

Greater Yuma EDC Investors Making News



July 27, 2016 Issue

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Alexander Ford Dealership Receives Award

Azucena Martinez, KYMA, July 15th, 2016

Bill Alexander Ford receives the coveted Presidents Award from Ford Motor Company. The award was presented to Ryan Hancock, president of Bill Alexander Ford, with the highest recognition for customer service. Receipt of the Ford Motor Company's Presidents Award means that Hancock's service and sales satisfaction is in the region's top 4 percent.

The official presentation ceremony took place during a noon ceremony at the Bill Alexander Ford Lincoln Dealership at 801 E. 32nd Street in Yuma, AZ 85365. Ford Motor Company's Regional Manager, Steve Papanicklas was on site to present the award to Hancock and Bill Alexander Ford dealership in recognition of their high level of customer service in the industry.

Ford Motor Company reserves this exclusive award for dealers and dealerships in the top 4 percent in their region for service and sales according to independent surveys.



Yuma Sun photo

Bill Alexander Ford receives the coveted Presidents Award from Ford Motor Company. The award was presented Friday, July 15 to Ryan Hancock, president of Bill Alexander Ford, with the highest recognition for customer service. Receipt of the Ford Motor Company's Presidents Award means that Hancock's service and sales satisfaction is in the region's top 4 percent.

APS Foundation Continues Focus On STEM EDUCATION

More Than \$1.2 million Awarded In First Round Of 2016 Funding



PHOENIX – Fourteen nonprofit organizations located throughout Arizona and the Four Corners area will receive more than \$1.2 million in STEM-supported grants, the APS Foundation announced today. Supporting science, technology, engineering and math (also known as STEM) and other education programs has been the Foundation’s principal focus since 2012.

“Arizona is blessed to have a number of local organizations doing impactful work in STEM educational areas,” said Tina Marie Tentori, executive director of the APS Foundation. “These grants will help move their efforts forward, including encouraging and preparing Arizona students to pursue future jobs in technology, clean energy and other STEM-related careers.”

The following nonprofits received grants from the APS Foundation:

- American Indian College Fund received a \$100,000 grant for a scholarship fund that provides financial support to 15 Navajo college students pursuing majors in STEM or related fields at Navajo Nation-serving tribal colleges and mainstream universities in Arizona and New Mexico, with a particular emphasis around the Four Corners region.
- Arizona Center for Afterschool Excellence received \$5,000 for its annual conference dedicated to training 700 childcare providers throughout Arizona on integrating STEM activities into daily programming.
- Arizona Science Center received a \$385,000 grant to support the continuation of its Professional Learning and Development Rural Communities Expansion Project, which helps integrate STEM curriculum into rural school districts, including grades 3-8 in Cottonwood, Oak Creek, Humboldt, Winslow, Prescott, Sedona, Tonopah, Florence and Yuma.

- Flagstaff Chamber of Commerce Foundation received a \$20,000 grant for its Ready.Set.Code. Digital Initiative which introduces area youth and teachers to the various roles and potential careers that make up the digital workplace eco-system.
- HandsOn Greater Phoenix received a \$10,000 grant for its Your Experience Counts academic mentoring program that trains volunteers to work alongside elementary teachers in the classroom, helping with academic improvement in reading, writing, math and science.
- Audubon Arizona received a \$25,000 grant for its River Pathways program, which introduces urban youth to environmental science-related careers and gives students access to natural resource professionals.
- NTC Research Foundation received a \$108,000 grant for its BrainSTEM program, which brings 45-minute live performances by professional actor/educators to rural schools to introduce STEM principles to low income 5th through 8th graders. The program will reach 20,000 students, 700 teachers and 50 schools.
- Teach for America received a \$50,000 grant for a targeted STEM initiative that will sponsor 10 math and science teachers in Title I schools in the Phoenix metropolitan area.
- Valley of the Sun YMCA received a \$45,000 grant for its STEM Thursdays program, which provides fun, engaging, hands-on group STEM learning projects and encourages low income elementary school students in the Valley, Yuma, Somerton and Flagstaff to pursue STEM careers.
- Arizona Chamber Foundation received a \$100,000 grant for A for Arizona, an initiative to improve and serve K-12 low-income schools throughout Arizona.

Additional organizations receiving grants during this funding cycle include: Arizona State Parks Foundation, Expect More Arizona, Grand Canyon Association and Great Hearts Academies.

