

MAG Continues Efforts to Prevent Disapproval of Dust Plan Region Could Face Economic Sanctions Under EPA Proposal



The Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) continues efforts to save the region from air quality penalties that may result from pending action by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in January. The EPA is proposing to disapprove portions of the MAG Five Percent Plan for PM-10, which could prevent some transportation projects in the Maricopa region from moving forward and ultimately result in progressively dire economic sanctions for the region.

The EPA published a *Federal Register* notice in September that proposed a partial approval and partial disapproval of the MAG Five Percent Plan for PM-10. EPA cited several issues with the plan, including failure to demonstrate attainment of air quality standards due to exceedances of those standards at the West 43rd Avenue monitor. MAG and the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) continue to press the EPA to consider scientific data demonstrating that the four exceedances were the result of dust storms or dust devils caused by high winds.



Participating via videoconference was EPA Deputy Assistant Administrator Janet McCabe.



“We continue to request that the EPA delay its decision so that it can adequately review the documentation MAG and the state have provided proving these exceedances were caused by high wind events,” said MAG Chair Thomas Schoaf, mayor of Litchfield Park. “The Clean Air Act allows for such exceptions and does not punish a region for violations of air quality standards that are caused by events such as dust storms, dust devils, wildfires, and forest fires. The residents of our region should not suffer because of high wind dust events that no plan can control.” (See also “*Message From the Chair*,” page 2.)

MAG hosted a meeting and videoconference with the EPA to discuss air quality issues. Pictured are (left to right): MAG Executive Director Dennis Smith, Litchfield Park Mayor Thomas Schoaf, U.S. Representative Harry Mitchell, Mesa Mayor Scott Smith and Mary Baumbach, who attended on behalf of U.S. Representative Jeff Flake.

Mayor Schoaf noted that if the EPA moves forward with final disapproval of the plan, it will put \$1.7 billion in

Continued on page 6

INSIDE *this issue*

Message From the Chair	2	Road Safety Assessment Program	7
Voices From the Council	3	CSI: Domestic Violence	8
Regional Profile: Supervisor Wilcox	4	New MAG Website Launched	10
Don't Trash AZ Tarp Contest	5	Regional Community Network	11
Five Percent Plan for PM-10 (cont.)	6	Calendar	12



Message From the Chair



Mayor Thomas Schoaf
City of Litchfield Park

When the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced its plans to disapprove the region's Five Percent Plan for PM-10 in September (*see cover story*), newspaper accounts proclaimed that the region was being "punished" for failing to heed "repeated warnings" about dust pollution. Unfortunately, these stories ignored some important facts about our region's air quality.

Fact #1. In 2008—the year currently in question by the EPA—there were 11 exceedances of the air quality standard at just four monitors on eight separate days. This means that our air was clean 99.8 percent of the time. Our air was also clean at the monitors more than 99 percent of the time in 2009.

Fact #2. The Maricopa Association of Governments and the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality have submitted scientific evidence to the EPA demonstrating that all but one of the exceedances of the standard in 2008 were caused by dust storms or dust devils as the result of high winds. We live in the desert where dusty, silty soils prevail. Congress allows regions to be excused from penalties for exceptional events like high winds that cannot be controlled by measures in an air quality plan. EPA has ignored the data.

Fact #3. We care about the air our residents breathe. That is why we have taken aggressive action to protect public health. Our plan includes 53 of the most stringent measures in the country to reduce dust pollution. These measures are on top of 77 measures still being implemented under the region's previous Serious Area Plan.

Fact #4. Every city and town in the nonattainment area, and Maricopa County, have implemented dust control measures. Our tracking report indicates these local governments have gone above and beyond these commitments.

Fact #5. The EPA has admitted that the exceptional events rule is flawed, and many states are concerned about inconsistencies in how it is administered. The rule is being questioned not only by Arizona, but also by 14 other western states that must frequently contend with dust storms, wildfires and forest fires.

Fact #6. While the EPA cites issues with the plan involving emission sources and whether the levels attributed to each source are still accurate, the truth is that the MAG plan addresses ALL sources of dust pollution.

Fact #7. The EPA had the MAG plan for three years, yet failed to

Continued on page 3



MAGAZine

MAGAZine is a quarterly newsletter of the Maricopa Association of Governments. It focuses on the issues and concerns of the cities, towns and tribal communities of Maricopa County. If you know of a friend or colleague who would like to receive MAGAZine, please call the MAG office, (602) 254-6300.

