

Diversifying the Economy: Economic Development Committee Looks to Improve Economic Landscape

While “construction” may never have been officially included in the five “C’s” of Arizona’s economy (copper, citrus, cotton, climate and cattle), there is no denying that the construction industry has been a key economic driver in the Valley for decades. However, in the wake of what is now being called the “Great Recession,” Valley leaders believe it is time that we pursue a new economic paradigm.

“A reset in the economy requires a reset in the way we approach regional planning,” said Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) Chair Thomas Schoaf, incoming chair of the Economic Development Committee (EDC). “For many years, the transportation planning process has been built around transportation metrics: we make decisions based on such factors as levels of service and the amount of delay. Those are important to our core business, but the process should also have a metric related to the economy. We have tended to overlook the fact that, along with mobility and safety, federal transportation law also includes a mission of fostering economic



development. The EDC is intended to add that element to transportation planning at MAG,” he said.

Schoaf points to recent numbers showing that Maricopa County has 52,000 pending or foreclosed homes and a vacancy rate of 13.9 percent as indicative of our region’s economic challenges. He adds that, beginning in the fall of 2007, the Proposition 400 transportation sales tax showed negative growth over 38 months. Before this downturn, sales tax revenues in Maricopa County had never declined.

“For many years, our economic foundation has been housing, and while it appears that the housing market is beginning to recover, it is clear that we need to diversify our future economy to make our region sustainable.”

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MAG Economic Development Committee

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Message From the Chair



Mayor Thomas Schoaf
City of Litchfield Park

It has been my great pleasure to serve this past year as chair of the Maricopa Association of Governments. This year has been very eventful, especially with the development of the MAG Economic Development Committee (see cover story). The formation of this committee is affirmation that local elected officials and business representatives understand the role transportation plays in our economy and that MAG needs to make its resources available as we all work to get our regional economy back on its feet.

“Arizona is a great state with many strengths. I am confident that our current economic issues will be addressed and that our region will continue to prosper in the future.”

During my year as chair of MAG, I was impressed by the many other activities at MAG that are not related to transportation. These have included innovative programs to assist homeless individuals in the region and programs to reduce the incidence of domestic violence. MAG is also a key partner in the effort to plan and deploy the infrastructure to support electric vehicles throughout the region.

One of the most intense and important efforts for MAG was to address the region’s PM-10 dust pollution issue. With the possibility of a disapproval of the PM-10 plan

by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), our region was facing a crippling freeze of transportation projects. Through a year’s worth of effort, the plan was withdrawn and technical improvements were made by EPA that allowed our region to avoid a freeze. This took a combined effort of local and state elected officials, congressional assistance, and great staff effort. We need to redouble our efforts to enforce our dust regulations. I am confident that local governments, working with the state, the EPA, and the business community, will solve this issue.

MAG has also embarked on a key freight study that will examine freight movement in the Sun Corridor and examine the possibility of developing an inland port. Currently, the majority of freight moves through Arizona without stopping. We need to diversify our economy and take advantage of the freight that moves through this region. Arizona is a great state with many strengths. I am confident that our current economic issues will be addressed and that our region will continue to prosper in the future.

Again, it has been my honor to serve this region and I thank all of you for the support you have given me. I look forward to continuing to serve this region as a member of the MAG Regional Council and incoming chair of the Economic Development Committee. 



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 Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport is developing as a true economic engine for the Valley, with more than a million passengers served to date and an annual economic impact of nearly \$700 million. It has helped attract First Solar, Inc., as well as the ASU Polytechnic Institute with over 10,000 students. It is a vital complement to Phoenix Sky Harbor, serving passengers and businesses not only from the East Valley, but from around the state.

