

**MINUTES**  
**SPECIAL WORKSESSION/LEGISLATIVE DAYS**  
**CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF YUMA, ARIZONA**  
**ARIZONA STATE CAPITOL**  
**1700 W. WASHINGTON, PHOENIX, AZ**  
**March 4, 2025**  
**9:30 a.m.**

Councilmembers Present: Morales, Smith, Morris, McClendon, Watts, and Mayor Nicholls  
Councilmembers Absent: Martinez  
Staffmembers Present: Acting City Administrator, Jay Simonton  
Deputy City Administrator, Jennifer Reichelt  
Deputy City Attorney, Rodney Short  
Mayor's Chief of Staff, Kathy Moon

*Yuma Legislative Days serve as a multiple-day meeting for City Council/Administration to meet collectively with Arizona State Legislators and other state agencies to discuss current topics. No deliberation or actions took place, and no recordings of the meetings were made.*

**I. MEETINGS:**

**Senate Minority:** Minority Leader Senator Sundareshan; Caucus Chair Senator Alston; and, Elizabeth Higgins, General Counsel/Policy Advisor

**Discussion Summary:**

- Public Safety, taxation in Wellton, San Luis, & Somerton and challenges with servicing and staffing a population that doubles in the winter.
- Provided update on Public Safety staffing, competitiveness, and trends.
- Yuma's uniqueness and local solutions to local issues and need for statewide solutions to statewide issues.
- Housing successes in Yuma
  - Metropolitan issues do not always translate.
- Farming and water, and creation of new Active Management Area (AMA) and Irrigation Non-expansion Area (INA) across state.
- Spaceport discussion and update.
  - Federal process for approval.
  - State land/Federal land.
- Highway 95 improvements for San Luis to YPG.
- Senate asked about Border and Tariffs.
  - Provided update on cross border traffic and trade with Mexico, discussion of Yuma County Free Trade zone, and new San Luis port of entry.
- Immigration and difference between legal and illegal.
  - Provided updates from BP that numbers were down.
- Senate Minority Leadership confirmed support for Yuma's Ag industry and commerce, H2A housing.

**Secretary of State's Office:** Laura Terech, Executive Director Arizona America250

**Discussion Summary:**

- America 250 and State of Arizona's plans with local communities. Semi-quincentennial 2026.
    - Debuted new logo from student contest, student is now at ASU.
    - Paul Revere ride, "one if by land, two if by sea"
      - Each municipality/agency displays two lights.
    - Flyover at Capitol.
    - Traveling Bell, pictured with every County seal.
      - Big Bell will come to Yuma.
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**Senate Majority:** President Petersen; Majority Leader Senator Shope; and, Senator Dunn

**Discussion Summary:**

- Water in Arizona and confirmation of Interior Secretary Burgum.
  - Majority gave updates on discussions with Secretary Burgum.
  - New Commissioner of Bureau will hopefully have Arizona and Colorado River ties.
  - Working closely with Yuma water districts on priority rights when Post 2026 guidelines are released.
  - Budgets: Yuma County, City of Yuma, San Luis, Somerton, and Wellton budgets
    - City's low tax rate.
  - Serving double population
    - Why it is important to capture the winter population to participate in economy, so locals are not required to fund everything.
  - President discussed vape bill, no consensus on it.
  - President priority is pensions, asked about Yuma's pay down of Public Safety.
  - President and Leader discussed border security and workforce development in the City and across the County.
  - Senator. Dunn provided an Agriculture update
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**Legislative Lunch at League of Arizona Cities and Towns**

11:45 a.m. Legislative lunch held with Yuma Delegation, Highground Consultants and League of Arizona Cities and Town staff

**Topics of Discussion:**

- Yuma Day materials and local solutions
- Economic development in Yuma and positive job trends
- Spaceport
- Aerospace for Arizona and how Yuma fits in
- Veteran opportunities
  - Spaceport
  - Nuclear workers and Engineers

- Manufacturing in Arizona
- Manufacturing in Mexico and final assembly in U.S./Yuma
- Energy
  - Regulation, not deregulation
  - APS planning another nuclear plant for 2040
  - Legislation on Small Modular Reactor (SMR)
    - Tribal company looking at Arizona for SMR
  - SRP/APS pipeline
- Broadband expansion and bill SB1661 to form Broadband Districts
  - Not taxing, but subject to sales tax
- Housing Assistance Program; Appropriating Monies
- Agriculture and Water
  - HCR2051, as it relates to Yuma water rights
  - Autonomous farm equipment and the allowance to cross county roads

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### **Introductions on the floor at the Senate and House of Representatives**

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**Governor's Office:** Deputy Chief of Staff Jennifer Loreda; Director of Policy, Legislative, and Intergovernmental Affairs, Marge Zylla; and, Senior Water Policy Advisor Patrick Adams

#### **Discussion Summary:**

- Mayor discussed Yuma Day materials.
  - Discussed the success of Yuma branding.
  - Governor's staff discussed Yuma Harvest Dinner video and Yuma connections.
- Economic development in rural communities.
- Governors update on commerce, taxes, and energy.
  - Governor has expectations that bills will be negotiated, suggested staying engaged. Understand that one-size-fits all does not work, especially in housing.
- Adams provided updates on water and Post 2026.
  - Gloomy and probably will not get movement until new Commissioner is named.
  - Crisis is increasing, Lower Basins have plan on table, zero from Upper Basin.
  - Looking for accountability from all States.
  - Governor does not want Priority system to be disrupted.
- Meeting with Hank Auza for the Yuma Districts, meet with Rodney.
- Watching rural groundwater regulations from Senator Dunn
  - Need to protect groundwater basins.
  - Does not apply to Yuma, but preserving that water keeps hands out of the Colorado River.
  - Understands that Yuma's wells are surface water, so river communities have only one source.
- Congratulations to Mayor Nicholls for space commission appointment.
- Discussed Elevate Southwest as incubator for job training and creation.
  - Federal Free Trade Zone in Yuma could provide boost.
  - Need ADOT access to site and connection to AZ Tech Council.

- Rockets do not bring high number of jobs, it is the innovations and research and ultimately manufacturing right on site.
- Discussed Yuma Fire Department AZ Department of Emergency and Military Affairs grant for border rescues, especially from top of border fence.
- Discussed AXON/TASER relocation issue.
  - Headquarters in Scottsdale subject to referendum.
- Discussed new distribution center in Yuma and closure of Shaw and Bose.

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### Evening Reception

3:45 p.m. Evening reception hosted by Highground and held at Highground Inc., located at 830 North 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Phoenix. This was a social event, and no specific City business was entertained.

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Lynda L. Bushong, City Clerk

APPROVED:

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Douglas J. Nicholls, Mayor

Approved at the City Council Meeting of:

City Clerk: \_\_\_\_\_