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Ward 6 Newsletter

Tucson First

January 19, 2016

In this issue...

Sonoran Corridor – World View.....	1
Grant Road Noise Study.....	2
Budget.....	4
More Budget.....	6
1998 Water Policies.....	7
Moving Ward Offices Downtown.....	7
Budget Big Ticket ‘Ask’.....	8
A Final Budget Add.....	10
Back to Animals.....	11
Puppy Mills.....	11
Southern Arizona Animal Food Bank.....	12
Ringling Brothers and Elephants.....	12
Texas Gun Laws.....	13
Paid Leave Time.....	14
Events and Entertainment.....	15

Sonoran Corridor – World View



This week, the Board of Supervisors will vote on an incentive package related to a new World View manufacturing and research facility that will go in on the Aerospace Parkway adjacent to Raytheon. They will build manned capsules to take people up into ‘near space,’ about 20 miles above the earth. To me, it looks like a kick. I suspect my bride would have issues with my taking the trip though (rather expensive for a Council salary).

Last October, World View completed a test flight that essentially keeps them on track for their 2017 goal of human private flights to the edge of space. The plant they’re planning to build out by Raytheon will be a huge step for us in





Important Phone Numbers

**Tucson Police
Department**
911 or nonemergency
791-4444

Water Issues
791-3242/800-598-9449
Emergency: 791-4133

Street Maintenance
791-3154

Graffiti Removal
792-2489

**Abandoned
Shopping Carts**
791-3171

**Neighborhood
Resources**
837-5013

SunTran/SunLink
792-9222
TDD: 628-1565

**Environmental
Services**
791-3171

Park Wise
791-5071

**Planning and
Development
Services** 791-5550

**Pima Animal Care
Center**
724-5900

**Pima County Vector
Control**
Cockroach: 443-6501
Mosquito: 243-7999

Continued: A Message From Steve

demonstrating the validity of completing the Sonoran Corridor that I've written about previously.

The World View facility will be a 120,000 square foot plant that'll open with 25 employees, with plans to expand that to as many as 400 workers. By 2020, they intend to host a payroll that'll be worth over \$25M, with an average annual salary of between \$55K and \$60K. They also plan on investing over \$32M in capital at the plant.

The arguments I've made in support of the Sonoran Corridor center around the idea that we will need these sorts of high wage jobs to fill our long-term structural budget holes. Congratulations to the county folks who have worked hard to get this project to this point. When we take the funding for our portion of the Sonoran Corridor build-out to you, hopefully later this year, World View will be an additional selling point.

I'll touch on some budget items later in the newsletter. But before talking about cuts, service reductions, and fee increases, it's key to put this item front and center in order to keep the message clear that our long-term success from a regional economic perspective lies in development. I'll be circling back to this from time to time as we talk more about bonding for the project.

Here are the data provided on the World View project by the independent economic analyst who did the county's financial review:

- 448 estimated new jobs
- \$25.3 million annual payroll by 2020
- \$55,000 average annual salary per worker
- \$32.3 million World View investment in equipment
- \$3.5 billion total economic impact over 20 years
- \$15 million estimated public investment

Source: Pima County/Applied Economics

Grant Road Noise Study



Last week, Amy and I sat in on the staff presentation of a noise study related to the west end of the Grant Road widening project. More of those will be conducted as the project moves eastward. The results of this segment were instructive and likely predictive of what we'll see in subsequent studies.

By way of background, when it was passed, the RTA needed to find objective measures by which to decide which design elements were going to be funded through the sales tax dollars they use to pay for the projects. For noise mitigation, they adopted Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) guidelines. Very briefly, those say that in order to qualify for a noise wall, a project will need to yield noise levels of 66 dBA or

higher or increase existing noise levels by at least 15 dBA. Depending on the level of increase, certain mitigation strategies can be funded with RTA money. The image above is a typical sound wall. The FWHAs standards say that it must be at least 10 feet in height, more than two homes must be affected by the project, and the cost per home for the construction of the new wall must be less than \$35K.



Another sound mitigation approach is the use of rubberized asphalt. The FWHAs standards followed by the RTA give rubberized asphalt a 3 dBA credit.

The study projects traffic assumptions out 20 years in the future – they have models that anticipate how much noise will be created by the anticipated numbers of cars. For the Grant segment studied (Stone to Santa Rita), the model did not show an increase in noise levels sufficient to justify RTA funding a mitigation sound wall. They have, however, planned

to use rubberized asphalt.

