

## PINAL COUNTY LIFESTYLES JUNE 2009

Welcome to June and as the temperature outside soars and kids (and their parental chauffeurs) race from recreational opportunity to non-traditional learning opportunity, life in Pinal County government shows little sign of slacking off for a summer vacation. Issues of budgeting for the Fiscal Year 2010, adoption of a new Comprehensive Plan, the beginning of a process to review and revise the County's Zoning Ordinance, and continuation of dialog with various groups with a stake in mitigating PM10 dust issues are among the things on our "to do" list.

But before I leap into those issues, I'd like to salute a little known Class of 2009 – but they're 16 people who graduated from a program that's not widely known (yet). I'm talking about the Hispanic Leadership Institute which is the brainstorm of the Latino Familia Initiative and Central Arizona College with an enormous assist from Valle del Sol. This 10 week course brings people of diverse workplaces and cultural backgrounds from all parts of the county together in order to promote participation in leadership roles within Pinal County. These dedicated graduates are all employed locally and added the course load of evening seminars to their full work days. I salute them for their dedication and passion for improving our county – and thank you LFI, CAC, Valle del Sol and the program's sponsors for their vision and commitment to our County's future.

Now on to the on-going process of moving our county forward during these times of economic uncertainty. The Board and county staff have been diligent over the past 30 months – yes, we started down this path in early 2007! – in working with residents and other stakeholders on crafting a new Comprehensive Plan that will help guide land use and development in general in the unincorporated areas of the county. After literally hundreds of public input sessions and meetings, the final draft plan has been reviewed, "cussed, discussed, and re-discussed" by the county's Citizens Advisory Committee as well as the County's Planning Commission – it now awaits consideration and action by the Pinal County Board of Supervisors.

Ultimately this document will provide a clear statement of our intentions for land uses in Pinal County and level the "playing field" for all who want to help us grow and develop. As I've said elsewhere, this final version to come before us is a good one and it is my fervent hope that the Board will act positively inasmuch as there are yet policy documents that desperately need review and revision: the County's 1964 Zoning Ordinance is one such set of policies that immediately comes to my mind.

Another project on the County's plate involves a continuation of efforts to work on plans to mitigate PM10 dust in advance of any regulatory activity by the Environmental Protection Agency. These microscopic particles in the air occur for a number of reasons: vehicles on dirt surfaces including roads, construction activities, rock and sand extraction operations, naturally occurring wind events, and concentrated animal feeding operations, etc. The focus of these discussions is twofold: achieve a narrowing of the scope of the

problem to an appropriately sized area and coordinate collaborative efforts to identify and implement appropriate measures to mitigate the problem.

The Board will also be considering the adoption of its final FY 2010 budget. By now the informed reader knows that in order to create a balanced budget, we worked with all of our managers (elected officials and appointed department heads) in reducing the budget by some 10 percent. Wide-spread operational efficiencies have been implemented, along with early retirement incentives, a hiring freeze (with the exception of public safety positions), salary reductions, and (sadly) reductions in force. Obviously income from sales taxes and permit fees is down – in some instances to pre-turn of the century levels – and although we continue to grow in population, the relevant revenues are greatly diminished.

The Board is committed to doing its best to maintain our ability to ensure the public's safety; however, despite the best efforts of our dedicated employees, the public may notice some deterioration of service delivery. Lines at counters, calls back from staff, responses to emails, etc. may take longer than in the past because our staff is doing more with less. I know I speak for my fellow Supervisors and on behalf of all of our employees when I say that we'll be doing our best to maintain current levels of service – and if it gets a bit frustrating when our responses aren't optimum, please know that that frustration is shared on both sides of the transaction.

*David Snider*

Supervisor, Pinal County District 3