

Greetings from Terry Doolittle, County Manager: I am requesting supervisors print this email and provide a copy to employees within their department who may not have an email account.

As you are certainly aware, the last several weeks have been very difficult for Pinal County and its employees. The announcement that former Pinal County Manager Dr. Stanley Griffis had pled guilty to six felonies committed while serving in a government capacity was truly a source of sadness, embarrassment, frustration and outrage for the people who live and work in our County.

As the Special Prosecutor has publicly acknowledged, Pinal County officials responded appropriately when Dr. Griffis was first suspected of improprieties. In fact, the fundamental decision to retain the services of former Maricopa County Attorney Rick Romley to conduct a thorough and independent investigation demonstrates the County's commitment to fully resolving these issues. Pinal County is deeply grateful of Mr. Romley's efforts and effectiveness. Regardless of Dr. Griffis' prior service or associations, it is important that all of us recognize that he has admitted to stealing hundreds of thousands of dollars from the people of Pinal County for which he must be held fully accountable. We have every confidence that the judge will impose a sentence that accomplishes this objective.

Although Dr. Griffis has pled guilty and is awaiting sentencing, this does not conclude Pinal County's duties and responsibilities. When we hired Mr. Romley, we asked him to do more than investigate; we also asked him to take a 'no-holds barred' look at the way Pinal County government is structured and operates. Within the next couple months, he will be issuing a full report on the administrative and organizational shortcomings that allowed Dr. Griffis to operate in a criminal manner. That report will be welcomed and an essential tool for improving county operations moving forward.

As important as the administrative report may be, it is important that everyone understand that the County Administration has already begun implementing changes to our structure. We have strengthened our internal controls and created greater checks and balances that will protect Pinal County residents, businesses, and government employees from such abuses in the future.

I believe Pinal County is at a critical crossroad. In the past, we relied upon our "small town values" and the close relationships among people in our county to conduct business. Now, we have to find a way to maintain that small-town feeling and friendliness while implementing systems to maintain public accountability.

In a way, this moment is reminiscent of the first time many of us were forced to lock our doors at night. Many of us are old enough to remember a simpler time when families didn't have to do that. While it is sad to see that the days of trusting our neighbors have gone, it is our obligation to protect the people of Pinal County and their assets.

When Mr. Romley completes his report, the recommendations will be made public. We will continue to provide our employees and residents with information as it becomes available. In addition to direct communication from this office, the public information portion of the Pinal County website www.co.pinal.az.us has established a link to post information regarding the investigation and corrective measures. More importantly, we are committed to take whatever action is necessary to ensure that this type of conduct never happens again.