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Yavapai County Supervisors OK $12.6M in first contract for broadband improvements

By CINDY BARKS
The Daily Courier

The first round of broadband improvements in Yavapai County using American Rescue Plan Act funding got the go-ahead from the Yavapai County Board of Supervisors this week.

In a unanimous vote in Cottonwood on Wednesday, March 16, the supervisors approved a $12.6 million contract with CSC Holdings, LLC (the holding company for Altice USA, Inc.) for the construction of broadband infrastructure and the provision of broadband services to unserved and underserved areas.

Altice was one of three companies to submit proposals for the project. Other proposals came in from Sparklight and Cox, according to county officials.

The vote to approve the contract with CSC Holdings came after the supervisors first took the matter into a closed-door executive session for discussion. When they returned to public session after the executive session, the supervisors approved the contract with no additional public discussion.

According to a county memo, the communities benefiting from the contract would be:

- Rimrock area, including Lake Montezuma and Beaver Creek
- Cornville
- Mayer area, including Spring Valley and Cordes Lakes
- Paulden

The $12.6 million is a portion of the $20 million that the supervisors had earlier set aside for broadband (high-speed internet) improvements in unserved or underserved areas.

And the $20 million was a portion of the $45.7 million that the county is receiving through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA).

The county went out for bids for the broadband improvements in late 2021, and the bids were received in December. The results were then reviewed by a county RFP review committee, and the committee recommended the partial award of the allocated ARPA funds to CSC Holdings.

The county memo added that one or more additional contracts for broadband infrastructure using the ARPA money may be presented to the board at a later date.

The construction contract is expected to run through Dec. 31, 2024, County Administrator Phil Bourdon said.

Follow Cindy Barks on Twitter @Cindy_Barks. Reach her at 928-445-3333, ext. 2034, or cbarks@prescottaz.com.

Sparklight, an internet and cable TV provider for the Quad Cities, operates out of its offices at 3201 Tower Road in Prescott. (Doug Cook/Courier, File)

Bright day at Granite Basin Lake

A bright sunny day at Granite Basin Lake in the Prescott National Forest as the water reflects the sky, clouds and foliage. Temperatures are expected to increase heading into the weekend before taking a dip back into the 50s come Sunday. See forecast on page 2. (Karen Shaw/Courtesy)

50th Anniversary

Prescott-Caborca Sister City relationship celebrates half-century mark in 2022

By CINDY BARKS
The Daily Courier

ABOVE: In a recent meeting at Yavapai College, Prescott Mayor Phil Goode, right, meets up with Mexican Consul General in Phoenix, Jorge Mendoza Yescas, left, a native of Caborca, to commemorate the Prescott-Caborca Sister City relationship. (Susan Jones/Courtesy)

Fifty years is a long time for any friendship, and for one that spans an international border, generations of members, and a worldwide pandemic, the half-century mark is especially noteworthy.

With five decades of goodwill now behind it, the Prescott-Caborca, Mexico Sister City partnership is celebrating its landmark 50th anniversary in 2022 with a celebration that will include a range of events on both sides of the U.S./Mexico border.

Back in 1972, the City of Prescott entered a Sister City relationship with Caborca, Sonora, Mexico — a historic and similarly sized community about 330 miles to the south.

The 2022 events will mark both the 50th anniversary and the return to international exchanges after a hiatus of about two years because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

REGULAR EXCHANGES

Over the past five decades, hundreds of residents from both communities have made trips across the border to take in cultural events important to their municipal siblings.

For instance, residents from Caborca have often traveled to Prescott for the popular downtown Christmas season event, the Acker Musical Showcase, as well as for the July 4 Frontier Days events.

*See **SISTER,** page 5*

Special session looms to replace significant Arizona tax cuts

By HOWARD FISCHER
For the Courier

Arizona House Majority Leader Ben Toma, R-Peoria, right, watches the voting board along with Rep. Jeff Weninger, R-Chandler, during a vote on the Arizona budget Thursday, June 24, 2021, in Phoenix. (Ross D. Franklin/AP,File)

PHOENIX — Key Republican lawmakers and Gov. Doug Ducey plan to call a special legislative session to formulate an alternative to the $1.9 billion tax cut that has been blocked by a voter referendum.

That alternative would be an even bigger tax cut and take effect even sooner than previously planned.

The goal, however, is the same: A flat tax rate. And that means the most wealthy, by virtue of paying the highest taxes, would get the biggest relief.

But in order to enact a new plan, legislators would first need to repeal the 2021 measure.

That's the one that foes managed to collect to collect more than 215,000 signatures last year to hold up enactment until this November's election, when voters would get to decide whether to ratify or reject the plan.

If lawmakers repeal that 2021 measure, however, there is nothing left to send to the ballot for voters to consider — even if it is replaced with a similar proposal.

David Lujan, a key player in referring last year's measure to voters, said the whole reason for the plan to repeal the 2021 plan, kill

*See **TAX CUTS,** page 5*

Today's Weather

High 62° | Low 34°

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