



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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**THUNDERBIRDS CHARITIES DONATES RECORD \$1 MILLION  
TO SPECIAL OLYMPICS ARIZONA FOR NEW STATE OFFICE AND DISTRIBUTION CENTER**

**PHOENIX, Ariz.** – Thunderbirds Charities, the charitable giving arm of The Thunderbirds – hosts of the Waste Management Phoenix Open – announced today at an official groundbreaking ceremony, that a record-breaking donation of \$1 million has been gifted to Special Olympics Arizona (SOAZ). The donation is the largest single gift handed out by Thunderbirds Charities since its inception in 1937, and the gift will help support the building of a new Special Olympics Arizona state office and distribution center adjacent to Perryville Prison in Goodyear.

“We’re extremely proud of every charitable contribution we make to our local communities, but this gift to Special Olympics Arizona – the largest in our organization’s history – is extremely special,” said 2019 WM Phoenix Open Tournament Chairman Chance Cozby. “This gift is only possible through the incredible support we receive from our corporate partners and from the best fans in golf who attend the WM Phoenix Open each year. We’re honored and humbled to have such a strong giving presence in the Valley.”

This much needed new facility, which will be led by JE Dunn Construction, will provide statewide support for programs and events that are not just for Special Olympic athletes and personnel, but also for the community and sporting events that focus on inclusion. It will provide a center for distribution services, uniform production, equipment, and an efficient facility for youth and inclusive sports in the state of Arizona.

“This new state office and distribution center will provide programs, services and equipment to 25,000 athletes and Unified partners across the state of Arizona,” said Jamie Heckerman, CEO of Special

Olympics Arizona. “We are grateful for this partnership with The Thunderbirds and the Arizona Department of Corrections to make this much needed project possible.”

The Arizona Department of Corrections has partnered with SOAZ on this project and has created an inmate work crew to benefit SOAZ while also providing services and classes for inmates. The building will be sustained by inmate labor with equipment maintenance, repair and management, while also providing job training for inmates to stop recidivism into prison system, provide classes in auto maintenance and repair, design/art work, printing for SOAZ uniforms and banners.

“The Arizona Department of Corrections is proud of its partnership with Special Olympics Arizona and we are excited to host its new distribution center on the grounds of the Perryville Complex,” said ADC Director Charles Ryan. “It will create additional skill development and employment opportunities for our inmates, and enable us to support the organization’s important and growing efforts to provide inclusive community programs and events throughout the state for years to come.”

Representatives from Special Olympics Arizona, The Thunderbirds and the Arizona Department of Corrections, along with the Governor of Arizona and the Mayor of Goodyear, were on hand today to officially break ground on the new project that is expected to be completed by the end of 2019.



#### **ABOUT SPECIAL OLYMPICS ARIZONA:**

*The purpose of SOAZ is to empower children and adults with intellectual disabilities to live healthy, fulfilling and meaningful lives. We realize our vision of acceptance and inclusion through health, leadership and advocacy programs, as well as our mission to provide year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-style sports for children and adults with intellectual disabilities, giving them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy and participate in a sharing of gifts, skills and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes and the community. For more information on Special Olympics Arizona visit [www.specialolympicsarizona.org](http://www.specialolympicsarizona.org).*

#### **ABOUT THE THUNDERBIRDS:**

*The Thunderbirds were founded in 1937 with the mission of promoting the Valley of the Sun through sports. The Thunderbirds consist of 55 “active” members and more than 280 “life” members. The Thunderbirds raised a record \$13.2 million for charity from proceeds from the 2019 WM Phoenix Open and have eclipsed \$147 million in charitable giving since its inception in 1932. For more information on The Thunderbirds visit [www.thunderbirdscharities.org](http://www.thunderbirdscharities.org).*

**ABOUT THE WASTE MANAGEMENT PHOENIX OPEN:**

*The 2020 Waste Management Phoenix Open Presented by The Ak-Chin Indian Community will be held at TPC Scottsdale January 27 – February 2, 2020. “The People’s Open” has been named the Tournament of the Year by the PGA TOUR three times in the last five years (2014, 2015 and 2018) and has gained legendary status for being one the most unique events in golf. The 2020 edition will mark the 85<sup>th</sup> playing of the event (one of the five oldest events on the PGA TOUR) and the 11<sup>th</sup> as the Waste Management Phoenix Open. For more information visit [www.WMPhoenixOpen.com](http://www.WMPhoenixOpen.com).*

**ABOUT JE DUNN CONSTRUCTION:**

*JE Dunn Construction, founded in 1924, is the 17th largest domestic general building contractor in the United States with offices in 20 locations. Our vision is to be an indispensable business partner for our clients by first understanding their purpose, goals and customers and then delivering transformational solutions with certainty of results. We maintain a commitment to our clients and their building goals while being true to our guiding principles — the philosophy of our business operation which is both family and employee-owned. JE Dunn’s purpose is to enrich lives through inspired people and places. [www.jedunn.com](http://www.jedunn.com).*