



A Note From Supervisor Day...

Many years of natural forces acting on our desert environment have sculpted the majestic and diverse landscape that we enjoy today. Our Sonoran Desert is a story of constant and careful change, of natural beauty and a sense of peaceful boundlessness. It is the reason so many of us choose Pima County as our home.

As more families find their way here and our population continues to grow, new forces are acting on our land and on our lives- the forces of growth. Pima County is faced with serious challenges. Water – the lifeblood of our desert county – faces a one-two punch of record drought and unprecedented growth. New development on State Land threatens to strain our infrastructure and degrade our environment unless we plan early, carefully and creatively. And underscoring it all, are economic changes that strain the county’s finances as well as our household budgets.

Change is certain, but with careful management our community can be sculpted in a way that reflects and enhances the landscape; where development blends more readily, in form and function, with the natural environment and we create a community where citizens are allowed to prosper.

Ann Day

A Day at the Park

What do parks and preserves say about us as a society?



Investing in our public lands, building parks and providing recreational activities shows that we are committed to joining our neighbors and spending time and resources building our community. Developing parks shows a willingness to invest in the future and in our youth. Pima County has done a pretty good job recently of bringing attention to the lack of park space for our growing population, but we could do better in working together as a community to create a network of great parks and civic spaces that help to define our community and our quality of life.



Arroyo Grande and the Future of Growth

Pima County continues to work with Oro Valley and the Arizona State Land Department as the town and the state move forward on eventual annexation and development within 9,100 acres of state trust land north of Oro Valley. The 14-square mile planning area known as Arroyo Grande is expected to add almost 16,000 homes and 38,000 people to Oro Valley when it is fully developed over the course of a decade or more.

Pima County has no control over the state's mandate to sell trust lands and Oro Valley's sovereign right to annex. We can only try to influence the process to ensure it results in smart, managed growth. Our county planners and my office have had a degree of success in encouraging the town and the state to adopt the concepts of Pima County's Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan and provide that 68 percent of this environmentally-sensitive area is kept as open space and critical wildlife corridors are preserved. But the county still lacks any enforceable assurances that our conservation goals in the Tortolita Fan area that we have been trying to achieve for over a decade will be cast in stone. We must also have detailed infrastructure planning upfront to ensure there is adequate water, sewer service, parks, schools and a sufficient transportation network in an area that is already under strain.

We have had successes and setbacks as the three jurisdictions try to approach this from a regional planning perspective, and the county will continue to work as best we can to help shape this next leap in growth. Arroyo Grande will have a substantial impact on existing neighborhoods and communities. We must not compromise on infrastructure, conservation standards or the quality of life for all residents, current and future.

Real Tax Relief Needed



In a recession, government is faced with two choices: raise taxes or cut spending. Anything else is a budgeting gimmick.

This year is going to be one of the toughest financial years Pima County has faced in recent memory. County Administrator Chuck Huckelberry has proposed [a \\$1.5 billion budget](#) to the board that lowers the primary property tax rate 21 cents. That's a pretty good start, but it is still a de-facto tax raise because Chuck's budget brings in more money from new construction. Supervisor Ray Carroll and I think we can tighten the budget even further. A month before the county administrator released his budget, Ray and I proposed that the county operate on the same amount of property tax revenue that it took in last year. That results in a primary property tax rate reduction of 32 cents and provides much needed tax relief to citizens who are

feeling the strain of our recent economic downturn without impacting critical service or the county's core responsibilities. It's the responsible, common sense thing to do.

The county's budget adoption is scheduled for May 20 at 9 a.m. in the board's first floor hearing room at 130 W. Congress. The citizens of Pima County need tax relief. And if you feel as I do that the Board of Supervisors must be fiscally responsible, please attend the meeting or send your comments to me by e-mail, fax, phone or letter.



Pima County and Tucson: Flowing Together on Water Planning



The Pima County Board of Supervisors and the Tucson City Council each has approved a Regional Water Study Oversight Committee charged with developing a strategy for securing our water future. This type of regional cooperation is vital and my hope is that 2008 will become the year that we finally begin to act like we live in a desert.

Currently, in Phase I, we're working together to inventory water, wastewater, and reclaimed water infrastructure systems, as well as assess available water supplies and project future demand. This is important because we must not limit our inventory analysis to what we have, but what we will need to service an expected population of up to 2 million in 2030.

It is important that this regional planning process be open to all interested parties. The Board of Supervisors voted to accelerate public participation by directing the Oversight Committee to report back in 60 days with a plan to include other regional governments, the business community, utilities, citizens, environmental organizations and everyone who has a stake in making sure our water is safe, secure and used efficiently.

