

DATE: August 22, 2025
TO: Mayor and City Council Members
FROM: Mario Cifuentes II, City Manager
SUBJECT: Bi-Weekly Management Report



Police Department

Community Feedback

The Cottonwood Police Department continues to seek and gather community feedback about its operations and how it interacts with citizens who ask for help with different issues. These two recent examples demonstrate the effort and high standards the officers and staff aim for every day. Likewise, if we fall short, we reflect and assess how to consistently improve our performance and service.

CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION

THIS CERTIFICATE RECOGNIZES OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

"I've only lived in Cottonwood for a few years, but the interactions I've had with the PD have always been positive and professional."

August 11, 2025 at 01:52 PM

CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION

THIS CERTIFICATE RECOGNIZES OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

"I would like to thank everyone who is an officer and or works within the department and there families with a heart felt gratitude"

August 16, 2025 at 04:31 PM

Police Department Citizens' Academy

The Cottonwood Police Department recently launched its long-standing Police Citizens' Academy. This intensive eight-week program invites community members and business owners to get an inside look at the day-to-day operations of the Police Department. Participants in the academy will have a rare opportunity to engage directly with officers and staff from the Cottonwood Police Department. Through hands-on demonstrations, classroom discussions, and facility tours, attendees will gain valuable insights into how and why officers make their decisions, as well as how those decisions impact the community.

Parks, Recreation, Library

Cottonwood Youth Advisory Commission Attends 2025 League of Arizona Cities and Towns Conference

On Wednesday, August 20, 2025, members of the Cottonwood Youth Advisory Commission proudly represented the City of Cottonwood at the 2025 League of Arizona Cities and Towns one-day conference. The day began with the Parade of Flags and Celebration of Cities and Towns, where the youth delegates joined peers from across Arizona and carried the City of Cottonwood flag in a vibrant display of civic pride.

Following the ceremony, the Cottonwood youth commissioners participated in a full-day youth program, engaging in team-building exercises, networking opportunities, and collaborative information-sharing sessions with other youth councils from across the state. This experience provided the commissioners with valuable insights into civic engagement, leadership development, and the importance of inter-community collaboration. To view a short video of their day, please follow the link, <https://gopro.com/v/2a56311e-d43a-45b8-853b-dab2f1d6c942>.



Arizona Library Association Newsletter

The Cottonwood Public Library's 2025 Summer Reading Program was recently highlighted in the Arizona Library Association (AzLA) newsletter alongside some of the largest library systems in the state. The write-up captured the essence of our program, which welcomed hundreds of families, logged over 400,000 minutes of reading, and created meaningful opportunities for learning, creativity, and connection.

This recognition reflects the efforts of our entire library team, whose daily work ensures that families have a welcoming, engaging, and well-supported experience. At the heart of this year's Summer Reading Program was our Youth Services team, Danielle Ave, Adella Martinez, and Paula Valenzuela, along with their part-time staff and youth services volunteers. From high-energy story times and teen crafts to new traditions like Nighty-Night Library Lights, they created a summer experience that families will remember for years to come. This was a true team effort, and it is a proud moment for all of us to see our library recognized at the state level.



SRP 2025: A SUMMER OF STORIES, CONNECTION, AND COMMUNITY
BY DANIELLE AVE' - COTTONWOOD PUBLIC LIBRARY

This summer, the Cottonwood Public Library welcomed hundreds of families into a season filled with reading, creativity, and meaningful connection. The 2025 Summer Reading Program wasn't just about books. It was about building memories, encouraging curiosity, and creating joyful learning moments for all ages.

"My kids were begging to read every night just to earn the next prize. We've never seen them this excited about books." - Byron, Local parent

Together, our community logged over 400,000 minutes of reading. Many families shared that their children were reading more than ever. Sometimes just to earn a fun reward, and sometimes because they were caught up in a friendly sibling competition to log the most minutes.

"I was really into the food prizes. It made reading feel even more worth it like a reward I actually wanted." - Everett, Teen participant.

