Before I was a councilman, I was a Juvenile Probation officer and a member of Arizona Probation Officers Association Union (AZPOA). I had the opportunity to represent my fellow officers on issues like pensions and grievances. Labor Day is special to me because of that.

Earlier this year, folks in Bisbee observed the 100th anniversary of the Bisbee Deportation. That day back in 1917, hundreds of striking miners were loaded in cattle cars and dropped off in the desert outside Columbus, New Mexico.

While the mine owners were hoping to quash a growing national move toward recognizing the basic rights of miners everywhere the Bisbee miners demands were pretty basic: no blasting while workers were underground, full crews on equipment, and an end to humiliating strip searches at the end of their shifts.

Of course, not every labor dispute of the last hundred years ended the way things did on that day in Bisbee. Most here in the U.S. end in either a settlement between the two parties or defeat for the union. It is a reminder, however, that a lot of the gains that have been made for employees, from a five day work week to workplace safety, to overtime pay to employer paid health care, and were not easily won. Like so many struggles for human rights over the course of our history, much of what was accomplished by previous generations is taken for granted by the people who benefit from those struggles today.

I hear people argue that we don’t need unions anymore. It’s just the opposite: we continue to need a well-organized voice for working Americans as our economy changes. It is no accident that many issues, including the ever widening gap between worker and CEO pay, started happening around the time unions declined.

An obvious example can most be seen in weekly paychecks. Pay for the American worker over the last thirty years has not kept up with productivity. The average American worker is making more money...
for their employer, but is not seeing the benefits of that reflected in their paycheck. The Economic Policy Institute noted in a study in 2015 that productivity for the average American worker has gone up by 74% since 1973. Technology has made our factories and workplaces more efficient. That should, according to what we were taught in school, be reflected in workers’ paychecks. It is not. In that same time, wages have only gone up by 9%. The separation between productivity and pay can be found again and again, among both blue and white collar jobs. The trend has been accelerating in recent years. While the take home pay for the average worker has declined, pay at the very top has been increasing. When my parents entered the work force in the mid 1960’s, a CEO made about 20 times the average worker that they employed. Now, they make 296 times as much. It is hard to argue that the lack of wage growth is because companies can’t afford it when you see a statistic like that one. Interestingly, as union membership declines, the percent of income going to CEOs increases at a similar rate. In 1960, 31% of workers were members of a union, and the share of CEO income was 32%. By 1990, membership fell to 17% and CEO share went to 38%. Ten years later, membership was at 14% and CEO share was at 43%. The last year I found data for was 2012. That year, union membership accounted for only 11% while CEO compensation was up to nearly half of corporate income, 48%. Workers at the bottom end of the wage scale have seen little growth in their paychecks in that same time. That same EPI study broke out what’s been happening for middle-wage workers (those at the 50 percentile of income) and low-wage workers (those at the 10 percentile). Income growth for middle-wage workers has only gone up by 6% since 1979, but has actually fallen by 5% for low wage workers. How has this been happening? This is from the EPI study:

One of the main causes of stagnant wages and rising wage inequality is the decline of collective bargaining which has lowered the wages of both union and nonunion workers. The figure shows that the drop in the share of workers under collective bargaining contracts is the mirror image of the rise of incomes of the top 10 percent…This phenomenon occurs when collective bargaining achieves even modest penetration. The erosion of collective bargaining can explain from one-fourth to one-third of the growth of wage inequality between 1973 and 2007 and had a greater impact on men than women. This erosion of collective bargaining occurred despite large numbers of workers indicating they would prefer collective bargaining if they had a choice. But the political power of those with the most income, wealth, and power prevented the adoption of laws to modernize our labor–management system and enable workers to pursue collective bargaining. In other words, this is not an accident. A series of laws are in place to make joining a union at best less attractive or at worst nearly impossible in many of our workplaces. The pay gap and lack or real wage growth is not a bug, it’s a feature. When Monday comes around, make sure to remember the sacrifices our people have made to make our workplaces safer and more rewarding, but keep in mind how much more work there is to do. Happy Labor Day.Way.
**Houghton Road Open House**

The City of Tucson Department of Transportation and the Regional Transportation Authority invite you to attend a public open house to learn about the Houghton Road projects currently in construction or design. These projects are part of the overall plan to improve Houghton Road from Tanque Verde Road to Interstate 10 and part of the voter-approved $2.1 billion RTA plan.

The open house will be on Tuesday, September 12, 2017, from 5:30 pm to 7 pm at Empire High School Dining Auditorium, 10701 E Mary Ann Cleveland Drive by any time.

The presentations will cover four of the southern phases of the Houghton Road project: bridge over the Union Pacific Railroad, Union Pacific Railroad to I-10, Valencia to Mary Ann Cleveland Way, and 22nd Street to Irvington Road.

For more information, please visit the Houghton Road Corridor website at www.houghtonroad.info or contact Lori Lantz at lori@gordleygroup.com or 327-6077.

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**Save the Date—Ward 2 Town Hall**

We will be having a Ward 2 town hall featuring representatives of the Tucson Police Department, Department of Transportation and the Department of Transportation as well as City Manager Mike Ortega.

The town hall will be here at the Ward 2 office, 7575 E Speedway, on Wednesday September 13 from 5:30 pm until 7 pm.

RSVP to Odessa, 837-4252.
**Parks Programs**

**Holiday Arts & Craft Fair Registration:** Vendor registration is open for the Holiday Arts and Crafts Fair in Reid Park. The fair is scheduled for Thanksgiving weekend - Saturday and Sunday, November 25-26, 2017 from 9 am to 4 pm. For more information, visit tucsonaz.gov/parks or contact Susan Orrico, Event Coordinator, 791-4877. Attached is an event flier.

**Swim Fall Schedule:** The swim fall schedule began on August 3rd. For additional information: ttps://www.tucsonaz.gov/parks/pools-and-splash-pads

**Parents Night Out Program:** Parents Night Out at Udall Recreation Center on Friday, September 22nd from 4:30 pm to 7:45 pm. The program is for ages 5-11 years. Children participate in a supervised game, craft and watch the movie SING.

The cost is $4.00 per child, and due at time of reservation. The cost overs pizza, popcorn and drinks. Register by Wednesday, September 20.

**Fall Leisure Classes:** The first session of Fall Leisure Classes begins August 27 and runs through October 14. Session two of classes will run October 29 through December 16. Visit EZEEreg.com for details.

Call 791-4877 for more information or questions.
Please bring these items to the Ward 2 Office for the following charities:

**THE COMMUNITY FOOD BANK**—Non Perishable Items

**DIAPER BANK OF SOUTHERN ARIZONA**—Infant/Child/Adult Diapers

**TIHAN**—Personal Care Items for Individuals and Families in Need

**LIONS CLUB**—Eye Glasses

**DANCING IN THE STREETS ARIZONA**—Ballet/Dance Equipment

**CASA MARIA**—Plastic bags

**SR. JOSE WOMEN’S SHELTER**—Summer items and clothing, athletic shoes, back packs, tote

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**Mayor and Council**

The next Mayor and Council meeting will be on **Wednesday, September 6**. Regular Session starts at 5:30 pm following an afternoon study session. There is always a short call to the audience before the business portion of the meeting. Council chambers are located downtown at 255 W Alameda.

The agendas for the meetings are posted online at [http://tucsonaz.gov/ward2](http://tucsonaz.gov/ward2)