

This Is the Fastest-growing Retirement Hot Spot in the U.S. — and No, It's Not in Florida

Goodyear, Arizona, has seen a whopping 61 percent increase in residents 65 and over between 2017 and 2022.

By Dobrina Zhekova
Published on June 24, 2024

Over four million Americans will reach retirement age in 2024 alone, a record-breaking number for the country and its retirement communities. And while many may choose to spend their golden years under the warm Floridian sun, others may head southwest. According to a new report by GoBankingRates.com, a suburb in Arizona is the fastest-growing retirement spot in America.

Goodyear, a city of about 98,000 west of Phoenix, has seen a whopping 61 percent increase in residents 65 and over between 2017 and 2022. This brought the city's median age to 40, with 18 percent of the general population being of retirement age.

So, what makes Goodyear a retirement hotspot? It's a safe city with a crime rate 12.7 percent lower than the national average and many housing options for seniors with resort-like amenities. The median home value is \$485,000, while the average monthly rent is \$1,713. Residents also enjoy access to the scenic **Estrella**

Mountain Regional Park, offering 20,000 acres worth of wetland, desert, and mountain recreation, including a golf course, fishing, miles of hiking, and horseback riding. However, the cost of living in Goodyear is higher than the national average, and it is one of the top three cities in America with the highest benefit income.

Second on GoBankingRates's list of fastest-growing retirement places is Sugar Land, Texas. The city is located just 20 miles southwest of Houston and is home to top-notch baseball facilities, excellent dining, and museums, including the Houston Museum of Natural Science at Sugar Land. According to BankRates.com, the city's retirement age population increased by 58 percent between 2017 and 2022, bringing the median age to 42.5.

And the third spot goes to the beautiful lakefront community of Clermont, Florida. Clermont is home to the President's Hall of Fame and has often been touted as one of the best places to retire in the Sunshine State, thanks to low crime rates, bicycle-friendly communities, access to Orlando's top-notch entertainment, and excellent healthcare facilities.

And while Florida didn't land the top spot on the list, the website notes that the state had the most cities in the top 50—12. The study also found that four cities experienced population growth of over 50 percent among retirement-aged adults, including Goodyear, Sugar Land, Clermont, and El Dorado Hills in California.

Why Goodyear, Arizona is the Top Choice for American Retirees in 2024

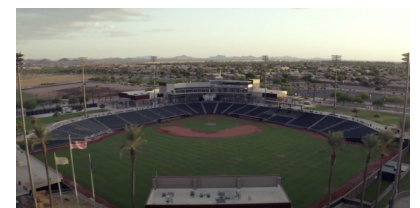
By Kathleen Orenza
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11:08PM EDT

Being a senior is like being a fine wine—better with age, and with a desire to settle somewhere equally fine! Have you heard? Goodyear, Arizona is turning heads, not just because of its name that reminds you of great tires, but because it's the top spot for retirees in 2024!

Why Goodyear? It is a city where the sun gifts you about 300 days of vitamin D a year, landscapes are as alive as the community, and everything you need is within reach.

According to Go Banking Rates, this city in Arizona saw a 61% increase in its 65-and-over population from 2017 to 2022, and it's easy to see why.

Goodyear offers desert beauty and city conveniences, making it a prime spot for your golden years. You will love the low crime rates, which means peace of mind is part of the package.



Goodyear's Growth and Popularity

Goodyear, Arizona is not slowing down, especially when it comes to attracting retirees. This city experienced a 61% increase in residents aged 65 and over between 2017 and 2022. What does this mean for you? It signals that Goodyear is a place where many retirees are finding happiness and a high quality of life.

With its increasing popularity, Goodyear promises a community that understands and caters to your needs as a senior.

Outdoor Paradise

Goodyear offers retirees more than just a place to relax. It is a gateway to exploring the great outdoors. You have access to numerous walking and hiking trails, perfect for staying active. The nearby **Estrella Mountain Regional Park** and **White Tank Mountain Regional Park** are favorites for those who love nature and adventure. Goodyear ensures that every day is an opportunity to discover something new in the beauty of Arizona's landscapes.

Year-Round Sunshine

One of the best parts about living in Goodyear is the weather. Who does not love plenty of sunshine and mild winters? According to Robson Senior Living, Goodyear enjoys a climate that allows you to indulge in outdoor activities all year.

The mild winters and warm, dry summers are ideal for anyone looking to escape the harsh weather in other parts of the country. This perfect weather is

a big reason why retirees love Goodyear.

Health and Wellness

Healthcare is a crucial consideration for anyone in retirement, and Goodyear excels in this area, too. Goodyear is home to top-notch medical facilities like the Banner Estrella Medical Center.

Having access to excellent healthcare providers gives you peace of mind. In Goodyear, you do not just live but also thrive, knowing that the best medical services are right around the corner.

Community Spirit

Finally, the community spirit in Goodyear is unmatched. Goodyear is not just a place to live; it is a place to belong. The city is known for its friendly and inclusive atmosphere.

You can easily make friends and find social activities that fit your interests. This sense of belonging is vital for enjoying your retirement years to the fullest.

Harmony Hollow

By Sonoran News
June 24, 2024

On March 20, 2019, I learned that Harmony Hollow, my former home, was for sale after 50 years. Harmony Hollow is a distinctive artist enclave and former residence of many longtime Cave Creek artists and craftsmen including Richard Mocco, John Woodjack, Jeff Cross, Sheila Kollasch, Scotty Bechtold, and Ray Stone.

This special land is in the heart of the **Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area**. The 30-acre property is bounded by the living creek and had the potential for up to 7 homes being built on this environmentally sensitive site. In addition, a 10-acre parcel across the creek was also for sale and included an old historic stamp mill from gold mining days. It was another developable piece of property within the Conservation Area.

