

Celebration of Freedom coming to downtown Mesa

By GARIN GROFF
TRIBUNE

Mesa is celebrating America's independence in a new way this year, with a goal of making a two-day event Arizona's biggest July 4th bash.

The Southwest Ambulance Celebration of Freedom will take place on several downtown streets and fill the area with water features, food vendors and displays featuring U.S. history. The highlight will be a Saturday fireworks show that includes pyrotechnics being shot from the top of buildings.

The event will transform downtown in way people aren't used to, city spokesman Steve Wright said. "We're basically converting it into an event venue," Wright said.

The Celebration of Freedom was created only after the city's decades-old fireworks tradition fizzled.

The Sertoma Club of Mesa cancelled its fireworks in 2009 because the recession left it unable to raise the \$20,000 to \$30,000 needed for a show. The club's Walter Zimmerman said he got calls from



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MAYOR SCOTT SMITH
ABOUT THE SOUTHWEST AMBULANCE
CELEBRATION OF FREEDOM

disappointed city residents and even from reporters across the country who were writing stories about cancelled fireworks shows. Zimmerman spoke with Mayor Scott Smith about reviving the tradition. The city eventually got about 40 businesses to sponsor a

bigger event, and one that Smith wants to become one of downtown's signature events.

"We hope that this will become a community tradition," Smith said.

Mesa plans to hold future Celebration of Freedom events the Friday and Saturday before July 4th, with the fireworks show on

tographs of more than 150 Arizonans killed in the Afghanistan and Iraq wars.

Highlights and tips:

- The event runs 6 p.m. to 10 p.m.

- Fireworks begin 9:30 p.m. Saturday, with pyrotechnics shot from the top of the Mesa Arts Center and Mesa City Plaza. A 20-minute fireworks show will be shot from south of downtown. The best viewing is along the north side of Main Street.

- Misting tents and misting fans will be set up to cool people. Kids can get soaked in several water features.

IN|BRIEF

CHANDLER

Budget cuts result in fewer hours at library

Chandler's Downtown Library will reduce its hours starting Thursday as part of the city's budget cuts. The new hours are 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Wednesday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Thursday through Saturday, and 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday. The city had been considering more drastic cuts in hours but the City Council set aside about \$167,000 to support longer hours. The city is not changing hours at the Sunset, Hamilton or Bascha branch libraries.

Garin Groff, (480) 898-6548

EAST VALLEY

Registration open at CGCC

Registration is open for fall 2010 classes at Chandler-Gilbert Community College. Students are encouraged to register early to get the classes they need. Classes begin Aug. 21. Counselors in the advisement center can help students create a plan to reach their educational goals. To set up an appointment, call (480) 732-7317. Registration

Town of Gilbert for 90th anniversary

The town will host an honor of 90th anniversary at 7 p.m. at the Mesa Arts Center, 500 N. Main Street. The show will be shown on Channel 4. Live at 7 p.m. The show will include a memorial service for residents and residents who served in the military. The show will be held at the Mesa Arts Center.

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"We hope that this will become a community tradition," Smith said.

Mesa plans to hold future Celebration of Freedom events the Friday and Saturday before July 4th, with the fireworks show on Saturdays.

The city raised \$370,000 in cash and in-kind donations. The Mesa celebration will be unlike any other because it will include many educational displays on history, said Ken Koziol, senior vice president with Entertainment Solutions. One of the features is pho-

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- Patriotic music performances begin at 6 p.m. inside the Mesa Arts Center.

- Plan to arrive early to find a parking space or consider using the LINK bus on Main Street. The service will run until 11 p.m.

Information: www.arizonacelebrationoffreedom.org.

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Michelle Reese, (480) 898-6549

General availa

Gilbert's Dr. Plan, including complete and line. The 60-c period begins and runs through Drafts will not to homes. The able online a bertaz.gov/plan2011.cfm, facilities, 50 E. ter Drive and Center Drive. ments will be to the steering and subcomm review. The Ge is used to pl next 20 years including wher businesses, ho and fire static includes energ ment and cha ments. Inform: gilbertaz.gov.

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E.V. AGE

MESA CITY C MEETIN

When: 4:45 p.m. Th

Where: City Council 57 E. First St.

Details: The council consider selling 126 in Pinal County for The buyer is TransCanada bought the land in its water rights but secured other water Buyer TransCanada the land for a natural plant.

Information: www