

PINAL COUNTY LIFESTYLES

OCTOBER 2011

Greetings Gentle Reader – welcome to October and what passes for a fall season here. My first clues to the change in the seasons are subtle but unmistakable: the sky's color returns to a deep cerulean blue (as opposed to summer's milky blue), it's no longer necessary to maneuver my car so as to position my steering wheel so its covered by the shadow of a telephone pole as I park, and the license plates in town begin to change colors as winter visitors return. Ah well – on to weightier matters.

By now, property owners in Pinal County should have received their 2011 property tax bills. Issued by County Treasurer Dodie Doolittle's office in early September, the tax notice looks different and will hopefully be easier to read and understand. Aside from changes in the size and colors, additional explanations about school district tax rates are moved to the reverse side of the form. Property owners can also receive future property tax bills electronically by contacting her office at treasurer@pinalcountyaz.gov.

One item that's missing from this year's notice is a specific line item detailing the impact on the County's budget as a result of program and cost shifts enacted by the state legislature. Beginning in the 2008-09 fiscal year, the state balanced its budget by shifting the costs to provide state services onto county taxpayers. In 2011-12, the legislature shifted additional costs into your local tax bill. The County-specific tax figure (\$3.99) this year reflects **\$0.2369** per \$100 Assessed Value as the result of the state's FY2011-12 budget adoption. Some of those shifted costs and programs are connected to the Arizona Department of Public Safety, the Motor Vehicle Division, salaries of judges, a mandated cash contribution to the state, treatment for sexually violent persons, and other costs that used to be paid by the state and are now shifted to counties.

Before I move on to some “must-go-and-participate” events for your calendar, I should report that Pinal County continues to attract the attention of various media outlets. Recently Roger Yochem (*Inside Tucson Business*) wrote a column entitled “Canadian Investors see future logistics hub with Marana and Pinal County.” It appears to me that there's often times a slight tone of “you've got to be kidding me – Pinal County?!?” in some of these stories. It sure feels good to surprise the rest of Arizona when they discover what a great place Pinal County is for working, living, and raising a family.

OK – on to the calendar. Saturday, October 9th is the date for the Casa Grande Valley Historical Society's First Annual “Hot Wings for History” cook-off. The event takes place between 11 and 4 that day on the grounds of the Museum (110 W. Florence Blvd.). It's a fun-raiser for a great cause – for tickets and more information call 520.836.2223.

Since you'll have had fun that Saturday, you will be able to really chow down at the 25th Annual Taste of Casa Grande the following Sunday (October 16th). This iconic fund-raising event for Against Abuse, Inc. brings together some 25-35 local area restaurants and they serve up their best foods and recipes all Sunday afternoon from 1 to 4 p.m. The Taste event first debuted at The Property Conference Center as the result of conversations between AA,I Director Pat

Griffen and restaurateurs Michael and Nancy Jackson – so it's only fitting that the 25th annual event return to the Property. Tickets are available from any AA,I Board member (including yours truly) or by calling 520.836.1239. Y'all come hungry ... you sure won't leave that way!

Then y'all can run over to Maricopa and help them celebrate Stagecoach Days (October 21-23) and work off all the food you've consumed during the last two weekends. Most of the activities will take place within the confines of Pacana Park on Porter Road. There'll be arts, crafts, food booths, family activities galore, and lots of other things for the whole family. I hope to see you there. For more information, contact the Maricopa Chamber of Commerce – 520.568.9573 or <http://www.maricopachamber.com>.

Finally, if you're a volunteer-minded person, consider signing up with the United Way of Pinal County to help senior citizens with their taxes through the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program. It's not as hard as you think and the rewards are awesome. Go to <http://www.unitedwayofpc.org/vita> for more information or call Ricardo Banuelos, VITA Program Manager at 520.836.0736.

See you around Pinal County one of these days,

David Snider

Pinal County Supervisor District 3