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View of Sacaton Mountains from Olberg Bridge District 2

Gila River farms - District 2, Blackwater
We welcome you to experience the rugged, awe-inspiring vistas of the Southwest and the rich heritage of the Akimel O’odham (Pima) and Pee-Posh (Maricopa). Historically, the strength of our culture has been the community spirit, industriousness, and maintaining our traditions and languages. Today, we continue to face the challenge of preserving these core values while also meeting the demands of a rapidly changing world.

Throughout Gila River’s history, our tribe has made innumerable contributions and will continue to play an integral role in the decades ahead.

Governor William R. Rhodes
COMMUNITY PROFILE

The Gila River Indian Community is located on 372,000 acres in south-central Arizona, south of Phoenix, Tempe, and Chandler. The reservation was established by an act of Congress in 1859. The Tribal administrative offices and departments are located in Sacaton, and serve residents throughout the seven community districts. The Gila River casinos are both owned and managed by the Gila River Indian Community. All profits from gaming are utilized by the community to expand the tribe's economic development, to provide additional social services to community members and for tribal operations.

TRIBAL SEAL

The Gila River Indian Community, located in central Arizona, affiliates its people and its government with this tribal seal. The seal symbolizes the Gila River bringing life to the Desert. The seal is illustrative of the Community's farming history. The irrigation system is representative of those developed by their ancient descendants, the Hu Hu Kam. From the blue skies overhead, to the majestic mountain backdrop, the seal represents the indigenous people of the area, Akimel O’odham, the “river people.”

TRIBAL FLAG

The Gila River Indian Community, located in south central Arizona, affiliates its people and its government with this tribal seal. The seal symbolizes the Gila River bringing life to the Sonoran Desert. The seal is illustrative of the Community’s farm.

FOUNDED: 1859
TRIBAL MEMBERS: 19,000
COUNTY: Pinal County
ON-RESERVATION RESIDENTS: 13,000
ACREAGE: 373,00 (nearly 600 sq miles) divided into seven districts
ELEVATION: 1,280 FEET
LANGUAGES: O’ohdam (Pima) and Pee Posh (Maricopa)
EXECUTIVE BRANCH: An elected Governor and Lieutenant Governor
LEGISLATIVE BRANCH: An elected 17-member tribal council
CAPITAL: Sacaton (30 miles south of Phoenix)
LOCATION: The northern border of the Gila River Indian Community is located on the southern boundary of the City of Phoenix, with the reservation paralleling the course of the Gila River. Primary access is via I-10, as well as numerous state and U.S. highways
First there was the river and the land—the Gila River that wound westward across south-central Arizona and the surprisingly fertile Sonoran Desert. Some 6,000 years ago, various cultural groups collectively labeled the Archaic peoples, who lived by hunting and gathering along the river's banks and adjoining upland terrain, wandered into this realm.
Circa 300 B.C., these early inhabitants were joined by peoples from central Mexico, transformed by concepts and technology introduced from the south. From this merger arose the Hohokam (or Huhukam) people-our ancestors-who conducted trade over great distances and became superb farmers. Fed by waters of the Gila River, they constructed some 500 miles of large canals (on average 10 feet deep and 30 feet wide!) linked to smaller ditches, so watering thousands of acres of farmland.

Fed by waters of the Gila River, they constructed some 500 miles of large canals (on average 10 feet deep and 30 feet wide!) linked to smaller ditches, so watering thousands of acres of farmland.

Transforming the desert into gardens, the Hohokam grew cotton for clothing, rugs and other textile products, and crops of corn, melons, beans, fruits, tobacco and other foods. They supplemented these crops with game, mesquite beans, agave, cactus fruit and other foods gathered locally from the wilds or in trade, enabling them to settle into large population centers. Here their arts flourished, including production of fine pottery and jewelry, the latter worked with imported shell and other materials. During the Hohokam’s “Classical Period” (circa A.D. 1150-1450), this lifestyle apparently supported between 50,000 and 60,000 people, with some villages holding several thousand residents and containing large public buildings (formed largely of adobe), religious centers and sunken clay courts where an exciting, ritualistic ball game was played. But around A.D. 1450, for unknown reasons, the urban centers were abandoned. Perhaps there was an extended drought, or pressures brought by the arrival of new Native peoples to the region - foremost the fierce, nomadic Apache - or a loss of public faith in leadership. At any rate, the Ho-Hokam culture dispersed.
Early Contact

The first Catholic missionary to reach the Gila River, the tireless Father Kino, entered the region from Mexico in 1694. He found two related peoples (whom the Spanish collectively called Pima) occupying south-central Arizona: the Akimel O’odham and the Tohono O’odham. The Akimel O’odham clustered along the banks of the Gila and Salt rivers and were-like our Hohokam ancestors-attaining culture, while the Tohono O’odham called the Papago by Americans) lived a more nomadic lifestyle in the desert terrain of southern Arizona. Both branches of the O’odham people survive today but our story focuses on the Akimel O’odham, whose descendants compose a large part of today’s Gila River Indian Community populace.

