

DATE: April 4, 2025
TO: Mayor and City Council Members
FROM: Tom Whitmer, Acting City Manager
SUBJECT: Bi-Weekly Management Report



[Police Department](#)

Cottonwood Police Department Supports Bowl for Kids' Sake

Over the weekend, members of the Cottonwood Police Department participated in the 2025 Bowl for Kids' Sake event, supporting Big Brothers Big Sisters of Yavapai County. With the generous help of Cottonwood Law Enforcement Heroes, our team raised just over \$1,000 for this incredible cause. Want to support this life-changing program? Donate today: [Home - Yavapai Big Brothers Big Sisters - Youth Mentoring](#).



Congratulations to Officer Autumn Durnez

The City of Cottonwood's Animal Control Officer Autumn Durnez has been awarded the "Arizona Animal Control Officer of 2024" at the 2025 Arizona Animal Control Association (AZACA) Conference on March 27, 2025.

This prestigious award, voted on by AZACA members, recognizes outstanding dedication and performance in the field of animal control. Officer Durnez was one of 10 nominees, nominated by fellow Animal Control Officer Randy Damron of the Safford Police Department, for her unwavering commitment to the profession and AZACA. With over 14 years of service to the City of Cottonwood and a lifetime membership in AZACA, Officer Durnez has been a driving force in the field. For the past three years, she has served on AZACA's Board of Directors, working alongside animal control officers from across Arizona.

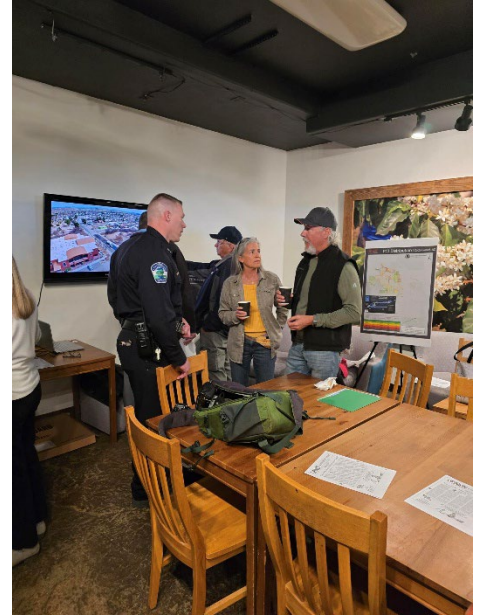
This year's AZACA conference brought together over 80 attendees from approximately 40 agencies, highlighting the dedication of professionals like Officer Durnez in ensuring the safety and well-being of animals and the communities they serve.



Administration

Coffee With Council

The City of Cottonwood hosted its first Coffee With Council event on Thursday, April 3, 2025, at Firecreek Coffee Co. The occasion was well-attended by the public, who enjoyed coffee and pastries while engaging in meaningful discussions about the future of the City's roads and infrastructure with our City Council, Public Works Director David Hausaman, Senior Engineer James Bramble, Public Works Project Manager Jennifer Somit, and Acting City Manager Tom Whitmer.



Grant Coordinating Team

Congratulations to our Grant Coordination Team for receiving a recommendation from the Water Infrastructure Finance Authority (WIFA) Water Supply Development Fund Committee to the Board of Directors to approve a \$546,790 award for the Mingus Avenue Wastewater Treatment Plant Injection Well. It will now proceed to the next phase for final approval by the Board on April 16, 2025. This funding will have a significant impact, and we appreciate the time and commitment that Debbie Breitreutz, Ryan Bigelow, Tom Whitmer, and Heather Rowe put into making this a success.

State Grants-in-Aid Construction Funding

We want to congratulate our Library team on winning a State Grants-in-Aid Construction funding award of \$25,500.00 to replace the existing automatic doors at the Library. This project helps us achieve one of our library's strategic goals: "Create an Inviting Space for Everyone." Our library has a longstanding mission to improve our patrons' experience continually. Accessibility improvements, such as ADA doors, create a more welcoming space for everyone. Our library serves to enrich the lives of all our community members, including the elderly and individuals with special needs. We believe that the installation of these new doors will have a positive impact on both existing and new patrons.

Human Resources

City Manager Finalists

The City of Cottonwood engaged in the services of the Duffy Group to recruit for their next City Manager in November. Since the departure of its last City Manager, the City has been operating under an Acting City Manager, Tom Whitmer, since February 2024. There were 158 candidates considered for the position, which have been narrowed down to three top finalists. The top finalists have been invited to interview with the City in early May. Finalists will have the opportunity to tour the community with the Mayor, introduce themselves to the public, meet with the City's leadership team, and interview with the City Council.

The top three finalists are Ken Bennett, a former Arizona Senator; Mario Cifuentez, current City Manager for the City of Hanford, California; and Darren Coldwell, current City Manager for the City of Page, Arizona.

Bennett is a former Arizona Senator and Arizona's 18th Secretary of State. He has experience in both the private sector and public service in various capacities over the past 40 years. Bennett has strong skills in policy and procedure development, communication, community relations, and servant leadership.

Cifuentez has been the City Manager for the City of Hanford, CA, since 2019. He has almost 40 years of experience working in local government and is passionate about government transparency within the community. Cifuentez has strong skills in full-service City leadership, strategic planning, staff development, community outreach and engagement, team building, and transparent communication.

