

DATE: July 25, 2025
TO: Mayor and City Council Members
FROM: Tom Whitmer, Acting City Manager
SUBJECT: Bi-Weekly Management Report



Police Department

Citizen Police Advisory Board Meeting

The Cottonwood Police Department began its first Citizen Police Advisory Board Meeting. In recent months, the department solicited local community members to sit on its inaugural City Police Advisory Board. The citizen board members provide a direct link to the Police Department leadership to assist in providing policy, decision-making, and strategic planning recommendations. The board consists of residents, faith-based leaders, business owners, and other professionals who have volunteered to assist in this endeavor. "It's an overarching goal to provide access, transparency, and seek alternative input to police operations to determine what we do, how, and why, a key component in successful police organizations, said Cottonwood Police Chief Brian Freudenthal."

Cottonwood Police Department Participates in Tabletop Exercise

On July 14, 2025, representatives from the Cottonwood Police Department participated in a tabletop exercise with the Cottonwood Oak-Creek School District to work through mock scenarios. The scenario-based training aims to identify roles, responsibilities, and capabilities in an emergency situation. These training events are critical to successful outcomes and underscore the importance of pre-planning and contingency operations so that all involved stakeholders are aligned on expectations. The Police Department conducted a similar exercise with Mingus Union High School last fall. This opportunity aligns with the Department's Strategic Direction to "Strengthen Relationships."

Cottonwood Police Department Granted Certificate of Waiver

On Friday, July 18, 2025, the City of Cottonwood, Cottonwood Police Department, was granted a Certificate of Waiver/Authorization from the Federal Aviation Administration to augment its existing small unmanned aerial system (sUAS) program to enhance public safety. Over the past several years, sUAS, also known as public safety drones, have significantly enhanced public safety efforts to assist in tactical, wildland fire, and search and rescue operations. This waiver will permit sUAS operations below 200 feet AGL while respecting other aircraft with ADS-B signals. Special thanks to Airport Manager, Rodney Propst, for his insight and technical expertise.

Back The Blue

On Wednesday, July 30, 2025, the Law Enforcement Heroes Fundraiser will host the "Back the Blue" event at BV's Italian Kitchen in the Lux Verde Hotel, located at 301 AZ-89A. Join us from 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. to enjoy delicious Italian cuisine while supporting our local law enforcement officers. A portion of the proceeds will benefit the Law Enforcement Heroes Fund, providing essential resources for officers and their families. Whether you dine in or choose takeout, your participation will make a difference. Come together with us to show appreciation for those who protect our community!



Cottonwood Police Locate and Safely Recover Child Listed in Arizona's First-Ever "Turquoise Alert"

On Wednesday, July 23, 2025, at approximately 7:00 p.m., the Arizona Department of Public Safety issued the state's first-ever Turquoise Alert after a 6-year-old girl was taken from Hawaii by her non-custodial parent, Sarah Coultas. At approximately 11:30 p.m., the FBI contacted the Cottonwood Police Department with credible information suggesting the mother and child may be in the Cottonwood area. Officers quickly began developing leads and narrowed down a potential location—an effort that would not have been possible without the issuance of the Turquoise Alert.

By approximately 1:00 a.m. on July 24, 2025, Cottonwood officers successfully located the pair at a local women's shelter. Sarah Coultas was arrested without incident on a nationwide felony warrant out of Hawaii related to a custodial interference investigation. The child was found safe, asleep, and undisturbed. She remained in the care of shelter staff and officers until the Arizona Department of Child Safety (DCS) arrived and assumed custody.

The Cottonwood Police Department extends sincere appreciation to the FBI, the Arizona Department of Public Safety, and the shelter staff for their outstanding teamwork and coordination in bringing this case to a swift and safe resolution.

About the Turquoise Alert System

The Turquoise Alert System is a new public safety initiative established in 2025 under "Emily's Law", passed by the Arizona State Legislature. It was created to assist law enforcement in the safe recovery of missing and endangered individuals under the age of 65 who are believed to be in danger under suspicious or unexplained circumstances.

Criteria for a Turquoise Alert include:

- The missing person is under the age of 65.
- The missing person is not a runaway.
- Law enforcement has exhausted all available investigative resources.
- The individual is believed to be in danger or is in the company of a potentially dangerous person.
- Sufficient descriptive information is available to assist in their recovery.

The system is named in honor of Emily Pike, a 14-year-old from Mesa who was reported missing in early 2025 and tragically found deceased near Globe. Her death was ruled a homicide, and the investigation remains ongoing.