I contemplated a way to try to save these lands from being developed, talking to the Desert Foothills Land Trust, The Town of Cave Creek, private investors, and other local non-profits. My efforts were brought to the attention of Town Council member Kathryn Royer and she helped bring awareness of the matter to the Town Council. Kathryn facilitated my first public presentation at the Desert Foothills Library, and another at Cave Creek Town Hall. Her brilliant work to fund appraisals on the properties by use of an inter-governmental agreement with Maricopa County was crucial in helping to bring the matter to a real-world solution. The conservation buyers who bought the Stamp Mill and Harmony Hollow properties worked with the Desert Foothills Land Trust to protect the vital creek waterway that nourishes the entire area.

More recently, thanks to the appraisals and cooperation with the Land Trust, the Town of Cave Creek and Maricopa County, a plan was conceived and executed to purchase and preserve 30.6 acres next to Harmony Hollow, behind the Ranger station. The land is now

preserved in perpetuity. Please support Kathryn Royer with your vote on July 30, 2024. She is an amazing advocate for open space preservation.

Sincerely,
Melissa Paxton

The Hidden Nature Park In Arizona With Its Very Own Nature Center, Campground, And So Much More

By Melissa Mahoney |
OnlyInYourState.com
June 24, 2024

There's a hidden nature park in Arizona that's so tucked away that maybe you've never heard of it. It seems as though locals are the only ones who really know about it, and perhaps, there are some who don't. Located in the town of Cave Creek, just north of Scottsdale, is a nearly 3,000-acre park that's like an oasis in the desert.

Welcome to **Cave Creek Regional Park!** The entrance to this 2,922-acre park can be found at 37019 N. Lava Lane in Cave Creek.



Wolfgang Muno/Google Reviews

The park's nature center is worth a stop if you visit during its open hours. With exhibits displaying information on local flora and fauna, you can learn about things you may encounter in the desert. Furthermore, it hosts events throughout the year that you can participate in.

Hiking is abundant here as well. In fact, there are over 11 miles of trails for both hikers and equestrians to use. The trails range from easy to difficult so all levels are welcome!

Another awesome amenity at Cave Creek Regional Park is the playground. Bring the kids to burn off some energy on a hike and then let them loose on the park's play structures to tire them out some more!



For those of you who love to camp, the park has 55 campsites for tent and RV camping. For RVs, most sites can accommodate a 40-foot RV while a few pull-thru sites can accommodate a 60-foot RV.

Campsites include water and electric hookups, picnic tables, and fire rings. There's also a restroom with toilets and hot showers.

Of course, you could just come here for a picnic and peacefully enjoy the scenery.

If you can, stick around for a spectacular Arizona sunset at Cave Creek Regional Park. Our sunsets are among the best in the country, if not the world!

Have you visited Cave Creek Regional Park before? If so, let us know if you visited the nature center, went hiking, booked a campsite, etc. and how was the experience. To learn more about this hidden nature park in Arizona, take a look at the Maricopa County Parks & Recreation website.

Need a place to stay in Cave Creek and don't want to go camping? Well, here's a suggestion — a bed and breakfast! Take a look at the Spur Cross Inn and book your stay.

2024's 6 Most Beautiful Small Towns In Arizona

With the nickname of the Grand Canyon State, it is no surprise that the southwestern state of Arizona is known for its scenic beauty. Throughout the state are several small towns that showcase the state's natural beauty, charming downtown districts, and various landscapes. From the mesmerizing Red Rock formations in Sedona to the reflecting Verde River alongside Cottonwood and the Sonoran Desert in Carefree, the state boasts stunning small towns perfect for nature lovers and outdoor enthusiasts. Whether

strolling along the streets in the old copper mining town of Jerome or exploring the majestic mountains surrounding Payson, here are some of Arizona's most beautiful small towns to visit in 2024.

Sedona



Downtown Sedona, Arizona, with mountains in the background. Editorial credit: Red Lemon / Shutterstock.com.

Known for its stunning Red Rock formations and charming downtown, Sedona is one of Arizona's picturesque small towns for those seeking both relaxation and adventure. One of the best spots to view nature in Sedona is at Red Rock State Park, which offers several trails showcasing the fiery Red Rock vistas and stunning sunset views. More hiking adventures await along the Bell Rock Loop Trail and Chimney Rock Trail, where outdoor enthusiasts have the chance to view hot air balloons in the western sky in the early mornings.

Along with its breathtaking views, Sedona has a charming downtown to explore, especially for those who enjoy the arts. The Tlaquepaque Arts & Shopping Village is a popular area to visit due to the village's southwestern shops and galleries. Andrea Smith Gallery offers original artwork and sacred sculptures, while Azadi Fine Rugs provides handwoven authentic Navajo rugs to view and purchase. After exploring

the area's beauty and local shops, enjoy savory Southwestern cuisine that blends Mexican and Native American flavors at El Rincon Restaurante Mexicano.

Carefree



Arizona Desert Gardens and Sundial in Carefree, Arizona.

Just as its name suggests, Carefree is a laid-back desert town offering serenity and beautiful landscapes. Discover the beauty of the Sonoran Desert at the Carefree Desert Gardens, featuring a diverse collection of the desert's cacti and flora, as well as one of the world's largest sundials, the Carefree Sundial. Outdoor enthusiasts can explore the nearby **Cave Creek Regional Park**, which offers horseback riding, mountain biking, and hiking trails with panoramic views of the desert, especially at sunset.

The town itself is a canvas for artists and musicians, boasting unique architecture, public art installations, and live music in 2024. Local galleries, such as the Wild Holly Gallery and the Sonoran Arts League Gallery, provide a glimpse into Carefree's creative community. Every third Thursday, the town hosts the monthly Carefree Art Night, a vibrant celebration under the desert sky. Visitors

can enjoy live music, delicious food, and fine wines, along with gallery walks that showcase the town's artistic beauty.

Bisbee



This historic mining town of Bisbee, Arizona.

