Hayes was in the national news after the parade. The U.S. Department of Defense website removed articles featuring Hayes and other notable Native veterans who served in the U.S. military. The move comes from President Donald Trump's executive order banning diversity, equity and inclusion. Lewis called the decision to remove the Native veterans "misguided" and "irresponsible."



# SRPMIC Veterans Services Department Hosts Open House

BY JUAN YSAGUIRRE  
O'dham Action News  
juan.ysaguirre@srpmic-nsn.gov

In the continued efforts to ensure Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community veterans are honored and supported, the SRPMIC Veterans Department held an open house at the Round House Café for Community veterans and their families on February 21.

“Our annual open house in the Community serves to highlight the benefits and services that we currently assist with, as well as those we don't have expertise in,” said SRPMIC Veterans Services representative, Amanda White.

She continued, “This event is designed to assist veterans and their families, focusing on the various benefits and assistance available to them through the VA [Veterans Affairs] and other organizations that do expertise in.”

The previous open house was held in February 2024 with expected plans for upcoming open houses to be held on an annual basis in the Community. “We had [around] 70 people attend [this year's],” shared White.

Community veterans and their families were treated to kettle corn, lemonade and more inside of the Café. Additionally, the SRPMIC Veterans Department staff held raffle prizes for those that entered in the contests as well as answered questions from veterans and their families. Maintaining a consistent line of communication with Community veterans has been a key aspect for the department.

White shared, “We truly appreciate everyone for coming out. A special thanks to our Community veterans, employee veterans and the SRPMIC staff along with families. Events like

these are also intended for them. Any services that our veterans need, can benefit anyone, especially if they have veterans in their families who can share or learn from the information provided. It's all valuable knowledge. Thank you all once again for attending!”

The SRPMIC Veterans Department have already begun plans for their next event, the annual Community Memorial Day Ceremony, on May 26 in the SRPMIC.

“We invite the community to participate in these types of events. For details about all other activities, dates, and times, please check out our social media channels on Facebook and Instagram.”

Community veterans and their families interested in reaching out to the SRPMIC Veterans Department can email [VeteranServices@SRPMIC-nsn.gov](mailto:VeteranServices@SRPMIC-nsn.gov) or dial (480) 362-7884.

*Open your camera on your mobile phone/tablet to scan the QR codes below for additional information.*

SRPMIC Veterans  
(Instagram Page)



SRPMIC Veterans  
(Facebook Page)



## COMMUNITY EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM (CERT) TRAINING 2025 — CLASS 8

CERT Training provides individuals with the basic skills needed to offer immediate assistance to family members and neighbors during an emergency.

Classes will be held at Great Wolf Lodge Training Room located at 7333 N Pima Rd. Scottsdale, AZ 85258

Training is open to the public for interested Community Members, SRPMIC Employees, and Enterprise Employees seeking to join the SR-CERT.

### CERT Basic Course 1: Tuesday, April 8th, 2025; 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM

- Disaster Preparedness
- CERT Organization
- Disaster Medical Operations 1 & 2

### CERT Basic Course 2: Wednesday, April 9th, 2025; 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM

- Disaster Medical Operations 1 & 2 (cont'd)
- Disaster Psychology
- Fire Safety and Utility Controls
- Light Search & Rescue Operations

### CERT Basic Course 3: Thursday, April 10th, 2025; 8:00 AM - 1:00 PM

- Terrorism and CERT
- Course Review and Disaster Simulation

To register for our upcoming CERT training, please call Terry Nelson at 480-362-7929 or email [Terry.Nelson@srpmic-nsn.gov](mailto:Terry.Nelson@srpmic-nsn.gov)

## Honoring Native Desert Shield/Desert Storm Veterans



SUBMITTED BY SRPMIC VETERAN SERVICES

This past March 7, 2025 we had the honor of hosting a truly successful Desert Shield/Desert Storm Native Recognition Ceremony Event at the Talking Stick Golf Clubhouse. The event was a tremendous success, uniting our community veterans with their loved ones,

along with members from our sister tribes and neighboring tribes who served in Desert Shield/Storm. We aim to celebrate and honor these courageous veterans who served during the Gulf War and recognize their significant contributions.

We hold immense pride for our Community Desert Shield/Storm Veterans, not just for their service but also for those who devoted their time to organizing this event. They took the initiative to create a committee, dedicating to meetings to share their insights and ensure that the ceremony was both meaningful and memorable. Their dedication and effort to honor their fellow Native veter-

ans truly stood out, transforming the event into a heartfelt tribute to their service and sacrifices.

For additional details about the event and to view more photos, visit the SRPMIC Veterans Social Media Page.



