



THE FOUNTAIN HILLS TIMES

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Emotional talks bring change of dispensary hours

By Bob Burns
Times Reporter

After an emotional, sometimes heated discussion, Mark Steinmentz, the medical marijuana dispensary operator in Fountain Hills, walked out of last week's Town Council meeting with the opportunity to extend the dispensary hours but did not get all he wanted.

Steinmentz was asking the council to amend its zoning rules to allow his Nature's AZ Medicines dispensary to operate within a range of hours between 8 a.m. and 9 p.m. seven days a week.

The ordinance had limited the hours to Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The Planning and Zoning Commission had recommended the ordinance be changed to 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Saturday.

Last week Councilman Dennis Brown made the motion to modify the P&Z recommendation slightly using the 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. hours Monday through Friday, and 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday with no Sunday hours permitted.

Two attempts to amend Brown's motion failed for lack of a second, and ultimately the council vote to approve the expanded hours was 5-2 with Mayor Linda Kavanagh and Councilman Cecil Yates dissenting.

Although Planning and Zoning Administrator Bob Rodgers reminded the council that the question before them was not a referendum on drug use, arguments used for and against the change in the ordinance mostly broke out that way.

While proponents of the extended hours would not endorse legalized mari-

(cont. on page 5A)

Parks' Bryan Hughes leaving town for Florence director job

By Bob Burns
Times Reporter

Bryan Hughes, the long-time Parks and Recreation supervisor for Fountain Hills, has left to begin work as the new Parks and Recreation director for the Town of Florence.

Hughes began his new job in Florence Monday. "This is bittersweet," Hughes told *The Times* last week. "I will miss the staff and the people in town here. I don't want to leave, but you move on for new challenges and opportunity."

Hughes said Florence is growing, now a town of 25,000. It has a small parks department but is ready to expand to meet the needs of the growing community.

It is moving into a significant expansion mode, Hughes said.

After 18 years in Fountain Hills, Hughes is not a stranger to parks expansion and improvement projects.

When he first arrived in 1995 the first phase of construction at Golden Eagle Park was just wrapping up. That park underwent four more phases of construction before reaching completion.

During his tenure the town has expanded Four



Bryan Hughes

Peaks Park, built Desert Vista and the dog park from the ground up and completed numerous improvements at Fountain Park.

"Probably Desert Vista and Fountain Park are what I am most proud of," Hughes said. "We started the dog park (the first phase of Desert Vista) with \$17,000 in fencing and built from there."

Fountain Park was just turf around the lake with an aging playground. After the lake liner had to be replaced in 1999 the town began work on improvements that are just now scheduled for completion this summer with Phase 6.

Concrete walkways were installed around the park,

(cont. on page 5A)



Times photos by Barb Charzuk

Honored as 2014 inducted members of the Lower Verde Valley Hall of Fame are, from left rear, Arlie Denomme; Vicki Beseke, Paul Appeldorn, Ed Kehe, Donna Yordy and Dana Saar; front, Brian LaGreca, accepting for his father the late Scott LaGreca; David King, and Jason LaGreca, also accepting for his father, Scott LaGreca. Individuals are selected for their contributions to one or more of the following categories: Arts and Culture, Business and Professions, Community Services, Education, Governmental Activities, and Religious and Spiritual Activities. See additional photos on Page 14A.

Eight inducted into Hall of Fame

Legacy Award given to Ministerial Association

Eight people were inducted into the Lower Verde River Valley Hall of Fame last Wednesday night, March 19.

The Induction Dinner was held as a special meeting of the Fountain Hills & Lower Verde River Valley Historical Society at the

Fountain Hills Community Center.

The Hall of Fame was started in 2004. With this year's inductions there are now a total of 120 people who are members of the Hall of Fame from the communities of Fountain Hills, The Verdes, Fort McDowell

and Goldfield Ranch.

The dinner is an event of the River of Time Museum Foundation Jerry Miles foundation president welcomed the more than 200 people in attendance.

He gave a brief history of how the foundation was formed and how the hall of fame came to be.

Remarking that the foundation is the fundraising arm of the museum, he called Historical Society President Debbie Skehen

to the podium and presented her with a check for the museum for \$7,000.

"This brings the total of our museum donations to \$41,000, since this event began," he said.

Emcee for the induction ceremony was John Gibson, chairman of the Greater Fountain Hills Business Alliance.

Also, he is employed at *The Times* as an advertiser

(cont. on page 14A)

Julie Ghetti honored at last meeting

By Bob Burns
Times Reporter

The Town of Fountain Hills bid good-bye to retiring Deputy Town Manager/Finance Director Julie Ghetti at the regular Town Council meeting on March 20.

After 24 years with the town Ghetti is moving on to retirement with her husband, Rino.

Ghetti expressed her great appreciation for being able to serve the community so long. She specifically thanked Vice Mayor Cassie Hansen who hired her on as an accountant soon after incorporation.

Hansen was the town's first employee and served as town clerk and eventually director of administration.

Former Councilman Rick Melendez took the podium and said he appreciated the help he received from Ghetti in understanding municipal finances after he was first elected.

Melendez brought greetings from former council members paying tribute to

(cont. on page 5A)



Town Manager Ken Buchanan presents retiring Deputy Town Manager/Finance Director Julie Ghetti with an appreciation plaque during the March 20 Town Council meeting.

First responders honored



Jason Porter, center, was recently honored as 'Deputy of the Year' by the Noon Rotary Club. With him are Rotarian Jon Klesner, left, and MCO Capt. Joe Rodriguez. For story and more pictures, see Page 8A.

Countdown to our 40th Anniversary!

This week we continue our countdown to the newspaper's 40th anniversary, which will be celebrated in June. Each week we will post on our website (www.fhtimes.com) a new page looking back through the years and summarizing the news, starting with 1974, the first year this publication rolled off the presses. Take a stroll through history with us. A special commemorative issue will be published in June.



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INSIDE THIS WEEK

News:
MCO seeking 30 Adero Canyon lots.
See Page 10A

Schools:
Dylan Northern is National Merit Scholarship finalist.
See Page 12A

Sports:
Ashlin Lawyer (pictured) and Lady Falcons forge ahead.
See Page 2B

WEATHER

	H	L	P
Tues., March 18	78	47	--
Wed., March 19	80	45	--
Thurs., March 20	80	41	--
Fri., March 21	81	49	--
Sat., March 22	80	49	--
Sun., March 23	81	52	--
Mon., March 24	86	53	--

For weather updates and forecasts go to www.fhtimes.com

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