

PINAL COUNTY LIFESTYLES

APRIL 2010

Welcome to the April edition of *Pinal County Lifestyles*. As you know by now, Editor JJ has asked us all to put a little **green** in our columns this month. So I'm going to do my part and ask you all to plant a flower or tree or whatever strikes your fancy to help us all celebrate Earth Day on April 22nd. We've only got this one planet and no fall back plan if we mess up so let's all do our part to ensure a verdant Planet Earth. And speaking of green, here's some of what's going on at the County level in this vein.

All County buildings now feature energy efficient lighting and heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) equipment. An energy efficiency contract awarded back in 2000 resulted in a permanent annual energy savings of \$1.2 million – even after paying for the new equipment.

The heavy equipment we use to build and maintain roads are fueled by ultra-low-sulfur or “Clean Diesel” fuel. The majority of diesel fuel sold for automotive use in the US is the clean variety but fuel with higher sulfur content is still available for non-highway and heavy equipment use. Shifting to ultra-low-sulfur fuel reduces the amount of particulate emissions from the heavy equipment (dust and dirt in the air). Given the air quality issues we face in Pinal County, this was a logical and necessary move that happens to also provide a positive impact on the environment.

Pinal County has adopted the 2006 International Energy Conservation Code as drafted by the International Code Council. This document establishes construction and design requirements for efficient buildings. This may come as a surprise to many but Pinal County's building code currently allows for energy-efficient alternative construction methods such as adobe, rammed-earth and straw bale construction. And we are in the process of examining possible ways of rewarding energy efficient and/or Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design (LEED) certified construction in our building codes.

We even allow for gray-water systems. If you aren't familiar with gray water, it is recycled water for use in non-potable applications such as landscaping or toilet flushing. Community lakes, ponds, golf courses and common areas are increasingly filled or irrigated with treated wastewater. The County asks all new developments to minimize open water features or prove their beneficial use as part of the zoning process. We also support groundwater recharge projects that seek to replenish water pumped from underground aquifers with water from wastewater plants or CAP sources.

As many of you know, I am also a strong advocate for responsible, conservation-driven water policy. The new Comprehensive Plan addresses the need for pro-active awareness of the need to manage water resources to ensure a sustainable future. While I'm serving as Supervisor, I will not let Pinal County grow in a way that squanders the precious natural resources that will be needed by future generations. That's why I'm proud to be a member of Governor Brewer's Blue Ribbon Panel on Water Sustainability that's looking at better, more effective ways of using reclaimed and recycled water to make sure we can sustain our state's growth into the future.

Speaking of doing something nice for someone this month – why not thank an Animal Control Officer for being the voice for our animals during ACO Appreciation Week (April 11 through 17)? The men and women who devote themselves to this sometimes thankless, dangerous, and often heart-breaking career with the sole mission of helping our feathered, furred, hooved, clawed, winged, and scaly fellow travelers on this planet. Their job is not without peril: animals needing to be removed from abusive environments often turn on the helping ACO – and sometimes so do the humans involved. And try as they do to find happy homes for the animals they rescue, they’re not always successful and it falls to the ACO to deal with that as well. Thank you, Animal Control Officers, for doing what you do as well and as humanely as you do ... I could not do your job and I thank you for being there for them and us.

If you’re looking for something “unusual” to do this month, please consider travelling to Maricopa and spending Saturday, April 10th with members of the Ak-Chin Indian Community during their Him-Dak Celebration. Him-Dak means “Our Way of Life” in Pima and tribal members come together to share their heritage with their children and neighbors. For more information on this wonderful day of celebration, go to <http://www.ak-chin.nsn.us>.

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