

Maricopa, Arizona

Volume XXXIII, Issue #8

May 15 - June 4, 2020



Harrah's Ak-Chin Casino may be empty in this photo, but on Friday May 15, they will open their doors at 9 am to welcome guests back with new social distancing protocols. (Photo by J. Peters)

# Harrah's Ak-Chin Casino to Re-Open May 15, Social Distancing Protocols in Place

(MARICOPA, Ariz. – May 11, 2020) – The Ak-Chin Tribal Council has approved the reopening of Harrah's Ak-Chin Casino, effective 9 am on Friday, May 15, 2020.

Harrah's management has put in place a variety of social distancing measures for the health and safety of casino guests and employees. These include:

• The casino floor will be open with slot machine banks arranged to allow for proper social distancing and with throughout the casino floor, masks for all employees and increased cleaning service in all common areas and throughout the back of the house.

- Dunkin Donuts®, Copper Cactus, Chop Block & Brew, and Agaves will be open for food/beverage service, with social distancing protocols in place. The Buffet, Oak & Fork and Laurel Lounge will not be open at this time.
- Based on the number of guest reservations, the resort and tower guestrooms will also

all events and conference, Valet and Spa and Fitness Center will remain closed at this time.

"Over the past several weeks the Tribal Council, along with Caesars management, have been monitoring the situation here in Arizona and across the country, making sure we had the best and most accurate information needed to re-open the casino," said Robert Livingston, general manager of Harrah's Ak-Chin Casino. "We look forward to welcoming back our casino guests in the coming days."

## Ak-Chin Indian Community sues federal government to release overdue COVID-19 relief for native tribes

## Ak-Chin among tribes seeking release of \$8 billion in relief funding

The Ak-Chin Indian Community and multiple other tribes have filed suit against the U.S. Treasury Department and seek a federal court order to release \$8 billion in promised but overdue COVID-19 relief funding.

The money was allotted as part of the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act to help native tribes respond to the COVID-19 crisis. The legislation mandated the U.S. Treasury Department disburse the funds no later than April 26, 2020. The relief funding is needed to avert economic and fiscal devastation, as tribal businesses and gaming facilities remain shuttered and tribal governments have shouldered significant added costs in responding to the public health crisis.

"All that we ask is for the timely release of federal relief aid that was promised so that the Ak-

Chin Indian Community and other Tribal governments may respond to this unprecedented crisis," said Ak-Chin Chairman Robert Miguel. "Indian Country has suffered disproportionately under this pandemic. As with other tribes, we've declared an emergency and closed tribal businesses and gaming enterprises in order to mitigate the outbreak. Without swift federal assistance, we will have no choice but to furlough

limited seating at Blackjack tables. The Poker Room, Keno and BINGO will not be open at this time.

stations

Hand-sanitizing

ck open on May 15 for stays m, beginning that evening.

> Additionally, The Events Center at Harrah's Ak-Chin, including

stays

For more information and to make a reservation, visit <u>www.</u> <u>harrahsakchin.com</u>.

tribal employees and make cuts to essential services our people depend upon.

"If the Treasury Department will not honor its promise of relief to native peoples during their time of need, we trust a federal court will make this right."

Tribal plaintiffs in the case include the: Ak-Chin Indian Community; Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians; Chickasaw Nation; Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma; Cherokee Nation; Northern Arapaho Tribe of the Wind River Reservation; Snoqualmie Indian Tribe; and Yurok Tribe of the Yurok Reservation.



Guests at Ak-Chin Southern Dunes enjoy lunch inside the Arroyo Grille restaurant. Arroyo Grille opened its dining area on Monday, May 11, with limited seating and enhanced safety and sanitizing measures.

number on it, which guests can take home and are encouraged to continue to use for take-out orders.

To be safe, there are currently no salt and pepper shakers or sugar boats or anything similar for guests to touch, but packets are available. Even the pens that servers use to give to guests to sign with are one time-use and sanitized before use.

"I think everyone, including the staff, is in a positive mood, happy to be physically distancing and practicing CDC protocols; but I think also happy to being one step closer to normal," says Wilson.

