

MARCH 2010 NEWSLETTER COLUMN

Welcome to the month of March – now, is it in like a lion and out like a lamb or the other way around? Oh well, regardless of the weather we're one step closer to the Vernal Equinox and the opening of pools all around the county. Of course, this month is also American Red Cross Month, National Noodle Month, Bubble Gum Week (the 7th through the 13th), Peanut Butter Lover's Day (the 1st), National Anthem Day (the 3rd), and – for all you classical literature buffs – the Ides of March stand tall on the 15th of March.

Before I get too deep into this month's column I need to correct a misstatement from last month concerning ADOT's plans to widen part of I-10 in the Casa Grande area. ADOT's lovely and talented PIO Linda Ritter called me last month to gently correct me about the construction timeframes I used in the column. So, here goes the correct version of this welcome news: I-10 just north of Val Vista to Early Road will get a third lane in each direction. Construction is slated to begin in late 2010 and will last approximately 24 months.

In February I attended various events that were either sponsored by or involved local veterans' organizations such as the American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Benevolent & Protective Order of Elks, etc. – and this month will be no exception. These organizations work quietly to raise money and awareness for America's warriors and their families. They absolutely deserve our support and thanks for all the work they do for our veterans. I was especially proud to serve as a judge for Pinal County's VFW posts' annual Buddy Poppy contest last month. Winning entries go on to compete at the state, regional, and national levels. The proceeds go to support local programs that support veterans and their dependents and I hope you'll join me in proudly wearing one in your lapel when they are sold on May 6, 7, and 8.

In the meantime, here are a couple of great events for your calendar this month. The Gila River Indian Community invites you to come to Sacaton and help them celebrate Mul-Chu-Tha on March 19-21. This annual event, honoring the Community's ancestors, includes a fair with Native arts, crafts, and dances, as well as a rodeo.

The Pinal County Fairgrounds will be bustling during the five day run (March 17-21) of the County Fair. Rides, FFA exhibits, games, live music, Junior 4-H Livestock show and auction, and awesome fair food are on tap for this "gotta go and see" event that has been entertaining Pinal County residents and visitors for more than 50 years.

March 12th is the date of the 5th Annual Cesar Chavez Dinner. Local and county officials will gather to honor the memory of this incredible Arizona native who labored long and hard for the rights and dignity of American laborers. His rallying cry of "Si, Se Puede!" (Yes, It Can Be Done!) has transcended American labor issues and has served as a focal point for civil change around the world. For more information on the dinner event, contact Ralph Varela at the Pinal Hispanic Council (520.466.7765) or Gloria Leija at the Casa Grande City Hall (520.421.8600).

And finally, I am travelling to Washington, DC early this month as a part of the National Association of Counties annual legislative conference: the primary purpose of the meeting, of course, is to meet with members of Arizona's delegation and make sure that they are aware of, and will support our requests for federal funding for such projects as flood control planning, applying dust control coatings for Pinal's dirt roads, and widening/expanding the Hunt Highway. Appointments have been made and I expect that I will be able to make significant inroads on these and other issues.

During the conference itself, we'll be hearing guest speakers such as Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, and Rep. Gerry Connolly (D-Va.). In addition to featured speakers, excellent educational workshops are planned to cover issue areas ranging from health care to energy policy to the federal budget. A number of the scheduled workshops will focus on economic recovery and health reform as well. As we work to be sure that our county isn't ignored by the federal government and/or we receive our fair share of federal funding, these face-to-face meetings are invaluable.

David Snider, Supervisor
Pinal County District 3