



Signage indicating the end of State Route 24 East is posted along SR24 as it approaches Ironwood Drive in Queen Creek.

San Tan Valley road projects in jeopardy

Money to ease traffic congestion is hard to find

Maritza Dominguez
Arizona Republic
USA TODAY NETWORK

A highway poised to be the gateway to Pinal County and a traffic reliever for Queen Creek remains in limbo as local, county and state transportation planners scramble to find money for the multimillion-dollar project.

County and town planners consider two planned highways there critical to ease growing traffic congestion in the area. One is a 15-mile extension of State Route 24, an east-west corridor that ties into Loop 202 with a focus on building out 4 miles east in phase one. The other is a proposed 14-mile north-to-south corridor dubbed the Central Arizona Parkway, connecting to the state route down to Arizona Farms Road.

Frustrated locals liken driving in the area to a kind of battle. With about 98% of San Tan Valley residents, traveling into metro Phoenix for work, rush hour traffic can bring cars to a standstill in the early morning and late evenings. Some drive 30 minutes before reaching the nearest highway.

Queen Creek is one of the nation’s fastest-growing communities, while fast-growing San Tan Valley is aiming to become an incorporated town. Both are expected to add about 277,000 residents when they reach build-out, according to town and county projections. Currently, their combined population sits at



Traffic heads toward State Route 24 Westbound from the intersection of State Route 24 and Ironwood Drive where SR24 begins in Queen Creek. PHOTOS BY MEGAN MENDOZA/THE REPUBLIC

about 183,000 residents.

When a stub of State Route 24 opened in 2022, it stoked expectations of relieving congestion and spurring an economic boom on some of the most developable land in the metro Phoenix region.

Now along the Ironwood Drive stretch, both hous-

See ROAD, Page 6A

Police officers investigated over actions at fatal fight

Robert Anglen and Elena Santa Cruz
Arizona Republic
USA TODAY NETWORK

Two Phoenix police officers who watched as a 22-year-old man was fatally beaten outside of a nightclub and appeared to take no action are facing an internal investigation, city officials said.

The department’s Professional Standards Bureau opened an investigation into the officers’ actions, City Communications Director Dan Wilson told The Arizona Republic on March 21.

Wilson confirmed the investigation hours after The Republic published a series of videos showing the two

See POLICE, Page 5A

DELUXE CONDOS BUSINESS, 9A



Luxury condominiums with penthouses selling for \$10 million or more are planned in Scottsdale. PROVIDED BY OLSON KUNDIG AND REPLAY DESTINATIONS

Black market pot tainted

Black market marijuana tested in Arizona showed heavy contamination by a toxic byproduct of mold that could make people ill. It is the first time fusarium mycotoxin has been found in cannabis, according to an ASU study. **INSIDE, 12A**

AZ Guard chief resigning

Adjutant General Kerry Muehlenbeck, who led the Arizona National Guard for four years, is stepping down. **VALLEY & STATE, 3A**

Migrant kids lose publicly funded legal services

Efforts to remain in US legally will come at their expense

Daniel Gonzalez
Arizona Republic
USA TODAY NETWORK

Undocumented children battling to stay in the United States legally will face immigration courts alone without taxpayer funded legal representation after the Trump administration canceled a contract with nonprofit legal services providers in Arizona and across the country.

The Florence Immigrant & Refugee Project received notice on March 21 that the program that provides legal services and representation to migrant children who arrived unaccompanied by parents or legal guardians had been almost entirely shut down, Deputy Director Roxana Avila-Cimpeanu said.

Unaccompanied minors will no longer receive legal services including court assistance, post-release referrals, shelter advocacy and direct representation, Avila-Cimpeanu said in a written statement.

The Trump administration is violating legal protections for immigrant children by canceling the contract and “forcing them to fight their immigration cases alone,” Avila-Cimpeanu said.

“Without the (Unaccompanied Children Program) funding for legal advocacy, children, no matter their age, will be forced to represent themselves in immigration court,” Avila-Cimpeanu said. “Already, we are seeing the government move for the expedited removal of unrepresented children.”

