

## PINAL COUNTY LIFESTYLE – SEPTEMBER 2010

Eight months gone and four months to go – and if we're very fortunate, we have only 30 more days (give or take a week or so) before the hot, muggy, monsoon weather breaks for good and Fall arrives. Maybe it will help that the Autumnal Equinox takes place on September 23<sup>rd</sup>.

Back in July, I attended the 2010 National Association of Counties (NACo) annual conference. Two of my conference days were filled with meetings of the Environment, Energy and Land Use (EELU) Steering Committee as we prepared our recommendations on policy statements or positions to be included in NACo's federal legislative platform. Among the policy positions advocated by our committee was a statement of opposition to "any legislative or regulatory proposals, such as a cap and trade system or carbon tax, that would pass on direct and indirect new (implementation) costs and/or taxes onto counties, communities, and businesses." That legislative policy plank was subsequently adopted by the NACo Board of Directors.

We also reaffirmed our determination to oppose any efforts to remove the terms "navigable" and/or "navigable waters" in the Clean Water Act. Without the inclusion of those two terms in the CWA, the federal government would exercise jurisdiction over our washes, roadside ditches, gutters, etc. and needlessly complicate our daily lives. During its annual business meeting NACo also adopted a policy plank stating that "NACo opposes any attempts by the Environmental Protection Agency to impose regulations of Particulate Matter (PM) at levels more stringent than current standards."

During the two days of conference programming that followed committee work, I attended a number of workshops and programs dealing with topics that ranged from county collaborations with local farmers to create and maintain local food systems to benefit residents' health and our local economy to the new EPA air quality standards (ozone) and the implications for Pinal County to lessons to learn about disaster recovery to a session entitled "Preserving Civility, Decorum and the right to leadership."

Throughout the conference there were several common threads: local economies are stuttering, the federal government is doing either too much or not enough, state (and/or federal) governments are usually not the friend of counties, and addressing the paradox of constituents demanding a decrease in taxes and a continuation of programs and services at current and/or expanded levels. However, having said that, virtually all of the commissioners/supervisors I spoke with were in agreement that it continues to be an honor to serve the citizens of our respective counties.

Pinal County's Emergency Management Department is moving around our county with their Annual Emergency Preparedness Fair – and it's coming to western Pinal County on September 14<sup>th</sup>, specifically to CAC's Corporate Center at 540 N. Camino Mercado in Casa Grande. During the Fair which runs from 8 a.m. until 2 p.m., attendees will learn more about emergency preparedness for businesses, working with the media during emergencies, planning for violence in the workplace, etc. There will also be booths staffed by the Casa Grande Fire Department, Arizona Division of Emergency Management, Arizona State Emergency Response Commission, and many more. Given today's environment, we all need to know more about how to plan for and set aside resources for the unexpected. I hope to see you there.

Work continues apace on tying up loose ends for the 2010 Decennial Census. Census workers in Arizona – and most certainly here in Pinal County – are fanning out to follow up on the first wave of contacts with citizens in order to perform Vacant Delete checks and Field Verifications. In each case, Census workers can be identified by their white Census badge and black Census bag. Remember, the population data collected in the decennial Census is the basis for all kinds of things, including the number of Congressional representatives each state has, as well as where legislative districts (from Congress to county) are drawn.

In closing, don't forget that September is both Library Card Sign-up Month and Read-A-Book Month. September also plays host to: National Grandparents Day (9/12), National Blueberry Popsicle Day (9/2), and the 197<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first use of the Uncle Sam image (Sept. 3, 1813). More importantly, this is the month for honoring the Constitution of the United States of America during the week of Sept. 19<sup>th</sup>. Finally, 9 years ago – on September 11, 2001 – the United States was attacked by foreign terrorists: a day we must never forget.

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