

Annual Report



2023



City of
EL MIRAGESM
Arizona



City's Bond Rating Improves

The City's general obligation bond rating was raised to "AA" by Standard & Poor Global Ratings, based on fund balance and economic development. The rating reflects the City's strong financial performance, according to analysts.



Infrastructure

More than 4,000 linear feet of water and wastewater piping replacement projects began design and construction processes. These projects are integral to the City's water conservation and environmental stewardship efforts.



Public Works Facility Upgrade

The City Public Works facility received project bids in 2023. The new building will be approximately 6,400 square-feet and include offices, conference rooms, storage rooms, a break room, lobby area, and open office area for staff workstations.



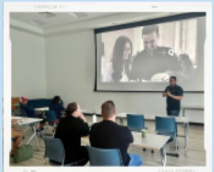
Student Art Displayed at City Hall

The City partnered with Dysart Schools to display student artwork in the lobby of City Hall. The first classes featured were from El Mirage Elementary School, featuring Stencil & Paint, Silhouette Mosaic, and Still-Life Pumpkin Oil Pastel.



Business Workshops

The City conducted business training seminars at the El Mirage Library as part of its retention and recruitment program, partnering with the Southwest Valley Chamber of Commerce, Small Business Administration and other organizations.



Water Conservation

The City partnered with Water Use It Wisely to display The Water Tower exhibit in the lobby of City Hall, showcasing the average daily water use of individuals, which amounts to 120 gallons on average. The 16-foot tall wall of water jugs was on display in January.



The City expanded its event offerings with Music in the Park and announced the creation of a new Parks & Recreation Department.

Mission

To protect and enhance the quality of life through leadership, partnerships, and the efficient delivery of outstanding service to our diverse community.

✿

Values

The City of El Mirage is committed to:

Transparency;
Fiscal Responsibility;
Environmental Stewardship;
Community Engagement; and
Excellence in all we do.

Vision

To embrace progress while respecting El Mirage's grand heritage.

👁️



EL MIRAGE COMMUNITY:

I am delighted to present our 2023 Annual Report. This report serves as a testament to the hard work and dedication of our city teams, as well as the substantial progress we've made in achieving our goals and serving the needs of our community.

One of the primary focuses of our efforts has been to foster long-term economic growth. Despite the challenges of inflation, El Mirage's job growth has increased 12% since 2020, and exciting new developments like the LogistiCenterSM at Copperwing, restaurants and retail, and an emergency care facility are underway.

Another area of focus was improving safety and essential infrastructure. Highlights included the introduction of a Flock gunshot detection system, the construction of the Hohokam multi-use trail, entering the construction phase for a new Public Works facility, and the replacement of underground utilities. These efforts have been crucial in keeping our community safe and providing important services.

Throughout the year, we celebrated milestones and enhanced the quality of life for our residents. We established a new Parks and Recreation Department, brought back Fiesta de la Gente and received notice that the City's bond rating improved. The permitting process streamlined by moving online, and construction began on the widening of Dysart Road--all indicators of our commitment to progress.

These accomplishments were thanks to the dedication of our City employees, as well as the guidance and support of our Mayor and City Council members. Their commitment to serving the best interests of El Mirage and its residents remains the driving force behind our success.

As we reflected on the achievements of 2023, we recognized the opportunities and challenges ahead. With continued collaboration, innovation, and strategic planning, we are confident that a thriving and sustainable future awaits the City of El Mirage.

Respectfully,

J. Crystal Dyches

J. Crystal Dyches, El Mirage City Manager

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Councilmember
Roy Delgado

Councilmember
Monica Dorcey

Councilmember
Bob Jones

Mayor
Alexis Hermosillo

Vice Mayor
David Shapera

Councilmember
Anita Norton

Councilmember
Donna Winston

El Mirage Mayor & City Council



New Parks & Recreation Department

For the first time in history the City of El Mirage has a new Parks & Recreation Department. Parks were previously managed by the facilities division of the Public Works Department. The City conducted a citizen's survey, a facility needs assessment and developed a plan for parks, recreation and open space. This outreach resulted in the decision to place more emphasis on recreational needs. The City offers more than 52 acres of parks and open space and partners with the YMCA on recreation services.



Sean VonRoenn became the City's first Parks and Recreation Director on December 6, 2023. He brings 25 years of experience in programming, management and customer service. Previously VonRoenn was Executive Director of the Eastern Rio Blanco Metropolitan (ERBM) Recreation & Park District in Meeker, Col., and he holds a master's degree in Exercise and Sports Science. Welcome, Sean!



This is a big step forward for our residents and the community as a whole.
--El Mirage Mayor Alexis Hermosillo.



Along with Maricopa County officials, El Mirage cut the ribbon on the Hohokam Trail connecting neighborhoods and green spaces.



