

Gila County
Community Services
 A Community Action Agency

Gila County Community Services Division

Oct—Dec. 2011

Volunteers are always needed

Volunteering is the perfect way to feel connected to your community. The simple act of offering your skills and enthusiasm will positively impact the lives of others, as well as your own. The intent of volunteerism is to both generate and harness the community's desire to assist in the overall improvement of the quality of life for everyone. Each individual brings a unique perspective, which fosters relationships and interaction with others.

Everyone Can Help, We know that everyone has a talent to offer, whether it's expertise in a particular field or simply offering their valuable time to help fulfill volunteer

opportunities within their community. Several factors drive people into community service, but the powerful force behind volunteering is the social change that is made through the inspiration of people to make a difference to help those in need. Volunteering is an invaluable experience and engaging in service creates a valuable dimension within your community.

There are many opportunities to volunteer within your community if you have some time to spare volunteer. Volunteers aren't paid, not because they are worthless, but because they are priceless.

Laid off?
Need help finding a new job?

Call the Employment Specialists at REPAC, they may be able to help you.

Contact:
 David Franquero
 Employment Specialist
 (928) 402-8695




This Holiday Season Avoid Credit Card Overspending

Credit cards, if used unwisely, can lead to a mountain of debt. If you charge more than you can afford, make low monthly payments, or pay late, you may be headed for trouble.

However, if you learn to use credit cards wisely, they can be convenient, help build good credit, and prove useful in emergencies.

Don't Use Your Credit Card as a Loan

A credit card can be two things, depending on how you use it. If you carry a balance, it is a very high interest loan. If you make only the minimum payment (usually 2-3% of the balance) each month, you will be paying off the debt for years and years to come, including a huge amount of interest. (For more on understanding credit cards and their terms, see Nolo's article [Shopping for Credit Cards.](#))

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Improving the Quality of Life for All Residents, One Life at a Time

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**www.gila
 countyaz.gov/
 communityservices**

To view websites, click on text in [blue](#) or the icons.

Tips to Save Energy this Fall/Winter

Easy low-cost and no-cost ways to save energy.

Space heating can account for up to 31% of your home energy consumption, so the time to take measures to save energy this fall/winter is now. Using these tips, you may be able to reduce your heating costs:

- Set your thermostat as low as is comfortable in the winter and as high as comfortable in the summer.
- Clean or replace filters on furnaces once a month or as needed.
- Clean warm-air registers, baseboard heaters, and radiators as needed; make sure they are not blocked by furniture, carpeting, or drapes.
- During the heating season, keep the draperies and shades on your south-facing windows open during the day to allow the sunlight to enter your home and closed at night to reduce the chill you may feel from cold winds.

For more information on Energy Savings, log on to www.epa.gov/tips/

This Thanksgiving Fry Your Turkey Safely



WASHINGTON, D.C. - The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission is issuing safety tips for preventing fires and burns when using turkey fryers. Since 1998, CPSC has reports of 75 incidents that involved fires, flames, or burns associated with turkey fryers. Twenty-eight of these incidents were reported for the year 2002. Here are some of the hazard scenarios:

House fires associated with turkey fryers leading to injuries and property damage.

- Ignition of oil used with turkey fryers.

This was often related to oil reaching excess temperatures or oil contacting the open flame of the fryer.

- Splashing of hot oil causing burns.

The majority of reported incidents occurred while the oil was being heated, prior to adding the turkey. For this reason, it is very important consumers monitor the temperature of the oil closely. If **any smoke at all** is noticed coming from a heating pot of oil, the burner should be turned off immediately because the oil is overheated.

There is a risk of injury resulting from splashing due to the cooking of partially frozen meats. Thoroughly thaw and dry ALL meats before cooking in hot oil. One reported burn incident occurred when

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This Holiday Season Avoid Credit Card Overspending Continued. . .

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On the other hand, if you pay off the balance each month, a credit card becomes a convenient way to purchase items and services without carrying around a lot of cash. Use your credit card as a cash substitute, not as a high-interest loan.