We will need new voices and new ideas coupled with true transparency and inclusiveness for this effort to lead to sustainable water planning. It is important that we undertake a highly public education process. Education, collaboration, transparency and communication are key principals to developing a sustainable water plan. We must continue to press other jurisdictions to follow in the County's steps to link land use decisions to water policies. Under a new policy approved by the Board of Supervisors, developers who apply for a comprehensive plan amendment or rezoning will be required to provide information about the development's projected water demand, water supply options and water conservation measures. This requirement to "show us the water before you build" will allow the board to consider the true development impacts on water resources before we decide whether to approve increased land use densities or intensities. And in that same spirit, we absolutely have to accelerate our efforts to get all parks and other turf areas irrigated with reclaimed water.

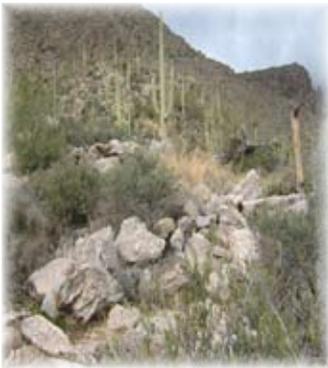
We also need to look at water pricing and incentives to encourage conservation. No water topic should be off the table as we begin this important community discussion. That includes deciding if, when or how reclaimed water – the dreaded toilet to tap – becomes part of the equation. And most importantly, we need to look at ways to tear down barriers that keep the various jurisdictions in Pima County from competing with each other for a resource that we all know we can not do without.

I encourage you to become involved in this important committee, attend its meetings and make your voice heard. Information is available at www.tucsonpimawaterstudy.com or simply call my office at 740-2738.

Sustainability Update

Pima County recently reached a green milestone when we marked the one-year anniversary of our groundbreaking Sustainability Initiative. These environmental policies target how the county operates internally and also sets voluntary standards for the community that are intended to advance the vision of a more livable and sustainable county for all of our residents. Within the county, we're "leading by example" by ensuring all new buildings meet nationally recognized energy and water conservation standards. I'm proud to report that one of the first new facilities to use these standards is under construction in District 1 – the new

Catalina Community Services/Pima County Health Department building that will serve low-income and elderly residents in Catalina. We're also on track to have as many as 200 vehicles within the county fleet replaced with alternative fuel vehicles by the end of this year. We've set a goal of having the county meet 15 percent of its electrical needs with renewable resources by 2025 and have partnered with the University of Arizona and power providers to reach that goal. Currently, we're searching for suitable county properties of at least an acre in order to possibly erect photovoltaic panels and harvest solar energy. The county is also making headway with waste reduction, a green purchasing program and policies governing sustainable land use and water conservation. In the community, we've recently launched the first Residential Green Building Standards in Southern Arizona. This voluntary program provides guidance to homeowners and builders on how to build energy-efficient, water conserving and healthful homes.



Pretty good progress for the first year – and even more sustainability initiatives are in the works.

Careful Infill is Key to Quality Managed Growth

The County faces a number of challenges as it experiences major changes in its landscape, culture, and population. One of the most pressing is accommodating new growth while respecting the quality of life in established neighborhoods. You may already be familiar with current population projections of approximately 2 million County residents by 2030. With a majority of the large plots of land developed in past decades, more and more of the new development to satisfy this growth will be infill projects.

Given space constraints and compatibility issues, it is not always easy making new development work with what already exists. The best projects are a result of communication, cooperation, and compromise between planners, elected officials, and residents. I have challenged developers to design communities that promote smart and sustainable growth – making new growth pay its own costs rather than saddling existing residents with higher taxes. The County is doing its part by enacting sustainability initiatives for architecture, energy, and design and site planning. In an era of shrinking resources, including land, it makes ecologic and economic sense to conserve and put to best use the assets that are available. The County, with the help of the new Arizona Department of Real Estate Commissioner, has entered into an agreement with the ADRE that strengthens the County's enforcement abilities to go after wildcat subdivisions that are often a blight in the county and a drain on our limited tax dollars. A new ordinance the county is considering is highly questionable. A proposal to allow manufactured homes in higher density zones (such as areas that allow 3, 4 or 5 homes per acre) is currently being examined by Pima County's Affordable Housing Committee. Affordable housing is important, but it must be carefully applied. I do not think it will work in the Foothills or many other District 1 neighborhoods. I am convinced that if such a zoning change occurred, we could see an impact on property values in existing neighborhoods.

I will be watching this issue closely and encourage you to do the same.