Photos by Steve Hoza

# Nurture Naturally:

## Unlock the Benefits of Breastfeeding

**APRIL 16 • MAY 21 • JUNE 18**  
1:30 PM – 5:00 PM  
River People Health Center Teaching Kitchen

**JOIN VIRTUALLY SCAN FOR ACCESS!**  
Available Online for Your Convenience.

APRIL 16

MAY 21

JUNE 18

**QUESTIONS? CALL 480-362-7300 OR EMAIL [WIC@SRPMIC-NSN.GOV](mailto:WIC@SRPMIC-NSN.GOV)**

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

## O'dham Action News

# 2025 GRADUATION ISSUE

That time of year is coming up quick!  
Congratulate your Graduate in the OAN June 5, Graduation Insert.

## 2025 DEADLINE MAY 30 at NOON

**SEND PHOTO & 30-WORD MESSAGE TO:**  
**[OODHAMACTIONNEWS@SRPMIC-NSN.GOV](mailto:OODHAMACTIONNEWS@SRPMIC-NSN.GOV)**

O'dham Action News June 6, 2024  
**Graduation Issue**  
Congratulations, Class of 2024

CONGRATULATIONS 2024 GRADUATES!

# SRPMIC COVID-19 Memorial Unites All



Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community membership and staff gathered together to honor and commemorate the loved ones we lost during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Half a decade ago, the world drastically changed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. On January 20, 2020, the virus was officially declared a public health emergency of international concern. Two months later, the virus caused worldwide shutdown as leaders from across the world collaborated on ways to help end the pandemic.

To date, over 20 million deaths across the world have been caused by the virus. According to a study conducted by the University of Boston in March of this year, approximately 280 deaths still occur per day because of the virus. Comparatively, in 2021, the estimated deaths caused by COVID-19 was 5,000 per day.

Emotions were at a high during the memorial ceremony. SRPMIC Council member Jacob Butler served as emcee for the gathering and Vice-President Ricardo Leonard provided the welcoming blessing. During his blessing, Leonard asked for continued blessings to be placed among everyone in the Community. He also asked for the Community to never forget those lost as a result to the virus. "I ask that you help us move forward," he said.

Following the blessing, SRPMIC President Martin Harvier detailed the timeline of the impact the virus had, specifically in the SRPMIC. "Time seems to heal pain," he began. "But time is different for all of us. Sometimes pain lingers. The pandemic that

we went through, touched every one of us differently," he said.

During his speech, Harvier recalled in March of 2020 when the Community was shut down and 300-plus white flags were showcased in front of the Huhugam Ki: Museum. "Whether it was a Community member or co-worker, those are some of the things we have to remember," he said.

The timeline of events he shared included the July 2020 mask mandate, the beginning of the COVID-19 vaccine program in January 2021, as well in March 2022 when SRPMIC ended the public health emergency declaration. "The decisions during that time were made to keep people safe," he added.

Later, he added how O'odham and Piipaash people gather when a family member passes away and the pandemic sadly denied families that right. "The pandemic prohibited that. Decisions were made that we couldn't gather. Those were very difficult times. In unveiling this monument, I just hope that this is a place that you can remember and never forget the loved ones that we weren't able to be there for when those events happened."

Following his words, Dr. Nancy Mangieri, chief public health officer for the River People Health Center, provided additional insights regarding how the Community rallied together to help save each other.

"The first COVID test occurred on March 9. We had our first positive test on March 24. We had our first death on April 3. 2020 was an incredibly difficult year. It was frightening for all of us. We had no vaccine, and we weren't sure where COVID was taking us. The Community stood strong, hard decisions were made, families were heartbroken, and we all supported each other from a distance."

In December of 2020, vaccines were introduced into the Community. In February of the following year, eight additional Community members were lost to the virus as the vaccine rollout was implemented in the Community.

"We had a small team of professionals doing disease investigations, calling people and making sure they had food, shelter, and isolation. I want to thank each and every person for how responsive you were to our calls and how you always followed our recommendations."

She continued, "It is heartbreaking to talk to someone in the morning and then find out in the afternoon that they passed."

As she completed her speech, Dr. Mangieri called for the SRPMIC Health and Human Services staff to place a wreath as the foot of the memorial. "The wreath has at least 93 white flowers on it to represent all of the people that we lost. We want you to know that we still remember and want

to make sure that we never have to go through this again."

During the speeches, the family of Bonnie Faye DeLowe (bot) filled the front row of chairs while wearing memorial t-shirts and holding a canvas photo print honoring DeLowe.

Afterwards, Council member Butler shared a part of himself as the ceremony neared its end. "I want to say thank you to those people that stayed working. Thank you to the first responders and medical staff. That's why we call them heroes. They put themselves after those in need."