The missionaries converted many of our people to the Roman Catholic faith, and introduced new crops, cattle, horses, sheep and goats, and new technologies – which were quick to adapt to our own uses. But we were largely ignored, and life largely went on little changed, during the Spanish era and in the period following Mexico’s break from Spain 1821. The situation, however, took a radical turn in the next historical phase.
In 1846, southern Arizona fell under the influence of the United States following the Mexican-American War. In 1848, gold was discovered in California and tens of thousands of ill-prepared men streamed across America heading toward dreams of riches. One of the primary routes was across southern Arizona. Between 1849 and 1851, an estimated 60,000 travelers arrived among our peaceful people, many starving or near death from dehydration and/or wounds inflicted in battle by the warring Apache to the east and the Yuman tribes to the west of our lands. Here the travelers rested and ate well, enjoying our bounty of wheat, corn, beans, pumpkins, watermelon, squash, peas and other foods. Indeed, one grateful member of the Mormon Battalion wrote in his journal in 1846, en route from New Mexico to California to secure that state during the Mexican American War, “They are a noble race.” And wrote Lt. Sylvester Mowry in 1857, “Their stores of wheat and corn have supplied many a starved emigrant, and restored his broken down animals.”

We were also hospitable to other tribes as well. In the 1840s (though some sources suggest this occurred as early as the mid 1700s), the Akimel O’odham offered refuge to the Maricopa tribe, a Yuman tribal people who had been driven eastward from the lower Colorado River area by other Yuman tribes. The Maricopa, who called themselves the “Pee Posh,” settled in with the Akimel O’odham, and to this day we share the space and resources of the Gila River lands.

In 1854, the Gadsden Purchase officially made southern Arizona part of a United States Territory. In appreciation for the important role the Akimel O’odham played in America’s westward expansion, in 1859 Congress established the first reservation in Arizona, encompassing 372,000 acres along the Gila River. In 1862, putting our agricultural skills to work, our people grew more than one million pounds of wheat, most of which we sold. Our prospects looked good.

However, our lifeblood - Gila River water - was cut off in the 1870s and 1880s by construction of upstream diversion structures and dams by non-Native farmers, and our farming was largely wiped out. From 1880 to 1920 or so, we faced mass famine and starvation. The federal government stepped in and doled out canned and processed food by the ton. The change in diet proved disastrous, leading to extremely high rates of obesity and diabetes - a condition we still face today. With almost no jobs available on the reservation, and the loss of our cash crops, our people faced widespread poverty as well. Alcoholism raised its ugly head, and our people experienced the loss of certain cultural and artistic traditions and rituals. It was the darkest moment in our long history.

But, we proved resilient and eked out a marginal existence for several precarious decades. Conditions finally began to improve in the 1930s, when the U.S. government completed Coolidge Dam on the upper Gila River, creating the San Carlos Reservoir. The project included a canal and pipe system to deliver some of this lake water to our reservation, restoring a portion of our farming practices. This was the beginning of a long climb out of the economic trenches. Men began to find work off the reservation following World War I and World War II as the introduction of cars made travel to booming Phoenix possible. Eventually, small businesses began to appear on the reservation as well, launched both by the community and individual tribal members. Schools, health centers and new housing appeared. Income levels slowly grew and famine was erased. These trends continue today as the Gila River Indian Community looks toward a promising future.

“THEY ARE A NOBLE RACE... THEIR STORES OF WHEAT AND CORN HAVE SUPPLIED MANY A STARVED EMIGRANT, AND RESTORED HIS BROKEN DOWN ANIMALS.”
- LT SYLVESTER MOWRY, US ARMY
The Gila River

Since before the arrival of the Bearded Ones (Spanish) the waters of the Gila River has provided for the Akimel O’othom. The Spanish gave these desert farmers a name which is still used today PIMA.

The O’othom were here in village clusters and had a well-defined irrigation system in place. The O’othom had crops of corn, beans and squash, grown in abundance. These were the food crops but they also found cotton and tobacco being cultivated.

Their villages dotted the entire Gila River Valley, to the East as far as Florence, to the West near the base of the Estrellas or Komatke as they are called by the O’othom.

The Spanish found these people diverting the waters of the Gila into canals they had constructed, with the aid of only wood and stone tools, which extended for miles and miles. Their engineering ability was amazing to these new arrivals. From the larger canals they had headgate to divert waters to the actual field of crops. It was a combined effort with each village responsible for the maintenance of the canal system to their fields and village. Field houses were often put up near the fields but home was in the main village.

The O’othom people are a peaceful group and worked together on large-scale projects. For instance, in the rebuilding of a house which was lost by fire, the village would rebuild it in a matter of days. Materials would be gathered such as posts and beams for the roof and corners, arrowweeds obtained from the banks of the river. Labor was from the village and food was provided for the noon lunch. There was no monetary exchange but food was donated by the families and the ladies did the cooking. Not only did they do the cooking but also helped in the actual house or structure construction.

It was also a time for visiting with old friends and relatives. The elders would sit in the shade and watch over the grandchildren. Plus watch the progress and offer suggestions to the young men who still had much to learn.

Irrigation continued and there came a time when the Pee Posh came to the valley seeking refuge from their fellow people. Part of the Yuman groups along the Colorado they came East to ask permission to live among the Akimel O’othom. They were welcomed and allowed to live and farm in what is now District Seven. Today they still coexist and therefore the name for the irrigation Project of today, the Pima-Maricopa Irrigation Project.

