

Town General Fund budget increasing slightly

By Bob Burns
Times Reporter

The Town of Fountain Hills will be unveiling its proposed 2014-15 fiscal year budget to the public this week during an open house session prior to the regular Town Council meeting Thursday, April 17.

The session begins at 5:30 p.m. in council chambers at Town Hall. Staff will be available to answer questions from the public related to the proposed budget.

Overall the budget plan totals \$44.5 million including \$22.7 in capital expenses,

which encompasses the \$8.2 million bond approved for the Saguaro Boulevard reconstruction.

The General Fund budget proposal is \$13.6 million compared with roughly \$13.1 for the current fiscal year.

Items budgeted from Special Revenue Funds total about \$6 million.

Other capital projects that show up in the budget include \$4.4 million for Shea Boulevard improvements (mostly grant funded); \$2.5 million for Fire Station No. 2 relocation (from CIP fund); \$1.7 million for park improvements (CIP fund); \$1.6 million

for wash channeling flood abatement (grant funding); \$1.5 million for Avenue of the Fountains median improvements (excise tax fund).

Town Manager Ken Buchanan said the budget's objective is to operate the town with sustainable services for residents. He said the only personnel change proposed for the year is to increase the position of volunteer coordinator from part-time to full-time.

Moving forward on the budget, the council has scheduled three workshop sessions for Monday through Wednesday, April 28-30.

The budget has been placed on the agenda for the May 1 regular council session for tentative approval. This action sets a cap on the total for the budget, which will be finalized following a public hearing Thursday, June 5.

At its regular session at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, the Town Council has mostly routine business includ-

ing a public hearing and consideration of placement of a cellular transmission tower disguised as a saguaro cactus. That tower is to be placed in the Eagle Mountain subdivision near the Inn at Eagle Mountain. It will be placed near a similar facility.

The council will consider appointing one person to fill a vacancy on the Planning

and Zoning Commission. They will be completing a term that ends in September this year.

The Public Art Committee is asking the Town Council to consider accepting the donation of two new art sculptures and a change to the placement of one previously approved.

The council meeting is open to the public.

MCSO, DEA

Prescription pills targeted

The Maricopa County Sheriff's Office and the federal Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) will give the public its eighth opportunity in three years on Saturday, April 26, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. to prevent pill abuse and theft by ridding their homes of potentially dangerous expired, unused, and unwanted prescription drugs.

Bring pills for disposal to Fountain Hills Town Hall at 16705 Avenue of the Fountains. Items to be disposed of should be taken inside the Town Hall lobby off the south parking lot.

The DEA cannot accept liquids or needles or sharps, only pills or patches. The service is free and anonymous, no questions asked.

Last October, Americans turned in 324 tons (over 647,000 pounds) of prescription drugs at over 4,114 sites operated by the DEA and its thousands of state and local law enforcement partners. When those results are combined with what was collected in its seven previous Take Back events, DEA and its partners have taken in over 3.4 million pounds—more than 1,700 tons—of pills.

This initiative addresses a vital public safety and public health issue. Medicines that languish in home cabinets are highly susceptible to diversion, misuse, and abuse. Rates of prescription drug abuse in the U.S. are alarmingly high, as are the number of accidental poisonings and overdoses due to these drugs.

Studies show that a majority of abused prescription drugs are obtained from family and friends, including from the home medicine cabinet. In addition, Americans are now advised that their usual methods for disposing of unused medicines—flushing them down the toilet or throwing them in the

trash—both pose potential safety and health hazards.

DEA is in the process of approving new regulations that implement the Safe and Responsible Drug Disposal Act of 2010, which amends the Controlled Substances Act to allow an "ultimate user" (that is, a patient or their family member or pet owner) of controlled substance medications to dispose of them by delivering them to entities authorized by the Attorney General to accept them.

The Act also allows the Attorney General to authorize long term care facilities to dispose of their residents' controlled substances in certain instances.

Chalk activity for the kids

Local dad Greg Baker wants to increase the number of informal activities available here for young children.

"Most activities cost money or are limited to 'members,' so I thought it would be nice for kids and parents to be able to get together for something simple and free," he said.

"And make new friends and acquaintances at the same time."

So he has put together a fun activity he's calling "Chalk it up," in which

families are invited to come to Golden Eagle Park to create some chalk art.