Tucked away in the picturesque Mule Mountains, Bisbee is a charming town known for its vibrant arts scene and beautiful architecture. Once a bustling mining town, Bisbee's narrow streets are now lined with colorful Victorian-style homes framed by the rugged mountains, providing enchanting views for visitors in 2024. Located in the heart of downtown is the historic Copper Queen Hotel. Whether spending the night or just enjoying the hotel's saloon and restaurant, the Copper Queen Hotel showcases the town's old-world charm. Visitors can also stroll along Brewery Gulch to view the town's artistic beauty, stopping at the Old Bisbee Brewing Company for a refreshing pint and views of local art along the Bisbee Art Wall.

Bisbee also offers unique historical tours, showcasing the town's past, historic buildings, and natural surroundings. The Bisbee Mining and Historical Museum is a great place to learn about the town's mining heritage, while the Copper Queen Mine Tour provides an exciting underground adventure through a former mine. Yes,

hard hats are required! For another memorable experience, the Old Bisbee Ghost Tour offers a walking tour of the town's haunted history. This one-of-a-kind town offers incredible natural and historical beauty to discover.

Cottonwood



The historic Old Town of Cottonwood, Arizona. Editorial credit: EQRoy / Shutterstock.com.

Located in the heart of Verde Valley wine country, Cottonwood blends nature with historic charm and a thriving arts scene, making it one of the most beautiful places to visit in Arizona. The historic Old Town district is a highlight, with its quaint shops and art galleries, including the enchanting Hart of AZ Art Gallery, where visitors can view art and pieces by local artisans. The town is also part of the Verde Valley Wine Trail, featuring several wineries, including the Arizona Stronghold Vineyard Old Town Cottonwood Tasting Room.

Outside of the town's charming downtown area, Cottonwood offers natural beauty for those who enjoy the great outdoors. Nature lovers can hike, horseback ride, or kayak in the Verde River Greenway State Natural Area. More outdoor adventures await at Dead Horse Ranch State Park, which offers trails for both leisurely walks and more challenging hikes. For

a unique experience, take a scenic train ride on the Verde Canyon Railroad, which provides some of the best views of the surrounding landscape.

Payson



View of the Mogollon Rim from Payson, Arizona.

Nestled in the scenic Mogollon Rim country, Payson is a charming mountain town known for its outdoor beauty and rich Native American history. Surrounding the town is the Tonto National Forest, which offers more than 2.9 million acres of scenic hiking trails, fishing spots, and camping areas. The forest is home to diverse vegetation and landscapes, allowing visitors to hike along stunning Pinyon-Juniper and Ponderosa Pine trees, explore breathtaking vistas along the Mogollon Rim, or enjoy fishing in the Verde River. In town, outdoor enthusiasts can enjoy scenic hikes on the Payson Area Trails System, with views of Gibson Peak and Steward Canyon.

The town also offers a glimpse into its Western history at the Rim Country Museum & Zane Grey Cabin, which showcases the area's pioneer past and the works of author Zane Grey. Payson's Indigenous history is also on display at the Shoofly Indian Ruins. The ruins date back to 1000 CE and provide a fascinating look at ancient

Native American life, with rock outlines showing the base of various buildings.

Jerome



Cityscape view of Jerome, Arizona. Editorial credit: Nick Fox / Shutterstock.com.

For some of the most breathtaking views in Arizona, visit the former mining town of Jerome in 2024. Perched on a hillside overlooking the Verde Valley, Jerome offers visitors a glimpse into the region's mining past alongside natural beauty and a vibrant arts scene. The town is known as "The Wickedest Town in the West" due to its lawless past during the copper mining boom in the 1800s. Today, Jerome's haunted history can be explored through Jerome Ghost Tours and a visit to the Haunted Hamburger, where ghosts have been sighted. Nearby, art enthusiasts can explore the town's artistic side at galleries like the Jerome Artists Cooperative Gallery and Pura Vida Gallery.

History buffs and nature lovers alike will enjoy the Jerome State Historic Park, home to the historic Douglas Mansion and a mining museum. The mansion showcases a variety of historical items, including glass bottle displays, mining artifacts, and mineral samples. After exploring the mansion and museum, enjoy the panoramic

views of the valley that stretches for miles.

Visiting Arizona In 2024

These small towns in Arizona are some of the most beautiful places in the southwestern state. Each town showcases the state's diverse beauty and rich history, from the Red Rocks of Sedona and the serene desert landscapes of Carefree, to the rugged mountains in Bisbee. Whether exploring the mining history of Jerome, Payson's vast forests, or Cottonwood's charming wineries, these beautiful small towns in Arizona offer an unforgettable getaway in 2024.

Preserving open space is vital to Cave Creek

By Cave Creek Mayor Bob Morris
Published on Jun 21, 2024



Land preservation is the most universal virtue in Cave Creek. Photo by Brian Welby Poore

Land preservation is the most universal virtue in Cave Creek. Much is being done at the council level to accomplish those goals including identifying viable open space properties and acquiring them for the future.

Most recently, the town along with Maricopa County bought

more than 30 acres adjoining the **Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area** at a cost of nearly \$700,000. Cave Creek maintains a ready bank balance to purchase high quality properties when opportunities arise. Currently there is \$1.5 million on hand for open space acquisition.

The town is currently in negotiations with the Arizona State Land Department (ASLD), conducting financing analyses, tracking Colorado River water negotiations and managing real estate appraisals related to thousands of acres of ASLD holdings on the west side of Cave Creek north of Carefree Highway.

Per an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) executed in 2009 for a 20-year period of the 7,700 state land acres, about 4,000 are zoned, and therefore protected, as open space. It would take a rezoning vote by the town council to change that zoning, which is highly unlikely given our community's focus and desires in this regard.

Here are the facts about current ASLD efforts:

- The land must be auctioned to the highest bidder by the state constitution.
- Cave Creek has a right to initiate auction of the open space in 2029.
- The choice preservation pieces are already zoned, protecting them as open space (which forbids residential and commercial).
- ASLD informs us there are currently no interested purchasers.

- The town has had several positive meetings to extend our rights and clarify the process. More are expected.
- An appraisal is underway in consultation with ASLD to estimate the cost of purchase, although that is only one preservation option.
- Once that appraisal is complete, all options can be evaluated and a strategy decided.

