

SEPTEMBER 2010 NEWSLETTER COLUMN

Welcome to September everyone: our schools are in full swing, the field of those vying for public office has been narrowed and the race for the November 2nd General Election is on, and as usual there are lots of things to talk about.

Before I get too deep into a review of some other issues, I want to invite you all to join me for a very special and meaningful event. The Casa Grande Youth Commission has extended an open invitation to the community to join them as they once again present a ceremony to honor those who died in the terrorist attacks on our country on September 11, 2001. This moving program will begin at 6:30 p.m. at the band shell in Casa Grande's downtown Peart Park and conclude with a candlelight vigil. I hope to see you all there.

On August 31st, I participated in a very special ribbon-cutting ceremony commemorating the opening of the Oasis Pavilion Nursing and Rehabilitation Center on Rodeo Road in Casa Grande. This skilled nursing facility has 134 beds, is licensed by the Arizona Department of Health, and provides rehabilitation therapy services, in addition to the skilled nursing component, and has a special care unit. Western Pinal County has been without such a facility since mid-2007 – I'm really pleased that Oasis Pavilion is open for business.

Pinal County's Emergency Management Department invites you to an Emergency Operations Fair on Tuesday, September 14th from 8:00 until 2:00 p.m. in the CAC Corporate Center at 540 N. Camino Mercado. Attendees will be able to view various pieces of emergency operations equipment, interact with first responders, and gather materials and tips on how to prepare for the disaster we never thought would happen to us. Speaking of disasters and emergency operations, did you know that one of the critical elements of Pinal County's Emergency Management system is a cadre of civilian volunteer ham radio operators? They're a part of the RACES organization.

The mission of the Pinal County Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES) communications group is: "To operate, and maintain reliable, continuous supplemental and emergency backup communications in support of the Pinal County area emergency needs." RACES is a public service communications group that provides emergency communications by volunteer members in times of extraordinary need.

Traditional RACES operations involve emergency message handling on Amateur Radio Service frequencies. These operations typically involve messages between critical locations such as hospitals, emergency services, emergency shelters, and any other locations where communication is needed.

Whenever the need arises, trained radio communications personnel are ready and prepared to help. RACES groups develop and maintain their communications ability by training throughout the year with special exercises and public-service events. Our Pinal County's Emergency Management team is very fortunate to have a small number of local

volunteers for our RACES group; however, more volunteers are needed to ensure adequate assistance in times of emergencies. Please check the following website for further information: <http://www.pcecg.org/>.

By now, most of you Gentle Readers know that our County Manager Terry Doolittle has informed the Board of his intention to retire in October of this year. After due deliberation, a “head-hunter” or personnel recruitment company was selected (CPS Executive Search) and a national level search was mounted. 41 successful applications were received by the August 6th deadline – the recruitment firm spent the balance of August reviewing them for compliance with the job’s requirements. On the 1st of September, the Board met with Mr. Satow of CPS to review all of the applications and agreed upon a short list of candidates for interviews with the Board. Those interviews will take place on September 16. If agreement is reached on a successful candidate – and a contract is negotiated – soon thereafter, it is my hope that we have the new manager in place by the end of October.

Beginning on September 14, 2010, Pinal County is hosting a series of evening sessions to acquaint the public with the duties of the county, its budget structure, services that are mandated by statutes and more. Sessions begin every Tuesday at 6 PM (except for September 28, an evening when there is no session planned) and will last 60 to 90 minutes.

Sessions are scheduled for 6:00 p.m. in the Board of Supervisors’ Meeting Room at 31 North Pinal Street, Building A on the following dates: September 14, and 21 ... October 5, 12 and 19. Pinal County’s elected officials have been invited to provide overviews of the services that they deliver. Managers who oversee specific programs will also have an opportunity to present the services they provide and entertain questions from interested residents.

I intend for these forums to be interactive, with opportunities for open, honest dialogue between taxpayers and county officials and staff. The meetings are open to the public – anyone with an interest in their government and the use of their tax dollars is welcome to attend these free sessions.

David Snider, Supervisor
Pinal County District 3