



4 Showing Up for Santa Cruz County
Rosanna Gabaldón, Arizona State Senator

CONNECTING SOUTHERN ARIZONA



7. Reading Across Santa Cruz County 2026

SCAN ME



Child Abuse Prevention Awareness Month!



10 Rio Rico Insights: Masterpiece & Milestone:
Third-Grader Wins State Art Prize



12 Beyond the Badge: Nogales Officers
Show a Different Side of Policing

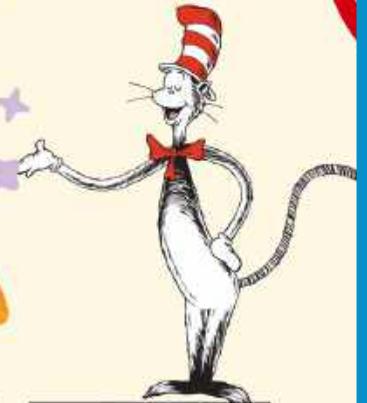


15 Sheriff's April Round-Up



READ

across
AMERICA



Thank
you!

TO ALL THE
VOLUNTEERS



Maya Donnelly
Santa Cruz County
School Superintendent
&
Staff

21 E. Court St.
Nogales, AZ 85621
Phone: 520.375.7940

Border Eco Updates

Child Abuse Prevention Awareness Month

To our Border Eco readers, thank you for being part of a community that values connection, reflection, and the stories that bind us together. Your continued support allows us to highlight the people, places, and issues that matter most across our region.

Every April, our community leaders observe Child Abuse Awareness Month, emphasizing the importance of protecting our children, who are our future. When children feel safe and supported, they develop the emotional resilience needed to thrive as adults.

Child abuse can cause serious harm, affecting brain development, learning, and overall security. In contrast, children who feel safe perform better in school and build healthy relationships.

Raising awareness extends beyond wearing a blue ribbon; it involves neighbors watching out for each other, teachers noticing behavioral changes, and providing parents with resources such as counseling and affordable childcare.

Investing in children's safety not only improves their well-being but also benefits our communities by reducing costs for healthcare and social services. This April, learn the signs of abuse, support local family services, and remind children that they matter. A safe childhood leads to a stronger community for all.



SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

We now offer great advertising packages at Border Eco Magazine. Find out how we can help promote your business in Santa Cruz County by contacting us. Our magazine reaches a wide and diverse audience, providing excellent exposure for your brand. With our targeted distribution, your advertisements will be seen by key demographics interested in your products or services. Additionally, our team offers creative support to ensure your message resonates effectively with potential customers.

Our office is located on :
1071 N. Grand Ave. Ste. #122,
Nogales, Arizona 85621
(520) 461-4880
Email: contact@bordereco.com



Please send us information on any upcoming events, meetings, or programs to share with our readers.

CONTENT

4 Showing Up for Santa Cruz County

Rosanna Gabaldón, Arizona State Senator

5 Inflation Surge: The Impact of the Big Beautiful Bill

6 Reading Across Santa Cruz County 2026

7 Reading Across Santa Cruz County 2026

10 Rio Rico Insights-Masterpiece and Milestone: Third-Grader Wins State Art Prize, Gains College Fund

11 Rio Rico Insights- RRHS Winter Guard Team Promoted to Higher Division, Earns Back-to-Back Top Finishes

12 NPD Monthly Roll-Beyond the Badge: Nogales Officers Show a Different Side of Policing

13 Let's Talk Health- Denim Day: Turning Awareness into Action

14 Child Abuse Awareness Month

15 Sheriff's Round-Up



Chief Editor: Adriana Romero
Student Intern Reporter: Nadia Sandoval
Student Intern Reporter: Chris Alcaraz
Graphic Designer Consultant: Erika Ruiz
Sales Representative: Tony Montanez

Information is correct at press time.
Check www.bordereco.com for updates.

