

A House of Hope for seniors who have lost their homes

Housing affordability increasingly impacts those over 55

By **GILLIAN 'GUS' ANDREWS**
The Daily Courier

Bert Hunt got a call from hospice: Jackie's husband had died. Now Jackie couldn't afford rent, and was facing eviction. In her 80s, for the first time in her life, she was about to become homeless.

"Wonderful woman," Hunt said of Jackie. "Can barely hear a thing. The sweetest little grandma you would ever want to see."

House of Hope 316, the nonprofit Hunt founded, houses seniors who would otherwise be homeless. They usually run a wait list.

So Hunt assumed Jackie was looking for housing. He offered her a rare opening in one of the duplexes House of Hope 316 maintains.

But Jackie told him her plan was to camp. She and her husband often did it, so she felt prepared. She'd gotten rid of her furniture and bought a tent.

"She said no, no, I'm fine," Hunt remembered. "I just wanted to know if I could help you."

Jackie's story was far from unique. Local shelters say they are seeing an increase in the number of women older than 50 facing homelessness. Local seniors also worry they will lose their housing due to rising rents.

It's part of a nationwide trend, as well as a local one. AARP estimated in 2024 that one in five seniors had no retirement savings. The Arizona Housing Coalition reported 3,300 Arizonans over 55 experienced homelessness last year.

These are "people that worked their whole lives, that raise families, and never thought they would be in this position," Hunt said.

SELFLESS ACTS

Jackie called Hunt a few months later. "She said, 'Bert, the camping thing didn't work out. Do you have an opening?'" he remembered.

Strikingly, Jackie was not the only older woman more concerned for others' safety than her own. Jerri, though homeless herself, referred multiple people to Hunt.

On a day over 100 degrees in 2024, Hunt reached out to Jerri, concerned about her health. She was still living in her car. Hunt has only a couch open, but he told her it came with three meals a day, a shower, and kind roommates.

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Sherree Garrison tends to her tomatoes at the House of Hope 316 duplex she shares with four other women, in October 2025. (Gillian "Gus" Andrews/Courier)



Bert Hunt, founder of Prescott Valley's House of Hope 316, helps residents finish a puzzle in October 2025. (Gillian "Gus" Andrews/Courier)



(Prescott Police Department/Courtesy)

Tri-City Task Force addresses speeding on Willow Creek Road

The Tri-City Task Force returned last week, this time focusing enforcement efforts along Willow Creek Road on Dec. 10.

Prescott Police Department (PPD), Prescott Valley Police Department (PVPD) and Yavapai County Sheriff's Office (YCSO) joined forces to address speeding along the busy corridor.

The Tri-City Task Force conducted 105 traffic stops which resulted in 69 speeding citations and three excessive speed citations, according to PPD. The highest speed was clocked at 70 miles per hour in a 45 mile-per-hour zone.

"The Tri-City Task Force remains committed to keeping our roadways safe through high visibility, zero tolerance enforcement," PPD stated. "Drivers can expect to see increased patrols and proactive traffic enforcement in and around the Tri City area throughout the year as part of ongoing efforts to reduce hazardous driving behaviors and prevent serious injury collisions."

The Tri-City Task Force's enforcement efforts are supported by grants from the Arizona Governor's Office of Highway Safety (GOHS). To learn more about GOHS and how it is helping local agencies improve road safety, visit its website at gohs.az.gov.

Hava Herzog, The Daily Courier

CAFMA's ground ambulance celebrates one year of service

Central Arizona Fire and Medical Authority (CAFMA) announced it has celebrated one year of its ground ambulance transport service to the communities of Prescott Valley, Chino Valley, Dewey-Humboldt and nearby areas.

The service began in October 2024 and between then and this past October, CAFMA reported 1,833 patient transports, about 150 a month. Besides patient transport, CAFMA also responded to structure fires, vehicle accidents, hazardous material incidents, and other emergencies. CAFMA's ambulance service is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

"These results are a testament to the dedication and expertise of CAFMA's firefighters, who are trained Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT) and Certified Emergency Paramedics," CAFMA stated in a news release. "Their advanced skills and commitment have made a tangible difference in the lives of residents across the Quad Cities."

Before CAFMA launched a ground ambulance, LifeLine Ambulance, Copperstate Ambulance, Mayer Ambulance, and Priority serviced the area. According to Courier archives, CAFMA had worked to bring additional ambulances to the quad-city area to address critical service gaps for the past decade.

"This first year has been extraordinary for our team and our community," CAFMA Fire Chief John Feddema said. "Our firefighters have demonstrated the highest level of care and professionalism, making sure that residents receive timely, life-saving treatment. We are proud of what we have accomplished and remain committed to providing the best emergency medical services possible."

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CAFMA Station 61 (CAFMA/Courtesy)

GOP lawmakers push to fund prison Oversight Office Hobbs approved

Warn inaction could cost Arizona millions

By **HOWARD FISCHER**
For the Courier

PHOENIX — Two Republican lawmakers convinced Gov. Katie Hobbs earlier this year to sign legislation to allow some outside oversight of the state's prison system.

Now they want to see if the governor is willing to fund it so it actually can begin operations.

Rep. Walt Blackman of Snowflake and Sen. Shawna Bolick of Phoenix have introduced proposals to provide \$1.5 million to the newly created — but so far not functional — state Independent Correctional Oversight Office. The bills, HB 2063 and SB 1032, are identical, allowing them both to advance in parallel, expediting how quickly they can reach the governor's desk.

They believe they already have the support

of a majority of their colleagues.

In fact, the original plan to create the office — complete with the money

to fund it — was approved earlier this year by the Senate on a 23-5 margin. It also unanimously cleared the House Government Committee that Blackman chairs.

But both Blackman and Bolick told Capitol Media

Services at the time that the message from the Hobbs was that the idea was DOA with the funding. So when the measure came to the House floor, Blackman agreed to strip out the

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Reps. Walter "Walt" Blackman and Shawna Bolick. (Courtesy Photos)

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Weather



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