City Faces Budget Woes, Cuts Pay For City Workers
By Kathleen Stevens and Dan Sullivan
South Tucson city employees had their salaries cut to control an expected $54,000 budget shortfall.

“The South Tucson City Council unanimously approved a 2 percent cut for every $10,000 the 106 city employees earn to make up for the shortfall in the city’s general fund,” said city clerk Dolores Robles.

The pay cut that began Jan. 25 will reduce City Manager Enique Serna’s salary around 23 percent, and Finance Director Ruben Villa’s salary will fall 17 percent.

“The city could cut $54,000 budget deficit is because of a drop in sales-tax collections revenue and a decline in revenue from the state,” Serna said.

Cities throughout the country are dealing with a decline in rev- enue, and cuts and lay-offs have become commonplace.

Sales take up most of South Tucson’s nearly $5.3 million general fund, Serna said. The city wasn’t much in the city could cut, Serna said. The saving between Serna and Villa alone totals $170,000.

“The good news, of course, is that we didn’t have to entertain any lay-offs,” Serna said. It was city employees who suggested the prog- ressive pay cuts, he said.

The Pima County Public Library describes the program as a chance to give kids a “stress-free” reading environment. Dogs make good book buddies because they don’t judge and they will never stop a child to point out a mistake — only beg for a treat or a pat on the head.

The idea is that reading to a dog builds confidence and confi- dent readers practice more.

“The handler is supposed to be as inert as possible. I won’t butt in unless a kid asks for help, but even then I’ll usually tell them that Penny doesn’t care how they read the story,” Saling said. “It’s actu- ally the perfect job for a dog train- er. We ignore the wrong and rein- force the right.”

Penny is a 3-year-old brown and white beagle-pit bull mix. She drops down on her mat at the library and patiently waits for kids to pet her belly and read her story. Several librarians and a security guard take a break from work to dote over Penny who is wearing a lavender vest that says, “please pet me.”

El Oficial García Se Declara Culpable
Por Dan Sullivan
El jefe de la Policía del Departamento de Policía del Sur de Tucsón (STPD). Era el oficial que recibía cheques del STPD por vehículos incautados y por bienes confiscados, luego lo depositaba en su propia cuenta de las que grababa a sus compañeros de la fuerza de trabajo.

Según los documentos judiciales, Garcia también cambió cheques del Departamento de Seguridad Interna, del Estado de Arizona y de la Secretaría del Tribunal Superior del Condado de Pima y robó dinero, joyas y armas de la sala del departamento donde se almacenaban las pruebas.

“La verdad es que no se pagó la represión.” Según los documentos judiciales, Garcia dijo que robó debido a su adicción por los juegos de azar.

Garcia se enfrenta a una pena de 33 a 41 meses en prisión. Se fijó la sentencia para el 6 de abril.

Local Driver Helps ‘Extreme’ Family
By Colleen Keefe
Roberto Aldrete is a quiet man. He is a giving man.

For the most part, the recipients of his kind gestures catch only brief moments of his presence before he slips into obscurity.

Roberto and his wife Kelly have owned and operated Xtreme Limousine, 6627 S. Tucson Blvd., for the past five years. Roberto, a graduate of Cholla High School, has been in the business for 22 years.

The couple’s family has been touched by cancer and heart dis- ease which has left them both empathetic and philanthropic. They have donated their services fre- quently to families in need, often for funerals.

So to those who know Roberto, it will come as no surprise that he recently gave his services to the Bell family whose home was reno- vated by the reality TV show “Extreme Makeover: Home Edition.” The Bell’s 14-year-old daughter, Lizzie, suffers from a rare blood disorder that requires her to receive transfusions every few weeks. Mounting medical bills coupled with a home in dire need of repair and Lizzie’s own dedica- tion to community service prompt- ed a visit from ABC’s show hosted by Ty Pennington.

It’s a great thing when people can come together and help — to give back to the community,” Roberto says.

Just after the first of the year, Roberto provided services to the families of the young cousins bru- taly beaten with a baseball bat in Phoenix. He also offered his servic- es for the funeral procession of Officer Erik Hite who was killed in the line of duty in June 2008.