It was during this point of his speech that many attendees began to shed tears.

Later, Butler shared that during the pandemic, one of his sons caught the virus. An emotional Butler recalled that conversation with him and grew emotional at the lectern. Thankfully, his son was okay. "Your time here isn't promised. Share that time with the ones you love. [The pandemic] showed me that there's a lot more love here. I saw a lot more people asking each other if they were okay."

"Let this be a reminder of the gravity of the things that we lost. Thank you again for all being here and honoring those that have passed from this. My heart is with you today and I hope you all go on with your loved ones in your memory and thoughts."



White flags were temporarily planted out in the Two Waters Complex Courtyard as a symbol of the lives lost due to the virus.



Many SRPMIC staff, membership and their loved ones gathered in the Two Waters Complex Courtyard during the morning of March 18, nearly





BY DALTON WALKER  
O'odham Action News  
dalton.walker@srpmic-nsn.gov

## Congressman Remembered

Raúl Grijalva, a longtime advocate for Indigenous communities, has died.

The U.S. representative for a southern Arizona district died on March 13 from complications related to lung cancer treatments. He was 77.

"It was well known that Congressman Grijalva was a champion of tribal nations and worked to ensure that tribal communities had a voice in Congress to speak to important policy issues," Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community President Martin Harvier said in a statement.

## Arizona Governor Talks MMIP Crisis

Gov. Katie Hobbs hosted Arizona tribal leaders on March 14 and shared steps her administration is taking to implement a missing and endangered persons alert.

Hobbs said on her Facebook page that she is committed to addressing the missing and murdered Indigenous people crisis.

"This alert is critical communication tool that will save lives," she said.

## Reward Offered For Emily Pike Slaying

*\*Editor's Note: This contains sensitive subject matter that readers may find upsetting\**

The San Carlos Apache Tribe is offering a reward of \$75,000 for information that leads to the arrest of those responsible for the murder of 14-year-old Emily Pike.

Pike was reported missing out of a Mesa, Arizona, group home in January and was found dismembered weeks later near Globe, Arizona.

Vigils for the young Apache girl have taken place across the Phoenix Valley to bring awareness to Pike and the missing and murdered Indigenous people crisis.

## Ak-Chin Indian Community New Chair

Gabriel Lopez is the new leader of the Ak-Chin Indian Community. He was recently elected to serve as chairman. His term began in January.

Lopez replaces Robert Miguel, a longtime Ak-Chin chairman.

The Ak-Chin Indian Community is governed by a five-member tribal council.

## First Nations Hockey Star Makes History

Abby Roque caught the hockey world's attention on March 22.

Roque became the first player in Professional Women's Hockey League history to score what is called a "Michigan goal" trick shot. The shot is known as a lacrosse-style goal where the player is behind the opponent's net and scoops up the puck on the stick blade and lifts it around into the net.

The video of the play can be found on the ESPN website.

Roque is Wahnapiatae First Nation and member of Team USA hockey. Her New York Sirens play home games in Newark, New Jersey.

# SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS MONTH

## "Evaluation of Child Sexual Abuse" Webinar

April 22, 2025 | 10am-11am



Led by Dr. Manning in collaboration with HHS Prevention & Intervention. Sign up coming soon.

## Denim Day

April 30, 2025

Visit our table at the **Round House Cafe** from **8:30am - 12:30pm** to learn about the importance of denim day and create a denim patch.

Wear your denim to show solidarity to survivors of sexual assault.

## Why Denim Day?

An Italian court overturned a rape conviction due to the high court not believing that the victim had not consented to sexual contact since, in their opinion, her jeans were so tight the perpetrator could not have gotten them off without her assistance. Sounds outrageous, yet all over the world, women and men who are victims of sexual violence continue to be disbelieved and accused of causing the assault due to their behaviors or fashion sense.

Join us and stand up for an end to sexual violence.

Contact the Family Advocacy Center for any questions: 480-362-5425





## ATTENTION SRP-MIC

# SALT RIVER VITA TAX PROGRAM

Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program

FEBRUARY 3, 2025 TO APRIL 15, 2025

SENIORS/DISABLED PRIORITY

NO FILING BACK TAXES AND ITEMIZED TAXES

CONTACT THE VITA MESSAGE LINE (480) 362-7540

A VITA Volunteer will promptly return your call with further details.