There are likely to be future council agenda items and discussion of ASLD lands. The best way to stay informed is to sign up for email notifications at cavecreekaz.gov (click "Stay in the Know!").

Good government is all about public trust, information and transparency. We invite you to [join the open space discussion.](#)

Six Underappreciated Towns to Visit in Arizona

World Atlas
June 16, 2024

Arizona is a land of striking contrasts, from its iconic deserts and vibrant cities to its charming small towns that offer a more intimate glimpse of the state's rich cultural and historical aspects. These towns invite visitors to experience the warmth of Arizona's local communities. Whether you are drawn to the artistic enclave of Bisbee, the storied streets of Tombstone, or the architectural

wonder of Arcosanti, Arizona's small towns promise unforgettable experiences and breathtaking scenery. Explore these hidden gems and discover the diverse attractions that make each one a must-visit destination.

Bisbee



Overlooking Bisbee, Arizona. Image credit Manuela Durson via Shutterstock

Bisbee, perched high in the Mule Mountains of southern Arizona, is an artist's haven brimming with character. Once a bustling mining town, Bisbee has transformed into a quirky, picturesque community known for its well-preserved historic architecture and colorful artistic nature. The Copper Queen Mine offers guided tours that delve into the town's mining heritage, while the Bisbee Mining & Historical Museum provides further insight into its storied past.

The town's narrow, winding streets are lined with eclectic shops, galleries, and cafes, making it a delightful place to explore on foot. Annual events like the Bisbee 1000 Stair Climb and the Bisbee Blues Festival draw visitors from near and far, contributing to the town's lively cultural scene. With its charming ambiance and rich history, Bisbee stands out as an underappreciated destination in Arizona.

Tombstone



Historic Allen street with a horse drawn stagecoach in Tombstone. Image credit Nick Fox via Shutterstock.com

Tombstone, Arizona, is famously known as "The Town Too Tough to Die" and is a captivating journey back to the Old West. This historic town, known for the infamous Gunfight at the O.K. Corral, is a living museum where history comes alive. Visitors can walk the same streets as legendary figures like Wyatt Earp and Doc Holliday, with reenactments of the gunfight performed daily. The Tombstone Courthouse State Historic Park offers a detailed look at the town's legal history, while the Bird Cage Theatre provides a glimpse into its more rowdy past.

Tombstone's Allen Street is lined with saloons, shops, and restaurants, all maintaining an authentic 19th-century feel. The annual Helldorado Days festival, featuring parades and reenactments, celebrates the town's wild and storied history. Page



Page, Arizona, at dusk.

Page is a small town that offers some of the most breathtaking natural landscapes in the Southwest. Located near the stunning Lake Powell and Glen Canyon National Recreation Area, Page is a gateway to outdoor adventures and scenic beauty. Visitors can explore the awe-inspiring Antelope Canyon, known for its ethereal light beams and sculpted sandstone walls, or take a boat tour on Lake Powell to marvel at its striking red rock formations.

Horseshoe Bend overlook provides a dramatic view of the Colorado River's sweeping curve, one of the most photographed spots in the region. Page's proximity to these natural wonders makes it an ideal base for outdoor enthusiasts and photographers.

Arcosanti



The Ceramics Aspe in Arcosanti. Image credit DBSOCAL via Shutterstock

Arcosanti is a neat architectural experiment located in the high desert of central Arizona offering a glimpse into the future of urban living. Designed by visionary architect Paolo Soleri, Arcosanti is an ongoing project that aims to create a self-sustaining community integrating architecture with ecology. Visitors can take guided tours to learn about Soleri's innovative design principles and the project's history. The site hosts

workshops, events, and performances, fostering a vibrant cultural atmosphere.

The stunning architecture of Arcosanti, with its sweeping curves and harmonious integration with the surrounding landscape, attracts architecture enthusiasts and curious travelers alike. Nearby, the Agua Fria National Monument presents opportunities for hiking and exploring ancient Native American ruins.

Carefree



Carefree, Arizona Desert Gardens and Sundial.

Carefree Arizona lives up to its name with a relaxed, laid-back atmosphere perfect for a tranquil escape. Known for its stunning desert scenery and charming downtown area, Carefree offers a mix of natural beauty and cultural attractions. The Carefree Desert Gardens, located in the heart of downtown, feature a variety of native desert plants and picturesque walking paths. Visitors can explore the town's shops, art galleries, and dining establishments, or attend one of the many annual events such as the Carefree Fine Art & Wine Festival.

The nearby **Cave Creek Regional Park** has outdoor activities, including hiking, horseback riding, and camping.

Seligman



Seligman, Arizona: Famous town on Route 66. Image credit Jon Chica via Shutterstock

While Seligman may be underappreciated, you may recognize it. The small town has a big place in American pop culture history and is known as the birthplace of Historic Route 66. The town exudes a nostalgic atmosphere, with its colorful retro motels, diners, and shops that pay homage to the golden age of American road trips. Visitors can stop by the Route 66 Motorporium and the iconic Snow Cap Drive-In, both filled with memorabilia and quirky charm.

The Seligman Historical Society Museum provides insights into the town's history and significance along the Mother Road. Seligman also serves as a starting point for exploring the Grand Canyon Caverns, a fascinating underground network of caves.

Idyllic Small Towns In Arizona Arizona is home to idyllic small towns, contrasting with bustling city life, making for lovely, peaceful destinations to visit.

Arizona's small towns offer a diverse array of experiences, with each town showcasing a unique aspect of the state's rich cultural and natural heritage. From the artistic charm of

Bisbee to the historical intrigue of Tombstone and the architectural wonder of Arcosanti, these towns provide visitors with a wealth of attractions and a warm, welcoming atmosphere. Whether you are seeking outdoor adventure, historical exploration, or a peaceful retreat, Arizona's underappreciated small towns have something for everyone. With their picturesque settings and vibrant communities, these hidden gems are a testament to the allure of the Grand Canyon State and the perfect excuse to get out there and explore.

