

## FEBRUARY 2010 NEWSLETTER COLUMN

Since February is such a short month – and there’s such an awfully lot to do in these 28 days – let’s get right to it. But first, a brief interlude to remind us all that this is American History Month, Black History Month, American Heart Month, Valentine’s Day (Feb. 14 and don’t blame me if you forgot!) and Arizona’s birthday on Feb. 14<sup>th</sup>, as well as President’s Day (Feb. 15).

For those of you who have been wondering whether or not ADOT was going to be continuing to its widening of I-10 into this part of western Pinal County – wonder no more. Thanks to some adroit footwork by ADOT Board Chairman Delbert Householder, the funding for the next phase of the I-10 widening was preserved. Therefore ADOT has announced that beginning this year they will be starting a 10 month construction project to add a third lane in each direction along the interstate beginning at Mile Post 186.6 (just north of Val Vista) and proceeding south to just south of Earley Road at Mile Post 196.4.

Pinal County’s got dust. According to the EPA and the ADEQ, we’ve got lots of dust (as measured in microns in the PM<sub>10</sub> and PM<sub>2.5</sub> range) so much that the EPA notified Governor Brewer that Pinal County’s in Non-Attainment for compliance with their standards for dust in the air. Several public hearings were held last month on the size and location of the areas to be included in the area so designated: most of that proposed area is the western half of Pinal County.

Arguments have been made by me and others urging ADEQ and Governor Brewer to shrink the map to reasonable boundaries in order to allow us to focus our resources in an appropriate and effective manner on mitigation. The Governor has until the end of this month to respond to the EPA with a map proposal. Although the last public hearing took place on February 1<sup>st</sup>, ADEQ is accepting written testimony up until February 5<sup>th</sup>.

I’d like to take this opportunity to congratulate a number of individuals on the occasion of their being recognized and celebrated by their peers. In mid-January, Ak-Chin Indian Community members went to the polls to elect one of two candidates to its tribal council. Louis Manuel, currently Council Chairman, stood for re-election while former Tribal Councilwoman and Chairwoman Delia Carlyle sought to return to Council. After deliberation and a solid exchange of viewpoints, the voters chose Mr. Manuel. I very much look forward to working with Mr. Manuel and Tribal Council members in the coming years as we plan together to meet our common challenges.

The Chambers of Commerce in Casa Grande and Maricopa met within the space of a week last month to honor members of their local business communities. The one thing all of these individuals have in common is their drive for excellence, their commitment to the larger good, and their willingness to go the extra mile (or more) for their chosen communities and causes.

The Maricopa Chamber of Commerce chose to celebrate the accomplishments of the following individuals and/or companies: Business of the Year was H&N Landscape;

Non-Profit of the Year went to Recycling Center of Maricopa; Terri Kingery, Chamber Executive Director, was selected as Volunteer of the Year; the Golden Spike Award went to The Communicator; and the Maricopa Chamber of Commerce Citizen of the Year Award was given to Sue Carlisle.

The Greater Casa Grande Chamber of Commerce praised the contributions and accomplishments of: Police Chief Bob Huddleston as Community Leader of the Year; Business Leader of the Year was awarded to Roger Hill, Abbott-Ross Industries Plant (CG) Manager; and Mayor Bob Jackson was feted as the Chamber's 2009 inductee into their Hall of Fame.

My congratulations, admiration, and gratitude goes out to all of these exemplary individuals and businesses – they are the stuff of which our greatness is made and sustained.

In closing – and operating on the premise that everyone loves a good parade – there are two really great parades this month. Leading off on the calendar is the annual O'odham Tash Parade on Saturday morning, February 13<sup>th</sup> in downtown Casa Grande. This spectacular event features Native American dancers from the various Pima tribes plus bands, antique cars, horses, and other delights for the eyes and ears of on-lookers. Of course, in case you've missed the advertising, O'odham Tash runs from the 11<sup>th</sup> through the 15<sup>th</sup> with arts and crafts activities and booths, as well as a variety of rodeo events.

The very next Saturday – February 20<sup>th</sup> – is the date for a glorious parade event commemorating the 65<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the raising of the U.S. Flag on Iwo Jima. Sponsored by the Ira H. Hayes American Legion Post 84, the parade features lots of military units, veterans' organizations, Native American Code Talkers, antique cars, and a military fly-over. Immediately following the parade, the veterans muster in Ira H. Hays Memorial Park for addresses from those who fought in World War II. After that, there's a Pow Wow with lots of Native American dancing that will last well into the night. This annual event is a wonderful tribute to those who served and died for our country as well as celebrating those who currently serve in harm's way in defense of our country.

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Pinal County District 3