"The biggest positive we have has been our staff and our

#### Arroyo continues to Page 2

# Southern Dunes Arroyo Grille opens dining room with new safety measures

The dining area of Arroyo Grille at Ak-Chin Southern Dunes Golf Club opened up officially on Monday, May 11 as per the executive order from Arizona Governor Doug Ducey, with restrictions and safety measures in place to minimize exposure to COVID-19.

With a proactive approach and the safety of guests and staff of the utmost importance, every server and associate go through a combination of self-monitored and manager symptom check for potential COVID-19 symptoms before each shift.

Physical distancing of at least six feet is practiced by staff and encouraged to guests and golfers. Tables are spaced out with a limited seating maximum occupancy inside of 20 guests, and 30 guests on the patio. The tables are up and active, however, chairs have been removed from out of service tables with signs expressing physical distancing encouragement.

"We've started using the verbiage 'physical distancing,' not 'social distancing' because now that restaurants are open, we want our guests to be social, we just want them to be spaced far enough out," says Ak-Chin Southern Dunes Golf Club Manager Brady Wilson.

Employees are wearing masks and gloves with frequent sanitation of all the traffic areas. Each table has individual hand sanitizer bottles for the guests to use and take with them.

The experience is different now in the way that when guests come in and sit down, they are given a paper menu with the Arroyo Grille phone





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Above, Elder cooks, Rene Carlyle and Elizabeth Chavez prepare homecooked meals for Ak-Chin Elders on Tuesday, May 12. Elders can pick up the curb-side meals right in front of the Elder Center, where they will be met without having to leave their vehicle. Meanwhile, homebound elders continue to have their meals delivered to their place of residence.

We are very happy the Ak-Chin It is uncertain when it will be Indian Community's "Stay safe to open the Elder Center at Home" order will be lifted once again. We want to serve on May 15, 2020. However, the elders in the best way due to the COVID-19, the possible and are rethinking and Ak-Chin Indian Community recreating how we serve the Elders are still at an elevated elders during the COVID-19 risk of serious illness.

The Ak-Chin Elder Center will remain closed for congregate meals and activities at this time. We are delivering lunch to the homebound elders. We also have our friendly curbside service at the Elder Center for elders to drive in and pick up their lunch.

If elders are interested in requesting a meal, please call the Elder Center at 520-568-1760.

pandemic.



Flash sits patiently in his chair at the Elder center, just waiting for the right time to get together with all his hajun for some good times and good food. Until that time comes, he is practicing social distancing.





Dear Community Members,

With graduations and end of year educational ceremonies being postponed due to COVID-19, the Ak-Chin Runner would like to recognize the hard-working individuals who have achieved big accomplishments in 2019–2020 academic year.

We are asking all parents/guardians/students (preschool through higher education) to submit their academic accomplishments (grad photos, awards, etc.) to be recognized in the upcoming issues of the Runner.

Please submit the following to runnernews@ak-chin.nsn.us

- Name of student
- Grade
- School
- Academic achievement
- Photo (optional)

### Congratulations to all academic achievers!!



Arroyo Grille continued from front

our employees. They are diligent about cleanliness and they're committed to providing our guests with the best experience."

As for golf, there is more work that goes into cleaning, preparing, and sanitizing after a golfer than ever before. There is more labor and staff involved, which takes more time.

There are traffic-limiting factors in place as well. As golf is traditionally played as a foursome, now if you book as a twosome, you play alone as a twosome. If you play as a threesome, you play alone as a threesome and will not have a single paired with you. Single players will also play alone for now.

A couple times every hour is blocked to

lot of pride in the fact that we were one of the few enterprises that were allowed to stay open during the shutdown and our goal was to be a shining light of hope for the Community," said Wilson

At Arroyo Grille, daily lunch specials are served seven days a week. The dinner specials are still in place, with fish fry night on Wednesdays, Kansas City strip steak night on Thursdays and prime rib night on Fridays and Saturdays.

The Summer Six Pack special is available earlier than usual for golfers, which includes 25% off at the golf shop, 20% off at Arroyo Grille, six rounds of championship summer golf, six Callaway Chrome soft golf balls, six rounds on #miniDunes, six beverages and a custom Southern Dunes bag tag for \$159.00.

