

Business

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Area tackle store makes big expansion

BY KEN SAIN
Tribune Editor

There are not a lot of tackle shops in the Valley.

“In the Maricopa County area, you have one, two, three, four mom-and-pops, and then of course you have the big box,” said Dave Lewis, the owner of CopperState Tackle in West Chandler. He grew up in Ahwatukee and attended Desert Ridge High School.

The lack of tackle stores might explain the long line waiting for the shop to open on June 29. CopperState was expanding, offering four times as much retail space as it had before.

As part of the grand reopening, Lewis had a sale where some items were discounted 25%, which is what had many arriving early and standing outdoors in the Arizona summer waiting to get in.

The previous space is now used exclusively for storage. Lewis added the space next to it to double the size for the retail



Customers and professional bass anglers eagerly waited in line to attend the grand reopening of Copperstate Tackle in Chandler last month. (David Minton/Staff Photographer)

area.

Before the expansion, half of the limited space he had went to storage, so there wasn't a lot of customers to look at when they came in.

“Before we weren't able to put all of our baits on display,” Lewis said. “When

customers would ask, we'd have to go and get it, and customers get sick of that, and the staff it's a large burden on them.

“Now we can get a majority of our [merchandise] out and people can feel, touch and see.”

With the additional space came a lot

of graphics and a large 25-foot wide by 8-foot tall TV screen behind the cash registers.

Lewis originally opened his shop at Kyrene Road and Chandler Boulevard in 2022.

“Ever since we started, we've had huge support from the fishing community,” Lewis said. “We help out a lot in the community, because they help us out so much.”

Lewis said one of the reasons for the support is that fishing is very popular.

“We have a lot of fishing, and people don't even realize it,” he said.

Lewis said his favorite spots to fish are Saguaro Lake, because it has the biggest fish, but also Barlett and Roosevelt lakes because they are beautiful locations and there's a good chance you'll be going home with a fish every trip.

Asked if people fish during the hot

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Mesa banker gives back to the community

BY CHRIS FAHRENDORF
Tribune Guest Writer

When Mesa resident Mohammed Ahmad applied to Arizona Financial Credit Union by mistake, he had no idea that this serendipitous error would become a cornerstone of his professional journey.

Since making this “mistake” 11 years ago, Ahmad has climbed the ranks to become the assistant vice president of business banking at the Phoenix-based financial cooperative, a role he stepped into in December after 17 years in the banking industry.

Ahmad's career path has been unconventional but his personal story has highlighted the power of purpose and community.

Raised by Iraqi immigrant parents who struggled to navigate the complexities of the U.S. banking system, he witnessed firsthand the challenges faced by his community.

This desire to educate and uplift his community drove him to join the banking industry.

“I want to help people like my parents understand how banking works,” Ahmad said. “Being in this position allows me to make a real difference, and I am grateful every day for the opportunity to give back to my community and help others succeed.”

Ahmad's career began at Arizona Financial in 2013 as a Service Consultant. Since then, he has worn many hats, from management and business develop-

ment to mergers and acquisitions.

Throughout his journey, one thing has remained constant: his unwavering commitment to helping Arizonans, particularly minorities and entrepreneurs, succeed.

One key moment that kickstarted Ahmad's career came from an accidental application. Intending to apply to another local credit union, he mistakenly submitted his application to Arizona Financial.

This mix-up turned out to be a blessing, he said, as he found a welcoming organization that nurtured his growth and fostered his passion for serving others.



Mesa resident Mohammed Ahmad has risen through the ranks of Arizona Financial. (Special to the Tribune)

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“Walking into Arizona Financial for the first time felt like finding a family,” Ahmad recalled. “The support and opportunities I received here have been incredible.”

He quickly realized that he had found more than just a job; he found a platform to effect positive change. This realization propelled him to fully immerse himself in his role, leveraging his skills and experiences to empower others with his banking knowledge.

Ahmad is also actively involved with Local First Arizona’s We Rise business accelerator, an initiative that supports Black business entrepreneurs by providing essential information and resources.

His work with We Rise involves not only financial guidance but also breaking down barriers that hinder minority business owners.

“It hurts to see that there are still obstacles in place for minorities, but I am determined to be a catalyst for change,” said Ahmad. “Through education and support, I believe we can break down

these barriers and create a more inclusive and equitable environment for everyone.”

Besides his work with We Rise, Ahmad has also made it a priority to be involved in the community in which he resides.

When he lived in Tucson he served as the treasurer at the Islamic Community Center of Tucson, where he managed finances and fostered a sense of community support.

Since moving to the Valley, he has collaborated with the City of Surprise, sharing his financial expertise with high school students in their accelerator courses, empowering the youth to make informed financial decisions.

“Being involved in my community and helping them become financially literate is a crucial part of my mission,” Ahmad noted. “Working with our local youth and seeing them understand and take control of their financial futures is one of the most fulfilling aspects of my work.”

Ahmad views his accidental application as the turning point that led him

down a path of purpose-driven leadership with Arizona Financial.

As he continues to rise in his career, Ahmad said his commitment to empowering others remains steadfast, inspiring those around him to strive for excellence and inclusivity.

“My goal has always been to make a difference,” he said. “Whether it’s through my work, my involvement with We Rise, or my volunteer efforts, I want to leave a positive impact.” ■

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HealthyU Clinics promotes health education and awareness through free webinars and educational videos on its YouTube channel. Topics include weight loss, chronic pain management and neurological treatments among others.

Since launching in late 2021, it has expanded locations and services to 11 clinics in the Valley and has 130 medical professionals and support staff in Arizona.

Information: healthyuclinics.com. ■

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Arizona summers a customer walking by answered for him: “It’s never too hot in the summer.”

Lewis agreed.

“The great part about Arizona is that we fish year-round,” he said. “We don’t get ice down here, ... fish still got to eat.”

He said that during the summer fish will dive deeper and look for shadows to escape the heat, so a different type of bait is needed.

“You find those baits that they can see and entices them to eat,” Lewis said.

Almost all the inventory is for fishing, but there are some other products available at CopperState, including outdoor speakers that float and are waterproof, perfect to tubing down a river.

They also have a line of coolers. But those products are the minority. Anglers come to the shop to get fishing supplies, so that’s most of what they offer. ■

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