—Mesa Mayor Scott Smith



Budget and budget shortfalls are being painstakingly discussed at every level of government, including our Tribal Council meetings at Fort McDowell. The ever-increasing price of oil is an additional burden to everyone's financial picture. This increase has been a causal agent in the latest price spikes in essentials—from gasoline to food. Without a taxing system, Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation itself provides most of the essential services to its people and has resisted reducing these services. Thus, we have had to be creative and more resourceful as we further shrink our government budget to meet these needs. Recently, we have responded to escalations in energy costs with a number of energy efficiency steps. For example, we entered into a cooperative arrangement with SRP that uses solar energy for nearly 25 percent of one of the government's largest buildings. We received a grant from the Department of Energy and utilized rebates from SRP that have allowed us to perform energy audits in 13 buildings and subsequently retrofit five buildings that will increase their energy efficiency. Fort McDowell Radisson Resort is also now registered to be considered for LEED certification. These steps are important not only to reduce overall costs and our carbon footprint, but more importantly, preserve precious natural resources. We are examining other ways to continue these proactive efforts for the years to come.

—Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation President Clinton M. Pattea



It is heartbreaking that we continue to see so many drowning incidents involving children throughout the region. We must continue to remind residents of 'Eye to Eye Supervise' any time kids are around water. That means pools, bathtubs, canals or even a bucket. We all have the ability to put an end to these tragedies.

—Chandler Mayor Jay Tibshraeny

MAG Renews Heat Relief Efforts

For most of us, the triple digit summer temperatures represent a temporary annoyance that shows up in our monthly utility bills. But for people who are homeless, elderly, or otherwise vulnerable, extreme temperatures can be deadly.

For the sixth straight year, the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) is coordinating the Heat Relief Network, a coalition of service providers, faith-based groups, municipalities, businesses and caring citizens who mobilize to provide water and shade or shelter for people in need.

The Heat Relief Network was formed in 2005, when the regional community was devastated after 32 people died in the month of July due to blistering temperatures. The network began a campaign to provide water and refuge

stations across the Valley for those who had no means of escaping the summer heat. In 2010, there were 63 hydration stations and refuge locations throughout the Valley.

"These efforts have increased awareness about the dangers of heat-related illnesses and have established critical resources for those who desperately need them," said Tempe Councilmember Shana Ellis, chair of the MAG Regional Continuum of Care Committee on Homelessness. "The purpose of the network is to prevent heat-related deaths among homeless people. With the community's continued help, we hope to prevent any further loss of life."

For more about the heat relief efforts and how individuals and agencies can help, visit the MAG website at www.azmag.gov. 

Regional Profile: Mayor John Lewis



Mayor John Lewis
Town of Gilbert



Gilbert Mayor Finds Life's Lesson in Keeping the Garage Clean

He was first bitten by the political bug as a junior in a high school history class.

"There was an election going on, and the history teacher encouraged us, and in fact gave us extra credit if we got involved in a campaign—she didn't care which one. I involved myself with a candidate running for the U.S. Senate, and he won," says Gilbert Mayor John Lewis, who relates that his involvement later led to a staff position in Washington, D.C., with Senator Jake Garn.

"I don't know what adjectives to use to describe it, but it was just a fabulous learning experience," says Lewis. Garn was the chair of the Senate Banking Committee, leading Mayor Lewis toward another career path in accounting and bank consulting. While Lewis longed to return to politics, life interrupted.

former Gilbert Town Manager Kent Cooper (town manager from 1983-2001), who encouraged Lewis to become active in the community.

Lewis did, and soon found himself appointed as the co-chair of a Diversity Task Force responsible to address challenges and restore harmony from "Devil Dog" gang activities that had shocked the community. He also became involved in major youth service projects and began working closely with community interfaith events.

"I had a great love for the Constitution, and I helped initiate what has become the largest Constitution Week celebration in the country," he recalls.

Having become a well-known member of the community, friends approached him to run for mayor. Initially resisting due to work and family commitments, Mayor Lewis soon recognized it was a chance to be part of a "service opportunity of a lifetime!" With the support of Apollo Group (his employer of 20 years), he accepted the assignment, and started his public service in June 2009.

"I am honored to be able to serve in Gilbert—a community that I describe in three words: Clean, Safe, Vibrant. I appreciate how everyone comes together to make positive things happen, whether it's police, fire, public works, community services, or the hundreds of volunteers that support our area," he says.

