

# Class of 2025



YAQUI TIMES PRESENTS

# GRADUATION

*Edition*

YAQUI TIMES

FROM THE DESK OF CHAIRMAN

provided a powerful platform for our people to voice their hopes, concerns, and visions for the future.

JULIAN HERNANDEZ
PASCUA YAQUI CHAIRMAN

Reflections on Our First Year Together

Yaqui Times – July 2025 Edition

Lios enchim aniavu,

Reflecting on this first year serving as your Tribal Chairman, I am reminded daily of the strength and spirit that define our people. It has been a year of listening, learning, and leading together, a time of transition, growth, and renewed commitment to our shared vision of sovereignty, cultural preservation, and generational prosperity.

From day one, our administration has prioritized collaboration and service. We've worked to ensure that decisions made by Tribal Council reflect the values and aspirations of our people. Whether it was amending council schedules to honor our students' graduations or supporting leadership transitions within our departments, our focus has remained the same: to uplift our community and protect our future.

One of the most meaningful milestones this year has been our community's active engagement in the Tribal Council Community Meetings and Constitution meetings. In this first year, the Tribal Council made three visits to each of our Tribal communities, a commitment to being present, listening, and learning firsthand from our members. These gatherings have

Tribal sovereignty is not just a policy; it is a living, breathing expression of our right to self-govern and shape our future. These meetings have reaffirmed that our strength is in our collective voice.

We are taking steps to strengthen collaboration across our tribal departments. By fostering a culture of unity and shared purpose, we are better equipped to address the evolving needs of our community. At the same time, we are exploring ways to enhance services that support personal growth and opportunity, so that every member has the tools and confidence to thrive. We aim to create pathways that promote independence and long-term well-being, while continuing to honor our responsibility to care for one another.

As we look ahead, our path is clear, and our purpose is strong. We will continue to advocate for sovereignty, development, and advancement. We will deepen our investment in cultural preservation and do so together, Yaqui strong, Yaqui proud.

To every community member, thank you for your trust, your voice, and your commitment. This first year has laid the foundation for a legacy we will build together.

In strength and service,
Julian Hernandez
Chairman, Pascua Yaqui Tribe

TREASURER'S OFFICE STATEMENT

THOMAS J. CUPIS
TRIBAL COUNCIL TREASURER

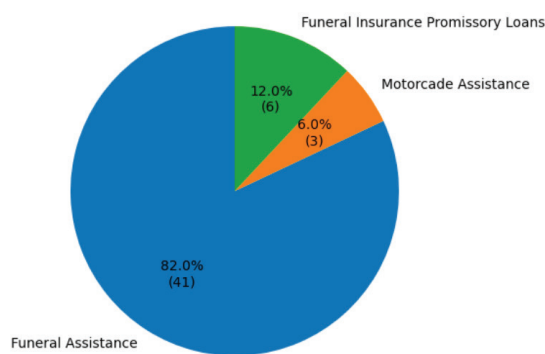
tal assistance provided amounted to \$63,999.16.

Types of Assistance Provided

The program offered three main types of financial support:

- Funeral Assistance: 41 families
Motorcade Assistance: 3 families

Distribution of Assistance Types Among Families



- Funeral Insurance Promissory Loans: 6 families

The program provided the following forms of non-financial support:

- Cigarettes, Firewood, Ramada, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), Portable Handwashing/Restrooms, Paper goods and Water.

The Tribal Council continues to strengthen our policies and procedures, ensuring community members can fully understand the support available to them and fostering equitable distribution of resources and funding for all Tribal Members and Yoeme communities. These resources include employee PTO requests, the 12% Gaming Revenue Sharing Funds Program, and Tribal Council Assistant Programs.

The Tribal Council's commitment to transparency remains a priority. Accountability starts with financial transparency. Below is a financial overview of the Tribal Council Assistant Programs, where all tribal members can seek financial support, subject to the availability of adopted funding. Reporting Period: Fiscal Year 2025, October 2024 – May 2025

Funeral Assistance Report

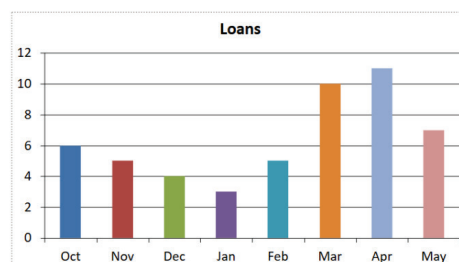
The Funeral Assistance Program's mission is to alleviate some of the burdens of Wakes, Lutos, and Novenarios arrangements for families in need. During the reporting period, 50 families were supported, reflecting the program's ongoing commitment to cultural sensitivity and compassionate support for families during times of mourning. The to-

Tribal Employee Hardship Loans Report

The Office of the Treasurer processed 51 employee loans during the fiscal year. This financial support has played a crucial role in helping employees manage unexpected expenses. These loans were primarily requested for vehicle repairs (39%), reflecting a consistent need for transportation-related financial support among tribal enrolled employees. Government Employees were the recipients of most of these loans, with a smaller portion going to Casino Employees:

- Government Employees: 45 loans

Monthly Loan Distribution Chart



- Casino Employees: 6 loans

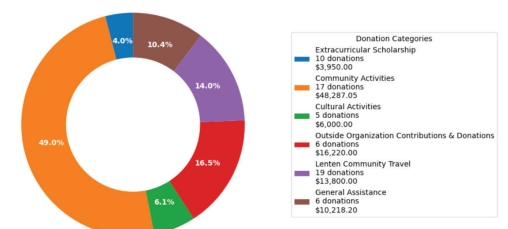
The total amount disbursed through these loans was \$77,700.00. Eligible employees can borrow up to \$2,000 through the Tribal Employee Hardship Loan initiative.

Donations Report

From October 2024 through May 2025, the Office of the Treasurer prepared 63 donation requests and submitted them to the Tribal Council for review and voting. These contributions reflect the Tribal Council's commitment to enhancing support for community needs, cultural engagement, and individual assistance. The total financial support provided through these donations amounted to \$98,475.25

The distribution of donations per category is as follows:

- Extracurricular Scholarship 10 contributions, totaling (\$3,950.00).
Community Activities 17 contributions, totaling (\$48,287.05).
Cultural Activities 5 contributions, totaling (\$6,000.00).
Outside Organization Contributions & Donations 6 contributions totaling (\$16,220.00).
Lenten Community Travel



## TREASURER'S CONT.

19 contributions, totaling (\$13,800.00).

- General Assistance 6 contributions, totaling (\$10,218.20)

### Church Donations Reports

The Pascua Yaqui Tribe made a series of generous donations to support various church ceremonies and community events across multiple communities, including Old Pascua, Guadalupe, Los Milagros, San Martin de Porres, and New Pascua, ensuring each had the necessary resources to fulfill their cultural and spiritual responsibilities.

### Lenten Ceremonies

The most significant portion of the donations, totaling \$130,000, was dedicated to Lenten ceremonies, supporting church leaders with funding for fireworks, kitchen supplies, and cultural participation from Mexico. These

contributions were distributed among five community churches:

- Lenten contributions: \$16,000 allocated to each church.
- Fireworks funding: An additional \$3,000 per church, with some funds redirected to support Fiestas.
- Kitchen support: \$3,500 per church, donated from the Casino's Unclaimed Jackpots Funds.
- Cultural participation: Enrollment issued a total of \$17,500 per diem, distributed in varying amounts per church, to support cultural participants from Mexico.