Fire Department

The Cottonwood Fire Department completed another successful annual Vacation Fire School event at the Cottonwood Public Safety Building on Wednesday, July 16, 2025, and Thursday, July 17, 2025. Once again, several different departments and agencies taught this year's program. We had assistance from the Cottonwood Police Department, Cottonwood Communications Dispatch Center, Parks & Recreation Department, and the Verde Valley Ambulance Company. Below is a summary of some of the topics and demonstrations taught by City staff.

- CPR
- EMS Triage
- First Aid
- Eddie Eagle Gun Safety
- Crawl Low in Smoke
- Police K-9
- SWAT
- Pool Safety and Rescue Swim
- Firefighter Tools & Equipment
- Dispatch & Communications
- Exit Drills In The Home {E.D.I.T.H}
- Bucket Brigade
- Station Tour
- Fire Safety Training

This two-day program continues to be very popular within the community, and it can't be successful without the excellent support and participation from all the agencies willing to impact these students positively.



Public Works

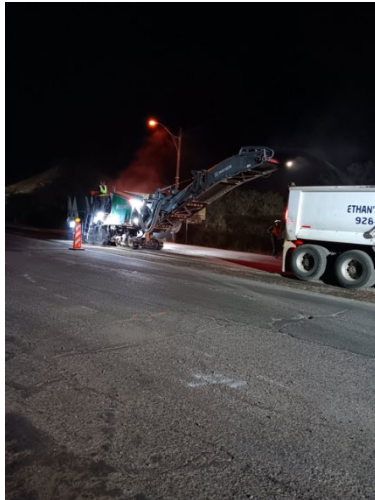
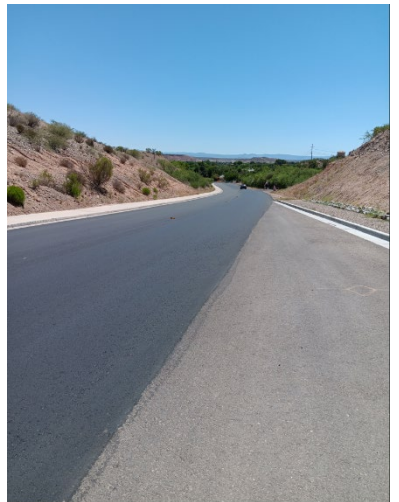
Main Street Improvements Project

Combs Construction Co. has made significant progress on the Main Street Improvements Project during the past two weeks. Between Sunday, July 13, 2025, and Saturday, July 19, 2025, the contractor completed work on asphalt removal, roadway excavation, subgrade preparation, and paving on Main Street between Cactus Street and the north city limits just north of the Gray Fox Ridge subdivision. In addition to completing this roadway segment, the contractor lowered all utilities between the north City limits and 10th Street in preparation for roadway construction activities.

On Sunday, July 20, 2025, the contractor started work on the segment of Main Street between Cactus Street and Willard Street. Work completed includes asphalt removal, roadway excavation, and subgrade preparation. Paving is scheduled to start the evening of Thursday, July 24, 2025. The contractor will complete paving on Main Street between Cactus Street and Willard Street, including Balboa Street, by Sunday, July 27, 2025.

On Tuesday, July 29, 2025, the contractor also completed removing the top 3" of asphalt between Willard Street and 10th Street.

The contractor is currently a week ahead of schedule. No work will be performed the week of July 28, 2025. Work on the final segment of Main Street between Willard Street and 10th Street will resume on Monday, August 4, 2025.



Cottonwood Area Transit

National Rural Transit Day

On Wednesday, July 16, 2025, Cottonwood Area Transit (CAT) proudly joined communities nationwide in celebrating National Rural Transit Day, recognizing rural transit's vital role in connecting residents to essential services and opportunities. CAT transported 514 passengers across Cottonwood, Clarkdale, Verde Villages, Sedona, and surrounding areas, demonstrating our commitment to providing safe, accessible, and courteous transportation for all.

On this special day, CAT honors its dedicated drivers, staff, and passengers who make our services a lifeline for the community. Through our Fixed Route and Verde Shuttle services, as well as our ADA-accessible buses with bike racks and air conditioning and door-to-door paratransit services, CAT ensures that everyone—seniors, individuals with disabilities, and commuters—can access healthcare, education, employment, and more.



Airport

Ad Hoc Airport Meeting

The public is invited to attend an Ad Hoc Airport meeting regarding the Part 150 Study. This meeting will include an information session and a discussion and will take place on August 13, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. in the City Council Chambers, located at 1083 E. River Front Road.



Parks, Recreation, Library

Special Guest at Cottonwood Public Library Youth Services Storytime

On Tuesday, July 8, 2025, the Cottonwood Public Library Youth Services Storytime welcomed a special guest, Sabina Sandoval, and her *"Free to Be Me"* drum circle. Sabina brought the rhythm of joy, connection, and creativity, helping participants sync the beat of their hearts with the pulse of the drums. Everyone had the chance to play various musical instruments, including drums, tambourines, bells, and other fun accessories. It was a hands-on, high-energy experience filled with music, movement, and smiles!



