



A Brief Update of News Around Arizona

April 2017

The **Arizona Office of Tourism** is pleased to provide this monthly update of new and noteworthy items within Arizona's tourism industry. For more information, contact Becky Blaine at bblaine@tourism.az.gov, Kim Todd at ktodd@tourism.az.gov or Marjorie Magnusson at mmagnusson@tourism.az.gov.

Adventure

The City of Payson just launched the "[Payson Passport to Adventure](#)" an adventure scavenger hunt. This smartphone app showcases more than 60 attractions in and around the community. Attractions and adventures include: hiking trails, camping spots, special events and natural attractions such as the Tonto Natural Bridge State Park. As visitors use the app and visit each of the attractions, they accumulate points in the app which qualifies them for entry into drawings for prizes from many of the local businesses. A built-in leaderboard allows users to see if they are winning. There are monthly prizes and two \$1,000 cash prizes in December of 2017. The app will notify visitors if they have won.

To celebrate the State of Arizona's 105th birthday, [Rainbow Ryders Hot Air Balloon Ride Company](#), gave the state a one-of-a-kind gift – a new Arizona themed hot air balloon. The new hot air balloon named *Arizona Rising*, joins its sister hot air balloon, *Valley of the Sun*, a balloon which was purchased to celebrate the state's 100th birthday. The Arizona Rising hot air balloon joins the 25 hot air balloon fleet used to promote Arizona tourism and bucket list adventures throughout the Valley of the Sun and travels to other cities for special events. In Phoenix, the weather allows for year-round flights, allowing visitors the chance to see the valley from the air throughout every season with either a sunrise ride, sunset ride, a gourmet breakfast or dinner ride or a private ride. In addition to the new balloon, Rainbow Ryders opened a new 12,000 square foot Adventure Center and office at 715 E. Covey Lane near the Phoenix Deer Valley Airport.



Rainbow Ryder's Arizona Rising

[Lake Powell Resorts & Marinas](#) has announced the newest addition to its fleet of houseboats – the *Wanderer*. The *Wanderers* are 59-ft. long and 18-ft. wide, two full feet wider than most four bedroom boats, with four queen-sized staterooms, two bathrooms, a screened upper deck driving helm that includes a wet bar and a barbeque. The top deck includes convertible dinettes, a 48-inch LED TV with Blu-ray players and an enclosed water park-inspired spiral tube slide. The *Wanderer* is built for Lake Powell with a reverse design, placing living areas in the aft section maximizing views of the scenery from all living areas and allowing for greater privacy in the bedrooms. The *Wanderer* accommodates up to 12 passengers. In addition, Lake Powell Resorts and Marinas offers rentals ranging from powerboats, to water toys that include ski tubes, wakeboards, kayaks, water skis, paddle boards, and kneeboards. The six new custom-built *Wanderer* houseboats, are available for rental in June.



Lake Powell Resort's Wanderer

Culture/Heritage

On March 1, 2017, [Oracle State Park](#) opened with a new schedule. It is now open seven days per week from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. It is the last park to fully reopen to the public after restricted operations were put in place at several parks beginning in 2009. Oracle State Park is located northeast of Tucson in the northern foothills of the Catalina Mountains and offers monthly environmental programs including hikes and lectures. The park is a 4,000-acre wildlife refuge with more than 15 miles of trails, including a segment of the Arizona Trail. The International Dark Sky Association designated Oracle State Park as an International Dark Sky Park in 2014.



Hotel News

Two hotels recently opened in Chandler. [The Element Chandler Fashion Center](#) opened in December next to Chandler Fashion Center, which is home to upscale stores, restaurants, and a movie theater. The hotel features 107 light-filled, open-flow guest rooms (studios or one-bedroom suites) with well-equipped kitchens, Heavenly Beds®, and spa-inspired baths as well as a 32" LCD TV. The hotel also features 600 square feet of meeting space as well as amenities that include the RESTORE gourmet pantry, the Bikes to Borrow program, with complimentary bikes and a local trail map, electric vehicle charging stations, a state-of-the-art 24-hour fitness center, a heated outdoor swimming pool and free Wi-Fi throughout the property. Guest rooms at this Element hotel are smoke-free. The [Drury Inn & Suites Phoenix Chandler Fashion Center](#) opened in January. In addition to its 210 guest rooms, the property also features four meeting rooms totaling more than 3,000 square feet of flexible event space. The hotel is near the Chandler Fashion Center, golf courses and casinos. Hotel amenities include complimentary Wi-Fi, hot breakfast, afternoon soda and popcorn, a “kickback” reception including beer, wine and appetizers, 24-hour business and fitness centers, outdoor pool and whirlpool, and parking. Two-room suites are also available, featuring a bedroom separated by a door from the living area, which also has a pull-out queen sofa sleeper.