**Note: The total amount does not include the Pascua Yaqui Tribe's non-financial contributions, such as portable handwashing**

**stations and restroom facilities, sanitation dumpsters, lighting services, and the Casino's donation of paper goods and bottled water.**

### Church Fiestas

Our Community-based Church Fiestas received \$26,500 in support. These contributions helped ensure the continuation of our sacred cultural and spiritual celebrations. The distribution was as follows:

- Santa Lucia Church Fiesta and Our Lady of Guadalupe Fiesta: \$3,500 each
- Fiesta de San Martin De Porres and Cristo Rey Pahko: \$2,500 each
- Fiesta of Santa Lucia, La Virgen de Guadalupe and Nacimiento de Niño Dios: \$2,000
- Santa Kus Fiesta: \$2,500 allo-

cated to each of the five participating communities

### Conclusion

This report highlights the Pascua Yaqui Tribe's commitment to transparency, cultural preservation, and community support. From October 2024 through May 2025, the Tribal Council provided meaningful aid to tribal members and communities through various financial assistance programs and donations.

Together, these efforts demonstrate the Tribal Council's holistic approach to uplifting its members financially, culturally, and spiritually while maintaining a strong foundation of accountability and service.

Donations were strategically allocated across six distinct categories to maximize impact and support diverse initiatives. This structured distribution ensures transparency and alignment with the organization's philanthropic goals.

## SECRETARY ALVAREZ REPORT

**ROSA S. ALVAREZ**  
TRIBAL COUNCIL SECRETARY

I hope and pray this message finds you well and in good spirits. Reflecting on the past year, it's hard to believe that twelve months have passed since we took our oaths of office. Serving as Secretary for the Pascua Yaqui Tribe has been both an honor and a blessing. I remain deeply humbled by this responsibility and am fully committed to serving our people with integrity, dedication, and heart.

**Office of the Secretary**  
Throughout the year, I have focused on ensuring that our office operates efficiently and transparently. This effort includes supporting Tribal Council meetings, maintaining accurate records, and advancing key resolutions that reflect our shared priorities.

**Tribal Resolutions**  
Since January 2025, the Tribal Council has passed 158 resolu-

tions, seven tabled and two withdrawn. Additionally, we adopted two proclamations:

- June 15 as ICWA Day
- September 30 as Every Child Matters Day

These actions across nine regular council meetings underscore our commitment to protecting our children and families.

**Advocacy and Travel**  
This year, I was honored to represent our Tribe in Washington, D.C., and at the Arizona State Capitol, advocating for our community's needs. A highlight was witnessing the historic signing of HB 2281, also known as Emily's Law, which establishes a missing Indigenous person alert system. The law was signed at the Governor's Office on May 21, 2025.

**ICWA Committee**  
On March 13, 2025, the Trib-



al Council established our first ICWA Committee by resolution. The committee includes:

- Rosa Soto Alvarez
- Gloria Alvarez Gomez
- Irene Sanchez
- Andrea Gonzales
- Jose-Enrique Saldana

I was honored to be elected as the first Chair of this committee. Our goal is to support Arizona in becoming an ICWA State. On June 16, 2025, we will host the first ICWA Awareness Day at the Capitol to educate legislators and promote the importance of ICWA.

**Special Appointments**  
I am proud to serve as the Secretary/Treasurer of the Inter-Tribal Council of Arizona and to participate in the Southern Arizona Task Force for Missing & Murdered Indigenous People. Recently, I joined the Executive Board of Haven, a nonprofit that supports Native and Indigenous women facing barriers to substance use treatment. Haven's Native Ways Program, launched in 2005, helps women heal through cultural and traditional practices.

None of this would be possible without God's grace, my family's strength, and our community's unwavering support. This role is challenging, but I believe I was called to be a strong advocate for the well-being of our people.

One year down, three to go—God willing. Thank you for your continued trust and encouragement. It is truly an honor to serve. God bless.

## COUNCILMAN FLORES REPORT

**ROLANDO FLORES**  
TRIBAL COUNCIL MEMBER

As I reflect on my first year in office, I continue to be inspired by the strength of our Tribe. I've deepened my commitment to ensuring that every member is treated with dignity and has the opportunity to thrive.

One of the most rewarding aspects of this role has been connecting directly with our pueblos. Meeting with members from our recognized

communities and listening to your questions and concerns helps me address our complex issues.

We are just starting, and so much meaningful work is ahead. My calendar is full of meetings and events across our lands, and I look forward to seeing and hearing from you in the coming months.

### The Constitution Reform Project

This Tribal Council is supporting and facilitating an effort to amend our

## YAQUI TIMES

## COUNCIL MEMBER FLORES CONT.

Constitution. Any amendments will be the product of the tribal members who choose to be involved in this process. This project will take place over several phases:

The first phase involves a survey and initial meetings to discuss the scope and intent of the project.

The second phase will consist of community meetings designed to educate members on the Constitution. During the gatherings, we expect meaningful discussions and the drafting of any amendments that will be presented for a vote by the people.

In the third phase, once finalized, the Tribal Council will ask the PYT Election Board to conduct an election on the proposed amendments.

In the last phase, the Tribal Council will adopt the necessary changes to PYT Tribal Codes to reflect the amendments.

**WHEN:** The goal is to conduct an election in May 2026 before the June 2028 Tribal Council Election.

**WHERE:** Meetings will take place in our recognized communities. We will develop an online option for members who cannot attend in person.

**WHY:** This Tribal Council acknowledges that tribal members may want changes to our Constitution. We are providing the opportunity for members to express their voice and place governance of our Tribe into the hands of the people.

**We want to hear from you!**

Please submit any questions or comments about the Constitution to [PYTConstitutionalReform@pascuayaqui-nsn.gov](mailto:PYTConstitutionalReform@pascuayaqui-nsn.gov) or call us at (520) 883-5024.

## COUNCIL MEMBER FRIAS REPORT

HERMINIA FRIAS

TRIBAL COUNCIL MEMBER

**L**ios enchim aniaavu, I hope this message finds you in good health and spirits. On behalf of the Frias family, I want to express our sincere gratitude for your prayers, condolences, and continued support following my mother's passing on March 31.

Living out one's life purpose is not always easy, but it brings comfort knowing that our work helps others live better lives. I am doing my best to balance personal grief with my responsibilities as a council member. Thank you for your patience and understanding as I return to serve you.

**One Year of Tribal Council**

This June marks one year since our Tribal Council began working together, and I'm proud of our progress in partnership with our community. We've held two rounds of community meetings and are now moving forward with constitutional reform. Meetings are scheduled in every community to ensure your voices are heard regarding the changes you want. I've learned so much from you during these sessions—thank you for your insights and engagement.

The Council has also been actively involved in developing our third casino, located in Old Pascua. We anticipate a grand opening in late 2026 and are excited about the opportunities this project will bring to our community. I would also like to extend my heartfelt thanks to Mrs. Kim Van Amburg for her years of dedicated service as CEO of Casino Del Sol properties. We wish her continued health and success in her next chapter.

