

# Chandler's Science Spectacular



**NEED FOR SPEED:** A solar race track draws participants of the City of Chandler's Science Saturday, to be held Feb. 16. *Submitted photo*

Chandler is dedicating three days to the exploration of invention and demonstrating that science is an integral part of the world around us by hosting the Chandler Science Spectacular.

The event, which makes science and technology both interesting and accessible, is part of the Arizona SciTech Festival, a statewide movement to promote and celebrate science in daily life. The month-long festival uses engaging and creative activities related to art, food, entertainment and gadgets as an entryway to a

greater understanding and appreciation for science.

Education and businesses based around the industries of science, technology, engineering and math (STEM), are becoming more critical as communities are competing internationally for economic stability and success.

The goal of the AZ SciTech Festival is to brand Arizona internationally as a nucleus for science. This complements the City of Chandler's strategy of recruiting and retaining companies in the high-tech, high-wage science and technology industries.

Chandler fostered its reputation as a high-tech leader in several ways including preserving the prestigious Price Corridor for industry, supporting the growth of small businesses through the Innovations Science & Technology Incubator and developing collaborative partnerships with both Arizona State University and the University of Arizona.

The City is beginning to earn recognition for its efforts, most recently being noted as one of the top-four cities in the nation for high-tech startups per capita, along with Fremont and San Jose, CA, and Irving, TX.

The Chandler Science Spectacular is spearheaded by Councilmember Rick Heumann's Education Coalition, and is a collaborative community effort in order to engage a broad range of residents.

## Tech Crawl

The Wed., Feb. 13 Tech Crawl includes a behind-the-scenes glimpse of some of Chandler's largest technology companies, such as Intel and Air Products, and an open house at the Innovations Incubator, a secure facility that opens to the public for this event.



The Tech Crawl is aimed at giving adults and families insight into the level of



**HANDS ON FUN:** Jackson Heinkel practices his crime scene investigation skills during Science Saturday. *Submitted photo*

industry being developed right in their own community.

A Night of Art & Science on Fri., Feb. 15 is open to families, but geared toward adults as Downtown Chandler's Third Friday Art walk is transformed into a celebration of science.

Artists reveal the scientific methods that go into their creations, ranging from painting, candle making and sculpture to woodwork.

Visitors also learn how science relates to the craft of making quality food and drink, as some of Downtown Chandler's independent establishments showcase the science behind their craft.

The festival culminates in Chandler's Science Saturday, as businesses, schools and professionals offer hands-on activities and creative demonstrations about the daily work they do in STEM fields.

The University of Arizona will introduce kids to video game design and give them an introduction to simple programming.

Kids can test their skills as crime scene investigators by taking fingerprints or see what it's like to have a job

## Conservation takes education, care

Cathy Rymer has a challenge on her hands. Last year a poll of Americans revealed 77% don't know where their water comes from. As the City of Chandler's water conservation coordinator, she must make residents understand and value something they know little about.

Along with regular education on the basics, like turning off the faucet when you brush your teeth and training homeowners on how to have beautiful landscaping while using desert-friendly plants, Rymer gets creative.

She is working with Project WET, based out of the University of Arizona, to train middle-school teachers on how to incorporate water conservation into their curriculum through a Teacher Academy.

"Our goal is to help students make the connection of water from their tap to the sources that provide that water," says Rymer. "By teaching kids where water comes from, they'll better appreciate it and become stewards of our resources and protect them in the future."

It's a timely partnership as in recent years, U.S. employers have reached out internationally in order to fill job vacancies in highly skilled science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) fields. This situation led to calls for better STEM education in the United States.

Innovative educational initiatives like the Teacher Academy are emerging to answer the call for more professional competence in these STEM areas. This Academy gives teachers the tools they need to integrate water-related topics in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. The implementation of STEM education stresses the interdependence of water within the four subjects, while helping students develop critical thinking skills and become more successful in these topics.



**UP FOR THE CHALLENGE:** An uninformed audience won't stop Water Conservation Coordinator Cathy Rymer. She aims to bring her message of resource appreciation to schools throughout the City of Chandler. *Submitted photo*

Three basic concepts are addressed: water is precious, we must each do our part to use it wisely, and we should support solutions for the future.

The concept of "training the trainer" helps Rymer integrate the message of water conservation into the community.

"Teachers have access to so many students, and the trickledown effect is amazing," she says. "It's a way to tap into that and be able to reach their families, and see them take action."

High school students involved in the program also learn and develop leadership and public speaking skills, and are asked to engage their families and neighbors in what they learn.

*Information provided by the City of Chandler Communications and Public Affairs Department.*



**FREEZING IN THE DESERT:** An Air Products employee unveils a frozen flower during a Tech Crawl demonstration. *Submitted photo*

scaling electrical poles as Chandler-Gilbert Community College demonstrates one of its popular job training courses.

Visitors can also check out the creative minds of the next generation of inventors, as students from Chandler Unified School District showcase some of the "best of the best" science projects.

For detailed information on the 3-Day Chandler Science Spectacular, visit [chandleraz.gov/default.aspx?pageid=584](http://chandleraz.gov/default.aspx?pageid=584).

For more information on the Arizona SciTech Festival, visit [azscitechfest.org](http://azscitechfest.org).

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