## IT'S TAX TIME!

### REQUIREMENTS

- Must have an appointment
- Income of \$58,000 or less
- Social Security card for tax filer & all dependents or any official government document with SS#
- Copy of Driver License or Government ID (tax filer & spouse)
- All tax documents (W-2, 1099's, etc.)
- IRS Child Tax Credit letter, if applicable
- Bank Account/Routing number (for direct deposits)

LOCATION

Two Waters Building A, 3rd Floor, Suite 300

ADMINISTRATION OFFICE

Two Waters Building A, 3rd Floor, Suite 300

# PIIPAASH MATASHEEVN WALK

Organized & Hosted by the Young River People's Council

Endorsed by WellPath and StrongLife






## Saturday, April 5, 2025

8:00 a.m. Registration | 9:00 a.m. Walk Begins



Lehi Gathering Area, 3221 N. Stapley Drive, Mesa, AZ 85203

Morning Schedule:

- 8:00 a.m. Registration Begins
- 8:45 a.m. Warm-up & Stretch
- 9:00 a.m. Walk Begins

YRPC Organizer: Janyse Salinas (602) 880-1090

Sponsored by the Piipaash Matasheevn Committee

PMC Contact: Bernice Easchief (480) 809-0357

[f Piipaash Matasheevn-Lehi](#) #piipaashmatasheevn

April 3, 2025

O'odham Action News

17



# SRPMIC Social Services Department Hosts Inaugural Reunification Day



Staff from the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community Social Services department provided families with free food, games, bounce houses, as well as a photo booth and more to help celebrate Reunification Day.

BY JUAN YSAGUIRRE  
O'odham Action News  
juan.ysaguirre@srpmic-nsn.gov

Being together with family can be a positive and crucial cornerstone aspect in anyone's life. With family, we learn how to communicate, express our emotions, interact with people and showcase our love for each other as we all grow and navigate life and its many journeys.

Here in the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community, reuniting families with their children has been just one of the many focal points within the Social Services Department.

On March 10, the department hosted its inaugural "Reunification Day" at the Salt River Ballfield. SRPMIC Council members, directors, managers and others were all in attendance to help celebrate SRPMIC families being reunited with their children.

"Families reunify through Salt River Tribal Court and obtain physical and legal custody of their children once their Dependency case closes," shared Devanie S. Hawkins, SRPMIC social worker/community liaison.

"[Reunification Day] is something we want to continue to do annually to celebrate families who achieve reunification," she said. "We know and understand how important it is for kids to be home with their families and to remain in the Community and it is our mission to reunify kids back home as quickly and as often as can safely be done."

During the celebration, Steve Hudson, Social Services director, shared his appreciation to the families and those in attendance who helped celebrate the reunification. "I know how much my family means to me and what I do today. As Indigenous people, we truly have the same framework," shared Hudson. He continued, "Not only with our immediate family, but extended as well. It truly takes all of us to work together in order for us to have successful outcomes," he said. Hudson has been with Social Services for nearly a decade.

Hudson thanked his team for their hard work and extended his appreciation to the many other SRPMIC departments and staff that work in collaboration. "We believe children are best when they are with family," said Hudson.

Families were provided with several free inflatable bounce houses in the outfield of the ballfield, lunch from the food truck, Taqueria Los Chachos, as well as gift bags, compliments of the staff and management from Discover Salt River. Additionally, families had the opportunity to have their photo taken at a family photo booth operated by Schaaf Industries.

After Hudson's remarks, former Presiding Judge Darayne Achin provided a few words as families and their children had fun at the bounce houses. "As your retired presiding judge, it was my great pleasure and honor to be the judge for the families that were able to return the children to the parents. This was teamwork, it wasn't just a judge or a social worker. It was everybody. That old saying, 'it takes a village to raise a child?' It's true," she said.

Following Achin's speech, SRPMIC Council member Jacob Butler, bared his soul regarding his family being displaced years ago. "Many years ago, all of us were taken from our parents because of an accusation. It was hard to be away from our parents, being young and not understanding what's going to

happen next. The holidays came and we still weren't with our parents. The day we came home was the first time that all of us had seen each other again. I remember crying. I cried out of pure joy of seeing my family, my mom, dad and being able to have them hold me. I know what it feels like for these kids," he shared, holding back his emotions as they poured out of him.

He added, "For all the parents here, congratulations for doing the work and getting your kids back. The same pain and anguish you're going through, so are your kids. I commend you for all the hard work you've done."

Nearly a decade ago, the SRPMIC Social Services Department had over 400 children out of home care. Currently, the Social Services program has less than 100 children, with the continued goal of reuniting families and hosting reunification days on an annual basis.

For information regarding the program and the resources available to membership, interested individuals can contact the department directly by dialing (480) 362-3277.

**MARICOPA COUNTY**  
TRANSPORTATION

**ROAD CLOSURE**

**MCKELLIPS ROAD, CLOSED BETWEEN 92ND STREET AND LONGMORE ROAD**

The Maricopa County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) continues construction of the McKellips Road improvement project located within the Salt River-Pima Maricopa Indian Community (SRPMIC). The project necessitates a full closure of McKellips Road between 92nd Street and Longmore Road starting at 5 a.m. Monday, March 24, 2025, continuously for sixty (60) days until Friday, May 23, 2025 at 5 p.m. to accommodate a box culvert installation on both sides of McKellips Road.