Avila-Cimpeanu said legal services under the taxpayer-funded program “are critical not only as a

See SERVICES, Page 6A



The U.S. Department of Homeland Security Florence Detention Center, which houses the Florence Immigration Court in Florence. JIMMY JENKINS/THE REPUBLIC

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BUSINESS

Changing your mind can change your life

Harvey Mackay
Special for The Republic

A college professor was once approached after a lecture by a young man demanding an explanation for an apparent contradiction between something he had said during class and something he had written in an article years before.

The professor responded, “When I’m wrong, I change my mind. What do you do?”

Changing one’s mind is a natural and often necessary part of personal and professional growth. In fact, the ability to adapt and reconsider one’s positions or decisions is a hallmark of resilience and open-mindedness. In other words, we should be open to new information, experiences and perspectives that can and should influence our thinking.

This adaptability is crucial in both personal and professional settings.

Changing your mind gives you the freedom to make better, more informed decisions. It shows that you are open to learning and are not rigidly attached to a single viewpoint. This flexibility can lead to more effective problem-solving and innovation.

For instance, in my book “We Got Fired!... And It’s The Best Thing That Ever Happened To Us,” I chronicled the

stories of 29 individuals who thrived after being fired. Many of them had to change their minds about their career paths, goals and even their definitions of success.

Changing your mind isn’t a sign of weakness or indecisiveness; it’s a sign of growth and learning. When Pat Mitchell, former CEO of PBS, seized every chance to learn, she found that the skills she acquired by accident became indispensable later on.

Pat Mitchell emphasized the importance of learning and adapting. Throughout her career, she seized every chance to acquire new skills, which often led her to change her mind about her career direction.

This adaptability allowed her to navigate various roles successfully and make significant contributions to public broadcasting.

There are numerous examples of people who changed their minds and achieved remarkable success as a result. Here are a few notable ones:

Michael Bloomberg was a partner at Salomon Brothers and was let go after a merger. Instead of dwelling on his dismissal, he changed his career path and founded Bloomberg LP, a financial information and media company. His decision to pivot led to the creation of a global financial empire.

Ray Kroc was a milkshake machine salesman before he bought McDonald’s at the age of 52. He saw potential in the small chain of hamburger restaurants and decided to change his career focus. His decision to invest in and expand McDonald’s transformed it into the world’s leading fast-food franchise.

Dr. Bernadine Healy, former president of the American Red Cross, often had to change her approach and strategies in her career. Her ability to adapt and stand firm on her values, even when it meant reconsidering her methods, helped her make impactful decisions in public service.

Steve Jobs was famously ousted from Apple, the company he co-founded. Instead of giving up, he changed his focus and founded NeXT and acquired Pixar. His return to Apple years later, with new insights and experiences, led to the company’s resurgence and the creation of iconic products like the iPhone and iPad.

Howard Schultz initially worked for Starbucks as the Director of Retail Operations and Marketing. He left the company to start his own coffee shop, Il Giornale, after failing to convince Starbucks’ owners to expand into espresso beverages.

Later, he acquired Starbucks and transformed it into the global coffee-

house chain we know today. His willingness to change his mind and pursue his vision was pivotal.

J.K. Rowling faced numerous rejections before the “Harry Potter” series was published.

She changed her mind about her career path multiple times, from working as a researcher and bilingual secretary to becoming a full-time writer. Her persistence and adaptability led to her becoming one of the most successful authors in history.

These examples illustrate how changing your mind can lead to new opportunities, personal growth and significant achievements. Flexibility and openness to change are not just beneficial; they are often essential for success. Change can be daunting – don’t be afraid to trust your instincts if you see a better path forward.

The willingness to change your mind can open doors to new opportunities and lead to extraordinary success. Embrace change, and you may discover your true potential. Embrace change, and you may find yourself on a path you never imagined.

Mackay’s Moral: *Changing your mind is not a sign of failure; it’s a sign of growth. Embrace the journey of learning and adapting, and you’ll find new paths to success.*

How to defend against the new StilachiRAT malware



Ken Colburn
Columnist

Question: Do I need to switch from Chrome to Edge because of Microsoft’s warnings if I have Trend Micro installed?

Answer: If you’ve seen these recent headlines, you might be wondering if Microsoft is sounding the alarm or simply promoting its own browser. The latest warning is tied to a newly discovered malware known as *StilachiRAT*, which has sparked concern because of its pervasive threats.

Here’s a quick breakdown of what’s actually going on and whether switching browsers should be on your to-do list.