There came a time in the 1800’s when the people who were so generous with their crops to the people crossing their lands to California began to see changes in the river flow. A good number of the settlers stayed in the upper Gila River Valley and began to use the waters, which affected the flow downstream. Due to their diversion upstream the waters finally stopped flowing down in the

Historical Timeline of the Pima/

1859 - Gila River Reservation established by Executive Order.
1869 - The first recorded shortage of water began.
1872 - The first petition by Chiefs for relief from water thefts took place.
1883 - Pima/Maricopas were forced to reside on reservation.
1886 - Florence Canal opens upstream and diverts all low flows. Federal Government settles with Florence Canal Company.
1903 - Appeal to President Roosevelt.
1892-1904 - The Starving Decade Mesquite forest is cut down for money to buy food. Indian infant mortality rates approach 50%.
1904 - 13 Chiefs appeal to the Indian Commissioner for work.
1908 - Sacaton Dam project begins.
1916 - Ashurst-Hayden Diversions Authorized.
1924 - Coolidge Dam Authorized.
1929 - Coolidge Dam Completed.
lower valley where the O’othom and Pee Posh lived. This major event forced some of the people to migrate to the Salt River Valley only to suffer the same fate, the eventual loss of water.

Today the people who now reside within the reservation of the Gila River Indian Community the Pima and Maricopas, are in the planning stages of an irrigation project of monumental proportions. The plans are to establish an irrigation system to deliver water to 146,300 acres. From District 1 in the Blackwater area to the farms of the Pee Posh in District Seven. It will again take the effort of all the people to make major decisions, just like in the old days. There will be impacts to the community members in many ways and they will all have to be addressed. It will take years to complete but in the end the community members will once again hear the sweet music of rushing water.

Maricopa Water Rights Settlement

1929-1936 - Subjugation of San Carlos Project Lands
1935 - Globe Equity #59/ Gila Decree approved. Tribal Council tries to stop approval but made to wait in hallway.
1980 - Gila Adjudication Begins.
1983 - Community permitted to intervene on own behalf in GE#59
1985 - GRIC Water Master Plan Prepared.
1990 - Pumping compliant stayed in GE#59
1992 - CAP Contract signed
2002 - Pumping compliant permitted-Trial held.
2003 - Judge Coughenhour resigns rather than rule on Community’s behalf.
Akimel O’odham (Pima)

If the level of a people's arts and cultural activity is an accurate reflection of their overall state of vitality, it is encouraging to note a renaissance of both traditional and innovative arts, crafts, and cultural pursuits among our Gila River community. Historically, the Akimel O’odham and Tohono O’odham were some of the world’s premier basketmakers, and the Tohono O’odham remain very active in this field. Among the Akimel O’odham, basket weaving is an art undergoing revival. In addition, cultural gatherings and special arts events are growing larger, and more tribal members are making a living, or supplementing their income, through the sale of arts and crafts. And, in January 2004, the community dedicated one of the nation’s finest facilities for the preservation and display of Native artifacts, the HuHugam Heritage Center.

In 2003, community youth at Ira Hayes Memorial Applied Learning High School on the reservation tackled a new arts medium: video. With the aid of the Herberger College of Fine Arts at Arizona State University in Tempe, the teens created a wonderful documentary, The River People, which was chosen for screening at the Cinematexas International Film Festival in the fall of 2003, showing that our people's artistic talents can be extended in new and exciting ways.
The Maricopa people were small bands living along the lower Gila and Colorado rivers. Each of these bands migrated eastward at different times. The Xalychidom (Maricopa of Lehi), left around 1825-1830.

The last of these bands is said to have left the Colorado River in the late 1830’s. Eventually these bands came together and became collectively known as the Maricopa.

As they migrated eastward, they came upon the Pima tribe and established a relationship. Both tribes provided protection against the Yuman and Apache tribes.

Some Maricopa’s (mostly Xalychidom Piipaash) began migrating to the area now known as Lehi on the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community, because water from the Gila River was becoming scarce. When the Salt River Indian Community was established in 1879, the reservation included both tribes within these boundaries.

The Maricopa Tribe is known for their red clay pottery work. Various jars and bowls were created for essential needs, made of natural materials. The clay was collected at various locations within the area. Natural dyes were used to depict geometrical designs.

Maricopa pottery artwork can be viewed at the Community’s Hohogam Ki Museum.
It is the goal of the Gila River Indian Community’s leadership to provide a better quality of life for future generations. As a result, the Governor and Lieutenant Governor and 17 elected members of the Community Council continue to focus on a well-diversified economic base, building effective community service programs, and promoting cultural vitality.

The Executive Branch includes the Governor and Lieutenant Governor who are elected for a three-year term, their support staff and the Executive Team. The Executive Team members play key rolls within the tribe who report weekly to the Administration, these members includes the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Chief of Staff, Public Information Officer, the Five Community Managers (two designated to oversee the daily operations of the Community’s programs and departments and three managers designated to address and implement strategic plans for the Tribe), General Counsel, Finance Director, Planning and Evaluation Director and the Director of Community Services.

