



PRESS RELEASE

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 21, 2025

CONTACT: Melinda Marchese, Director
Communications and Community Initiatives
623.932.7033 | mmarchese@aguafria.org

Freshman Career Expo at Phoenix Raceway celebrated the Class of 2029 with hands-on experiences and resources

(AVONDALE, Ariz. — Oct. 21, 2025) The Agua Fria High School District hosted its annual Freshman Career Expo at Phoenix Raceway on Sept. 18. The Expo is a key component of the District's Freshman Experience class, designed to help students discover their talents, passions, and career goals while developing employability skills. During the event, students from all six of our high schools –Agua Fria, Canyon View, Desert Edge, Goodyear, Millennium, and Verrado – had the opportunity to engage with more than 100 professionals representing a wide range of industries, including local businesses, corporations, government agencies, military branches, and post-secondary institutions.

These partnerships were carefully selected to enhance students' career literacy, giving them direct exposure to several professions and opportunities available after high school.

"It's important for students to be exposed to experiences like this," said Mark Yslas, Superintendent of the Agua Fria High School District. "When they are introduced to career pathways and industries they might pursue after high school, their learning takes on greater intentionality and purpose. They begin creating plans for themselves and start to see possibilities in a variety of occupations."

Students connected with counselors and staff for course selection, graduation planning, special education services, and wellness resources, ensuring a smooth transition into high school. Career & Technical Education (CTE), arts, STEM, athletics, JROTC, and student leadership organizations hosted hands-on stations and mini-clinics to help students discover their interests. Representatives from local colleges, workforce programs, civic groups, and nonprofits shared scholarships, internships, and volunteer opportunities. Thanks to Phoenix Raceway, attendees also enjoyed a unique venue atmosphere that highlighted the power of partnerships in education and community life.

"The Freshman Career Expo is one of the most important events that our District hosts each year, and we cannot do this event without the help of our community partners. The Expo is an opportunity for our students to see real professionals in the pathways that they can study on their campus," said Nate Showman, Executive Director of Academics and CTE. "Our District is very thankful for the support of Phoenix Raceway and the more than 100 community partners who participated in the event--thank you for making this event a success for our students."

By centralizing services and showcasing opportunities, the Expo helped students set goals, build relationships, and make informed choices about academics, activities, and post-secondary pathways. Joel Velez, a student from Agua Fria High School, shared, “I liked learning about the West-MEC program. I asked questions about the HVAC program and found out that you need a certain number of years of training to become an AC technician. I also learned about space and how communications systems are built and work. I feel that experiences like this benefit me and my classmates because they give us a chance to see what the world has to offer.”

“We are very grateful for our partnership with Phoenix Raceway,” Yslas said. “By opening The Barn to us, they made it possible for every one of our freshmen to take part in this experience. Their support helps us create an environment where students can explore their pathways through our educational academies, strengthening both academic excellence and community connection.”

#####

Agua Fria Union High School District was established in 1955. Today, the district serves the communities of Avondale, Buckeye, Goodyear, and Litchfield Park, with six high schools: Agua Fria, Canyon View, Desert Edge, Goodyear, Millennium, Verrado, and Agua Fria Online. Additionally, the District offers two alternative programs: Coldwater Academy and New Directions. More information can be found at www.aguafria.org