Discover 21 fun things to do in Phoenix

By Copper Courier Staff
June 13, 2024

Phoenix, the vibrant capital of Arizona, is a hub of cultural, recreational, and historical attractions. Whether you're a local or a visitor, the city is never short on things to do. From outdoor adventures to artistic explorations, here are 21 must-do activities in Phoenix.

Outdoor Adventures

1. Hike Camelback Mountain
Camelback Mountain is a popular hiking destination offering stunning panoramic views of the city. The challenging trails are perfect for avid hikers looking for a rewarding experience. With an elevation of 2,704 feet, Camelback Mountain is an intense hike or climb that offers incredible views of the Phoenix Valley.

2. Explore the Desert Botanical Garden

Immerse yourself in the unique flora of the Sonoran Desert at the Desert Botanical Garden. The garden features over 50,000 plant displays and seasonal events. At the Desert Botanical Garden, guests can see and learn about the countless plant and animal species native to Arizona and enjoy a number of activities, such as stargazing and desert landscaping.

3. Visit Papago Park

Papago Park offers scenic hiking trails, fishing lagoons, and picnic spots. Don't miss the iconic Hole-in-the-Rock formation for a perfect photo opportunity. Located in Phoenix and Tempe, the nearly 1,500-acre municipal park offers undulating red sandstone formations, blue lagoons framed by towering palm trees, miles of hiking and biking trails, and desert plants. Take a short 10-minute hike up to the iconic Hole-in-the-Rock, a scenic opening in the sandstone buttes, where you'll find picture-perfect panoramas of the park, the lake and southeast Phoenix. The viewpoint is especially popular for taking in sunrises and sunset.

Papago Park offers exceptional hiking and a wide array of recreational facilities. The park is also home to the Phoenix Zoo and the Desert Botanical Garden. You can make your visit to Papago Park a day filled with activities.

4. Enjoy South Mountain Park

South Mountain Park is one of the largest municipal parks in the U.S., offering over 50 miles of trails for hiking, horseback

riding, and mountain biking. In 2024, Smith Mountain Park celebrates its 100 year old birthday, commemorating the City of Phoenix's purchase of 13,000 acres of land for \$17,000.

Today, with over 16,000 acres, Smith Mountain Park consists of three mountain ranges: the Ma Ha Tauk, Gila and Guadalupe. You can hike, horseback ride, and mountain bike through the mountains and trails.

Cultural Experiences

5. Discover the Heard Museum

The Heard Museum is dedicated to the advancement of American Indian art. With exhibits of both traditional and contemporary creations, this museum celebrates American Indian art. Home to a collection of Indigenous art and history with a mix of traditional and contemporary art, this Phoenix fixture also has an exhibition dedicated to the history of Indian Boarding Schools, where Indigenous children were forcibly assimilated into white American culture.

6. Visit the Phoenix Art Museum

The Phoenix Art Museum houses an impressive collection of art from around the world, including contemporary, modern, and Latin American works. Located in the Central Corridor of a bustling, desert metropolis, Phoenix Art Museum has opened doors to world-class exhibitions, its comprehensive collections, and meaningful moments of learning and connection for 60 years

7. Explore the Musical Instrument Museum

The Musical Instrument Museum features a vast collection of instruments from every corner of the globe. Interactive exhibits allow you to experience the sounds and stories of music. The Musical Instrument Museum was founded in 2010 by Bob Ulrich, the former CEO of Target. The museum has over 7,500 instruments from over 200 countries and territories. The MIM is in north Phoenix, just off Loop 101 and west of Mayo Clinic. The MIM also hosts concerts in its theater with 300 seats.

8. Wander Through Roosevelt Row

Roosevelt Row is a vibrant arts district known for its street art, galleries, and trendy eateries. It's a great place to experience local art and culture. On the first Friday of every month, you can experience an art walk and other special events. Roosevelt Row is best known for its street art, so put on your walking shoes and get ready for a nice meal followed by a stroll through the street's galleries.

9. Visit the Arizona Science Center

The Arizona Science Center offers hands-on exhibits, a planetarium, and an IMAX theater. It's a fun and educational destination for visitors of all ages. Founded in 1984, the Arizona Science Center has over 140,000 square feet of exhibits and galleries that feature the human body, forces of nature, and physics. Historical Sites

10. Tour the Heard Pueblo Grande Museum

The Pueblo Grande Museum is an archaeological site that showcases the ancient Hohokam culture. Explore the ruins and learn about early desert inhabitants at the Pueblo Grand Site and visit the prehistoric irrigation canals that harken to a different time.

11. Visit Heritage Square

Heritage Square is a historic block in downtown Phoenix featuring beautifully restored buildings from the late 1800s. It's a charming spot to learn about the city's past. Exploring Heritage Square is like traveling back in time. If you want to see what the original town of Phoenix looked like, this last remaining residential block from that old town offers you the opportunity to do just that.

The Rosson House Museum is a great starting point. With historically accurate furniture and household items—including an original Queen Anne-style wooden staircase and parquet floors—the museum offers an authentic look at life in Phoenix back in the day. Once you're done exploring the museum, check out some of the other historic homes and the Memorial Rose Garden, then refuel at one of the nearby restaurants.

12. Explore the Arizona Capitol Museum

The Arizona Capitol Museum offers insights into the state's political history. Tour the historic statehouse and see exhibits on Arizona's governance. The Arizona Capitol Museum, located in vibrant downtown Phoenix, is a

unique museum that offers a fascinating journey through the state's political and cultural evolution. As you step through its doors, you're greeted by a world where history comes alive, inviting you to explore Arizona's rich heritage through a wealth of exhibits, artifacts, and interactive displays. Visiting the Arizona Capitol Museum provides a unique opportunity to connect with Arizona's past all for free.

Family-Friendly Activities

13. Visit the Phoenix Zoo

The Phoenix Zoo is home to over 1,400 animals and offers interactive exhibits and educational programs. It's a fun day out for families and animal lovers. After exploring Papago Park, you can wander over to the Phoenix Zoo and encounter over 3,000 animals from 400 species.