Lewis notes he additionally enjoys his regional role at MAG.

"MAG has done a great job of forecasting population trends and determining future transportation needs. MAG is asking the right questions as we envision our communities in the next 10, 20 and 50 years—do we have the roads in place, do we have commuter rail, do we have light rail, do we have the ability to get from airports and the right size of airports? The long term thinking of MAG is critical." Mayor Lewis also references MAG's vision in bringing the Loop 202 through Gilbert.

"Because of the 202, we are a completely different community. The Gateway Airport is now easily accessible from anywhere in the Valley. On the (Loop) 202, we have the new San Tan Village Mall that unlocked the door for hundreds of new businesses to open. Five years ago, our first hospitals, Mercy Gilbert and Gilbert Hospital, were built near the 202. Now, just five years later, new health care groups and services are all over town, including the MD Anderson Cancer Center next to Banner Gateway Hospital. One of our town's strategic initiatives is to focus on and expand our bio-medical life sciences market. Our growth and future direction has so much to do with the 202, through the MAG vision, coming to Gilbert."

Mayor Lewis spends his spare time playing early morning basketball and staying active with his family. He and his wife have a great love for children and recently became active in foster care. The family is now in the process of adopting a ninth child, a nine-year-old boy named Brian.



"We moved to Houston with a baby daughter (very cute). And we blinked and the next thing we knew we had identical twin boys," he says. "Life went on, a transfer to Arizona occurred, Gilbert became our new home, and another five Lewis children came along." One of the Lewis neighbors was

Continued on page 5

Mayor Lewis (continued)

“We’re very excited about the newest member of our family. Of course this involves time and family integration so some adjustments have been made to the daily schedule,” says Lewis. Despite his busy mayoral duties, he still finds time to run between his children’s music and sporting events. He notes that he even earns the occasional “pooper scooper” duty cleaning up after the family’s three horses. He says such duties have kept him humble.

“I have a memory of two years ago that helps remind me of priorities in life. I had been very focused on the mayoral campaign, and I had neglected a few important items. A week before the election, my wife, in a joking but serious way, said, ‘You won’t get my vote, and I won’t tell anyone to vote for you, unless you clean the garage this weekend.’” He laughs. “So while my focus is on Gilbert—how to help now and how to help in the future—I haven’t forgotten the importance of keeping the garage clean and maintaining that long-term focus on what matters most with the family, because someday I will no longer be an elected official, but I will continue to be a husband and dad,” he says.

What gift would Mayor Lewis give to the Valley if he could? “It would be a gift certificate to eat at Joe’s Real BBQ in downtown Gilbert for every single person. I think that would make everyone’s day. Although I guess if it’s a gift certificate, that would not bring in sales tax revenue, but it would get them hooked on Joe’s for future visits to Gilbert,” he says. 🏡



Mayor Lewis (right) joins Tad Peelen, general manager of Joe’s Real BBQ, outside the Gilbert landmark.

MAG Regional Domestic Violence Council Honored for Service Coordination

The MAG Regional Domestic Violence Council has been recognized by the Attorney General’s office for its efforts to protect and defend victims of domestic violence. In April, the council was presented the Distinguished Service Award for Service Coordination from the Arizona Attorney General’s office during a ceremony that took place during Crime Victims Rights Week.



Commander Kim Humphrey receives the award from Attorney General Tom Horne.

“The single most important thing government does is to protect society from predators,” said Attorney General Tom Horne in presenting the award. Commander Kim Humphrey, chair of MAG’s Regional Domestic Violence Council and a police officer for the city of Phoenix, accepted the award on behalf of the council.

“Ten years ago, this region awoke to the brutal reality of domestic violence when a mother was killed by her husband in front of their children after she could not find shelter,” said Commander Humphrey. “Her story shocked the region into action, and the MAG Regional Domestic Violence Council was formed. Since then, the council has mobilized the community through collaborative projects that have profoundly and positively impacted victims of domestic violence crimes,” he said.

