

## MARCH 2009 NEWSLETTER COLUMN

Welcome to the marvelous month of March – and if it's March, then it's time to cook! Last month I spent quite some time talking about some of the many entertaining things that folks could find to do in and around our grand Pinal County. This month's activity calendar is equally overflowing with tasty things to do and experience, including the Cactus Antique Airplane Fly In event at the Casa Grande Municipal Airport and the 31<sup>st</sup> Annual Arizona State Open Chili Championship at Casa Grande's Ed Hooper Park. Both of these premium events take place (mainly) on Saturday, March 7<sup>th</sup> although Casa Grande's airport is a very busy place on Friday the 6<sup>th</sup> and the planes are available for inspection.

And, just as a teaser for your taste buds (once you've finished sampling the various chili concoctions on the 7<sup>th</sup>), you might want to mark your calendar for April 25<sup>th</sup> when the 2009 Maricopa Salsa Festival descends on Pacana Park in Maricopa. 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 on these events and lots of other fun things to do, check out the websites of the Casa Grande and Maricopa Chambers of Commerce at <http://www.casagrandechamber.org> and <http://www.maricopachamber.com>.

Before I leave the events-of-note calendar, I'd be remiss if I didn't call your attention to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Cesar Chavez Celebration that will take place on March 13<sup>th</sup>. This great event raises thousands of dollars for scholarships for local (Pinal County) area students while celebrating the Si Se Puede (Yes We Can) spirit of Cesar E. Chavez. For tickets or more data, contact the Pinal Hispanic Council at 520.466.7765.

A day to remember: on March 23<sup>rd</sup> citizens and patriots will be gathering at the base of Piestewa Peak in Phoenix to remember our fallen heroes and all those who currently serve as well as those who served to ensure our freedoms. This specifically Arizona event began as a memorial service to honor the sacrifice made for her country on March 23, 2003 by Spc. Lori Piestewa from Arizona. However, as Arizona's veterans and the Piestewa family continued this annual memorial service, those involved came to expand the service to remember not only the 11 soldiers, 18 Marines, and 6 airmen who died on that specific day but to reach out to all families that have lost loved ones and thank them for their sacrifices.

Those who died that day served in the United States Army 507th Maintenance Company, Army Forward Support Battalion 3d Infantry Division, North Carolina Marines of Task Force Tarawa and Air Force 347th Rescue Wing 41st and 38th Rescue Squadrons – they gave their lives in the name of freedom.

Property owners in Pinal County will be receiving a “special” piece of mail from the Pinal County Assessor's Office this month: Notice of Assessed Value. That postcard notice is designed to let property owners know how much their property values have risen or declined since this time last year. The important thing to note as you look at your Notice is to know that if you don't agree with the values established by the Assessor's Office, you must petition the

Assessor for a change in valuation by April 29, 2009. Since property taxes are generally driven by the valuation of property (real estate), this is an important notice.

And speaking of County processes, I would be remiss if I didn't acknowledge the fact that the Board of Supervisors and County management are hard at work crafting a budget for FY 2009-10 – and it will be an austere budget, to say the least. All County departments and elected officials' offices have been asked to prepare budgets that are a minimum of 10% smaller than their current (already reduced) allocation. We have already instituted a number of cost cutting measures but the continued downturn in the economy (and an anticipated reduction in revenues as imposed by the State Legislature) makes the coming fiscal year's budget a pretty grim prospect. Hiring freezes, indefinite postponement of capital projects and possible layoffs and/or elimination of positions are all “on the table” as we move through the process.

One last note – last month I inadvertently credited the VFW post in Sacaton with the organization of the annual parade and ceremonies commemorating the flag-raising on Iwo Jima 64 years ago. My bad: there is no VFW post in Sacaton – all that hard work is the result of the dedicated veterans and volunteers with the Ira Hayes American Legion organization. And, for those of you who missed the day's events ... it was wonderful and inspirational.

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