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The 12 miles of HOV lanes being added to the Santan Freeway (Loop 202) will have a very positive impact for Southeast Valley commuters in the coming years. Funded through MAG's voter approved Proposition 400, this project will include HOV connections to the Price Freeway (Loop 101) and I-10, making it an attractive route for those who carpool. And, the design-build method of development will ensure a timely project.

—Chandler Mayor Boyd Dunn



Through the Luke Forward Campaign, we have successfully signed up over 17,000 supporters from across the state and raised over \$29,000 to ensure that Luke Air Force Base (AFB) becomes an F-35 training base. We are asking citizens and businesses to continue to voice their support of Luke AFB by signing up at www.lukeforward.com. The future of Luke AFB depends largely on the community support it receives, so now is the time to speak up and let our voices be heard!

—Glendale Mayor Elaine Scruggs



Regional decisions should be made based on what is best for the region. That concept should not be treated as a radical idea. Many times, lines on a map shouldn't be the determining factor for regional project boundaries. We are part of an intertwined metro area. When one city experiences success, the surrounding cities benefit as well. This philosophy of regionalism is easily applied to transportation planning. Leaving one city and entering another on a train, bus, bicycle, or in an automobile, should not be obvious; it should be seamless. Working together to create a transportation system that makes it easy for our residents and visitors to travel from one side of the Valley to the other with ease should be a selling point for all of us. It can be difficult to put aside parochial interests and have faith in the idea of true regionalism, but many members of MAG are working toward that goal. I am pleased and proud to see the progress.

—Mesa Mayor Scott Smith



Gila River's relationships with our neighboring communities are very important to us; our ongoing collaborative work with the Arizona Department of Transportation on the Loop 202 is a good example of this relationship. Gila River Indian Community understands what the completion of the freeway loop will mean for interstate travel in the county and what it could mean to our community.

—Joseph Manuel, Lt. Governor, Gila River Indian Community



In these hard economic times, it is very productive to have the Maricopa Association of Governments coordinate services for the homeless. Because of these efforts, every dollar coming into the county has been well spent and has helped organizations serve a greater number of homeless individuals.

—Maricopa County Supervisor Mary Rose Wilcox

Message from the Chair (continued)

take any action on the plan or to notify the region about any perceived technical issues. The Clean Air Act envisioned a collaborative process with state and local governments, which hasn't been demonstrated by EPA.

Fact #8. If the EPA follows through with the proposed action within 30 days from final action, a conformity freeze will occur. This freeze will not allow amendments to the MAG Transportation Improvement Program. If a new air quality plan is not approved, it could mean serious economic sanctions for our region, including the potential loss of \$1.7 billion in federal highway funding and the tens of thousands of jobs that go with it.

These are just a few of many important facts that the residents in our communities should know. As the mayor of a small community, I am well aware of the significant efforts being made by cities and towns across the region to ensure that our air quality is clean and that we are doing everything in our power to address dust pollution. We will continue to work with the EPA to address the technical issues in the plan, and to convince the federal agency that hurting our economy over technical differences in our plan is not the answer. 

Regional Profile: Supervisor Mary Rose Wilcox



Maricopa County Supervisor Mary Rose Wilcox



Maricopa County Supervisor Mary Rose Wilcox Still Packing a Punch

She's been in the political ring for 28 years, so perhaps it's not all that surprising that Maricopa County Supervisor Mary Rose Wilcox gets her physical exercise by working out in the boxing ring. Early in the morning, three times a week, she travels to her husband Earl's gym, where she can let it all fly.

"I'll go about eight rounds with him. He just has the mitts, he doesn't really box me, but I'll work out in the mitts. It is a fun sport. You can get your aggression out, so I love it," enthuses Wilcox, who says the activity helps her deal with the stress politics sometimes brings.

Wilcox has been a fighter all of her life, devoting her career to public service. Born in Superior, deep in the mining country of Arizona, Wilcox's first exposure to politics came while witnessing disputes over miners' rights. Her father, who had been a miner for 10 years, had recently been promoted to a management position at the

encouragement of the unions.

"So I saw the management's side. I saw the workers' side. And I saw how you could bring people together, reason with everybody, and have solutions for the better of all. And that really stayed with me," says Wilcox. "When I came down to Arizona State University in the late '60s and early '70s, I really felt that the only way to make change was through the political system, because there you could have both sides sit together and work out solutions."

As a fourth-generation native from a pioneer Mexican-American family, Wilcox also saw the need for gender and minority representation in government. With the encouragement of Earl, then a state legislator, her first race was in 1982 for Phoenix City Council.