Special Events

Special Events have become a hallmark of the City's culture and quality of life and became a division of the newly-created Parks and Recreation Department.

The City manages five signature events: Public Safety Day, Spring Faire, Fiesta de la Gente, Harvest Festival and Winterfest & Parade.

In 2023 a new series was introduced in Gentry Park called Music in the Park.

This year the City also held a Tree Lighting Ceremony for "El Mirage Sparkles" to flip the switch on the holiday lights at City Hall and Gateway Park.



Public Safety Day in February featured interactive exhibits and booths with many safety agencies including a build-a-dog station.

Economic Development

El Mirage is dedicated to commercial revitalization efforts to help businesses succeed. Developing strategies to boost economic activity, spur commercial development, redevelopment and retail entrepreneurship is a top City Council priority.



Accomplishments & Highlights



LogistiCenter at Copperwing

The LogistiCenter at Copperwing project broke ground. The 961-acre development will include more than ten million square feet of distribution space and buildings up to 1.4 million square feet.

Arcadia Cold cut the ribbon October 19 on a state-of-the-art cold storage facility at approximately 300,000 square feet, the largest in El Mirage. As a regional distribution hub at Dysart and Joe Ramirez Roads, Arcadia Cold employs approximately 80 people and services regional food manufacturers, importers, exporters, retail and food service companies.

Healthcare Facilities

Construction began on El Mirage's first emergency care facility at El 12000 El Mirage Road. Opening in 2024, the 24/7 Emergency Room and Medical Center is a physician-owned outpatient center with 24-hour services.

Rand Family Chiropractic opened its doors at 15235 N. Dysart Road and held a ribbon cutting in February 2023.

Retail & Restaurants

Checkers Drive-In Restaurants, Inc. and investors broke ground on a Rally's drive-through restaurant at El Mirage and Thunderbird Roads.

Taco Spot held a grand opening at 13011 W. Greenway Road featuring authentic Mexican with a modern twist of Al Pastor.

A Jiffy Lube is under construction located at the southeast corner of Thunderbird and Dysart Roads in the Park Mirage Center



Accomplishments & Highlights

Launch of ELM Online Permitting

ELM Online launched January 2, 2024, and provides a convenient portal to streamline the inspection and permitting process, remove manual submissions and improve communication with our customers. Plans are now submitted digitally through the online portal.



Hohokam Multi-Use Trail

A 12-foot wide, asphalt, multi-use trail was completed in June 2023 and provides residents with a safe and permanent path throughout the community. The City received \$1.2 million from Maricopa County in Community Development Block Grant-Coronavirus (CDBG) funding to support design and construction along the Lower El Mirage Wash.

Infrastructure - Roadways

Construction began on the widening of Dysart Road from Northern Parkway to Olive and Peoria Avenues. Improvements include roadway widening, raised medians, bike lanes, curb and gutter, driveways, signing and striping, roadway lighting, traffic signals, traffic signal interconnect conduit and landscaping. Additionally, construction of the north half of Cheryl Drive from El Mirage Road to 121st Avenue was completed including asphalt, curb and gutter, signing, striping and decomposed granite.

Know Our Code

The Know Our Code campaign continued with postcard mailings to all El Mirage households, informing recipients about various common code violations and encouraging the community to become more familiar with our codes and collectively keep El Mirage clean and beautiful.

Development Services

The Development Services Department ensures responsible planning and development within the current and future city limits and provides quality customer service to all City of El Mirage customers.



City and Maricopa County officials cut the ribbon on the Hohokam Multi-Use Trail on May 26, 2023.



Public Safety Police



El Mirage Police Department (EMPD) is dedicated to providing professional police service and a safe, secure community for the residents of El Mirage.



Accomplishments & Highlights

Calls for Service & Crime Counts

El Mirage police responded to an average of 926 calls for service per month and averaged 773 officer-initiated activities monthly.* Officers averaged 90 arrests per month along with additional warrant arrests. Crime statistics are published monthly on the City's website.



Integrating Communications, Assessment and Tactics (ICAT)

The department implemented ICAT national training that provides first-responding police officers with the tools, skills and options they need to successfully and safely de-escalate a range of critical incidents.

Flock Detection Systems

The Flock Safety Raven detection system was deployed. Flock systems detect gunshots, alert police and aid in locating suspects.

Opioid Redirection Program

The department partnered with Community Medical Services to offer an Opioid Redirection Program with intake clinics and support services.