**Committee Work and Leadership**

In addition to my role as Co-Chair for Health, Housing, and Economic Development and Oversight Committee Member for Education and Social Services, I continue to serve on many local and national committees and advisory boards.

**Representation and Advocacy**

This term, the Tribal Council has focused heavily on advocacy. Federal funding cuts, program consolidations, and staffing changes have impacted our services. That's why it's more important than ever that we are at the table, representing and advocating for our people. We are not DEI; we are sovereign nations. Any proposed changes must go through Tribal Consultation and a government-to-government process. In May, we traveled as the Tribal Council to Washington, D.C., and met with members of the Administration and Congress.

**Health and Budget Advocacy**

**IHS Budget Formulation:** In February, I helped finalize our FY 2027 budget proposal and contributed a piece on the importance of food as medicine, highlighting the Produce Prescription Pilot Program (P4). Pascua Yaqui was one of five tribes selected in the first round of funding. We also advocated for continued funding for the Special Diabetes Program for Indians (SDPI), which supports diabetes prevention, education, and wellness programs—including El Tour de Tucson and Walupe.

**HHS Consultation:**

I attended the HHS Budget Consultation in Washington, D.C., where we engaged with Secretary Kennedy's administration,

IHS, CMS, NIH, SAMHSA, and others. These agencies support critical services like Sewa Uusim, Centered Spirit, AHCCCS, and elder care. We must ensure our voices are heard to protect these programs.

**Guadalupe Clinic Update:**

We anticipate opening the new Guadalupe Health Clinic in late August. We're monitoring federal changes that could affect clinic operations and funding.

**Sober Living Home Support Program:** In May, Arizona Attorney General Kris Mayes awarded \$6 million in grants to support Tribal Nations and community members impacted by fraudulent sober living home practices. Attorney General Mayes has awarded 11 Tribal Nations and non-profits across Arizona. Our Tribe was awarded \$500,000 to provide compensation, remediation, and supportive housing for those affected by the fraud involving Arizona's Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS). I was honored to represent the Tribe at the meeting with Attorney General Mayes.

**Tribal Interior Budget Council (TIBC):**

In May, we submitted our budget proposal to President Trump. We requested increased and flexible funding to support tribal self-governance. Programs included in the TIBC budget span public safety, tribal courts, ICWA, social services, enrollment, education, and Tiwahe.

**Elections and Voting**

I continue to work with Arizona Native Vote to increase voter turnout. On June Yaqui Vote hosted a successful "Cafecito with Candidates" event for the upcoming special election to fill the late Congressman Raúl Grijalva's seat. Thank you to our Youth Move for their leadership;

they did a wonderful job facilitating the discussion with candidates.

**KEY DATES:**

- **Special Primary Election: July 15, 2025**
- **Register to vote for the General Election by August 26, 2025**
- **Special General Election: September 23, 2025**

Thank you to the Yaqui Vote team for organizing this important event. Let's make our voices heard—make your vote count. For more information, visit the Arizona Secretary of State's website.

**Pascua Yaqui Development Corporation (PYDC)**

As President of the Pascua Yaqui Development Corporation (PYDC), I continue working with our Board of Directors to foster economic development and self-sufficiency for the Pascua Yaqui Tribe. PYDC is dedicated to creating sustainable business ventures that generate revenue, provide employment opportunities, and support the long-term prosperity of our community.

**Sonoran Pueblo Contracting, LLC (SPC)**

Sonoran Pueblo Contracting, LLC (SPC) is a wholly owned subsidiary of PYDC and a source of great pride. Headquartered on the Pascua Yaqui Reservation, SPC is a full-service general contractor specializing in:

- Commercial and residential construction
- Renovation projects
- Civil and sitework services

*SPC is a certified 8(a) enterprise through the U.S. Small Business Administration, enabling it to deliver high-quality general contracting services to federal agencies nationwide.*

## COUNCIL MEMBER FRIAS CONT.

### HIGHLIGHTED PROJECTS:

- Seneca Nation, New York
- Construction of two 4-plex housing complexes, including sitework, utilities, concrete, carpentry, masonry, electrical, plumbing, and HVAC.
- Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community
- Construction of a heavy equipment shade structure

and port, including sitework, utilities, concrete, steel structure, electrical, and paving.

### Past Projects Include:

- Ignacio Buamea Street Rehabilitation – Pascua Yaqui Tribe
- Civil improvements, underground utilities, grading, paving, street lighting, and landscaping.

- Legends Casino Spa Resort – Yakama Nation, Washington
- Completion of the spa area at the Legends Casino Resort.
- Two Rivers Casino – Sauk-Suiattle Indian Tribe
- Conversion of an existing building into a small gaming casino.
- U.S. Air Force Projects
  - HVAC controls upgrade
  - Structure erosion control at AMARG
- Customs and Border Protec-

tion (CBP)

- Generator replacement, entry gate upgrades, repel tower improvements, flooring, and countertop replacements.

This is a brief update on my work. Thank you for allowing me to serve on the Tribal Council. I look forward to seeing you at future meetings or events.

**Lios em chiokoe uttesia, vu.**

## REPORT FROM THE DESK OF GLORIA ALVAREZ GOMEZ

GLORIA ALVAREZ-GOMEZ  
TRIBAL COUNCIL MEMBER

### Lios Enchim-aniavu, Ketchem allea? Blessings to You and Your Families,

As we mark the end of a very exciting and fruitful year, I am pleased to share updates on our progress. Serving as Co-Chair for Facilities, Housing, the Department of Language and Culture, and Social Services has been a rewarding experience. This year, I attended numerous trainings to stay informed about changes in financial support, funding opportunities, and new program developments.

### Social Services

The Adult Services team has been diligent in seeking funding for TANF programs, which

will expand to include initiatives such as

the Agriculture and Food Sovereignty Program. This program integrates skill-building with opportunities to learn the Yoeme language and traditional food preparation. Meanwhile, the Childcare team is collaborating with Education to enhance the Early Learning Center curriculum and improve childcare systems. The center is on track to open in 2026 with limited enrollment capacity.

### Facilities

The Facilities Department continues its efforts to fill key positions and ensuring the safety of parks and streets. Building maintenance and repairs are progressing steadily, as are renovations to cultural grounds to accommodate our cultural societies.

### Housing

The Housing Department is making significant progress with the New Pascua Pueblo homes. The first set of homes will be ready by July 1, 2025, with additional homes completed by August 1 and August 10, 2025. For those who have applied for housing, please ensure your annual application is updated and any changes to your contact information (address, phone number, or email) are submitted. This is critical for determining eligibility and move-in scheduling.

In addition, Housing is offering Homebuyers Sessions to assist members with the journey to homeownership. For more information, contact our Homebuyer Representative, Mrs. Rosemary Arriaga:

- Tucson Office: (520) 879-5890
- Guadalupe Office: (480) 755-2515

### Department of Language and Culture

Our work in preserving and revitalizing the Yoeme language continues to thrive. This summer, we are coordinating language classes for youth aged 8-17 in Old Pascua, Guadalupe, and New Pascua communities. Furthermore, we are investing in traditional ceremonies by offering classes in music and regalia creation, ensuring these essential aspects of our culture remain vibrant for future generations.

