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CONNECTING SOUTHERN ARIZONA



ACADEMY



OF EXCELLENCE

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"Thanksgiving is a time of togetherness and gratitude."– Nigel Hamilton

Happy Thanksgiving



Alfredo I. Velásquez
Santa Cruz County School Superintendent
&
Staff

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Border Eco Updates

We want to thank our readers and customers for their continued support. Your support helps us report on the great people, events, and organizations who make a difference in our community.

Our goal is to help connect Santa Cruz County. Santa Cruz County is a unique bordertown rich in culture, and traditions. We are here to support our community. Please send us any information on any upcoming community events, meetings, or conferences. Don't forget to follow us on Facebook, YouTube or Twitter for the latest events, people, and organizations who make a difference in Santa Cruz County.

We are always looking for new talent. If you have an interest in sales, journalism, and photography send us your resume at contact@bordereco.com



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

RRHS students participate in Public Safety Integration training

Rio Rico Medical and Fire District (RRMFD), Santa Cruz County Office of Emergency Management (SCCOEM) in conjunction with Integrated Community Solutions to Active Violence Events (ICSAVE.org) conducted Public Safety Integration training with the help of Rio Rico High School students.

ICSAVE volunteer Bruce Whitney, who, with more than 30 years experience in military and public safety, coordinated the training. Whitney is one of many professional volunteers who teach and train emergency preparedness across Arizona. After a recent shooting involving the AMR ambulance crew, Tucson Fire Department and Tucson Police Department, local agencies reached out to ICSAVE for training.

First responders from around Santa Cruz County, representing fire, law enforcement, and customs and border protection participated in the two day training. Day one of training included classroom instruction, while second day activities provided responders an opportunity to put learned skills into action. Scenarios included bomb and mass shooting situations.

According to Whitney, the activities are designed to train professionals to work together in the event of an emergency. The focus is “to get into areas, such as schools quickly to both stop the killing and actually stop the dying. In order to do that, firefighter unit professionals will have a security escort, (and) law enforcement will provide a layer of protection while they are rendering aid to patients.”

Theatre, JROTC and law enforcement students were invited to participate in training as wounded and non wounded victims. Theatre students also participated as victims and used their makeup skills to apply moulage. At the sound of Hollywood gunfire, students would spread out in teams and hide in different rooms waiting for responders to find them. Hollywood ammunition is typically used during the training, because it is louder and more intense sounding.

Law enforcement officers were responsible for providing a clear and safe path for medical responders to attend the wounds and move the victims. Once found, medical responders would assess and treat wounds utilizing integrated point-of-wound care skills.

Students were instructed to role play and react as they would in the case of a real emergency. “This provided a realistic aspect, students are incredibly vital to the success of these trainings,” said Whitney. Students could be heard crying, moaning, some were unable to walk because of their assigned wound.

Darlene Lara-Cordova pretended to struggle against medical attention in an attempt to conceal a weapon. Darlene is a Law and Public Safety student who has plans of going into law enforcement. “I would like to enlist in the military and do school at the same time and study criminal justice. I’m looking forward to becoming a Border patrol agent and getting experience and would love to transfer to the FBI after that and become a Special agent.” When asked how the exercise helped her future plans, she said, “this has helped me to understand a little more about what law enforcement agencies are actually about.” -Shannon Enciso/ Communication Specialist



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People who "echo" Robert Thompson

Border Eco magazine is pleased to feature Robert Thompson this month. Thompson is an individual whose voice resonates within our community. In December, he will celebrate 25 years of service with the City of Nogales. During the end of 2019 and early 2020, Mr. Thompson was the acting deputy city manager. Later in 2020 and early 2021, he was appointed as Acting City Manager. Just recently appointed as Housing Director overseeing Nogales Housing Authority while once again serving as Acting Deputy City Manager.

"Nogales is an incredibly safe place to live. We have a significant law enforcement presence in the city. Our crime rates are low. We have beautiful parks and more on the way. However, we do have a shortage of housing. We have limited rental properties, which I believe has contributed to our census numbers dropping," stated Robert Thompson Housing Director.

In June of 2021, Robert was appointed executive director of the Housing Authority and stepped down from the police department. Thompson has been appointed as Acting Deputy City Manager, where he assists the Acting City Manager with daily operations. "Although my separation from the police department qualifies as a retirement, the internal move and retirement policies do not allow me to retire because I chose to remain employed by the City of Nogales."

Robert was born in Tucson Arizona. He has lived the large majority of his life in Nogales, Arizona. In fact, he grew up in the low income apartments he currently manages, next to his office. "I see the home I grew up in daily and it reminds me of my past," said Thompson. Robert has two children Mia and Mathew. He likes to keep his family life private.