Border Eco, LLC © 2026. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored, or transmitted without prior written permission from Border Eco Magazine. All submitted materials become the property of Border Eco. The views and opinions expressed in published materials do not necessarily reflect those of Border Eco Magazine. Border Eco accepts content from various sources, advertisers, and contributors, but disclaims any responsibility or liability for the accuracy or implications of such content.

Showing Up for Santa Cruz County

Rosanna Gabaldón, Arizona State Senator LD 21

Serving Southern Arizona has taught me one lesson over and over again. Progress rarely happens in a single meeting or legislative session. It happens through relationships, persistence, and a commitment to show up for the community you represent.

Santa Cruz County sits at the center of international trade, culture, and opportunity. The Nogales port of entry is one of the most important economic gateways in the country. The work we do here affects families, businesses, and communities on both sides of the border. That reality shapes how I approach public service.

Over the years, I have worked closely with local leaders, businesses, educators, and community organizations throughout Santa Cruz County. Those conversations often begin in community meetings, school events, or local gatherings. They continue through months and sometimes years of work to move an idea forward.

One example is the investment in the I-19 and Ruby Road interchange area. Improving infrastructure in that corridor helps strengthen the safety and efficiency of the transportation network that supports regional commerce and daily travel.

Another effort involved working with local officials and community partners to secure \$6.2 million for much-needed road repairs in Nogales. Reliable roads are essential for families, small businesses, and the international trucking industry that moves goods through our region every day. Trade is a defining part of life in Santa Cruz County. That is why I have worked closely with industry leaders and cross-border partners to support infrastructure and policy that keep our trade corridors strong and competitive. In recognition of that work, I was honored to receive the 2025 Champion of Trucking Award from the Arizona Trucking Association.

Public service also means collaboration beyond transportation and trade. Water sustainability, economic development, education, and health care are all part of our border communities' long-term future. I continue to work with partners across Arizona and Mexico, as well as local nonprofits, educators, and medical organizations that serve families in the region.

Earlier this year, I was honored to receive the 2025 Good Government Award from the County Supervisors Association of Arizona. I see recognitions like this as a reflection of the partnerships that make progress possible.

Santa Cruz County has always been a place defined by resilience, cooperation, and a deep sense of community. My role as your State Senator is to keep listening, keep building relationships, and keep showing up so that the voices of this region are heard and respected.

There is still more work ahead. Together, we will continue strengthening the economic vitality, infrastructure, and quality of life that make Santa Cruz County such a special place to call home.

Rosanna Gabaldón, Arizona State Senator LD 21



Inflation Surge: The Impact of the Big Beautiful Bill

The One Big Beautiful Bill Act introduced significant changes to how the government manages finances, affecting everyday people and the economy. It includes about \$3.7 trillion in tax cuts aimed at boosting families' take-home pay and encouraging economic growth. This could provide some financial relief for working- and middle-class families and help create new jobs in the U.S.

However, there are some potential downsides to these changes. The federal government is expected to run a deficit of more than \$2.4 trillion, meaning it will spend more than it collects in revenue. This could lead to higher costs for mortgages and other loans, putting extra pressure on household budgets. Additionally, there may be cuts to important programs such as healthcare and education, which negatively affect lower and middle-income families, potentially outweighing the benefits of the tax cuts.

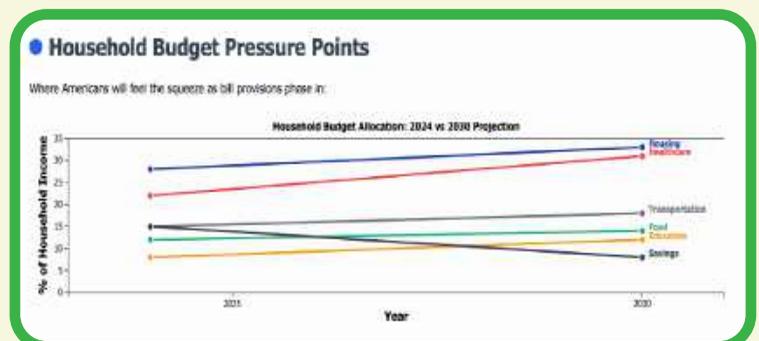
Additionally, the bill reduces funding for important federal programs like healthcare, food assistance, education, and student loans. Many households, especially low- and moderate-income families, may find that these cuts cancel out any gains from the tax reductions. Increased out-of-pocket healthcare and education expenses could strain already tight budgets. Over time, rising national debt could erode investor confidence, hurting the U.S.'s position in global markets and affecting the overall health of the economy.