He was recommended for the Extreme Makeover job by employ- ees at On A Roll, a sushi bar on Congress Street. The producers were talking about needing a limo and employees knew Roberto...
Se Instalarán Cruces Peatonales de Alta Intensidad

Por Taylor Avery

Dos de las intersecciones en una de las calles más transitadas del sur de Tucson serán mejoradas pronto.

En el cruce de las calles 31 y 34 en Sixth Avenue, se instalarán cruces peatonales activados de alta intensidad, o HAWKs (por sus siglas en inglés). Los HAWKs, también conocidos como cruces peatonales con señalización intermitente, tratan de reducir la velocidad del tráfico y el riesgo de accidentes peatonales.

“Hay una gran cantidad de movimiento peatonal en esa área”, dice James DeGrood, director de los servicios de transporte de la Asociación de Gobiernos de Pima. La Autoridad Regional de Transporte, RTA (por sus siglas en inglés), proveerá fondos para el proyecto.

“Estamos en construcción y en funcionamiento durante la primavera y el verano”, dijo DeGrood. “La construcción es bastante rápida pero el trabajo con la TEP [Compañía de energía eléctrica de Tucson] tardará cierto tiempo para que funcione.”

DeGrood, quien trabaja para el RTA, dice que se realizó un estudio de seguridad vial en las intersecciones. Para hacer este estudio invitaron a un equipo de inge nieros de seguridad para averiguar si las intersecciones eran áreas con mayor problemas.

Hay una gran cantidad de tráfico peatonal en la intersección de Sixth Avenue y la Calle 31. Los estudiantes de la escuela Mission View lo utilizan frecuentemente.

Santa Rita Skate Park Nears Completion

By Max Voege

Despite nearly a decade of neighborhood division and controversy, Santa Rita Park is preparing to open a new skate park that will be free to the public.

Santa Rita Skate Park, 400 E. 22nd St., will be a completely public park compared to other Tucson skate parks that require membership fees much like the Ott Family YMCA, which can cost up to $10 for a non-member adult. The Randolph Center and Purple Heart Skate Parks are also public and operated by the city of Tucson.

Although getting the project underway was a struggle, construction has been on target with the proposed plans. Neighbors slowed the process by opposing the park’s construction because of safety concerns for the children from supposed drug use in the park.

Others supported it because it will give kids somewhere to exercise and have an after-school activity to keep them out of trouble. With construction underway, neighbors will have to wait and see how the community and kids will be affected.

“Everything has been going according to plan since construction started in October,” said Henry Inzuana, the park’s contractor and superintendent for Environmental Strategies Inc. There is no official completion or grand opening date set.

The style of the Santa Rita Skate Park is different from others around town in that parks such as Celestial and Randolph Center are more street-style. These parks consist of ramps strategically set up across a flat expanse of pavement. This set up allows skaters to string a variety of tricks together.

Santa Rita Skate Park strictly has “bowls” which resemble empty swimming pools with pipes lining the rim for grinding tricks on. This affords skateboarders another option rather than going from one street-style park to another.

Tucson Councilman to Retire at End of ‘09

By Mike Luke

After serving Tucson’s south side and downtown communities for more than 20 years, Ward 5 councilman Steve Leal will not seek re-election at the end of his term expires in December 2009.

Since being elected to the Tucson City Council in 1989, Leal has been the driving force behind the building of four neighborhood recreation centers, as well as a medical center, library and adult education facilities, to serve Ward 5 residents.

“This area is a lot different than it was in previous years,” said Manny Grijalva, a longtime resident of Ward 5.

Grijalva credits the presence of the community centers such as El Pueblo Neighborhood Center which includes a senior center, a clinic, after school childcare, basketball leagues, a social lounge and youth programs, for helping to improve the community.

“There are a lot more places for young adults to go and spend their time constructively,” Grijalva said. “A lot of things we take for granted grew up in California and graduated from the University of California-Santa Cruz before moving to Tucson in 1977 where he enrolled in the political science graduate program at the University of Arizona.

But after two decades of service to Tucson, Leal thinks it’s time for a change. “I need some time to apply attention to family that I otherwise wouldn’t be able to do if I was still on city council,” Leal said.

