

A Message from Steve:

At Council meetings these past few sessions it is the budget challenge that has occupied the bulk of our discussion. Depending on whether or not the Governor's proposed sales tax increase passes on the special election in May, our deficit will range from between \$31 million to over \$40 million.

With those numbers, there are no silver bullets. It has been and will continue to be my mantra that we must grow our way out of this deficit - cuts alone will not get us there, and we cannot further burden the taxpayers. Neither of those is a long term fix to a structurally unbalanced budget.

It was with growing the sales and property tax base in mind that I moved to instruct the city manager to actively recruit large retail establishments in a manner that mitigate their effects on surrounding neighborhoods, and to refrain from recruiting those stores to areas in which they are simply inappropriate. The vote failed by a 5-2 margin; the mayor alone joined with me in this effort.

We won't get this budget balanced without growing the pie. Cuts, fees and taxes are not the solution. The conversation is not over. Perhaps there is a middle ground we can find to move towards a larger revenue stream that does not find it's way through the peoples' paychecks.

Some good news is that this week we will announce several private sector projects that are beginning, each of which will do what I am trying to achieve; that is, increased sales and property tax to fill the city budget coffers while expanding the menu of activity options in our community. Stay tuned for those announcements - entertainment and retail will both be in the mix. We can do this if we use government to catalyze the private sector and at the appropriate time, get out of the way and let the private sector do what it does best; that is, create jobs and enhance our community with the options for retail, activities, entertainment and more.

Out and around Tucson:

Each week I'm trying to get around to some of our local entertainment venues. This week I can suggest that if you haven't yet visited the newly minted Museum of Contemporary Art, pay them a visit. They have special exhibits and/or presentations several nights during the week catered to a variety of ages. Catch up with their schedule at info@moca-tucson.org.

Also, the Reid Park Zoo has something for children of all ages, and no two trips are ever the same. From their newly-built education building to the various animal exhibits, you'll come away having learned about, and having experienced the wonder of the animal kingdom. They do a great job. For program information and hours of operation, go to www.tucsonzoo.org.

This week there are two special events featuring great local talent. Tonight, the merchants of Main Gate Square are hosting the First Thursday Art Walk, with 30 local artists including Destanii aka the Poetess, live music by Chain of Fools, 'Round the House, and Odaiko Sonora Drumming Band. In case you haven't visited this lively business district, Main Gate Square is located on University Boulevard between Park and Euclid.

This Saturday is *Festival en El Barrio Viejo*, an outdoor concert on Cushing Street. Tucson's own Calexico is the headliner, along with several other local bands. This is a ticketed event, but we mention it here because it benefits Tucson's Community Radio KXCI. For more information, go to www.kxci.org.

The Graffiti Protective Coatings (GPC) has selected the Palo Verde Neighborhood Association (PVNA) for a one-day graffiti cleanup on April 10 from 8am-1pm. Representatives from the PVNA extended the boundaries for the cleanup to include locations within the Garden District Neighborhood Association.

The Blenman Elm Historic Neighborhood Association will host a home and garden tour April 11, 2010 from 12:30 - 5:00 p.m.

This home tour will feature homes, guest houses and beautiful gardens. Included in the tour are two Joesler homes, a Zendo, a Tudor, homes with guesthouses, a casita, and a garden that has drawn attention from *Better Homes and Gardens* and the Tucson Botanical Gardens tour. Another home was designed by architect Arthur Brown, Tucson's solar-design pioneer. The Blenman Elm Historic Neighborhood home tour will start at Grace St. Paul's Episcopal Church at 2331 E. Adams St. Tickets are \$10.00, of which \$1.00 goes to the Tucson Community Food Bank and the remainder will be used for neighborhood improvements. Email Contact: mykle@dakotacom.net

Make a Difference:

The University of Arizona's Mortar Board Senior Honorary organized another successful neighborhood clean up. About 350 UA students, staff, neighbors, and business partners came together to cover El Cortez, Northwest, Feldman's, Jefferson Park, North University, Rincon Heights and Pie Allen Neighborhoods. Thank you to all of the volunteers and thank you for including our Ward 6 Council Office in this great event.

Finally, it's not all about entertaining ourselves. I would like to encourage you to check out the Lend A Hand Senior Outreach website at www.lahseniorhelp.org. This is a wonderful program that works to provide assistance to the elderly in the form of transportation, errands, friendly visits, and more. The coalition includes central Tucson neighborhoods, faith-based groups and businesses. Take a moment to look them over and see how you might fit into their mission.

I am and will continue to be committed to making Tucson the best city that it can be.
Sincerely,

Kozachik

Council Member Kozachik