To better manage their finances in this changing environment, families should focus on creating sound budgets, paying off high-interest loans, and improving their skills. Supporting local businesses and using community resources can also help. Being active in civic activities allows families to advocate for policies that promote economic stability.

In conclusion, while the bill offers immediate tax relief and the potential for growth, its long-term effects, such as rising debt and cuts to social support programs, might lead to higher living costs. It's essential for families to take proactive steps to manage their finances and get involved in their communities to navigate these challenges effectively. To navigate this changing economic landscape, Americans should focus on proactive financial management, continuous education, and community involvement.

As we approach the upcoming election cycle, the selection of representatives becomes increasingly important for addressing potential flaws in the One Big Beautiful Bill Act. Elected officials will be instrumental in determining policies that can either alleviate the negative impacts of increasing deficits and cuts to vital programs or worsen them. By supporting candidates who emphasize fiscal responsibility, social welfare, and sustainable economic development, we can advocate for reforms that protect funding for healthcare, education, and social services.

Furthermore, choosing leaders who are dedicated to community development and attentive to their constituents' needs will help ensure that any financial benefits from tax reductions are shared by all families, especially those in low- and moderate-income tiers. Ultimately, this election presents a critical chance to shape fiscal policy direction and create a more equitable economic environment for the future.





Read Across Santa Cruz County

Santa Cruz County Celebrates the Joy of Reading During Read Across America Week 2026

Santa Cruz County, AZ – Classrooms throughout Santa Cruz County were filled with imagination, laughter, and the timeless joy of storytelling as students and community members came together to celebrate Read Across America Week, held from March 2 to 6 in honor of the birthday of the beloved Dr. Seuss. This celebration of reading was organized by the Office of the Santa Cruz County School Superintendent, Maya Donnelly.

The week-long event featured nearly 100 dedicated volunteers who visited elementary schools across the county to read to students from kindergarten through fifth grade. Among the readers were Santa Cruz County Supervisors Rudy Molera, John Fanning, and Luis Carlos Davis. With the coordination and support of the Santa Cruz Mobile Library Literacy Facilitator, Paloma Barraza, the initiative ensured that children in our community experienced the magic of books.

From classic tales to new favorites, volunteers transformed classrooms into joyful spaces filled with imagination and connection. Students delighted in silly rhymes and eagerly engaged with stories that sparked their wonder. These experiences are essential for fostering a lifelong love of reading.

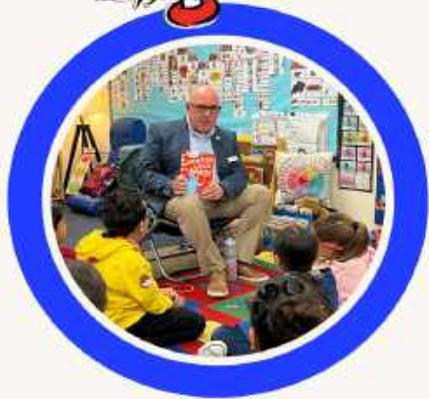
"Events like these remind us that literacy is more than just a skill—it's a gateway to opportunity," said the organizers. "When a child connects with a story, they begin to see the world and their place in it in new ways."