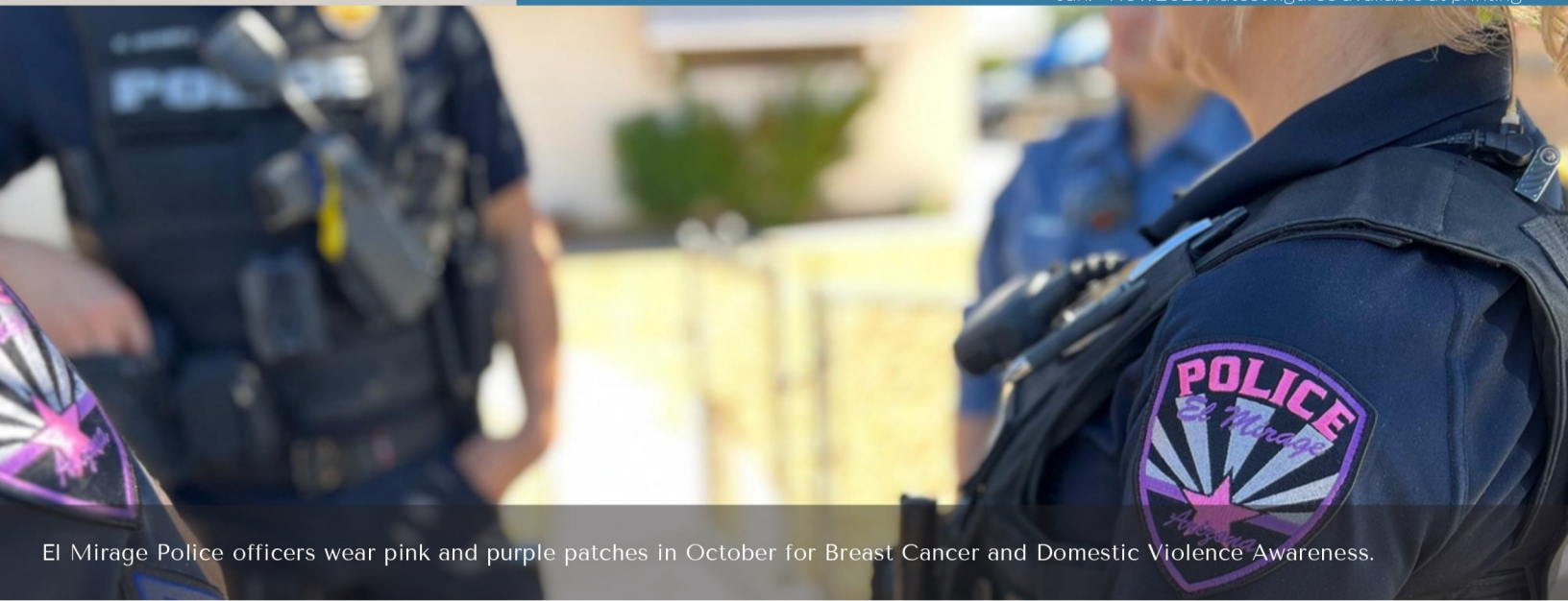
Recruitment

In 2023, the department sent six recruits to the new West Valley Police Academy. Six Police Assistant positions were filled, along with the continued hiring of highly-qualified Lateral Police Officers.

Community Engagement

Many community outreach programs were conducted including Cops & Pops, Lunch Squad, Walmart Safety Event, Coffee with a Cop, Read Across America and participation in Public Safety Day.

**Jan. - Nov. 2023, latest figures available at printing*



El Mirage Police officers wear pink and purple patches in October for Breast Cancer and Domestic Violence Awareness.

Accomplishments & Highlights

Response Times

The department continued with efficient response times to calls for services with a 4:30 (minute/seconds) average time.

Emergency Medical Services

The department placed into service external chest compression devices to increase survivability for heart attack patients. Cooperation continued with our local hospital partners to increase pre-hospital and emergency procedures and provide the highest level of care.

Fire and Life Safety

The operations division continued to train and provide the highest level of emergency and nonemergency responses to the community. In partnership with the Arizona Burn Foundation more than 80 battery-operated smoke detectors with a 10-year life span were installed in residential homes.

Fire Prevention Division

The new Fire Prevention Division conducted 26 classes in CPR, AED, First Aid, and bike safety for more than 500 individuals. Outreach, held at city facilities and special events, included topics of fire and life safety, fall prevention, drowning awareness, and kitchen safety. The division also restarted the residential lock box program, installing more than 20 units.

Professional Development

The department continued to exceed the minimum number of required training hours annually to maintain fire and EMS service proficiency.



Public Safety Fire

The mission of the El Mirage Fire Department is to protect the life, property, and environment of our community, neighbors, and guests by delivering professional life safety and hazard mitigation services.



El Mirage Fire Department's C-shift trained at Glendale Regional Public Safety Training Center.