"I really felt that women needed to be in politics, and I wear a double hat: I'm a woman and I'm a Hispanic, a minority. So I said,

'I'm going to go for it.' And it was a pretty tough race. I ran against 10 people, nine of them were Hispanic males. It was pretty tough, but I won. And I have been very fortunate—I have been elected 10 times since then."



Supervisor Mary Rose Wilcox gets her exercise in the boxing ring.

In fact, Wilcox is the first Hispanic woman to serve on both the Phoenix City Council and Maricopa County Board of Supervisors. She believes that growing up in a small community has helped her to focus on what matters to her constituents.

"I can't just stay in office because I'm a woman and I'm a Hispanic. I had to prove that I could govern. I have always felt that my upbringing in a small town helped me a lot, because I look at the different parts of my district as small towns, or small communities. I try to find the leadership there, find out what the issues are, and work with the leadership to solve them. I think I am very 'hands-on' and that has helped me a lot."

When she first entered politics, Wilcox says her focus was on stabilizing families. Two decades later, that platform hasn't changed much. She says the most significant issue facing the region today is the economy, "which drives everything." Wilcox feels strongly, however, that the region can't move forward until the image of Arizona changes.



Supervisor Wilcox talks to employees constructing the Superior Court tower about new jobs created by the project and congratulating them for a sound safety record.

Continued on page 5

Supervisor Wilcox (continued)

“The image right now is one that I feel is very detrimental,” says Wilcox, who blames recently passed and proposed immigration legislation, some of which she calls “draconian.”

“What that does, it not only hurts the immigrant community, but it hurts all of Arizona. Because everywhere else, people are looking at us and saying ‘the climate for business is not one that is welcoming. And as long as (Arizona) is having these problems, we should look someplace else.’ So I think we all have to start working together.” Wilcox says she is encouraged that the business community has recently begun to step forward to ask the legislature to look at immigration issues from a more global and economic perspective.

Wilcox serves on the National Association of Counties Immigration Task Force, the Arizona Mexico Commission, Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund, and National Council of La Raza. She currently serves as vice president of the National Association of Counties Human Services Committee, and as chair of the Sports Youth Exchange Subcommittee. At MAG, she serves not only on the Regional Council, but also on the MAG Human Services Coordinating Committee and on the MAG Regional Continuum of Care Committee to address homelessness.

Wilcox says if she could give one gift to the Valley, it would be “jobs, jobs, jobs, jobs.”

“Unemployment is just a horrible thing for a family—or underemployment, where you have to work two or three jobs in order to survive. So that’s why I really feel the major problem today is the economy and fixing this reputation that we are getting, so that Arizona continues to attract good jobs.”

In her limited spare time, Wilcox and her husband, Earl, run three Valley restaurants, and she confides that she still insists on making the chili herself to ensure it has the “right taste.” The rest of their time is spent being active in the lives of their five grandchildren, all boys, ranging in age from 11-20.

“They are the joy of our life right now...They all play basketball, so our whole life, our free time, is devoted to them. It does take a village to raise kids, and my daughter, her husband, and the other set of grandparents, we all key in to the children.”

That familial support may be even more apparent in the relationship between Mary Rose and Earl.

“What has really helped me is having a husband who is involved. We’ve been married 40 years, and both of us have been involved in politics, so he is a real good sounding board for me. We’re married, we’re business partners, we’re political partners, and I think that has helped me sustain myself. It is hard for women in politics—it’s hard for anybody in politics nowadays—and the support of family is extremely, extremely important. He’s my best friend and I just couldn’t have done it without him.”

Wilcox says she will remain in politics for as long as she can keep serving people and for as long as they want her to serve. She says she will continue to do what she has done all along.

Fighting for her beliefs. 



Don't Trash AZ

SAFE LOADS = SAFE ROADS

Take the Safe Loads = Safe Roads Pledge

Become Eligible to Win a Free *Don't Trash Arizona* Tarp

Pledge to keep Valley roads cleaner and safer. When you do, you will be entered into MAG's **Safe Loads = Safe Roads** Contest. Each month the name of one lucky winner will be drawn who will receive a free *Don't Trash Arizona* tarp that will help drivers keep their loads secure.

There are two types of drivers who litter—those who deliberately toss items from their car window and those who accidentally lose items from loads that are not properly secured. No matter how debris makes it onto Valley roadways, it is ugly and poses a threat to drivers who must swerve to avoid hitting it. However, that threat can be avoided when drivers tie down their loads properly.

Through the **Safe Loads = Safe Roads** program, motorists are urged to keep our highways clean and to help save lives by taking the pledge at www.DontTrashAZ.org. Those who enter pledge to:

- Keep a litter bag in their car and to dispose of trash properly.
- Keep cigarette butts in the car by using a portable ashtray.
- Secure all vehicle loads properly with tarps and tie-downs.
- Take pride in Arizona and keep their community clean and safe.