Start a Savings Account

Use your savings account to help extend your finances during the times of the year that you expect to spend more money. Go talk to your banking institute to help with opening an account that would best suit your needs.

ARE HIGH UTILITY BILLS

GETTING YOU DOWN?

Help is available for low income Gila County residents. Call the Gila County Community Action Program for more information on qualifying for assistance.

(928) 402-8699

Consider your savings as a source of credit

If you use the money you have saved to do your shopping, you will stick to a budget, since the money is limited and you will save money because you will not be paying interest payments. After using an amount from savings, make a payment schedule so that you can pay the savings account back.

Avoiding overspending will benefit you in many ways, financially, emotionally and physically. You will not be worried about how you are going to stretch your income to meet your payments, therefore, you will be happier, healthier and start 2012 fiscally secure and healthy.





National Disability Employment Awareness Month

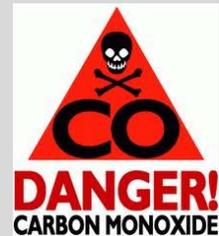
Globe, Arizona—In recognition of October being National Disability Employment Awareness Month, the Gila County Board of Supervisors, The City of Globe Council, The Town of Miami Council and The Town of Payson Council have issued Proclamations affirming October as National Disability Employment Awareness Month in Gila County. Approximately fifty (50) employers in Gila County employ disabled persons in their businesses. These employers were recognized at the October 18, 2011 Gila County Board of Supervisors Meeting.

Held each October, [National Disability Employment Awareness Month \(NDEAM\)](#) is a national campaign that raises awareness about *disability employment* issues and celebrates the many and varied contributions of America's workers with *disabilities*. The theme for NDEAM 2011 is *Profit by Investing in Workers with Disabilities*, which promotes the valuable contributions people with *disabilities* make to America's workplaces and economy. 2011 NDEAM posters are now available to [download](#) or [order](#).

[Find out where 2011 National Disability Employment Awareness Month \(NDEAM\) Posters Now Available is located on Disability.gov](#)



Protect Your Family and Yourself from Carbon Monoxide Poisoning



Carbon Monoxide Can Be Deadly

You can't see or smell carbon monoxide, but at high levels it can kill a person in minutes. Carbon monoxide (CO) is produced whenever any fuel such as gas, oil, kerosene, wood, or charcoal is burned. If appliances that burn fuel are maintained and used properly, the amount of CO produced is usually not hazardous. However, if appliances are not working properly or are used incorrectly, dangerous levels of CO can result. Hundreds of people die accidentally every year from CO poisoning caused by malfunctioning or improperly used fuel-burning appliances. Even more die from CO produced by idling cars.



Fetuses, infants, elderly people, and people with anemia or with a history of heart or respiratory disease can be especially susceptible. Be safe. Practice the DO's and DON'Ts of carbon monoxide.

CO Poisoning Symptoms

Know the symptoms of CO poisoning. At moderate

levels, you or your family can get severe headaches, become dizzy, mentally confused, nauseated, or faint. You can even die if these levels persist for a long time. Low levels can cause shortness of breath, mild nausea, and mild headaches, and may have longer term effects on your health. Since many of these symptoms are similar to those of the flu, food poisoning, or other illnesses, you may not think that CO poisoning could be the cause.

For More Information On Carbon Monoxide click on the link below:

<http://www.epa.gov/iaq/pubs/coftsh.html>

This time of the year is the perfect time to start thinking about your 2011 Income Tax Returns. You may benefit from itemizing your deductions on Schedule A if you:

- Cannot use the standard deduction
- Had large uninsured medical and dental expenses
- Paid interest or taxes on your home
- Had large unreimbursed employee business expenses
- Had large uninsured casualty or theft losses, or
- Made large charitable contributions

You may be subject to limitations on some of your itemized deductions. Please refer to the [Form 1040 Instructions](#) or [Form 1040, Schedule A Instructions](#) for the limitation amounts.

