

PINAL COUNTY LIFESTYLE – SEPTEMBER 2009

Gosh – is it September already? Can more temperate weather and the probability of a car wash lasting more than a day be far off? Will we soon start to see the colors and states-of-origin for license plates on our roadways begin to change as Arizona’s official change of seasons begins? Are the Cougars going to go all the way to State this year? Since “hope springs eternal in the human breast...” (sayeth the author Alexander Pope), I’m all about optimism for the return of our Fall season! And now, on to items of interest – I hope – on the County scene.

Let’s start with a subject that sounds rather dry and boring but in fact, I think, is pretty exciting and bodes well for our county organization. The topic is performance-based budgeting – Pinal County calls it Managing for Results (MFR). Many governments and organizations (and we were certainly one of them) base their budgeting processes on a demand/past performance model department-by-department. That meant that the Public Works Department paved 30 miles of roads last fiscal year at a cost of X number of dollars and the County Transportation Plan called for the paving of 35 miles of roads, their new budget would presumably be bigger (more miles of paving plus adjustments for more expensive materials and inflation). But if the department didn’t pave as many miles as it said it would (for whatever reason), then there was no penalty for underperforming.

Thirty-six months ago, the Board of Supervisors and County management began the process moving our organization into the MFR process. We – the Board and all of the County’s elected officials – created a strategic agenda (which can be found on the County’s website at <http://pinalcountyaz.gov>) that spelled out our strategic priorities and assigned measureable values to those priorities. County departments and the offices of elected officials then began to build budgeting models that linked their activities to the Strategic Agenda and created benchmark measures for the purpose of evaluating that unit’s progress toward the County’s goals. This process stretched over the last two budget cycles as the process was refined and units transitioned into the model. I’m pleased to report that virtually all of the Courts, Elected, and department operations have successfully created strategic business plans, established their evaluative measures, and are hard at work to implement this fiscal year.

Work continues apace on readying ourselves for the 2010 Decennial Census. The County and all of the county’s cities and towns have created their Complete Count Committees, volunteers are receiving training, strategies and work plans are being developed and refined, and informational campaigns are being planned. Fact sheets on the upcoming census count next spring are now available in multiple languages (especially Spanish). Stay tuned for lots more on this critical event (April 1st, 2010) in future editions.

Pinal County now operates its own Medical Examiner’s Office. Opened in June, this office is now providing non-criminal autopsy services at the county facility in Florence rather than paying for those services to be done in Pima County. This shift will provide a significant cost savings for our citizens.

I regret to inform you that the men and women of the County’s Animal Care & Control Department continue to be overwhelmed with too many dogs and cats left with us by folks who can no longer

provide for their care. Please visit the [Animal Control](#) link on our website for information on how to adopt a pet. An updated Animal Care & Control ordinance has been prepared for Board consideration – a work session on the draft was held last month. I hope to see its adoption by the end of this year.

Finally – lest you think that Pinal County is no longer paying attention to transportation issues – let’s chat a bit about some of the various transportation studies that we continue to work on. In late 2008, we inaugurated the County Transit Regional Feasibility and Implementation Study: representatives from virtually all of our local cities, towns, and Indian Communities plus ADOT, Valley Metro, Northern AZ Intergovernmental Public Transit Authority, and Yuma MPO attended. To date some 27 stakeholder interviews have taken place, concurrent with a transit inventory assessment. We are taking the leadership position in coordinating transit planning by our cities and communities – I anticipate the first phase’s completion by the Spring of 2010.

The Hidden Valley Roadway Framework Study is nearly complete with final presentations currently underway. Eloy has virtually completed its Small Area Transportation Study and we were pleased to offer input into their SATS. The County also continues to work on issues related to the North/South Freeway, State Route 802 (Williams Gateway), and the I-10 widening from Tangerine to I-8.

David Snider

Supervisor, Pinal County District 3