14. Explore the Children's Museum of Phoenix

The Children's Museum of Phoenix offers hands-on exhibits and activities designed to engage young minds. It's a great place for children to learn and play. The Children's Museum of Phoenix was designed for kids 10 and under. There's over 48,000 square feet of space and over 300 play experiences across three floors. Exhibits touch on gardening, climbing, making art, reading, building, and making music among other things. The museum hosts a summer camp that is open for kids ages 5-8 where they can interact with exhibits and participate in hands-on activities. Check out the calendar for a list of daily events and activities. Admission

is free from 5 to 9 p.m. every first Friday of the month.

16. Enjoy Butterfly Wonderland

Butterfly Wonderland features a large indoor rainforest environment filled with thousands of butterflies. Interactive exhibits and a 3D theater enhance the experience. This interactive butterfly habitat is the perfect way to immerse yourself in the world of butterflies and other rainforest creatures.

Unique Attractions

17. Explore the Phoenix Mountains Preserve

The Phoenix Mountains Preserve offers a variety of trails for hiking and mountain biking. Enjoy the natural beauty and wildlife of the desert. The Preserves are the perfect place to escape away from the city while also experiencing the beauty of nature. You can see views from Piestewa Peak and Camelback Mountain.

18. Take a Hot Air Balloon Ride

Experience the beauty of the desert from above with a hot air balloon ride. Sunrise and sunset flights offer breathtaking views of the landscape. You can experience the best view of Phoenix from up above, and you'll encounter the Sonoran Desert for new heights. You can choose between a sunrise or sunset tour, so you'll definitely want to plan accordingly if you're not an early riser!

19. Visit the Japanese Friendship Garden

The Japanese Friendship Garden is a tranquil oasis in the city, featuring traditional Japanese landscaping, koi ponds, and tea ceremonies.

These include places such as the Japanese Friendship Garden located right in the heart of downtown Phoenix. The Japanese Friendship Garden is a 3.5-acre park with a tea house, tea garden, lanterns, and more.

Sports and Recreation

20. Catch a Game at Chase Field

Home to the Arizona Diamondbacks, Chase Field offers an exciting baseball experience. Don't miss a chance to catch a game during the MLB season. Baseball fans will not want to miss the chance to experience Chase Field and watch the Diamondbacks score a home run.

21. Relax at Lake Pleasant Regional Park

Lake Pleasant Regional Park offers boating, fishing, and water sports. It's a great destination for outdoor recreation and relaxation. The area straddles the Maricopa and Yavapai county border, and it's a major hub for those wanting to get outdoors just north of Phoenix. If you're into camping, horseback riding, or hiking, you'll definitely find place to do it at the Lake Pleasant Regional Park.

Phoenix is a city brimming with diverse activities and attractions. Whether you're exploring the great outdoors, delving into cultural experiences, or enjoying family-friendly fun, there's something for everyone in this vibrant city.

**Mesa
wedding/events**

**venue touts
expertise and
setting**

By Tribune News Staff
Jun 8, 2024



Superstition Manor owners are, from left, Chuck Cotter, Kacey Lawhead, Sharley Cotter and Taylor Cotter.

(Courtesy of Superstition Manor)

There probably aren't many places in Mesa where someone could theoretically meet the man or woman of their dreams and eventually get married in the very same venue.

But with some free and ticketed social activities planned this month and in August, Superstition Manor, 1220 N. Signal Butte Road, is one of those places.

From a black tie ball limited to 200 guests on Saturday, June 8, to county line dancing June 28 and Aug. 16 to several food truck events with live music and a couple improv shows, the

special events and wedding venue offers at least the possibility of a chance meeting that eventually could lead to an elegant wedding amid the rugged desert beauty of an 11-acre property at the edge of **Usery Mountain Regional Park**.

Superstition Manor is not exclusively for couples tying the knot in one of its three venues – a North Villa offering “classic Italian styling,” a South Villa with a Tuscan accent and The Barn, which is the largest of the three.

Owners Sharley Leavitt, Taylor Cotter, Chuck Cotter, Kacey Lawhead also offer it for parties and corporate gatherings of every description.

But as a wedding venue with unobstructed views of the Superstition Mountains, it is designed to provide a couple with all the elements they need to start off their life together in bliss.

The three wedding packages include features and personnel such as a venue planner and venue coordinator, two large “getting ready suites” open all day, six hours of event time, private ceremony yard, covered patio and reception hall, catering package with three-course meal and the staff to serve it; tables, linens, fine china; a design studio, house décor and centerpieces, set-up and tear-down and more.

Superstition Manor works with preferred vendors for services like photographers or DJs and even outside caterers, but requires couples to use its bar and alcohol because of its liquor license requirements.

But Desirae Webster, Superstition Manor’s director of special events and projects, added, “We have a phenomenal team of chefs – and even some of our family recipes on our menu – a pastry chef, a bar manager that creates amazing experiences for our clients.

“With DJs we have an approved list of options for our clients that we really trust,” she said. “All alcohol is done in house so that we can guarantee a high level of safety.”

Moreover, Webster added, “We have so much to offer our clients in regards to space, expertise, inventory, planning tools. Our focus is always on offering the most to our clients while keeping our intimate family owned and operated feel.

“We know all of our staff on a personal level and our staff carries that through to our clients and really creates lasting relationships with the families and companies we host.”

The affable and efficient staff was part of the reason why Leavitt and Taylor Carter decided to buy the property in 2021, according to Webster.

“Really it was the staff, the clients, and the view that made them want this property,” she explained. “They were regularly working at the venue as outside vendors and it really just because a place they all really loved to be at.”

“Taylor and Sharley have worked in the wedding industry locally for over 10 years as a photography, videography, and

DJ company,” she said. “They loved serving the community on their big day and knew they wanted to continue in that industry. Kacey has worked as a wedding planner for over five years.”

And even though Chuck Cotter’s background is in sales and management,” Webster added, “Taylor and Sharley really sold Chuck on how fun and special the wedding industry is.”

