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Jenny Kaufman | Ledger



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Voters to be asked to approve and fund 20-year Pinal County transportation plan next November

By James J. Hodl
 Copper Area News

A 20-year plan to develop a countywide transportation system consisting a new and improved roads and transit systems throughout Pinal County is currently being drafted, with an eye on bringing it – along with a request to fund the requested projects – before voters next November.

The developmental effort was launched last August when the Pinal County Board of Supervisors voted to create the Pinal Regional Transportation Authority (PRTA) as a special public improvements and taxing subdivision of the state of Arizona under state statute 48-5302. The statute applies only to Arizona counties with fewer than 400,000 residents, of which Pinal County qualifies.

Overseeing PRTA will be one representative each from each municipality within the county, the county, and Central Arizona Governments (CAG), one of six regional districts in Arizona formed to support a number of planning activities, while complying with

federal planning requirements. Each will have one vote when determining which projects go forward and in which order.

Andy Smith, CAG transportation planning manager, is overseeing PRTA.

To develop a balanced regional transportation plan, PRTA with the Pinal Board of Supervisors contracted with Dibble Engineering for transportation consulting services. The purpose of the plan will be to boost economic activity within the county by making it easier and quicker to get around. Both the needs of business and citizens will be taken into consideration, Smith said.

High on the planning list are roads bisecting the county that will function as a North-South Corridor (determining the route of the proposed I-11) and an East-West Corridor, the latter providing faster travel between Kearny and Maricopa. Other road projects will likely benefit Southern Pinal County, Hidden Valley, as well making major improvements to regionally significant roads.

The plan also could include transit

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"There are numerous countries in the world where the politicians have seized absolute power and muzzled the press. There is no country in the world where the press has seized absolute power and muzzled the politicians"

David Brinkley

TRANSPORTATION PLAN

Continued from page 2

systems, including buses and light rail, to areas where no public transportation currently exists. Park-and-ride lots would funnel customers into light rail systems.

At present there are only three bus services in Pinal County: Cotton Express in Coolidge, CART (Central Arizona Regional Transportation) connecting Florence with Casa Grande through Coolidge, and COMET (City of Maricopa Express Transit). These services operate primarily in morning and late afternoon rush hours.

But how much extra bus service the county needs is not known. A bus service linking San Tan Valley and Queen Creek with Gateway Mesa Airport folded years ago for lack of riders. Two of three light rail lines proposed by the Arizona Department of Transportation would benefit Pinal County with the Phoenix-Tucson route going through Queen Creek, San Tan Valley and Florence; and the Phoenix-Globe line skirting the county's northern towns.

Once a balanced fiscally-sound 20-year transportation plan is developed, it will be

presented to voters in November 2016, Smith said. Details of the plan will be released well before the voting date, Smith said.

To fund the 20 years of projects, voters will be asked to approve a 0.5% hike in the county excise tax. That would be in addition to the existing 0.5% excise tax county residents already pay to fund county road maintenance projects. The current 0.5% excise tax raises about \$16 million annually.

PRTA was created to fill the gap left by a steady decline in recent years of federal transportation project funding. Currently the county only receives

about \$500,000 in federal transportation revenues.

Smith has already appeared before city and town council meetings throughout Pinal County to build support for the transportation project.

The need for the program to be balanced and provide improvements for all corners of the county was driven home when in November a Casa Grande councilman said he wouldn't be inclined to support a North-South Corridor highway if it ran through San Tan Valley, Coolidge and Eloy but missed Casa Grande. That would take business and economic development away from his town.

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DECEMBER



18-24 Loop of Lights in Pecan Creek

Come experience the traditional holiday light drive in the Pecan Creek neighborhood of Waverly Dec. 18-24, 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. New this year is the no charge trolley shuttle (Christmas Wish charity donations are certainly welcome). The shuttle pickup location is Combs Middle School, 37611 N. Pecan Creek Dr., San Tan Valley. The drop off location will be at the loop entrance, 38333 N. Carolina Ave., San Tan Valley. The classic trolley is no wheelchair equipped or accessible. For more information, please visit www.loopoflights.com and www.trolleybell.com.