Five Percent Plan for PM-10 (continued)

federal highway funding and tens of thousands of jobs in the region at risk.

“If the final disapproval occurs, it could have major impacts on our economy, which is already suffering from the recession and the foreclosure crisis. If the plan is disapproved in January 2011, we would enter a conformity freeze within 30 days from the effective date,” noted Schoaf. “Under a freeze, only projects in the first four years of the Transportation Improvement Program could proceed, and no new projects could be added until a new plan is submitted. If a conformity lapse occurred, major projects in the \$7.4 billion Transportation Improvement Program could not proceed.”

The Arizona Congressional Delegation has also weighed in on the issue. In August, nine members of the delegation signed a joint letter asking EPA for a six-month delay in its decision.

“(W)e are concerned that EPA is presently pursuing a course of action that could result in a disruptive effect on Arizona’s economy without ensuring a meaningful improvement in air quality,” stated the letter, which was signed by Senators John McCain and Jon Kyl, along with Representatives Jeff Flake, Trent Franks, Gabrielle Giffords, Anne Kirkpatrick, Harry Mitchell, Ed Pastor, and John Shadegg. EPA did not grant the request for a six-month extension.



**MAG TPC Chair,
Mayor Scott
Smith, City of
Mesa**

Mesa Mayor and Transportation Policy Committee Chair Scott Smith said that the extension of light rail through Mesa is just one of the projects that could be impacted by a conformity freeze.

“We are continuing a dialogue with the EPA to make sure they understand the consequences of their actions,” said Mayor Smith. “We need for them to work cooperatively with MAG to address the concerns they have about our plan, but that should happen in a manner that does not impede vital transportation investments in our region,” he said.

On October 8, 2010, U.S. Representative Harry Mitchell convened a bipartisan conference to address the proposed disapproval. Also attending were representatives from the offices of Congressman Jeff Flake and Congressman Ed Pastor, EPA Deputy Assistant Administrator Janet McCabe, representatives from EPA Region IX, and representatives from the state and regional air quality planning agencies responsible for developing the plan.



**U.S. Representative
Harry Mitchell,
Arizona 5th District**

“We all want clean air and want to meet national air quality standards, but the EPA needs to understand that we live in a desert, and deserts have dust,” said Representative Mitchell, who questioned why the EPA would want to jeopardize funding for environmentally friendly transportation projects like the expansion of light rail in Mesa. “If anything, I would think they would want to accelerate these kinds of projects, not short-circuit them. Obviously there was a lot to talk about and I’m glad we had the opportunity to do so today.”

MAG and ADEQ submitted comments on the proposal in October, which included concerns over how the EPA administers the Exceptional Events Rule. In fact, a coalition of 15 western states, including Arizona, has formally objected to the way the rule is implemented, calling it inconsistent and confusing. The coalition is requesting a review of the rule as well as more information on how the EPA wants regions to demonstrate exceptional events. In a May meeting in Maricopa County, EPA Region IX Director Jared Blumenfeld admitted that the rule is flawed but stated that EPA had to enforce the flawed rule. 

MAG Moment



During an October press conference, MAG Chair Thomas Schoaf discussed MAG’s participation in “The EV Project,” the world’s largest rollout of electric vehicle infrastructure. MAG is assisting in the project by working to streamline the introduction and expansion of electric vehicles into the region. During the event, ECOtality, Inc. unveiled a map for 960 electric vehicle charging stations it will install throughout the Maricopa region.

MAG Commitment to Air Quality

MAG, Maricopa County, and ADEQ have an impressive record in improving the quality of our air. Below are just a few of the region's air quality achievements.

- The MAG region was one of the first areas in the country to implement an alternative fuels program to help resolve the carbon monoxide issue.
- The region has one of the most stringent vehicle emissions inspection maintenance programs in the country.
- MAG is currently a cosponsor of a pilot project to implement electric vehicle charging stations in the region.
- The region has met the federal air quality standard for carbon monoxide. The nonattainment area is now a maintenance area.
- There have been no violations of the one-hour ozone standard since 1996. The region was also redesignated as a maintenance area for that pollutant. There have been no violations of the .08 parts per million eight-hour ozone standard since 2004.
- The region also meets the fine particulate standard (PM-2.5).
- In the area of PM-10, the MAG Revised 1999 Serious Area Plan contained 77 aggressive measures to reduce dust. This Plan was one of the first in the nation and was heralded by the EPA as one of the most comprehensive plans in the country.
- The PM-10 Plan submitted by MAG in 2007 contained another 53 aggressive measures that are in addition to the Serious Area Plan Measures. In fact, every city and town within the nonattainment area, and Maricopa County, have implemented dust control measures to address dust pollution. A tracking report indicates the cities and towns have gone above and beyond their commitments.
- In addition, the MAG Regional Council has allocated a total of \$23.2 million in Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funds over the last 10 years to purchase clean, dust-reducing street sweepers. It has allocated \$28.4 million for paving unpaved roads from fiscal 2007 to 2013.
- Since the MAG Five Percent Plan was submitted in 2007, there have been no exceedances at monitors during stagnant conditions.