I won't go into all of the technical considerations used in conducting the study (rush hour, average vs. peak numbers, exclusions of certain types of noise such as planes and other things that spike sound levels, etc.), but what the study yielded for this segment intuitively suggests segments that are farther to the east may also have trouble qualifying for sound wall mitigation. The homes in this segment are right up against the widened roadway, not separated by an access road or other buildings.

The RTA adopted this objective measure as a way of having a standard that was more scientific than, as one staffer offered in a rather unhelpful manner, 'the people who complain the loudest get the funding.' The comment doesn't reflect how taxpayer money is or should be spent.

Comparisons are made to the Campbell Avenue (Grant to Elm) roadway. There's a wall on both the east and west side of the road. But it's not a 10' high sound barrier. It helps – I notice it every night walking home and listening to my radio. But it was funded by a combination of grant money, and Pima County bond dollars allocated for 'public art and beautification.' That line item doesn't exist in RTA projects.

I'll be reaching out to our legal people to begin a conversation about other funding strategies, expecting study results will conclude that the RTA won't be funding walls that some neighborhoods to the east of Campbell have already indicated an interest in seeing. There's lots of homework to do. The noise studies still have to be conducted, but it's important to be out ahead of the issue with some possible options ready to toss into the exchange.

Rubberized asphalt is effective in cutting down road noise, not engine noise. Sound walls are good for noise that's below the height of the wall, not noise coming from overhead (airplanes). None of them are foolproof, and all of them come at a cost. The outcome of the Grant study at the western end of the project was instructive and has set the gears turning to try to come up with alternate approaches to funding, based on my expectation that similar



Important Phone Numbers

Senator John
McCain (R)
520-670-6334

Senator Jeff
Flake (R)
520-575-8633

Congresswoman
Martha McSally (R)
(2nd District)
(202) 225-2542

Tucson Office: 520-
881-3588

Congressman
Raul Grijalva (D)
(3rd District)
520-622-6788

Governor Doug
Ducey (R)
602-542-4331
Tucson office:
520-628-6580

Mayor Jonathan
Rothschild
520-791-4201

ZoomTucson Map
[http://
maps.tucsonaz.gov
/zoomTucson/](http://maps.tucsonaz.gov/zoomTucson/)

results will be coming as we move east on Grant. We'll also have to start thinking of alternatives for other road projects – Broadway, for example.

Funding sources follow guidelines. M&C don't have the authority to sidestep those standards, nor do we have the financial capacity to put up the big dollars some of the project enhancements will cost. I've asked staff for some clarification on whether we're going to do real-time post-construction noise measures, or simply plan to rely on the computer modeling. When the issue is quality of life and/or property values, I'm not sure why we wouldn't go back after construction's done and verify the predictions we're seeing in the models.

Finally, it wasn't clear to me that specific mitigation decisions had been made prior to the demolition of structures. From a planning standpoint, it seems one would know ahead of time how the impact of a soon-to-be vacant lot would be buffered to prevent a loss in quality of life and/or property values on adjacent property.

Budget

As I mentioned last week, these budget talks are going to be complex and include multiple moving parts. We're past being able to focus on a single year. We need a long-term plan to pull ourselves to a structurally balanced position. I'm going to try to offer a few points each week that'll break down the whole conversation into some bite-sized pieces. That's to allow me to fully understand how the parts fit together as much as it is for your edification.

We 'balanced' our current budget using a combination of land sales and dips into our reserve funds. If we can find savings in the remaining five months of FY'16 to offset those dollars, our projected \$42M deficit for FY'17 can be reduced by that amount. Combined, the land and reserves amounted to about \$12M. So how do we chip away at that in the immediate term?

By far, the largest component of our budget is personnel, so if we want an immediate hit, we implement a hiring freeze. The goal is a net of about 130 fewer positions. That's the strategy staff has put on the table. Those vacancy savings aren't likely to get us all the way to the \$12M, but here's what looks possible as of today:

- a) Save about \$4.6M in general fund positions we leave unfilled
- b) Save another \$2.2M in enterprise fund jobs we leave unfilled – but help the general fund by filling those positions with current general fund employees.
- c) Due to the timing of the process, we might see an additional \$1M saved by having the retirement incentive we offered end on June 30, a month before the fiscal year closes
- d) We could see an additional \$1M in fuel savings that haven't traditionally gone back to help the general fund.