The Gila River Indian Community Council enacted a Resolution establishing two separate units of tribal government within the Executive Branch: the Administrative Offices and the Programmatic Departments.
The Gila River Indian Community Tribal Council (Tribal Council) serves as the legislative governing body for the Gila River Indian Community. The Tribal Council currently consists of 17 enrolled members of the Community. Tribal Council members are elected by qualified voters of the seven respective districts of the Community to three (3) year terms. The Governor of the Community is the presiding officer of the Tribal Council. In the absence of the Governor the Lt. Governor serves as presiding officer. The legislative body functions in conformance with the Bylaws or Ordnances of the Community.

There are currently seven (7) Standing Committees appointed by Tribal Council. Members are appointed to serve three (3) year terms. Each Standing Committee includes at least one (1) Community-at-large member. Standing Committees are responsible for the review of matters directly related to the welfare of the Community in specific areas. After review at the committee level recommendations are presented to Tribal Council for final action. On occasion the need may arise for a Special Committee appointed for a specific purpose and when their assignment is complete the committee is automatically dissolved. Standing Committee meetings are held the week prior to the regular bi-monthly Council meetings.

The current Standing Committees are as follows:
1. Education Standing Committee
2. Health & Social Standing Committee
3. Cultural Resources Standing Committee
4. Legislative Standing Committee
5. Economic Development Standing Committee
6. Natural Resources Standing Committee
7. Government & Management Standing Committee
The Gila River Indian Community Court was established by the Gila River Indian Community Constitution and Bylaws on March 17, 1960. The Community’s main court, the Akimel O’Otham Loditha Kud Ki (River People’s Court Building), is located in Sacaton, Arizona. There is a second court office located in the west end of the Gila River Indian Community, the Westend Judicial Center, which provides court services to Districts 6 & 7, in Laveen, Arizona.

The Community Court provides services to approximately 20,000 members of the Akimel O’Otham (Pima) and Pee Posh (Maricopa) tribes.

The Court is a full service court, exercising jurisdiction to the full extent available under federal law. Services include: case filings of criminal, civil, traffic, juvenile matters, and appellate matters. Other services the Court provides are the issuance of orders of protection, marriage licenses, livestock ownership, and mental health treatment orders. The Court uses a computerized case management system called “Full Court”, the system has the capability to manage every aspect of a case's progression through the court. The Community Court currently has a 58-member staff. The Chief Judge and 5 Associate Judges are elected into office by the people of the Gila River Indian Community and serve 3-year terms. The 2 Children’s Court Judges are appointed by the Tribal Council and serve 4-year terms.

Currently, the Probation Department is under the Community Court and provides services to all persons, juvenile and adult, ordered by the court to probation. The Probation Department monitors probationers through office appointments and home visits.

Under the Probation Department, a Diversion Program was created which provides education, program services information, and community cultural awareness to juveniles. The Diversion Program consists of the Drug Court, the Teen Court, Group Education meetings, Peer Mentoring, Community Services and the Truancy Teen Court.

“To Provide Effective and Fair Administration of Justice and Quality Customer Service for the Benefit of the Gila River Indian Community.”
Strategic and determined pursuits of tribal economic activities are now beginning to pay off for Gila River Indian Community (GRIC). While the community’s gaming facilities remain the catalyst for economic growth—other endeavors range from telecommunications to resort and golf facilities; health care, and agriculture.

The community employs nearly 5,000 people, including Tribal members. The number of non-tribal members working in various community businesses and departments strengthens the positive impact GRIC makes on the region’s economy, as a whole. In fact, salaries from tribal governmental operations and economic endeavors total more than $100 million a year!

In addition to its employment of non-Indian people, the community also makes a profound financial contribution to regional, state and local economies through purchases of goods and services from off-reservation sources. The positive economic impact to the state of Arizona through GRIC’s gaming facilities alone, is estimated to exceed $40 million per year; while the community’s Sheraton Wild Horse Pass Resort & Spa contributes millions of dollars, annually to Arizona’s economy via salaries, purchased goods and services.

An important organization created by the community’s elected leadership is the Wildhorse Pass Development Authority. The authority sought, negotiated and secured financial backing of the Sheraton Wild Horse Pass Resort & Spa, the Koli Equestrian Center, the Whirlwind Golf Club, and the Wild Horse Pass Business Park.

The improved economic climate for the community resulted in a burgeoning small-business market, led by diverse Tribal businesses. To assist in these endeavors, GRIC developed, implemented and currently manages a micro-lending program of up to $25,000 for tribal members. The program also helps with preparation of business plans and loan applications to other entities like the Small Business Administration, as well as, offering college-accredited courses in marketing, accounting, and additional business related fields. The tribal business ventures range from auto repair shops and towing services, to counseling; ice cream sales; construction companies; beadwork sales; entertainment, and custom clothing.

