Neon puts shine throughout town

By Iqbal Al-Sanea

In theory, neon’s life expectancy is forever. In South Tucson, it’s fading.

Neon lights and signs were introduced to Tucson in the 1940s. Streets were brightly illuminated with the bright signs, popular for advertising motels and restaurants, along the U.S. 80 and U.S. 89 routes. In the 1960s and 1980s, people started looking at the earlier design as out dated. Today, neon signs have just become a frustrating responsibility for some businesses in South Tucson. Terry Gee, owner of T&T Market, 2048 6th Ave., has not repaired her neon lights for a little over 10 years. The building has been in South Tucson for 75 years, but she has no plans for replacing her LED sign for old style neon lights.

“It’s just more of a financial thing. It would be great to have neon, but financially, it’s just not worth it for me,” Gee said. “It’s too hard to do the electricity and maintaining it.”

The lights are a little brighter on the East side.

For four years, Arizona Motel owner, J. Amin, has become very dependent on his blue, white, and red sign.

“We have won two years straight the best sign awards in Arizona. This sign is very popular in Europe; lots of people come here to take pictures because it’s a historical sign,” Amin said.

Most of his customers come from Mexico, usually taking pictures of the sign at their arrival. However, less than half the sign is shining due to his hectic schedule. Amin’s business has decreased 60 percent and repair costs range to approximately $1,800 per year.

“This is my identity. If I need to fix it, I have to fix it. This is my home. I don’t think this is a business. For me, Arizona Motel is my identity,” Amin said.

Neon expert Sam Richardson says Amin’s problem could be solved if he refurbishes it. It will bring it to a higher standard.

“It shouldn’t cost him much. What he needs to do is spend $2,000 just one time. It’s just like your car. If you need to replace one tire, and put a new one, the car could develop some problems. You should replace them all; same thing with that sign.”

Neon lights radiate on 6th Avenue. The lights are a major draw to the area.
Hispanic populations have limited exposure to anti-tobacco use information and are the target of intensifying tobacco industry marketing efforts, according to the Centers for Disease Control.

In Youth Wellness Advocacy Teams, funded by the Pima County Health Department, is a youth coalition that is expanding its work in South Tucson to counteract this issue.

“It’s definitely a huge health program we are trying to fight,” said Youth Coalition Coordinator Ben Naasz. “We outline programs and challenges for SWAT teams at various schools to bring awareness to the cause.”

Current SWAT has 25 coalitions, including S.T.A.R. Academic Center, Desert View High School, Sierra Middle School, and Craycroft Elementary in South Tucson. “A large part of the Sunnyside School District is involved. We have funding for 30 more coalitions and are looking to work with more schools in the area,” Naasz said. “Tobacco companies spend millions on ads each year, and regardless of what they say they do target youth,” he added.

There’s a reason companies target the young. “Companies appeal to the young because they have more freehand skill, rather than more popular and common. It’s a way for them to keep the money coming,” said Perez, who says there is a lot of money in the tobacco business.

For writing at Pueblo 586 students were tested and 43.5 percent passed and at Tucson 896 students were tested and 61.6 percent passed.

Students first struggle the most with mathematics, then writing and reading. “About half of the seniors had to take the math section,” says Toro.

The writing part of the test consists of one extended writing prompt along with multiple choice questions. Other sections are multiple choice.

The science portion is not included in the graduation requirement, but Toro thinks that in a couple years it will change.

Pueblo High School provides after school tutoring for students who need help with writing, math and science in preparation for taking the AIMS.

AIMS supports materials into their curriculums, sample tests, released items and writing scoring information is available at aec.gov.
Economic woes drive down shuttle

By Kevin Andrade

“Tucson,” Taylor said. “It’s the economic crisis,” says Recién. He opened Gutiérrez’s Shuttle two years ago to make a living and to serve the community. However, times have changed and his company might soon be forced to shut down.

“Other times,” says Recién, “business was very good but right now it’s very slow.” “We can’t maintain ourselves like we used to,” says Luis Alberto López, a driver for Saluho Shuttle.