Webster said none of the planners work from a canned script, so couples can add their unique touches to their wedding.

“Some of our favorite unique weddings are really cultural or religious celebrations,” she said. “Our planners are challenged to really do their own research so that they can understand these events and be a welcoming and accommodating guide. These weddings are usually really enjoyed by staff and are talked about for a long time after.”

To learn more about Superstition Manor – and those upcoming social events that might turn a pair of guests into clients – see superstitionmanor.com.

New fire restrictions to begin in 3 national forests, plus State Trust lands across Arizona

Jun 5, 2024, 10:49 AM
KTAR.com



Coconino National Forest will be under Stage 1 fire and smoking restrictions starting Thursday. (Coconino National Forest Photo)

PHOENIX – Three national forests plus Arizona State Trust lands in multiple counties will go under Stage 1 fire restrictions on Thursday morning, authorities said.

The Arizona Department of Forestry and Fire Management (DFFM) said the restrictions will start at 8 a.m. The restrictions cover all of Tonto, Prescott and Coconino national forests, according to the U.S. Forest Service.

Meanwhile, the Arizona Department of Forestry and Fire Management is implementing Stage 1 on all State Trust land within Apache, La Paz, Mohave, Navajo, Yavapai and Yuma counties as well as the portion of Coconino County south of the Grand Canyon.

“Restrictions remain in effect until rescinded,” according to DFFM’s Wednesday announcement.

The Phoenix Parks and Recreation Department started its annual ban of fires in desert parks and reserves on May 1. The **Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department** set a similar ban in place that day as well.

Stage 1 fire restrictions are currently in place on State Trust

lands in Gila, Maricopa and Pinal Counties.

Why are Arizona authorities putting these restrictions in place?

Hot and dry weather conditions combined with a rise in human-caused fires spurred Arizona wildlife leaders to set Stage 1 fire and smoking restrictions in place, according to the Tonto National Forest.

Essentially, officials want to reduce the chance of people causing even more fires, which can grow rapidly during hot and dry temperatures. Over the past month, multiple people have started fires near the forest, such as the Wildcat Fire and the recent Spring and Adams fires.

“The specific cause of these human-caused wildfires ranged from vehicle fires to recreational target shooting,” according to the announcement from Tonto National Forest. “All told, these fires burned almost 23,500 acres in just over a month.”

What are Stage 1 fire and smoking restrictions?

Fire restrictions are implemented under certain criteria. For example, current and predicted weather can trigger them. Fuel moisture, fire activity levels and available firefighting resources can also cause restrictions.

Under Stage 1 restrictions, fires, campfires, charcoal, coal, wood stoves and smudge pots are prohibited, except within a developed recreation site.

Another exemption is using a stove or grill that is solely fueled by pressurized petroleum or pressurized liquid petroleum

gas (LPG) fuels, which is allowed in areas that are barren or cleared of all overhead and surrounding flammable materials within three feet of the device.

Fire restrictions exist to help prevent human-caused fires. They also limit exposure to the public during in the midst of dangerous fire conditions. They typically remain in effect until the area receives widespread precipitation.

Any violations could result in mandatory appearance in a federal court, fines or jail time.

Maricopa County needs public’s help on parks master plan

Daily Independent
Posted Thursday, June 6, 2024
5:59 am



INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

The **Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department** is working on a three-year master plan project to complete improvements and preservation efforts for nine parks.

The master plan will provide a road map for the future of the parks’ recreational facilities, open spaces and opportunities

over the next 10-15 years, according to a county release.

“The goal is to develop master plans for three separate parks each year, and it’s crucial to have community members’ input to ensure that all voices are heard,” county officials stated in a release.

The release asks for public help regarding “the community’s vision, existing parks, services, facilities and resources to assess future parks, recreation and open space needs.

The Park Master Plans will provide a foundation for:

- Identifying capital improvement goals to evaluate fiscal requirements and funding needs.
- Guiding critical decisions about parks, recreation facilities, open space, infrastructure, programs, and services.
- Developing recommendations and an implementation strategy.

For more:

<https://engageberrydunn.mysocialpinpoint.com/maricopa-county-parks-and-recreation-parks-master-plan>

6 Senior-Friendly Towns in Arizona

World Atlas
June 6, 2024

If you're looking for a place to retire that experiences mild winters, throw your gloves and snow shovels away and give a small town in Arizona a try. From sweeping mountain ranges and lush forests to

scenic deserts, Arizona is a state of contrasts. Its quaint towns offer everything you'll need to enjoy your golden years, such as an affordable cost of living, welcoming communities, and an abundance of outdoor recreational and cultural activities.

More In Arizona Apart from its natural beauty and climate, Arizona is also home to idyllic small towns, contrasting with bustling city life, making for lovely, peaceful destinations to visit.

Cave Creek



In the 1800s, the prospect of gold lured people to the frontier town of Cave Creek, but today, it's the Wild West spirit, cowboy heritage, desert foothill landscape, and outdoor recreational opportunities that draw them in. Due to its combination of small-town charm and plenty of entertainment and cultural attractions, Cave Creek is the ideal place for seniors to retire and spend their golden years. The affordable cost of living, warm winter temperatures, and convenient access to good medical facilities, such as Abrazo Cave Creek Hospital and Da Vinci Health Services, make the charming town an ideal choice.

When seniors want to enjoy horseback rides through the

desert landscape, they can head to Arizona Horseback Adventures or Cave Creek Trail Rides and saddle up. Both **Cave Creek Regional Park** and **Spur Ranch Conservation Area** offer miles of looping trails along cactus- and wildflower-dotted hillsides, perfect for leisurely walks. Golfers can swing their clubs at scenic Rancho Manana Gold Club, and history buffs won't want to miss a trip to the Cave Creek Museum, which features exhibits depicting Sonoran desert life and artwork from local artists.