During his teenage years, he worked briefly for the Housing Authority as a maintenance worker. Over the subsequent years, he worked at Wal-Mart and volunteered for victim services. In December 1996, he applied for a communications position at the police department and was hired. In February of 2000, he went to the police academy in Tucson Arizona and graduated in June as a peace officer. In 2003, Thompson was promoted to detective then in 2005 to Corporal.

Finally in 2007, he was promoted to sergeant. While serving in this capacity, he supervised patrol officers, detectives, k-9 officers, motor officers, parking enforcement and held different capacities within the police department. In 2015, he was promoted to lieutenant where he managed all operational divisions of the police department. He successfully applied for and obtained a multitude of grants that helped the police department grow. These grants provided vehicles, and equipment, roughly estimated at \$5.5 million dollars. "My commitment is to the people of Nogales and I am willing to help in any capacity where I can make an impact. No matter where I am needed," said Thompson.

HUD and the City of Nogales fund the Nogales Housing Authority, which supports low-income families and individuals seeking and maintaining affordable housing. The agency serves the entire Santa Cruz County. The first houses were constructed in 1970. The development was named Casas de Anza, and we currently have a total of 226 low income apartments ranging in size from 1 to 5 bedrooms. Most likely, the name is attributed to Juan Bautista de Anza who traveled through our region. Federal Housing was started shortly after the Great Depression to address housing hardships. It has evolved into many different splinters, as with many federal programs.

Through federal funds, the housing authority also established Housing Choice Vouchers, also known as Section-8, which pays a portion of a tenant's total rent cost.

There are presently 226 families living in our apartments, ranging in age and size. Additionally, we provide Section-9 assistance to 192 families or individuals. Recently, we were able to acquire 15 Emergency Housing Vouchers to help families and individuals who are fleeing domestic violence, are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

Currently, the Nogales Housing Authority maintains: 226 Low income apartments 192 Section-8 Vouchers 15 Emergency Housing Vouchers The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) provides most of the funding. Rental income is deposited and appropriated to our programs. Federal funding and rent payments sustain the operation.

"The difference between us and other low income apartment complexes is that we are managed by City of Nogales personnel who deal with local housing issues. In addition, we managed Section-8 vouchers for other low income apartment complexes," said Thompson.



Nogales Housing Authority

"Delivering Smiles"

Our seniors will be warm and cozy this winter thanks to the **Borderlands Food Bank, Making Connections 4U, and the Nogales Housing Authority**. Three organizations distributed blankets across the county to elderly individuals in need. The Borderlands Food Bank donated the blankets to those in need.

Together, Making Connections 4U and the Nogales Housing Authority identified the population that would benefit most from this donation. A blanket was given to each elderly resident at their residence. Robert Thompson said that seniors frequently request blankets.

Nogales Housing Authority director Robert Thompson says we often forget to help our elderly population during the holidays. We are collaborating with other organizations to gather items to put in our care boxes to distribute to our seniors during the holiday season.

"We are passionate about our vision to deliver smiles to our senior citizens this holiday season. We appreciate any donations of socks, gloves, cookies or anything else we can put inside these care boxes," said Thompson

For information on how to help or donate any items please email us at scommunitycoalition@gmail.com or call us at (520) 216-5058.



Frida Rodriguez

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Mexicayotl Exemplifies Excellence in Education

Mexicayotl was awarded in 2020 the National Blue Ribbon of Distinction. It is the highest award for excellence in education. Only five schools in Arizona have been awarded the National Blue Ribbon of Distinction. Mexicayotl is the only school in our county to have such a recognition. The award recognizes schools across the country based on their performance on student tests and graduation rates. There are two categories: Exemplary High Performing Schools and Exemplary Achievement Gap Closing Schools.

The coveted blue ribbon acknowledges educators, families, and communities for their hard work in creating welcoming schools where students learn challenging, engaging material. Educators and teachers at these schools know how to help students succeed academically, regardless of their background and income level. In 1997-1998, the school opened its doors. Mexicayotl serves k-8 students in Santa Cruz County. Through its dual education program and unique intercultural curriculum, it distinguished itself from other schools.

“We founded this company because we felt that students in our predominantly Mexican community could benefit from the Nogales experience. We live with the Spanish language and culture every day. Charter schools are public schools and therefore open to all students age K-8. Families choose the school because they value literacy and want their children to be literate, not just bilingual in English and Spanish. After enrolling, they must demonstrate a willingness and work ethic that states, “I want to learn”, in other words, Ganas,” said Baltazar Garcia, School Director.

