

OCTOBER 2009 NEWSLETTER COLUMN

Believe it or not, this month has its full complement of days, but it does seem from this vantage point that we're going to run out of time to do everything that's lined up on the calendar. October seems to have joined the pantheon of February and March as THE months to have events to go to.

Many of us received our residential property tax bill(s) in the mail late last month. In terms of today's housing and real estate markets, it seems counter-intuitive that tax bills should go up rather than down. However, there are several factors "behind the scenes" that have combined to produce increases this year. Last month, Governor Brewer vetoed a bill that would have permanently repealed the State Education Equalization tax – that action meant that the tax (suspended for three years) went back into effect, thereby adding to most bills.

Secondly, the assessed value of properties in Arizona is set according to an assessment calendar (established by the State Legislature): that calendar contains an 18 month lag between the time the assessment "snapshot of value" is taken and the impact it has on your taxes. Thus, the 2009 tax bill that we all received is based on values set in the 2007 marketplace.

In the meantime, please take a careful look at your tax statement – it will clearly show you just exactly which entities are taxing you – whether the tax liability went up or down from the previous year – and the assessed value of your property. Property receive a Notice of Valuation from County Assessor Paul Larkin in March. 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 when you look at that Notice is 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 the end of each April. Since property taxes are generally driven by the valuation of property (real estate), this is an important notice. For more information on the Petition process, go to <http://pinalcountyz.gov> and click on the link to the Pinal County Assessor's Office. Please understand – by the time we receive our tax bill in September, the time for protest is long past: the time for action is in the spring when the Notice of Value is sent out to property owners.

Before I look at some fun things for your social calendar, let's talk briefly about The Flu. The first kind is now being called "seasonal flu" in order to differentiate between the annual varieties of flu and the H1N1 or so-called Swine Flu. Seasonal flu kills and/or incapacitates tens of thousands of Americans every year. The Pinal County Health Services District began administering seasonal flu shots for adults by appointment at all of the District's clinics: that arrangement will continue through the end of October and shots will cost \$15 per adult. Seasonal flu shots for children are free and do not require an appointment; however, to facilitate the process, parents are encouraged to bring their children with them when they get their flu shot. The H1N1 flu is now officially a global

pandemic flu but the total picture of its impact on us is yet to be measured but vaccine for the H1N1 flu is not yet available.

There are some basic measures that I urge you to undertake in order to either avoid the flu or minimize its spread. Wash your hands often in warm soapy water for at least 30 seconds each time. If you cough or sneeze, do so into your elbow. And if you're not feeling well – STAY HOME! If you're ill and go to work or school, you'll only infect others and prolong your illness.

OK – calendar time: October is Domestic Violence Awareness month and Against Abuse, Inc. is putting on the 23rd Annual Taste of Casa Grande on Sunday the 18th at Eva's on Pinal Avenue in Casa Grande. For more information, call 520.836.1239. The City of Maricopa is hosting its annual Founders Day event on Saturday the 10th in Pacana Park from 2 to 8 p.m. For more information, go to <http://maricopachamber.com>.

One last note for your calendar – the annual Casa Grande Veterans Day Parade takes place on November 7th at 9:30 a.m. Please consider making this a “Must Be There” event for yourself and your family: America's warriors have set aside their families and lives to defend our country (and in many instances, paid the ultimate price to protect us) – they deserve our thanks and gratitude. The parade is a great opportunity to join your neighbors and friends in saying “Thank you for your service!” Finally, the dedication of the Flag Retirement Memorial – a special facility designed to respectfully cremate U.S. flags that have seen better days – is slated for the 11th at 5:30 p.m. at Mountain View Cemetery. See you 'round the County!

David Snider, Supervisor
Pinal County District 3