Community Services

The Community Services Division administers grants and the benefits attained through funding sources and partners, the Community Action Program (CAP), Dial-a-Ride and the Senior Center, providing needed services to our most vulnerable populations.

Accomplishments & Highlights

Grants

The City received approximately \$2 million in new funding to further enhance City safety, parks, special events, paratransit, community services and education.



Dial-a-Ride and Paratransit

Our service providers, Northwest Valley Connect and Valley Metro, provided more than 5,760 rides for elderly and disabled residents.

Senior Center

The El Mirage Senior Center provided 7,591 meals for members, as well as ongoing programming like daily social activities and special events such as field trips and holiday parties. The Senior Bus provided approximately 2,000 rides for members.

Community Blood Drives

Vitalant hosted three community blood drives in 2023 in partnership with the City, which were held at City Hall and promoted citywide.

Community Action Program & Homeless Services

Through a partnership with Maricopa County and the City of Surprise, the Community Action Program provided support services that foster self-sufficiency and stability during financial crisis. Phoenix Rescue Mission successfully provided services to those experiencing homelessness.



Community Blood Drive



Safe Routes To School event brought the community together to walk to school safely.

Accomplishments & Highlights



New Utility Customer Service Office

The former library facility was repurposed as a new customer service office. The new location at 14011 N. 1st Avenue provides improved space for customer service and billing and a more central location for residents.

Pavement Maintenance - Infrastructure

There are more than 200 miles of paved roadway in residential neighborhoods in the city, and roughly 50% of these residential areas will have undergone a crack seal treatment by the end of Fiscal Year 2023-24.

Areas Identified for New Fire Hydrants

The department collaborated with the Fire Department to identify residential areas where additional fire hydrants will be installed to enhance the City's firefighting capabilities.

Water & Wastewater Piping Replacement Projects

The department continued its focus on improving the city's underground infrastructure. More than 4,000 linear feet of water and wastewater piping replacement projects began the design and construction processes. These projects are integral to the City's water conservation and environmental stewardship efforts.

Skate Plaza Shade Structures

Thanks to grant funding from the Tohono O'odham Nation, additional shade structures and benches were installed at the Gateway Park Skate Plaza. Existing area lighting was also upgraded with new LED fixtures.

Public Works

The Public Works Department manages quality services related to the City's parks, streets, facilities, fleet, environmental, water, sewer and sanitation systems.



New El Mirage Utilities Customer Service Center at 14011 N. 1st Avenue.

