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In Focus

Are we there yet?

It's been three months since Arizona Senate Republicans launched an unprecedented investigation into the 2020 election of President Joe Biden.

Yes, the audit that was supposed to last 60 days remains in full-swing – and there appears to be no end in sight.

On Thursday, Arizona Senate President Karen Fann, former Secretary of State Ken Bennett and the army of Cyber Ninjas hired to oversee the review held a **preliminary briefing** that many hoped would offer a clear picture into the months-long investigation, and possibly signal that a conclusion to their work may be on the horizon. That now appears unlikely.

Instead, President Fann and Head Ninja Doug Logan announced they don't have enough information to finish the report, and would need more materials and data from Maricopa County.

Among the records they're seeking are images of mail-in ballot envelopes, a copy of the county's voter-registration database and internet routers, which auditors believe may prove voting machines were connected to the internet during the election. **The county has remained firm in its refusal to provide the routers**, noting a previous independent audit already disproved that theory and citing security risks to residents and county officials.

All of this inevitably sets the stage for yet another legal battle in the ongoing war between state and local officials over what the Legislature does and does not have the authority to subpoena.

In other words ... see you in court.

VERIDUS CLIENTS IN THE NEWS



Secretary of Ed visits with Tohono O'odham education leaders and students

Arizona Daily Star

Improving educational opportunities was at the forefront of a visit by U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona to Tohono O'odham Community College, where he heard from students and education leaders and spoke about federal agendas that would invest in all students as well as tribal colleges and universities.

“We know the pandemic has made worse gaps that existed and challenges that existed across our country,” said Cardona, who was joined by Rep. Raúl M. Grijalva on July 15. “And we have more work ahead to not only address those issues but to do right by our students and give them more opportunity than ever before.”

The Build Back Better agenda includes three parts, only one of which has been passed so far. The American Rescue Plan passed by Congress in March was the first part. That \$1.9 trillion economic stimulus bill included up to \$1,400

checks for individuals and \$250 to \$300 monthly child tax credits that started going out to eligible families today.

‘Ocean of Obstacles’ Chronicles 12 Blind Phoenix Teens’ Sailing Feat

Phoenix

When Phoenix film director Louie Duran came up with the idea for his new documentary *Ocean of Obstacles*, he had one goal in mind – to show that being without sight should not matter. A dozen Phoenix youths, nicknamed the blind buccaneers, were there to help him tell that story.

Set off the shores of Puerto Rico, the movie chronicles the adventures of the dozen blind teenagers from the desert as they test their courage and determination navigating the open waters across the Spanish Virgin Islands aboard three catamarans – aided by three veteran captains, for safety. The 82-minute film traces the students, who were recruited from Phoenix’s Foundation for Blind Children, from the outset, showing them learning the rigors of nautical life while discovering a little about themselves during their 2018 trip. As with other challenge events put on by the foundation, such as climbing Mount Kilimanjaro or hiking rim-to-rim at the Grand Canyon, the challenge was steep.

Along the way, friendships are made and new experiences are absorbed. Take the time a rare school of dolphins visited the buccaneers as they were diving near the boats. Or an impromptu linking of arms captured during an uphill hike amid a driving rain. And there was the victory dance, complete with power hymns like “We are the Champions,” when the all-girl boat beat the others to shore.

“I wanted to show people you shouldn’t let obstacles in life hold you back,” Duran says. “Even if you can’t see them.” He adds that the teenagers quickly adapted to life on the boats.

ESA Leadership Desk: A Nation of Video Game Players

theESA.com

We are a nation of video game players. This became increasingly clear during the global COVID-19 pandemic, as we all adapted to working, learning and playing at home. People from all walks of life reached for video games to find joy, connection and a sense of belonging when it was needed most. And games continue to be a positive source of entertainment and comfort.

This year's **2021 Essential Facts about the Video Game Industry** is a snapshot of the American video game playing community following a year of social distancing, just as the country was starting to open again. Today, nearly 227 million Americans play video games. Players across the country embrace the ability of games to inspire, provide stress relief and mental stimulation or simply bring joy through play.

