

# NEWS FOR NEIGHBORS



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## NEIGHBORHOOD RESOURCES

### The US Census is Coming to Chandler



It's quick, it's easy and it's completely confidential. The US Census will be arriving in the mailbox of every house in Chandler and across the United States next spring.

This will be the shortest Census in history – only 10 questions per household, but it's probably the most important for Chandler. Our population has exploded since the last Census from about 175,000 people to more than 250,000. Since every resident counted in Chandler is expected to bring approximately \$4,000 in federal and state funds to our community over the next 10 years, this means an enormous amount of money to our community.

Information about individual households is strictly confidential. Population counts are used to define legislative and school district boundaries and to determine each state's Congressional representation. Census numbers are responsible for bringing projects right to your door such as neighborhood improvements, public safety, education and transportation. There is so much at stake that preparation is starting now to educate the public and maximize participation.

Look for information and updates on the web at [www.chandleraz.gov/census](http://www.chandleraz.gov/census).

### First Time Homebuyer's Program

The Community Development Division has collaborated with Newtown Community Development Corporation (NCDC), a Tempe non-profit community land trust to implement a *First-Time Home Buyer Program* made possible through a federal Neighborhood Stabilization Grant funded by the Department of U.S. Housing and Urban Development. The Neighborhood Stabilization Grant will be utilized to help first time home buyer's purchase foreclosed single-family homes located within the 85225 zip code area bounded by Elliot Road, Chandler Boulevard, Arizona Avenue and Alma School Road. The program aims at stabilizing the housing market especially in areas hardest hit by foreclosures.

First-time home buyers can buy a home at an affordable purchase price because the buyer only pays for the cost of the structure, not the land. The land is held in a community land trust administered by the NCDC.

The program will aim at purchasing as many as 17 vacant foreclosed properties and rehabilitating them for the home buyers. Homebuyers can work with the realtor of their choice and purchase the home of their choice as long as meets the criteria set forth by NCDC. .

Families earning between \$51,350 and \$77,050 are eligible to participate in the program. If the home buyer were ever to sell the home, they would share any accrued equity with NCDC and the land would remain in the community land trust to ensure the home remains affordable indefinitely. The program also includes homeowner education and counseling services.

For more information, contact the Community Development Division at 480-782-4320.

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## Pool & Water Awareness

Although swimming can be fun, drowning has become the leading cause of accidental childhood deaths in Arizona. It is important to be aware of your environment and keep an eye on your children when they are around water. Drowning is preventable. Here are some simple steps to help ensure that a water tragedy does not take place:

- Never leave a child unobserved around water. Designate a “Water Watcher” for those next to or in any type of water. Eye-to-Eye Supervision is the key to drowning prevention.
- Enclose your yard and pool with a self-closing, self-locking fence with vertical bars.
- Put self-closing, self-latching hardware on all doors leading from the house to the pool area.
- Keep furniture and toys away from the pool fence and trim trees inside and outside of the fence so that children cannot use them to climb into the pool area.
- Keep toys and pets away from the pool; they can cause a child to fall or slip in the water and can draw children to the pool area without proper supervision.
- Keep basic lifesaving equipment (a pole, rope, or life preserver) near pool.
- Install a phone by the pool or keep a cordless phone nearby when watching someone in the pool. For an emergency, call 9-1-1.
- Every caregiver should know CPR, Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation.
- Seconds count, a swimming pool, pond, lake, canal, bathtub, toilet or even a bucket of water can spell disaster for a child.

For more information on the City of Chandler’s pool requirements and water safety call Chandler Fire at (480) 782-2121 or visit the web site at [www.chandlerfire.org](http://www.chandlerfire.org).



## Does Your Landscape Have a Drinking Problem?



May through October is considered our summer season. Be sure that irrigation systems are working properly. Plants may look a little stressed this time of year as they transition to higher temperatures and lower humidity levels.