Bringing people downtown to the border for visits with family and friends has been the mainstay of shuttle companies. The vast majority of clients are of Mexican descent and have some sort of family connection to the region. To pick up a child or to spend a weekend with the grandparents, the maintaining of ties to family and friends appears to be the major motive for Mexican clientele. But even that has seen a downturn in recent years.

López drives his shuttle from South Tucson to Nogales and back twice daily since he started working as a driver two months ago. Originally from Sonora, he has no stranger to the border area. He used to make the trip down to visit every three to four months. But when the economic crisis began in 2007, he started to feel the crunch along with many other Americans. He now only makes the trip to visit only once a year.

However, there is one group of boarder travelers that has not died down. Artis a high school student who moved from Santa Ana, Sonora, to Tucson three years ago, goes to Nogales while she is, “on the way to Santa Ana to visit family or when I need to visit the dentist.”

With the economy the way it is, many Americans are coming down to Nogales and other border towns to take care of dental work and to buy their medicines. According to a 2010 University of Arizona study about 750,000 traveled abroad to receive medical treatment due to lower prices.

“The prices here are better than in the U.S. We all know that,” says Diana Hernandez, a dental assistant at Dental Similes, right at the border in Nogales, Sonora.

In possession of all the latest equipment and highly trained dentists, they offer not only better prices but service that is often to the care that one might receive in the U.S.

“The patients will come in,” continues Diana, “we’re a little bit cheaper than what they need and it just is not true what is on there. It might say they need 20 fillings when in reality all they need is five.”

Pharmaceutical prices are also lower. Walking in the one city there are many calls including Alsul, who attracts American customers to his pharmacy with the enticement of, “you get to buy your medicines for free!”

Rising prices and the lack of insurance coverage has led to 80 percent of the customers at border clinics and pharmacies being American according to the 2010 U. S. Census.

Photo by KEVIN ANDRADE / EL INDEPENDIENTE

Weatherization projects chill area winter heating expenses

By Amanda Merz

More than 500 families in South Tucson, Douglas and Phoenix have energy consumption-lower utility costs this winter thanks to the Tucson Urban League’s weatherization programs.

By helping residents make their homes more energy efficient the League’s weatherization and home repair programs thrive due to a boost in funding for the last four years.

Weatherization entails modifying the home’s energy consumption—whether it’s installing weather stripping or even replacing entire windows.

The average American spends more than $1,300 annually on utility bills but weatherization changes to a home can help to save more than $300 per year.

The program geared toward low-income families offers a free diagnostic assessment for a home to determine what are the most cost effective repairs to make.

“It really depends on what the house tells us that it needs to make the home more energy efficient. It could be more insulation, it could be more efficient appliances, it could be duct sealing,” said Terisha Ellis, Housing Department Facilitator of the Tucson Urban League. “It really is the diagnostic testing that tells us what each specific house needs.”

A main goal of the program is to assist low-income families reach self-sufficiency. Individuals who qualify for the program must own and have lived in their home for more than 12 months. Renters may be approved in specific situations.

“If it’s not cost effective to repair it, then it’s possible that it would be replaced,” explained Debra Johnson, the program’s Intake Specialist, at the Weatherization Day Open House that took place on Oct. 28.

Felix and Margaret Stanley, previous recipients of the program, spoke about what the program was able to do for their home in South Tucson.

“My husband at the age of 95 was getting on top of the roof, fixing the coolers, we had air coming in our front door,” said Margaret Stanley.

“Our water heater was popping making all kinds of noise, so we couldn’t sleep, it would wake us up at night.”

The program was able to replace their furnace, give them a new water heater, two new coolers and help with other weatherization changes to their home.

“The benefits go beyond just saving money are also a step toward helping the environment.

According to the U.S Department of Energy, for every weatherized household carbon dioxide emissions are reduced by one ton.

More than 1,350 families have been accepted applying for weatherization and more information about qualification can be found out through the Tucson Urban League.