Together, we are building a future that honors our traditions while creating new opportunities for growth and prosperity. Thank you for your continued support and commitment to our shared vision. For more program information please contact the Department of Language and Culture at (520) 879-5939.

Lios Em'chiokoe Utte'sia

## COUNCIL MEMBER GONZALES REPORT

ANDREA GONZALES  
TRIBAL COUNCIL MEMBER

### Lios enchi aniavu! Ket chem area.

I am Councilmember Andrea Gonzales, and I continue to be proud to serve our people across all the Tribe departments. I co-chair the Education, Fire, and Police Department and sit on all other department oversight committees. As we enter our summer months, it is my pleasure to congratulate all students who have been promoted and graduated this May 2025. I would also like to recognize those graduating in the summer months, including our PYT Adult Education students representing graduates from Guadalupe, Old Pascua, and within the Tucson area. No matter what the road may have looked like for you, rigorous or unchallenging, please know that no matter the path, you have accomplished a remarkable feat. I want to thank all families who have supported these students: parents, grandparents, spouses, children, and others. There is no doubt that your love and support are priceless. Once again, CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL GRADUATES, and I wish you all the best as you continue your education or pursue a career.

I want to thank all departments and programs for organizing activities for our community youth throughout the year and our summer months. One of those is the WIOA work experience for tribal teenagers. They work with twenty-two youths in various departments to obtain work experience. Throughout the year, WIOA supports our community members in obtaining certifications outside a regular 2- or 4-year degree program.

### WIOA – Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

#### Adult Program services:

Adults eighteen and older who want to enter training to obtain the skills needed or upgrade skills to advance or retain employment. Employment services assist individuals seeking employment and may include:

- Job Search
- Resume Writing
- Interview Preparation

- OSHA 10 & 30 Training
- Forklift Certification
- Flagger Certification
- Career Assessments (Adults and Youth)

#### Youth Program Services:

Participants may include in-school youth, 16-21 years of age, attending high school to obtain their high school diploma, and planning to enter the workforce or pursue post-secondary education. Also, participants may include out-of-school youth, 16 – 24 years of age, who graduated from high school or have dropped out. The program encourages youth to explore their interests and follow a path that works for them.

#### EMT Cohort

The most recent cohort proudly graduated eight certified EMTs. Furthermore, six of these graduates have expressed interest in advancing their careers by continuing their education at the Fire Science Academy, demonstrating a clear path for professional development within the fire and emergency medical services.

## YAQUI TIMES

## COUNCIL MEMBER GONZALES CONT.

Emergency Medical Technology (EMT) students are required to complete a rigorous six-month training program. This program was a collaborative effort between Pima Community College (PCC) and the Pascua Yaqui Fire Department, highlighting a strong partnership in emergency services education.

This successful completion signifies the students' dedication and the effectiveness of the partnership between PCC and the Pascua Yaqui Fire Department in preparing skilled professionals for critical roles in the community.

## EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

I want to extend my appreciation to the Education Division staff for all its programs. In speaking with community members whom these staff interact with directly, I have received many comments on a shift in response, positive service outcomes, and more equity of services among our different communities. We thank you, and your efforts do not go unnoticed.

## Program Highlights:

- Attendance Achievement Program: seven students graduated from High School
- Ili Uusim Mahtawa'apo- providing summer school opportunities for thirty-five students, a collaboration with First Things First

- Yaqui Education Services (YES) K-12 staff provided cap and gown for sixty-one students
- The GED Adult Education program had over eight hundred outreach and engagements to students, prospective students, and the community.
- YES, the program provides semester incentives for students; please be on the lookout for incentives throughout the academic year.

## IMPORTANT DATES FOR STUDENTS &amp; FAMILIES

Some important dates to remember this summer. Clothing vouchers for "Tools 4 School" applications are open as of mid-May and close on August 31. (include clothing voucher flyer as a picture)

## RECRUITING YAQUI COMMUNITY MEMBERS

## Youth Council

Yoeme Youth Council consists of young leaders ages 14 - 20 who will be the voice and representatives of the Pascua Yaqui Tribe youth. The Education Department is honored to collaborate with eleven young leaders ready to make a difference in the Yaqui communities.

The deadline to apply to participate is Sunday, July 27, 2025, at 5 p.m.

Scan the QR code or follow this link: (include QR code)

<https://forms.office.com/r/CrGVwDcgL8>

## Teacher Language Institute (TLI)

Recruit certified teachers to participate in a PAID yearlong Yaqui language immersion program. Activities will include building a mastery-level understanding of linguistic principles toward revitalizing the Yaqui language. For more information, contact Albert Siqueiros at [alberto.siqueiros@pascuayaqui-nsn.gov](mailto:alberto.siqueiros@pascuayaqui-nsn.gov).

Once again, thank you, department staff, for your continued services to our members throughout the year. Lastly, I would like to acknowledge the PYT Charitable Organization, which has provided funding to the Yaqui Little League with means to fund the league and very much-needed equipment for youth participants, including catchers' equipment, gloves, left-handed gloves, and bats. PYTCO was organized to perform and carry out specific charitable and educational purposes and activities, including charitable, cultural, and educational programs, assistance, and support to underprivileged members of the Pascua Yaqui Tribe, their families, and general members of the public in need. For more information, visit [yaquicharity.org](http://yaquicharity.org)

**Lios enchi hiokoe uttesia vu.**

## COUNCIL MEMBER MUNOZ REPORT

FRANCISCO G. MUNOZ  
TRIBAL COUNCIL MEMBER

As we reach our first year in office, I am pleased to share the progress, milestones, and key updates on our government's activities and goals. Your continued support and engagement have been critical to our success, and we look forward to collaborating with you for the remainder of our three-year term.

I co-chair the Athletic Commission, Social Services Department, and Public Safety, including the Police and Fire Departments. I also oversee the Health Department, Economic Development, Senior Center, and Language and Culture. Additionally, I chair the Public Safety Retirement Board and the El Rio Board of Directors.

As the co-chair of the Athletic Commission, I have nothing to report currently, as no events have taken place at the enterprise's properties; however, we look forward to a future event at our beautiful facility and bringing that type of entertainment back to the Tucson community.

As the co-chair of the Pascua Police Department, I am happy to report that from January 2024 to June 20, 2025, the Police Department received 16,505 calls for reports ranging from community assistance to animal control. The calls are of various types, but the Police Department is actively keeping the Pascua Yaqui Reservation safe from crime.

As for the co-chair of the Fire Department, I am happy to report the following:

## PASCUA PUEBLO FIRE DEPARTMENT: DEDICATION IN ACTION – 2025 MID-YEAR HIGHLIGHTS

The Pascua Pueblo Fire Department has been hard at work protecting the health and safety of the Pascua Yaqui Tribe. From structure fires to medical emergencies, our team of firefighter-paramedics and EMTs has responded to 806 emergency calls between January 1 and May 31, 2025 — a testament to the growing demands of a vibrant and evolving community.

## MEDICAL EMERGENCIES FRONT AND CENTER

Emergency medical services (EMS) accounted for the majority of the calls—580 in total—with 351 patients transported to local hospitals. The department's two primary response units, P271 and P272, worked tirelessly to meet the community's needs. Notably, P271 was in service for all 150 days during this period.