In challenging times, we are careful to protect our physical health.

Don't forget to take care of your mental and emotional health, too.

Contact your local Indian health care provider for more information, visit Healthcare.gov, or call 1-800-318-2596.



space out the golfers, limiting the range to 10 spots, maintaining the physical distancing on the course.

"It's been an honor for us and we take a

More information can be found at akchinsoutherndunes.com



Proudly owned by the Ak-Chin Indian Community [TROON GOLF]

### 480.367.8949 AKCHINSOUTHERNDUNES.COM



off total food order. Must present coupon to server. No substitutions. Not valid with and s or discounts. One coupon per order, no split checks. Does not include alcohol. Non-transferabl

(520) 426 - 6832 ARROYOGRILLE.COM

## Ak-Chin Oodham Runner 💮

Newspaper of the Ak-Chin Indian Community ©2020

16600 N. Maricopa Hwy Maricopa, Arizona 85139

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The Ak-Chin O'odham Runner is published on the first and third Friday of each month.

The "Runner" is delivered to all residents and departments of the Ak-Chin Indian Community, as well as surrounding community businesses, interested groups and subscribers.

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#### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Announcements and wishes may be phoned in, faxed or e-mailed.

#### ARTWORK, LETTERS, **STORIES**

The Ak-Chin O'odham Runner is a Community Newspaper and encourages Community involvement.

If you have artwork, photos, poems or a great story that you would like to share, please contact us so we can include it in "YOUR" newspaper.

Also, if you have suggestions or comments about "YOUR" newspaper, let the Runner

## **Ak-Chin** Regional Airport repairs near completion

Story and photo by C. Picciuolo

The repairs at Ak-Chin Regional Airport from the crash that sent a small, single-engine plane into the main airport building on September 10, 2019 are coming closer to completion, with an end of May date set.

According to Airport Manager Tim Costello, the contract for repairs was awarded last year but there was considerable delay in getting started as the coronavirus hindered the process of getting the building permit.

The work picked up in April after the building permit was issued by Pinal County. Initially after the crash, there was a clean-up of debris. A



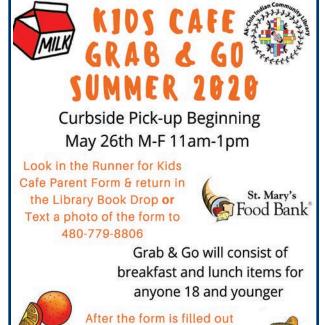
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tarp was placed over the hole in the roof and exterior wall.

The permanent work involved demolition of the damaged area, replacement of the steel framing, replacement of the damaged roof sheeting and foam roof, exterior wall sheeting, stucco and paint. Inside, drywall was replaced, textured and painted.

Not much remains to repair, with only carpet replacement, electrical some light replacements and a final clean-up ahead.

The adjoining space in the building was initially built to be a



and returned to the Library, parent/guardian can pick up meals at the Library curbside for the entire week.



residential apartment, and this is where temporarily Costello has his office, which was separated from the damaged area.

**Capital Projects continue in the Community** 

The apartment had a ground floor kitchen area that became the temporary "terminal" public space.

The airfield has continued to operate without skipping a beat even during the accident because the accident site is far enough from the runway.

"It was an intense experience," said Costello who was in the building at the time of the accident. "The two on board the aircraft were quite lucky to hit the building...where it hit. The building was 'soft' there and it had a cushioning effect."

Both people on board the plane survived the crash with serious but not lifethreatening injuries.

Costello says that the National Transportation Safety Board is investigating the accident, as they do with all crashes involving certified aircraft. Their process is long and involved and is likely to take a full year, before they come up with a probable cause of the accident.

## Home remodels in Community

Story and photo by J. Peters



For three homes in the community a much-needed remodeling is currently taking place. It's been a long time coming for the families waiting for their "new" homes and soon they will have a new roof over their heads.

Ak-Chin Project Manager, Casey Turgeon from Capital Projects provided an update on the homes currently under remodel.