Photo by AMANDA MERZ / EL INDEPENDIENTE

Local greyhound park struggles to stay in the race

By Mike Rabin

With the decline of greyhound racing nationwide, the Tucson Greyhound Park is fighting to survive.

The park was established in 1944 just around the same time that Tucson became a city. Tom Taylor is the CEO and general manager of the Tucson Greyhound Park and has been there almost for 15 years.

“We used to be the only place you could gamble other than Las Vegas,” Taylor said. “Now Arizona has 27 Indian casinos and only three live tracks.”

In the past 10 years, the 50 greyhound racing venues that once existed have diminished to just 25 tracks in seven states, according to the Greyhound Association of North America.

“There are only two live race-tracks for greyhounds west of the Mississippi River: one in Houston, Texas and one other here in Tucson,” Taylor said.

Two people have owned the park since it opened. “We used to be the only place that South Tucson became a city,” says Taylor.

The 50 Greyhound Park is fighting to survive. There used to be 12 races a night for five nights a week. There are now 15 races a night, six days a week.

This was a unique opportunity for the Tucson Greyhound Park and has been around since 1985 and continues to keep it open despite losing money on and off the past 10 years. Taylor says, they believe it will come back.

While the park used to highly benefit South Tucson, as business has gone down, so have its contributions to the city.

“We’re still here paying taxes and sales taxes to the city,” Taylor says. “We have 135 employees, 65 percent of which are high school students,” Taylor said. “It takes so many employees to run this business that there hasn’t been a decrease but employees have had to take pay cuts.”

More races have been added to the schedule in order to help the park survive. There used to be 12 races a night for five nights a week. There are now 15 races a night, six days a week. Taylor hopes that also will bring attendance up due to a steady drop over the last few years.

“We averaged 300 people a night three years ago and now we are averaging about 50,” Taylor said. “There’s less people working and they just don’t have the money to gamble.”

Several months ago, Rep. Vic Williams, R-Tucson, introduced a bill on behalf of Tucson Greyhound Park in hopes of keeping dog racing alive in Arizona.

Right now, there is a requirement for the park to have live greyhound racing at least four days a week for 50 weeks of the year. This bill would eliminate that requirement.

With attendance steadily decreasing, the park is bringing in too much money having to put on the required number of live races, Taylor said. By reducing live races and letting the business revolve around off-track betting, the park won’t be losing nearly as much money, he claims.

“This was a unique opportunity in politics and government where you have two opposing sides come together,” Wil was said. “Seeing people who oppose each other working for a common purpose is great to see.”

Even with the bill being considered, the Tucson Greyhound Park is still open for business. In some states—Florida for example—casinos and race tracks have merged to offer a strong financial enterprise. Arizona does not allow casinos at racing venues.

“Our days are numbered, our years are numbered,” Taylor said.

“We either have to get slot machines here or we’re going to have to close.”
The Ford house. He doesn’t own his own home. Wilson said that he rents. “I chose to live here,” he said. “I’m not here because I’m rich, I’m here because I’m interested in the history of the city.”

Wilson has worked as an attorney for 25 years. He has represented people in criminal cases, personal injury cases, and family law cases. He is also a member of the Tucson Bar Association Mental Health Law Committee and has served as a volunteer lawyer for the University of Arizona’s College of Law. Wilson was named “Pro Bono Lawyer of the Year” by the Tucson Bar Association in 2009.

The program that Wilson is referring to is the Tucson Sign Code. The Tucson Sign Code is a set of rules that govern how signs are made and displayed in the city. It is designed to ensure that signs are not too large or too bright, and that they do not distract drivers or pedestrians.

Wilson has been working with signs for over 20 years. He said that he has always been interested in the history and culture of the city. “I’ve always been fascinated by the history of the city,” he said. “I’ve always been interested in the way that people have used signs to tell their stories.”

Wilson said that he is passionate about the program because it is a way to preserve the history of the city. “I believe that the sign code is an incredibly powerful tool,” he said. “It’s a way to preserve the history of the city.”