Flu cases remain low, but see slight increase due to less health protocols

FOX10

After a historically mild flu season, common colds and other viruses are now popping up in parts of the country, including in Arizona. Doctors are attributing this to an ease in the health protocols people followed during the COVID-19 pandemic.

While numbers for these viruses are still low, there's an uptick in cases compared to numbers that are usual for the summertime.

"Typically you don't see common cold this time of year or RSV this time of year," said Dr. Frank LoVecchio from Valleywise Health.

In other parts of the country, illnesses are increasing and doctors say it could be an indication of what to expect this flu season.

"Some places in the country are seeing a little uptick in the common cold and RSV, some places are saying the reason is because we have loosened social distancing," LoVecchio said.

There were record lows of flu cases due to the pandemic and doctors say it was due to social distancing, people staying home while they are sick and wearing masks.

Schools train for active shooter situations

KVOA

Critical emergency preparedness and crisis response training is being provided to teachers and school staff across Tucson.

The Pima County Sheriff's Office is working with other agencies to bring the training to local schools.

Monday, Legacy Traditional School in Marana learned how to react in active shooter situations.

"Unfortunately, across the nation school violence and school shooting events happen every so often and we just want educators to have a plan or be prepared," said Sergeant Cris Gonzales with Pima County Sheriff's Office.

Teachers were placed in four different scenarios and had to respond to the situation. In one situation, a student brought a gun to school and was threatening to hurt himself. In others, there were active shooters on campus. A student actor is shot in one of the simulations.

Veridus is proud to represent a true "who's who" roster of premier members of the business community. The Veridus Weekly has proven to be an excellent opportunity to highlight key announcements, activities, etc. If you would like to feature something in an upcoming issue, reply to this email or send information to info@veridus.com.

IN OTHER NEWS ...

Maricopa County will spend millions to replace voting machines turned over to the Arizona Senate for audit

Arizona Republic

Maricopa County will spend nearly \$3 million to replace voting equipment that officials say was permanently tainted by the Arizona Senate's election review.

The county will spend millions to purchase and then destroy the old equipment that was subpoenaed for the audit as well as for new systems before the upcoming elections.

The Board of Supervisors voted unanimously for the funding after the county announced June 28 it would not reuse most of the voting equipment that was in the possession of contractors for the audit.

Secretary of State Katie Hobbs had previously warned the county that her office would move to decertify the machines if officials tried to use them in another election, citing concerns about the chain of custody after the Senate took possession of them.

Feds will keep definition of metro at 50,000-person minimum

Arizona Capitol Times

Facing criticism from small cities that feared losing status and funding, the federal government said Tuesday that it won't raise the population threshold for what qualifies as a metro area.

The Office of Budget and Management said it will keep the minimum population needed in a community's core city at 50,000 residents in order to be designated a "**metropolitan statistical area**," also known as an MSA.

The federal government had been considering doubling that threshold to 100,000 people. Under that earlier proposal, 144 cities with core populations of 50,000 to 99,000 were at risk of becoming "micropolitan statistical areas" instead. The proposal would have changed the designation of more than a third of the current 392 MSAs.

In case you missed it . . .

Arizona news:

Ducey creates \$101M grant program to market Arizona as tourism destination

Democrats to take on Supreme Court after justices uphold Arizona election laws

Feds: AZ can't use federal COVID relief funds for tax cuts

Extra \$300 in unemployment benefits ending this week in Arizona

Arizona governor allows lawmakers to boost expense pay

Arizona Senate ballot recount expected to start Tuesday; rest of audit scheduled to end this week

National news:

US to evacuate Afghans who assisted US military

Biden to nominate Arizona Republican Jeff Flake as ambassador to Turkey

Senate Democrats announce \$3.5-trillion budget agreement for climate change, healthcare

Consumer prices rise 0.9 percent, inflation up 5.4 percent in June

Inflation accelerates to 5.4% in May as overheating fears swirl

Blake Masters enters GOP Senate race, saying age, political experience 'overrated'

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