



THE FOUNTAIN HILLS TIMES

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Museum searches for early women settlers

The River of Time Museum has put out a call for journals, letters or other documentation involving Lower Verde River region women settlers. Executive director Cherie Koss said families who have records of ancestral settlers before the 1950s are encouraged

to contact her at 480-837-2612 or by email at director@rotmuseum.org. An intern, Sonia Renee Brown is engaged in a new project that will feature ways that women influenced the settlement and the culture of the region, Rio Verde and the Yavapai Nation.

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Revenue sources

Sales tax hike, safety fee proposed

By Bob Burns
Times Reporter

The Town Council has directed staff to move forward with proposed revenue-generating measures aimed at keeping town finances out of the red.

At an April 18 special session the council voted 5-2 to move a sales tax increase, and also voted 6-1 to implement a public safety fee.

The sales tax proposal would increase the local tax rate .3 percent from 2.6 percent to 2.9. It would increase the overall rate from 8.9 percent to 9.2. Staff estimates that increase would generate an additional \$1 million per

year.

Vice Mayor Art Tolis and Councilman David Spelich were the no votes on the sales tax plan. Tolis called the increase a "bad idea."

"There are a lot of [commercial] vacancies in town and the mom and pop operations are struggling," Tolis said. "We need to do all we can to encourage people to shop locally."

Spelich said he believes the town should focus its efforts on collecting money it is already owed before increasing taxes.

The council vote to implement a public safety fee would ask parcel owners to pay \$185 per year for law enforcement and fire and emergency medical

services.

Based on 15,600 parcels the \$185 fee would generate up to \$2.9 million annually for those services. The town has no means to enforce delinquent payment on this fee so the amount would depend on collection rate. The town's current \$36 annual environmental fee has a collection rate of about 90 percent.

The vote to move forward on the public safety fee also suspends the environmental fee and it provides for a hardship clause.

It was a resident, Michelle Webb, who stepped up to the podium and suggested the town set a public safety fee at \$1 per day, or

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Street maintenance begins

By Bob Burns
Times Reporter

Workers will be in Fountain Hills neighborhoods as soon as this week preparing for a \$3.5 million street maintenance project that is expected to be completed by the end of May.

This is the town's pavement management project for the 2018/2019 fiscal year, which had been delayed due to utility work.

The Town Council approved the project at its April 16 session on a 6-1 vote over the objections of Vice Mayor Art Tolis.

The contract is being done through a cooperative purchase agreement with the City of Chandler and the contractor is M.R. Tanner.

Tolis was not happy with the priorities of the project. He said he believes there should be an emphasis on renewing the streets in the downtown area.

"Looking at the map, these projects are scattered all over," Tolis said. "Why

Affected streets listed on page 7A

not do the most for the downtown, it needs to be pristine."

Tolis said having the downtown streets in top condition should be a priority to help attract business to the area.

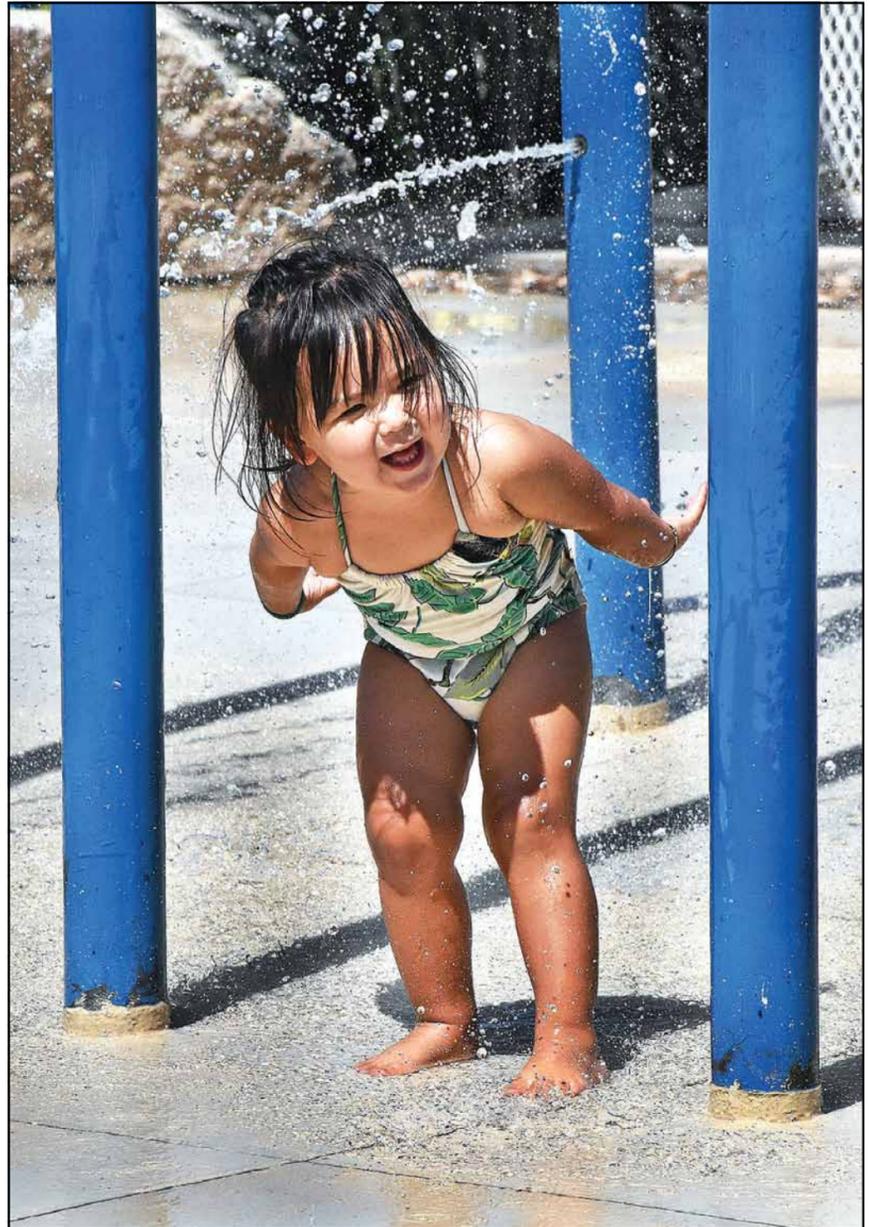
Public Works Director Justin Weldy told the council that portions of Palisades Boulevard, Parkview Avenue and Verde River Drive in the downtown area are in need of total reconstruction, and the money is not available for a project that large.