Alternative travel around the McKellips Road closure will be provided via detours in the area. Detour signage will be in place to direct travel in the area. Access to Dobson and Longmore Roads from McKellips will be closed. Local access to Dobson Road and Longmore Road will be open from McDowell Road as shown in the map above. Motorists are encouraged to find alternate routes to their destinations.

Please watch for work crews, obey all traffic control signs and follow reduced speeds in the work zone. For more information on the project and the latest on travel restrictions, please visit the project website at: <https://www.maricopa.gov/5938/McKellips-Road>.

**WORK SCHEDULE:**  
Where: McKellips Road from Alma School Road to the SR101L.  
When: Monday, March 24, 2025, through Friday, May 23, 2025.  
Weekdays from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m.  
Occasional weekend or holiday work may occur if required.

**Questions:** ☎ 602.506.3342 ✉ [MCDOTprojects@maricopa.gov](mailto:MCDOTprojects@maricopa.gov)

\*\*Schedule is subject to change for reasons beyond MCDOT's control, including: weather, equipment failure, illness or other circumstances.\*\*

**Participating Agencies**

2901 W Durango Street : Phoenix, AZ 85009 : (602) 506-3342 : [maricopa.gov/transportation](http://maricopa.gov/transportation) : @maricoparoads

**SALT RIVER PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT**

NOTICE

ROADWAY IMPROVEMENTS  
ON ALMA SCHOOL ROAD  
FEBRUARY 24 TO APRIL 17, 2025

Pimara Construction with Achen-Gardner Construction will begin work on the pavement repairs along Alma School Road starting from Chaparral Road and ending at McKellips Road.

Impacts include intermittent road restrictions and detours, however, homes along Alma School Road will have access to their driveways.

Please use caution and pay attention to signage when traveling through the construction areas. Alternate routes are encouraged.

We appreciate your cooperation and patience while we make these improvements.

If you have any concerns, please contact us immediately.

**Pimara Construction Contact**  
Estevan Esparza  
602-463-6717  
[eesparza@achen.com](mailto:eesparza@achen.com)

**SRPMIC Public Works Contact**  
Mike Jensen  
480-362-3507  
[michael.jensen@srpmic-nsn.gov](mailto:michael.jensen@srpmic-nsn.gov)

**SALT RIVER PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT**

**480-362-5600** ✉ [PWCustomerService@srpmic-nsn.gov](mailto:PWCustomerService@srpmic-nsn.gov)



Continued from front

# SRPMIC Becomes Temporary Sanctuary for Phoenix VA Tribal Flags

Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community President Martin Harvier looks on as the 22 tribal flags from the Carl T. Hayden Veterans' Administration Medical Center were temporarily housed by the Community on March 18.

"But then, we got in contact with Troy [Truax Jr.]," said Shawdin Tracy, Facility Rural Health coordinator for the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs in Phoenix. After communicating with each other with not much time on their side, Tracy and Truax, who works for SRPMIC Veterans Services, created plans for the SRPMIC to become a temporary sanctuary for the flags.

ments that detailed their disappointments in the Trump administration for their decision to remove the flags from the Carl T. Hayden Veterans' Administration Medical Center.

"As Chairwoman for the Cocopah Tribe, I find the removal of our tribal flags both insulting and disrespectful to all the members of the 22 federally recognized tribes in our state," said Cocopah Tribe Chairwoman Sherry Cordova in a statement.

She continued, "The Cocopah Tribe is a small Tribe but per capita, we have had a large percentage of our men and women serve this nation only to be disrespected by the very country they defended."

Arizona tribal leaders also provided their utmost appreciation to the SRPMIC for their swift action by housing the tribal flags temporarily in the Community.

On March 25, five days after the SRPMIC agreed to house the flags in the Community, Arizona Gov. Katie Hobbs made the decision to accept the 22 tribal flags to the Executive Tower Rotunda inside of her office in Phoenix.

"The Community is grateful that we had the opportunity to receive the tribal flags and to have them for the short time and we are thankful Governor Hobbs has agreed to take the flags to display them at the Arizona Capitol, a more prominent and appropriate place for them to be located," said SRPMIC President Martin Harvier in a statement.

Gov. Hobbs reiterated that she would continue to honor and commemorate the sacrifices of tribal veterans.