17 Florence Copper Coffee Club to Meet

Join Florence Copper on Thursdays at 10 a.m. for the weekly Coffee Club. Enjoy a hot beverage and pastry with other residents of the community as you chat about the Florence Copper Project, the future of Florence, or anything else. Coffee Club meets at the Florence Copper Community Center, located at 130 N. Main St. in Florence.



18 All About Packrats at the San Tan Mtn. Park

We think of human pack rats as people who fill their houses with mountains of things that to them are treasures and to others are garbage and junk. But did you know we have a Sonoran desert rodent equivalent? They look like hamsters with tall round ears and adorably huge black eyes with a taste for anything that's bling. Pack rats have a penchant for collecting odd bits of shiny or brightly colored objects for their nests. Join Ranger Tish at the San Tan Mountain Regional Park for this 1-hour program as they explore the odd collections of desert pack rats. Meet in the Nature Center at 5:30 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 18. No registration is required and the fee is covered with the \$6 per vehicle park entry fee. For more information, visit: <http://www.maricopa.gov/parks/santan/>. The park is located at 6533 W. Phillips Rd., Queen Creek.

JANUARY



9 POWWOW comes to Farmers Market

On Saturday, Jan. 9, Produce on Wheels Without Waste will return to the San Tan Valley Farmers Market. Buy 60 pounds of produce for just \$10. And you get to pick it out! Artisan breads will also be available for purchase. The Farmers Market is located at Combs High School, 2505 E. Germann Rd., San Tan Valley. For more information please call 602-684-5489.

A Very Common Cause of Abdominal Pain in Children

I believe that at least once a day when seeing patients I will end up talking about a topic many of the teenagers and children believe to be, in their words: “uuhhg!! Disgusting!” That is about their bowel movements (stool).

The reason we end up talking about it is because many of them come with complaints of this intermittent on- and off-chronic abdominal pain. The pain tends to be all over the abdomen. Sometimes they come with lower

back pain. Sometimes it is just lack of appetite and/or nausea. Sometimes it is recurrent urinary tract infections or pain in the pelvic area.

After asking several important questions, as physicians will be able to determine if the likely cause of their symptoms is constipation. The workup can be extensive in some cases; it is very important to check with your physician whenever any of these symptoms present. The list of diagnoses that can present with these symptoms is quite large. So what is constipation? Most people do not think they have this problem, because they have bowel movements every day—but if those are hard, lumpy, painful and hard to pass, with straining, or sensation of incomplete defecation, they have constipation issues. Some even start having blood in the stool, which in the case of constipation is from rectal bleeding. In severe cases sometimes they even start vomiting.

The symptoms, as you can see, are many, the causes too—and there are several. “Primary” constipation can be irritable bowel syndrome, where the stool passes through your intestines at a normal rate but there is abdominal pain and a hard time passing the stool. When the transit of stool in the intestines slows is when you have less frequent bowel movements. I do find, at least in children and teens, that the “Secondary” constipation is the most common one—this is the one that is caused by not drinking enough water, not going to the restroom when they feel the need to (ignoring the urge), not eating enough fiber, and eating too many “constipating” foods. Once the main cause of the constipation has been determined, we can focus on how to treat it.

The most important part when treating constipation is NOT using medicine, but a lifelong change in the way we eat. This is where the recommendation of eight glasses of water a day is used the most. Most of my patients (I



ALL ABOUT KIDS

By **Dr. Emilia Gomez**
Special to the Ledger

have found out) will not be doing nearly half of this at all. The other very important thing is decreasing foods/drinks that make you constipated—some of the big ones are milk, cheese, ice cream, bananas when they are not ripe, teas and coffee. Paired with good water intake, it is very important to have a diet high in fiber. You find fiber in fruits, vegetables, and there are also fiber supplements like psyllium, wheat or methylcellulose; there are even fiber gummies for the little picky eaters we all have. Medications like laxatives should be reserved for the severe cases when we need first to “clean out” the intestines or when the pain or symptoms are becoming severe, and should be used for short periods of times in most cases (there are always exceptions where longer therapies are needed depending on the presentation, cause and symptoms).