Carefree



Seniors can leave their worries behind in Carefree, which offers many advantages for those who want to enjoy their golden years in a warmer climate. Situated in the Sonoran Desert, Carefree is the quintessential Arizona small town, with a charming downtown filled with unique boutiques and eateries, a welcoming community, and scenic mountain vistas in every direction. Both Carefree Manor Assisted Living and Heritage at Carefree offer onsite nursing services for seniors who require an extra level of care. Retirees can get plenty of daily exercise in a beautiful environment at Carefree Desert Gardens, a 4-acre garden featuring a walking path, blooming desert flowers, self-

guided walking tours, and a playground for grandchildren. The Sanderson Lincoln Pavilion offers live entertainment year-round, not far from the lively downtown area. The Civana Wellness Resort is also available for seniors who want to pamper themselves.

Benson



Benson's low cost of living, easy access to quality health care, and majestic mountain views make it a popular place for retirees to call home. Situated about 45 miles from thriving Tucson, Benson has retained its small-town feel since its founding in 1880, when the Southern Pacific Railroad came through the area. Benson's Good Samaritan Society offers a retirement community featuring several different options, such as both assisted and independent living apartments.

The charming western town's claim to fame is being the gateway to Kartchner Caverns State Park. The impressively large limestone cavern was discovered in 1974 and is available for both guided underground tours and above-ground hikes that wind through the surrounding Coronado National Forest. The local San Pedro Golf Course, which offers an 18-hole championship course, is another place where retirees can stay active and

socially connected all year round.

Litchfield Park



Lovely Litchfield Park was named the best Arizona city in which to live by Movato due to its low crime rate, affordable cost of living, median home value, and warm and sunny climate. All of these factors make it the ideal place for retirees to live, especially if they love the Southwest. There are several local senior living centers and retirement communities in the area, including Hacienda Del Rey and La Loma Village, and St. Joseph's Hospital and Medical Center is there to provide care as needed.

Charming Litchfield Park provides the best of both small-town living and big-city amenities, as it's just 20 miles from downtown Phoenix. Retirees can spend time at the Wildlife World Zoo and the Aquarium and Safari Park, which are also fun attractions to bring visiting family members to. The over 19,000-acre **Estrella Mountain Regional Park**, which offers opportunities for horseback riding, hiking, and camping, is another place where seniors can stay active. The park is also home to the Tres Rios Golf Course, a relaxing, 18-hole course featuring scenic mountain views.

Cottonwood



Cute Cottonwood's location in the heart of Arizona's wine country, surrounded by beautiful red rocks and Mingus Mountain, is just one of the many reasons people retire there. The cost of living is slightly below the national average, and almost half of the population is over age 45, so retirees will be in good company. There are a handful of retirement communities, including Cottonwood Village, Granite Gate Senior Living, and Christian Care Cottonwood that provide assisted living options as well as senior social activities.

Cottonwood is located in the scenic Verde Valley, which offers abundant outdoor recreational attractions and parks, such as Dead Horse Ranch State Park, which retirees can explore on foot, bike, ATV, or horseback. The park's peaceful trails wind through cottonwood and sycamore tree forests along the cool Verde River. Other nearby parks include Fort Verde State Historic Park, Jerome State Historic Park, and Tuzigoot National Monument. Old Town Cottonwood is the perfect place for a stroll and is filled with boutiques, local eateries, and wine-tasting rooms.

Apache Junction



Situated in the stunning Superstition Mountains, approximately 35 miles from Phoenix, Apache Junction is a popular retirement destination for seniors who crave sun-drenched days and warm, mild winters. Almost half of Apache Junction's population is over the age of 45, and the charming town offers convenient access to good healthcare facilities. Retirement communities and assisted living facilities include Palmas Del Sol East, Brookdale Apache Junction, and Avista Senior Living Apache Junction.

Retirees can get daily exercise at Lost Dutchman State Park, which is known as the western gateway of the Superstition Mountains and offers six trails ranging from easy to rugged, 135 camping and RV sites, and climate-controlled cabins for overnight stays. The Superstition Mountain Museum is also available for those wanting to learn more about the area's storied past via American Indian and cowboy exhibits, a model railroad, and movie set replicas.

There are many reasons why retirees from all over the country flock to Arizona, and the state's senior-friendly towns offering convenient access to medical facilities, retirement communities, and plenty of

outdoor and cultural activities are at the top of the list. If you're looking for a welcoming place where you can forget your winter woes and spend sunny days outdoors during your golden years, consider the Grand Canyon State.

Maricopa County Parks Seek Feedback on Park Master Plan Updates

Signalsaz.com
June 04, 2024

The Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department is working on a three-year park master plan project to complete comprehensive improvements and preservation efforts for nine parks across Maricopa County. The Park Master Plans will provide a road map for the future of the park's recreational facilities, open spaces, and opportunities over the next 10-15 years.



The goal is to develop master plans for three separate parks each year, and it's crucial to have community members' input to ensure that all voices are heard. Your input is invaluable as we strategically examine the community's

vision, existing parks, services, facilities, and resources to assess future parks, recreation, and open space needs.

The Park Master Plans will provide a foundation for:

- Identifying capital improvement goals to evaluate fiscal requirements and funding needs
- Guiding critical decisions about parks, recreation facilities, open space, infrastructure, programs, and services
- Developing recommendations and an implementation strategy

The Park's Master Plans to be updated are as follows:

2024

- Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area
- Cave Creek Regional Park
- McDowell Mountain Regional Park

2025

- Estrella Mountain Regional Park
- Lake Pleasant Regional Park
- Buckeye Hills Regional Park

2026

- White Tank Mountain Regional Park
- Utery Mountain Regional Park
- San Tan Mountain Regional Park

To learn more about the project, park users can visit the master plan website, <https://engageberrydunn.mysocialpinpoint.com/maricopa-county-parks-and-recreation-parks-master-plan> to:

- complete an online survey,
- provide feedback on an interactive park map,
- comment on budget allocations for potential improvement projects and
- stay informed on upcoming meetings and milestones.

Feedback may also be provided electronically by emailing maricopacountyparks@maricopa.gov and adding "Park Master Plan" to the subject line.

To learn more about Maricopa County's regional park system, visit www.maricopa.gov/parks.