"Arizona is proud of the Tribal Veterans who sacrificed for their country," said Hobbs. "We should be recognizing their service, not disrespecting their heritage. It's my honor to display these flags at the Executive Tower, and I am grateful to all the Tribal leaders who have entrusted me with this responsibility. I will always support our Veterans, and vow to keep these flags safe until they can be returned to their rightful place at the VA hospital."

### Erasing Native American Military Histories

The executive order to remove the 22 tribal flags from the Phoenix VA is another example of the Trump adminis-

tration's continued and ongoing efforts to erase certain history.

Since his inauguration in January, President Donald Trump has authorized several executive orders that saw the removal of Native American historical content from many federal websites, some temporary after blowback.

On March 12, the U.S. Department of Defense removed website content related to the Navajo Code Talkers, Marine Cpl. Ira Hayes' contribution at Iwo Jima during World War II and other Native military history. Across the country, calls for the content to be reinstated were introduced, resulting in the return of some of the Navajo Code Talker website pages days later, but not all.

White House officials informed the Navajo Nation that a process powered by artificial intelligence removed the websites as it was searching for content with diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives. This led to the deletion of any mentioning of websites or content related to "Navajo," according to a statement from Navajo Nation President Buu Nygren.

The long and verifiable history of Indigenous people serving and protecting this country is not remotely affiliated with anything related to federal DEI initiatives. The contributions of Indigenous people protecting and serving America is undeniable. The removal of content from federal websites negatively impacts society as the Trump administration and their executive orders continue to threaten the military history and accomplishments of Indigenous peoples.

Interestingly enough, during his own proclamation on October 31, 2018, Trump acknowledged that Indigenous people have enlisted in the U.S. military at a rate of five times the national average. That proclamation has since been removed as well.



Once the flags were successfully moved to the Two Waters A-Building, Vice-President Ricardo Leonard provided a feather blessing to all 22 flags.

In a video posted to the SRPMIC online on March 19, President Harvier expressed his concerns regarding these changes. "These changes have brought so much uncertainty to our nation and raised questions as how tribal communities can work constructively with the federal government in the days, months and years to come."

He added, "I want to assure you all that regardless of the circumstances, we will continue to provide the service that you expect and deserve."

In the video, Harvier notified the Community that SRPMIC will be "taking the lead" by collaborating and working with the three sibling tribes (Ak-Chin Indian Community, Gila River Indian Community and Tohono O'odham Nation) and their elected tribal officials to "work on issues of common concern."

Harvier reiterated that many current and former SRPMIC Council members serve on executive committees and boards that continue to ensure the safety and security of the Community and its membership.

As the video neared its end, Harvier encouraged the Community to attend upcoming Council meetings and to reach out by contacting Council if they have additional concerns or questions by dialing (480) 362-7469.

O'odham Action News will continue to monitor this story.



Rueben Malin (LEFT) and Troy Truax Jr (RIGHT) assisted Phoenix VA staff with the transport of the 22 flags.

During the early morning of March 18, all 22 flags were successfully transported from the VA facility to the third-floor conference room in SRPMIC Two Waters A-Building. President Martin Harvier, Vice-President Ricardo Leonard, SRPMIC Veterans Services Department staff, Community Manager Bryan Meyers and Rueben Malin, new director of Administration, were on-hand and assisted with the transport.

Once the flags were carefully moved to the third floor, Leon became emotional and shared a few words about the importance of continuing to show respect to the flags.

He shared his deep appreciation to the SRPMIC for agreeing to house and showcase the flags, just as they were inside of the VA office.

Following the transport, Leonard performed a feather blessing to all flags.

In a March 20 statement, Leonard called on the Veterans Affairs Secretary Doug Collins to restore the flag display at the Phoenix VA hospital.

The flags called SRPMIC home for about a week.

Once the news spread of the new location of the 22 tribal flags, Arizona tribal leaders released official state-



## SRMG Supports Public Safety through Community Sponsorship

Salt River Materials Group (SRMG) continues to demonstrate its commitment to the community by supporting the Salt River Fire Department (SRFD) and Salt River Police Department (SRPD) through sponsorship of two significant events: the **SRPD Awards Banquet & SRFD 3-N-1 Golf Challenge**.

SRMG proudly sponsored the **SRPD Awards Banquet** on January 17th, an event honoring the dedication and service of the department's officers and staff. The banquet recognized the outstanding achievements, bravery, and contributions to Public Safety within the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community.



SRMG served as the title sponsor of the inaugural **SRFD 3-N-1 Golf Challenge** on January 27th. Fundraising will benefit the philanthropic efforts and initiatives of the Fire Department. The tournament brought together firefighters, first responders, and community members for a day of camaraderie and competition.

The company is grateful for the dedication and hard work of the Salt River Fire and Police Departments in keeping the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community safe. SRMG appreciates their service and is honored to support them in their mission to protect and serve.