Parent Gwen told us her three kids, ages 8, 11, and 13, all chose the same book from the prize cabinet so they could read it together. "It completely melted my heart," she said.

Programs like pottery class and tie-dye crafts for teens gave young people space to be creative and hands-on.

"She looked forward to pottery day more than anything else this summer. It was her happy place." - Ann, parent of an 8-year-old.



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SRP 2025: A SUMMER OF STORIES CONTINUED

Families also loved our regular storytimes, which saw some of the highest participation we've ever had. Our storytime families especially enjoyed the Summer Splash event, a beloved yearly tradition and summer pond-off for our youngest patrons. The local fire department helped make it extra special by bringing out their fire truck and hoses, giving kids a chance to cool off and connect with their hometown heroes.



We wrapped up the season with Nighty-Night Library Lights, a cozy, end-of-summer storytime party. Kids came in pajamas, brought their stuffed animals, and helped us say goodnight to the library with calming stories, quiet activities, and bedtime snacks. It was a peaceful and joyful way to close a memorable summer.

Our passive programs like scavenger hunts, a collaborative sticker poster, and postcard writing for local seniors kept the library experience fresh with each visit and encouraged families to engage in fun, low-pressure ways.

"It went beyond reading. This program gave my kids something to care about and be proud of." - Ginny, Library patron and parent



With support from Camp Innovation, Earth Growers LLC, the Verde Valley Humane Society, the fire department, and over 20 local sponsors, SRP 2025 offered storytimes, science exploration, early childhood screenings, crafts, meals, and more.

Thanks to our community partners, volunteers, and dedicated staff, this year's program reached across generations and made a lasting impact. We're grateful for the continued support and we're already looking forward to what we'll grow together next summer.

Cottonwood Area Transit

Arizona Transit Association

Cottonwood Area Transit was recently featured in the August 2025 edition of the Arizona Transit Association (AzTA) Highlights & Happenings for its expanded fleet, which now includes new fixed-route buses.

Cottonwood Area Transit Expands Fleet with New Fixed Route Bus

Cottonwood Area Transit (CAT) is excited to announce the arrival of a brand-new bus to its Fixed Route service. This addition marks a continued investment in reliable, accessible, and sustainable public transportation for the Verde Valley community.

The newest bus will be hitting the road soon, expanding CAT's capacity to serve more riders while improving overall service efficiency. Two additional buses are also expected to arrive in the coming weeks, further strengthening CAT's fleet.

"This is a great milestone for our transit system," said Transit Manager Lisa Boring.

"Our goal is to ensure residents and visitors have access to safe and dependable transportation, and these new buses help us meet that goal while preparing for future growth."

Each new vehicle is equipped with modern features, including ADA accessibility, bike racks, and improved air conditioning systems which are perfect for Arizona's climate.

The City of Cottonwood Transit Department is dedicated to providing safe, reliable, and accessible transportation services. Through innovative programs and partnerships, the department strives to enhance mobility and improve the quality of life for all residents.



Cottonwood Area Transit was honored with the South West Transit Association (SWTA) Spotlight Award in the "14th the Spot: Print Rides" category!

This award recognizes dedication to effective and impactful print communication within the rural transit sector. The team's hard work and commitment to serving the community are greatly appreciated.

Department of Transportation

Cottonwood Area Transit will host a Substance Abuse Management and Program Compliance course, along with a Reasonable Suspicion and Post-Accident Testing Determination course, through the Arizona Department of Transportation in February 2026.

Community Development

DR-25-008 – Design Review Request for Building and Site Improvements for Commercial and Tourism Use

On Monday, August 18, 2025, the Planning and Zoning Commission approved a design review request for building and site improvements related to commercial and tourism uses at 775 N. Main Street.

Cottonwood Historic Preservation Commission

The Cottonwood Historic Preservation Commission will meet on Wednesday, August 27, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. The meeting will take place at the City Council Chambers – Riverfront, located at 1083 E. Riverfront Road, Cottonwood, AZ. The agenda item listed below will be discussed.