Leal supports Richard Fimbres, as his replacement on the council. Although Leal is retiring at the end of the year, he will continue working for the community.

“I plan on continuing to work on issues such as sustainability, civil rights and arts, culture and history,” Leal said. “I just won’t walk away from the issues I care about.”

Santa Rita Skate Park Nears Completion

By Max Voege

Henry Inzuana, site contractor and superintendent, left, instructs employee Freddy Moza as they put the finishing touches on Santa Rita Skate Park.
Es necesario que las niñas menores de 13 años vayan acompañadas por adultos, pero las niñas con mayor edad pueden usar el local después de la escuela y a lo largo del verano.

La estancia está designada también como un “lugar seguro”. Por medio del programa National Safe Place (Programa nacional de lugares seguros), jóvenes menores de 18 años pueden recibir cualquier clase de asistencia de parte de los empleados y voluntarios.

La nueva estancia de lectura funcionará como un refugio seguro y un entorno positivo de aprendizaje y entretenimiento para las niñas de Tucson.
South Tucson Studio Keeps Kids Dancing

By Veronica Cruz

It all started with a simple dance step and a $5 bet.

At a Memorial Day barbecue a couple of years ago, Joseph Rodgers, a professional ballet dancer and instructor, offered a friend’s son a few dollars if he could master an easy step he’s taught scores of children.

Other kids began to pour out of the house, eager to learn the move and soon Rodgers was teaching tendus and plisé, classic ballet steps, to a group of 40 kids gathered in the middle of a south side neighborhood street.

It was then that Rodgers realized these kids had something special.

Rodgers, 46, and wife Solente Lupu, 44, have been feeding those hungry souls and enriching the lives of south side youth by opening the doors to their non-profit dance studio, Dancing in the Streets Arizona, 2302 S. Fourth Ave., in August 2008.

The couple is committed to providing a creative outlet in a community where performing arts programs are almost non-existent.

“I’m just trying to reclaim this side of town,” Rodgers said. “I think it’s been in the dark too long.”

Having grown up in the South Park Neighborhood, Rogers is all too familiar with the pressures that youth face, adding that little has improved since he has been away for more than two decades.

“It’s the same crack, same prostitution, same poverty,” he said.

Rodgers began studying ballet at the Tucson Academy of Dance with Maria Morton, who offered him a full scholarship after meeting and attending classes with Morton and other educational events.


The project will include research and policies and to promote solidarity among people affected by border policies.

The project is named after Father Eusebio Francisco Kino, a Jesuit priest who founded many missions in southwestern North America, in what is now northern Sonora, Southern California, and Southern Arizona.

“We took his name because he is one of the most recognized of the European missionaries,” said the Rev. Peter Neeley, director of the KBI education project, and “was the first Jesuit to explore this area.”

While KBI is Jesuit-led, it is not a religious organization, Neeley said, but rather, a non-profit social service and they welcome volunteers from all paths.

In all respects, KBI “is something beyond the borders,” said Peter Neeley, Director, KBI Education Project.

Across the street from CAMDEP, the eight-bed Casa de Atencion para los Migrantes de Norte America, in what is now northern Sonora, Southern California, and Southern Arizona.

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senator from Illinois, announced he
Obama Inauguration Inspires Hope in Tucson

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Reading to Dogs Boosts Confidence

Two year-old Gabriel Saling has been reading to a black Labrador named Penny at the Tucson library's children's section since January 2007. He reads to Penny as part of a program that encourages children to read to dogs to help build their reading skills and confidence.

The program, called "Read to a Dog," is part of a larger initiative to promote healthy living in the community. It is sponsored by four different organizations: the Tucson Public Library, the city of Tucson, the University of Arizona, and the Arizona Humane Society.

Gabriel, who is in second grade, says that reading to Penny is fun because she is a good listener. He especially enjoys reading the book "Green Eggs and Ham" by Dr. Seuss. After Gabriel reads, Penny has a chance to read back to him. If they both like the story, they will continue reading.

The program is designed to help children develop a love of reading and improve their reading skills. It also encourages children to get involved in their community and to give back to others.