MAG Launches Road Safety Assessment Program

A program designed to evaluate the safety of roads and intersections in order to identify potential solutions will soon be implemented by the Maricopa Association of Governments.



Nearly 55 percent of all serious injury and fatal crashes in the region occur at intersections.

Road Safety Assessments (RSAs) are formal examinations of particular intersections or entire road corridors from a safety performance viewpoint.

The concept of RSAs originated in the United Kingdom in the 1990s, and such programs have been adopted in many countries with much success.

The road environment examined through an RSA could be of an existing road or the design of a future road. All RSAs are performed by an independent, multidisciplinary team and led by a person trained in performing RSAs. The RSA team considers the safety of all road users, qualitatively estimates and reports on potential road safety issues, and identifies opportunities for safety improvements.

The Arizona Department of Transportation has a similar RSA program. It conducts RSAs across the state and has performed a few in the MAG region.

The MAG RSA program plans to launch the first assessments in early 2011.

“These RSAs will be focused on identifying road safety solutions at some of the intersections with the highest crash risk in the region,” said MAG Safety Program Manager Sarath Joshua. “Nearly 55 percent of all serious injury and fatal crashes in the region occur at intersections. Although RSAs are often carried out proactively, to prevent crashes before they occur, the MAG program will be more reactive to recent crash history, at least initially,” he said.

The MAG Transportation Safety Committee has identified the top 100 high crash risk intersections in the region, based on a review of crash data for 2006 to 2008. A few of these intersections have already been improved by the local agencies. Potential RSA sites will be identified in consultation with local agencies.

An example of the safety benefits of RSAs comes from the New York Department of Transportation, which reports a 20 to 40 percent reduction in crashes at more than 300 high-crash locations where safety improvements suggested by RSAs were implemented. 

Mock Crime Scene Highlights Importance of Protocols

CSI:
Domestic Violence

Standing in the middle of a living room strewn with torn photos and upended furniture, a domestic violence survivor named Alexis knows that this time, the scene is just pretend: a mock domestic violence crime scene that is part of a news conference illustrating how police and prosecutors build a domestic violence case.

But for Alexis, it brings back memories of a long history of abuse.

“The first time he broke into my house, I had already filed a restraining order...I knew he was coming. I called the police, but they were unable to do anything because they could not prove it was him. While officers were still

“I thought for sure that for the love of our child, the help of the domestic violence team, and his anger management counseling, that he would change,” said Alexis.

“That hope almost cost me my life.”

there, the harassing phone calls continued. I even put him on the phone with the police. But what we didn't know was that he was there watching the whole time. Within ten minutes of leaving my apartment, I walked onto my second story patio, and there he was,” recalls Alexis. Fortunately, during that incident, police were still nearby and were able to apprehend the abuser. But after time went by, Alexis began communicating with her abuser again.



A torn photo lies on a tabletop at the mock crime scene, representing how domestic violence tears families apart.

“I thought for sure that for the love of our child, the help of the domestic violence team, and his anger management counseling, that he would change,” said Alexis. “That hope almost cost me my life.”

The abuser broke in through a kitchen window and stabbed Alexis in the face while she and her daughter slept. Before police could arrive this time, he stabbed Alexis twice, her brother once, and a friend eight times.



Domestic violence survivor Alexis recounts her experience of abuse.

“There is no amount of love that can conquer an abuser's need for power and control. I was a single mom with three daughters and couldn't go home. My home had very literally become a crime scene and I a statistic,” she said. Her abuser was ultimately convicted and is serving a 10-year prison sentence.

Domestic violence calls are among the most common and most dangerous emergency calls police receive, generating tens of thousands of police reports and resulting in a cost of \$18-26 million to the criminal justice system each year. Ensuring that these calls are handled appropriately is the focus of a new program that was highlighted during the MAG Annual Domestic Violence Awareness Month press conference. The Protocol Evaluation Project is designed to look at what can be done at the crime scene and in the courtroom to ensure that victims of domestic violence receive justice and support.