The Community faces new opportunities and challenges each day—with strategic and sound decisions… survival of the Community will be secured for generations to come.
**TRIBAL ENTERPRISES**

**AJI SPA & SALON**  
5594 Wild Horse Pass Blvd.  
Chandler, AZ 85226  
(602) 225-0100  |  1-(866) 837-4156 (toll-free)  
www.wildhorsepassresort.com  
Our 17,500 square-foot Aji Spa is aptly named for the Pima word for sanctuary. Featuring 17 treatment rooms, salon, fitness center, a relaxing watsu pool and a traditional roundhouse, it offers the fine spa services with a Native American flavor. Experience one-of-a-kind treatments developed from ancient rituals, including ingredients such as red clay for the Gila River, and Cholla cactus to help purify and rejuvenate the body. Through its design, storytelling art, gardens, treatments and programs, Aji Spa will inspire you with clarity and a renewed perspective as you seek sanctuary from your world of daily stress and cares.

**KAI**  
5594 Wild Horse Pass Blvd.  
Chandler, AZ 85226  
(602) 225-0100  |  1-(866) 837-4156 (toll-free)  
www.wildhorsepassresort.com  
Kai, meaning ‘seed’ in the Pima language, features a menu rich in creativity, history and Native American culture. Executive Chef Michael O’Dowd and Native American Chef de Cuisine Jack Strong incorporate the essence of the Pima and Maricopa tribes and locally farmed ingredients from the Gila River Indian Community to create unforgettable masterpieces.

**K’OSIN**  
5594 Wild Horse Pass Blvd.  
Chandler, AZ 85226  
(602) 225-0100  |  1-(866) 837-4156 (toll-free)  
www.wildhorsepassresort.com  
Ko’sin features a fusion of American and Southwestern cuisine. Offering breakfast, lunch and dinner Ko’sin, meaning ‘kitchen’ in the Pima language, delights guests with delectable dishes amid stunning views of the Sierra Estrella Mountain Range.

**GILA RIVER SAND & GRAVEL CORPORATION**  
P.O. Box 926  
Sacaton, AZ 85247  
(520) 418-2106  
www.gilariversandandgravel.com  
Gila River Sand & Gravel Corporation is a construction aggregate producer. It produces and sells rock and sand products to customers who then use these products to produce concrete or asphalt all throughout Arizona. It also sells base course aggregate commonly known as ABC for the use in road construction and as a base sub structure for houses and buildings.

**GILA RIVER TELECOMMUNICATIONS INC**  
7065 W. Allison Drive  
Chandler, AZ 85226  
(520) 796-3333  
www.gilanet.net  
Gila River Telecommunications Inc. (GRTI) was established in 1988 for the purpose of providing the Gila River Indian Community with telephone service and other telecommunications services. GRTI currently has over 3,800 lines, including business, residence, and private line circuits. GRTI is also a 25% owner of the Gila River Cellular General Partnership with Verizon Wireless, serving the Rural Service Area 5 in Arizona. With over forty-five employees, GRTI is capable of providing many services with the use of in-house personnel, including our own engineering and construction departments. GRTI will continue to bring the latest services and technologies to the Gila River Indian Community and ensuring the best service possible. In 2003 it was nominated for an Honoring Nations Award bestowed annually by Harvard University.

**HUHUGAM HERITAGE CENTER**  
4759 N. Maricopa Rd.  
Chandler, AZ 85226  
(520) 796-3500  
www.huhugam.com  
On January 24, 2004, the Gila River Indian Community opened arguably the nation’s finest tribal facility for the preservation and display of important cultural artifacts and art. The Huhugam Heritage Center serves many functions: a climate-controlled repository for prehistoric and historic artifacts, cultural materials and vital records; a museum to display these materials to the public; a center for research by tribal members; a space to exhibit traveling art and history shows; and a gathering place for both tribal and residents and the outside world.
**TRIBAL ENTERPRISES**

**KOLI EQUESTRIAN CENTER**
6940 N. Broken Ear Road
Chandler, AZ 85226
(602) 565-3199
www.koliequestrian.com
The Koli Equestrian Center provides instruction in various riding styles, trail rides, and other Sonoran Desert adventures at this top-notch riding facility located minutes from the Sheraton Wild Horse Pass Resort. Pick between some 50-60 mounts, drive some cattle out onto the range, visit the old stage stop and catch the action of a mock gunfight. You may even catch sight of the herd of wild horses that roam the area.

**LONE BUTTE INDUSTRIAL PARK**
P.O. Box 5000
Chandler, AZ 85226
(520) 796-1033
www.lonebuttepark.com
Lone Butte Industrial Park, is managed and operated by the Lone Butte Industrial Corporation. The Park’s prime location next to Interstate 10, minutes from Sky Harbor International Airport and close proximity to Metropolitan Phoenix provides our tenants with strategic access to the entire Southwest. Lone Butte Industrial Park accommodates, warehousing, light and some heavy industries, as well as research and development, high tech firms and services. Lone Butte Industrial Park has been rated the nation’s best tribal industrial park.

**WILD HORSE PASS DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY**
5718 W. North Loop Road
Chandler, AZ 85226
(520) 796-5389
www.whpda.com
Near the Sheraton Wildhorse Pass Resort and Casino, with attractive landscaped roadways and brand new utilities, including fiber-optic lines. Plots run from three to 30 acres. Includes The Wild Horse Pass Corporate Center that houses that The Gila River Office of Water Rights and The Wild Horse Pass Development Corporate Headquarters.