Dr. Gomez practices medicine at Pediatrics of Queen Creek, PLLC, 22709 S. Ellsworth Rd, Ste F104, Queen Creek, 480-792-9200; Dr.Gomez@bethesdapeds.com; www.BethesdaPeds.com.



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Poston Butte names new football coach

By Andrew Luberd
Southeast Valley Ledger

Poston Butte High School has found the man to lead its football program after announcing late Wednesday night that now former Prescott High School head coach Cody Collett has been tabbed as the Broncos' new head coach.

Collett, who notified his Prescott players of the hire on Wednesday, compiled a record of 27 – 14 during four winning seasons leading the Badgers' program. He led Prescott to one playoff appearance – in 2012 – during his four years at the school.

He's now tasked with replacing a hall-of-

fame coach at a school that experienced
Continued on page 11



Cody Collett. Photo courtesy of Matt Hinshaw - The Daily Courier.

Broncos Post Win Over Safford

POSTON BUTTE

Boys' Basketball – The Broncos, who last played on Nov. 27 and play only two games during a 17-day stretch in their schedule, went 1 – 1 last week, falling at Walden Grove (61 – 50) on Dec. 7 before defeating Safford at home on Dec. 8, 66 – 53. The Broncos won't play again until Dec. 14, when they travel to Veritas Prep for their Section V opener.

In the win against Safford last Tuesday, senior Preston Anderson scored a team-high 14 points and was one of four Broncos to reach double figures in scoring. Josh Zaker (13), Qujuan Steward (12), and Tyson Berringer (12) were the others.

Berringer finished the game with a double-double after grabbing 13 rebounds. Kevin Johnson led the Broncos with three assists in the win.

The Broncos led 17 – 9 at the end of the first quarter and extended the lead to 30 – 21 at halftime. They outscored Safford 36 – 32 in the second half.

Upcoming schedule: Dec. 18 vs. Winslow at 7 p.m. and Dec. 22 vs. Williams Field at Talking Stick Arena at 11:45 a.m.

QUEEN CREEK

Girls' Basketball – Sophomore Torri Gillespie scored a team-high 13 points and senior Jayden Kartchner added 10 in the Bulldogs' 65 – 36 loss at St. Mary's last Wednesday. Junior Alicia Granill finished with nine points and was part of the trio that accounted for 32 of the Bulldogs' 36 points in the game.

Granill and Kelli Chapman, a sophomore, each grabbed a team-high six rebounds.

The Bulldogs trailed 36 – 14 at halftime and were outscored 29 – 22 in the second half.



FOUR CORNERS OF SPORTS

By Andrew Luberd
Southeast Valley Ledger

Upcoming schedule: Dec. 17 at Seton Catholic. The game is scheduled for 7 p.m.

Girls' Soccer – The Bulldogs suffered a 2 – 1 loss at Higley on Dec. 8 before avenging an early season loss to Desert Ridge by defeating the Jaguars last Friday, 2 – 1.

Brook Baldwin and Lindsay Hunt scored the Bulldogs' two goals with Hunt also adding an assist.

Upcoming schedule: Dec. 17 vs. Dobson at 6 p.m.

COMBS

Girls' Basketball – The Lady Coyotes improved to 8 – 4 after three consecutive wins last week against Chandler Prep (46 – 26), Amphitheater (49 – 40), and Morenci (40 – 33).

The Lady Yotes have now won five of their last six games.

Upcoming schedule: Dec. 15 at Phoenix Christian and Dec. 18 vs. Chino Valley. Both games are scheduled for 7 p.m.

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Giving the gift of life: donate blood and become a hero

San Tan Valley, AZ— American Red Cross heroes come in all shapes and sizes. They don't wear capes or special suits, and their badge of honor is the bandage that shows they gave the "gift of life." The Red Cross encourages eligible donors to become hometown heroes and answer the call of patients in need by donating blood.

Donating blood is one of the simplest things a person can do to help save a patient's life. For the hour it takes to give blood, there could be a whole community of people thankful for another birthday given to their loved one.