“We enter as many as 49,000 living rooms like this one every year in

Continued on page 9

Mock DV Crime Scene (continued)

Arizona,” said Commander Kim Humphrey during the press conference, which was held in a living room at the Chrysalis Shelter in Phoenix. Humphrey is a Phoenix police officer and chair of the MAG Regional Domestic Violence Council. “We come into people’s homes amidst crisis and violence with the intention of keeping victims safe and arresting abusers. What we find and what we do at the crime scene impacts our ability to achieve this goal.”

The MAG Regional Domestic Violence Council is working to end the physical, emotional and financial impacts of domestic violence by coordinating resources across the region. The Protocol Evaluation Project is supported by funding through the Governor’s Office and a STOP Violence Against Women grant. The project is evaluating the common practices, or “protocols” used to arrest and prosecute domestic violence offenders at the misdemeanor level. Such protocols become even more necessary when victims choose not to participate in the trial of the abuser.

“This happens in far too many cases. But if we have enough evidence, we can still prosecute the abuser,” said Barbara Marshall, a prosecutor with the Maricopa County Attorney’s Office and vice chair of the MAG Regional Domestic Violence Council. “This makes consistent, careful implementation of the protocols even more critical. Most prosecutors have a ‘no-drop’ policy. This means they will prosecute on the victim’s behalf as long as they have enough evidence to proceed. When cases are not prosecuted, victims remain in danger,” she said.

Marshall pointed out that costs to the system also increase when police are called out again and again when the violence repeats. “If we can successfully prosecute an offender the first time, we are saving the system money and preventing additional trauma to this and future victims,” she said.

The Protocol Evaluation Project is one of 15 strategies identified in the MAG Regional Plan to End Domestic Violence, released in July 2010. The press conference



“We come into people’s homes amidst crisis and violence with the intention of keeping victims safe and arresting abusers. What we find and what we do at the crime scene impacts our ability to achieve this goal.”

was one of many activities scheduled to highlight October as Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

“Domestic violence knows no boundaries,” said Litchfield Park Mayor Tom Schoaf, chair of the MAG Regional Council. “It affects people of all income levels in every community. Our priority is to put resources into place that will make our communities stronger, healthier, and more productive.”



Commander Kim Humphrey, MAG Regional Domestic Violence Council chair, reenacts a domestic violence crime scene.



MAG Chair Tom Schoaf discusses the financial impacts of domestic violence.

MAG Launches New Website: azmag.gov

Flash animation, bold photos, easy-to-find links and a better search engine, combined with continued high-quality content, are all features that can be found on the dramatically redesigned new MAG website.

The first significant change is a new domain name, which has been shortened from www.mag.maricopa.gov to a new web address, www.azmag.gov. The home page features rotating banner photos that users can click on to be taken to the page of interest, as well as hot topic links that can connect visitors to the latest news or most-requested information. A

“ticker” that runs across the top of the page also enables staff to post items of current interest that are one click away. The home page also includes a clickable calendar and a list of upcoming meetings. The main navigation includes links to committees and to each MAG division. Project pages include links to resources associated with each project, and divisional pages include easy-to-update photos or graphics that can also be clicked for information on timely topics.

The more efficient and user-friendly website was two years in the making and houses more