As the week concluded, organizers expressed their heartfelt gratitude to the volunteers, teachers, and students who contributed to making this year's celebration a success. The generosity and commitment of community members brought not only books into classrooms but also joy, encouragement, and a powerful message: that reading matters, and every child deserves the chance to discover its magic.

The office of Maya Donnelly is committed to continuing the work of bringing opportunities and resources to students across the county, with plans for the return of Read Across America next year, as well as summer reading programs and much more to come.



Read Across Santa Cruz County



Happy Easter



Santa Cruz Training Program

Taking orders !

**Contact us at:
(520) 287-2043
EXT. 21 & 22**

Cookies

Pecan, Orange, Cajeta

Turnovers

Pineapple, Apple, Pumpkin

Delicious flan and chocoflans

Mexican Tamales

La Castellana Cafe



Desert Hills Insurance

Delivering on a promise

Jorge Guayante Agent



dhinsurancellc@yahoo.com

**545 N Grand Ave Ste 4,
Nogales, AZ 85621
Phone: (520) 287-0837**

Alex Barber Shop



**2743 N Grand Ave B,
Nogales, AZ 85621
(520) 281-4642**



"You'll love our style"



Lutheran
Social Services
of the Southwest



Address: 557 E Frontage Rd,
Nogales, AZ 85621
Phone: (520) 281-9240
<https://www.lss-sw.org/>

545 N. Grand Ave. Ste. #3
Nogales, Arizona 85621
Cell: (520) 461-8573
scautoglass@yahoo.com

Santa Cruz Auto Glass

We Accept All Insurance Brands

Tel: (520) 394-4321

Lifetime Guarantee on Labor

Lopez

Cleaning
Services

Businesses



13 Years

Florentino Lopez
Owner Operator

florentinolopezjr1967@gmail.com
Nogales, AZ 85621

(520)470-4331

"Where Experience Meets Excellence. 13 Years and Counting!"



Making Connections 4U

Child Abuse Prevention
Awareness Month



Simple acts of kindness
Make a difference!

ELECTRONIC RESOURCE GUIDE



Contact us at:
(520) 216-5058



sccommunitycoalition@gmail.com



Rio Rico Insights



Masterpiece and Milestone: Third-Grader Wins State Art Prize, Gains College Fund

At 8 years old, Leonardo Ochoa already knows what it feels like to stand under the Arizona State Capitol dome. The Calabasas School third-grader was named one of 19 winners in the AZ529 Art Contest, beating out 906 entries from kindergarten through sixth-grade students across 15 counties. He was the only winner from Santa Cruz County.

Leonardo's artwork earned him \$529, which was deposited into a 529 college savings account. This is a prize meant to give Arizona families a head start on higher education costs. He received the award at the Capitol, where he met with Arizona State Treasurer Kimberly Yee. He saw his work displayed alongside winners from across the state.

"It's a big deal," said a Calabasas teacher who watched Leonardo's excitement. "Nine hundred six entries, and he's the only county child on that list. That says something about his creativity and the support he's getting at home and at school."

The AZ529 contest invites young artists to illustrate their personal interpretations of what saving for college means to them. Winning entries are selected based on their imagination, clarity, and ability to convey the theme effectively. Leonardo's artwork distinguished itself among submissions from both urban and rural schools. This brought recognition to a small classroom in Santa Cruz County on a statewide level.

For Calabasas School and the SCV35 community, the win is more than a trophy. It's a moment that shows that local students can compete with any school in Arizona.

"Leonardo represents what we're trying to nurture here, which is curiosity, effort, and pride in our community," said Superintendent Verdugo. He will recognize Leonardo before the Governing Board next week. "When one of our kids achieves something like this, it lifts us all."

Family, classmates, and staff have celebrated the news since its announcement. Parents say Leonardo loved drawing, filling notebooks with colorful scenes. This contest gave him a chance to channel that passion into something tangible: a savings boost for his future and a day at the Capitol most adults never get.