General

[Lowell Observatory](#) has plans for the August 2017 Solar Eclipse. Although Flagstaff is not in the path of totality for the solar eclipse on August 21, 2017, staff at Lowell Observatory are busy working on special events surrounding this significant astronomical event to take place at both the Flagstaff campus and off-site in Madras, Oregon. In Flagstaff the eclipse will be 70 percent of the sun, and visitors are invited to spend the day at the observatory for a safe viewing experience and special education programming on the science of the eclipse as well as a live feed from the event in Madras where the eclipse will be 100 percent. At the Lowell Observatory Solar Eclipse Experience at the Madras High School football field, astronomers, educators and personalities from Lowell Observatory and the Science Channel will narrate the eclipse as it occurs where the highlight will be more than two minutes of total darkness. Lowell Observatory will also host astronomer talks and solar experiments throughout the day and end the evening with a star party. The August 21, 2017 total solar eclipse has been called the Great American Eclipse because it will be visible from only one country—the United States.

lowellsolareclipse.com

Tour company [DETOURS](#) is now offering a day visit to the Verde Valley from the Phoenix metropolitan area. The Verde Canyon Railroad and Jerome day trip is a fully narrated excursion with hotel pick-ups in the Scottsdale and Phoenix area. The tour stops in Jerome for some time to shop and learn about the mining history of the area. Next, guests visit the new Arizona Copper Museum, for an educational, hands-on experience about the discovery of copper and its many uses today. The afternoon is spent enjoying views from a first-class seat, with lunch on the Verde Canyon Railroad. The tour operates on Wednesdays and Saturdays, and is \$235 per adult which includes lunch, unlimited bottled water and all entrance fees.

Wellness

Surrounded by the red rocks in Sedona, [Enchantment Resort](#) has launched a new ‘[Canyon Conservationists](#)’ kids program dedicated to educating guests on the history and preservation of Boynton Canyon. In celebration of the 30th Anniversary this year, the resort has renewed its commitment to the environment with the development of ‘Canyon Conservationists’ through fun and educational activities. The new program joins the resort’s Native American Program which offers guests educational activities and seminars about the traditions and cultural

heritage of the indigenous tribes. The new 'Canyon Conservationists' program includes some of the following activities:

Save the Bees! - The beekeeper leads an interactive demonstration on collecting honey and explains how bees make their hive and produce honey.

Organic Gardening and Composting for Kids - Teaches guests how to make their own compost with the resort's resident expert organic gardener. Hosted at the Mii amo Chef's garden.

Leave No Trace - Guests learn the principles of *Leave No Trace* from a Grand Canyon Ranger by learning how to properly prepare themselves and their natural surroundings for the next outdoor adventure.

Nature Walk for Kids - Kids learn how local Native American tribes used their natural resources for clothes, tools, medicine and food from the resort's resident naturalist guides

Bats: Ecological Superheroes - Arizona has 28 species of protected bats. Guests learn how to cultivate these rapidly dwindling mammals by building bat boxes at home.

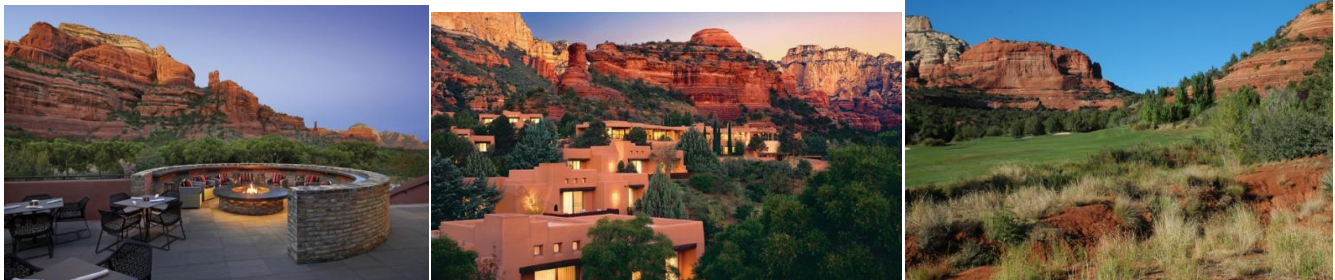
What is Wilderness? - A representative from the Arizona Natural History Association shares information about Sedona and what travelers might encounter while they are in the wild. Includes a short hike.

Ancient Southwest Native American Astronomy - Look at the celestial interpretations and practices of several ancient tribes.

Improving Owl and Kestrel Habitats - Arizona's Raptor Experience provides an up-close encounter with birds of prey. Guests check the bird boxes on the Resort grounds.

Creepy Crawly Creatures - A local, long-time animal advocate and rescuer will get participants comfortable handling snakes, tarantulas and scorpions.

Help Preserve the Canyon's Ruins - Join the Director of the Verde Valley Archeology Center for an informative presentation about the etiquette guests should follow when visiting fragile Native American ruins and how locals work to preserve them for others to enjoy.



Enchantment Resort

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YouTube: www.youtube.com/user/ArizonaTourism

Official State Visitors Guide: <http://www.visitarizona.com/visitors-guide>

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