The activity will be held on Saturday, April 26, from 10 to 11:30 a.m. around the park's play areas.

"Bring your children to help beautify the park sidewalks with their unique and imaginative minds," Baker said.

"Chalk will be provided."

Participants and spectators may vote on the art. Awards for the top three works of art will be given, as well as gifts for children

who participate (limited quantities).

In addition, Bashas', Subway and Streets of New York have donated food and beverages for participants (limited quantities).

Other supporters include Town of Fountain Hills, Little Caesars, Paul's ACE Hardware, Copy Express, Nabers Realty and Hot Salsa Interactive.

To inquire or volunteer, contact Baker at gbaker1@cox.net or call (602) 321-5433.

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Communication strategies class

Communications Strategies is the subject for a series of programs being presented by the John O'Flynn Senior Activity Center beginning Tuesday, April 22.

The programs will be held over a five week session on Tuesdays and Thursdays beginning April 22 and continuing through May 20.

The sessions will last from 9:30 to 10:30 a.m.

There's no reason to struggle to communicate. Communication can present a problem for many hard of hearing individuals.

Communication Strategies teaches skills that help to maximize communication skills. The classes are presented by doctoral students from health profession programs sponsored by the School of Health Sciences at A.T. Still University in Mesa.

The Senior Activity Center is located at the Community Center, 13001 N. La Montana Blvd.

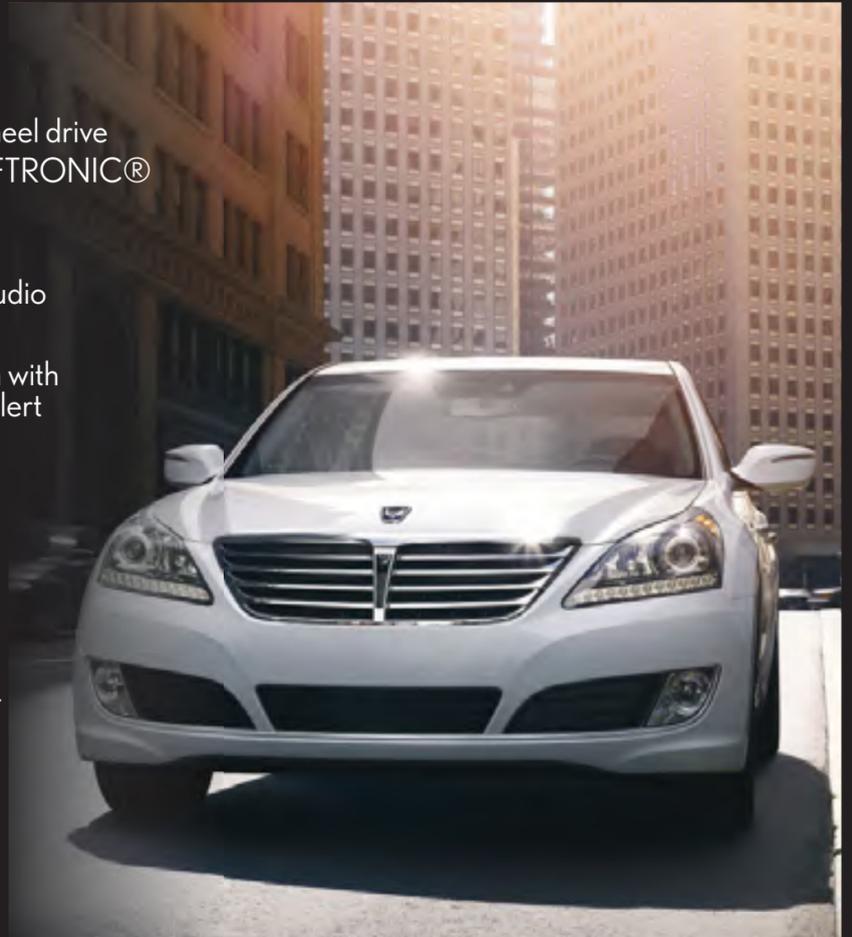
Pre-registration for this program is required and please reference course #536 when registering. Enroll by April 7, as space is limited, and a 2014 Activity Center membership is required.

For more information, contact the Activity Center at 480-816-5226 or visit www.fh.az.gov.

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