That's just under \$9M, not the \$12M we're looking for. But if those numbers materialize, they chip away at the land and reserve dollars we had planned on using to help this fiscal year, and reduce the FY'17 projected deficit from \$42M down to \$33M.

I'm hopeful, and yet I have continued to make the point that we won't know the full im-

impact of these vacancy savings until we see exactly which jobs were affected. Some are critical path positions to our organizational mission and we'll have to fill them. But the 'bite size' message I'm making is that in order to get us to a structurally balanced position, step one is reducing the size of our personnel costs – that means shrinking the size of the organization. What I've shown above is our immediate term approach.

With a \$33M deficit left on the table to begin the FY'17 talks, we clearly have more work to do. Here's the table I shared last week that contains some ideas we're going to consider for getting over that deficit hump as we go forward into FY'17:

Revenue Option	Potential Action	Potential Financial Impact
Public Utility Tax	4% to 4.5%	\$1.7 M
Telecom, right-of-way	50% increase	\$1.6 M
Zoo Entrance Fee	Increase by \$3	\$1 M
Bed Tax	Increase by \$1	\$1 M
Advertising Tax	Set at 2%	\$1 M
Business License Fee	Increase by \$5	\$200,000
Increase existing fees	Parks and Recreation Planning & Development Fire Courts Parking Police	TBD
Establish a Storm Water Fee	\$0.10 per month per Water Acct	\$270,000
Bus Fares	Increase \$0.25	\$2.5 M
Graffiti Cleanup	Move to Environmental Services	\$1.7 M
Code Enforcement	Move to Environmental Services	\$2.3 M

One component of that is an increase to zoo fees. I want to give that one some focus, largely to test if the \$1M savings is a believable assumption. What's the impact on attendance if we raise fees – will it help, or will it end up hurting the zoo revenue? What does history show us?

Right now, admission to the zoo is \$5 for kids, \$7 for seniors, and \$9 for adults. The admission fees were increased by \$2 across the board back in July 2012. In January of 2010, they were increased by \$1 across the board. That's the full \$3 being proposed – and we've already done it since I began serving on the council. We



need to look at the impact that has had on attendance and revenues.

In FY'09, they had 529,010 people visit the zoo. Following the fee increase in January 2010, they saw the numbers drop by 15,000. They continued below the '09 number in FY'11, and didn't recover until we opened the new elephant exhibit in March 2012. In FY'12, they had 585,000 people visit.

As I noted above, we increased the fees on July 1st, 2012. In FY'13, attendance dropped again by over 35,000 visitors, and stayed below the 585K level through FY'14. It wasn't until the baby elephant was born in August of 2014 that we saw attendance bump back above the level we saw when Expedition Tanzania opened. From the looks of things, you enjoy the elephants.

What about revenues? The proposal to increase the fees isn't intended to necessarily help the zoo, but instead to offset our general fund deficit.

Every year since 2009, the general fund has contributed between \$1.2 and \$1.5M to the zoo operations. Over that same time, the zoo has augmented its operations budget with admission and other revenues (concessions, etc.) with amounts from \$1.4M up to just over \$2M. When we increased fees in 2010, we saw our general fund subsidy to their operations go from \$1.2M up to \$1.5M in FY'11. When we raised them again in July of 2012, our subsidy went from \$1.4M in FY'12 up to \$1.6M in FY'13.

Though this data alone can't tell us for sure, there at least seems to be a connection between zoo entry fee increases, drops in attendance, and increases to our general fund subsidy. They're gonna feed the critters, regardless of whether or not you and I visit – costs are costs. If fewer of us are going, they sell fewer tickets, hot dogs, and t-shirts, and Nandi still eats three square meals per day.

We're going to have to do this sort of analysis on each of the line items shown in the chart above to see if our assumptions are valid. That is, by increasing fees, do we really increase revenues? The old adage 'if you want less of something, charge more for it' needs to be tested. In the case of the zoo entrance fees, it seems to hold true.

The Tucson Zoological Society has been keeping our heads above water with annual donations that are in the six figure range – largely allocated to our capital needs at the zoo. Without those kinds of partners, we wouldn't be able to do the sorts of things we do over there. The docents who give their time are similarly key to the operations side of the equation.



More on the Budget

We have five golf courses. The one in the photo is Silverbell. It's located out west of the freeway. It's losing money each year. So does our whole golf enterprise. We have to decide what to do in order to both preserve some municipal golf function, but also to reduce our out-of-pocket (that is, out of general fund).