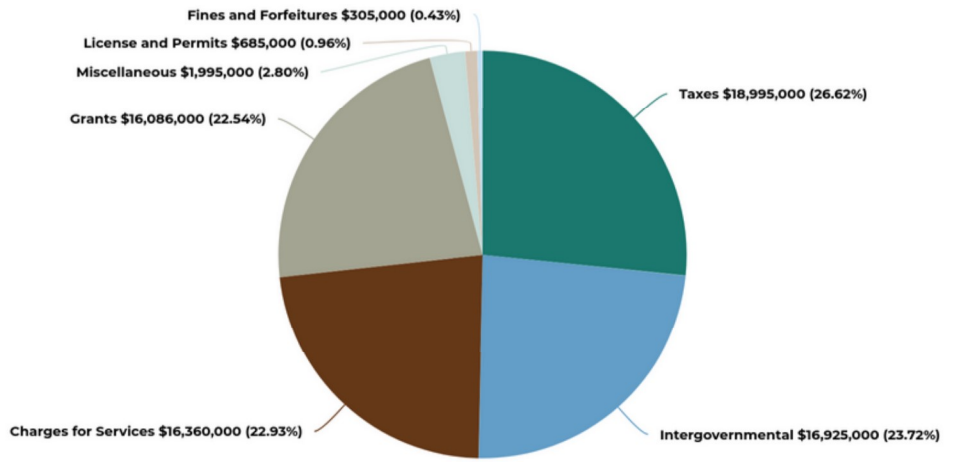


Budget

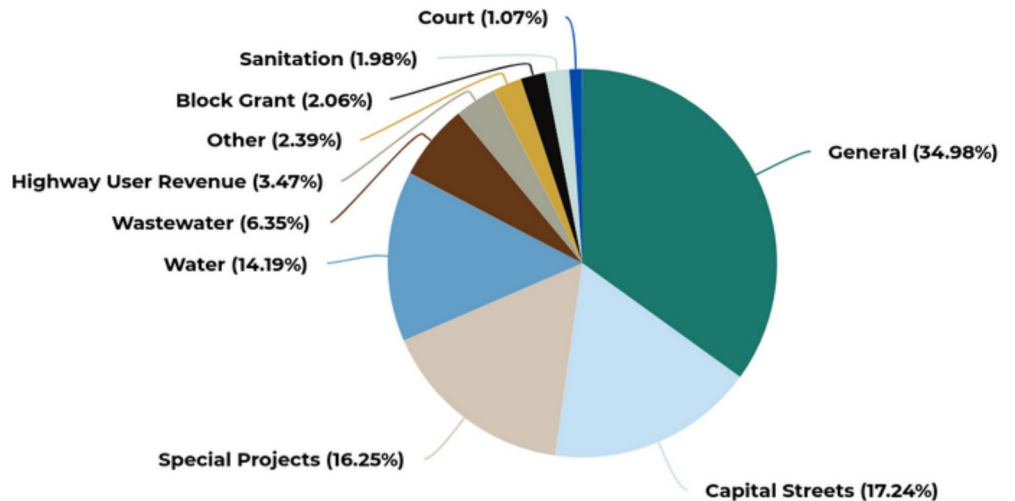
The adopted budget for Fiscal Year 2024 (July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024) was \$121.2 million, representing an increase of \$1.2 million from the previous year. It included \$42.4 million for the General Fund, the primary fund for most City operations.

The budget is not only a policy document. It also sets the financial course for our community, advancing the City Council's Strategic priorities and vision for the City.

Citywide Budgeted Revenues

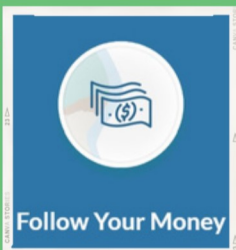


Citywide Budgeted Expenditures by Fund



Follow the City's Budget in Real Time

The City values transparency as a top priority. You can follow the City's budget in real time by typing ElMirageAZ.gov/budget in your web browser or go to the City's homepage at ElMirageAZ.gov and click on "follow your money" to be directed to the digital budget book.



Water & Wastewater Piping Replacement

More than 4,000 linear feet of water and wastewater piping replacement projects started the design and construction processes. These infrastructure improvements are integral to the City's water conservation and environmental stewardship efforts.

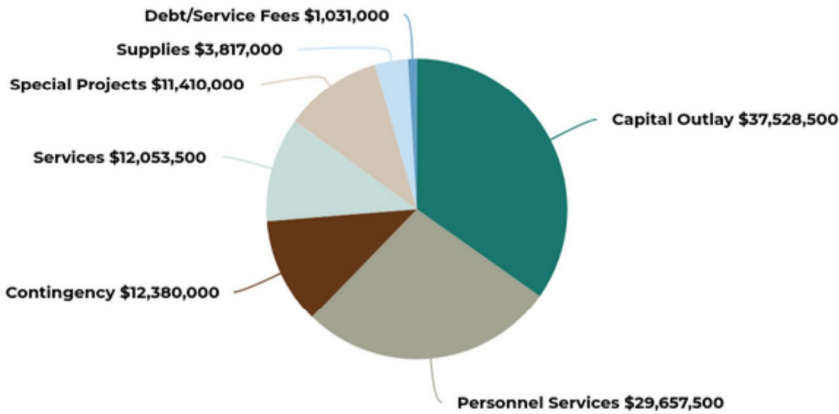


City's Bond Rating Improves to AA

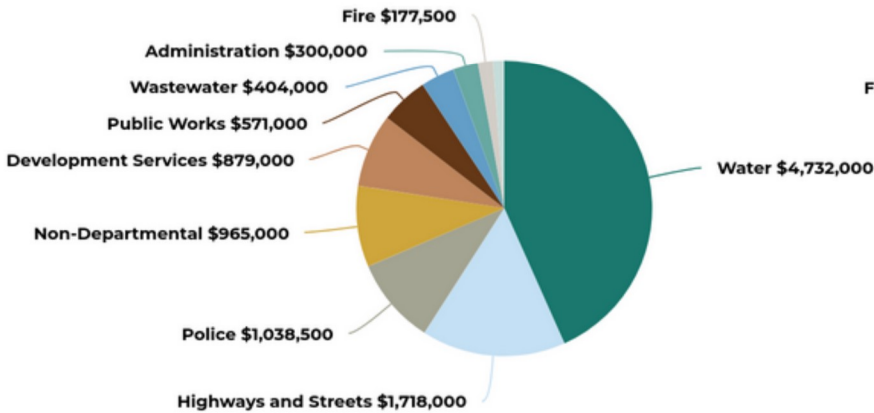
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Citywide Budgeted Expenditures Less Exclusions



