

APRIL 2008 NEWSLETTER COLUMN

Ah April – the month of tax filings, rampant fragrances of citrus and sneezing from those allergic to pollen, and students with wandering attention as they're torn between AIMS testing and the close proximity of summer vacation.

Many readers have been active participants in the County's year and a half quest to review and revise our Comprehensive Plan. However, for those of you at home who haven't been following along, here's the latest news. During the month of February, residents came together in a number of community meetings to provide input on whether or not we ought to pursue a land use and transportation model favoring either trends (i.e. status quo or let development happen where it will), dispersed growth (making sure that development is spread throughout the County), and/or corridor focused (encouraging growth along transportation corridors with less focus on areas away from the corridors).

Most of the input agreed that a corridor focused alternative was "best" but with some modifications – for example, additional development ought to be encouraged in the eastern sector of the County. Another area of agreement had to do with development densities: higher density developments in some parts of the County would be acceptable if the trade-off is preservation of significant open spaces. And, clearly the issue of transportation (intra- and inter-Pinal community) is still a very important concern: mass transit (bus rapid transit, commuter rail service, commuter air, etc.) and a strong commercial airport ranked high in the discussions.

Follow-up opportunities for public input on these issues are slated as follows: Arizona City' Central Lutheran Church on April 16th (6-8 p.m.); Central Arizona College's Signal Peak Campus on April 19th (9-11 a.m.); and the Dorothy Powell Adult Center in Casa Grande on April 23rd (6-8 p.m.). For a complete listing of these input sessions – and to preregister for a session in order to have a copy of the documentation in advance of the meeting – go to <http://pinalcountyplan.com/WorkshopReg.html>. Or call Audra Thomas at 480.816.1811 to register. Once these workshop meetings conclude, County staff will be working to complete a draft Comp Plan update document which will, in turn, be made widely available for public review before moving on to the County's Planning & Zoning Commission and then the Board of Supervisors.

Before I share some "must attend" events, their dates, locations, and other pertinent information, I'd like to reinforce the annual message to those who routinely call the County for burn permits. Every year, we take steps to minimize the risk of grass and range fires and therefore during the month of April, County-issued burn permits are only good for three (3) days. This year, all open burning permits will expire on or by May 1st and no new permits will be issued until such time as summer monsoons arrive and sufficiently reduce the risk of open range fires from inadvertent sparks from burn barrels and open fires.

Now – on your mark, get set, start your calendars! The week of April 14th has been designated as 2008 Victims' Rights Week and there is a full slate of events throughout

the county. There'll be a formal kick-off event in the Casa Grande City Hall Plaza on Monday the 14th (7:30 – 9:30 a.m.), training Outreach in Maricopa and Casa Grande during various days of this week, and two big festival and commemorative events in Casa Grande and Florence at the end of the week. For more information on the schedule, please contact the County Attorney's Office (800.208.6897 x6813) or my office (520.836.0003) or visit the County's website <http://pinalcountyz.gov>.

April 17 through 20 are the dates for the 42nd Annual Mul-Chu-Tha Fair "Embracing Traditions, Envisioning Our Future" in Sacaton. Featuring an all-Indian and other rodeos, arts & crafts, waila music, a powwow, and a parade, this is a cultural event that shouldn't be missed. For more information on the schedule of events and locations, call 520.562.6087. That Sunday evening, the 20th, is also a special time as VFW 1677 installs its new Commander at the Post in Casa Grande.

The next week some 150 Pinal County residents will gather at the Biosphere 2 outside of Oracle for the annual Pinal County Town Hall. This year's topic is the Greening of Pinal County. Conferees will come together on Wednesday the 23rd for networking and then spend the next day and a half listening to speakers and collaborating on resolutions of action and commitment that will help guide the county as we shape today's policies and get ready for the next wave of hyper-growth and development. Some of us will rush back to Casa Grande that Friday in order to attend the Seeds of Hope Dinner to be held at the First Presbyterian Church. Tickets are still available so call 520.836.6335 for information.

Then it's out to Maricopa on Saturday the 26th at 10 a.m. for the City's annual Salsa Festival in Pacana Park! Great things to eat (and sample), arts and crafts, booth exhibits, face painting, and great music all combine for a fabulous family event that's a must on any calendar.

Rounding out this incredibly busy month is a day of reflection and remembrance: the 14th Annual Vietnam Remembrance Day event on Sunday, April 27 from 8:30 a.m. until 1 p.m. at the Vietnam Memorial in Wesley Bolin Plaza at the State Capitol in Phoenix. The day is for coming together and sharing the grief and sadness of the American and Allies' veterans' families whose fathers, husbands, wives, and children were wounded, passed away during the war, or still remain MIA.

Remember – if you're bored in Pinal County, you're not paying attention to the opportunities all around you.

David Snider, Supervisor
Pinal County District 3