Each course has land encumbrances. We cannot simply sell them

and turn the land over to the private sector. With that in mind, I've asked staff to list the specific encumbrances on each course, and note what possibilities exist for turning some portion of any of them into, say, an industrial park – some use that will yield tax revenues – while preserving the public space component we're obligated to keep. There are ground leases we should be able to explore, but we need to know what options exist.

I'm a big supporter of our whole Parks and Recreation menu – I believe it's a part of what makes us a great community – but I've said there can be no sacred cows, and so we have to at least explore what we can do to bring golf out of the red ink and back to a healthy fiscal condition. I'll share what I learn about those options when we get the answers to my questions.

1998 Water Policies

In 1998, Mayor and Council adopted a set of water policies, some of which could continue to have impacts on our general fund if we don't amend them. Here's an example.

The '98 policy said we were to charge the general fund for any costs associated with the administration of our low-income water rate program. Here's the language from that dated policy statement:

e. Low-income water users living within the City may be supplied a minimum amount of water at reduced rates or other form of subsidized water service at the discretion of Mayor and Council. The cost of this subsidy will be funded from the general fund of the City and not from water rates.

In 2011, we began charging those costs to the Water Department – but we never changed the language in the '98 policy. If left unchanged, the charges to the general fund could (perhaps *should*) be these:

Annual Program Cost

FY 13: \$531,105 + \$40,000 to Pima County's Community Action Agency to administer the program

FY 14: \$770,844 + \$40,000

FY 15: \$812,886 + \$40,000

Obviously, I don't unilaterally make policy changes. I have, however let staff know that our practice should match our policy statement. If we're charging Tucson Water for the low income program, we need to change our policy. If we're not going to change the policy, the general fund picks up the \$850K in costs. I fully support a change in the policy so we permanently take the \$850K into the water budget, where it has in reality been for the past few years. We don't have the cushion in the general fund to take a chance on seeing those dollars moved back, consistent with our policy language.

The ball is in staff's court to bring us a recommendation.

Moving Ward Offices Downtown

Last week, I shared the notion being floated around that we move some or all of the ward offices to City Hall. I also shared that I oppose the idea for reasons of accessibility, conven-

ient use of the ward buildings, and little upside financial gain. I also solicited your input.

I've heard from quite a number of people on the idea. Nobody has supported the move. In response to the newsletter item, Tucson Residents for Responsive Government (TRRG) sent us each this letter:

*Reaction to Ward Office Consolidation at City Hall Concept
TRRG Board Position Paper
Jan. 15, 2016*

The TRRG Board appreciated the inclusion of the Ward Office Consolidation Downtown concept in the Ward 6 Jan. 11, 2016 newsletter. Transparency is one of TRRG's essentials of good government. When an idea could have a major impact on residents, the earlier we are informed the better for elected officials to gauge public reaction. We are totally aware of the City's dire financial status, and we appreciate staff's exploration of many options to address the problem. Before any decision is made on this option, we would ask that the following be considered:

- *Access to Ward Council members at present locations—free, easy parking; flexible hours of meetings; distance and time needed to get to Ward office; psychological comfort in going to present location vs. Downtown*
- *Projected financial savings in closing offices—short-term gain in selling these sites would not solve the City's long-term financial problem but could have a negative permanent impact on the community; it is unlikely there would ever be an opportunity to get Ward Offices back into the Wards. How much money would be saved in staff consolidation is unknown to us*
- *Input from all who would be affected—elected officials and their staffs are short-timers; residents often stay in homes for a longer time than a council term; all should agree that consolidation is worthwhile. Any location change should be voluntary for each Ward*
- *Utilization of meeting rooms at Ward Offices—use of these City-provided spaces by non-profits can be almost 24/7; these impacted groups need to have a say in decision-making too*
- *Neighborhood services have been gutted in the past few years—losing Ward Offices can be seen as one more evidence that neighborhoods do not matter*

Ultimately, the TRRG Board cannot support what we know of this current proposal, doubting that even moderately satisfactory alternate arrangements can be created at City Hall. The resulting significant reduction in participatory opportunity is too high a price to pay for what we perceive as limited cost savings.

Feel free to continue offering your input. I don't know where the rest of the M&C stand on this, but I'm sure each of us will appreciate hearing how you all feel.