Gabriel's mother, Sarah, says that reading to Penny has helped her son become more confident and to enjoy reading. She believes that reading to dogs is a great way for children to learn how to read.

The program is open to children of all ages and is held at several locations throughout the city. It is free and open to the public.

To learn more about the program or to sign up, contact the Tucson Public Library at 737-8165.
Tucsonans Celebrate Martin Luther King Jr.

Photo by Nyssa Baca

Barbara Arissa, from the Altrusa women's service group, helps Brownie Elisabeth Smith, 7, make a sock puppet at the grand opening of the Bookmans Low Lounge in January.

ABOVE: Members from the Rejoice Star Missionary Baptist Church sing together as they lead the annual Martin Luther King Jr. Day March from the University of Arizona campus to Reid Park. TOP LEFT: Clarence Boykin, speaker, talks with Otis Brown before introducing the pastor to the audience on the university mall. BOTTOM LEFT: Holly Page paints children’s faces in Reid Park. Page is part of a performing arts group called Arts for Life.

Scholarship Opportunities Available for Local Students

By Melissa V. Teran

High school seniors preparing for college should already be aware that higher education comes with a price, but paying off school tuition doesn’t have to be as hard as some may think. This is the time of year when students should take advantage of scholarship opportunities to help cover tuition expenses.

Scholarships are widely available, usually free to apply for, and unlike loans, don’t have to be paid back.

To learn more about scholarships, students should utilize their high school counselors. They are prepared to assist students with resumes, scholarship essays and any additional questions the student may have while completing applications.

“We really try to recruit kids and try to push it on them,” said Teresa Torres, academic counselor at Pueblo Magnet High School. “We educate our seniors to apply.”

Another source for scholarship information is the Internet.

“Every place you look there is, nine times out of 10, a link to scholarship information,” said Holly Colonna, coordinator for the Tucson Unified School District Counseling Department. “It’s become easier than it used to be.”

A wide variety of scholarships are available for every kind of student and are not limited to students with outstanding grade point averages, according to Denise Kingman, senior counselor at Cholla Magnet High School.

Specific scholarships are designated for people who have extracurricular strengths in community services and special interests.

“Generally they are looking for well-rounded students,” said Kingman.

Sites such as http://www.fast-web.com provide the user with scholarship applications that meet their specific qualifications and interests, based on previously entered information.

Websites can provide students with scholarships specifically tailored to their desired school of choice. For example, at the University of Arizona, the Hispanic Alumni Club offers scholarships to Chicanos preparing to attend.

For more information on other scholarships in Arizona, students should visit:

- The Arizona Scholarship Foundation http://www.arzoom.org/
- The Tucson Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce http://www.tucsonchamber.org/
- Arizona State University Financial Aid Office http://students.asu.edu/financial-aid

Tucsonans Celebrate Martin Luther King Jr.

Photo by Nyssa Baca

ABOVE: Members from the Rejoice Star Missionary Baptist Church sing together as they lead the annual Martin Luther King Jr. Day March from the University of Arizona campus to Reid Park. TOP LEFT: Clarence Boykin, speaker, talks with Otis Brown before introducing the pastor to the audience on the university mall. BOTTOM LEFT: Holly Page paints children’s faces in Reid Park. Page is part of a performing arts group called Arts for Life.
February 13 / 13 de febrero 2009

By Ali Vieth

Feb. 21 - Feb. 22

Southwest Indian Art Fair

Come celebrate the 15th Annual Southwest Indian Art Fair at the Arizona State Museum inside the Main Gate at University Boulevard and Park Avenue. The show will feature more than 200 artists, performers and demonstrators. Single day admission is $8 for adults and $4 for children 12 to 16. Admission is free for the University of Arizona and Pima Community College students with a school ID and children under the age of 12. For more information visit www.statemuseum.arizona.edu or call 621-6302.

Feb. 21 - March 1

Tucson Rodeo

Enjoy an afternoon at the Tucson Rodeo, where you can see the current and former Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association world champions competing in one of the top 20 rodeos in the country. There will be seven professional rodeo events at the Tucson Rodeo Grounds, 4823 S. Sixth Ave. Tickets range from $12 to $20 when purchased 24 hours in advance and $14 to $22 at the gate. All seats reserved. Parking is free. For more information visit www.tucsonrodeo.com or call 741-2233.