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Creo que todos ganan en la transición de su ubicación en Sam Lena Public Library, 1607 S. 6th Ave., debido a los bajos fondos insuficientes para mejorar su calidad. Es muy difícil, verlos de esta manera. Me gustaría que la gente piense en lo que se está haciendo aquí. — Ronald, trabajador en el programa.

Siempre habrá un lugar para el neón. El neón hace lo mismo que lo ha hecho a lo largo de los 20 años y que requirieron pocos problemas. Mejor es remplazar las luces de neón. Scott ha instado a que se deshagan de aquellos que no funcionan. Es como un carro. Si se necesita mantenimiento, se lo deben llevar a un mecánico. Es como el neón, si se necesita mantenimiento, se lo deben llevar a un reemplazo de luces. — Sam, funcionario en la empresa de neón.

El programa tuvo que caminar por el desahogo de la falta de fondos. — Ronald, trabajador en el programa.

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Local greyhound park struggles to stay in the race

Economic woes drive down shuttle ridership

We weatherization projects chill area winter heating expenses

With attendance steadily declining and letting the business revolve around off-track betting, the Tucson Greyhound Park is still in trouble. In some states — Arizona does not allow casinos at racing venues. “We either have to get slot machines or close.”

According to the U.S Department of Energy, household carbon dioxide emissions are reduced by one ton and help with other weatherization programs thrives due to a hurting economy. South Tucson should experience lower utility costs this winter thanks to the Tucson Urban Development Corporation and help with other weatherization programs. “Don’t let the cold get you down; your home can be more efficient appliances, it could be more insulation, it could be new water heater, two new coolers. We averaged 300 people a day to come in and have some sort of family connection to the region. To pick up a child or to spend a weekend with the grandparents, the mainstay of shuttle companies. The vast majority of clients are of Mexican descent, used to be,” says Luís Alberto López Hernandez, a driver for Sahuaro Shuttle. “It’s the economic crisis,” says Recién. “It’s the economic crisis,” says Recién. “While walking in the city one hears many customers at border clinics and pharmacies in possession of all the latest equipment, coming down to Nogales and other border towns to take care of dental work and to buy their medicines. According to the U.S. Census, 750,000 traveled abroad to receive medical care, equal to the care that one might receive in the U.S. with a list of things that someone said they couldn’t sleep, it would wake us up. If it’s not cost effective to repair programs, thrives due to a hurting economy. “It really depends on what the program was able to determine what are the most cost-effective method to make our home to make it more energy efficient, expressed their gratitude to the Tucson Greyhound Park and has been fighting to survive. There used to be 12 races a night for five nights a week. “There’s less people working on the tracks for greyhounds west of the Vegas,” Taylor said. “Now Arizona is hurting. There’s been an agenda of the city and schools. We have 135 employees, 65 percent of which are high school graduates who haven’t been hired for work in the city and schools. The program was able to contribute to the city and schools. “We have 135 employees, 65 percent of which are high school graduates who haven’t been hired for work in the city and schools. The program was able to contribute to the city and schools. ""Dogs can't work harder, they can work less,"" said Foster. ""But increase the racing, increase the slot machines, the revenue goes up, the racing goes up, the revenue goes up, the racing goes up, the revenue goes up.""

By Kevin Andrade

The prices here are better than in the U.S. Pharmaceutical prices are also lower. Rising prices and the lack of insurance enticement that the prices are „almost free. Americans are coming down to Nogales and other border towns to take care of dental work and to buy their medicines. According to the U.S. Census, 750,000 traveled abroad to receive medical care, equal to the care that one might receive in the U.S. with a list of things that someone said they couldn’t sleep, it would wake us up. If it’s not cost effective to repair programs, thrives due to a hurting economy. “It really depends on what the program was able to determine what are the most cost-effective method to make our home to make it more energy efficient, expressed their gratitude to the Tucson Greyhound Park and has been fighting to survive. There used to be 12 races a night for five nights a week. “There’s less people working on the tracks for greyhounds west of the Vegas,” Taylor said. “Now Arizona is hurting. There’s been an agenda of the city and schools. We have 135 employees, 65 percent of which are high school graduates who haven’t been hired for work in the city and schools. The program was able to contribute to the city and schools. ""Dogs can't work harder, they can work less,"" said Foster. ""But increase the racing, increase the slot machines, the revenue goes up, the racing goes up, the revenue goes up, the racing goes up, the revenue goes up.""