Budget Big Ticket 'Ask'

We will more than likely have to come to the voters to ask if you'll approve an increase in sales tax, or some other big ticket funding option. By way of reminder, here's the table

I've shared previously showing those options:

Revenue Option	Potential Action	Potential Financial Impact
Food Tax	Set at 0.5%	\$10 M
Construction Tax	Set at 4%	TBD
Restaurant	Increase by 0.5%	\$1.4 M
Sales Tax	2% to 2.5%	\$48-50 M
Rental Tax	Increase 0.5%	\$3 M

If we're going to get any of that passed, we will have to put in place a solid long-term budget plan, and we're going to have to avoid any significant anti-tax campaign. This week, we each received a letter from members of the business community speaking out strongly against the proposed requirement of paid time off, and/or an increase in the minimum wage.

Nobody on the council disagrees with either of those ideas in spirit. But the bigger, more strategic question for me is how we put together a compelling case to help us long-term with the budget. While I haven't decided at all on the wisdom of asking you to vote on any of the options shown in the table above, none of them will be an easy sell – and causing a fight over those other issues isn't timely.

Last week, the head of the Arizona League of Cities and Towns sent out this email:

From: Ken Strobeck"<kstrobeck@azleague.org>

Date: January 11, 2016 at 4:44:29 PM MST

To: Executive Committee"<ExecutiveCommittee@azleague.org>

Cc: Executive Committee Intergovs"<ExecutiveCommitteeIntergovs@azleague.org>

Subject: Reaction to State of the State Speech

Executive Committee members:

In today's State of the State address, Governor Ducey called on cities to resist passing "ill-advised plans to create a patchwork of different wage and employment laws" or he would work to change the distribution formula for revenue sharing. While there have been discussions on these issues, no city or town has brought them up as a legislative proposal. It is important to have a dialogue about these matters, and also to not overreact to today's speech. If you are asked about this issue, it is important that we are speaking with one voice.

Here are our recommended talking points:

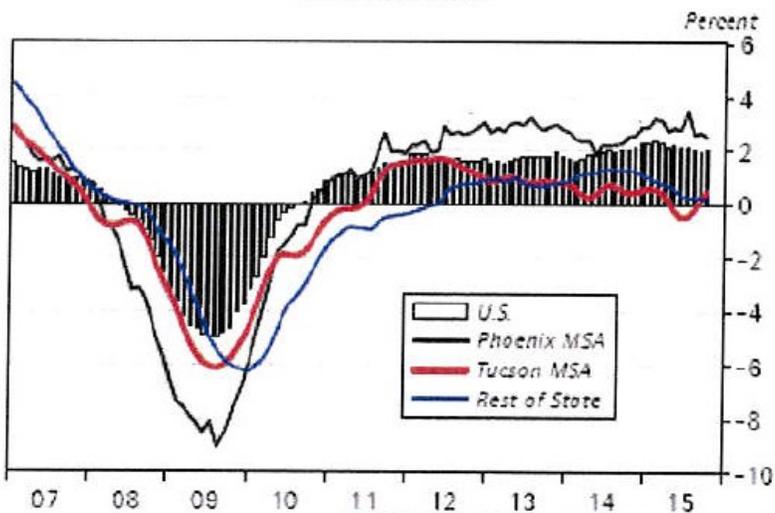
- *We commend Governor Ducey for the successes he has achieved in his first year of office, particularly the fact that the State has a balanced budget.*
- *Cities and towns stand with the Governor in taking steps to improve the State's economy. He points to Four Peaks Brewery as a great success story. We couldn't agree more...and the City of Tempe in which Four Peaks is located worked hard to create the environment in which this business can thrive and expand. Just like the City of Chandler played a key role in providing the opportunity for Tech Shop to start its first location in Arizona.*
- *Cities are in a unique circumstance when it comes to discussing regulations because they are so close to constituents on all sides of these issues. This sometimes means there will be public policy discussions brought up, especially when these discussions are not occurring on the state level.*
- *We certainly should not be penalized if someone brings up a public policy issue and we provide the forum for these discussions.*
- *We look forward to partnering with Governor Ducey and state legislators in growing our economy and providing safe, attractive communities for businesses and individuals to be successful.*

First, let me say that I don't do "talking points" at somebody's request. I don't mind sharing his thoughts, but I'll speak my own mind. This time, though, the sentiment is one I generally agree with. We're closer to our constituents than is the Governor or anyone in the State Legislature. We reserve the right to engage in discussions and debates about important social and budgetary topics. If Ducey wants to threaten legislation that penalizes localities, he's of course free to do that – and to run on that as a part of his platform next time around. But with all of that having been said, we need to focus on getting a strong private sector, and not driving them to surrounding jurisdictions by adding to their benefits costs in the ways that have been suggested.