Common call types included:

- **Sick person/General illness** – 123 calls
- **Trauma/Injuries** – 54 calls
- **Difficulty breathing** – 31 calls
- **Chest pain** – 32 calls
- **Seizures and altered mental status** – 30 combined.v

Fall-related injuries among older adults are a growing concern. Our department recently responded to **49 calls involving falls in individuals over 50**. Our safety and medical personnel reported that these fall-based incidents have occurred at various locations, including local senior housing centers and Casino del Sol.

While no distinct patterns of repeat falls were identified from these incidents, preventing falls

among older adults remains a critical priority for our department. We are committed to addressing this issue through ongoing awareness and prevention efforts.

## BATTLING THE OPIOID CRISIS

Our Fire Department recently responded to **12 suspected opioid overdose calls** involving patients between the ages of 20 and 53. In 7 instances, **Narcan (naloxone)** was administered, proving successful in every case. All patients survived and were subsequently transported for additional medical attention.

These successful interventions highlight our Fire Department's commitment to harm reduction strategies. The rapid administration of naloxone played a crucial role in saving lives during these overdose scenarios.

The department continues to prioritize and implement swift, effective responses to opioid overdoses, reinforcing its dedication to public health and safety through immediate action and continued care.

## ADVANCING LIFESAVING EFFORTS WITH THE LUCAS DEVICE

In February, the department placed the **LUCAS mechanical CPR device** into service, which was made possible through funding from the Pascua Yaqui Health Department. Since implementation:

- The device was used in **six out of seven cardiac arrest responses**.
- **Three patients achieved a Return of Spontaneous Circulation (ROSC)** during prehospital care, a powerful result that highlights the impact of early, consistent compressions.

## COUNCIL MEMBER MUNOZ CONT.

These outcomes reflect how technology and training continue to save lives across our community.

### BEYOND EMERGENCIES: PREVENTION, EDUCATION, AND SERVICE

In addition to emergency responses, our department conducted

- **Five fire drills**
- **Four fire inspections**
- **Five closet inspections**

- **Three public education sessions**

The department also assisted with **45 vehicle lockouts, nine desert pest removals, and nine invalid assists** — everyday calls that reflect our mission to serve in all capacities.

### A MESSAGE TO THE PASCUA YAQUI RESERVATION COMMUNITY:

Every call tells a story of care, urgency, and commitment. Whether responding to a life-

threatening cardiac arrest or helping a senior after a fall, our team stands ready — 24/7 — to serve with honor and compassion. The Pascua Pueblo Fire Department thanks the Tribal Council, Health Department, and our community partners for their continued support.

To end my report, I'd like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to Lt. Elizabeth Esparza and Officer Alexander Gonzalez on their 30-year retirement from the Pascua Yaqui Police Department! I wish you both the best of luck in your future endeavors!

## COUNCIL MEMBER SALDANA REPORT

JOSE-ENRIQUE SALDANA  
TRIBAL COUNCIL MEMBER

### DISTRICT-TO-DISTRICT TOUR

While the fate of education may feel uncertain at this moment, with shifting policies and evolving priorities at the federal level, the Pascua Yaqui Tribe Education Division Oversight Committee, chaired by Councilman Jose-Enrique Saldana and Councilwoman Andrea L. Gonzales, remains firmly committed to listening, engaging, and taking meaningful action.

In recent years, we have witnessed significant changes in educational policies, many of which have been influenced by broader societal shifts. The ongoing dialogue about equity, access, and the quality of education has never been more critical. While challenges abound, the Pascua Yaqui Department of Education and Oversight Committee is actively engaging with school districts to ensure that the needs of Native American students remain at the forefront of these discussions.

The committee launched its district-to-district tour across the state of Arizona in early April to meet with school district leadership, Native American staff, and students to address the pressing needs of Hiaki students and the school districts that support them. The committee continues to reinforce with district leadership the need for proper tribal consultation.

The committee toured several school campuses, reviewed student data, and discussed the yearly academic growth of Hiaki students, as well as service gaps. Students also had the opportunity to speak with Committee Chairman Saldana, Committee Chairwoman Gonzales, and Education Division Director Dr. Augustine Romero in a closed session to express personal concerns and discuss potential areas for growth in services provided through the Education Division.

In the Maricopa County Community College District, the committee met with South Mountain Community College President Veronica Hipolito to discuss the resumption of the Hoop of Learning Early College Program Pascua Yaqui cohort and courses. Since the April meeting, the committee has taken significant steps to resume the early college program, including

Yaqui Indian History and Culture (YAQ100) and Yaqui Language and Culture (YAQ110) courses at the Guadalupe satellite campus in the Town of Guadalupe. This effort aligns with the Tribal Council's 2024-2028 Strategic Action Plan, which promotes collaborative efforts in language and culture preservation.

At the University of Arizona, the committee met with the Office of the Provost's Native American Initiatives to discuss the impact of federal cuts on Native American programs and the University's commitment and plan to ensure that Native American services continue without disruption, despite the current climate. The committee reiterated that the federal government has a trust responsibility to support Native American tribes, yet many programs designed to aid these

communities have historically been overlooked or inadequately funded. With the potential for further cuts, there is a deep concern that this legacy of neglect will only worsen.

As we move forward, let us remain hopeful and dedicated to creating a brighter future for our Hiaki students, no matter the challenges we face. While the road ahead may be fraught with uncertainty, collaboration and open dialogue are key to forging a path that prioritizes the needs of all students. By advocating for policies that are grounded in equity, access, and support, we can help shape an educational landscape that not only responds to current challenges but also prepares future generations for success.

The committee will travel to Flagstaff, Arizona, in late July to visit Northern Arizona University and is finalizing additional dates for schools in the Tucson Unified School District. The committee encourages students to attend when the group visits their respective schools.

### PASCUA YAQUI TRIBAL COUNCIL EDUCATION RANKED PRIORITIES:

1. Successfully establishing our school system
2. More support for the Language Institute
3. Early Learning Center
4. Linking education to active workforce development
5. Create community advocacy to drive value for education

## COUNCIL MEMBER SANCHEZ REPORT

IRENE SANCHEZ  
TRIBAL COUNCIL MEMBER

Hello! I'd like to update you on my many impressive experiences recently.

### Senior Center Oversight Committee

We met with the representative who is overseeing the renovation of the building and toured the areas. We look forward to returning the staff and seniors to the Senior Center. In addition, we are still awaiting the delivery of the 40-passenger bus.

### Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA)

I am a member of this committee and am learning about its significance. This Act ensures that Native children in need of foster care placement remain within their native communities.

### Casino Del Sol All Staff Meeting

We recognized staff members for their years of service. Congratulations to all honorees!

### Health Oversight Committee

The Health Oversight Committee continues to address various issues, including preparations for the soon-to-be-opened new health building in Walupe and reviews of our budgeting.

### Constitutional Reform

I participated in community discussions in the following areas: New Pascua, Guadalupe, Marana, Old Pascua, Barrio Libre, Milagros, Casa Grande, and Penjamo.