The next cycle of APS Foundation grant applications opens on July 15 with a deadline of Sept. 1, 2016. Applications and more information on grant eligibility can be found at www.aps.com/corporategiving and clicking on the Foundation link.

About APS Foundation

The APS Foundation is committed to making a deep impact in Arizona communities and does so by supporting statewide nonprofits that advance knowledge in the field of STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) education. The Foundation supports a wide range of educational initiatives that target both students and teachers in order to keep the next generation of Arizona's workforce strong and competitive.

Privately endowed by Pinnacle West Capital Corp. in 1981 as an independent 501(c)(3) organization, the APS Foundation distributes an average of \$1.5 million to \$2.5 million per year through a bi-annual grant process. Since its inception, it has invested nearly \$38 million in Arizona nonprofits. For more information, please visit www.aps.com/corporategiving and click on the Foundation link.

Facebook Tests Unmanned Aircraft at YPG

By Blake Herzog, @BlakeHerzog Updated Jul 21, 2016

Facebook's Connectivity Lab confirmed Thursday that it successfully tested a solar-powered unmanned aircraft expected to bring internet access to remote corners of the globe at Yuma Proving Ground last month. The military testing site, which is also leased to private companies, was rumored to be the site of the test and a visit from Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg on that social network and others on June 28, but representatives of both would not confirm or deny the story. Now there's a three-minute video of the v-shaped Aquila drone's maiden flight, showing its takeoff from a runway at YPG and soaring over Castle Dome and other peaks within the Kofa National Wildlife Refuge. There's a glimpse of Zuckerberg high-fiving one of the members of the engineering team.

In a post credited to Jay Parikh, global head of engineering and infrastructure for the company, the 96-minute flight went an hour longer than originally planned due to its success, but the plane is intended to run for up to three months at a time, when the current record for continuous solar flight is two weeks. "In our next tests, we will fly Aquila faster, higher and longer, eventually taking it above 60,000 feet. Each test will help us learn and move faster toward our goal," Parikh wrote. He did not say where those tests might be taking place. Sarah Sullivan, a spokeswoman for Facebook, said the low-altitude test was done in the desert about 30 miles north of Yuma "because there aren't many places in the world where you can test an aircraft like this safely, and YPG met all the requirements we had for a site."

She declined to say how many people are working on the Aquila project, except that the experts on the team included "aerospace, avionics, mechanical and software engineers, designers, technicians, UAV operators, logistics specialists. Members of the team have previous experience at NASA, Boeing, DARPA, Northrup Grumman, and the British Royal Air Force, among other organizations." Facebook has been flying a fifth-scale model of Aquila for months, but this was the first time the full-size drone was put into use. The full wingspan is wider than a Boeing 737's, but it weighs less than a typical electric car with its carbon-fiber frame, and half of its weight comes from batteries. It's designed to fly under solar power during the day and battery power at night, and the 5,000 watts required is equivalent to a high-end microwave, the company said. According to an engineering blog posted by Facebook, the first flight used only battery power, consuming about 2,000 watts.

The aircraft are designed to provide online access at a point when over half of the globe still doesn't have it through laser communications relayed among a fleet of planes and e-band technology to relay connectivity to the ground. The fleet would serve people within a 60-mile communications diameter. Sullivan said three more Aquila drones have been built for testing purposes, but Facebook isn't planning to maintain a fleet of them.

"Right now we're focused on getting the technology right. Our end goal is not necessarily to build aircraft but to accelerate the pace at which aircraft technology moves forward in order to help others within the industry to ultimately supply and deploy them," she said. By Thursday evening Facebook's video of the first Aquila flight had been viewed more than 1.5 million times, according to the counter on the company's page. Yuma Proving Ground is never mentioned, but the footage clearly shows the mountains and desert surrounding the test range.

Russ Clark, the Yuma County supervisor who represents the YPG area and a member of the Greater Yuma Economic Development Corporation executive board, said Thursday from Cleveland he had not heard about the drone flight, but said it could help the area build its prominence among the growing unmanned aerial vehicle industry. He said test runs for UAVs have been going on for years at YPG and elsewhere in the county by military and private interests, but much of it is being kept under wraps. "We mostly don't know exactly what's going on, because most of it is not for public consumption," he said.

Yuma Mayor Doug Nicholls, another GYEDC board member, was on vacation Thursday and hadn't heard about the Aquila tests either, but felt that it could give the area new prominence in the drone industry.

"It shows the advantages of the capabilities at YPG and just testing throughout the Yuma area on all of our ranges," he said.



