

Graham County
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

1111 Thatcher Boulevard • Safford, Arizona 85546
Phone: (928) 428-2511 or 1-888-837-1841 • FAX: (928) 428-0744
E-Mail: info@graham-chamber.com

NEWS RELEASE

For release: Upon receipt

Contact: Graham County Chamber of Commerce -- Phone/(928) 428-2511; Toll-free/1-888-837-1841; Fax/(928) 428-0744; e-mail/info@graham-chamber.com

Safford, Arizona: The perfect weekend getaway!

As children escape the halls of schools and temperatures around the state begin to spike, visitors can take time to discover Arizona's hidden treasure – Safford – which offers a variety of activities perfect for any family getaway.

Safford, which is the seat of Graham County, is located at the base of Mount Graham. It's small-town atmosphere is perfect for those looking to escape from the city for a weekend, and there is no better weekend to visit than Memorial Day.

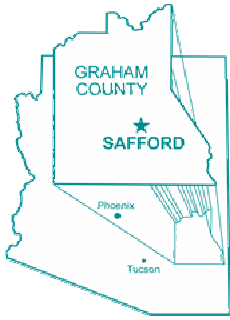
Fun for the entire family!

The Gila Valley Family Fest, sponsored by the SAVE Organization has events on May 26, 27 and 28 that range from an antique show to classic car displays to a talent show, and it promises to satisfy the tastes of the entire family.

When traveling to the Family Fest, visitors should not forget to bring their favorite antiques because one of the most popular events an Antiques Road Show-style event, which is Sunday afternoon. Experts are on hand to analyze antiques and tell hopefuls the value – or lack there of – of their items. Antiques are also for sale at this event.

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For those less interested in antique items and more interested in antique cars, the classic car show offers an array of restored cars from Ford Model-Ts to late-model Chevrolet Corvettes. Visitors can vote for their favorite car, and the people's choice award is given at 9 p.m. on Friday night. The largest car show of the weekend begins at 2:30 p.m. on Saturday, and it's a must for all gearheads and car lovers.

All of the showcases and shopping is centrally located, which allows families to each explore their own interests individually.

After shopping at the quilt, antique and craft shows, visitors can spend the evening strolling down Main Street, which offers more shopping and live entertainment. Local performers serenade visitors in the early evening, and the talent show begins at 8 p.m. Acts vary and include dancers, musicians and singers from the surrounding areas.

Saturday afternoon also allows for aspiring marksmen to show their stuff at the trap shoot, which is at the Safford Rifle Range. For \$3, shooters can take shots at 25 clay pigeons, and spectators can watch for free.

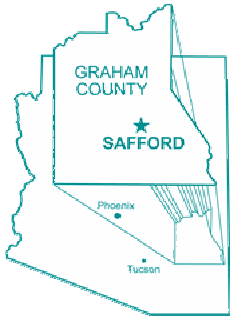
On Friday and Saturday evenings, bring lawn chairs and blankets to the grass in front of Safford City Hall and enjoy a free blue grass concert by "Just N Time."

After enjoying a night of music and rest in one of Safford many hotels, visitors need not worry about finding entertainment on Sunday and Monday.

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Tours of two Arizona landmarks are offered and are must-sees for those visiting the Gila Valley.

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Reaching for the stars!

Atop Mount Graham sits the Large Binocular Telescope (LBT), which is a world-renowned astronomical facility. The LBT is installing its second and final mirror and is expected to be online by the end of the year. When that occurs, the telescope will be able see farther than the Hubble Telescope, providing scientists with sharper-than-ever pictures of deep space.

Tours meet at Discovery Park at 9 a.m. for a 9:30 a.m. departure. Visitors are driven up to an elevation of 10,500 feet, and tour guides spend the drive educating travelers about the geology, diversity of life and history of the area as they pass through the different climate zones of the mountain.

Lunch is served at the summit, and then visitors are taken on a guided tour of the three observatories located at the summit. Visitors are encouraged to bring proper clothing because outdoor temperatures on the summit can be at least 30 degrees cooler than in the Phoenix or Tucson areas.

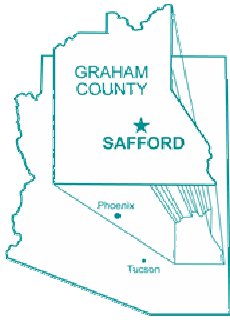
The tours cost \$40, and that price includes admission to Discovery Park, where visitors can learn about the origins of the universe, view the stars through a 20-inch telescope at the Gov Aker Observatory or ride the shuttlecraft POLARIS. The shuttlecraft POLARIS is a full-motion space simulator that features six-channel Dolby© Surround Sound.

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Bright as a shiny penny!

Just a short drive from Safford will bring visitors to Morenci – the home of North America's largest open-pit copper mine. The mine, owned by Phelps Dodge Mining Corporation,

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is a vast operation that produces more than 20 percent of the copper mined in the United States.

After visitors are welcomed, they are briefed about the tour itinerary, given an overview of copper and the high-tech mining process and educated about necessary safety precautions.

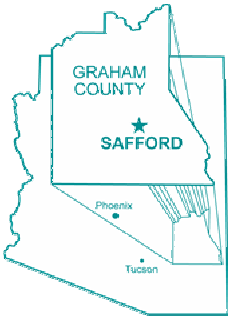
Following the briefing, visitors board a climate-controlled bus that stops at various points on the property and gives a first-hand view of the steps required to take the raw ore from the ground and convert it to finished pure copper. Copper guides are with visitors the entire time, keeping them informed and entertained with facts.

Safford has great food and a variety of lodging options, which makes it an ideal weekend getaway. Come celebrate Memorial Day by spending the long weekend in Safford and exploring the treasures southeastern Arizona has to offer.

For more information about Graham County, contact the Graham County Chamber of Commerce at (928) 428-2511, toll-free at 1-888-837-1841, email for information at info@graham-chamber.com or visit the Web site at www.visitgrahamcounty.com.

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