There are 180 students in our charter school, but we can accommodate up to 245 students in grades K-8. It all depends on how many student openings there are based on space, which at this time is not 245.

Both my wife and I are founders; she is the principal and I am the director. She has been providing support and education efforts to the school since 2013, resulting in an ‘A’ rating.

Mexicayotl is not a private school that charges tuition, but a public school that receives financial support from the State Department of Education, like other public schools in Nogales.

Our requirements and standards, therefore, are the same as those for every public school in this area. Additional funds come from state programs that value and support our academic accomplishments, where we are in the top 10% of the schools that serve low income students.

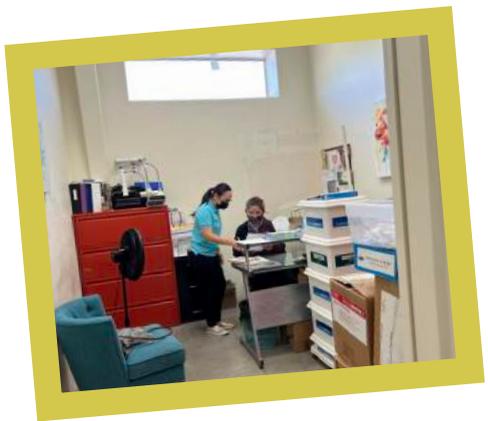
Whether you want your child to learn more at Mexicayotl even if they are doing well elsewhere, if you want your child to be challenged on a daily basis, or if you want your child to attend the top school in the region. By giving your school your state tax exemption when you file your taxes, you can help support the school’s activities.

Our school is the only one with a dual language model that values and reflects the culture of the region. Because the school has achieved academic success, this opportunity for educational excellence is not available in any other school in the state. Through our educational program, our students learn to become involved in their community. The ability to value one’s identity and culture allows one to value other cultures, which in turn enables us all to interact and work together for the common good. ‘Tequio’ or our way of observing the world and learning consists of these four words or ideas.

“Our success is based on our staff’s commitment to providing the highest quality education available in the county. In our experience, our dual language integration model can educate our youth to a highest level that opens doors for their individual and collective success,” said Garcia.



Mexicayotl Exemplifies Excellence in Education



Let's Talk Health

Preventing pre-diabetes and diabetes is the focus of November 2021's National Diabetes Month.

Prediabetes is a serious health condition where your blood sugar levels are higher than normal, but not high enough yet to be diagnosed as type 2 diabetes. According to the CDC, more than 1 in 3 U.S. adults have prediabetes—that's 88 million people—but the majority of people don't know they have it.

Type 2 diabetes, which is the most common type of diabetes occurs when your blood glucose, (blood sugar), is too high. Blood glucose is your main source of energy and comes mainly from the food you eat. Insulin, a hormone made by the pancreas, helps glucose get into your cells to be used for energy. In type 2 diabetes, your body doesn't make enough insulin or doesn't use insulin well. Too much glucose then stays in your blood, and not enough reaches your cells.

Type 2 diabetes can happen at any age, even during childhood. However, type 2 diabetes occurs most often in middle-aged and older people. You are more likely to develop type 2 diabetes if you are age 45 or older, have a family history of diabetes, or are overweight or obese. Diabetes is more common in people who are African American, Hispanic/Latino, American Indian, Asian American, or Pacific Islander. Physical inactivity and certain health problems such as high blood pressure affect your chances of developing type 2 diabetes. You are also more likely to develop type 2 diabetes if you have prediabetes or had gestational diabetes when you were pregnant.

Diabetes symptoms, which can develop slowly over many years, include:

- increased thirst and urination
- increased hunger
- feeling tired
- blurred vision
- numbness or tingling in the feet or hands
- sores that do not heal
- unexplained weight loss

The good news is that you can prevent getting type 2 diabetes by:

Losing weight if you are overweight and keeping it off. Just by losing 5 to 7 percent of your current weight you could prevent type 2 diabetes. Moving more.

Getting at least 30 minutes of physical activity, such as walking, at least 5 days a week. Start slowly and build up to your goal. Eating healthy foods. Eating smaller portions to reduce the number of calories you eat each day will help to lose weight. Choosing foods with less fat is another way to reduce calories. Drink water instead of sweetened beverages.

Mariposa Community Health Services Department at Mariposa Community Health Center offers free Diabetes Prevention Classes and Diabetes Management classes. For more information, please contact 520 375-6050.



Happy Thanksgiving



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"Thankfulness creates gratitude which ,Generates contentment, That causes peace!"