COMMONLY OVERLOOKED TAX DEDUCTIONS

Some of the most common overlooked tax deductions that you should speak to your tax preparer about are:

- Charitable non-cash contributions
- Points on refinancing your home
- Old points on refinancing your home
- Health Insurance Premiums
- Educator expenses
- Higher Education Expenses
- Energy Savings Home Improvements
- Casualty deductions if you live in an area declared a disaster area by the President.
- Retirement Tax Credits
- Job Hunting Costs
- Relocating for a new job expenses

Be sure to investigate these deductions so that you are informed prior to filing your 2011 income tax returns.

OWN YOUR HOME?

NEED HELP WITH REPAIRS?

If you are low income and own your home, you may be eligible for Home Weatherization Assistance. Energy related repairs and services available to those who qualify.



Contact: Gila County Housing Services at (928) 402-8685 for more information.



Walmart is bringing back lay-away

During the holiday season, Walmart is going to have layaway services for items such as electronics, toys, and jewelry. Starting in October and running through December 16, 2011 if an item is valued at \$15 or more, and you purchase at least \$50 worth of items, you can place those items on lay-away. There will be a \$5 charge and the customer must pay ten percent of the total balance to begin the lay-away process. A \$10 cancellation fee or late fee will be charged if the lay-away is not paid in full by the December 16th deadline. Call (928) 425-7171 or your local Walmart for more information.

Turkey Frying Safety Continued...

partially frozen chicken wings were added to hot oil in a turkey fryer.

CPSC staff is working with industry and voluntary standards organizations to improve the safety standard for turkey fryers.

CPSC staff recommends consumers who choose to fry turkeys follow the following safety guidelines:

- Keep fryer in FULL VIEW while burner is on.
- Place fryer in an open area AWAY from all walls, fences, or other structures.
- Never use IN, ON, or UNDER a garage, breezeway, carport, porch, or any structure that can catch fire.
- Raise and lower food SLOWLY to reduce splatter and avoid burns.
- COVER bare skin when adding or removing food.
- Check the oil temperature frequently.
- If oil begins to smoke, immediately turn gas supply OFF.
- If a fire occurs, immediately call 911. DO NOT attempt to extinguish fire with water.

For safest operation, CPSC staff recommends that consumers follow these guidelines as they prepare to use a turkey fryer:

- Make sure there is at least 2 feet of space between the liquid propane tank and fryer burner.
- Place the liquid propane gas tank and fryer so that any wind blows the heat of the fryer away from the gas tank.
- Center the pot over the burner on the cooker.

- Completely thaw (USDA says 24 hours for every 4 to 5 pounds) and dry turkey before cooking. Partially frozen and/or wet turkeys can produce excessive hot oil splatter when added to the oil.
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions to determine the proper amount of oil to add. If those are not available:
- Place turkey in pot
- Fill with water until the turkey is covered by about 1/2 inch of water
- Remove and dry turkey
- Mark water level. Dump water, dry the pot, and fill with oil to the marked level.

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) is charged with protecting the public from unreasonable risks of injury or death associated with the use of the thousands of consumer products under the agency's jurisdiction. Deaths, injuries, and property damage from consumer product incidents cost the nation more than \$900 billion annually. CPSC is committed to protecting consumers and families from products that pose a fire, electrical, chemical, or mechanical hazard. CPSC's work to ensure the safety of consumer products - such as toys, cribs, power tools, cigarette lighters and household chemicals - contributed to a decline in the rate of deaths and injuries associated with consumer products over the past 30 years.

To report a dangerous product or a product-related injury, go online to: www.saferproducts.gov, call CPSC's Hotline at (800) 638-2772 or teletypewriter at (800) 638-8270 for the hearing impaired. Consumers can obtain this news release and product safety information at www.cpsc.gov. To join a free e-mail subscription list, please go to <https://www.cpsc.gov/cpsclist.aspx>.



THIS FALL/WINTER REMEMBER TO HELP THOSE WHO ARE IN NEED

Charities are hit hard during the Fall and Winter months for their services. The Gila Community Food Bank feeds approximately 600 families for a total of 2300 individuals in a typical month. During the holiday season the need for food assistance nearly doubles.