**VIEW JOB OPENINGS & APPLY ONLINE**

FIND US ON **indeed**

FOR BENEFIT INFORMATION VISIT [SRMATERIALS.COM](http://SRMATERIALS.COM)

Check us out at . . .  
[www.srmaterials.com](http://www.srmaterials.com)



Exceptional People...Exceptional Benefits...Exceptional Company  
Phoenix Cement Company and Salt River Sand & Rock,  
dba Salt River Materials Group,  
both divisions of the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community

# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### ONGOING

- DIABETES SUPPORT GROUP**, 1st and 3rd Wednesday of each month from 11 a.m. - 12 p.m. in room 3104 (Cloud), 3rd floor of RPHC. This free, confidential, and safe group of individuals support one another by utilizing their collective experiences and learned wisdom. This gathering is for adults diagnosed with diabetes. For more information, contact (480) 362-3355
- SENIOR BOOK CLUB**, 2nd and 4th Wednesdays from 10:30-11:30 at the Tribal Library at WOLF.
- TAI CHI FOR SENIORS**, Tuesdays 9-10 a.m. at WOLF Senior Room and Thursdays 2:30 - 3:30 p.m. at Senior Services North Annex. Join Senior Services for tai chi, an ancient Chinese martial art used today as an effective moving meditation that improves the health of the mind and body. All abilities and fitness levels are welcome. For community seniors 55+ and adults with adaptive needs. Questions? Call 480.362.6350.
- YOGA FOR FALL PREVENTION**, Mondays 9 a.m. - 10 a.m. at WOLF Senior Room. All Fitness Levels Welcome! Sign up with Celinda Joe at (480) 876-7180 and request transportation if needed.
- YOGA FOR FALL PREVENTION**, Fridays 1 p.m. - 2 p.m. at WOLF Senior Room. All Fitness Levels Welcome! Sign up with Celinda Joe at (480) 876-7180 and request transportation if needed. \*\*Last Fridays of Each Month are YOGA BINGO with prizes!
- WATER AEROBICS AT WAY OF LIFE FACILITY POOL**, 45-minute sessions on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays at 10 a.m., 12 p.m., and 1 p.m. No registration required. Questions? Call (480) 362-6310
- NAMI FAMILY SUPPORT GROUP**, First and Third Wednesdays of each month from 12 p.m. - 1 p.m. at RPHC 3rd Floor, Room 3104. Contact (480) 362-6948 for more information.

- DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SUPPORT GROUP**, 5:30 - 6:30 p.m. at RPHC. Women's meetings held on Tuesdays, men's meetings held Wednesdays.
- WELLBRIETY 12 STEP AND MEDICINE WHEEL**, Wednesdays and Fridays 9:30 a.m. - 11 a.m. Wellbriety is a Native American recovery fellowship that blends spiritual practice with the 12-Step program. Its approach to recovery focuses on healing and is rooted in the Teachings of the Medicine Wheel, the Cycle of Life, and the Four Laws of Change. Wellbriety emphasizes creating new thought patterns, attitudes, and feelings about sobriety based on traditional concepts and Native American teachings.
- TALKING CIRCLE FOLLOWING WELLBRIETY**, Wednesdays and Fridays 11 a.m. - 12 p.m. Following the Wellbriety session, participants are invited to join the Talking Circle to share insights and experiences related to living in recovery and honoring traditional practices, including fellowship, community, and connection. Talking Circle sessions also take place every Wednesday and Friday, from 11:00 AM to 12:00 PM.
- WARRIOR'S SUPPORT CIRCLE**, 2nd Thursday Warrior's Support Circle is a talking circle aimed at offering our Veterans a safe space to meet and share their life experiences, challenges, and successes. The circle offers a free, confidential space for members to take steps towards recovery by gaining insight from others and learning more about PTSD, adjustment issues after reintegration into the civilian world, and to discuss general challenges that accompany service in the military.
- CRAFT COMMUNITY REINFORCEMENT AND FAMILY TRAINING**, Support group for families of loved ones battling substance abuse/addiction/dependance. Fridays 4 p.m. - 5:30 p.m. at RPHC Room 3106 (3rd Floor) For More Information please contact Shea Hinton at (480) 362-2739

