

AUGUST 2010 NEWSLETTER COLUMN

Can it really be true? Is it really August already? Yes, Virginia – it's once again time to report to the classroom for another scholastic year of academic achievement and excellence. For some the month of August is also the last gasp of summer vacations as at least one more trek into Arizona's mountains or long weekend trip to San Diego is undertaken. However, the one thread that's common to all of us is the need to once again practice vigilance when we drive through school zones and crossings: slow down to 15 mph, don't pass one another, and keep an eye out for children who don't always wait for the crosswalk and a crossing guard.

Thousands of veterans in Pinal County recently dodged another bullet: this one coming from the State of Arizona. The Department of Veterans Service lost its full-time Veterans Benefits Counselor for the Pinal County/Casa Grande office – and the rumor was that the office was to be shut down due to budgetary constraints. A number of elected officials, including me, joined the swelling chorus of veteran voices urging the full restoration of staff and hours of service. I, for one, had several conversations with senior staff in the Department who assured me that the office and vacant position would be restored as soon as the state's bureaucracy released the recruitment and hiring authority.

Shortly after that first call, another call confirmed that the (full-time) position was being advertised and the office would remain open. Our veterans deserve the best and having access to benefits counseling here in Pinal County is the least Arizona can do to say "thank you for your service to our country." And speaking of remembering our county's veterans, a small but determined band of residents led by Cecil Ahliel, Joanne Galindo, and former Pinal County Sheriff Frank Reyes are seeking to construct a permanent memorial wall for our county's fallen soldiers. Their work is in the formative stages but expectations run high as they organize. For more information, contact the Veterans Memorial Foundation at pinalcvmf@gmail.com or 520.466.0280.

Some of you Gentle Readers may know that the National Parks Service has been working with various local interests to enlarge the footprint of the Casa Grande Ruins National Monument so it incorporates more of the known Hohokam town sites in the Coolidge-Florence area. The bill to expand the Ruins passed out of the full Natural Resources Committee of the House of Representatives in mid-July. The bill can now be calendared for a floor vote of the full House or packaged with a number of natural resource bills (omnibus bill) and brought to the floor. This is a measure that Rep. Kirkpatrick has been working on – it has the full support of local governments, land owners, and the Native American communities.

Returning for a moment to our hot and sweaty August environment – I'd like to remind everyone about the dangers in having standing bodies of water around your yard or patio. This summer has seen the return of mosquitoes in a really big way. Several locations in western Pinal County have been swarmed with these flying, biting critters but fortunately most of them are not carrying West Nile Virus. County residents have been very helpful

in the fight against West Nile virus. Our Environmental Health staff relies on your help to spot potential mosquito breeding sites – especially green or abandoned swimming pools.

Unmaintained pools are an excellent breeding ground for mosquitoes of all kinds. If left unattended, each one of these green pools has the potential to become a “mosquito factory” producing literally millions of mosquitoes in a short time. By reporting green and abandoned swimming pools via the Mosquito Hotline (520.866.6200 or 866.287.0209 extension 6200) you can help reduce the number of mosquitoes in your neighborhood. Please keep in mind that it would be helpful when reporting a green swimming pool, if you include the street address of the house with the green pool and your name and phone number in the event that additional information is needed.

In the meantime, hang in there everyone: there’s only 60 (or so) days left before fall and cooler (I hope, I hope, I hope!) weather.

David Snider, Supervisor
Pinal County District 3