### Graduation Celebrations

As Tribal Council members, we have been invited to many of this year's graduation ceremonies. At the Head Start ceremony we were all thrilled to see the joyful children along with their parents, family, and guests. The proud performances by teachers and students were the highlight of the day. Watching the two young Yaqui children perform the Deer Dance was a moment of pride, reminding us of why we are Yaqui and proud.



### ALESSANDRO VALENCIA

Alessandro graduated from Tucson High. During the 2024-2025 School Year, he served as Vice President of the Yoeme Youth Council.

### AVERY SHALOM- VALENCIA

Avery, Valedictorian graduate of Pueblo High School, has demonstrated exceptional academic achievement and leadership. She was awarded a prestigious full-ride Flinn Foundation scholarship to the University of Arizona, a testament to her outstanding scholastic record. Her dedication to community leadership is evident through her role as President of the Yoeme Youth Council for the 2024-2025 term.

Throughout her high school career at Pueblo College Preparatory Academy, Avery consistently challenged herself by enrolling in AP, GATE, and Honors courses. Her commitment to academic excellence was further recognized by her consistent placement on the Honor Roll and Principal's List for all four years. Beyond academics, she actively participated in student council and served as Vice President of the Feminist Club at Pueblo High School.

Avery's accomplishments also include earning the Pueblo Native American Student Services Certificate and the Academic Achievement award, highlighting her commitment to her heritage and academic rigor. She is set to continue her impressive academic journey at Stanford University in the fall.



### ERIC A. ALVAREZ

Eric graduated from Cholla High School, won the Congressional Art Competition, and will have his Art hung up at the US Capitol for one year.

### LIZEA GARCIA VALENCIA

Lizea started her education at the Pascua Yaqui Head Start for two years.

She then went on to Johnson Primary School for K-2nd and Lawrence Intermediate for 3rd-8th grade. Lizea attended University high School for 9th-12th grade where she participated in the dream catchers club, baking club, and travel club. Lizea is a proud 2025 University High School graduate! Throughout her education she has maintained A's and the occasional B. She has always been a dedicated and determined student. Lizea will be attending the University of California Berkeley this fall. She hopes to major in Neuroscience and minor in Native American studies.



### MIA WOOLSEY

Mia graduated from Tucson High School graduate. Mia will join the Navy and leave on July 8th.

NAIYMA MARTINEZ- TRUJILLO

Naiyma graduated from Hiaki High School. She is certified in billing and coding and is now a certified medical insurance specialist. Naiyma is also Miss Pascua Yaqui for 2024-2025. She was also recognized with a citizenship award and pin for her continued community service within Hiaki High and the Hiaki Community.



THOMAS CRUZ

Thomas graduated from Hiaki High School with certificates in Medical Billing and Medical Assisting. He plans to continue his education at Pima College. While in high school, Thomas participated in the Pima Community College dual enrollment program, where he earned an Honorary Award for Outstanding Academic Achievement.

**HIGH SCHOOL GRAD+ EVIT**

Graduated from their high school as well as East Valley Institute of Technology, obtaining a certification in a specific field.

- › LEANDRO VERDUGO  
Mental and Social Health
- › JACOB PEREZ-RUBACLAVA  
Diesel Mechanics Program
- › JOSE AYALA  
Construction Technologies
- › IZAAH RAMOS- MARTINEZ  
Welding Technician
- › XAVIER GUERREO- LUCERO  
Welding Technician
- › MIA FLOREZ  
Emergency Medical Technician
- › LORENZO OSUNA  
Welding Technician
- › DELILAH LOPEZ  
Medical Assistant
- › ALEXANDER LADESMA  
Automotive Technology
- › CRUZITA ARMENTA  
Medical Assistant

**HIGH SCHOOL GRAD+ HONORS**

- ADAN FRAIRE  
National Hispanic Scholar, National First-Generation Scholar, National Indigenous Scholar
- MICAH MATUZ  
Future Inspired Native American Leaders' Youth Council (Phoenix Indian Center), JROTC
- ANTONIO PADILLA  
Semper Fidelis for Musical Excellence, Scholastic Excellence Award from USMC, AZ Fine Art Seal, Native American University Scholarship- ASU, Academic Achievement- Phoenix PXU Union
- JAZMIN CARRION VALDEZ  
National Honors Society, JROTC
- PAUL SAINZ JR.  
Early Graduate, South Mountain Community College
- ISAIAH MATUZ  
Early Graduate

ARCADIA HIGH SCHOOL

Ariza Santiago

Mireya Palomino

Paul Sainz

ARIZONA AGRIBUSINESS  
& EQUINE CENTER EARLY  
COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOL

Julius Lawrence

CATALINA HIGH SCHOOL

Fernando Mesquita

Viviana Coronado

CHOLLA HIGH SCHOOL

Aaliyah-Navaeh Martinez

Luis Jr Escobar

Betina Valenzuela-Leon

Logan D Valenzuela

Dominik Martinez

Marcous Barajas-Diaz

Eric A Alvarez

Macayla Hines-Elenes

Estevan C Valenzuela

Natalia Martinez

Gonzales Ernesto

Paris Cordova

Hayley Flores

Phillip S. Salazar

Josue A. Nunez

Rosendo C. Valenzuela

Jayden Bustamante

Xitaly Baker

Jordan Cordova-Fruge

COOLIDGE HIGH SCHOOL

Cruz Alvarez

Josiah Barboa

Isabella Martinez

Syenna Leon

CORONADO HIGH SCHOOL

Brianna Smith

Nayelli Torres Valencia

Keyonnie-Sewa Martinez

Xavier Guerrero-Lucero

Michael Peralta

CORNERSTONE CHARTER  
HIGH SCHOOL

Cruz Alvarez

Keyonnie-Sewa Martinez

DOBSON HIGH SCHOOL

Michael Flores

HIGHLAND HIGH SCHOOL

Amaris Vidal

HIAKI HIGH

Anastashia A. Cordova

Karena A. Salcido

Araceli K. Gutierrez

Leandrea Sardina

Alexia K. Good Shield

Maximo Yslava

Abigail M. Hanson

Marcos I. Alvarez

Andres Uriarte

Nathaniel D. Talkalai

Daniella I. Mateo

Naiyma Martinez-Trujillo

Daniel I Estrella

Rene J. Valencia

Daniel A. Silvas

Trinity Francisca M. Sol

Dominic Silvas

Thomas A Cruz

Gabriel F. Garcia

Yizel A. Rascon

Jayson R. Stahl

HOWARD HIGH

Abri Rodriguez

HUMANITIES & SCIENCES  
ACADEMY

Alana Matuz

LA JOLLA HIGH

Julio Mongales

LEONA CONNECTED

Angel Peneulas

MCCLINTOCK

Adrian Munoz

Joaquin Encinas

Gabriela Soberanes

Leandro Verdugo

Julius Fuentes

Syuri Gasca

MILLENIAL HIGH

Audrina Flores

MOUNTAIN POINT

Delilah Lopez

MARYVALE

Alexander Ledesma

Antonio Padilla

MARCOS DE NIZA

Angelina Moreno

Alyss Castro

Alexander Ledesma

Annalisa Ortega

Ariza Santiago

Ariana Lopez

Anthony Cruz

Alana Matus

MARCOS DE NIZA  
“CONTINUED

Angel Peneulas	Jacob Gamboa
Antonio Padilla	Juan Daniel Mendez
Alizah Quezada	Jacinto Campas
Cameron Gomez	Jasmine Valenzuela
Carlos Otero	Jose Ayala
Cruzita Armenta	Jaime Orozco
DeAndre Nunez	Katherine Gamboa
Elias Sosa	Lorenzo Osuna
Elise Verdugo	Leilani Flores
Elyse Matus	Mia Flores
Fabriccio Hernandez	Mercedes Valencia
George Matuz	Micah Matuz
Izayah Abril	Navaeh Avila
Izaiah Ramos	Rafael Martinez
Issac Guerrero	Nathaniel Coronado
Isaiah Matuz	Precious Flores
Julio Mongales	Steve Campoy
Juilius Lawrence	Samantha Sanchez
Jazmin Carrion	Xavier Villegas
Jacob Perez	

