

Cinco de Mayo Parade Cancelled

Due to concerns of the COVID-19 virus pandemic, and the CDC's recommended actions to not gather in groups of 10 or more, the Cinco de Mayo Parade, sponsored by St Rose of Lima Catholic Church, has been cancelled for the 2020 event year.

Building Permit Fee Waivers

On July 1, 2019, Resolution 19-013 went in to effect, which encouraged new homes to be built in Safford by waiving building permit fees, and reimbursing water capacity and water meter fees. Building permits for 40 new residential homes have been issued since it's inception. There's still time to be included on this incentive! Building Permits for new homes issued prior to June 30, 2020 will still be eligible for fee waivers and reimbursements. For more information, visit our [website](#).

Best of Safford Awards

Since the annual appreciation luncheon hosted by the Safford Downtown Association could not go on with the Covid-19 social distancing measures in place, the Best of Safford Awards were announced via Facebook Live on April 29. The winners are:

- Best Dining Experience of 2019: Casa Manana
- Best Customer Service of 2019: Palmer & Johnson Family Dental
- Best Business Remodel of 2019: Safford Builders – Ace Hardware
- Best Business Newcomer of 2019: Rustic Barn Bakery
- Business Excellence Award of 2019: Palmer & Johnson Family Dental

Economic Stimulus Certificate Program



Recognizing the amount of small, locally owned businesses we have in Safford, and the need for immedi-

ate funds to assist an array of businesses that had to unexpectedly close their doors due to the Covid-19 pandemic, Danny Smith, President of the Safford Downtown Association, along with Safford City Manager Horatio Skeete, created a plan to help local businesses get funds in their pocket now to keep the lights on, and make their rent and payroll through the "Economic Stimulus Certificate Program" (ESCP). The Safford Downtown Association (SDA) is a small non-profit organization that works to improve Downtown Safford through events, capital improvement projects, business support and reinvestment in downtown Safford. They knew they would need a bigger pot of money to assist many struggling local businesses. The SDA partnered with the City of Safford and United Way of Graham and Greenlee Counties to raise addi-

tional funds for this program, and extended the program to all businesses located within the city limits of Safford.

How the program worked: Businesses were asked to fill out a simple application explaining how they have been affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. Accompanying the application, businesses requested "Discounted Gift Certificates" in increments of 50 (up to 500 per business). The business then sold the pre-printed gift certificates to their customers for \$6. Each certificate holds a \$10 value for the customer, making the certificates "40% off" to the customer. Funds raised by the program were used to reimburse the business \$3 for each certificate sold. The best thing about this program was that it provided businesses with an immediate infusion of cash, potentially as much as \$4,500, to help sustain them until current restrictions are lifted.

What the businesses are saying:

- *People are excited to buy them and it has brought in revenue when we most need it. Thank you, United Way, COS & SDA*
- *It was an absolute lifesaver, with no EIDL, SBA, PPP, loans that have been approved for myself as a business owner, my landlord still expects full rent May 1, and my salon has been closed for almost a month with no income, so this gift certificate program allowed me to raise enough money to pay my rent and have a place to still be able to work when we are allowed to.*
- *The assistance and support from these organizations helps more than we can ever say. We know we will be able to open strong once the restrictions are lifted for social distancing.*
- *The ESCP not only stimulated the economy and helped local businesses but the generosity of those three entities helped us to give back to the hard working people who support small businesses. I was truly almost to a meltdown state, not seeing any hope in the near future. But the ESCP not only boosted us financially from the sales of the coupons, a very large percent also purchased food/coffee from us and that helped immensely! We even had people who had never been in the store that "found" us through coming to purchase the coupons.*

Safford Pool Opening

The Safford Pool hopes to open on it's regularity scheduled date of May 22, 2020. We are however monitoring the Covid-19 situation and will make adjustments to the pool season if needed. Please check our City of Safford Pool Facebook page or city website for announcements regarding the pool's opening and services offered.