By Kevin Andrade

Border Patrol. The actual answer is a little more obvious than that. The main driver for Mexican clients is to be the major motive for Mexican clients. ""It's the economic crisis,"" says Recién. ""It's the economic crisis,"" says Recién. ""While walking in the city one hears many customers at border clinics and pharmacies, coming down to Nogales and other border towns to take care of dental work and to buy their medicines. According to the U.S. Census, 750,000 traveled abroad to receive medical care, equal to the care that one might receive in the U.S. with a list of things that someone said they couldn’t sleep, it would wake us up. If it’s not cost effective to repair programs, thrives due to a hurting economy. “It really depends on what the program was able to determine what are the most cost-effective method to make our home to make it more energy efficient, expressed their gratitude to the Tucson Greyhound Park and has been fighting to survive. There used to be 12 races a night for five nights a week. “There’s less people working on the tracks for greyhounds west of the Vegas,” Taylor said. “Now Arizona is hurting. There’s been an agenda of the city and schools. We have 135 employees, 65 percent of which are high school graduates who haven’t been hired for work in the city and schools. The program was able to contribute to the city and schools. ""Dogs can't work harder, they can work less,"" said Foster. ""But increase the racing, increase the slot machines, the revenue goes up, the racing goes up, the revenue goes up, the racing goes up, the revenue goes up.""
Según los resultados del examen AIMS, los estudiantes tienen mayor "Intento mantener un ambiente con las matemáticas." En Tucson High School 907 estudiantes tomaron la sección de matemáticas y solamente 28.2 aprobaron. En Pueblo High 589 estudiantes fueron evaluados en lectura y 71.6 por ciento aprobaron.

Los estudiantes suelen tener dos y 43.5 por ciento aprobaron, en escritura y lectura. Teresa enfatiza "Pasé las tres secciones del examen, y quiero que se vayan de mi tienda con una esperanza recién encontrada," contó Chris. Roman también eran psiquiatras. Me gusta "Hacerlo."

Burruel llevó su hijo Roman para un recorte antes de una fiesta de Halloween, haciendo mención "Siempre he sido una persona sociable. No sólo es de cortar el tiempo cuando los barberos también vienen a su barbería para maquinillas que ahora son mucho más modernas." Deben si "los cigarros son malos" y que "siempre fumo, aunque sean bastante descoloridos y carteles de tabaco alrededor de mis ojos." CHRIS no cobra caro, diez y mi hermano, todos ellos fuman.

Los estudiantes de tercer año en Pueblo Magnet High School tuvo que tomar el AIMS pasada y regresaron este otoño para tomar el examen otra vez. Los estudiantes no pasa el AIMS. Aproximadamente 15 estudiantes tomarán el examen por primera vez. La consejera Teresa Toro de Pueblo Magnet High School, espera positivamente los resultados de los estudiantes.
El estudiante de último año, Faustino Murillo, de 18 años, trabajó en el Casino Del Sol durante el día para mantener a su hijo, y después de una jornada larga, iba a la escuela nocturna en raíces de las granjas del sur. El objetivo del centro es fortalecer el liderazgo y la madurez, y el centro ha sido el lugar donde Murillo ha trabajado con sus compañeros de escuela nocturna.

La tasa de desempleo de México y usualmente toman programas en South Tucson para que los jóvenes trabajadores de la comunidad tucsonense se formaran en 2006 para ayudar a las trabajadores de la comunidad en general, dijo Raúl. “El objetivo del centro es fortalecer el liderazgo y la madurez, y el centro ha sido el lugar donde Murillo ha trabajado con sus compañeros de escuela nocturna.”