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Stormwater retention efforts aim to replenish local aquifers

By **STAN BINDELL**
For the Review

Yavapai County Supervisor Chris Kukyno is glad that every town and city in Yavapai County is on board with projects to retain stormwater.

The Yavapai County Board of Supervisors recently passed a resolution supporting flood control and stormwater retention, and Kukyno said the recent storms showed the need for it.

"We need to lessen the floods, and we can recharge the water by slowing it down," he said.

He said the county is looking at putting mini-dams in at the Big Chino Wash, near Sullivan Dam north of Chino Valley, to slow the water down.

"This will put more water into the aquifer," he said.

Kukyno said the dams will not be expensive.

The Chino Valley Town Council recently passed a resolution supporting stormwater projects, and the Prescott Valley Town Council passed one Oct. 8 in support of stormwater retention.

Tracy Lund, Prescott Valley's water resources manager, said the town is piloting a project that looks at potential technologies for modeling stormwater retention.

"We want to model how we cannot lose water to evaporation and how we can get it deeper into the ground," she said. "The water also has to be high quality."

Prescott Valley already has three town buildings with stormwater technology to get the water off the roof, Lund said.

"They are designed to catch 1 inch of rainfall," she said.

She said the town will test a few technologies on buildings, parking lots and parks to retain stormwater, though that depends on funding. In her view, the work should have been done years ago, and it is a statewide issue.

"The best time to do it is 20 years ago, but now is also good," she said. "At some point, this is infrastructure that we need to invest in."



Stormwater flows through a drainage channel following a recent downpour that caused localized flooding in Chino Valley in October 2026. (Town of Chino Valley/Courtesy)

Lund said fixing the issue is going to take a long time.

Kukyno said stormwater is bringing the towns and cities of Yavapai County together to work on common goals, including the Verde Valley communities of Cottonwood, Camp Verde and Clarkdale, as well as Jerome.

"There are going to be a lot of local projects that look different," he said. "We need to talk about not what we can't do, but what we can do."

He recently teamed up with Yavapai County Supervisor Nikki Check to create the Water and Open

Space Committee to see what the county can do to encourage conservation.

The county will carry out its own projects, such as the mini-dams at the Big Chino Wash, but individual cities and towns will have to fund their own stormwater projects, although they may be able to get grants for some of them.

Kukyno said the more water they can put into the aquifer, the less they need to take out. He is concerned about dropping water levels in the Verde River.

Stankewicz cites finances, economic development as top priorities

By **STAN BINDELL**
For the Review

John Stankewicz, who was appointed to the Chino Valley Town Council after Bob Schacherer resigned and later won election after running unopposed, said the town's top priority is maintaining its financial health.

"Our budget is tight, to say the least. In recent years, some sacrifices have had to be made, and we need to get to a point where all of our departments are fully funded and able to run efficiently," he said.

He said many departments are doing more with fewer resources.

Economic development is his second major priority.

"Economic development is a priority. Bringing jobs, businesses and tourism into our town is vital to our success," he said.

Stankewicz added that growth must be carefully managed.

"Our growth needs to be intelligent and well thought out. Considerations regarding water, new housing and the types of businesses we want to attract need to be examined diligently by our Planning and Zoning Commission, Town Council and the citizens of our town," he said.

Having served about six months as an appointed council member before being elected, Stankewicz said he has been encouraged by how the council works together.

"I am pleased to say that all current members of our Town Council work well together, even during disagreements or differing opinions. I am proud that I was able to come on board and work well with my fellow council members, as well as our Town Manager Terri Denemy," he said.

He described participating in approval of the town budget as a rewarding experience and said he has enjoyed meeting residents through community events.

"During National Night Out, I was able to have the best costume at the hot dog grill, mustard, which is much better than ketchup," he said.

Stankewicz believes Chino Valley is navigating significant changes in economics, population and business development and said community involvement is important to ensuring those changes benefit residents.

A Chino Valley resident for more than 11 years, Stankewicz was born in New York and moved to Ohio as a child. After high school, he joined the U.S. Navy and served aboard the USS Shasta as a gunner's mate from 1986 to 1991, including three Middle East deployments.

