

PINAL COUNTY LIFESTYLES

JUNE 2011

Welcome to June Gentle Reader. Even though this is traditionally the first month of summer vacation (students only need apply because the rest of us are hard at work this month!), there is quite a bit happening. So let's get to it.

Pinal County has received \$3.17M in federal Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP3) funds. The funds are made available through the U.S. Housing & Urban Development (HUD) Program's Neighborhood Stabilization Program which provides targeted emergency assistance to state and local governments to acquire, redevelop or demolish foreclosed properties. The County will be using its \$3.17M allocation to address foreclosure issues in four "areas of greatest need" – as defined by HUD guideline criteria.

In addition to adhering to the HUD criteria, input from local governments in Pinal County was used to determine which neighborhoods were eligible. The areas chosen are select neighborhoods within the cities of Apache Junction, Casa Grande, and Coolidge. Much of the funding will be used to help qualified home buyers with down payment and closing cost assistance as well as financing for rehabilitation assistance to purchasers of NSP3 properties.

To learn more about the specific income and financing requirements, please contact the Pinal County Housing & Community Development office Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to Noon by email (nsp3@pinalcountyyaz.gov) or by phone at 520.866.7203. A copy of the application form can also be downloaded from the County's web site <http://pinalcountyyaz.gov/departments/housing/pages/neighborhoodstabilizationprogram.aspx>.

Kudos goes to the winners of this year's Earth Day Art Recycling Contest which was once again run by those green folks at the Recycling Association of Maricopa (RAM). The Group Project Winner was the Kids of the Ak-Chin Indian Community Library (grades 1-7). Best of Show honors went to: Lloyd Clark who built an airplane from recycled materials. Nancy Smith was the winner in the Adult Category while Dexter Hawley (kindergarten student at Santa Cruz Elementary School) took home the green ribbon in the Student Category. Well done everyone!

One more tidbit from the folks at RAM: during an 11 day neighborhood cleanup effort in the Heritage District of Maricopa (in conjunction with the City of Maricopa, the Gila River Indian Community, the Heritage District Advisory Committee, and Pinal County – 8,488 tires were collected, transported to Pinal County's Recycling Center (12725 Adamsville Road, Florence), and ultimately sold to ADOT for use in construction rubberized asphalt on existing roadways in Arizona. Now that's what I call a great use for those old tires!

For a third year in a row, Pinal County earned an "A" grade and a Sunny Award from the Sunshine Review. Sunshine review is a non-profit organization formed to advocate for transparency in government and recognize the most transparent websites in America. Heather Murphy, Pinal County Communications Director, said: "in 2010, Pinal County was one of only 39 government websites to receive an 'A' grade ... this year there were 100 Sunshine Award winners." To learn more, go to <http://pinalcountyyaz.gov> and look for the yellow "A" badge on the right side – the evaluation of our website and the full Sunshine database can be found there.

As you may know by now, County staff is working hard to come up with some viable maps for the new five member Board of Supervisors for Pinal County. These new districts – however they turn out – have to contain 75,000 residents (plus or minus 10%), respect “communities of interest,” geographical barriers, not split Native American communities, and take into account a number of other factors. The goal of the County is to “finalize” the new map configuration and submit them to the U.S. Department of Justice for their pre-clearance process by the end of this summer.

That won't be the end of the road for the process, however. Since the state's precincts are ultimately fixed by the final legislative and Congressional district maps – created by the Independent Redistricting Commission – we will have to resubmit our supervisors' maps after the IRC's work is completed. But it's our hope that we'll have created maps for the County's purpose that have essentially already passed DoJ muster and that any changes necessitated by the state and congressional maps will be minor.

Finally, I'll be spending time with the many incredible social service agencies and their personnel on June 10th as they come together for the 7th Annual Resource Roundup at Casa Grande's Holiday Inn. These dedicated professionals (and volunteers) are faced with greater and greater challenges as budgetary support dwindles and demand skyrockets. I'm proud to say that Pinal County supports this annual event that facilitates so much networking and resource-sharing. These hard working folks need all the support they can get.

See you around the County,

David Snider

Pinal County Supervisor District 3