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Arizona Daily Star

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2026 | tucson.com

Safaris could be coming to Sahuarita

HENRY BREAN
Arizona Daily Star

People often move to Sahuarita from the big city in search of quiet living and wide open spaces. The same goes for giraffes and rhinos. Hundreds of exotic animals could one day

room through giant enclosures at a conservation safari park the Phoenix Zoo hopes to build at the western edge of the booming town about 20 miles south of Tucson. The park would be developed on almost 1,100 acres of vacant land, with large natural areas capable of supporting sustainable

populations of some of the world's most at-risk animals. "We don't quite have a name for it at this point, but we're building a conservation park for imperiled species," said Norberto "Bert" Castro, president and CEO of the Arizona Center for Nature Conservation, the

nonprofit that operates the Phoenix Zoo. "At the same time, we're going to have a really great drive-through wildlife experience for the public." The zoo has entered into a long-term lease

Please see **SAFARI**, Page A4



TY ONEIL, ASSOCIATED PRESS

Pima County Sheriff Chris Nanos defends the release of Guthrie's property back to her family one day after the 84-year-old mother of NBC "Today" show co-anchor Savannah Guthrie was reported missing.

Quick property release in Guthrie case questioned

CATHALENA E. BURCH
Arizona Daily Star

Crime scene investigators from the Pima County Sheriff's Department spent at least 20 hours combing through Nancy Guthrie's Tucson home in the hours after she went missing. The next day, the property went back to Guthrie's family in a move that some legal observers said was not only unusual, but could possibly complicate a future prosecution. "I don't see a reason why you would release the scene," said Brian Kohlhepp, a 25-year policing veteran

who teaches advanced crime investigation at the John Jay College of Criminal Justice in New York. "That's certainly a crime scene that I would recommend you hold because you're not inconveniencing anyone. There's not a whole family, there's not a business here that's trying to reopen."

LOOK: To see more photos from staff photographers on the disappearance of Nancy Guthrie, point your smartphone camera at the QR code, then tap on the link. **NEWSVU**

"It's self-inflicted wounds," said Mike Jette, a former state and federal prosecutor who served 18 years in Arizona and most recently ran to be the county's top prosecutor. "Every investigation should be handled textbook. It sure doesn't sound like this was handled textbook." Pima County Sheriff Chris Nanos defends the move by his investigators

Please see **GUTHRIE**, Page A2

■ **More inside:** Nanos not ruling out possibility more than one person was involved, **Page A2**

Deeds show that ICE is buying huge warehouses

HEATHER HOLLINGSWORTH AND MORGAN LEE
Associated Press

In a Texas town at the edge of the Rio Grande and a tall metal border wall, rumors swirled that federal immigration officials wanted to purchase three hulking warehouses to transform into a detention center. As local officials scrambled to find out what was happening, a deed was filed showing the Department of Homeland Security had already inked a \$122.8 million deal for the 826,000-square-foot warehouses in Socorro, a bedroom community of 40,000 people outside El Paso. "Nobody from the federal government bothered to pick up the phone or even send us any type of correspondence letting us know what's about to take place," said Rudy Cruz Jr., the mayor of the predominantly Hispanic town of low-slung ranch homes and trailer parks, where orchards and irrigation ditches share the landscape with strip malls, truck stops, recycling plants and distribution warehouses. Socorro is among at least 20 communities with large warehouses across the U.S. that have become stealth targets for Immigration and Customs Enforcement's \$45-billion expansion of detention centers.

As public support for the agency and President Donald Trump's immigration crackdown sags, communities are objecting to mass detentions and raising concerns that the facilities could strain water supplies and other services while reducing local tax revenue. In many cases, mayors, county commissioners, governors and members of Congress learned about ICE's ambitions only after the agency bought or leased space for detainees, leading to shock and frustration even in areas that have backed Trump. "I just feel," said Cruz, whose wife was born in Mexico, "that they do these things in silence so that they don't get opposition."

Please see **ICE**, Page A6

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