



NEWS RELEASE

www.azmag.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT:

Kelly Taft, APR
Communications Manager
(602) 452-5020

MAG Selected for Brookings Partnership

PHOENIX – (August 15, 2011) The Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG), in collaboration with economic development leaders across the region, has been selected to participate in a Metropolitan Business Planning Initiative to determine an economic development strategy for the region.

The Brookings Institution Metropolitan Policy Program selected MAG as one of only a handful of pilot cities to participate in a collaborative partnership to develop the Metropolitan Business Plan. Other partners in the project will include the Greater Phoenix Economic Council, Arizona State University, and the Thunderbird School of Global Management.

“Not only are we tapping in to some of the brightest minds in our region, the value of working with Brookings is that they can help us identify new opportunities through their connections with best practices around the country,” said MAG Chair and Tempe Mayor Hugh Hallman. “This will help us leverage key assets to better compete in a global economy,” he said.

“We were impressed by the high-caliber team of public- and private-sector leaders you have convened as part of MAG’s Economic Development Committee,” stated Brookings Senior Fellow and Co-Director Amy Liu. “Your region’s emphasis on collaboration across municipal and county boundaries creates an environment well suited to a successful metropolitan business plan that repositions greater Phoenix for global success.” Liu added that the initiative is part of the Brookings-Rockefeller Project on State and Metropolitan Innovation, a collaboration between the Metropolitan Policy Program at Brookings Institution and the Rockefeller Foundation.

Through the partnership, Brookings working with RW Ventures LLC, will assist the region with a rigorous market analysis, developing an overall strategic plan for the region’s economy, and ultimately in defining one or more lead catalytic initiatives for the region to immediately act upon. The initial work will include an inventory of existing strategies. A formal launch of the project is anticipated in October.

Litchfield Park Mayor Tom Schoaf, who chairs the MAG Economic Development Committee, says diversification is necessary to ensure a growing economy. “The reset in the economy requires a reset in how we approach regional planning,” said Mayor Schoaf. “Through this partnership, we can harness the great talent this region has to offer and work in the same direction through targeted strategies that will strengthen the economy.”

Barry Broome, president and CEO of the Greater Phoenix Economic Council, said GPEC will serve on a leadership advisory team that will help develop the economic overview and help shape the project in its formative stages.

“If we want to transform Greater Phoenix into a world-renowned region of excellence, we need a shift in strategic direction, especially within our metropolitan areas. This initiative seeks to develop new levels of coordination, bringing business expertise to regional economic development,” said Broome.

Dr. Michael M. Crow, president of Arizona State University, said the expertise of the educational community is another critical component in developing a regional plan.

—MORE—

MAG Economic Development Partnership Continued

“ASU recognizes its significant responsibility for the economic, social and cultural vitality of the communities it serves,” noted Dr. Crow. “While we work to prepare the next generation of global leaders, we are equally committed to collaborating with local governments to develop comprehensive strategies that ensure the long-term economic success of our region,” he said.

Dr. Angel Cabrera, president of the Thunderbird School of Global Management, the world’s No. 1-ranked school of international business, said that given the challenges and opportunities being faced by our region, the moment is right for finding ways to invest in metropolitan regions.

“It is important to recognize how regional drivers impact our state’s economy, which in turn drives international competitiveness,” said Dr. Cabrera. “The Metropolitan Business Plan will help outline concrete steps to provide focus for our economic development efforts and stimulate innovation.”

Mesa Mayor Scott Smith, a member of the MAG Economic Development Committee who has been a strong proponent for the partnership, noted that the effort will help create a cohesive economic team that will include the local, regional, state and even federal levels.

“This collaboration is necessary for competing against similar economic teams worldwide,” stated Mayor Smith. “We need to reach beyond our individual city boundaries to develop policies and programs that invest in the greater megapolitan area, which will lead to business and job growth and make us more competitive globally,” he said. “We need to work with our partners in the Intermountain West, as well as our international trade partners, to further expand our prosperity, which will result in both our individual and collective economic success.”

###

About the Maricopa Association of Governments Economic Development Committee

The role of the Maricopa Association of Governments Economic Development Committee (EDC) is to “develop an opportunity-specific and action-oriented plan that fosters and advances infrastructure in the MAG Region, especially transportation infrastructure, that would further economic development opportunities.” The EDC consists of 25 members and includes 14 MAG member agency elected officials appointed by the MAG Regional Council, including the Central City, Maricopa County, six West Valley, and six East Valley representatives. The committee also includes 11 business representatives and one representative from the Arizona Department of Transportation.

About the Metropolitan Policy Program at the Brookings Institution

Created in 1996, the Brookings Institution’s Metropolitan Policy Program provides decision makers with cutting-edge research and policy ideas for improving the health and prosperity of cities and metropolitan areas including their component cities, suburbs, and rural areas. To learn more visit: www.brookings.edu/metro

About the Brookings-Rockefeller Project on State and Metropolitan Innovation

The Brookings-Rockefeller Project on State and Metropolitan Innovation is working to present fiscally responsible state policies and practical metropolitan-led solutions that leaders can use to move to the next economy. To learn more visit: <http://www.brookings.edu/projects/state-metro-innovation.aspx>

About RW Ventures, LLC

A Chicago-based firm, RW Ventures, LLC is a national leader in market-based strategies for inclusive regional economic growth. To learn more, please visit: www.rw-ventures.com