One of the most common reasons for plant failure here in the desert is incorrect watering. If you were watering your established plants once every two weeks in the spring, then increasing the frequency to a single watering once or twice a week should be adequate during the summer months. Too much water in the high temperatures and the humidity of the monsoon season can cause root and stem rotting. Soils must be allowed to dry a bit in-between irrigations for the best plant health. This could also reduce your water bill. That means money back in your pocket!

The key to success is to water deeply. Trees should be watered long enough to wet the top two to three feet of soil. For shrubs, wet the soil down 18 inches or so. For shallow-rooted turf, groundcovers, flowers and vegetables one foot deep wetting is sufficient. The recommended run time for drip systems is a *minimum* of 2 hours. Water early in the morning or after sunset to reduce evaporation.

### Bonus Tip:

Check your sprinklers after each mowing to be sure they are not broken or misdirected. A broken sprinkler head can lose up to 8 gallons of water a minute!

### Landscape Tip:

Citrus fruit drop is common from May to July where young fruit, (1" in diameter or smaller) fall from the tree due to a self-regulating mechanism.

There is no cause for concern unless excessive. Citrus require deep infrequent irrigation at the drip line avoid watering right next to the trunk. For other helpful gardening tips for June, visit the U of A Cooperative Extension site at <http://cals.arizona.edu/maricopa/garden/html/t-tips/june.htm>.

Save 30 to 50 percent on your water bill by adjusting your irrigation each season. “Landscape Watering by the Numbers: A Guide for the Arizona Desert” will help you determine how much water to apply and how long to run your system.

If you would like a free home water audit or a free copy of the “Landscape Watering by the Numbers: A Guide for the Arizona Desert” booklet, please call Water Conservation at 480-782-3580 or visit [www.chandleraz.gov/water](http://www.chandleraz.gov/water) for workshops, landscaping tips, rebates, and frequently asked questions.

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## Sign Enforcement



On Saturday, April 18, 2009, Code Inspectors tagged 280 bandit-type signs in the rights-of-way. Tags were placed over key information on the signs making them ineffective. The tags identified the bandit signs as being a sign violation and gave a notice for removal.

On Thursday, April 23, 2009, Code Inspectors removed all bandit signs that had not been voluntarily removed. Unfortunately, only approximately 20% of the signs had been removed voluntarily; therefore, Code Inspectors removed and recycled the remaining signs. The education efforts lessened the placement of illegal bandit signs compared to recent prior weekends. In areas where notifications have been placed and signs have been removed, the appearance of bandit signs have lessened.

The media has expressed great interest in the new enforcement approach and the reaction of the community has been positive. There have been no complaints from owners of signs that were tagged and/or removed. One sign company called the Code Enforcement office requesting more information regarding the bandit sign enforcement in the City of Chandler to inform its customers. No amount of effort will totally stop the illegal placing of bandit signs. Code Enforcement believes, that the current plan to tag and remove these bandit signs on an on-going basis will greatly lesson their numbers.

Code Enforcement plans to continue with an incremental plan to decrease the number of illegally placed signs on sidewalks, upon rights-of-ways, and in the landscape areas adjoining major roadways. The next step will be to educate homebuilders regarding illegally placed bandit directional signs. Once the educational process is complete, bandit directional signs will also be tagged and removed.

For more information on bandit sign education and removal, please contact Code Enforcement at 480-782-4320 or visit us on the web at [www.chandleraz.gov/code](http://www.chandleraz.gov/code).

## Stray / Feral Cats



As stray and feral cats continue to be a growing problem for many Chandler residents, it is beneficial for communities to work together in addressing the problem.

As Chandler residents, if you feed stray and feral cats, you should also take responsibility to spay and neuter them. This is beneficial for their health and it also helps in reducing their numbers.

There are different programs that a resident can turn to in the community for assistance that is easy and affordable. Maricopa County offers information on several organizations that offer assistance with stray and feral cats and TNR (Trap, Neuter, and Return).

To learn more about stray/feral cats and different organizations that assist with TNR, visit: <http://www.maricopa.gov/Pets/FieldEnforcement/FeralCats.aspx>.