Loaned photo

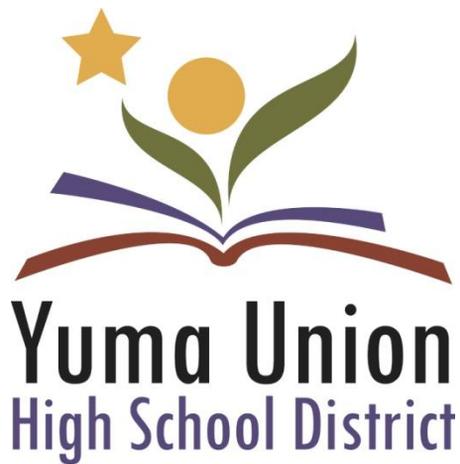
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Loaned photo

Facebook's Connectivity Lab confirmed Thursday that it successfully tested a solar-powered unmanned aircraft expected to bring internet access to remote corners of the globe at Yuma Proving Ground last month. In this photo, Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg watches the test.

YUHSD OKs Exploring Somerton Land Buy For New School



By Amy Crawford, Yuma

The Yuma Union High School District got the green light to start the process for purchasing land in Somerton for a new high school in that city.

“We’ve been authorized to move forward to develop a purchase agreement,” Superintendent Toni Badone said after the special meeting of the governing board Wednesday evening. The property the district is considering is north of Perricone Park, just off of Highway 95 and along Cesar Chavez Avenue, according to the resolution approved by the board.

Data from the Yuma County Assessor’s Office sizes the agricultural parcel at nearly 140 acres, of which the district is looking to purchase about 77 (more or less) of those acres, Badone said, excluding certain infrastructure, such as a pump station and rights of way for Highway 95, a retention basin and other roadway and canal easements.

The parcel is now owned by Perricone Arizona Properties, LLC, and has passed through various Perricone owners since it was purchased by the family in 1984, according to county data. The Perricone family runs a large citrus empire stretching from Yuma County all the way to central California, according to the L.A. Times.

“This resolution by the governing board allows our district officials, myself and the chief financial officer to proceed with the paperwork and the due diligence in order to purchase the property described in the resolution,” she said. “It doesn’t bind us to purchasing it, but it does provide for us to go forward for all the

Badone noted that those “due diligence” items must be completed before any purchasing agreement is developed. Things that need to be done include appraisals, inspections, an environmental study, easements, covenants and other such items.

The City of Somerton is also looking to purchase about 30 acres of the parcel to develop fields for soccer and other activities, Badone noted, and that the YUHSD would look to enter into an intergovernmental agreement for use of those fields as it has done with other cities.

County assessor data puts the full cash value of the entire 139.74 acres at about \$167,000.

Badone cautioned that a purchase price has not been negotiated and that the district has the right to use eminent domain to procure the acreage.

Somerton City officials have long sought a high school for the growing area, including outlining in its 2010 General Plan for improving “its recreational opportunities by co-locating a major (30+ acre) Community/Regional Park with the new high school.”

YUHSD was originally approved by the Arizona School Facilities Board for a new high school in Somerton prior to 2007, which was scheduled to have opened in 2011, a previous article noted. However, when the recession hit in 2008, the ASFB was no longer funded to build new schools.

“That means that we as a district and as a community need to do our own long term facilities planning,” Badone said in May of 2015.

That November, the district, noting that the ASFB was no longer being funded at all, sought a bond measure to upgrade its facilities and provide for a new campus in Somerton. The measure was approved by voters.

A motion to approve the resolution Wednesday evening was made by board member Linda Munk, and seconded by Yira Hoffmann. Board member Bruce Gwynn recused himself from the vote due to a potential conflict of interest, as he has family ties to the property owner. Board member Teri Brooks was absent.

“This is very win-win,” Badone said. “I’m actually very excited about this.”

In other meeting news, board members approved a resolution for multiterm architectural services, a contract with DLR Group for architectural services for Kofa High and Somerton (down the road), and routine personnel.

The board also heard from its attorney, Jim Giel of Gust Rosenfeld, on the need to redeem its bonds early. The law allows for school districts to have 20-year terms to repay the bonds, Giel said. When the paperwork was drawn up for the bond terms, the firm didn’t expect the bonds to be sold until after July 1 (the start of the new fiscal year). However, YUHSD sold its first round of bonds in April, thus lengthening the timeframe. Giel noted that if the district pays off the bonds in 2035 instead of 2036, it would still be within the limits of the law.

The board also approved cooperative contract purchases and renewing of the state purchasing cooperative agreement.

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