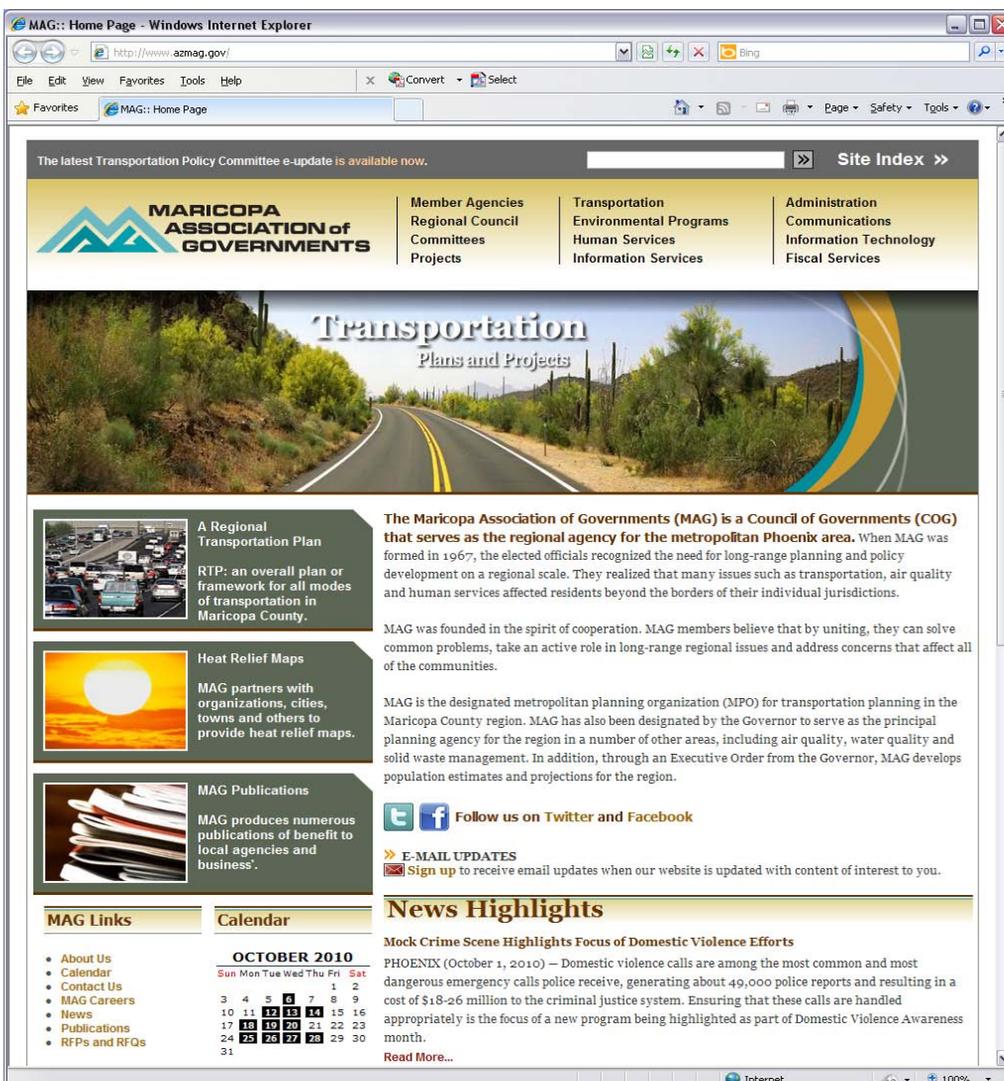
than 7,000 documents—on fewer pages and with more information on each page. The site features a more customized navigation ability and a more flexible document handling feature, meaning users can find what they want more easily and in fewer steps than it took before.

Other features include a better typographic display that makes the site easier to read; distinctly different page types allowing users to recognize desired pages via appearance; and a new function that allows employment applications to now be submitted online.

The site continues to allow utilization of MAG’s GovDelivery option, which automatically notifies subscribers when a specific page on the site has been updated. All existing subscriptions have been transferred to the appropriate pages on the new site and former users are encouraged to update their “favorites” bookmark to recognize the new web address.

MAG’s goal in developing the new website is to make a better experience for thousands of monthly visitors to the site, including MAG member agencies and Valley residents, who will have better access to information and activities related to all aspects of the MAG planning and programming process. The site provides increased flexibility for future growth of online information.

MAG encourages users to visit the website and provide staff with feedback. Please email comments to webmaster@azmag.gov. 



Seeing the Big Picture: New Fiber Optic Network Gives Engineers a Better Look at Valley Traffic

Traffic management in the Valley just got a whole lot easier. Traffic engineers in a number of agencies across the Valley will soon be able to view real-time images of the vehicles coming their way from neighboring communities, thanks to the recently completed Regional Community Network (RCN).

The RCN is a fiber-optic based network that serves as a secure, private “Internet” for transportation data and connects many of the agency traffic management centers. The information, including real-time video, helps local traffic managers see potential problems early and to make adjustments to traffic signals and other control systems based on current conditions.

“The Regional Community Network will help us to better maintain traffic flow and respond to events as they occur,” said Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) Director John Halikowski. “This is a valuable resource to ADOT and Valley communities, enabling us to use state-of-the-art technology to reduce congestion throughout the regional transportation system.”

ADOT oversaw the construction of the first phase of the network, which was developed as the result of a MAG study conducted in 2003. Ten agencies have gained access to each other’s traffic cameras as part of the first phase of RCN development. Participating agencies donated fiber, staff and equipment space to make the network a reality and minimize costs. Other communities will gain access in future phases, and additional uses for the network are being approved to further leverage agency investments.

The project, which received \$1.6 million in funding by MAG, involved laying fiber to complete the missing links and installing the equipment. Phoenix provided significant amounts of material and is hosting two of the core routers for the new network.