There are stakeholder conversations going on right now about the paid time off. We'll see if anything constructive comes from them, or if they just demonstrate the divide that exists on that issue. For us, the budget has to be job number one.

Arizona Job Growth by Region

Over-the-Year



UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA / ELLER COLLEGE OF MANAGEMENT

A Final Budget Add

If you circle back up to the opening item on World View, it speaks to the need of growing our economy. Here's a table produced through a study done by the UA Eller School. It shows how our region is doing in comparison to the rest of the state in terms of growth trends.

Add to that the 'Tucson Economy Scorecard' Lucinda Smedley shared in this week's Trend Report:

Employment in Tucson was virtually unchanged from this time last year, and we ranked in the bottom 1/3rd in median home price, real GDP, as well as median household

income. Any growth that's projected is a result of diminishing fiscal drag associated with Federal and State impacts.

There are legitimate reasons our growth lags behind the rest of the state. We're too heavily dependent on military funding, and one of our three major economic centers is the UA. When the Federal Government cut military spending through sequestration and when the state balanced its budget by significantly reducing support of higher education, our local economy took a disproportionate hit. Climbing back to health is that much more difficult. In addition, the strength of the dollar versus the Mexican Peso hurts us from a tourism standpoint and on our export trade. The City Council doesn't control international currency values.

We're going to have to make reductions in the size of the city organization and look for new revenue sources as short-term fixes to the budget hole we face. But in order to change the trend lines you see in the table in the long term, we have to grow the economic base – Sonoran Corridor. I opened with that, and I'll close the financial part of this newsletter with that reminder.

Back to Animals

Onto something more fun than financial data. Animals. First, Pima Animal Care Center.

Throughout the month of January, PACC is adopting out both dogs and cats for a fee of \$20.16. You can do the adoptions out at the main campus on Silverbell or at any of the four local PetSmart outlets (Grant & Swan, Oracle & Wetmore, El Con, and Irvington & I-19.) The PetSmart hours are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., seven days a week.

Out at the center, you can pick up a new family member without an adoption fee if the animal is in their Silver Whiskers Club (over 5 years old) or if it has been at the center for over two weeks. They'll even waive licensing costs.

PACC staff, and the hundreds of volunteers who keep the place running, are committed to meeting the 'no-kill' goal. If you've got the room and can provide a great home for a new family member, they're making it financially affordable. If you already have a pet, they welcome you to bring yours along so you can see how they interact with the ones they have at the center.

Puppy Mills

While we await the court ruling on the Phoenix Puppy Mill ordinance lawsuit, I'm gratified to see that other jurisdictions are moving along with their own bans on the retail sale of dogs that come from sources other than local rescues and shelters. Most recently, Las Vegas joined the many others around the country with similar ordinances.

On January 7th, the Las Vegas City Council passed a ban on the sale of puppies, kittens, and even piglets from retail stores, unless they're sourced from a shelter or rescue. They have the same problem we do with respect to seeing their shelters over-stuffed with adoptable animals. The ban is intended to relieve that condition over time and to put one more nail in the puppy mill coffin.

I've previously shared the deplorable conditions that exist at puppy mills throughout the country. I'll keep an eye out for the settlement of the Phoenix appeal so we can bring our local puppy mill ordinance back for final consideration. Until then, good for the other cities that are joining the fight on behalf of humane treatment of our furry family members.

Southern Arizona Animal Food Bank



Last Saturday, I was pleased to help support the Donate-A-Thon hosted by Food for Horses. The event was held on the vacant lot at Speedway and Miramonte. The event served as Donna Deconcini's kick-off of her long hoped-for Southern Arizona Animal Food Bank.

Throughout the course of the day, over 3,000 lbs of food were donated, along with animal blankets and other supplies. The event included multiple local artisans, and even a massage therapist, many of whom donated prizes to the raffle that also went to support the effort. The event's music was pumped in courtesy of DJ Kelly Thames from Kamikaze Soundz, and there were food trucks on site throughout.

The purpose of the event was to raise money and food for the food bank. It was also to let rescues come and display their services. In that mix were Mostly Borders and Poms, PACC, the Hermitage, RUFF Rescue, Tucson Tails, and the Siberian husky rescue group.

During the event, I had the chance to meet dozens of you and chat about everything from advertising on bus stops to rheumatoid arthritis, and most passionately topics such as our pending puppy mill ordinance and the Tucson Greyhound Park. All in all, it was a successful event. I wish Donna and her group success in their work – as I do all of the rescues and shelters who serve the greater good of the community.

