

### South Mesa Water Company announces fire-resistant landscaping photo contest

South Mesa Water Company is hosting a Fire-Resistant Landscaping Contest for its customers. The contest launches as the community grapples with the severe drought impacting nearly three-fourths of the American West and the increased wildfire and water shortage risk that accompanies the hot and dry conditions.

“Fire-resistant and water-wise landscapes are more important than ever to ensure the resilience of our community,” said Dave Armstrong, General Manager of South Mesa. “We want to highlight our customers that have embraced fire-resilient landscaping while showcasing that it can be beautiful too.”

South Mesa Water Company invites its customers to enter the contest by submitting photos of their landscapes at SouthMesaWater.com. The deadline to enter is Monday, Sept. 6, 2021. Deputy Fire Chief Rodriguez from the Calimesa Fire Department and the South Mesa Water Company Board of Directors will judge the contest. Participants will be judged on the presence of fire-resistant plant species, defensible space, and overall aesthetics for a chance to win the grand prize.

“Fire season is well upon us and our community should be prepared,” said Chief of the Calimesa Fire Department, Jock Johnson. “Create a safety

zone of up to 100 feet around your home, remove dry brush, keep woodpiles at least thirty feet from your home, know your community evacuation plan, if you are told to evacuate, do so immediately, and stay informed.”

South Mesa is no stranger to wildfires. The water company was pleased to be able to provide water to help firefighters extinguish the 2019 Sandalwood Fire that began after a trash truck carrying burning garbage dumped its load near Sandalwood Drive and Seventh Street. The wind-driven fire destroyed 73 Calimesa mobile homes and a park clubhouse, damaged 16 other homes, and burned at least 500 acres. After the fire broke out, South Mesa sprang into action, making water available to fight the blaze. After the first day of the fire, South Mesa’s reservoir remained at 90%. The thorough removal of the brush around Well #5 kept the fire at a safe distance. South Mesa encourages its neighbors in the Calimesa and Yucaipa communities to prepare for wildfire by taking proactive measures like incorporating fire-resistant plants in yards and gardens, removing potential fuel, and having an emergency plan in place. Visit SouthMesaWater.com to learn more about fire-resistant landscaping and to enter the competition.



Cold Stone Creamery is holding a grand opening Aug. 15.

Photo by Karen daSilva

## New food choices at Marketplace

By KAREN DASILVA  
Staff Reporter

The Marketplace at Calimesa continues to grow.

With a Stater Bros. supermarket as its anchor store, the Marketplace now includes a Starbucks, Del Taco, Skin Solutions Aesthetics, a 7-Eleven convenience store and a Cold Stone Creamery, which is holding its grand opening on Sunday, Aug. 15.

Every purchase leading up to the event earns customers a raffle ticket for a Playstation 5 and other prizes at Cold Stone’s grand opening. The raffle drawing begins at 8 p.m. and participants need to be present

to accept prizes.

Other stores on their way, with signs out for hiring, are fast-food restaurants Jack in the Box, Panda Express and Arby’s. Also announced as the Marketplace’s first sit-down restaurant is Fire Rock Burgers and Brews, a casual rock ‘n’ roll-themed eatery offering local draft beers and burgers.

Located off Interstate 10 at the Cherry Valley Boulevard exit at Desert Lawn Drive, the Marketplace is Calimesa’s first retail center on the west side of the freeway with 100,000 square feet of shopping space.

At 45,712 square feet, the Stater Bros. offers full-service

meat, seafood, service deli and bakery departments and sushi made in-house daily. It’s a big difference from the other Stater Bros. in Calimesa, which is a much smaller store with less amenities on Calimesa Boulevard.

The Marketplace has a “California Ranch” architectural design in keeping with the aesthetic of the Summerwind Ranch development, which includes the Summerwind Trails residential project of 3,600 to 3,700 units at build out. The California Ranch design includes hip and gable roofs, and broad overhangs, while the landscaping calls for low-to moderate-watering plants.

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