

## JUNE 2010 NEWSLETTER COLUMN

Welcome to June – the month of weddings, celebrations, vacations, and hot days with less hot nights. In the governmental arena, it's also the month of tentative and final budgeting and – this year – the time of serious political campaigning: let the signs come forth on every street corner and billboard!

Several months ago Pinal County met and worked with various stakeholders in the county to help the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality and Governor Brewer prepare a response to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's declaration putting Pinal County into non-attainment for dust: specifically PM<sub>10</sub> and PM<sub>2.5</sub>. The Governor sent that proposal to the EPA in late March, showing a proposed PM-10 nonattainment map that covered portions of the northwestern corner of the county: from I-8 north to the Gila River Indian Community's boundary, from a line just east of Florence to the Maricopa County boundary on the west. The Governor's proposal excluded areas at the very western edge of the county, as well as the Ak-Chin and Gila River Indian Communities.

The Governor declined to make any nonattainment recommendation under the PM-2.5 annual standard. The Governor principally relied on the EPA's own regulations, which do not allow for use of a "fenceline" monitor such as the one at Cowtown to assess compliance with the PM-2.5 annual standard

In mid-May, the EPA responded in part to the Governor's letter. The EPA agreed that there was no basis for a nonattainment designation under the PM-2.5 annual standard. But the EPA then also went on to rely on that same data to propose a nonattainment map under the PM-2.5 24-hour standard. That EPA-proposed PM-2.5 nonattainment map covers the northwest corner of the County, including Stanfield, Hidden Valley, Cowtown, and City of Maricopa. Although the proposed boundary surrounds the Ak Chin Community, the EPA's recommendation does not actually include either the Ak Chin or Gila River Indian Communities. (A copy of the EPA's response and analysis is available on the County's website under the "air quality" link.)

The EPA has invited comment on that proposal until June 18th, and expects to make a final decision in July. The EPA did not respond to the Governor's proposal for a larger PM-10 nonattainment area, and we're still waiting for that "other shoe" to drop. Where do we go from here? Once we understand the area or areas that the EPA's action will affect, Pinal County, area stakeholders, and ADEQ will sit down together and begin the two-step process of first defining where the offending emissions originate, and then what we can do to mitigate those emissions.

It's a sad sign of the times to learn that the City of Maricopa's most recent application for federal transportation grant funds was denied. The \$20M was to accelerate and complete the engineering design work on a grade separation or overpass that would allow traffic on SR 347 to flow unimpeded over the Union Pacific tracks. The project, estimated to cost approximately \$60M, has been the City's top priority for the last five years and a top

priority for Pinal County's legislative platform as well. Competition for diminishing federal transportation dollars is intense and will continue to be that way for some time.

There is some good news, however, on the local transportation front. Late last month, the Board of Supervisors awarded a contract to CS Construction, Inc. for the construction of a traffic signal at the intersection of McCartney and Overfield Roads. Once the Notice to Proceed is issued by the County, the contractor will have up to 130 calendar days to complete the lights' installation. Therefore, shortly after we celebrate the New Year, there should be working traffic lights at this very busy intersection.

As long as you've got your calendar out, don't forget to celebrate Flag Day on the 14<sup>th</sup> of June – it's a Grand Old Flag and it deserves your respect on that day and every day of the year. But before we get to Flag Day, free up Saturday, June 5<sup>th</sup> and march on down to the downtown station (404 W. Florence Blvd.) of the Casa Grande Fire Department for their Save-A-Life event. Participants will learn CPR and a number of other life-saving skills – all free of charge. Contact Isabel Vasquez to pre-register at 520.421.8777, extension 5980 or [ivasquez@casagrandeaz.gov](mailto:ivasquez@casagrandeaz.gov).

Last but not least, let's talk a bit about the County's FY 2011 budget. With the passage of Proposition 100 on May 18<sup>th</sup>, the Board moved forward on May 26<sup>th</sup> to adopt a tentative budget for the coming fiscal year. The defeat of the Proposition would have shifted at least another \$1M of cost to our FY 2011 budget and forced additional reductions to be made by the Board. As it is, the tentative FY 2011 budget contains an additional 28 cents per \$100 Assessed Valuation on the tax rate as result of revenue reductions and simultaneous cost shifts from the state to Pinal County.

**David Snider**, Supervisor  
Pinal County District 3

P.S. If you're still blessed with his presence, don't forget to call your dad on Sunday, June 20: it's Father's Day. "Hi Dad!"