Upcoming blood donation opportunities:

- Burger King, December 24, 8:00 AM to 12:30 PM, 1741 West Hunt Highway
- Rural Metro Fire Department, December 26, 8:00 AM to 1:15 PM, 28353 North Main Street
- Johnson Utilities, February 23, 10:00 AM to 2:30 PM, 968-1 E. Hunt Hwy

How to donate blood

Simply download the American Red Cross Blood Donor App, visit redcrossblood.org or call 1-800-RED

CROSS (1-800-733-2767) to make an appointment or for more information. All blood types are needed to ensure a reliable supply for patients. A blood donor card or driver's license or two other forms of identification are required at check-in. Individuals who are 17 years of age (16 with parental consent in some states), weigh at least 110 pounds and are in generally good health may be eligible to donate blood. High school students and other donors 18 years of age and younger also have to meet certain height and weight requirements.

About the American Red Cross

The American Red Cross shelters, feeds and provides emotional support to victims of disasters; supplies about 40 percent of the nation's blood; teaches skills that save lives; provides international humanitarian aid; and supports military members and their families. The Red Cross is a not-for-profit organization that depends on volunteers and the generosity of the American public to perform its mission. For more information, please visit redcross.org.



The Red Cross Blood Drive bus was parked at the San Tan Valley Farmers Market Saturday. It will be at the Burger King at 1741 W. Hunt Hwy., San Tan Valley, on Dec. 24 if you'd like to donate your blood.

Jenny Kaufman | Ledger

San Tan Valley Farmers Market organizer Carrie Ribeiro takes time to donate blood during the Red Cross Blood Drive. Each unit of blood could help save up to three lives. There were 19 donors that presented to donate at the San Tan Valley Farmers Market Saturday. The Red Cross collected a total of 16 units of blood and 48 lives could be impacted. What a great Christmas gift!

Jenny Kaufman | Ledger

POWWOW and Farmers Market a great success Saturday



The next Farmers Market and POWWOW is set for Jan. 9, 2016 at Combs High School.
Jenny Kaufman | Ledger



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Sabercats stunted by growing pains

By Andrew Luberdia
Southeast Valley Ledger

It was inevitable.

The San Tan Foothills boys' basketball team was bound to suffer some growing pains during the season, considering its roster is full of underclassmen and inexperienced first-time varsity players.

Following their season-opening win against Hayden, the Cats dropped their next three games, largely the result of the aforementioned growing pains.

"We preach and practice (certain things) and for whatever reason it doesn't translate on the floor yet," San Tan head coach Joe Galish said after his team lost its third-straight game last Wednesday, 60 - 51 against Superior.

"They're young players, but I'm not making excuses; they don't have the quickness in their feet. They're just getting beat to spots, they're not finding bodies, and they're just watching the ball fly through the air."

Galish remains confident that there is a light at the end of tunnel. He believes in his staff and their coaching ability as well. It's up to players to improve during practice, where he feels the effort is lacking.

A better effort during practices will lead to more consistency on the court for one quarter, then a half, and ultimately an entire game.

In last Wednesday's loss, the Panthers dominated the boards at both ends of the court. The Cats led 12 - 9 at the end of the first quarter before Superior outscored them in the second quarter 14

- 8 take a three-point lead at halftime, 23 - 20.

"We work on being both mentally and physically tough," Galish said. "Winning basketball is the team that gets the rebounding edge in a game. The vast majority of the time that team is going to win the game. It's that simple."

Superior blew the game open near the end of third quarter, closing with a 10-point run to extend their lead to 41 - 30.

The Panthers maintained their double-digit lead throughout most of the high-scoring fourth quarter, eventually closing out the game with the nine-point victory.

Senior Nick Saults led the Cats with 25 points. Junior Brandon Ventour grabbed a team-high 13 rebounds in defeat.

The Cats are going to have to dig themselves out of the rut they're in. If not, things could get worse before they get better.

"It will continue to be ugly until we can figure it out," Galish said. "Nobody is going to cut us any corners so we have to get it right."

Eventually they will, hopefully sooner than later.

"They're listening, they're trying - god bless them, they're trying - but they're not there," Galish said. "(We) have to teach, be with them, fight, and bleed with them. So, we'll yell at them (sometimes), but we'll love them back. We're with them for the long term."