His community service continued through the Veterans of Foreign Wars, where he served as commander of Prescott Post 541 and previously led Post 4103 in South San Francisco, California.

Following his military service, Stankewicz worked as a supervisor and operations analyst for Franklin

Templeton Mutual Funds and Charles Schwab Financial Corp. before changing careers and becoming a police officer in Northern California for 14 years.

"I soon discovered the suit and tie was not for me. I changed careers and served as a police officer for 14 years in two Northern California police agencies," he said.

After retiring from law enforcement, he moved to Arizona. He and his wife, Gina, purchased a home in Chino Valley and married on May 5, 2019.

After years of traveling the country conducting firearms self-defense training, Stankewicz helped establish Compass Training Center in Chino Valley. The public shooting range operates as a certified Arizona nonprofit organization and offers a variety of training classes.

"We have also expanded into a second company. I am also chief operations officer, co-owner and lead instructor for Fabled Horse Solutions, which conducts most of its training classes at Compass Training Center," he said.

Stankewicz said preserving Chino Valley's environment while accommodating growth remains important.

"From our landscape, our cattle, our pronghorn, our water and every living creature, Chino Valley is special and unique," he said.

While acknowledging growth will affect the environment, he said the council should work to minimize those impacts and ensure future development remains measured and responsible.

Regarding the proposed Perkins Family Ranch airstrip, Stankewicz said he supports the project as presented, noting he was not on the council when the matter was considered.

"I read the proposal and attended the meetings the same as every other citizen," he said.

He believes both supporters' and opponents' concerns deserve consideration but also supports property owners' rights to use their land.

On housing, Stankewicz said Chino Valley can become more affordable if economic growth generates greater income for residents and the town. He encouraged residents to support local businesses because sales tax revenue helps fund municipal services.

Asked what he likes most about Chino Valley, he cited the sense of freedom and the area's scenic character.

"I have lived in several other states in this country, and Arizona by far gives me the greatest feeling of freedom," he said.

Looking ahead, Stankewicz said he wants economic development to continue while preserving the community's identity.

"I do not want Chino Valley to mirror Prescott or Prescott Valley. Chino needs to be Chino, but that does not mean we need to stay stagnant," he said.

Armstrong eyes growth, water and preservation in second term as mayor



Tom Armstrong was sworn in as mayor two years ago. He will be sworn in again on Dec. 8 as he just won re-election with no opposition. (Stan Bindell/For the Review)

By **STAN BINDELL**
For the Review

Chino Valley Mayor Tom Armstrong plans to spend the next two years promoting the history of the Fred Harvey Farm buildings, watching what development happens at the Perkins Family Ranch, retaining the current level of town services and promoting economic development along Highway 89.

Armstrong ran unopposed and has been reelected to a second term.

He said he looks forward to the restoration of the Fred Harvey buildings, which the town acquired. "I hope we can have tours for kids within

six months. It's important for them to know the history," he said. "This could also be a venue where people have gatherings." Armstrong said he is glad the question of whether the airstrip at Perkins Family Ranch should go through is going to the voters.

"Let the voters decide. It's their town," he said. If the airstrip proposition passes, Armstrong said, the Town Council will need to work on the development agreement.

"We will have to spell out what they can and cannot do," he said. If it fails, he said, town leaders will have to see what the Perkins family wants to do to bring more revenue into the farm.

"I'm sure they will want to do something," he said. "I'd rather it not be housing because we don't have the water for it." Armstrong said Arizona has not done a good job of managing its water.

"We need to be better stewards of the land," he said. He supports a movement by Yavapai County and Chino Valley to retain more stormwater for recharge into the aquifers. "We need to do anything and everything to capture stormwater," he said.

Armstrong said he also wants to make sure there are corridors for pronghorn. "We want to preserve wildlife corridors," he said. "It's their land, and we don't want

to hurt anything, wildlife or people."

He hopes to keep town services at their current level, though a decreasing budget makes that a challenge.

"We can't sustain this without more revenue," he said. "We need more businesses along the highway, and we're working with ADOT to relax restrictions." ADOT is the Arizona Department of Transportation. Economic development remains at the forefront. Armstrong said Town Manager Terri Denemy and the Development Services Department continue to work on it, and that Chino

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