New Business:

1. CA-25-003 – CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS FOR A NONCONTRIBUTING PROPERTY IN THE COMMERCIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT
2. CITY OF COTTONWOOD MUNICIPAL CODE TEXT AMENDMENT TO CHAPTER 2.110: HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
3. MEETING DATE SELECTION FOR NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER 2025

Discussion Items:

1. COTTONWOOD HISTORIC PROPERTY TOUR 2025

Human Resources

GEM Card Recognition

See an employee **Going The Extra Mile** or performing a **GEM**-like action? **Recognize them!**

Show your appreciation for your peers by filling out a **GEM** Card to explain why a particular employee deserves recognition. Once you have completed the card, present it to your colleagues in person and let them know how much you value their actions or work. After you express your support for their positive contributions, the employee can take the card to HR to redeem their gift.

The following employees received a **GEM** Card from their peers.

Dana Dowell, Rec Coordinator II – Youth Programs

“Dana has consistently shown grace, overwhelming kindness and true compassion and created such a positive experience for my kids at the Rec summer programs. She is always welcoming and encourages my kids to learn, be creative and positive! She puts her whole heart in the program and we are truly grateful!” Submitted by Heather Rowe, Management Analyst, on June 6, 2025.

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8/8/2025



Thanks for **Going the Extra Mile**
and being a positive representative
of the City of Cottonwood!

Your **GEM-like** action has scored
you a small gift of appreciation!
Bring your card to HR to collect
your appreciation gift.

To: Dana Dowell
From: Heather Rowe
Date: 6/6/2025

Describe the **GEM-like** Action:

Dana has consistently
shown grace, overwhelming
kindness and true compassion
and created such a positive
experience for my kids at
the Rec summer programs. She
is always welcoming and
encourages my kids to learn,
be creative and positive! She
puts her whole heart in the program
and we are truly grateful!

John Stabe, A/V Specialist

"This is not the first time I have seen John do something that deserves a GEM. Today at the Rec I noticed someone had left a Code Brown on the floor of the women's restroom. I told the desk & John was there helping with IT Staff. He immediately said I'll clean it up, grabbed gloves & rags & cleaned it. His willingness to help is going the extra mile!" Submitted by Kirsten Lennon, Financial Services Director, on June 12, 2025.

06/12/25



Thanks for **Going the Extra Mile**
and being a positive representative
of the City of Cottonwood!

Your **GEM-like** action has scored
you a small gift of appreciation!
Bring your card to HR to collect
your appreciation gift.

To: John Stabe
From: Kirsten Lennon
Date: 06/12/25

Describe the **GEM-like** Action:

This is not the first time
I have seen John do
something that deserves
a GEM. Today at the Rec
I noticed someone had
left a code brown on the
floor of the women's
restroom. I told the desk
& John was there helping
with IT stuff. He immediately
said I'll clean it up, grabbed
gloves & rags & cleaned it
His willingness to help is
going the extra mile!

Administration

2025 League of Arizona Cities and Towns Conference

During the week of August 18 – 22, 2025, members of the Cottonwood City Council, City Manager, and Administrative Staff attended the 2025 League of Arizona Cities and Towns Conference. This annual event brings together dedicated public servants from municipalities across the state.

The League's conference offers countless opportunities to learn, connect, and grow. From panel discussions on key policy topics to informal networking events, the conference serves as a platform to engage with peers, share local successes, and explore innovative solutions to shared challenges.

On Thursday, August 21, 2025, the City of Cottonwood proudly participated in the Showcase of Cities and Towns, an event highlighting the unique character of Arizona's communities. Cottonwood's booth featured merchandise from local businesses, including Wild Tonic Kombucha and a selection of local wines. Attendees also received City of Cottonwood swag, and two gift baskets filled with local goods were raffled off, drawing a great deal of attention and appreciation from visitors. A sincere thank you to Paula Woolsey, President of the Verde Valley Wine Consortium, and her daughter for sharing their knowledge about our local wineries.





Appreciation Team

Upcoming Events

- 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 do not hesitate to reach out.

Thank you.

Mario Cifuentez II
City Manager