Saturday December 11, 2021 9 am-3 pm

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The Amado Chili Cook-off, a project of the Community Prevention Coalition and Amado Community Alliance of PPEP, Inc., is supported by Pima County Attractions & Tourism. Sponsorships, donations, and proceeds will directly support the Amado Youth Center Building Fund. **SPONSORSHIPS AND OTHER DONATIONS ARE TAX DEDUCTIBLE.**

Information: Tony Bruno, Event Coordinator (520) 310-7712

Ed Dunin-Wasowicz, Event Chair (520) 403-0414 Amy Bass, Fiscal Agent Representative (520) 205-4780



Registrations Now Open @ AmadoChiliCookoff.org

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Mayor's Corner



Hello my friends,

These past couple of months have been very busy and exciting for Nogales and its residents. We held many different types of events for the community.

We started the fun on Thursday, September 9th with the Nogales Night Out. This was a fun evening of crime prevention awareness, there was also an outdoor movie, many free giveaways, and free food. The many different local law enforcement agencies that participated enjoyed the fun activities and enjoyed providing educational materials to the children and parents alike.

On Saturday, September 11th we held a remembrance ceremony in honor of the 20th anniversary of September 11, 2001. It is very important to me that every year we remember to hold in our hearts those who lost their lives that day, including the many first responders, the citizen heroes and the innocent victims.

We honored our Mexican heritage on Saturday, September 18th with the Fiestas Patrias Celebration that took place in downtown Morley Avenue. We held live music with many different performers including mariachi, there was baile folklorico groups, food vendors, and along with the Mexican Consulate we held the traditional Grito de Independencia. I was very happy to see so many people there partaking in the celebration.

We ended the month of September with the State of the City Address at the VFW on Tuesday, September 28th. I provided a complete report on the many projects completed by the hard-working City of Nogales employees. I was especially excited to speak about the future goals and projects we are currently working on, including the dog park, Teyechea park renovations, and annexation to name a few. We are continuously working hard to ensure we do all we can to provide growth and opportunities for our residents.

I am looking forward to the many fun events planned for the rest of the year including Dia de Muertos event in late October, the Christmas Casitas in late November, and the Christmas Parade on Saturday, December 4th. If you are interested in decorating a Christmas Casita or are interested in participating in the Christmas parade please contact my office at 285.5602. Our theme for the Christmas Parade this year is "Together This Christmas." We chose this theme because we weren't able to be together with our friends and family last year, but thankfully it will be different this year. We hope everyone comes out to enjoy all the fun holiday events we are planning, so that we can all be together.

On another note, I would like to wish you all a joyous and peaceful Thanksgiving. We have a great deal to be thankful for. Let us care for, share, and give in the spirit of kindness. Stay safe and God bless.



Sheriff's Round-Up



The Sheriff and Command Staff were honored to participate in the Fallen Officer Memorial this past month held on Morley Avenue in downtown Nogales. Family members of fallen officers Jesus "Chuy" Cordova and Jeremy Brinton participated as well. County Attorney George Silva was the speaker and gave a very moving presentation recounting the service of fallen officers in the county. The Sheriff was happy to participate in the 100th anniversary celebration of his Alma Mater, "The Little Red School" on Duquesne Road where the school's long history was reviewed.

The Sheriff also attended an Open House for the Crossroads Mission Transitional Center for Women and Children in Nogales. We are happy that private community partners like Crossroads do so much to support the needs of the poor and downtrodden in our communities. This month, the lobby of the Sheriff's Office underwent a time-machine transformation with a mural giving the feel of an old-time sheriff's office. The effect was enhanced with the addition of the roll-top desk owned by Sheriff J.J. Lowe who was sheriff from 1939 to 1958. Come by and have a look! The Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office was glad to host this month a meeting of all the "Search and Rescue" groups from all counties in Arizona. It was a good opportunity to network and share strategies and capabilities.

Also, the Sheriff's Office recently kicked off training for a new class of volunteer deputies as part of our Law Enforcement Assist program. With the addition of these volunteers, our volunteer program will double in size. Sheriff Hathaway was also glad to host Arizona Secretary of State Katie Hobbs for a day involving a briefing on county issues and a tour of the border. This month, the Sheriff's Office was sad to see the retirement of Commander Raoul Rodriguez who dedicated 25 years of his life to the Sheriff's Office, but we are happy that he will be able to pursue new opportunities. We wish you all the best Commander!



Happy Thanksgiving

A message from the

Santa Cruz County Attorney

DON'T DRINK & DRIVE



Happy Thanksgiving

"REMEMBER, IF YOU DRINK, DON'T DRIVE"

"The more we express thanks, the more gratitude we feel. The more gratitude we feel, the more we express thanks. It's circular, and it leads to a happier life."

- Steve Goodier



You have the power!

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