

# These stories & more inside



## Tempe Salutes

High school seniors honored for their upcoming service in the military. **Page 30.**



## Intel Water Deal

Chandler, Intel water pact could save ratepayers \$100 million. **Page 3.**



**Feliz de Mayo** Traditional Mexican holiday was a cause for celebration at this popular Tempe dining spot. **Page 8.**



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# WRANGLER NEWS

## Eye on the future

As MCC and other community colleges prepare to offer four-year degrees to qualifying young people, student John Gomez envisions new career and life possibilities. How this will be good news for prospective thousands. **Page 3.**



*Wrangler News photo  
by Joyce Coronel*



## Chandler/Intel pact to preserve city's water resources as drought lingers

By Joyce Coronel  
wranglernews.com

Chandler has entered into a new agreement with Intel for the construction of a reclaimed water interconnect facility. The agreement is critical because it saves and reuses water—a precious commodity in the desert.

With 12,000 employees, Intel is the city's largest employer.

"It's a win for Chandler, it's a win for Intel and it's a win for us," said Chandler City Councilmember Matt Orlando. "We won't waste water and it's a great way of reutilizing our

natural resource."

City officials say the partnership with Intel is designed to optimize the use of the city's water resource. Matt Burdick, Chandler's communications and public affairs director, boiled down the essentials of the agreement:

"Currently, the city and Intel execute an annual reclaimed water agreement to meet Intel's yearly projected needs. This agreement was only possible as long as the city had adequate reclaimed water volumes to fill Intel's request while still meeting our other obligations," Burdick said.

"This new agreement with Intel for the Reclaimed Water Interconnect Facility allows for additional water resources to be treated and delivered through our reclaimed water system to meet their future industrial cooling water needs long term. "

Key to the agreement is a construction project which is slated to begin in the fall when design is complete.

John Knudson, director of public works and utilities for Chandler, spoke with Wrangler News about the agreement between the city and Intel as

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*What you need to know*

## 4-year degrees coming to MCC, other colleges

By Lee Shappell  
wranglernews.com

Who really will benefit when Arizona's community colleges begin offering four-year degrees in a couple of years after Gov. Doug Ducey signed Senate Bill 1453 into law on May 4?

"It really depends on what your field of study is," said Lori Berquam, president of Mesa Community College. "We're never going to offer engineering as a four-year degree. We're never going to offer chemistry. We're going to be limited.

"And, you can always start here and then transfer into those fields and get those first two years at a much less."

The new four-year degree program will not be as radical as it might appear. The number of degrees and the number of majors offered by a community college will be strictly limited, especially in Maricopa and Pima Counties, where community colleges will be permitted to award baccalaureate degrees to no more than 5 percent of the total number of degrees during the first four years of the program, and then to no more than 10 percent thereafter.

Which bachelors programs they offer will be determined by market and community needs, among other criteria.

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## A community in grief

*Friends, residents share final thoughts on fallen officer*



A young boy lays flowers for fallen officer Christopher Farrar. —Wrangler News photo by Joyce Coronel

By Joyce Coronel  
wranglernews.com

In the glare of the harsh morning sunlight, they came, one by one, to silently pay their respects to a Chandler police officer killed in the line of duty April 29.

Chandler Police Officer Christopher Farrar, 50, was struck and killed by the driver of a stolen vehicle who was fleeing law enforcement. From shooting at Pinal County Sheriff's officers to driving on the wrong side of the freeway and crashing

through a gate at the Chandler Regional Airport then tearing through a car dealership, it was a wild night that ended in tragedy.

Within hours, a growing makeshift memorial sprang up in the plaza in front of the downtown Chandler Police Department headquarters, where two life-size statues representing law enforcement officers have long been displayed near the entrance. Chandler residents began piling

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# Degrees

From Page 3

In Arizona's 2018 high school graduating class, roughly half of students went on to higher education, and about a quarter of them into a four-year university. Those are low numbers in a growing state with increasing demands in certain fields.

"For example, you can't find a substitute teacher right now," Berquam said. "There is a huge demand for teachers. The half that doesn't go to (four-year) college, how are they going to have sustainable jobs throughout their lives?"



MCC President Lori Berquam says the plan to offer four-year degrees at the school will be aimed at filling gaps in the workforce. — Photo courtesy Mesa Community College

college for two years, get an associate degree and then move directly into the workforce without transferring to a university and completing a four-year degree.

"Many of our students, and especially students of color and low income, have said that they can't afford to go to one of our universities and get a degree," Berquam said. "I don't think we're taking anything from the universities. I hope not. We're good partners with them. We consider them to be amazing collaborators."

