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## 12-year-old Wish Kid from Prescott heads to Florida for dream vacation

By BRODIE GREENE  
The Daily Courier

Twelve-year-old Jason Deblois and his family are on their way to the Walt Disney World Resort in Florida after a Make-a-Wish sendoff party hosted by the Findlay Subaru Prescott car dealership.

Jason lives with an autoimmune disorder. He and his family were showered in support on Friday, Feb. 13, by representatives of Make-a-Wish and dealership staff.

"I'm really excited because one of my favorite YouTubers [Dude Perfect] went there and they rode the Tron ride and the Slinky Dog Dash thing. They went there and I've got to see what it would be like," Jason said.

They will be staying at the Give Kids The World Village, an 89-acre nonprofit resort in Florida, where they'll have a cottage to themselves and all the ice cream they can eat.

The party made sure they'll have plenty of swag, too. In addition to hats, bags and sunglasses, the dealership gave each family member a Visa gift card for their trip.

"We're extremely grateful. His illness came on so suddenly that this was never on our radar at all," said Ronalyn Deblois, Jason's mother.



Twelve-year-old Jason Deblois walks into his sendoff party with wish grantor Bonnie Bouschet and dealership manager Jason Jenkins on Friday, Feb. 13, 2026. (Brodie Greene/Courier)

"The Give Kids The World is such a cool program that we would like to donate to in the future and tell people about. It's a really cool village where kids can go and not have to worry about their sickness. It's very happy, very positive, and that's what Jason needs."

Brian Deblois, Jason's father, expressed gratitude to the dealership for the sendoff party.

"It's wonderful that they have that same vision to touch families," Deblois said.

See WISH, page 8



The majority of Prescott residents receive physical utility bills in the mail. As a result, the city anticipates spending close to \$180,000 each year on printing and postage. (Brodie Greene/Courier)

## Most Prescott residents still get their utility bills mailed, at cost to the city

By BRODIE GREENE  
The Daily Courier

The Prescott City Council recently extended an existing contract with DATAMATX, a shipping and mailing service based in Virginia, for the printing and mailing of city utility bills. The item was on the consent agenda for the Feb. 10 voting meeting and was approved unanimously.

See MAIL, page 8

## Will runway disrupt the road to enlightenment?

### Proposed airstrip in Chino Valley raises noise concerns at Buddhist Institute

By JOHN FOLEY  
The Daily Courier

Would it be bad karma for a pilot to buzz a Buddhist temple?

This question might not be all that farfetched given plans to construct a runway in Chino Valley near the Garchen Buddhist Institute.

The planned 390-acre airfield would serve pilots training at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University. Currently, Embry-Riddle pilots use the Prescott Regional Airport about nine miles to the south of the proposed runway, as well as other airports in the region such as Cottonwood.

The Chino Valley Planning and Zoning Commission voted 5-2 to recommend approval of the project at its Feb. 3 meeting. The issue now goes to a public

hearing by the Town Council at Grace Church on Monday, Feb. 23; the council's voting meeting will be Tuesday, Feb. 24, at Town Hall.

When contacted for this article, Planning and Zoning Chairman Chuck Merritt, who voted to recommend approval of the project, said: "I don't have a comment on that."

Perched atop a ridge dotted with pinyon and juniper about 10 miles east of Chino Valley, the Garchen Buddhist Institute was established on 95 acres in 2000. The proposed airfield would be about 1.2 miles west of the institute's property. The Tibetan monks and staff who reside there — along with supporters — are concerned about the noise impact, among other things.

"This is a silent retreat center," said Christina Lundberg, executive director of the Garchen Institute. "We chose this land because of the quiet."

The institute receives about 2,000 visitors annually, she said. About half make the journey out the long dirt road for silent meditation retreats, and the other half are curious about Buddhism and the institute.

Lundberg, 58, was a film student in New York when she heard the Dalai Lama speak about 35 years ago. She was deeply inspired, she said, and has followed a Buddhist path ever since.

Previously, Lundberg said that the proposed airstrip would be a "death knell" for the Garchen Institute, and she stood by that comment as she showed visitors around the property.

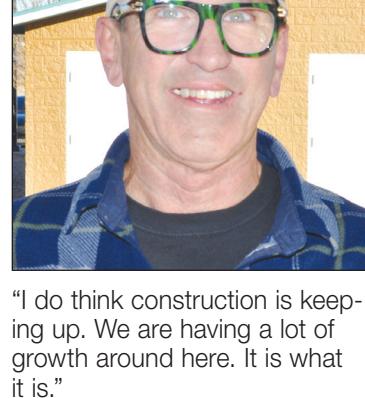
See BUDDHIST, page 8



The outdoor stupa, or monument that, at terms have sacred relics such as images, statues, metals, or other holy objects, at the Garchen Buddhist Institute, which is just to the East of Chino Valley. Stupas like this one are used for as a place of pilgrimage and meditation. (Chris Ortiz/PNN)

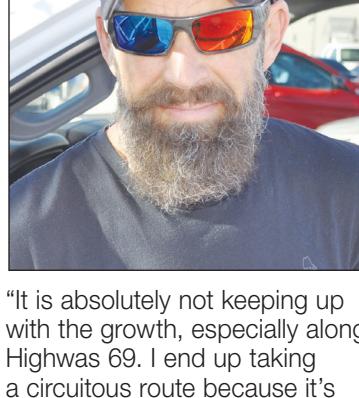
## Street Talk

### Is road construction keeping up with growth in the area?



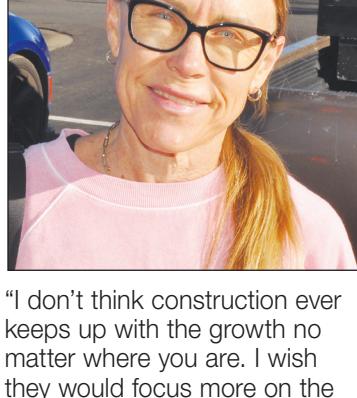
"I do think construction is keeping up. We are having a lot of growth around here. It is what it is."

— Kevin Mrotek



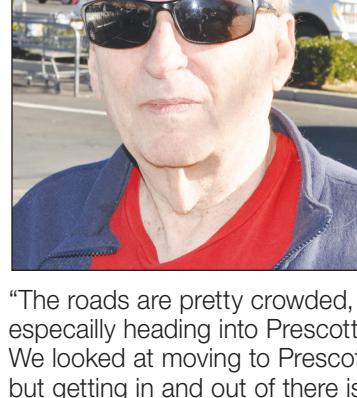
"It is absolutely not keeping up with the growth, especially along Highway 69. I end up taking a circuitous route because it's faster."

— Ed Moody



"I don't think construction ever keeps up with the growth no matter where you are. I wish they would focus more on the sidewalks and make it more walkable."

— Keira Moody



"The roads are pretty crowded, especially heading into Prescott. We looked at moving to Prescott but getting in and out of there is tough."

— Len Ashton



"It's not keeping up with the growth. I've lived here (for) 15 years and there are a lot more people now. There's not that small town feel anymore."

— Jean Fierro

Street Talk question asked by John Foley, The Daily Courier

Today's Weather



High 46° | Low 35°

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