Upcoming schedule: Dec. 15 at Odyssey Institute, Dec. 17 at Superior. Both games are scheduled to tipoff at 7 p.m.



San Tan's Jordan Figures (1) shoots a free throw during a 60 - 51 loss to Superior.
Kelli Luberdia | Ledger

Defense propels Queen Creek to win in home opener

By Andrew Luberdia
Southeast Valley Ledger

The Queen Creek boys' basketball team finally played its home opener last Tuesday, hosting Marana Mountain View, which entered the game with a 5 - 1 record.

The Bulldogs, who had won consecutive games

after losing four straight in a season-opening holiday tournament, extended their winning streak to three games after a decisive 59 - 32 victory against the Mountain Lions.

"Being at home where we are comfortable and having the all the fans behind us gives our guys that extra bit of juice," Bulldogs' head coach

Continued on page 9

Coyotes can't repeat magic in Copper Cities Championship Game

By Andrew Luberdia
Southeast Valley Ledger

Has it really been a year since Class of 2015 graduate Drew Johnson hit a game-winning three-pointer at the buzzer against Morenci to give the Combs boys' basketball team its first-ever Copper Cities Tournament Championship?

Indeed it has.

The Coyotes had a chance to repeat Johnson's heroics, and defend last year's title, on Saturday night against San Carlos in the championship game of the 35th Annual Copper Cities Tournament at Globe High School, but Clayton McCarthy's shot attempt with one second left fell short, resulting in the Yote's fourth

runner-up finish in the last five years at this tournament.

The Braves, who entered the fourth quarter with a 14-point lead, survived - barely - and escaped with a 58 - 55 victory.

"We didn't have any timeouts left and there was an argument about the amount of time left," Coyotes' head coach Kirk Fauske said after the game, describing the final shot attempt by his team. "There really wasn't a specific play dialed in. We were supposed to run something, but it didn't quite work out the way we (wanted). We just had to rush, throw it in bounds, and we just threw up a shot. It really wasn't the shot we wanted."

After two wins on the opening day of the

tournament against Mogollon and Hayden, the Yotes defeated St. Johns before facing Miami in semifinals the following day.

McCarthy, a junior, banked in a game-winning 15-footer with less than two seconds left against the Vandals, renewing memories of last year's magic. The win advanced the Yotes to their fifth-straight championship game at Globe after the 66 - 64 win.

In Saturday's championship game, sophomore guard Brian Tucker earned Player of the Game honors after scoring a team-high 16 points, including 12 from the three-point arc. McCarthy, one of three Coyotes to score in double figures against the Braves, finished with 13 points and a team-high eight rebounds. Sophomore

Justice Davis added 10 points.

After suffering losses in four of their first five games, the Coyotes have now won four of their last five.

Fauske believes the last-second win against Miami signifies his young team has turned the corner.

"We really came together as a team and fought through some serious adversity," he said. "The Combs' motto is we're a family, we're a band of brothers, but so far this season it's just been lip service. That game they actually did it. They were challenged by the opponent and by the coaching staff. They came out and they got it done."

Upcoming schedule: Dec. 18 at Gila Ridge at 7 p.m.

QC BASKETBALL

Continued from page 8

Troy Gibson said after the game. "We know that in order to have a chance at making the playoffs in Division II you have to win at home."

After allowing an average of 74 points per game during their four-game losing streak, the Bulldogs have allowed less than 40 points per game in their three wins since. The defense held Mountain View to seven points or less in three of the four quarters in the home-opening win.

"Our philosophy has always been that we will play solid team defense and we will rebound the ball," Gibson told the Ledger. "Team defense has to be a constant because offense is the variable; some nights you shoot the ball really well and other nights not so much, but you can always defend."

The Bulldogs dominated in all three areas – offense, defense, and rebounding – against the Mountain Lions, shooting nearly 50 percent from the field, 90 percent from the free-throw line, limiting their third-straight opponent to fewer than 40 points, and grabbing 34 rebounds.

Junior Kade Parks was one of three Bulldogs to finish in double-figures scoring with a team-high 13 points. Senior Bradley Woods and junior Mike Young added 12 and 10 points, respectively.

Woods also pulled down six rebounds while Young and senior Tyler Bloom had five and four, respectively.