Ringling Brothers and Elephants



Most of us had the chance as kids to visit "The Greatest Show on Earth" and see the elephant act. Due to pressure waged by numerous animal welfare groups, Ringling Brothers will phase it out by 2018.

Ringling Brothers uses what are known as 'bull hooks' to train elephants. Here's what one looks like:



And here's how they're used to 'train' the animal:



By stabbing the elephant, they compel obedience.

The circus parent company, Feld Entertainment has now – finally – decided to do the right thing in response to concerns many of us have raised over the technique. They're going to send the Ringling Brothers elephants to the Center for Elephant Conservation in Florida, joining more than 40 that are already at that facility. In a statement announcing this change, the CEO of Feld, Kenneth Feld said this:

This is the most significant change we have made since we founded the Ringling Bros. Center for Elephant Conservation in 1995. When we did so, we knew we would play a critical role in saving the endangered Asian elephants for future generations, given how few Asian elephants are left in the wild. ...This decision was not easy, but it is in the best interest of our company, our elephants and our customers.

I'd prefer to see them make the change immediately – but at least they've publicly announced it and now won't be able to walk back the decision.

Texas Gun Laws



While I'm on the topic of things I find objectionable, in the State of Texas, you may now carry guns out in the open. That's their new law, mimicking what's already legal in Arizona. In Texas, though, the gun needs to be in a holster. That's not the objectionable part.

In addition to the new open carry law, they've made it legal to carry guns into their ten state-run psychiatric hospitals. Until this year, they were banned at state-run facilities. In fact, before now, even law enforcement officers who were allowed

Photo by Phillip Barrera

to carry into those hospitals would regularly lock them up before entering – out of an abundance of caution.

In these facilities, patients are being actively treated for psychiatric conditions. According to

Carrie Williams, a spokesperson for the Texas Department of State Health Services, “it’s generally best not to expose them to weapons of any kind.” But Terry Holcomb, the founder of Texas Carry, said a ban at psychiatric hospitals is “an illegal infringement on gun owners’ rights.” In reference to being allowed now to openly carry guns into the hospital wards he said, “Nobody would have asked for that. It’s not something we ever would have considered.”

Dumb luck. An unfortunate unintended consequence of poorly thought-out law.

State Representative Matt Rinaldi (R-Irving) said, “it’s the responsibility of the operators of the facilities to ensure that the patients are not around dangerous weapons.” He supported the change in the law.

The comforting news is that alcohol and tobacco are still banned for the psychiatric hospital campuses.

Our State legislature is now back in session. We’ll see what they’re concocting.

Paid Leave Time

Finally, as I mentioned above, the city is considering requiring employers to offer paid time off to their employees. A series of stakeholder meetings has begun to allow advocates from both sides of the issue talk things through.

I did not support the formation of the stakeholder group. I don’t think this is the right time for the city to be sending the message out into the private sector that we’re considering increasing the costs of doing business in Tucson. And yet, I fully understand and agree with the spirit of the idea.

I’ve seen several emails from people on both sides of the issue that are nasty, personal, and offensive. We are a better community than that. I’m inviting you to come and listen in on the conversation, but leave the personal attacks at the door – regardless of which side you support.

The next meeting will be held here at the Ward 6 office (3202 E 1st Street) on Thursday, January 21st from 6:00 until 7:30 p.m. The final meeting will be held out at the Ward 2 office (7575 E Speedway Boulevard) on the 28th – same time. Both are open to the public. Given the size of the stakeholder group, they may not have time for any public call to the audience at either of the meetings.

The stakeholder group is made up of a diverse cross-section of the community. Both sides of the issue are represented. Here’s who has been invited to take part:

- *Child & Family Resources Eric Schindler, Ph.D.*
- *UFCW Local 99 Molly McGovern*
- *University of Arizona College of Law, Nina Rabin*
- *Women’s Foundation of Southern Arizona*
- *Nextrio, LLC Cristie Street*