Much of the Regional Domestic Violence Council’s work has addressed domestic violence through the criminal justice system. Crisis Response Teams were first organized under the council’s leadership. The council’s work has included creating standardized trainings, implementing workplace policies addressing domestic violence, increasing communication to ensure the safety of victims and survivors, and documenting the impact domestic violence has on municipal justice systems and the need for legal assistance. The council is now examining the municipal protocols used to arrest and prosecute domestic violence offenders and identifying promising practices in order to offer training on the improved protocols. The Protocol Evaluation Project is funded through a grant from the Governor’s Office and STOP Violence Against Women.

“Domestic violence tears families apart and ruins lives. The trauma extends beyond the victim to children, friends, neighbors and coworkers, impacting the entire community,” said Humphrey. “Recognition of the council’s work is a great testament to the dedication of many community members who are willing to speak out for those who often don’t have a voice.” 🏡

Dust Pollution: Do Your Part to Control Dust

The region will be holding its collective breath through the end of the year, hoping that no additional exceedances of federal standards occur at the monitors as a result of dust pollution.

Maricopa County is classified as a Serious Area for dust pollution by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the region has implemented strict measures to control particulate emissions known as PM-10 (particulate matter 10 microns in diameter or less).

In addition to protecting public health, attaining the federal standards for PM-10 is important to the region for economic reasons. Penalties for not meeting the requirements of the Clean Air Act can include sanctions on business and industry and the loss of millions of dollars in federal highway funding. However, that threat could be eliminated if the region can remain clean at the monitors at least through December.



Recently, unsupervised vacant lots have become a significant source of concern. You can see evidence of vehicles doing “donuts” in this dirt lot, directly adjacent to an air quality monitor. The activity caused the monitor to record levels exceeding health standards.

“In order for EPA to issue an attainment finding, a region must be able to show at least three clean years at the monitors,” said MAG Environmental Director Lindy Bauer. “EPA has indicated informally that 2009 may be a clean year. There were no violations of the PM-10 standard in 2010. If 2011 is clean, the region would have the three years needed for attainment of the standard, so the next few months are especially critical,” she said.

Bauer noted that MAG member agencies have embarked upon a rigorous effort to prevent PM-10 exceedances. The city of Phoenix, for example, has established a Dust Reduction Task Force comprising several city departments.

“The task force includes those departments that have the authority, expertise and resources to minimize particulate emissions from potential sources on city and private properties under our jurisdiction,” said Phoenix City Manager David Cavazos. “We are now making major strides in trying to better understand the high-risk areas and develop consistent, citywide, immediate response procedures for days when high levels of dust are predicted,” he said.

To help in the effort, MAG has provided \$90,000 to the Maricopa County Air Quality Department for upgrades that will provide near real-time monitor data. Local governments will be able to watch the monitor readings and rapidly respond if high dust-generating activities should occur. Local governments can also make use of longer range forecasts issued by the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) that can predict—

up to five days in advance—when high winds or stagnant conditions are putting the region at risk.

“We are developing a dust action forecast that will predict when there is a high risk for dust in the Valley,” said ADEQ Director Henry Darwin. “We are hoping that industry and the public alike will take those forecasts and further reduce their impacts on dust generation in the Valley.”

MAG is assisting member agencies by providing a Rapid Response Action Plan template that can be used when such forecasts are issued. In addition, MAG is producing an informational video to increase awareness that all sectors need to do their part to reduce dust pollution. The video outlines how cities, towns, contractors, homebuilders, and farmers are recognizing the serious nature of dust pollution and how they are addressing dust emissions. The video encourages members of the public to assist in the effort. 

What You Can Do:

- Refrain from driving or parking on dirt.
- Avoid the use of leaf blowers or other types of equipment that raise dust.
- Reduce fireplace and woodstove use.
- Ride ATVs and other off-road vehicles in authorized areas only.
- Maintain landscapes to avoid loose dirt by covering with vegetation or gravel.

More tips are available at CleanAirMakeMore.com.