NORTH HIGH

Jazmin Carrion	Mireya Palomino
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PRIMAVERA HIGH SCHOOL

Arieaelena Hernandez

PUEBLO

Avery-Shalom S. Valencia	Isaiah J. Hernandez
Aleiza Hernandez	Joshua D. Urbalejo
Andres Tapia	Juan A. Anguamea
Clarissa B. Carranza	Jesus Jaimez
Devin Castro	Leticia Coronado
Daniel Urbalejo	Layah Mendibles
Elijah A. Flores	Mireya Navaeh Amada
Gabriel J. Reyes	Markie Anguamea
Gabriel A. Reyes	Santos I. Baumea

RED MOUNTAIN

Donovan Young

RINCON HIGH SCHOOL

Isaiah Romero

SUNNY SLOPE

Aleck Vargas

SAHUARO HIGH SCHOOL

Jada Cruz

SAHUARITA

Christian Velez	Olivia Velez
Raul Velez	

SANTA RITA

Angel Flores	Alexander Flores
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ST. MARYS

Joseph Lavario	Jonathan Lavario
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SOUTH POINT

Cruzito Papoca	Naveah Avila
Natashia Stewart	Juan Daniel Mendez

TUCSON HIGH

Aaron Sanchez	Magda Mendoza
Aaron Sanchez	Micheal Holguin
Adam Jr Armadillo	MariaLuisa Romero
Angel Barcenaz	Mayela Campy
Antonio J Ochoa III	Mia Woosley
Alessandro Valencia	Nayelli Obregon
Cajame Vai Sevoi	Priscis Gonzales
Demetriez Valencia	Robert Cruz
Islas Anissa	Timothy Jr Ruiz
Jayden Aguirre	Yuliana Galaz
Leondro Martinez	

TEMPE HIGH

Amaya Vallecillo	Gazlyn Garcia
Dominic Aguilar	Isaiah Murillo
Esiae Vaquera	Jordan Blackshire
Fernando Flores	Pablo Ochoa

VISTA GRANDE

Xavier Villegas	Nathaniel Coronado
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YAQUI TIMES

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*Editor in Chief*  
ANNETTE LEYVA

*Executive Editor*  
DR. AUGUSTINE ROMERO

*Art Director/Layout*  
GILBERT L.A VALENZUELA

*Cover Art/Layout*  
ALEXANDRE LOPEZ-MEJIA

## VAHI TA'AM TOPPING-OFF CEREMONY FOR CASINO DEL SOL

**AMANDA SAMPSON LOMAYESVA**  
INTERIM CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Dominguez, Maehto, and San Ignacio de Loyola in the Old Pascua Community. Welcoming remarks were made by Amanda Lomayesva, Interim CEO of the Tribe's Gaming and Tribal Enterprises. Tucson Mayor Regina Romero spoke about the close relationship between the Tribe and the City, noting that the Pascua Yaqui Tribe has been in Southern Arizona and areas beyond for thousands of years and remarking on the importance of the sovereignty



of the Pascua Yaqui Tribe over their lands. She thanked the late Congressman Raul Grijalva for his role in introducing the Old Pascua Community Land Acquisition Act in the United States Congress along with Senator Kyrsten Sinema, both of whom shepherded the Act through until it was signed into law by President Biden. The Act put land into trust status for the Pascua Yaqui Tribe at the location of the new casino, an essential step in the process.

Chairman Julian Hernandez warmly welcomed all the community assembled for the event. He spoke about the importance of the new casino to the economic development of the Tribe and its members, and he gave special thanks to



the construction workers for all they have done on the project, working in the heat to move it towards completion. Each of the Pascua Yaqui Tribal Council members spoke in turn, making



The event began with a traditional blessing by David

remarks about the project and what it means for the Tribe. They also thanked all present for coming to celebrate the progress. Many remarked on how it took the work of past council members, chairpersons, and elders to get to this point and thanked all present for their contribution.

After the welcome and speeches,



Jessica Savare, Marketing

Director for Casino Del Sol, invited people up in groups to sign a structural steel I-beam, the last I-beam to be placed atop the structure. The beam, supported above the ground, was painted white, and everyone in attendance could sign it and have their name contained within the structure for all time. The Tribal Council, mayor, and other dignitaries signed, followed by the Pascua Yaqui Seniors, the facilities and construction teams, casino management and employees, Old Pascua Community members, tribal employees, and all others in



attendance, were invited to sign the beam.

To conclude the ceremony, a large crane lifted the beam high above

the assembled crowd, placing it atop the structure. Two awaiting construction workers perched at the top of the building's steel structure guided the beam into its place and bolted it securely. The unique beam signing ceremony is intended to honor the many hands contributing to the project and reflects the Pascua Yaqui Tribe's investment in the Tribe and the entire Southern Arizona region's growth, jobs, and cultural identity. Watching

the signed beam rise to its final location at the top of the building, all those present at the event could visualize the completion of this phase of the structure.

The Casino Del Sol: Vahi Ta'am is a transformative investment for the Pascua Yaqui Tribe. The third casino will bring 400 permanent jobs and expand the Tribe's economic footprint in Southern Arizona. The 163,000-square-foot development will feature a 52,334-square-foot casino floor, multiple dining venues, and a four-level parking structure. The anticipated grand opening is in the Fall of 2026.

## PASCUA YAQUI POLICE DEPARTMENT RETIREMENTS

CHIEF MICHAEL A. VALENZUELA  
POLICE CHIEF

On June 5<sup>th</sup>, 2025, the Pascua Yaqui Police Department, other department employees, family, and friends got together at the Sunset Room to celebrate two individuals who dedicated their lives for 30 years to the Pascua Yaqui Tribe Community as Police Officers. We celebrated with food, plaque presentations, desserts, Mariachi, and a DJ. We were celebrating the retirement of both Lt. Elizabeth "Liz" Romero-Esparza, Badge# 308, and Ofc. Alexander "Gonzo" Gonzalez, Badge#304 (AKA Cobra).