“Traffic does not stop at the border of each agency,” said Phoenix Councilmember Peggy Neely, who serves on the MAG Regional Council and is a former MAG chair. “Our citizens expect a seamless response to traffic conditions in adjacent communities and Phoenix is proud to be part of the partnership that makes that possible.”



Mayor John Lewis,
Town of Gilbert

Interagency cooperation was critical to the completion of the project. Some agencies were able to participate in the first phase because neighboring agencies were willing to act as intermediaries. For example, although the town of Gilbert could not directly access the fiber network, the city of Chandler voluntarily provided a link to the information it was receiving through a Wi-Fi link with Gilbert.

“Thanks to Chandler and the RCN, we now have direct access to traffic information that was previously inaccessible,” said Gilbert Mayor John Lewis.



Councilmember Sharon Wolcott,
City of Surprise

The infrastructure provided as part of the project has helped other communities receive direct links to the traffic information of neighboring cities. For example, the city of Surprise can now see traffic coming in from Peoria.

“The RCN provided a vital link to the Peoria traffic management center,” said Surprise Councilmember Sharon Wolcott, who represents Surprise on the Regional Council. “We are already looking at expanded uses, such as making the network part of our disaster recovery plan.”



Councilmember Peggy Neely, City of Phoenix

The MAG Intelligent Transportation Systems Committee and the MAG Technology Advisory Group are already evaluating additional uses for this new network and the Regional Videoconferencing System is being upgraded to take advantage of this new infrastructure. The original study foresaw the connection of all of the MAG member agencies and the committees continue to look for opportunities to bridge those missing links. 

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Winter 2010-2011 Calendar

November 2010

- 3rd 8:30 a.m. Regional Community Network (RCN) Working Group
- 3rd 10:00 a.m. Intelligent Transportation Systems Committee
- 4th 10:00 a.m. Technology Advisory Group
- 4th 1:30 p.m. Regional Domestic Violence Council
- 9th 1:30 p.m. Transit Committee
- 9th 1:30 p.m. Bicycle & Pedestrian Committee
- 10th 12:00 p.m. Management Committee
- 10th 1:00 p.m. Human Services Technical Committee
- 11th Veteran's Day (Office Closed)
- 15th 12:00 p.m. Regional Council Executive Committee
- 15th 2:00 p.m. Continuum of Care Regional Committee on Homelessness
- 16th 1:00 p.m. Street Committee
- 17th 2:00 p.m. Building Codes Committee
- 17th 4:00 p.m. Transportation Policy Committee
- 23rd 10:00 a.m. Population Technical Advisory Committee
- 25th Thanksgiving Day (Office Closed)
- 26th Thanksgiving Holiday (Office Closed)
- 30th 10:00 a.m. Transportation Safety Committee
- 30th 1:30 p.m. Air Quality Technical Advisory Committee (if necessary)

The dates, times and locations of all meetings may change. Other committees not listed here may meet during these months.

For confirmation, call (602) 254-6300, or visit the website: www.azmag.gov/Events/

December 2010

- 1st 10:00 a.m. Intelligent Transportation Systems Committee
- 8th 5:00 p.m. Regional Council
- 9th 10:00 a.m. Transportation Review Committee
- 9th 1:00 p.m. Human Services Technical Committee
- 9th 1:30 p.m. Transit Committee
- 14th 1:30 p.m. Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee
- 15th 2:00 p.m. Building Codes Committee
- 16th 10:00 a.m. Technology Advisory Group
- 24th Christmas Eve (Office Closed)
- 28th 10:00 a.m. Population Technical Advisory Committee

All meetings, unless indicated otherwise, will be held in the conference rooms located in the MAG offices on the second floor of the building, 302 N. 1st Avenue, Phoenix.

January 2011

- 5th 10:00 a.m. Intelligent Transportation Systems Committee
- 5th 1:30 p.m. Standard Specifications and Details Committee
- 12th 12:00 p.m. Management Committee
- 13th 9:00 a.m. PSAP Managers Group
- 13th 1:00 p.m. Human Services Technical Committee
- 19th 4:00 p.m. Transportation Policy Committee
- 26th 5:00 p.m. Regional Council
- 27th 10:00 a.m. Technology Advisory Group
- 27th 1:30 p.m. Air Quality Technical Advisory Committee
- 28th 10:00 a.m. Transportation Review Committee

Parking is available under the building. Please ask for parking validation at the meeting. Transit tickets will be provided for those using transit. Bike racks are available at the entrance to the parking garage.



302 N. 1st Avenue, Suite 300, Phoenix, AZ 85003