- A.R. Mays completed construction of home building pads starting in November and completed in mid-December 2019.
- Project went through public bidding process for vertical construction in December 2019 and January 2020. The vertical construction portion was awarded to Pimmex Construction
- Pimmex Construction broke ground on the 3-home demo rebuild project in the beginning of February.
- The home on Vincent has completed the outside stucco phase, and finished the drywall stage, and considered about 55% done.
- The 1st home on Farrell Road is at the outside stucco phase and has started drywall phase, and considered about 50% done.
- The 2nd home on Farrell is at the mechanical and electrical rough in phase and will be starting insulation phase, followed by drywall, and is considered about 45% done.

"If there are no unforeseen construction issues the first home is expected to deliver in late July, with the other two homes following closely behind." Casey shared.

These three homes will be the only home remodels for the year 2020. Hopefully, with more funding and Council approval more homes will see changes in future years.

## RATTLESNAKES!!

Story by J. Peters, photo by ACFD

Evervone knows living in the beautifully barren southwest comes with sightings of some of the wildest and deadliest creatures in Arizona.



Our state has 19 different species of rattlesnakes, making AZ the place with the largest diversity of rattlesnakes in the world.

Staff know that too.

All submitted letters MUST be signed by the author and are limited to 200 words. Authors must also include their name, address, and phone number. Names can be omitted by request. Anonymous submissions will not be accepted.

We reserve the right to edit all submitted material for clarity, grammar and good taste. All submissions should be received as typed or non-cursive writing. Please do not submit UPPERCASE or formatted paragraphs.

Submitted pictures need a return address and brief description. Pictures with no address will remain on file. Allow 2 weeks for return.

#### SUBSCRIPTION RATE

2020 Subscription rate is \$33.75. If you would like to receive the "Runner" by mail, please send a \$33.75 check/money order to:

Ak-Chin O'odham Runner 16600 N. Maricopa Hwy Maricopa, Arizona 85139

Make check/money order payable to: Ak-Chin Indian Community

#### DEADLINE

Don't forget the DEADLINE for the JUNE 5 - 18, 2020 issue is due by FRIDAY, MAY 29TH

Please submit all announcements, wishes, etc. no later than FRIDAY, MAY 29TH

Material submitted after the MAY 29TH DEADLINE

cannot be guaranteed placement. If appropriate and relevant, it will be included in the next issue.

#### V CHINTEDEL TO AN SERVING THE AK-CHIN INDIAN COMMUNITY

#### **New Service**

Ak-Chin Tribal Transit will be offering On-Demand service 7 days a week beginning May 15th, 2020. Ak-Chin Tribal Transit is discontinuing morning and afternoon fixed route services at this time. Please see On-Demand services Brochure for details.

New Business Hours are Monday through Sunday 7:00am to 6:00pm.

#### Please keep us in mind for your transportation needs. Need a ride? Call: 520-568-1630 - Call or Text: 520-340-0382 Demand-Response Service Schedule: Monday-Sunday from 7:15am to 5:45pm.



\*Ak-Chin Tribal Transit generally does not operate on holidays recognized by the Ak-Chin Indian Community

You must be 15 years or older to make reservations for our dema

So, during the warmer parts of the year the deadly coldblooded reptiles re-emerge from the ground to bask in the warm temperatures and become nocturnal when temperatures rise.

This non-friendly reptile was captured by Ak-Chin Fire recently and was safely released into the desert, far, far, away from the public.

Here in the community there has been a rash of

sightings of rattlesnakes and those sightings will continue to grow as the summer months hit. Here is some important information on the snakes themselves.

- Rattlesnakes are the top predator in Arizona, these snakes can be found in your neighborhood, around your home and even at your front door. So, being vigilant when walking outdoors is very crucial for everyone's safety.
- Keep in mind that the snakes are not out to harm you, *.*.. but if antagonized they will defend themselves as any creature would.
- ... Keeping your distance is the best way to avoid their venomous fangs. The snake will signal if it feels threatened by your presence by rattling its tail, once you hear the eerie sound that's your warning to stay away or else it will give you a taste of its venom.
- In most cases rattlesnake bites are not life threatening .... but that does not mean one should not receive medical attention immediately when bitten.
- The rattlesnake will go through multiple defense stages before striking, upon seeing anything other than their prey, they will camouflage as a way to keep themselves undetected for no further interactions.
- Secondly, the snake will try to get away to avoid any ÷. confrontations by slithering away to take cover so it can continue on its way, and
- The third line of defense is of course the strike. If the snake feels threatened and has no means of "escape" they will defend themselves; the snake will coil back their heads setting up in a "strike" pose and will rattle their tails giving a warning before striking.