"What we want to do is address some of those high workforce needs. We can do that on our campuses for about \$127 a credit, which is significantly less than at our universities."

Where Arizona State might charge roughly \$12,000 a year in tuition, the community colleges will do it for about \$3,000 a year.

Among fields likely to be offered for four-year degrees at community colleges are health care, information technology, police and fire science, and education, where there are workplace shortages of qualified candidates.

Berquam and Greg Peterson, president of Chandler-Gilbert Community College, agreed that

added expenses associated with research coupled with consistently shrinking funding from the state have caused universities to consistently raise their tuition.

Community colleges do not have research expenses and they receive funding from property taxes, allowing them to offer education at a much lower price.

"In those spaces where there is a shortage in the workforce, if we can find ways to decrease costs for that teacher, for example, then hopefully we'll increase the number of students that are selecting that career," Peterson said. "They'll be better able to access it."

"We're very excited that we have this opportunity. I think it's our opportunity to demonstrate the great work that community colleges can do. I definitely think cost is going to be of benefit for students."

That's touchy. The community colleges are mindful of not ruffling the feathers of Arizona State, Arizona and Northern Arizona, with whom they've been strong longtime partners in education. The community colleges have been, and plan to remain, a strong feeder system to the universities.

**"What we want to do is address some of those high workforce needs. We can do that on our campuses for about \$127 a credit, which is significantly less than at our universities."**

MCC President  
Lori Berquam

"What I can tell you is we're going to pay attention to our workforce. What does the community need? We are excited for our students to be able to give them an opportunity to get a four-year degree with very little cost and make it more obtainable for more of them."

High on the list of those who will benefit are marginalized students, especially low-income and minority students, who currently might go to community

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## Degrees

From Page 15

The Arizona Board of Regents and the state universities were not crazy about the bill. Berquam and Peterson agree that four-year degrees at their colleges will augment but not compete with Arizona State.

In the East Valley, there are many manufacturing and high-tech companies -- Boeing, Apple and Amazon in Mesa; in Chandler, the Price Corridor is filled with high-tech firms needing trained employees, especially at computer-chip giant Intel, which has committed billions of dollars to build two more chip plants.

"I feel like the 4-year degree is actually helpful for people who don't have that much income," said John Gomez, a freshman at MCC who is a member of the track and field team. "It's a good money-saver for families who choose to come here and not go to the big universities. You can kind of have a humble education and focus on yourself and your family and what you choose to do for your job."

Peterson was in California when that state approved a community-college four-year degree plan similar to Arizona's. The partnership among the California and California State university systems with the community colleges has proven to be successful. Those entities coexist more or less peacefully, providing access to higher education for more students, in turn putting more employees into the workforce and boosting the economy.

"It was a rigorous process and, as we know, California is highly regulated," Peterson said. "They wanted to make sure there wasn't competition there. There are similarities."

Arizona's universities may offer input into community college four-year degrees but they may not veto a proposed offering.

"We'll try to be mindful of how we're using our resources so we're not duplicating in spaces that are not beneficial for our communities," Peterson said. "California found success in their program. I think that Arizona is going to find the same thing by creating more opportunities for our students, especially in niche programs where there is great demand."

Peterson anticipates that the 10 Valley institutions in the Maricopa County Community College District will huddle to assess student demands and industry demands in their areas as they discuss potential offerings, and likely partner regionally on offerings so they are more different than they are alike.

Berquam points out that there then will be accreditation and licensure processes before the four-year programs are approved for roll out, likely for fall 2023.

"We don't want to overproduce a student with a skill set and then not have a position for them in the workforce," Peterson said. "For example, Gateway Community College has respiratory therapy program that is in demand in hospitals. We currently don't offer that as a four-year degree in Arizona. I imagine that would be one of the first degrees that we'd be looking at."

## Students will get desks through efforts by area man, Freeway Chevrolet

Freeway Chevrolet is teaming up with an area man to provide desks to students in need.

Steve Weinberg began building desks for needy students when the COVID-19 pandemic led to school closures.

Many students, he learned, didn't have a work station at home to do schoolwork.

Freeway Chevrolet, 1150 N. 54th Street, Chandler, will host Weinberg for a desk giveaway at 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, May 18. The event will feature 25 of Weinberg's desks being presented to representatives of the Roosevelt Elementary School District.

The public is welcome to attend.

Information: Desksforkidscharity.com

# LA CASA DE JUANA



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