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122nd YEAR, 251st ISSUE



**Cold trek**  
Man makes solo trip across Antarctica unaided/C5



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Today's high: 65°  
Details on C5

\$1.00



**YEAR IN REVIEW**

# County sees progress, better financial state

**BY BLAKE HERZOG**  
@BLAKEHERZOG

*Editor's Note: As 2018 comes to a close, the Yuma Sun reporting staff met with local government officials for a look back at the year. This story is one in a series called "2018: Year in Review."*

The year 2018 was a pe-

riod of continued progress in expanding services to Yuma County residents despite continuing state budget mandates hitting the bottom line, officials said this month.

This was enabled in part by improving financial conditions outside the offices and some penny-pinching from within, County Ad-

ministrator Susan Thorpe said.

"The economy has gotten better so our financial stability is there; it's not booming, but we're in better shape than we were before," she said.

The county Board of Supervisors has been committed to shoring up the county's general fund reserves,

and have gotten an assist from staff, she added.

"I think the general fund balance is around \$20 million right now, we were forecasting about \$14 million, \$15 million. But we ended up really underspending our budget this year so we've got a lot more that went into the fund balance as we go into the new

fiscal year, so that's good news," she said.

While the state Legislature afforded Yuma and other counties one-time relief from some statewide obligations, it was hit by a \$757,000 spike in required contributions to the Elected Officials Retirement Program, which factored into how the board struc-

tured its property tax rates for the fiscal year that began in July.

Thorpe said one significant cost-cutting move the county made was to contract with the state Department of Corrections for workers.

"We're getting a lot of good skilled labor for a very  
SEE COUNTY/A5



## Right on cue

With near perfect timing, a Christmas cactus busts out in bright blooms at a home in the Yuma Valley. Christmas cactus, according to Dictionary.com, is native to Brazil, with "branching stems of glossy green, flat, broad, tooth-edged sections, the tips of which bear long flowers, typically red or pink, with recurved outer petals. Christmas cacti are widely cultivated as houseplants."



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PHOTOS BY RANDY HOEFT/YUMA SUN

## Cold front expected in region

**BY BLAKE HERZOG**  
@BLAKEHERZOG

A cold front is expected to rumble through Yuma County beginning today, with freeze watches issued for outlying areas for Friday and Saturday nights and into the following mornings.

Sean Benedict, a meteorologist for the Phoenix office of the National Weather Service, said the watches have been issued for areas along the Colorado

River north of Yuma and the Gila Valley, running east from Ligurta east to Dateland.

"We're looking at temperatures as low as 29 in some of those areas out there," he said. "It may vary again as you get into the deserts away from the towns, they might get a little colder."

A freeze "watch" means sub-freezing temperatures are possible, which could destroy or damage crops or other sensitive plants. Residents should

start planning to bring pets and sensitive plants indoors, as well as dress themselves warmly.

The watch will turn into a more definitive freeze warning closer to Friday night if forecast predictions persist, Benedict said.

As of Wednesday evening, today's forecast high temperature for Marine Corps Air Station-Yuma was 65 degrees,  
SEE COLD/A5



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PHOTO BY RANDY HOEFT/YUMA SUN

**COPING WITH FREEZING TEMPERATURES** and frozen crops, black plastic covers rows of lettuce in a field in the Gila Valley in this February 2011 photo. The black plastic helps promote the thawing of the frozen lettuce so it can be harvested.

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