Diversifying the Economy (continued)

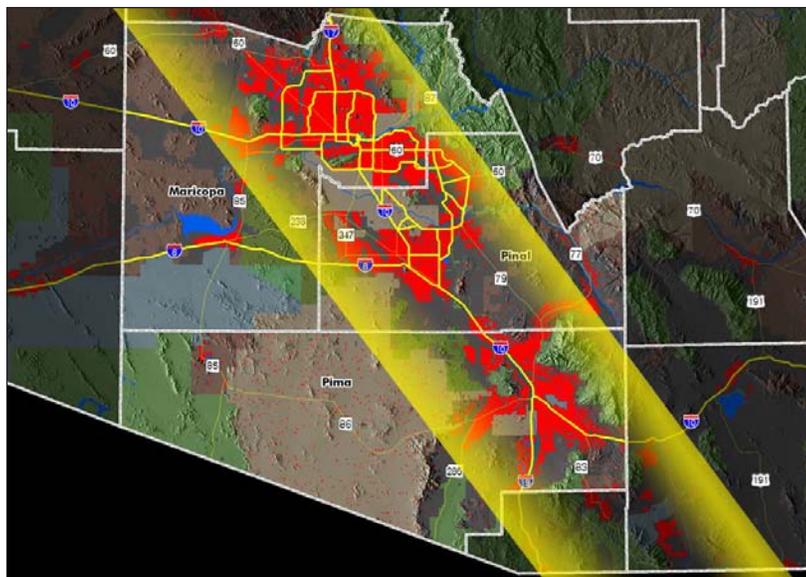
Since its inception in late 2010, the EDC has embarked on a variety of efforts, ranging from identifying what brings business to Arizona to exploring opportunities for taking advantage of freight movement through the state by developing inland ports. Recently, the committee began efforts to understand the region's trade relations with Canada and Mexico and the impact of the transportation system on those relationships. This effort is focused on what is known as the Sun Corridor; the "megapolitan" area that stretches from Tucson to Phoenix.

"The Sun Corridor contains approximately 81 percent of the population of the state, 83 percent of the jobs, and 84 percent of the economic output of our state," said Schoaf. "Economic centralization is typical of almost all megapolitan areas in the Intermountain West. Although many believe the Intermountain West is primarily rural in nature, in reality it is highly urbanized. We need to find ways to optimize these economic zones."

One recognition by the EDC is that Arizona could take better advantage of potential freight opportunities. Studies show that a large portion of the nation's freight passes through Arizona, but more than 60 percent of that freight simply passes through without any economic benefit to Arizona. MAG has currently embarked on an 18-month Freight Transportation Framework Study that will identify and develop freight-related economic development opportunities, including the viability of an inland port, and ways to increase access for freight movements (whether truck, rail, or air) throughout the Sun Corridor.

International relations have also garnered attention from the committee. The top three trading partners in the U.S. are China, Canada and Mexico, but the latter two often tend to be overlooked. The EDC is doing its part to increase the dialogue between neighboring nations with the goal of improving trade relations through transportation planning.

"In a recent presentation by a local representative of the Canadian Consulate, we learned that Canada generates more than two billion dollars in bilateral trade with Arizona and supports 150 thousand local jobs," said Schoaf. "Mexico is the 13th largest economy in the world and is also a significant trading partner with Arizona. This represents nearly \$55 million every day in bilateral trade, with Mexican visitors spending more than \$7 million every day in our state."



The Sun Corridor megapolitan area stretches from North Phoenix in Maricopa County, through Pinal County, to Tucson in Pima County.

It is important to identify key individuals of influence and listen to what they say," he said.

The EDC has also invited a number of incoming and existing businesses to come before the committee to discuss what brings them to—or keeps them in—Arizona, and what transportation resources are still needed. Schoaf said the goal is to explore transportation planning opportunities that would attract new business, encourage existing businesses to expand, and support local entrepreneurs.

Schoaf noted that transportation planning agencies have a wealth of data that can be used to demonstrate what the region has to offer businesses that are considering locating in the Valley.