Coldwell has served as the City Manager of the City of Page, AZ, since 2019. He has experience in both the private and public sectors, with almost 13 years of experience in local government. Coldwell has strong skills in full-service City leadership, strategic planning, collaboration, and community engagement.

The City of Cottonwood operates under the council-manager form of government. Cottonwood's City Council serves as the community's governing body, providing policy direction through the appointment of a City Manager and enacting ordinances and policies. The City Manager serves as the chief administrative officer and is responsible for overseeing the City's daily operations. The City Manager works collaboratively with key staff members to implement policies set forth by the City Council and provides organizational leadership for department directors and employees.

Utilities

Rural Water Infrastructure Committee

Assistant Director of Utilities Debbie Breitreutz was invited to present at the Rural Water Infrastructure Committee (RWIC) roundtable on Tuesday, March 11, 2025. The RWIC is a partnership of various federal and state agencies, as well as non-profit organizations, that provides loans, grants, and technical assistance to Arizona's rural communities. Notable participants included representatives from 13 different agencies, such as the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality, the Water Infrastructure Finance Authority, the Greater Arizona Development Authority, the Arizona Department of Water Resources, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the Bureau of Reclamation.

With the support of the Strategic Initiatives Department, Debbie advocated for critical water infrastructure funding to repair and replace the aging systems at our Mingus Wastewater Treatment Plant. The proposed improvements aim to enhance efficiency, ensure regulatory compliance, and support the growing water needs of our community. Committee members were able to share their expert advice on financing this project so that Cottonwood can modernize its infrastructure, protect the environment, and provide long-term, sustainable water solutions for all its residents

Parks, Recreation, Library

Parks & Rec at Clarkdale

On Saturday, March 29, 2025, our City's trails coordinator, Robert Gonzales, attended the Clarkdale Plant Sale and Garden Festival to represent the Parks & Recreation Department. With hundreds of attendees, Robert was able to share information regarding our trails system, community garden, and much more



Outdoor Courts Reopen After Resurfacing Project

The Parks & Recreation Department is pleased to announce that the outdoor courts at the Cottonwood Recreation Center are now open to the public following the successful completion of the resurfacing project. This project enhances the quality and longevity of the courts, encompassing resurfacing, painting, and ensuring that we provide the best playing conditions for all users. The newly refreshed courts provide a smoother and safer experience for all. We appreciate your patience during the temporary closure and are happy to welcome you back.



TVR is at Arizona Bike Week

The Parks & Recreation Department is attending Arizona Bike Week to begin promoting the 2025 Thunder Valley Rally. We have announced the main headliner will be Puddle of Mudd, who will be performing on Saturday night at TVR. More information will be shared in the coming months. Please visit thundervallerrallyaz.com or follow TVR on Facebook and Instagram for the latest updates.



Cottonwood's Vintage Run

Registration for the Cottonwood's Vintage Run is currently open. Join the Half-Marathon, 10K, untimed 5K, or 2-mile race happening on Saturday, April 12th! Visit runcottonwood.com today to learn more!



Love Cottonwood

The City of Cottonwood is proud to support Love Cottonwood, a program of Project Rising Hope. Please save the date of April 26, 2025, to spend some time participating in volunteer projects that help us love Cottonwood! Additional information will be posted soon at lovecottonwood.com.



Parents Night Off

Hey parents! Are you ready for a night out on Friday, April 18, 2025? Look no further! Let us care for your little ones from 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. while you enjoy a night on the town. Your child will have fun with games, activities, and making new friends. Our experienced staff will lead them in fun arts and crafts activities, and they'll enjoy pizza and a movie. Don't miss out on this opportunity to give yourself the break you deserve while your child has a blast with us. Reserve your child's spot soon, as space is limited. Sign up at <https://secure.recl.com/AZ/cottonwood-az/catalog>.



Annual Easter Eggstravaganza

The Annual Easter Eggstravaganza returns at Riverfront Park on Saturday, April 19, 2025. This free event is a community favorite, and we look forward to having a safe, family-friendly, and fun-filled time with you all. Kids up to 8 years old are welcome to participate. The egg hunts begin at 10:00 a.m. sharp, so get there early to pick out a good spot.



Tourism & Economic Development

Visit Cottonwood Newsletter

The latest issue of the Visit Cottonwood Newsletter was distributed on April 1, 2025, by the Tourism & Economic Development Department. Subscribers to the Visit Cottonwood Newsletter can expect information on upcoming events, sales & specials, and local alerts & updates. To read the newsletter or to subscribe to receive future issues, please visit the website, [Visit Cottonwood Newsletter](#).

Community Development

Title 15 Revisions

On April 1, 2025, the City Council directed staff to proceed with revisions to Title 15, Building and Construction, of the Municipal Code by adopting the 2024 International Codes with amendments and revising the Building Valuation Data.

Resolution Number 3336

On April 1, 2025, the City Council approved adopting a Notice of Intent to establish 2024 International Code Council (ICC) fees for the Community Development and Fire Departments.

Resolution Number 3335 – General Plan Amendments

On March 27, 2025, the City Council approved Resolution 3335, which made minor amendments to the General Plan regarding land use designations, arterial corridors, infill and revitalization areas, shared-use paths, and text corrections.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out.

Thank you.

Tom Whitmer
Acting City Manager