Capital Expenditures by Department



Award Winning Budget

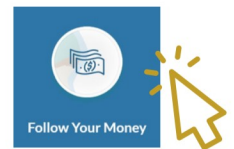
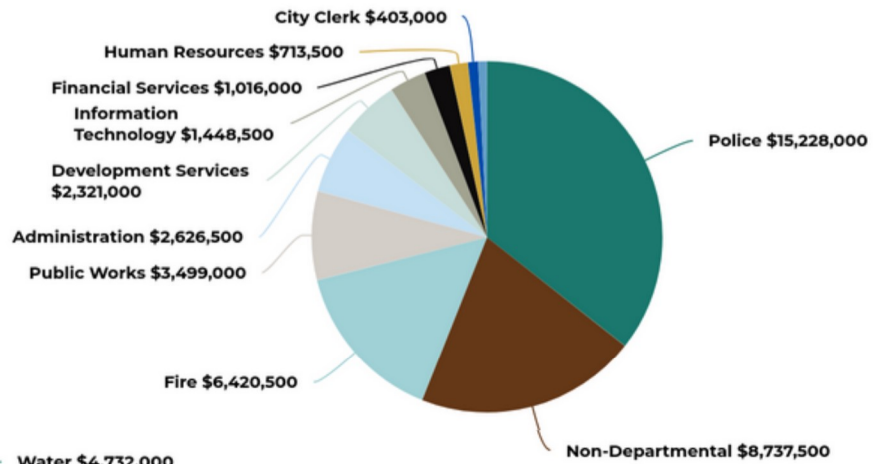


Budget

The Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) established the Distinguished Budget Presentation Awards Program to encourage and assist state and local governments to prepare budget documents of the very highest quality.

To earn recognition, budget documents must meet program criteria, and the budget must excel as a policy document financial plan, operations guide, and communication tool.

General Fund Expenditures by Department



ElMirageAZ.gov/budget

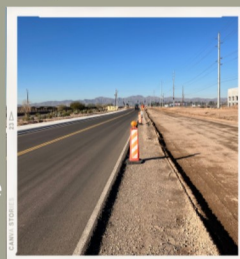
Grant Provides Class A Pumper Engine

The City received a Community Development Block Grant to add a Class A pumper engine to the Fire Department's fleet. This vehicle will arrive in 2024 following outfitting to make it operational for El Mirage in the battling of structural fires and carrying and pumping water.



Dysart Road Widening and Improvements Began

Construction began in 2023, including roadway widening, raised medians, bike lanes, curb and gutter, driveways, signing and striping, roadway lighting, traffic signals, traffic signal interconnect conduit and landscaping. Increased traffic is anticipated with future growth in the southern portion of the City.



Electric Vehicles Added to Fleet

The Fleet Replacement Program regularly evaluates and replaces vehicles citywide to meet the needs of all departments within the City. In keeping with the City's environmental stewardship goals, electric vehicles have also been added to the fleet.





City Clerk

The Clerk's Office is dedicated to excellence in service, performing ethically, honestly and with integrity. The City Clerk ensures El Mirage's legislative processes are open and public. The Clerk remains a neutral, impartial and professional link between the citizens and the government.

Accomplishments & Highlights



Election Oversight

The City Clerk's Office oversaw the 2023 Special Bond Election held Nov. 7, 2023. The City Clerk worked with staff, Maricopa County Elections Department, bond attorneys, bond financial advisors, and the printing company in preparing and mailing the informational pamphlet to every household with a qualified elector on October 3, 2023. Additionally, two groups were guided through the process of forming Political Action Committees (PACs).

City Hall lobby was a ballot replacement center for voters to either drop off their voted ballots or obtain and vote a replacement ballot if needed. The bond measure failed with a 21% voter turnout and the canvass of the election was held November 21, 2023.

Contracts

The City Clerk's Office migrated City contracts to OpenGov, a software that integrates with procurement and provides multi-departmental input on terms, scope of work, contact information and advance notice of expiration.

Public Meetings

The Clerk's Office coordinates City Council and official boards and commission meetings such as the Planning & Zoning Commission. A software program called *AgendaQuick* is used to notify the public of Council Meetings, Special Council Meetings, Council Work Sessions and Planning & Zoning Commission meetings. A feature on this software allows residents to sign up and receive agendas and minutes automatically under "Notify Me." This can be found at: ElMirageAZ.gov/CityClerk



Accomplishments & Highlights



Language Access

The Court increased access to justice by expanding the Language Access Plan. Modern hard-of-hearing devices were purchased, and certified interpreters contracted when necessary. The state's order of protection portal was also programmed with Spanish functionality.

Security Enhancements

The Court was awarded grant funds by the Arizona Supreme Court to make security improvements working within limitations of the current facility. Staff also attended several security trainings to gain first-aid skills and promote emergency preparedness.

Financial Stewardship

The Court complied with its Minimum Accounting Standards reporting requirements, developed numerous financial policies and procedures, updated its fine schedule to align with the El Mirage City Code and implemented a broadened bond acceptance process.