### Lt. Elizabeth "Liz" Romero-Esparza

Elizabeth started working for the Tribe in 1984 at the Yaqui Bingo/Arizona Club. 1985, she transferred to the Tribes Security Section, which reported to the Chairman. She eventually attended and graduated with a B.I.A Federal Law Enforcement Training Academy in New Mexico in 1991. Elizabeth was the first Pascua Yaqui Tribal member to graduate from the police

academy. She returned to the Tribe and eventually moved to New Mexico, working for the B.I.A. She returned to New Pascua in 1994 and started working as a B.I.A. Police Officer on our reservation. In November 1995, she joined the Pascua Yaqui Police Department, gaining her Arizona State Law Enforcement Certification

She dedicated herself to our community during those early years, working diligently to make a difference. She followed in the footsteps of her father, Edward Romero, who retired as a Pima County Deputy after having served as a South Tucson Police Officer. Throughout her journey, she received unwavering support from her mom, dad, and family. She rose through the ranks and developed many great professional relationships and friendships within and outside the Tribe. Besides her work as a police

officer and eventually a police administrator, as Commander of our Support Services Section, she also committed herself to the Employee Relations Committee, working alongside other tribal



employees to improve the morale of our workforce.

As a Police Commander, Elizabeth was always professional and looked out for the best interest of all her staff, including Victim Services, Communications, Records and Evidence, and Training and Administrative Staff. She was directly responsible for these sections. But she also tirelessly worked for the rest of the department, such as Police Patrol, Police Investigations, Animal Control, Security, and Detention Services. She always advocated for our troops to have the necessary equipment and training. Elizabeth successfully implemented the Police Department Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act compliance and development. Thank you, Elizabeth, for helping this department grow, develop, and go further than what we received back in those early years of the department. One of my favorite memories:

"Chief, Can I leave early, like at 2 today?" of course, I would say yes, and then at 4:57 pm, she was still in her office. It happened all the time.

### Alex "Gonzo" Gonzalez

Alex started the same month as Elizabeth, November 1995. He was the first PYPD



employee I met when I came down in '95 to begin the hiring process. Alex started his Law Enforcement Career in Shelly, Idaho, where he served as a Reserve Police Officer from 1990 to 1991. He then moved to Firth, Idaho, where he served as the "Chief of Police." He joked that he was the only police officer in Firth then. In 1993, he was hired as a police officer with the Shoshone-Bannock Tribe at Fort Hall, Idaho. He worked there from 1993 to 1995 before transferring to the Pascua Yaqui Reservation.



Alex moved to Tucson when his daughter was born and decided to stay. He began working as a police officer here and served from 1995 until 2025. Gonzo started his journey here when we would have one or maybe two officers to work a shift. He would have to transport detainees to B.I.A. Detention Centers (far from Pascua) after shift, tired as he was, because we had

**YAQUI TIMES**

no other options. He worked long hours, double shifts, and many times alone. Many would complain, but he never did; he just kept working and learning about the Tribe and our people. We all started seeing that he had a great sense of humor in the field, and when we returned to the station to do our paperwork, Cartoons of our mistakes and goof-ups started showing up at the police station. He even did them for himself. These cartoons boosted our morale and allowed us to view ourselves differently. No one was exempt; all his cartoons accurately captured

our experiences. His talent for observing the world and adding a comedic twist truly helped us laugh at ourselves and unwind.

Alex loves his reptiles and has a collection at his home. He volunteered his time to the community and did reptile presentations at



the old Boys and Girls Club. He loved showing the kids his collection and explaining the world of reptiles. As a police officer, he eventually became a Firearms and Defensive Tactics Instructor. He trained members of the police department in both areas. He was dedicated and

ensured that officers received proper training. Additionally, he used his skills to provide training to our Elders at the Senior Center.

Elizabeth and Alex will be missed at the department. Both were part of the growth and development of the Pascua Yaqui Police Department, which was started just a couple of years before they showed up. Thank you, Lt. Esparza and Ofc. Gonzales, for your dedication to your oath, to our community, and to your fellow PYPD brothers and sisters.

## CELEBRATING 30 YEARS OF DEDICATED SERVICE

**PETE C. RODRIGUEZ JR.**  
HUMAN RESOURCES  
SENIOR SPECIALIST

After 30 years of unwavering service, Pedro R. Rodriguez is retiring from his role as the beloved Groundskeeper for Senior Services — though his presence and legacy will remain deeply rooted in the garden he so lovingly nurtured for decades.

Pedro began his journey at the senior center over three decades ago, first working under a different organization before the center became part of the Pascua Yaqui Tribe. His commitment to the land and the people it serves never wavered through the transition. For over 25 years, Pedro was the heart and hands behind the senior garden and landscape.

He maintained the grounds with dedication and skill and generously shared his knowledge, mentoring countless volunteers along the way.

Pedro's expertise is entirely self-taught — a result of a life shaped by resilience and hard work. Born and raised in Corpus Christi, Texas, Pedro was one of 11 siblings in a family of migrant farmworkers. Formal schooling took a backseat, as the family moved frequently between California, Arizona, and Texas following seasonal work. Through these formative years, Pedro absorbed the skills of the land with his own hands and keen eye, building a lifetime of knowledge that he would later share so freely.

He settled in Eloy, Arizona, around 1943, continuing his work

on local farms as a ranch hand and later marrying Jane Coronado Rodriguez. Together, they raised two children, Pete Jr. and Rosemary Rodriguez, and now enjoy the blessings of four grandchildren and a great-grandchild. Pete C. Rodriguez Jr. (son) and Pedro J. "PJ" Rodriguez (grandson) both work for the Pascua Yaqui Tribe.

Pedro's warmth and humor have been a daily gift to all who worked with him. Known for always having a joke ready and

an eagerness to start each day, he brought skill and spirit to his role.

Retirement doesn't mean slowing down for Pedro. He plans to remain active and continue volunteering in the garden he helped grow. In his free time, he'll tinker with his old truck, create art, and always find joy in working with his hands.

Thank you, Pedro, for 30 years of service

## CELEBRATING 31 YEARS OF DEDICATION: HONORING MONICA'S REMARKABLE JOURNEY

**MARIA LOPEZ**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
OF THE TRIBAL GAMING OFFICE



Monica Baltazar has been a pillar of dedication, resilience, and commitment for many years.

From the moment she stepped into her role working for Sol Casinos and the Tribal Gaming Office, she has exemplified integrity and a deep passion for her work and culture.


Through the years, Monica has contributed to our organization's success and inspired many. Her ability to handle challenges head-on has set a benchmark for excellence!

As we celebrate this incredible milestone, we extend our heartfelt gratitude for everything Monica has done. Her 31 years of service are a testament

not just to her dedication but also to the legacy she leaves behind—a legacy of commitment and passion.


Congratulations, Monica! Your journey inspires us all, and we look forward to your continued success!





### MEMBER PORTAL

Access Tribal Information and Resources




## WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBER PORTAL

The Pascua Yaqui Tribe Enrollment Department is proud to announce the development of a new member portal for enrolled adult tribal members of the Pascua Yaqui Tribe.

Tribal members are encouraged to register and create an account to gain access to the portal. Once your membership status has been verified your account will become active

- Information related to the 2025 PYT Constitutional Reform Project
- Department information and online services
- Important tribal announcements, documents and resources
- Tribal Member ONLY content and benefits

SCAN ME! >>>



REGISTER NOW

If you experience any technical issues or have questions about the Member Portal, please contact the Pascua Yaqui Tribe Enrollment Department at (520) 879-6242 or email IT Portal Support.

portal-support@pascuayaqui-nsn.gov
www.pascuayaqui-nsn.gov