Food Banks are in dire need of donations of canned food items. If you can help, please drop off your donations at the Clara Horton H.E.L.P. Center/Gila Community Food Bank at 317 W. Hackney Avenue in Globe or call (928) 425-3639. All food banks could use donations, to help the local food bank in your community call and ask about donating or volunteering your time.

With your generosity, many people in our communities will be fed. Donations to charitable organizations are tax deductible.



Donations of canned food items are needed the most and will be greatly appreciated.

PHOENIX -- The Arizona Community Action Association, Pio Decimo Center and the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) are looking for community volunteers to provide free tax help to area residents in Globe-Miami and Hayden-Winkleman areas of Gila County.

IRS trained and certified community volunteers provide free tax help to their neighbors and other area residents who cannot afford to pay for tax help. "Area tax volunteers will help low to moderate income families, seniors, people with disabilities and those with English as a second language prepare and file their income tax returns free of charge," said Malissa Buzan, Program Manager, Gila County Community Action Program.

Tax volunteers need no prior experience. Materials and tax instruction are provided at no cost. Volunteers learn how to electronically file tax returns, both federal and state, using IRS tax preparation software. Volunteers are asked to provide tax help three to four hours a week, from February to mid-April.

This is a win-win situation with volunteers being able to put something back into their community while helping others meet their annual filing requirement and perhaps obtaining a tax refund.

"For example, if a person works and earns \$50,000 or less, they may be eligible for the Earned Income Tax Credit could generate a refund of up to \$5,751. But, you have to file a tax return to be eligible for the credit," said Buzan.

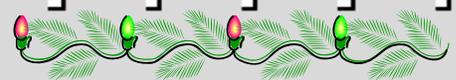
Additional community volunteers are needed as Spanish language interpreters and as 'greeters' to assist with scheduling and screening clients to make sure they have their tax information in order.

Last year, the Gila County Community Action Program tax volunteers helped their neighbors receive more than \$151,000 in tax refunds from preparing taxes in Payson and the Globe- Miami area.

Training begins soon in mid-December. For more information about becoming a community tax volunteer with the Gila Community Action Volunteers, contact Malissa Buzan, at 928-402-8693 or by e-mail at: mbuzan@co.gila.az.us.



Using Christmas Lights in a Safe Manner



Christmas lights are beautiful and much safer than [candles](#), but all that electricity can cause problems if not used properly. Christmas lights can get hot enough to burn or ignite other decorations. The cords can fray, leading to a short. Decorating with lights often requires the use of a ladder, and improper use could lead to an injury. Practice [ladder safety](#) when you are putting up Christmas lights.

When you put up Christmas lights this season - or holiday lights during any season - be sure to follow these Christmas light safety tips.

Choose Christmas lights that have been tested and deemed safe by a reputable testing laboratory, the best are UL or ETL. Christmas lights listed as safe by these laboratories will note that on the packaging.

- Try to use the cooler-burning "mini" Christmas lights as opposed to the traditional larger bulbs. The older style burns much hotter.
- Only use Christmas lights that have fuses in the plugs.
- Inspect each set of Christmas lights - old or new - for damage. Return or throw out any set with cracked or broken sockets, frayed or bare wires, or loose connections.
- Replace burned out bulbs promptly with bulbs of the same wattage.
- Never hang Christmas lights on a metal tree. The tree can become charged with electricity and shock someone. The tree can also short out the Christmas lights and cause a fire.
- Want Christmas lights outdoors? Use outdoor Christmas lights. The packaging will note whether the lights can be used indoors, outdoors, or both.
- All outdoor electrical decorations should be plugged into a ground-fault circuit interrupter (GFCI). You can buy portable units for outdoor use, or you can have them permanently installed by an electrician.
- Use extension cords properly. Outdoor cords can be used inside or outside. Do not overload extension cords - they can get hot enough to burn.
- Stay away from power lines or feeder lines (these go from the pole to the house).
- Secure outside Christmas lights with insulated holders (never use tacks or nails) or run strings of lights through hooks.
- When you leave or go to bed at night, turn off your Christmas lights.
- Never pull on a string of Christmas lights, it stresses the cords and can lead to fraying. Store Christmas lights loosely wrapped for the same reason.