Senior point guard Frigny Niclasse contributed with three steals and eight points, including a perfect 4-for-4 from the free throw line. Malik Cobbins, a senior, had a team-high nine rebounds in the win.

Queen Creek doubled-up Mountain View during the first quarter 14 – 7 before Cobbins drained a three-pointer at the buzzer to extend the lead to 17 – 7.

The Bulldogs doubled-up the Mountain Lions again in the second quarter, ending the first half with a 35 – 14 lead.

Mountain View outscored Queen Creek 13 – 8 in the third quarter, the only period of the game the Mountain Lions totaled

more than seven points. But the Bulldogs controlled the second half overall, allowing only five points in the game's final quarter.

Gibson said after the victory that he likes to play a difficult early-season schedule so his team's weaknesses are exposed, giving him, his staff, and the players a chance to make any necessary tweaks before power-point games begin. He acknowledged his team did just that since the Thanksgiving tournament and so far it appears those changes are working to

perfection.

"It's a long season and we will continue to make adjustments and work as hard as we can on what we do so that we can be the best team we can possibly be."

Now it's up to other teams to adjust to the Bulldogs, who are more comfortable and playing with a great deal of confidence.

Upcoming schedule: Dec. 17 vs. Seton Catholic. Tipoff is scheduled for 7 p.m.



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The Bubbly Hostess Serves a Pomegranate Champagne Cocktail

A few years ago, while making a purchase at Williams Sonoma, I was given a small, Thanksgiving cookbook by my cashier – sweet! While preparing

for that year's feast, I decided to take a peek at my new book. Low and behold, on page 3 was a gorgeous Pomegranate Champagne cocktail! Cheers to me!

Of course, I had to taste test it immediately to see if this was something we should add to our plans – I was sold. Delicious! What's also fun about this drink? Watching the bubbles carry the pomegranate arils up to the top and then watch them fall back down to the bottom of the glass. I was easily entertained by this ...

Given that we are in the midst of the holiday season, I wanted to share – enjoy!

I love to hear feedback - please visit my blog at www.bubblyhostess.com. You can also follow The Bubbly Hostess on Facebook, Pinterest, Instagram, and Twitter.



THE BUBBLY HOSTESS

By Heather Sneed
Special to the Ledger



Pomegranate Champagne Cocktail Serves 1 Recipe courtesy of Williams Sonoma

1 ounce Pomegranate juice
½ ounce Grand Marnier
Sparkling wine
Pomegranate arils, for garnish

Add Pomegranate juice and Grand Marnier to a champagne flute. Top with sparkling wine and garnish with arils.

PBHS FOOTBALL COACH

Continued from page 5

its share of tragedy and perhaps turmoil last year, which contributed to a winless season.

Nonetheless, Collett, like many others, believes the Broncos' program can achieve success once again.

"It's a growing area and I think that's very attractive," Collett answered when asked what about Poston Butte appealed to him. "It was obvious from the interview process that the administration really cares a great deal about football and understands the importance of football in the school community."

The new Broncos' head coach admitted this moment is bittersweet, but he'll always remember where he made his head-coaching debut and the relationships he's developed.

"I'll always be indebted to Prescott," Collett told the *Ledger* Wednesday evening during a phone interview. "It gave me my first opportunity as a head coach and for that I'm very thankful."

"I'm going to miss all the relationships with the kids and hopefully those can continue," he added. "They understand I'll always be there for them, but it was very tough."

Collett was asked what he expects from the players in his program.

"We have a very clear mission statement," he responded. "We're trying to develop our kids – our student-athletes – as people first and foremost, as students secondly, and as players third. We try to work it in that order. I expect our guys to be doing the right things on the field, off the field, and I expect myself to be doing my job in developing them as people first."

"We want to produce young men who will grow up to great husbands, fathers, and leaders in our community," he continued. "That's what our goal is every single day and I try to remember that mission statement every day too. We'll be talking to our guys about that frequently."

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We thank you once again for your loyalty and hope that you will take advantage of every moment of happiness in the year to come. Here's to a calm and prosperous new year!

Best wishes from our entire team.

LEDGER

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