If you have any issues with rattlesnakes in the Community, please contact the Ak-Chin Police Department at (520)-568-1200 for non-life-threatening issues. If someone has been bitten by a rattlesnake please call 911.

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#### AK-CHIN INDIAN COMMUNITY THREE (3) VACANCIES OPEN FOR THE AK-CHIN ENERGY SERVICES Open to Ak-Chin Community Members only

All interested parties who wish to be considered for appointment for the three (3) vacancies on the Ak-Chin Energy Services, must send a letter of interest to the Tribal Administration Office.

#### FUNCTIONS OF THE AK-CHIN ENERGY SERVICES:

- Regulates and oversees all areas of power and electric utility sources and services of the Ak-Chin Indian Community.
- 2. To acquire, maintain and expand electric utility services within the community.
- 3. To study and investigate the feasibility of acquiring, operating, and maintaining other electric utility service within the community.

**QUALIFICATIONS:** The Community Council is looking for individuals with the following qualifications:

- May 15 June 4, 2020
- Must have the ability and willingness to learn and understand the Electric Power Industry.
- 2. Experience working in a business environment and the ability to learn and understand business practices is preferred, but not required.
- Must have sufficient education and/or experience to make sound judgments.
- Must be able to attend board meetings and functions at various scheduled times and at least on a quarterly basis.
- 5. All community members who apply must provide written authorization from their immediate Supervisors allowing them to serve on the board.
- 6. All applicants must Possess a valid driver's license.

#### Please send all letters of interest Attn:

Ak-Chin Community Council ATTN: Victoria Smith 42507 W. Peters & Nall Road Maricopa, AZ 85138

Deadline for all letters of interest is June 1, 2020 at 5:00 pm.



## MAY 2020 Employee birthdays

5/1 Marlene Garcia, Housing Department Shauna Brown, Capital Projects

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Jose Arteaga, Law & Order 5/21

Brian Schaublin,

Fire & Safety

5/20

5/2 Maria Garcia, Maintenance

5/3

Sonya Joaquin, Early

Childhood

5/5

Brian Guyer,

Fire & Safety

Lydia Rueda,

Prosecutor

Blas Valles.

5/23 Tera Thornton, Education

5/24 Victor Harer, EPD Deidra Carlyle, Planning

5/25 Delia Carlyle, Council

Sanitation Francisco Velasco, Sanitation Lucy Jerry, Social &

**Health Services** 

5/26 Ricky Bunch, Law & Order Edith Munoz, Finance

5/27

Colleen Mike,

Security Guard

Brian Manuel, TGA

Maria Tavena-

Thomas,

Social & Health

Services

5/28

Henry Garcia,

Community

Government

5/29

Nickalus Acosta,

Law & Order

Marla Antone.

Youth Council

Elaine Peters,

Him Dak Museum

#### 5/6

Armando Zepeda, Sanitation Marie Escarsega, Vekol

<mark>5/9</mark> Joseph Davis, Youth Council

5/13 John Leon Guerrero,

IS Adam Bowman, Finance Raymond Narcia, Parks & Recreation

5/15 Robert Martinez, Sanitation

5/16 Waylon Antone, Him Dak Museum Estrellalinda Reyes-Helpingstine, Parks & Recreation

5/30 Karla Wear, Law & Order

5/3 I Christopher Hayes, Fire & Safety

5/17 Renee Boehm, Fire & Safety Mauricio Chairez Velazco, Sanitation

5/18 Rozenda Manuel, Vekol Amy Batopis, Vekol

5/19 Leslie Carlyle-Burnett, Elderly

# **COWBOY LIFESTYLE** NETWORK



The **Cowboy Lifestyle Network** is the Online Western Enthusiast Social Hub. A comunity that pursues the western lifestyle and lives the cowboy ideal.

# 

www.CowboyLifestyleNetwork.com