- *Bookmans Sheila Kressler, Community Relations*
- *Arizona Center to End Sexual and Domestic Violence, Alona Del Rosario*
- *Emerge Center, Ed Mercurio-Sakwa and Anna Harper Guerrero*
- *Pima County Health Department, Francisco Garcia*
- *YMCA Chief Executive Officer, Kelly Fryer*
- *Alliance of Construction Trades CEO & President, Jim Kuliesh*
- *Arizona Builders Alliance, Director S. AZ, Tom Dunn*
- *Arizona Grocers Association (AZ Food Marketing Alliance), Tim McCabe*
- *Arizona Lodging & Tourism Association President & CEO, Kim Sabow*
- *Arizona Restaurant Association*
- *Arizona Retailers Association*
- *Arizona Small Business Association, Director for Southern AZ, Joe Erceg,*
- *Downtown Tucson Partnership CEO, Michael Keith*
- *Fourth Avenue Merchants Association, Fred Ronstadt*
- *Goodwill Industries, Liz Gulick, and Lisa Allen*
- *Metropolitan Pima Alliance, Amber Smith*
- *National Association of Women Business Owners*
- *Southern Arizona Home Builders Association, David Godlewski*
- *Southern Arizona Lodging & Resort Association, Brent Davis*
- *Tucson Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Leah Marquez Peterson*
- *Tucson Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce, Mike Varney*
- *Visit Tucson, Brent DeRaad*
- *Small, Minority, & Women-Owned Business Commission, Patty Richardson and Ronnie Reyna*
- *Arizona Transportation Builders Association, Ramon Gaanderse*

Thanks to all who are serving on the stakeholder group. The exchanges need to reflect the civility this community is known for.

Sincerely,



Steve Kozachik
Council Member, Ward 6
Ward6@tucsonaz.gov

Events and Entertainment

Beat Back Buffelgrass Day

Saturday, January 23, 2016

Buffelgrass is a growing problem. This invasive grass is not only an eyesore, it is a wildfire waiting to happen. Buffelgrass threatens not only our beautiful natural areas but our homes and businesses as well. Join your neighbors and volunteer to remove buffelgrass from 22 sites around Southern Arizona: www.buffelgrass.org. Everyone is also invited to join the

Beat Back Buffelgrass After Party at Borderlands Brewing Co. (119 E. Toole Ave.) from 5-8pm.

UA Science Lecture Series on Climate Change

Mondays, January 25 - March 7, 2016 | 7 pm

Centennial Hall, 1020 E University Blvd

Climate change and its impacts are no longer merely abstract projections for the future. Instead, they are on-going and growing challenges for both humans and many of the natural systems upon which we depend. Scholars and the public alike need to brainstorm and work to ensure a resilient and vibrant future for the Southwest and the planet. Visit uascience.org for information on live streaming, TV broadcast, and digital viewing options.

Ongoing...

Tucson Museum of Art, 140 N Main Ave | www.TucsonMusuemofArt.org

Tucson Convention Center, 260 S Church St | tucsonconventioncenter.com

Meet Me at Maynards, 311 E Congress St | www.MeetMeatMaynards.com

A social walk/run through the Downtown area. Every Monday, rain or shine, holidays too! Check-in begins at 5:15pm.

Mission Garden, 929 W Mission Ln | www.tucsonsbirthplace.org

A re-creation of the Spanish Colonial walled garden that was part of Tucson's historic San Agustin Mission. For guided tours call 520-777-9270.

Children's Museum Tucson, 200 S 6th Ave | www.childrensmuseumtucson.org

Tuesday - Friday: 9:00am - 5:00pm; Saturday & Sunday: 10:00am - 5:00pm

Tucson Botanical Gardens, 2150 N Alvernon Way | www.tucsonbotanical.org

Southern Arizona Transportation Museum, 414 N Toole Ave | www.tucsonhistoricdepot.org

UA Mineral Museum, 1601 E University Blvd | www.uamineralmuseum.org

Jewish History Museum, 564 S Stone Ave | www.jewishhistorymuseum.org

Fox Theatre, 17 W Congress St | www.FoxTucsonTheatre.org

Hotel Congress, 311 E Congress St | hotelcongress.com

Loft Cinema, 3233 E Speedway Blvd | www.loftcinema.com

Rialto Theatre, 318 E Congress St | www.rialtotheatre.com

Arizona State Museum, 1013 E University Blvd | www.statemuseum.arizona.edu

Arizona Theater Company, 330 S Scott Ave | www.arizonatheatre.org

The Rogue Theatre, The Historic Y, 300 E University Blvd | www.therogue theatre.org



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Store proceeds to benefit Youth On Their Own programs.

*** We are unable to accept clothing & accessories, jewelry, electronics, and large furniture.**

Hours of Operation: *Thursday - Saturday*
9:00 am - 6:00 pm

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