The threat Microsoft is talking about

The *StilachiRAT* malware is no joke — it’s built to infiltrate Windows systems

and steal all kinds of sensitive data. This includes credentials stored in browsers, clipboard contents, system information, and even keyboard input. Once it’s in, it can be hard to detect and even harder to remove without the right tools and skills.

Microsoft has been vocal in suggesting that users switch to Edge, citing its deeper integration with Windows security features—specifically Microsoft Defender SmartScreen, which can block malicious sites and downloads in real time. Their argument? If you’re using Chrome and not running any additional security software, you’re more exposed to these types of attacks.

Is this really about the browser wars?

This isn’t the first time Microsoft has pushed users to switch browsers. Over the years, it’s used system alerts, pop-ups, and even built-in Windows messages to promote Edge, often highlighting its security benefits. While their concerns aren’t completely unfounded, it’s also fair to say there’s a marketing

component at play here.

The risk isn’t exclusive to Chrome as any browser that stores passwords or interacts with your system in a way that malware can exploit is vulnerable. *StilachiRAT* is delivered through phishing emails and malicious downloads. It doesn’t matter what browser you’re using if you open the wrong file or click the wrong link.

What if you’re using internet security software?

If you’re running a third-party internet security suite like Trend Micro, you’re already taking the right steps to block malware like this. These tools add layers of protection that go beyond what either Edge or Chrome can offer on their own.

For example, Trend Micro includes real-time file scanning, browser protection, email filtering, and behavior monitoring—all of which are designed to detect and stop threats like *StilachiRAT* before they can do any damage.

If you’re already using a comprehensive security suite and practicing basic

digital hygiene (keeping software updated, being cautious with unknown links or downloads, etc.), there’s no pressing reason to abandon Chrome.

The edge advantage — if you’re unprotected

Switching to Edge might make sense if you’re relying solely on Windows’ built-in protections. Edge combined with Windows Defender SmartScreen can reduce your exposure to malicious websites and risky downloads.

Third-party security programs like Trend Micro offer more robust security, so instead of switching browsers, I’d suggest installing better protection.

This malware warning is a serious reminder of the threats we all face, but it’s not a browser-specific flaw — it’s a wake-up call for users who aren’t taking security seriously.

The best defense isn’t which browser you use as much as how well you protect your system and how cautious you are online. The reality is that humans are always the weakest link in the cybersecurity chain.

Luxury condos going up near Camelback Mountain

Catherine Reagor
Arizona Republic
USA TODAY NETWORK

A luxury condominium development with penthouses selling for \$10 million or more is planned in Scottsdale next to the Phoenician resort.

The condos will be in the final phase of the 25-acre Ascent at The Phoenician development at the base of Camelback Mountain. Prices will start at \$2 million in the project called Summit by Olson Kundig, after the architecture firm designing it.

“Our design integrates with the mountain landscape, where red sandstone meets the open sky,” said Kirsten Ring Murray, principal of Olson Kundig. “Materials such as local stone anchor the structure to its Camelback Mountain setting, while refined metal screens respond to the shifting desert light.”

Replay Destinations is partnering with the architecture firm to develop the 63 condos, which will vary in size from 1,500 to 4,800 square feet. Features will include indoor and outdoor fireplaces, kitchens with quartz countertops, wine refrigerators and small appliance garages.

Ascent at The Phoenician was launched on 25 acres by Vancouver-based Replay in 2020 and will have almost 200 multimillion-dollar homes when it’s completed. The developer has sold about \$500 million in properties at



A rendering of a luxury condominium development with penthouses selling for \$10 million or more on a 25-acre swath of prime real estate at the base of Camelback Mountain known as the Ascent at The Phoenician. RENDERINGS COURTESY OF OLSON KUNDIG AND REPLAY DESTINATIONS

Ascent so far. Replay also has residential projects in the Bahamas, Hawaii and Park City, Utah.

The condos are going up next to Ascent’s Mountain Club, which has a pool, fitness rooms, a games room and a catering kitchen.

“This is a truly rare opportunity to own an Olson Kundig-designed residence in one of Arizona’s most iconic settings,” said Brianne Kelsey, vice president of development for Replay. “Camelback Mountain provides a breathtaking backdrop that cannot be

replicated.”

Sales for the condos started in March. Construction was expected to begin this summer, with condos ready for move-in in late 2027.