**SHERATON WILDHORSE PASS RESORT & SPA**
5594 Wild Horse Pass Blvd.
Chandler, AZ 85226
(602) 225-0100    1-(866) 837-4156 (toll-free)
www.wildhorsepassresort.com
The Sheraton Wild Horse Pass Resort & Spa, a 500-room resort was designed to be an authentic representation of the Gila River Indian Community’s heritage and culture. It is conveniently located 11 miles from the Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport on the ancient Gila River Indian Community. The AAA Four Diamond resort offers its guests a recreational, educational, and inspirational experience never before available in a resort setting. The architecture, design, and legends of the Pima and Maricopa tribes are celebrated in every detail imaginable, indoors and out.

**WHIRLWIND GOLF CLUB**
5692 North Loop Road
Chandler, AZ 85226
(480) 940-1500
www.whirlwindgolf.com
Adjoining the Sheraton Wildhorse Pass Resort is home to two 18-hole courses laid delicately over the Sonoran desert, and a handsome clubhouse, the Whirlwind Golf Club. They are managed by Troon Golf, a company known for its attention to fine detail. The Cat Tail and Devil’s Claw courses were designed by Gary Panks and were picked by Golf Magazine in 2002 as tops for new places to play.

**TOKA STICKS GOLF COURSE**
6910 Williams Field Road
Mesa, AZ 85212-0907
www.tokasticks.com
Toka Sticks Golf Course (formerly Williams Air Force Base Golf Course) is located 5 miles south of US 60, at the intersection of Power and Williams Field roads. The original 9 holes was built over 40 years ago by the Air Force personnel and local community members who volunteered their help in exchange for golf privileges. The course plays 6700 yards from the back tees, and features some terrific holes that will challenge even the best of players.
Income from Tribal gaming helps fund many of our community’s educational, social, health, and economic development programs, and is a key factor in our recent renaissance, employing more than 2,000 people (60 percent are Tribal members). Gaming began in June 1994 with the opening of the first small casino. Today the community operates three casinos:

**WILD HORSE PASS**
5550 W. Wild Horse Pass
Chandler, Arizona 85246
Just off I-10 south of Phoenix, Exit 162 (Maricopa Road). The largest (167,000 square feet) of the community’s casinos was dedicated in 1996. Games include slots (700 machines), live poker, blackjack, keno, and a 1,500-seat bingo hall. It also features a sports lounge with live music, a buffet restaurant, two delis, and a gift shop.

**VEE QUIVA**
6443 N. Komatke Drive
Laveen, Arizona 85339
At the west end of the reservation, just southwest of Phoenix, 12 miles south of I-10 on 51st Ave. This 99,000 square-foot facility opened December 1997 and features 800 interactive slots, a 500 seat bingo hall, poker, a restaurant, gift shop and a deli. “Phoenix’s only West Valley Casino Location”

**LONE BUTTE**
1200 S. 56th Street
Chandler, Arizona 85226
On Chandler’s west border, one mile south of Chandler Blvd. This new facility opened in January 2002 with 475 slots, including classic reels and new video slots, video keno, and video poker.
Life has taken a definite turn for the better in our community over the past two decades. Respect and hope for our people have flowed back, as has water for our precious farming fields - a remarkable turnaround.

While problems persist, improvements include overall quality of life, level of self-governance, tribal and personal income, health, housing, cultural, and artistic practices, education systems, and some intangibles like pride and dignity. When the community speaks, city leaders in the Phoenix metro area and Arizona as a whole now take note.

With income from tribal enterprises including its gaming endeavors, the Gila River Indian Community is taking bold steps in improving many facets of modern life on our reservation. Take our work in providing new housing for tribal members-at the rate of several hundred a year. In the near past, many Tribal homes lacked indoor plumbing, insulation, and other modern conveniences, and though the new residents are hardly palatial, they are a vast improvement.

**EDUCATION**

The community’s Department of Education has devoted considerable resources to improving our on-reservation educational system. There are now eight public/tribal/BIA schools serving reservation youth.

In addition, St. Peter Indian Mission School (K-8) offers another option. Parents and students can choose any of these schools to attend, or go to an off-reservation public or private school.

Another noteworthy project has been the development of culturally relevant curricula for our youth. Gila Crossing School, for instance, has created lesson plans based on our traditional love of farming, establishing a student garden where studies in math and science take on tangible meaning. The garden also produces high-quality foods for local consumption and sale to the restaurants of the community’s Wild Horse Pass Resort.

In recent years, $6 million a year has been allocated for higher education scholarships for tribal members. It is the goal of the Gila River Indian Community to have more college graduates return home, bringing with them the skills needed to launch and manage programs ranging from environmental oversight to school administration, economics, and legal affairs.
HEALTH

As noted, obesity and diabetes are found in epidemic rates among our people today, due to changes in diet and lifestyle over the past century. Some 52 percent of all adults over age 35 suffer from diabetes, and it is even afflicting our kids as young as seven years old. The HuHuKam Memorial Hospital in Sacaton, managed by a tribal corporation, provides for a variety of primary medical needs to combat this menace, as do the new Native American Dialysis Centers in Sacaton and Gila Crossing.

