

PINAL COUNTY LIFESTYLES

AUGUST 2011

What? It's August already? Seems like I just finished saluting the end of May and the beginning of what promised to be a long hot summer! I was sure right about the summer temperatures but the time sure flew by.

OK – so as long as I'm acknowledging that this is August, it's appropriate to call attention to the start of school this month. Please don't forget that the traffic laws (and common sense) mandate a speed limit of 15 mph in all school zones, when the school crossing signs are deployed – and it's illegal to pass in that designated zone when the crossing signs are out in the street.

Fortunately most children remember (for the most part) not to cross a street unless there's a crosswalk with a school crossing guard – but it takes only one forgetful child and one distracted or forgetful driver and we'll have a tragedy. Please join me in slowing down and driving defensively around our schools and their crossings.

While we all eagerly wait for the end of summer and a resumption of cooler temperatures (both at night and during the day), there's still a nighttime danger I'd like to call to your attention: West Nile Virus-positive mosquitoes. The first positive West Nile virus mosquito sample of the 2011 season was trapped in the City of Maricopa in June. Pinal County performs routine surveillance to detect the presence of West Nile virus in the mosquito population.

When and only when a WNV-positive mosquito is found, Pinal County (or the local government) will spray the affected area. Substantial West Nile virus activity was reported last year and it is unknown how serious this year will be. Public Health officials at the state and local level urge people to take protective measures to avoid mosquito bites and reduce the places mosquitoes live and breed.

That means eliminating mosquito-breeding sites around the home by removing standing water in potted plants, tires, bird baths and other containers where water may collect. For more information on our effort to "Fight the Bite" go to <http://pinalcountyaz.gov> and follow the links to the West Nile Virus home page or call 520.866.6200.

And now on to some budget news. As you've undoubtedly learned in our local media, the County adopted a final budget of \$357,196,950 – a 17% decrease from last year's budget of \$414M. The reduction came about as a result of a number of things: my insistence on keeping the property tax rate flat (at \$3.99) which in turn meant a decrease of approximately \$5-6M in revenues; a demand from the State of Arizona for \$2.6M directly from our General Fund; another \$4.2M of cost and program shifts from the State of Arizona; and a loss of some \$50M in revenues that will take place after October 1 when Pinal County will no longer be the provider/contractor for the Arizona Long Term Care Program.

The adoption of this budget is part of our strategy to respond to the economic stresses that confront all of us at both the personal and organizational level. We have reduced programs and personnel where possible and/or warranted. We are continuing to explore ways to streamline

operations and identify additional efficiencies. And Pinal County is stepping up its efforts to collaborate with local and regional economic development entities in order to pursue the “other side” of the Pinal economic equation. We must find new manufacturing jobs and new industries for Pinal County. We need to find companies that will export our goods and bring in new money and jobs. Right now we need to attract and add industrial and manufacturing capacity to the staples of agriculture, mining, transportation, and cattle – it’s our way through the tunnel into a prosperous tomorrow.

One last thought before saying *Adios*. On the morning of Saturday, September 17th – you are all cordially invited to the second annual Celebrating Women of Today & Tomorrow. This marvelous event is an expression of our community’s commitment to enhance healthy, productive relationships by offering motivation, communication strategies and information to help participants make positive life-long decisions for mothers and their 5th grade daughters. As a sponsor of the event, I must say the enthusiasm and passion exhibited for these positive goals by the 45 pair of mothers and daughters during last year’s event was nothing short of inspirational.

For more information and registration data for the event, contact the United Way of Pinal County at 520.836.0736 or 1.800.390.0736 or go to <http://www.unitedwayofpc.org>. I hope to see at one of our fine community events in the District this month – stay cool!

David Snider

Pinal County Supervisor District 3