Feb. 22

YMCA Annual 5K Run/Walk

Come join the fun with hundreds of Tucsonans at the fifth annual Lighthouse/City YMCA 5K Run/Walk and SilverSneakers 2 Mile Fun Walk. Runners and walkers of all ages and levels are invited to participate. There will be free day care, T-shirts, live music, a rock climbing wall, raffle prizes, food and drinks. All proceeds will be donated to the YMCA’s Changing Lives program, which funds scholarships for Tucson youth and families. The event will begin at 8:30 a.m. Admission is $20. For more information call 885-2782 or visit www.tucsonymca.org.

Feb. 22

“Footloose” at PCC

Pima Community College Theatre Arts will be performing the high-energy musical “Footloose” at the Prospector Theatre at Pima Community College West, 2202 W. Anklam Road. Performances are Wednesday through Saturday at 7:30 p.m. and Sunday at 2 p.m. Admission is $18 with discounts available. For more information visit www.pima.edu or call 206-6986.

Feb. 25 - March 8

“Footloose” at PCC

Feb. 25 - April 2

MLB Spring Training

Major League Baseball is kicking off another year of spring training in Tucson. Come watch the Arizona Diamondbacks and Colorado Rockies take on other big league teams at Tucson Electric Park and Hi Corbett Field. Tickets are on sale now. For more information visit www.visittucson.org/events/springtraining. For Diamondbacks tickets call 1-866-767-1342 and for Rockies ticket call 1-800-388-ROCK.

March 13 – March 15

Festival of Books

Tucson's first Festival of Books is coming to the University of Arizona campus. More than 250 authors are expected to be in attendance. Proceeds from event sponsorships will benefit local literacy groups and programs in the Tucson area. Admission is free and the event begins at 7:30 a.m. For more information visit www.tucsonfestivalofbooks.org or call 626-5653.

February 13 - 13 de febrero 2009

EL INDEPENDIENTE

February 13 / 13 de febrero 2009

By Ali Vieth

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Traducido por Diana Núñez

Feb. 21 de febrero – 22 de febrero

Feria de arte indígena

Vengan a celebrar la Decimocuarta Feria Anual de Arte Indígena del Sureste en el Arizona State Museum, dentro del recinto universitario en University Boulevard y Park Avenue. La exposición presentará a más de 200 artistas plásticos, actores e intérpretes. La entrada es de $8 para adultos y $3 para los menores de 12 a 16 años de edad. Para los estudiantes de la Universidad de Arizona y Pima Community College, la entrada es gratuita. Los boletos de los Rockies al 1-800-388-ROCK.

22 de febrero

Carrera/Caminata Anual

Una a la diversión con centos de tucanos en La Quinta Lighthouse/City YMCA 5K Run/Walk y SilverSneakers 2 Mile Fun Walk. Están invitados a par- ticipar los corredores y caminantes de todas las edades. Habrá guardería gratis, camisetas, música en vivo, una pared de alpinismo, premios de réplicas, comida y refres- cos. Todos los ingresos serán donados a la campaña YMCAs’ Changing Lives, que provee fondos para becas a la juventud y familias de Tucsón. Este evento comenzará a las 8:30 a.m. y la entrada es de $20. Si desea más información llame al 1-866-672-1343 y para los boletos de los Rockies al 1- 800-388-ROCK.

13 de marzo – 15 de marzo

Festival de libros

La primera feria de libros de Tucsón llegará al campus de la Universidad de Arizona. Se espera la asistencia de más de 250 autores. Los ingresos generados por la patrocinación del evento beneficiarán a los grupos literarios locales y a los programas en el área de Tucsón. La entrada es gra- tuita y el evento comienza a las 7:30 a.m. Si desea más informa- ción visite www.library.tucsonfestival- book.org o llame al 626-5633.

Upcoming community events can be submitted to El Independiente at elin@email.com. Event notices are published at least two weeks in advance.