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Adel reverses on botched cases

Takes 'full responsibility' after Ducey's criticism

Robert Anglen and Stacey Barchenger
Arizona Republic | USA TODAY NETWORK

Maricopa County Attorney Allister Adel, days after blaming her staff for the botched handling of 180 criminal cases, said she is taking "full responsibility" for the error and apologized to victims.

Adel's reversal follows criticism by Arizona Gov. Doug Ducey, who said Tuesday that Adel should take accountability and not blame her team.

Adel initially declined comment on Ducey's remarks. She said in a statement Wednesday the governor was right and echoed his words that county prosecutors are heroes.

"The governor is absolutely correct that the line prosecutors are the unsung heroes of the Maricopa County Attor-

ney's Office," she said. "All the employees of this office are dedicated public servants who strive for justice every day."

The statement is starkly different from what Adel told The Arizona Republic about the botched misdemeanor cases last week, which she described then as a failure of a few employees to complete their assigned tasks and alert supervisors to issues.

"To assume that I have knowledge of

every action my deputies or their supervisors perform or fail to perform, is simply absurd," Adel said in a March 10 email. "I cannot personally touch or handle every matter that falls under my statutory authority."

The Republic first reported Adel's office was forced to drop the 180 misdemeanor cases — including drunken driving, assault and domestic violence

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It's been nearly 2 years since Ducey issued a stay-at-home order

An appointment for a second shot of the COVID-19 vaccine is scheduled for a patient at State Farm Stadium in Glendale. MARK HENLE/THE REPUBLIC

Pandemic's pivotal moments in Ariz.

Stephanie Innes Arizona Republic | USA TODAY NETWORK

It's been nearly two years since Arizona Gov. Doug Ducey issued a stay-at-home pandemic order that, for most people, instantly halted regular daily life.

Under Ducey's March 30 "Stay Home, Stay Healthy, Stay Connected" directive, which came after a March 20 order mandating the closure of bars, fitness clubs, indoor gyms and movie theaters, state residents were advised to stay at home, with limited exceptions for "essential" outings.

Weekly update: Arizona reports 5,153 COVID-19 cases and 457 deaths. **4A**

COVID-19 risks: Experts worry CDC loosened mask guidance prematurely. **17A**

For some Arizonans, Ducey's order acted as a reassurance of action they'd already taken — many workplaces in the state had already begun telling employees to work from home by mid-March.

See **PANDEMIC**, Page 6A

Lake Powell drops to new low

Decline triggers worries about power production

Brandon Loomis Arizona Republic
USA TODAY NETWORK

Water levels at drought-stricken Lake Powell have dropped below an elevation water managers had fought to protect, dipping past a buffer meant to protect hydropower generation.

For the first time since water rose behind Glen Canyon Dam in the 1960s, the lake's surface dropped below elevation 3,525 Tuesday, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation said Wednesday morning. The dam can still produce electricity down to elevation 3,490, but shallower water reduces pressure and the power plant's capacity, and further declines could damage the turbines.

The new low reflects the continuing dirty work of the region's worst drought in 1,200 years, one that has deepened into a megadrought, according to scientists. High water demand from both a growing regional population and the effects of a warming climate promise to continue challenging water managers to shore up the Colorado River's second-largest savings account.

Federal officials have set a goal of keeping the water higher than 3,525 feet above sea level, both for power production and for storage to safeguard Colorado River flows to Lake Mead and downstream users. The water is expected to rebound past that level when snow melts in the Rockies this spring, but Tuesday's plunge

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RUSSIAN INVASION OF UKRAINE

Arizona delegation calls for more aid to Ukraine

Ronald J. Hansen Arizona Republic
USA TODAY NETWORK

After Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's emotionally charged speech to Congress on Wednesday, Arizona's delegation largely agreed more needs to be done, but split on how far to go.

The invasion of Ukraine has created fragile, bipartisan unity on Capitol Hill against Russia, even among most members of the state's usually polarized lawmakers.

But after weeks of shelling and the uncounted deaths of civilians, members

See **UKRAINE**, Page 8A



Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy speaks to the U.S. Congress by video on Wednesday to plead for support as his country is besieged by Russian forces. GETTY IMAGES

AG: Auction companies to pay for inflating bids

Auction Nation and Auction Yard boosted auction prices with fake buyers, the AG's office says. **13A**

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Weather

High 81° | Low 55°
Some clouds. **2A**

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