Fingerprint Legislation

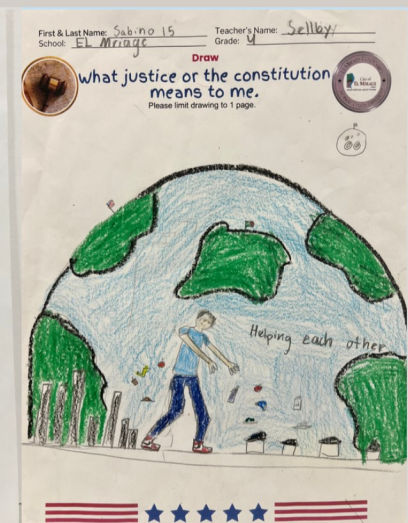
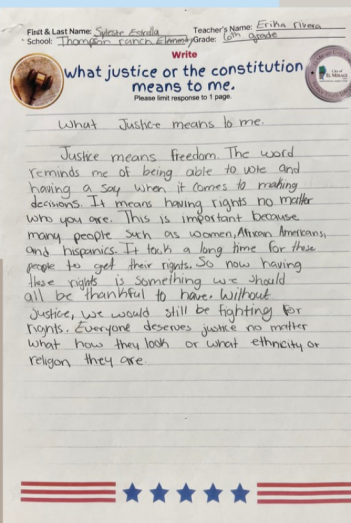
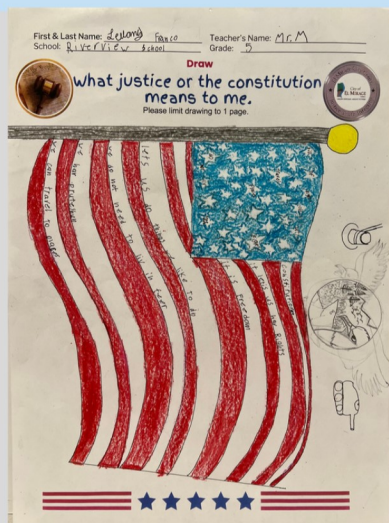
The Court collaborated with the El Mirage Police Department and others to create fingerprint policies, checklists, and forms to comply with new legislation which expands the offenses that require fingerprinting.

Educational Outreach

The Court continued its outreach program by coordinating the "What Justice or the Constitution Means to Me" school writing and drawing competition with the final student placements selected by the City Council.

City Court

We are committed to excellence in public service by treating everyone with dignity, respect, and professionalism though overseeing the effective, efficient and ethical administration of justice to ensure it is accessible and dispensed impartially to all.





Human Resources

The Human Resources Department provides comprehensive programs and support to departments in recruitment, retention, benefits administration and leaves, employee relations, classification and compensation, performance management, compliance and policy development.

Accomplishments & Highlights



Recruitment, Selection and Hiring

In 2023 staff worked with departments and completed the recruitment, selection and hiring process for more than 30 new employees.

In collaboration with the marketing division, the department rebranded the City's Employer webpage on the Indeed hiring platform.

Employee Benefits & New Wellness Program

A new wellness platform offered fun and engaging challenges, helpful content, and tools to encourage employees to make well-being a priority. The department managed, designed and administered cost-effective, compliant, competitive benefit programs to meet the needs of employees and their families. AzMT provides member entities with a way to maintain a greater degree of control over their employee benefits programs through their collectively larger numbers. Benefits include: medical insurance, pharmacy benefits, dental, vision and life insurance, wellness programs, deferred compensation plans, retirement programs, workers' compensation and paid leave.

Employment

The Human Resources Department managed programs and practices that support, motivate and retain a highly qualified workforce utilizing new hire check-ins, a revised stay interview process, performance evaluations and exit interviews.

Open Enrollment

The department coordinated the annual open enrollment period allowing employees to make benefit elections for the upcoming year.



WE ARE HIRING
We Are El Mirage



Accomplishments & Highlights



Excellence in Financial Reporting Award

The City was awarded the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2022. This is the twelfth consecutive year the City has earned this award from the Government Finance Officers Association.

Automated Financial Processes

The department transitioned to a new system for purchasing and contract tracking. The workflow-based, online software automates the creation and advertising of formal procurement opportunities and allows the resulting contracts to be kept and maintained. The department also selected a new payroll processing partner to simplify and streamline payroll and timekeeping for improved efficiencies and ease of use.

Code Change and Policy Updates

The department worked with other departments to amend City Code and policies to bring them up to date based on economic changes, best practices, changes in laws and regulations. This included creating a new travel policy.

Reports Available on the Website

The City's comprehensive annual financial reports, annual budget documents, fee schedules, bids and contracts and capital improvement plans can be accessed at ElMirageaz.gov.

