



HAZARD HAWK

Hazard Hawk’s horse, BC, drinks water from a trough. The water was hauled to Hawk’s house in the Richland area near southeast Arizona’s Dragoon Mountains by a private supplier. That’s because his drinking well was rendered useless when its pump was plugged up with sediment.

Drinking wells keep drying up in Willcox area

TONY DAVIS
Arizona Daily Star

For homeowner Hazard Hawk, it was a case of three strikes and his well was out. He and his wife, Deborah, had to abandon their well in Cochise County’s Dragoon Mountains foothills last February, after sediment built up in it and browned its water so heavily that they felt it was unfit for them and their four horses to drink. Three years earlier, they had a well company install a new set of pipes for the well after it had also filled with sediment. Fifteen years ago, the previous owner of the home where they live in the Cochise County subdivision of Richland had drilled the well 200 feet deeper after it dried up. This time around, their well driller, Brian Allen, came over and said, “Your

well is dead,” Hawk recalls. “He came in, and tried to pull out the pump. The ground was moving, and he said ‘once we get a 50,000-pound pump moving, no telling where it will go.’” So now they’re paying a water-hauling company \$200 every three weeks to truck 2,500 gallons to their home, lying 3 miles east of the Dragoon Mountains in the Willcox Basin. Hawk’s dead well had company. Not long after Allen told the Hawks their well was useless, he gave similar bad news to two other households nearby, all within a mile of each other, Allen told the Star. Around the entire Willcox Basin, estimates are that more than 100 drinking wells have dried up in recent years.

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DESERT WATER DELIVERY

A tanker run by Desert Water Delivery, a private water hauler in the Willcox Basin, connects to a large water tank owned by a Cochise County homeowner. The water is being hauled to the homeowner because the family’s well dried up.

Live nest cam of barn owls gets surprise second season

HENRY BREAN
Arizona Daily Star

State wildlife officials scored a surprise hit earlier this year with their real barn owls of Whitewater Draw, so they’re already back with the sequel. Two barn owls that successfully fledged five chicks in the spring are now tending to a rare second clutch of eggs in their webcam-equipped nest box at the wildlife area about 100 miles southeast of Tucson, the Arizona Game and Fish Department announced on Wednesday.

Anyone with an internet connection can watch the development of the second batch of eggs at any time of the day or night, just as they could during the pair’s first nesting success of the year. The live feed can be found at [tucnews/1v00](#). Jeff Meyers, AZGFD wildlife viewing program manager, said 38,515 individual viewers tuned in to watch the owls when the nest box was filled with chicks earlier this year. Please see **OWLS**, Page A4



ARIZONA GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT

A female barn owl stands over the rare second clutch of eggs she has laid this year in a webcam image from inside her nest box at Whitewater Draw Wildlife Area.

Giles talks abortion, vouchers

HOWARD FISCHER
Capitol Media Services

MESA — The nominee for Arizona lieutenant governor on the Democratic ticket says he sees no conflict between having declared himself “pro-life” in 2024 and, months later, voting for a state constitutional amendment that allows women to terminate a pregnancy up until fetal viability. “I voted for it,” John Giles said. “It accurately reflects my personal point of view on the topic.” In his first news conference since being tapped by Gov. Katie Hobbs as her running mate, the former Mesa mayor also: ■ Said vouchers for private and parochial school tuition are here to stay but that more funding is needed for public schools; ■ Called efforts to save the Republican Party, where he was registered until earlier this year when he switched to independent, a “lost cause;” ■ Said the policy differences between him and Hobbs are “remarkably little or nothing,” saying both are focused on nonpartisan issues such as economic development, education and public safety. Giles dismissed a question asking his position on biological boys using restrooms and locker rooms designated for girls, calling it a “red herring.” He pointed out that in 2021, as mayor, he helped push through a wide-ranging ordinance that prohibits discrimination in public accommodations, employment and housing, not just on the basis of race, color or ethnicity but also sexual orientation, gender and gender identity.

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Immigration hearings go ‘mega’

CHRISTOPHER CANN, ISABELLE FOLAND
AND MARY ANN KORUTH
USA TODAY NETWORK

Lines stretched out the front door of courthouses. Overflow seating was set up in hallways. Classroom-style exchanges, with judges asking people to raise their hands in response to generic questions about their cases. These are some of the scenes playing out in immigration courts across the country as the Trump administration increasingly turns to mass hearings in an effort to push more cases through the cumbersome immigration system. These so-called “mega master” hearings – which pack upwards of 50 to 100 cases into a single proceeding – are meant to cut down the large backlog of cases in immigration courts run by the Justice Department, federal officials say. Critics argue the effort slashes the already limited due process that immigrants receive, giving them less meaningful time before a judge. The hearings, which have ticked up since May, come as detentions and deportations have surged in recent weeks, according to data from U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. It also comes as the administration has made it easier for immigration authorities to deny asylum claims. Meanwhile, more children are being brought in front of immigration judges for mass hearings, including unaccompanied minors, legal observers say. The controversial hearings are preliminary in nature and offer individuals an opportunity to enter pleas or request relief, such as asylum. They are similar to arraignments in criminal court and are typically the first time people appear before an immigration judge. Please see **HEARINGS**, Page A3

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