

APRIL 2009 NEWSLETTER COLUMN

If you didn't get out to the 53rd Annual County Fair last month – you missed a great time! Despite the wind on Thursday, March 26th, the weather was very nice, the rides were a hoot, the 4-H Junior Livestock Committee Auction was successful, and the cotton candy was tasty. If your calendar will let you, don't forget to mark it for March 24-27, 2010 when we can all enjoy the 54th Pinal County Fair – I hope to see you there!

And now here are some things to add to your schedule for this month. On Wednesday April 8 Central Arizona College's Small Business Development Center will play host to a program for general information about the American Recovery & Reinvestment Act (aka the Stimulus Program). Slated to take place in CAC's Corporate Center (540 N. Camino Mercado in Casa Grande), the event runs from 6:30-8:30 p.m. with a healthy amount of time for questions and answers. Pre-registration is mandatory so for more data on the event, call 602.745.7200 or email Arizona@centralaz.edu.

Naturally, you'll want to make sure that the afternoon and evening of April 25th is blocked out for the 2009 Maricopa Salsa Festival in Maricopa's Pacana Park. Freshly created salsas of every possible taste combination and guacamoles that'll make you a believer are yours for the sampling – come hungry! For more information about the Festival, click on Maricopa Chamber of Commerce's website at <http://www.maricopachamber.com>.

On April 30, the District 3 Transportation Advisory Committee will meet for one of its public input sessions in the conference room of the Maricopa Justice of the Peace facility at 19955 N. Wilson Ave., Maricopa. This 3:00 p.m. meeting is one of several scheduled in various parts of the District as a way of soliciting public input on where to apply revenues from the Half Cent Sales Tax. Once hearings are complete, recommendations will be made and blended with results from the other two districts, then combined into the Pinal County Transportation Master Plan. This results in a rolling five year plan – this year's TAC input will be for FY 2013-14 funding.

The 22nd Annual Pinal County Town Hall will facilitate a lively discussion and exploration of a serious contemporary issue: **GangBusters: It Takes a Community**. This very successful community forum brings leaders from all parts of our county together and creates a dialogue about who we are and how we can solve our problems. It takes place April 22 through 24 at the Holiday Inn in Casa Grande. A link to the registration and other information on this can be found at <http://pinalcountyaz.gov/TownHall>.

One of the functions of the Pinal County Air Quality Department has to do with the issuance of burn permits for those residents living in the unincorporated parts of the county. Folks residing inside an incorporated city or town are not issued these permits due to local regulations prohibiting the open burning of trash, yard wastes, etc. However, as a general rule, Pinal County suspends these open burn permits every spring due to the heightened danger of brush fires. The danger to local residents is exacerbated by lots of

stagnant air patterns which can trap air-borne particulate matter (like soot) thereby making breathing difficult, to say the least.

The wet winter we've had has dramatically increased the presence of weeds, wildflowers, and other vegetation – and that vegetation is already starting to dry out, ready for combustion. So on April 1st the County will issue only three (3) day permits and on April 29th, we will suspend the issuance of all open burn permits. That suspension will remain in place until the summer monsoons have arrived to mitigate the dual risks to public safety and public health. For more information on the County's Air Quality program, go to www.pinalcountyaz.gov or call 520.866.6929.

In closing this month's report, I'd like to share some sobering thoughts on this coming year's budget. As many of you may know, all appointed and elected county offices were asked to submit budget plans reflecting both a three (3) and eight (8) percent budget reduction. A hiring freeze has now been implemented – with an exception for public safety operations – and eligible employees have been offered an early retirement package.

Various other cost saving measures have been implemented, including a dramatic restriction on the use of take-home vehicles and encouragement to use van and car pooling. Sadly, these measures will not be enough and so I regret to say that we will be laying off employees in June. This is not an action that I or the Board take lightly but it is something that we need to do in order to balance our expenditures with our revenues. And there may be more draconian measures necessary in the future as our economy continues to sputter.

David Snider, Supervisor
Pinal County District 3