Improving recreation facilities and opportunities for community members is another means of combating the health issues facing us. In 2001, we opened a new recreation facility, Kile Akimel, in Sacaton. With the help of the NBA franchise Phoenix Suns, the community invested $1.4 million in new baseball fields, a sand volleyball court, a playground, and a skateboard facility. Recently the MLB franchise Arizona Diamondbacks helped fund construction of a Little League baseball field in Sacaton, and the community opened a recreation facility in District 6 with an indoor pool. In addition, the community has established two Boys and Girls Clubs—the first among Arizona tribes—for our youth, and is opening elder centers across the reservation.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Also receiving increased attention and resources these days are tribal and regional fire departments and law enforcement facilities and personnel. The police department has grown from some 30 employees to nearly 100. The fire department has graduated its first all-Native American fire sciences class, and several new fire stations have been built to improve emergency response times throughout the community. And most impressive, a new tribal court building was recently dedicated, and an attractive new tribal governance center has recently been completed in the Spring of 2006.

The community has also recently awarded additional grants to surrounding cities to enhance their public safety programs. These included grants for a new fire truck for the off-reservation town of Tolleson and exercise equipment for the station’s firemen, and a $117,000 grant to the Avondale Police Department for technology upgrades.
PHILANTHROPY

Historically the Akimel O’odham, “River People,” have helped their neighbors by offering food, water or shelter to people traversing the great Sonoran Desert. The Community continues the altruistic traditions set forth by its early ancestors through its many donations to Phoenix-area and Arizona charities and non-profit organizations, including Boys and Girls Clubs, the Juvenile Diabetes Foundation, the United Way, the Special Olympics, and the Red Cross.

In recent years, the community has also been able to begin to expand our philanthropic capacity through Indian Gaming grants. Grant awards to Arizona cities, towns and counties focus on five major areas including Public Safety, Health Care, Education, Transportation and Economic Development.

In December 2003, the community announced a grant of $250,000 to the City of Tucson and the University of Arizona to help preserve and display the world-class pottery collection at Arizona State Museum, and in October 2004 a grant of $1 million was made to the Heard Museum in Phoenix – both projects provide educational opportunities for Arizona residents and visitors as well as promote tourism for the State. Funding for the Phoenix Downtown Market provides economic development opportunities for Arizona produce growers and entrepreneurs as well as a health benefit by providing nutritious fruits and vegetables at an affordable cost. Additionally over $2.1 million has been allocated to other projects that promote academic education, public safety education and health education.

In October 2005, the Community provided a $1,000,000 grant to the City of Casa Grande for the expansion of the Casa Grande Regional Medical Center Emergency Department. With projected completion scheduled for summer 2008, the entire Casa Grande Valley will benefit from more than twice the current number of beds, state-of-the-art medical equipment and the capacity to treat major medical trauma. The Community has also contributed over $3.3 million to other health care projects including $1,000,000 to the City of Chandler for the Mercy Gilbert Medical Center.

The Community has contributed over $1.8 million to numerous public safety agencies for various services and equipment throughout the state - electronic fingerprinting systems, video court appearances, auto theft suppression, computer aided dispatch and air/lighting support vehicles to name a few. Crisis Negotiations Command Trailers for the Chandler and Peoria Police Departments ensure that hostage situations are handled effectively for these cities and the entire Valley when mutual-aid agreements are implemented. In addition mutual-aid agreements between city, town, county and reservation fire departments also allow the $1.2 million awarded for fire services to benefit a major portion of the state.
“SINCE 2004 THE GILA RIVER INDIAN COMMUNITY HAS DONATED OVER 16.5 MILLION DOLLARS TO LOCAL CHARITIES AND ORGANIZATIONS”
INTRODUCING THE DISTRICTS

Of the seven districts that make up the Gila River Indian Community, District 1 is the second smallest and most Eastern district.

It is named Shuckma Shudag or Oos Kek, which translates to “Blackwater” and “Stick Stand.” It is roughly 50 square miles in area and is home to approximately 1,000 residents. The Eastern boundary of District 1 is adjacent to the town of Florence, Arizona, while the Southern boundary is adjacent to the city of Coolidge. To the North are the Johnson Ranch and Santan Heights communities. Just southeast, beyond the district’s boundaries, is the historic Casa Grande Ruins National Monument.

The Casa Grande Ruins are federally protected and personally tied to the Pima people of the Gila River Indian Community. The structure was built by the Hohokam (“those who have gone”) people, who maintained a sophisticated irrigation system for hundreds of years until periods of low water caused most of the community to disperse. Those who stayed are the ancestors of the present day Pima and Papago Indians. The Ruins have become a popular tourist attraction with nearly 100,000 visitors annually.

District 2 is named Hashen Kek, or “Saguaro Stand.” It is home to the Olberg Bridge which stands as a spectacular reminder of the rich history and culture of the Akimel O’odham and Pee Posh tribes. The Olberg Bridge was once considered a great engineering wonder when it was completed in the 1920’s along with the Sacaton Dam as part of the Pima-Maricopa Irrigation project. The dam was one of the final pieces connecting the main north-south highway across Arizona – becoming part of the Phoenix, Sacaton, Casa Grande, Tucson, and Nogales Scenic Highway. It diverted water to irrigate land in the district. Water and farming have long been a tradition and a central part of life for the industrious people of Hashan Kek.

