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Yuma Sun

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 28, 2018

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YEAR IN REVIEW

Wellton tries reviving golf course

BY BLAKE HERZOG
@BLAKEHERZOG

The town of Wellton's 2018 was spent shoring up the Coyote Wash Golf Course while signs of a new growth spurt began to sprout in the east Yuma County community.

Town Manager Larry Killman said taking over management of the town-owned golf course from previous leaseholder John Bass on May 1 was the biggest project Wellton had to take on, due to the condition its 18 holes were in.

"We've put \$400,000 into it in the first six months, just basically sprinkler systems, and trying to fix things that haven't been replaced. It was run-down, really bad," he said.

That is a big chunk of change for a town with just 3,197 residents, according to the most recent state population estimates. It helped push the budget into the red at the end of the fiscal year in June, Killman said.

But finances at the golf course have already begun to turn around, he said, with the number of players up 10 percent and \$108,000 in revenue raised in November alone, so some of that is going back into the



YUMA SUN FILE PHOTO

IMPROVEMENTS TO THE TOWN'S GOLF COURSE are helping property values in the surrounding neighborhoods, Wellton officials say.

town's reserve funds.

In November town voters approved a ballot question giving the town permission to sell the golf course if an offer was made, but Killman said nothing is on the table.

The town held an open house and grand re-opening event at the golf

course on Dec. 15 to welcome the community, which roughly doubles in size with the annual influx of winter visitors.

Wellton Mayor Cecilia McCollough said in an email this week the golf course was indeed one of the top accomplishments of the year: "Credit to Mr. Killman and

town staff working hard on turning it around.

"The grounds are greatly improved and the recent grand opening and open house was a success. Efforts to increase player numbers are in full force."

The Coyote Wash housing development and other parts of town are beginning to see more homes built again.

"We're trying to promote the whole area out there, because we built 13 homes total in the town last year. I got six under construction right now. So it's starting to turn," Killman said.

He said the improvements to the golf course are helping property values in the surrounding neighborhoods, and the rest of the town seems to be garnering some attention as well.

"We're starting to see some interest, because at this point we're 5 to 10 percent cheaper than the Foothills, even. And the commute, it's 18 minutes to the Foothills. So that's good to see, and prices are still down, but if we get some activity, it's really a good time to buy," he said.

SEE WELLTON/A5



PHILLIP MARTIN

Police arrest jewelry robbery suspect

BY JAMES GILBERT
@YSJAMESGILBERT

Yuma police have arrested a man suspected of robbing more than \$4,000 worth of jewelry from a Zales jewelry store earlier this month.

The suspect, identified as 29-year-old Phillip Martin, made his initial appearance in court Thursday afternoon, where he was informed by Justice of the Peace Greg Stewart of the charges pending against him, which are robbery and assault.

Stewart also told Martin that he is scheduled to return to court on Monday for his arraignment, at which time he will be informed whether a criminal complaint has been filed against him and what, if any, charges it contains.

Martin remains in custody at Yuma County jail, where he is being held on a \$75,000 bond.

According to Yuma police, at about 2:50 p.m. Friday, Dec. 14, officers responded to Zales, located at 1401 S. Yuma Palms Parkway, after receiving a report of a robbery.

The investigation revealed a male suspect with tattoos entered the business and took jewelry. He then fled the area after

SEE ARREST/A5



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PHOTO BY BLAKE HERZOG/YUMA SUN

DURING 2018, THE TOWN OF WELLTON SPENT ABOUT \$400,000 TO UPGRADE the Coyote Wash Golf Course after taking over operations in May from a previous leaseholder.

390 local high school students graduate from ASU academy

Program completes its first semester here

BY BLAKE HERZOG
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An Arizona State University-sponsored program for high school students and their families just completed its first semester in Yuma County schools, with 390 graduating from the program.

This is the American Dream Academy's first expansion outside of Maricopa County after 12 years, said Laura Corr, program

manager and an education professor with ASU's Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College in Yuma.

"I didn't know what to expect when we first brought it out to Yuma. I wasn't sure how school districts were going to receive it, but boy, it's been taking off and we've got some wonderful support from the community members, from the principals.

"We've just partnered with AWC, what an excit-

ing partnership that is, and it's just been an amazing experience out here," she said.

Once the academy comes onto a campus, any student in any grade is eligible to participate.

Some Yuma County students who complete the program are eligible for a one-time "promise award" of \$500 toward tuition at Arizona Western College

SEE ACADEMY/A5



PHOTO COURTESY OF ARIZONA WESTERN COLLEGE

A YUMA HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT RECEIVES HER GRADUATION certificate from Assistant Principal Delia Castro after completing Arizona State University's American Dream Academy. A total of 89 families graduated from the program at Yuma High this semester.

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