Finance

Responsible for all fiscal operations of the City of El Mirage, the Finance Department is dedicated to providing transparent, timely financial reporting, including accounts payable, payroll, asset management and all other necessary financial processes.



For the twelfth straight year, the City was awarded the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting.



Intergovernmental and Public Relations

Intergovernmental and Public Relations builds and strengthens relationships with federal, state and local agencies; creates City-centric marketing campaigns; informs and engages the community through multiple communication channels; and heightens the City’s brand awareness.

Accomplishments & Highlights

Social Media & Website Engagement

The City utilized social media platforms to inform and engage followers and create brand awareness, initiating 2,620 posts on the three primary platforms of Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, an increase of 38%. Total followers/fans on those channels increased by eight percent, totaling 8,818. Total engagement reached an all-time high of 1.8 million page and profile impressions (118% increase) and 1.1 million page and profile users (78% increase). YouTube, Nextdoor and LinkedIn were also utilized. YouTube views totaled 86,768, compared to 1,340 views in 2022.

The City’s website averaged 24,333 users per month (3% increase) and averaged 42,871 monthly page views in 2023 (11% increase).

Marketing & Communication Campaigns

The division generated 84 multi-channel marketing campaigns to engage and inform the community of city events, announcements and activities.

Media Stories

Staff worked with media members, coordinating interviews with City leadership, issuing 23 media releases to news agencies and responding to media inquiries for feature stories and public safety incidents.

Newsletter El Mirage Connect Mailed Quarterly

Four quarterly newsletters were published and mailed to all El Mirage households and businesses. The *El Mirage Connect* included special events, recreation, City features and public safety announcements.



The City engages the community, informs the public and builds relationships with other state and local agencies.

Accomplishments & Highlights

Security

As part of a Department of Homeland Security grant, the city implemented two new security-focused patching applications providing protection from web-based and Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) attacks. These changes, coupled with other improvements, allowed the City to achieve a 50-point boost in its security rating. In addition, security cameras and a new network video recorder were installed at both Gentry Park and the El Mirage Public Library.

Public Meetings Audio-Visual

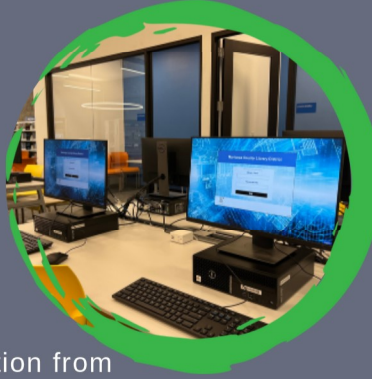
The department updated the city's audio/visual system in the City Council chambers. This allowed the streaming of live video through Teams in conjunction with the content for the Council meetings.

Firewalls

New firewalls were implemented at the Police Department to replace older units that had reached their end of life.

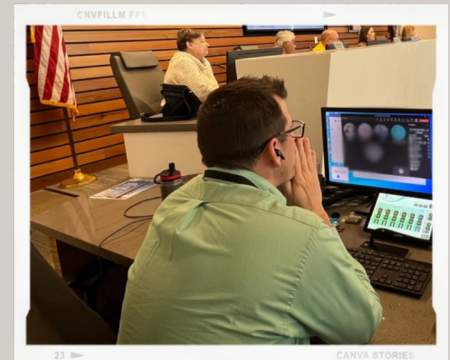
Wireless Infrastructure Replacement

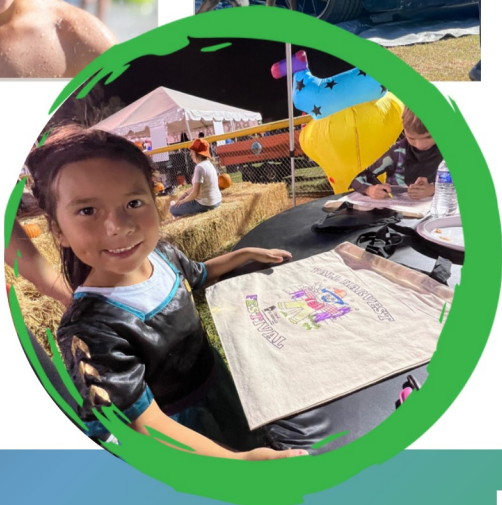
The wireless infrastructure was replaced at city facilities with access points equipped with the latest technology standard, WiFi6. This technology is faster and provides more range than the previous generation. These improvements also resulted in a reduction of hardware, saving the city approximately \$25,000 to deliver the same high-performance, enterprise-grade wireless service.



Information & Technology

The Information Technology Department manages the City's technology infrastructure providing secure, reliable solutions in alignment with Administration and City Council goals, while delivering excellence in customer service.





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ElMirageAZ.gov | (623) 935-6405