- SALT RIVER VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION ORIENTATION**, Bi-weekly on Tuesdays 10:30 a.m. - 12 p.m. Human Resources, Two Waters Building B. Walk-ins welcomed! Contact (480) 362-2650 for more information.
  - PRESBY PICKINS' FLEA MARKETS**, 1st Saturday of Nov, Dec, and Feb - April from 8am-2pm at Fountain Hills Presbyterian Church, 13001 Fountain Hills Blvd. 50+ vendors, food carts, & music. Shop for toys, collectibles, household items, jewelry, art, crafts, & more! Visit [www.fhpresbyterian.info/fleamarket](http://www.fhpresbyterian.info/fleamarket), call 480-779-8115.
  - MEDICARE ADVANTAGE OPEN ENROLLMENT**, through March 31. Are you considering a change to your Medicare plan? Need help navigating your options? Call River People Health Center at (480) 362-6880 for more information.
- KUI HIOSIG MAŞAD  
XLY'A CHMPAP  
APRIL**
- 1-6 NEW BEGINNING MINISTRIES CAMPMEETING**, Tent dedication March 29 at 10 a.m., tent located directly south of Talking Stick Resort. Guest ministers at 7pm nightly as well as planned children's church and gospel jam. Contact Pastor Norman Enas for more information at 480-526-0043
  - 4-5 PIIPAASH MATASHEVM**, see flyer on page 17 for more details!
  - 5 COMMUNITY VEHICLE AUCTION VIEWING DAY**, beginning at 8 am at vehicle storage lot by Dialysis Center. Bids will be accepted on viewing days or between 8am and 5 pm at the Dept. of Transportation office. Tribal members only, tribal ID required, sold as is, must be 18 or older to bid. Last day to bid will be April 14. Contact DOT at 480-362-7315 for more information.

- 8 HIGHER EDUCATION ORIENTATION PROGRAM**, 10-11 a.m. at Salt River Schools Education Board Room. Got higher ed plans? Let us help you meet your goals AND our scholarship program application deadlines! Contact 480-362-2547 or see ad on page 11 for more information.
- 8-10 COMMUNITY EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM TRAINING SESSIONS**, Training is open to the public for interested Community Members, SRMIC Employees, and Enterprise employees. See ad on page 13 for more information!
- 11 AMERICAN INDIAN DISABILITY SUMMIT**, 8:30 - 4 p.m. at Desert Willow Conference Center, 4340 E. Cotton Center Blvd. Phoenix, AZ 85040. For more information, contact Rosalie Perry at 602-980-0286 or visit [ability360.org/american-indian-disability-summit](http://ability360.org/american-indian-disability-summit).
- 12 COMMUNITY VEHICLE AUCTION VIEWING DAY**, beginning at 8 am at vehicle storage lot by Dialysis Center. Bids will be accepted on viewing days or between 8am and 5 pm at the Dept. of Transportation office. Tribal members only, tribal ID required, sold as is, must be 18 or older to bid. Last day to bid will be April 14. Contact DOT at 480-362-7315 for more information.
- 14 CM FULWILDER DISTRICT D MEETING**, 6 p.m. at Salt River Community Building. For questions, please contact council secretaries at 480-362-7469
- 14 LAST DAY FOR COMMUNITY VEHICLE AUCTION BIDS**, Bids must be submitted by 5 p.m. on the final day. Bids will be accepted on viewing days or between 8am and 5 pm at the Dept. of Transportation office. Tribal members only, tribal ID required, sold as is, must be 18 or older to bid. Last day to bid will be April 14. Contact DOT at 480-362-7315 for more information.

- 15 CM SCABBY/CM DALLAS DISTRICT F&G MEETING**, 6 p.m. at Lehi Community Center. For questions, please contact council secretaries at 480-362-7469.
  - 18 GOOD FRIDAY**, SRMIC Offices Closed. Please plan accordingly.
  - 19 CM ANTONE DISTRICT B MEETING**, 9 a.m. at Salt River Council Chambers. For questions, please contact council secretaries at 480-362-7469.
  - 19 COMMUNITY EASTER PROGRAM**, 9 a.m. at Salt River Ballfield. See ad on page 4 for more information!
  - 20 EASTER SUNRISE SERVICE**
  - 22 CM CARLOS DISTRICT E MEETING**, 6 p.m. at Way of Life Facility. For questions, please contact council secretaries at 480-362-7469.
  - 24 CM BUTLER DISTRICT A MEETING**, 6 p.m. at Council Chambers. For questions, please contact council secretaries at 480-362-7469.
  - 29 SALT RIVER REVIVAL: NIGHT OF MIRACLES**, Featuring evangelist Tim Rabara. Doors open at 6 p.m. 4827 N Country Club Dr Scottsdale 85256. For questions, call 480-427-4678.
- 'U'US VIOHOGTALIG MAŞAD  
XLY'A SARAP  
MAY**
- 1 LAW DAY AT SRMIC JUSTICE CENTER**, See ad on page 6 for full details!
  - 2 AMERICAN INDIAN CONVOCATION FOR MARICOPA COMMUNITY COLLEGE GRADUATES**, See ad on page 6 for full details and how to register!