The cultural heart of Hashan Kek are the traditional basket dancers, who have learned and kept a legacy of traditional dances that have been passed down from generation to generation.

The village of Sacaton in District 3 was named after the famous giant Sacaton grass that once grew in this valley and, like the vigorous growing grass, the village of Sacaton has grown as well with new buildings such as a police station, judicial center and a beautiful dialysis center.

In the O’odham language, Sacaton is known as Ge e Ke or “Big House,” which is largely because of its historical importance to the community as the unofficial capital of the Community. Though it is one of the smaller districts – approximately 39 square miles in size – it has always been the center of commerce and government activity for the tribe. Today, the Tribal government continues to thrive and operate in the new Governance building, which houses most of the tribal departments and serves as the meeting place for tribal council and government officials.

History, tradition, pride, and community are strong themes in District 3. The community as a whole is proud of its people and accomplishments, but is also proud to share goodwill and a strong sense of community with its neighbors.

THE 7 DISTRICTS OF GILA RIVER:

- District 1 - Blackwater
- District 2 - Hashen Kek
- District 3 - Sacaton
- District 4 - San Tan
- District 5 - Casa Blanca
- District 6 - Laveen (Komatke)
- District 7 - Maricopa Colony
**District 4**, also known as the Santan District, is large and unique in that it is comprised of eight distinct villages: Olberg, Santan (Upper and Lower), Stotonic, Chandler Heights, Gila Butte, Goodyear, and East Lone Butte Village.

The Santan mountain range played a role in the history of District 4 as do many other aspects of the land that surround the community. The mountain range tells a story that connects the people with the land, not only as a striking landmark but also through stories that are passed down from the elders of how the mountains influenced and shaped the people of this part of the Gila River Indian Community.

The District is 119 square miles and has seen the most industrial growth of any of the districts. District 4 boundaries contain an array of world-class sports and recreation venues, as well as a host of tribal, commercial, agricultural businesses that are owned and operated by the Community.

**District 5** is roughly 99 square miles and is known as Casa Blanca or by the O’odham people of the village as Vah ki which translate into English as “House that goes into the ground”.

The District is comprised of six village areas: Sweet Water, Bapchule, South Casa Blanca, West Casa Blanca, Sacate and Wet Camp. The northern boundary is the now dried banks of what was once the Gila River and on the southern boundary are the cities of Casa Grande and Maricopa.

District 5 was historically the center of the Pima villages and has long been and continues to be the center of the agricultural production of the Pima and Maricopa tribes. The story of the tribe’s relationship with the land and its ability to adapt to its surroundings is among the deepest rooted and most telling story of the culture.

Faced with an arid environment, the Hu Hu Kam, ancient ancestors of the Pima created irrigation systems hundreds of years before the Western settlement of Arizona. The many miles of canals they built allowed them to grow corn, bean, squash, and melons along the Gila River. Their ingenuity yielded great results.

This ancient irrigation system is proof of the tribe's dedication to the philosophy of bringing life to the Sonoran Desert through hard work, intelligence and respect for all living things.

Today, modern versions of the ancient irrigations systems allow Gila River Farms, founded in the 1960s, to produce crops such as cotton, alfalfa, citrus, olives, wheat and barley on nearly 35,000 acres of land with approximately 130,000 acres of additional agricultural land available to cultivate. In the ancient tradition, farmers continue to adapt by making the transition to newer and more modern farming equipment to help expedite the harvesting of these diverse crops.

**District 6** sits in the shadows of the Estrella Mountains where the once flowing but now dry sandy river beds of the Gila and Santa Cruz Rivers crisscross the Sonoran Desert and amongst the outer edges this community. The Northern boundary of the community is adjacent to the Ahwatukee Foothills and the Southern boundary borders the city of Maricopa.

The majestic Sierra Estrella Mountains which seem to stand guard over all of this life are known by the Pima and Maricopa Tribes as Komatke, which is loosely translated blue and hazy. The mountain ranges are both awe-inspiring and rich in history and lore; rising 4,000 feet above the Sonoran Desert and stretching the length of the community’s western border. One of the highest peaks was named for a humble warrior, the late Ira Hayes; the United States Marine who helped raise the U.S. flag on Mount Suribachi on the island Iwo Jima in World War II.

District 6 has four village areas: Lone Butte, Santa Cruz, Komatke and Co-op Village. It is 176 square miles and is home to the Komatke Community Center Complex, the scenic Estrella Mountain range, and Vee Quiva Casino, one of the Gila River Indian Community’s three casinos.

**District 7** sits in the western most part of the reservation at the base of the Estrella Mountains and is home to the Maricopa. In early days they grouped together in small bands living along the lower Gila and Colorado rivers. Each of these bands migrated eastward at different times. The last of these bands left the Colorado River in the late 1830’s. Eventually these bands came together and settled in the area.

The Maricopa of District 7 is known for their red clay pottery work. Various jars and bowls were created for essential needs, made of natural materials. The clay was collected at various locations within the area and natural dyes were used to depict geometrical designs.

Maricopa pottery artwork can be viewed at the Community’s Huuhogam Ki Museum, Phoenix’s Heard Museum and the Smithsonian Natural Museum of the American Indian.
Akimel O’odham - Pee Posh