The \$529 award is modest, but in 529 plans it can grow over time and cover tuition, books, or training after high school. For a third-grader, it's also a powerful message: your work matters, and your future is worth investing in.

Treasurer Yee's office runs an annual contest to raise awareness about 529 plans. These plans allow families to save on education expenses while taking advantage of tax benefits. Each year, the winning art is featured in promotional materials, meaning Leonardo's drawing will be seen by families statewide.

Back in Nogales, students are already talking about trying out next year's contest. Teachers hope Leonardo's win inspires more children to enter, showing them that their ideas can travel beyond the border city.

Leonardo's recognition comes at a time when Santa Cruz County schools emphasize arts education as part of a well-rounded curriculum. His success reminds us that creativity counts and that a child's drawing can open doors.

When the Governing Board honors him next week, Leonardo will get another round of applause this time at home, in front of the community that cheered him on from the start.

"We are so proud of Leonardo for representing Calabasas School and our SCV35 community so well," the school staff said.



Follow us on Facebook at:
Bordere Echo

RRHS Winter Guard Team Promoted to Higher Division, Earns Back-to-Back Top Finishes

The RRHS Winter Guard continues to build momentum this season with an impressive series of achievements on the competition floor.

After a strong early-season performance, the team was recently promoted to a higher competitive division, recognizing the group's growth, skill, and performance quality. In their first competition in the new division, the guard rose to the challenge and earned an outstanding 2nd place finish, proving they could successfully compete at the higher level.

Just one week later, the team continued its upward trajectory. At their next competition, the guard delivered an even stronger performance and captured 1st place, earning the top score in their division and demonstrating the team's continued improvement and dedication.

"This group has worked incredibly hard all season," said Coach Victoria Taft. "Being moved up a division mid-season can be intimidating, but the students embraced the challenge and showed what they're capable of. Their commitment, focus, and teamwork are really paying off."

The Winter Guard will continue preparing for their championship performance as they build on this momentum and refine their show throughout the remainder of the season. The Winter Guard is proudly coached by Victoria Taft and Joe Welsh.

Representing RRHS Winter Guard were: Kaylie Alliman, Camila Gaxiola, Hannah Hardwick, Emily Medina, Melissa Medina, Mariajose Mendivil, Julian Orrantia, Daniella Osorio, Estevan Quintanar, Santiago Valenzuela, and Sal Vazquez.



NOGALES POLICE

Monthly Roll Call

Beyond the Badge: Nogales Officers Show a Different Side of Policing

The Nogales Police Department is well-known for its patrol vehicles, traffic enforcement, and quick emergency responses. Currently, though, there's been a heartwarming initiative called Beyond the Badge. This initiative shines a spotlight on officers in new and friendly roles as mentors, readers, and neighbors.

This initiative, started by the department, aims to strengthen connections throughout Santa Cruz County. It brings officers together with local students and other agencies in fun, everyday settings, extending beyond their usual duties.

"Beyond the Badge focuses on visibility and trust." "When our officers read with children, or engage in Career Day conversations, it reminds us that policing is woven into the community fabric."

Recently, Nogales detectives teamed up with the Arizona Department of Public Safety to use an AIMS scanner. This is a nifty mobile gadget that helps quickly identify vehicles of interest. For these detectives, seeing the technology in action was an excellent chance to sharpen their skills. They worked closely with state partners on public safety efforts that really matter to our border community.

The program's personal touch was especially heartwarming at Calabasas Middle School. Corporal M. Duran and Officer P. Felix were recognized for participating in Dr. Seuss Read Across America hosted by the Santa Cruz County Superintendent. They read stories to students and turned what could have been a badge-related encounter into a fun story time.

The kids laughed, asked questions, and had a great time meeting the officers. A few days later, Duran returned to school for Career Day. He spent the morning discussing what a career in law enforcement truly means and sharing insights into training, teamwork, and serving the community. Photos from the day capture him engaging with a small group of eighth-graders, answering their questions and inspiring them to dream of careers in public service. It's clear that efforts like these help build strong bonds between the officers and the community!