"I don't want to do that in a piecemeal manner," Weldy said. "We are concentrating on what can be done with our limited funding."

The only street in the downtown slated for mill and overlay during this project is La Montana Drive between El Lago and Palisades boulevards.

Councilman Dennis Brown expressed his frustration that the town has not been able to develop a comprehensive plan for street maintenance, which

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Times photo by Barb Charzuk

Cooling off

The Rotary Centennial Splash Pad is a popular spot to cool off as the temperatures creep closer to the 100-degree mark. Mia Johnson came from Mesa with her father and sister, Violet, to enjoy the town attraction. For more photos, see page 5A.

Sanitary Board approves Fountain Park project

By Bob Burns
Times Reporter

The Sanitary District Board of Directors has approved the necessary resolutions to go forward with the district's planned well enhancement and restroom project in Fountain Park. Construction is expected to begin in May and wrap up by the end of summer.

The board voted 4-0 to approve a contract with Hunter Contractors for \$2,444,929. Board Vice Chairman Jerry Butler was absent.

The board approval allows District Manager Dana Trompke to execute a guaranteed maximum price contract.

The board also voted to authorize Trompke to enter into a time and materials agreement with Wilson Engineers to provide engineering and construction



Artist's rendering of the planned restroom/sanitary control buildings in Fountain Park.

administrative services for the project. That agreement is for \$266,640.

Trompke is also entering into an intergovernmental agreement (IGA) with the Town of Fountain Hills in relation to the project that will provide shared use

facilities for the district's well equipment and public restrooms for Fountain Park.

Board Chairman Gregg Dudash complimented Trompke and her staff for

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Times photo by Bob Burns

Sunrise service

The Easter Sunrise Service presented by the Fountain Hills Christian Ministerial Association drew a crowd to Fountain Park early Sunday morning, April 21. See additional photos page 5B.

Drug takeback day Saturday

The next prescription drug takeback day is set for this weekend.

On Saturday, April 27, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office, the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation Tribal Police Department and the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) will give the public its 17th opportunity in nine years to prevent prescription drug abuse and theft by ridding their homes of potentially dangerous expired, unused, and unwanted prescription drugs.

Bring your pills for disposal to Fountain Hills Town Hall, located at 16705 E. Avenue of the Fountains, or the Fort McDowell Public Safety building, located at 10755 N. Fort McDowell Rd. Liquids, needles or sharps are not allowed to be turned in, only pills or patches. The service is free and anonymous, no questions asked. For those who do not wish to drop off prescription bottles, simply pour your pills into a Ziploc bag and head to one of the drop-off points.

According to organizers, this initiative addresses a vital public safety and public

health issue. Medicines that languish in home cabinets are highly susceptible to diversion, misuse and abuse.

Rates of prescription drug abuse in Arizona are notably high, as are the number of accidental poisonings and overdoses due to these drugs. Studies show that a majority of abused prescription drugs are obtained from family and friends, including from the home medicine cabinet. In addition, Arizonans are now advised

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INSIDE THIS WEEK

Fire ban:

Precautionary hold begins May 1.
See Page 2A

Sports:

Spring seasons winding down.
See Page 2B - 4B

Band:

Andrew Merica (pictured) and his bandmates soar.
See Page 1B



WEATHER

	H	L	P
Tues., April 16	87	54	.07
Wed., April 17	76	59	--
Thurs., April 18	90	64	--
Fri., April 19	79	61	--
Sat., April 20	90	56	--
Sun., April 21	86	55	--
Mon., April 22	85	58	--

For weather updates and forecasts go to www.fhtimes.com