## Maddie's Project

Maddie's Pet Rescue Project is the largest funded project of Maddie's Fund. Maddie's Pet Rescue Project is a collaboration of ten leading animal welfare organizations in Maricopa County and Maddie's Spay/Neuter Project, a coalition of more than 21 veterinarians and clinics who provide low-cost spay/neuter to AHCCCS recipients and pit bull owners in the Valley. Together these efforts strive to increase adoptions, decrease euthanasia and increase spay/neuter.

Maddie's Projects is an innovative and forward-thinking fifteen-year endeavor with an ambitious goal by the end of October 2017, Maricopa County will be a community in which every healthy and treatable dog and cat in our animal shelters will be adopted into a new and loving home.

On November 12, 2007 Maddie's Pet Rescue Partners joined together with PETCO Foundation and opened Maddie's Projects Adoption Center in Gilbert.

Maddie's Projects Adoption Center has been designed as a model for collaborative, community partnerships in shelter animal adoptions. The Adoption Center provides much needed extra adoption space for our Partners, opening up kennel space in their facilities and foster homes for more animals needing preparation for adoption.

To learn more about Maddie's Project visit: [www.commonpaws.org](http://www.commonpaws.org)



## VITA Helps Claim \$1 Million In Tax Refund



Chandler's Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program helped nearly 700 low and moderate-income families claim over \$1 million in refunds this tax season, a 68 percent increase over last year's total.

The City's Neighborhood Resources Division worked with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) to train volunteers and establish two free tax preparation sites that returned \$1,023,104 in refunds to 695 working families.

The results were achieved thanks to 45 volunteers who provided over 1,600 hours of free tax preparation services. The effort included contributions in volunteer services and facilities by the First Credit Union and Community Services of Arizona.

The refund total included \$318,385 in Earned Income Tax Credits (EITC), a credit that IRS research indicates one in four eligible taxpayers fail to claim each year.

The opportunity to help families claim the EITC refund prompted the City in 2005 to begin offering free tax preparation services to struggling families.

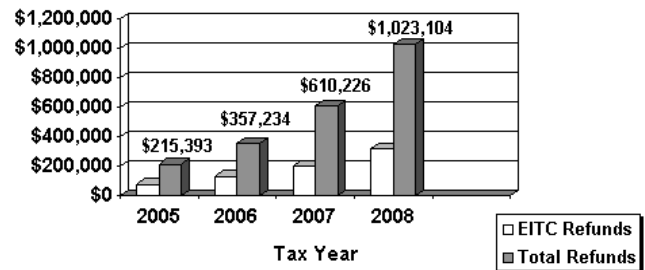
Taxpayers failing to claim the EITC credit typically include

people who have earned income but may not have a filing requirement, non-English speakers, non-traditional families, the homeless, childless workers and rural residents. For the 2008 tax year, the maximum credit was \$4,824 for a family with two or more children, \$2,917 for a family with one child, and \$438 for a childless taxpayer.

Chandler's free tax preparation service began in February and ended April 11 at two centrally located downtown Chandler VITA site locations.

If you would like more information on the VITA Program or you are if are interested in volunteering, contact Community Development at 480-782-4348.

**REFUND TOTALS (2005-2008)**



## Attorney General's Satellite Office



Beginning June 1, 2009 the Attorney General's (AG) satellite office in Chandler will expand its hours and move into the offices of City of Chandler Neighborhood Resources located at 55 North Arizona Place, Suite 310. The AG's satellite office provides Chandler residents with information on consumer fraud, elder abuse, identity theft, victim's rights, and other community concerns.

The AG's satellite office had been operating one day a week out of the City of Chandler's Community Center. The new accommodations will enable the satellite office to assist customers five days a week between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. Customers can get answers to questions or obtain educational materials and assistance when filing complaints. Appointments can also be scheduled by calling 480-782-4320.

The AG's office has 37 satellite offices throughout Arizona. Locations and hours can be found by visiting the AG's web site at [www.azag.gov](http://www.azag.gov) or by contacting the AG's Community Services Program at 602-542-2123.

