

PINAL COUNTY LIFESTYLES  
APRIL 2009

Long before “Going Green” was a trend, successive Boards of Supervisors were hard at work making energy efficiency a part of doing business in Pinal County. Why? It makes good business sense. And today, it makes more sense than ever before. The average home today is larger than the homes our parents grew up in. We plug in a lot more stuff. We’ve become an automated society where a pop culture and Star Trek technology fits in the palm of our hands.

I’m happy to report that our efforts to date are paying off and am encouraged by the additional opportunities that emergent technology offers. You can count on me to continue pressing for energy-efficient and green technology when and where it makes sound economic sense.

As many of you know, I am also a strong advocate for responsible, conservation-driven water policy. The new draft Comprehensive Plan update 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.

Let me share some specific examples of how Pinal County is influencing or exercising its emphasis on sustainable, green policies and initiatives.

By carefully evaluating the costs of more efficient products and equipment, we can determine the energy savings and how soon or how long it will take to recoup any premium costs for upgrading the equipment. 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.**

**Did you know that Pinal County has 126 drop sites for recycling cardboard, newspaper, plastic, can and paper? The County recycled 1,398 tons of material in 2008. Mandated by state statute, the County's waste tire program has seen steadily increasing volume to the point that we now take in and properly dispose of an average of 10,800 tires per month.**

**Many of you may recall news coverage from a few years ago that extensive studies across the US discovered traces of drugs in water supplies. Various theories were advanced about whether the water supply in some cities was actually contaminated but experts agree that flushing unused medication was a contributor. Last year Pinal County, through the efforts of the Sheriff and County Attorney, became the first US County – or one of the first – to obtain authorization from the Drug Enforcement Agency to collect unused, leftover or expired prescription drugs. Today, drugs are properly disposed of, per DEA guidelines, to ensure that they are kept out of landfills, out of our water supply and away from children.**

**Count on us to continue leading the way to a greener, brighter, cleaner future.**

**It makes cents to go green,**

***David Snider***

**Supervisor, Pinal County District 3**