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## Cornville man arrested for shooting neighbor



**Michael Snell**

**CORNVILLE** - What began as an alleged dispute over money resulted in a Cornville man being shot Monday, according to the Yavapai County Sheriff's Office.

Yavapai County Sheriff's Office Public Affairs Coordinator Dwight D'Evelyn said 64-year-old Michael Snell was arrested and booked into the Camp Verde Detention Center on charges that include aggravated assault with a deadly

weapon, assault causing serious injury, burglary, threatening and trespassing.

Snell is being held on a \$125,000 bond.

According to D'Evelyn, at about 10:15 p.m. Monday, deputies were dispatched to a weapons offense call in the 1400 block of South Chick Road in Cornville.

SEE SHOOTING PAGE 5



Yavapai County sheriff's deputies remained at the site of Monday's alleged shooting throughout the night and into the day Tuesday to handle the follow-up investigation. VVN/Vyto Starinskias

## Senate rejects change in consolidation election law

By BILL HELM  
Staff Reporter

**PHOENIX** — The Arizona Senate voted 16-13 Wednesday against a single-canvass consolidation election of the Mingus Union and Cottonwood-Oak Creek school districts.

This means that unless SB 1122 is reconsidered or attached as a striker to an existing bill, school district consolidation will have to be considered with three different ballots for each of the impacted school districts.

Since 1957, a partnership of Clarkdale-Jerome and Cottonwood-Oak Creek has made up the Mingus Union district.

Andy Groseta and his Committee for Better Up-

SEE CONSOLIDATION PAGE 5

## Final Friday edition of the Verde Independent and Camp Verde Bugle

This March 6 issue will be the final Friday edition of *The Verde Independent* and *Camp Verde Bugle*. There will continue to be print editions on Wednesdays and Sundays, with new expanded content and special sections planned for those products.

The newspaper website, [verdenews.com](http://verdenews.com), will continue to be a seven-day, 24-hour online news service.



### Missing something?

My Week TV Listings now will be added to our Sunday edition

## Camp Verde Council scraps complaint form — for now

By BILL HELM  
Staff Reporter

**CAMP VERDE** — There are at least three ways to register a complaint against one of Camp Verde's elected officials, Council Member Robin Whatley pointed out Wednesday.

Speak at a council meeting during the call to the public, write your local newspaper, or recall the council member.

Until Wednesday, the fourth way was to fill out the town's citizen complaint form. But council voted 4-3 to indefinitely suspend use of the form.

The form gave the public an opportunity to file a complaint against coun-

cil, or against town staff, but not against a council-appointed official such as it Planning and Zoning commissioners or Board of Adjustments and Appeals.

Before council's vote, Mayor Charlie German said that if citizens "want to continually file complaints, spend staff and resource time, there's other ways to solve those problems."

"I am highly in favor that we suspend until we can decide what to do in a work session with our attorneys," German said. "If they want to remove me, there's a methodology."

Joe Butner, Dee Jenkins and Bill LeB-

SEE COMPLAINT PAGE 5

## Drug-related deaths spike in Yavapai County in 2019



Cottonwood Fire Department Lt. Alex Lewis shows the Narcan nasal spray that his department and the Cottonwood Police officers carry to revive victims during opioid overdoses. VVN/Vyto Starinskias

By VYTO STARINSKAS  
Staff Reporter

Drug-related overdose deaths in Yavapai County spiked to 68 last year from 50 in 2018 and 41 in 2017.

Those numbers are enough for Leslie Horton, director of Yavapai County Community Health Services, to sound the alarm.

"Our meth deaths are actually rising steadily over the last several years," Horton said. "There's been an extreme increase of overdose deaths in general in the last year."

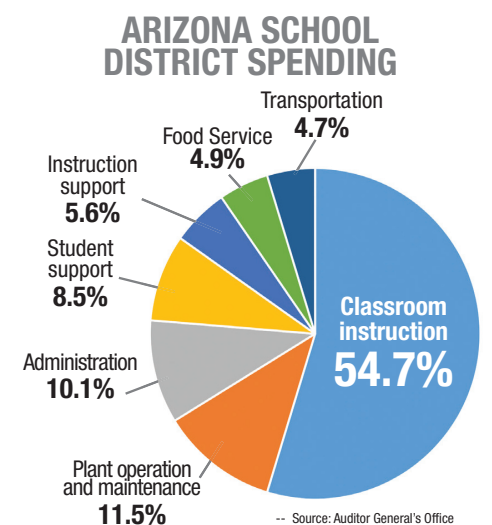
The numbers are gathered each year for the Yavapai County Overdose Review Board to study trends.

A 17-year-old Cottonwood-area teenager be-

SEE DEATHS SPIKE PAGE 5

## Arizona schools increase classroom spending for third straight year

Teacher salaries lag behind national average by \$11,500



By HOWARD FISCHER  
Capitol Media Services

**PHOENIX** -- Fueled by additional state dollars, Arizona schools are spending a greater percentage of their available dollars this year in the classroom than last year.

New figures Wednesday from the Auditor General's Office show that, on average, districts spent 54.7 percent of what they had on instruction. That's the third consecutive year with an increase in the past 15 years.

Auditor General Lindsey Perry said that also reflects a 7.1 percent increase in the average teacher salary between the 2017-2018 school year and the 2018-2019 year, bringing the figure to \$52,441. There are no figures yet for the current school year.

She also said school districts employed a total of 678 additional teachers. But Perry said the percentage of total dollars spent in the classroom is still 3.9 percentage points less than it was in 2004. The difference, she said, is that spending on other operational expenses, ranging from utilities and transportation to food services, have increased faster, "meaning that districts shifted spending from instruction to other areas."

SEE CLASSROOM SPENDING PAGE 5