Earth Growers

On Friday, July 11, 2025, the Cottonwood Public Library hosted a hands-on gardening program for kids called *Earth Growers*, in partnership with Earth Grower LLC. During the program, young participants explored soil and plant samples under a microscope and learned about what makes healthy soil. From tiny organisms to different types of matter found in the earth, the kids had a great time digging into the science of gardening. It was a fun and educational experience that sparked curiosity and helped connect science to the natural world around them.

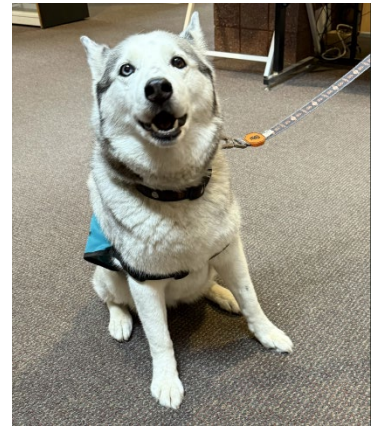


Mini Pet Adoption & Family Craft Program at the Cottonwood Public Library

On Friday, July 18, 2025, as part of our Summer Reading Program, families joined us for a heartwarming afternoon of learning and creativity during our Mini Pet Adoption & Family Craft Program. In partnership with the Verde Valley Humane Society, children learned all about the responsibilities and joys of adopting a pet. The Humane Society staff walked the kids through a realistic adoption process, explaining what it means to be a good pet owner and how to care for animals responsibly. After the lesson, each child had the chance to "adopt" a miniature toy cat or dog, complete with their official adoption certificate. The fun continued as kids designed and built cozy houses for their new furry friends using craft supplies, cardboard, and lots of imagination. It was a meaningful and memorable event that celebrated kindness, creativity, and the importance of caring for animals.

Earlier in the day, children had the opportunity to participate in our Paws and Pages event. We offered 16 spots for kids to read aloud to friendly therapy dogs throughout the day. This fun and comforting experience helped build reading confidence in a relaxed setting.

Humane Society Family Craft at the Cottonwood Public Library 7/18/2025



Cottonwood Public Library Provides Free Early Childhood Screenings

As part of our Summer Reading Program, the Cottonwood Public Library provided free early childhood screenings for children ages 0–6, including vision, hearing, and developmental checks. A total of 30 children were registered for this vital service, which offered families valuable insights into their child's growth during these critical early years. While the screenings were taking place, Adela hosted a lively Storytime attended by over 50 people, highlighting just how popular and well-attended our summer Storytimes have become. By partnering with local early childhood specialists, the library helped connect families to essential resources while reinforcing its role as a trusted community hub for support, learning, and early development.



Cottonwood Public Library Tie-Dye Craft with Local Teens

On Friday, July 18, 2025, Paula Valenzuela, the Youth Engagement Specialist at the Cottonwood Public Library, in collaboration with local 7th-grade teacher Stacy Bray, hosted a fun tie-dye craft with local teens. Each participant had the opportunity to dye a bandana, a drawstring bag, and a surprise T-shirt, generously donated by Stacy. The group learned various tie-dye techniques and worked together to create their personalized items. The Cottonwood Public Library extends its gratitude to Stacy Bray for her generosity and enthusiasm in sharing her expertise with local teens. Everyone enjoyed a pleasant afternoon, getting creative and meeting new people. One participant ended the day by asking, "When is the next activity?"



Community Development

2025 City Beautification Recognition Program

The City of Cottonwood Community Development Department is pleased to announce that SPRINGHILL SUITES, located at 565 S. 6th Street, has won the 2025 City Beautification Recognition Award. SpringHill Suites was nominated by a member of the community for its landscaping, which enhances the area's beauty. To view the images of the winning landscaping, please visit the City Beautification webpage on the City of Cottonwood website at <https://www.cottonwoodaz.gov/798/Beautification-Recognition-Program>.

The winner received the following:

- Recognition at the July 15, 2025, City Council meeting, where they were presented with a yard sign and plaque
- Business mentioned in a public service announcement on all of the city's social media platforms
- Name and photos of business featured on the Beautification Recognition Program's webpage

If you have questions about the program, please call Clover Pinion, Community Development Planner, at 928-634-5505 ext. 3322. The program will continue annually. Keep an eye out early next year for announcements regarding the 2026 City Beautification Recognition Program.



Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment – Ordinance 742 (ZO-25-001)

On Tuesday, July 15, 2025, the City Council adopted Ordinance 742, which amends Section 310 of the Zoning Ordinance: The Historic Preservation Ordinance. Ordinance 742 will take effect on Thursday, August 14, 2025.

Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment-ZO-25-006

On Monday, July 21, 2025, the Planning and Zoning Commission recommended approval to the City Council regarding ZO-25-006, which involves text amendments to Section 404 General Provisions and Article II (Section 201) Definitions of the City of Cottonwood Zoning Ordinance.

2025-2027 Historic Preservation Strategic Plan

On Wednesday, July 23, 2025, the Historic Preservation Commission passed a vote to recommend approval to the City Council regarding the 2025-2027 Historic Preservation Strategic Plan.

2025 Cottonwood Historic Property Tour

On Wednesday, July 23, 2025, the Historic Preservation Commission passed a vote to recommend approval to the City Council regarding the 2025-2027 Historic Preservation Strategic Plan.

Human Resources

City of Cottonwood Partners with Vitalant

The City of Cottonwood has partnered with Vitalant to host a blood drive on Saturday, August 16, 2025, from 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the Public Safety Building, located at 199 S. 6th St. If you are interested in participating, visit www.vitalant.org (Blood Drive Code: 10056250), call Vitalant at 1-877-258-4825, or scan the QR code listed on the flyer. This event is also open to the public.



\$10 for all
3 will win \$10,000

Gas Giveaway + \$10 Gift Card!
This summer, we've got your gas expenses covered while you're saving lives. **Donate Aug. 1-28 for a \$10 Rewards gift card. PLUS, you'll be entered for a chance to win one of three \$10,000 gift cards - enough to buy gas for a year!** Schedule today!

**City of Cottonwood
BLOOD DRIVE**

Saturday, August 16, 2025
9:00 am - 12:30 pm
Vitalant Bus - Cottonwood Public Safety Bldg
199 S 6th Street - Cottonwood

Visit www.vitalant.org (Blood Drive Code: 10056250), call Vitalant at 1-877-258-4825 or scan the QR Code to schedule your lifesaving appointment.

DONATE BLOOD May 23 - Sept. 7, you'll be entered to win a 2025 VW Taos S, donated by our Valley Volkswagen Dealers.

*Terms and condition apply, see vitalant.org/GasGiveaway.
For more information or to schedule a donation, call 877.25.VITAL or visit us at vitalant.org
Post us @getvitalant:    

vitalant 

Administration

Grant Funding for Main Street Preservation Project

We are celebrating another win for the City's Main Street Preservation Project. The City has been approved for another round of funding. After considerable effort, Northern Arizona Council of Governments (NACOG) has successfully helped secure \$1 million in State funding for the City's ongoing \$14 million Main Street Pavement Preservation Project, thanks to the support of Representative Quang Nguyen and Selina Bliss. This critical project will support long-term infrastructure improvements and preserve a key transportation corridor in our community. We're grateful to NACOG for their continued partnership and dedication in helping move this project across the finish line.

Employee Recognitions

On July 15, 2025, during a special City Council Pre-Meeting, several dedicated employees were honored for their outstanding contributions to the community and their exceptional performance in their roles. These individuals have consistently demonstrated a commitment to excellence, innovation, and teamwork, making a significant impact on our City's operations and services. We invite everyone to join us in celebrating the achievements of the following employees, whose hard work and dedication truly exemplify the spirit of our organization:

- Employee of the 4th Quarter 2024 – Alejandra Ramirez, IT Tech I
- Employee of the Year 2024 – Kevin Murie, Commander
- Manager of the Year 2024 – Alexis James, Communications Manager
- Team of the Year 2024 – Finance Department
- Employee of the 1st Quarter 2025 – Robert Gonzalez, Rec Coordinator II – Parks, Trails, and Community Enrichment Coordinator



Appreciation Team

Upcoming Events

- City Hall Selfie Day: On Tuesday, August 12, 2025, celebrate civic pride! Departments will take selfies to share on the City's social media to highlight all the work you do to keep Cottonwood running!
- Chili Cook Off: On Thursday, September 25, 2025, participate in our chili cook-off at the Rec Center event hall. Bring your best chili to compete, or simply enjoy sampling all the entries and voting for your favorite!
- Halloween/Fall Decorating Contest: On Friday, October 31, 2025, Departments are encouraged to decorate their offices for Halloween/Autumn. The department voted to have the best decor will win a prize!
- Surveys & Feedback: From November 1 to 30, 2025, The A Team will collect feedback on all the monthly events organized in 2025. Share your opinions and ideas with us!
- Appreciation Dinner & Awards: On Friday, December 12, 2025, join us at the Verde Valley Fairgrounds for a celebration including a catered dinner, door prizes, and the 2025 service awards!

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

Thank you.

Tom Whitmer
Acting City Manager