

Feds close border wall work zone



MARK HENLE, ARIZONA REPUBLIC 2025

Border wall construction in Arizona's San Rafael Valley in November 2025.

Forest land closed along Arizona border during wall construction

EMILY BREGEL
Arizona Daily Star

Access to acres of Coronado National Forest land at the U.S.-Mexico border has been closed due to what forest officials described as hazards created by border-wall there.

Construction on primary and secondary barriers at the southern border has added new roadways, causing vehicles to travel faster through work zones that include steep grades, open trenches and lots of equipment, said James Alford, special agent in charge

for the Forest Service's southwestern region.

"There's an inherent danger of the construction activity, and because they have opened that up, now the frequency of traffic has picked up and the speed of traffic has picked up, so that is the reason for the closure," Alford said Tuesday.

The closures are unrelated to confrontations between border-wall contractors and protesters along the southern border, he said.

But environmentalists and others seeking to bear witness to

border wall construction, which has already partially destroyed an Arizona archaeological site, say the access restrictions are more about shielding federal border-wall projects from public oversight and accountability.

"This is an attempt to prevent documentation. That's my take on it, honestly," said Erick Meza, borderlands coordinator for the Sierra Club. "As nobody is documenting, there is no transparency for a lot of the way the work is being done."

Please see **BORDER**, Page A2

Trump sending \$500 ACA checks

JOEY GARRISON
USA TODAY

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump was set on Wednesday to start sending \$500 checks to nearly 1 million Americans his administration says were overcharged through the Affordable Care Act's federal exchange for buying health insurance.

Treasury Department checks, along with letters signed by Trump notifying recipients, will begin going out to more than 950,000 Americans across 30 states, according to an administration official.

"For years, the Biden administration overcharged you to fund the operation of HealthCare.gov," Trump says in the letter, which was viewed by USA TODAY. "That money belongs to hard-working Americans, not the Government, and now I'm returning it to you!"

Trump announced the \$500 Obamacare refund checks on Sept. 10 in a video posted by the White House that coincided with the Republican midterm convention in Dallas. The money is separate from a controversial \$5,000 dividend Trump has vowed to distribute to all Americans if Republicans retain control of Congress after the November midterm election.

The White House has said the Biden administration collected user fees from health insurance companies that consumers paid for in the form of higher premiums — and that the premiums exceeded what was needed to run the exchange. The Trump administration has accused the Biden administration of sitting on the surplus of money.

Please see **CHECKS**, Page A3

3rd-country removals can resume

DANIEL GONZALEZ
Arizona Republic

The Trump administration can restart a controversial policy of deporting immigrants to other countries not their own while the Supreme Court reviews lower court rulings that forced ICE to halt the policy.

The Supreme Court agreed on Tuesday, Sept. 29, to grant the Trump administration's emergency request for an immediate stay of lower court rulings that the policy is unlawful because it denies immigrants due process to challenge removals to unfamiliar nations.

The lower court rulings had sided with immigrants facing deportation to so-called third countries who filed a lawsuit challenging the legality of the policy.

The Supreme Court's decision was a temporary victory for the Trump administration. It means ICE can restart the policy of deporting immigrants to third countries instead of their home countries while the Supreme Court reviews the lower courts' rulings.

Please see **REMOVALS**, Page A2

Hobbs restores \$16.5M in funds for UA, ASU and NAU

HOWARD FISCHER
Capitol Media Services

PHOENIX — Gov. Katie Hobbs is using nearly \$16.5 million she says she has left over in COVID funds to restore the funding cut earlier this year to state universities.

Tuesday's restoration includes more than \$4.7 million for the University of Arizona, plus slightly more than \$1 million for the UA Health Sciences Center.

Arizona State University will get nearly \$8.1 million, and Northern Arizona University is in line for more than \$2.6 million.

In a news release late

Tuesday, the Democratic governor did not dispute that she agreed in June to the \$18.3 billion state spending plan negotiated with Republican lawmakers. That plan included a 2.5% across-the-board cut across multiple state agencies, including the universities.

But now Hobbs said she has federal dollars left over from \$4.2 billion allocated to the state in 2021 as part of the federal American Rescue Plan Act. Those dollars were designed to assist state and local governments in addressing the impacts of the pandemic.

Please see **FUNDING**, Page A2



KELLY PRESNELL, ARIZONA DAILY STAR

Students on the University of Arizona campus stroll past wildcat sculptures.

Subscriber Benefits

Scan this QR code with your smartphone to see all the benefits of being a Star subscriber.



INSIDE TODAY'S STAR

Bridge	B3	Business	B5
TV	B3	Comics	B7
Obituaries	B4	Weather	C8

For home delivery, call 1-800-695-4492

email: circulation@tucson.com





SCARED TO UPGRADE YOUR WINDOWS?

FREE ESTIMATE

520.523.4961

OFFERING TRUSTED BRAND WINDOWS & DOORS



WE MAKE THE PROCESS EASY, FAST AND AFFORDABLE.

MOST INSTALLATIONS ONLY TAKE 1-DAY!

Lower energy costs. Superior sound reduction. Unmatched durability. Transform your space with top-tier craftsmanship today.

American Vision Windows of Arizona, LLC / ROC #267599



BOOK NOW AmericanVisionWindowsAZ.com

BEFORE UPGRADE



AFTER UPGRADE