LET'S TALK HEALTH

Denim Day: Turning Awareness into Action

Every year, during Sexual Violence Awareness Month, communities come together to recognize the impact of sexual violence and uplift survivors. One powerful day of action is Denim Day, observed on March 29th. On this day, people wear denim to stand in solidarity with survivors and challenge harmful myths about sexual violence.

Denim Day began after a court ruling suggested that a victim's clothing implied consent—a dangerous and false narrative. Today, wearing denim is a statement: clothing never equals consent. Responsibility always lies with the person who causes harm.

But awareness alone is not enough. Prevention starts with education—especially with our children and youth. We must go beyond one-time conversations and create ongoing, age-appropriate discussions about what healthy relationships truly look like. This includes teaching respect, communication, boundaries, and accountability. Young people need to understand that relationships should feel safe, supportive, and equal. Teaching consent is a critical part of this. Consent is not just about saying “yes” or “no”—it’s about understanding body autonomy, respecting others’ choices, and recognizing that consent must be clear, enthusiastic, and can be withdrawn at any time. These lessons can start early in simple ways, like respecting personal space, asking permission, and honoring when someone says no. As youth grow, these conversations should evolve to include dating relationships, peer pressure, and digital boundaries.

Sexual violence is often rooted in deeper issues such as power and control, harmful gender norms, silence around emotions, and learned behaviors. When young people are exposed to messages that normalize dominance, entitlement, or aggression, it increases the risk of harm. That’s why it’s essential for adults—parents, educators, and community members—to model healthy behaviors, challenge harmful stereotypes, and create environments where young people feel safe asking questions and speaking up.

This Denim Day, wear your jeans with purpose. Start conversations. Educate the next generation. And remember: preventing sexual violence begins with all of us.



SONIA SANCHEZ

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY
SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT

Students, Families, and Community

Paid for by the committee to elect Sonia Sanchez for SCC Superintendent 2026

Email soniasanchez1325@gmail.com



Follow us on YouTube for the latest community videos.



APRIL IS CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH!



*"Innocence
Matters—
Speak Up.
Stand Up.
Protect
Kids."*



Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office
2170 N. Congress Dr.
Nogales, AZ 85621
520-761-7869

Sheriff's Round-Up



Over the past month, members of the Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office have proudly participated in several training sessions and community events, including:

- Movie Night event at Villa's Market
- Senior Project event for NHS Student-mentoring by the Sheriff's Office
- OHV Certification and deployment
- Speed Enforcement deployment
- Airport Open House
- Greater Tucson Leadership group

Recently promoted to the rank of Patrol Corporal is Alejandra Estrada and Jonathan Molera. Congratulations to both!

Let's congratulate and welcome to our team in Patrol Division, Carlos Avila, Kenia Delgadillo, and Jaime Cervantes; in Communications Division, Marylou Huaracui; and in Detention Division, Alfonso Ortiz and Galacion Sicairos.

Join Our Team

If you're interested in a rewarding career in law enforcement, we are currently accepting applications for the following positions:

- Deputy Sheriff
- Detention Officer
- Dispatcher
- Search & Rescue Volunteer
- Law Enforcement Assist Team Volunteer



We are also actively recruiting Lateral Officers for Peace Officer, Detention Officer, and Dispatcher roles. Applications can be downloaded from the Santa Cruz County website and submitted to the Human Resources Office.

On behalf of myself and the entire administration, I extend my heartfelt appreciation to all members of our communities who help maintain public safety every day.

Sincerely,
Sheriff David Hathaway



**A Message from the
Santa Cruz County Attorney**

Child Abuse Awareness Month



**CHILD ABUSE
PREVENTION MONTH**

**LOVE
IS NOT
ABUSIVE**



**2150 N Congress Dr,
Nogales, AZ 85621
(520) 375-7780**