"When we recognized that we could provide this asset, we approached the Greater Phoenix Economic Council on a regional data partnership to provide economic development related information through a joint website. It is envisioned that the joint data center will have mapping and other user-friendly capabilities to communicate information about our region to prospective businesses," he said.

Schoaf said the EDC is exploring the idea of facilitating a forum or conference where the various planning agencies representing Intermountain West megapolitan areas could meet and share their economic strategies, with a goal of identifying gaps and designing a cohesive strategy. 



Regions Seek Interstate 11 Designation

With Phoenix and Las Vegas being the two largest neighboring cities in America not connected by an interstate highway, momentum is building in both cities to encourage Congress to include Interstate 11 (I-11) in the next Transportation Equity Act reauthorization.

I-11 represents a new north-south travel corridor connecting communities in the Intermountain West. Following the opening of the interstate-standard Mike O'Callaghan-Pat Tillman Memorial Bridge (Hoover Dam bypass bridge) in October 2010, several states, including Arizona and Nevada, began working with Congress to seek interstate designation of the freeway corridor between

Phoenix and Las Vegas and potentially to destinations in the Pacific Northwest.

“By developing these connections, I-11 would improve trade and commerce opportunities for the MAG region, providing better links to San Francisco, Salt Lake City, Portland and Seattle,” said Litchfield Park Mayor Thomas Schoaf, incoming chair of the Economic Development Committee. “It would also improve travel reliability and provide relief for congested freeway corridors in the West, such as Interstates 5 and 15,” he said.

Interstate 11 has been identified to replace US-93 and includes a new freeway, the proposed 152-mile Hassayampa Freeway west and south of Phoenix. It would be part of the CANAMEX Corridor. The Arizona Department of Transportation has been upgrading the US-93 roadway to a four-lane divided highway over the past 15 years. As recently as 1997, US-93 was mostly a two-lane road known for its dangerous curves and hills in the stretch between Wickenburg and Interstate 40. The I-11 corridor has been accepted by the MAG Regional Council as an illustrative project (meaning no funding is currently identified) in the Regional Transportation Plan.

Interest in the corridor received a significant boost with the completion of the Hoover Dam bypass bridge. Since that opening, Arizona Governor Brewer has asked the Arizona Department of Transportation to begin an environmental process for the first segment of I-11 in western Maricopa County between Interstate 10 in Buckeye and US-93 in Wickenburg; the Nevada Legislature has passed a resolution

calling for the designation of Interstate 11 to replace US-93 between Phoenix and Las Vegas; and the Nevada Department of Transportation has begun study work for identifying the location of I-11 north of Las Vegas toward the Pacific Northwest, with participation from state transportation agencies in California, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington.

In addition, a business coalition consisting of representatives throughout the corridor have been working with governmental partners to move I-11 forward as a strategic route to link communities throughout the Intermountain West, which is recognized as the fastest-growing region in the United States.

“It is interesting to note that when the Interstate Highway System was designated by President Dwight Eisenhower in 1956, the communities in the corridor stretching from Tucson to Reno had a population of 700,000. Today, this corridor’s population exceeds eight million,” said Schoaf, who added that an interstate designation would fit into the region’s economic development vision.

“A large portion of the nation’s freight passes through Arizona without any economic benefit. The Economic Development Committee is looking at the feasibility of developing inland ports to help take advantage of the expansion of several seaports in Mexico. We have recommended another rail corridor be established, and when Interstate 11 is added, it will provide a greater ability for freight movements, which would mean more jobs and economic security for Arizona,” he said. 



The line in green shows the potential route of the I-11 corridor from Arizona through Nevada and Oregon to Washington state.



The Legacy Award winners made major contributions throughout their careers in developing Arizona's transportation system.

Arizona Transportation Legacy Awards

Former MAG Secretary John “Jack” DeBolske was honored as one of ten outstanding individuals to receive the first-ever Arizona Transportation Legacy Awards at a special ceremony in Tucson. In celebration of the 60th Arizona Conference on Roads and Streets, the first “Legacy Awards” were presented to recognize “one or more outstanding individuals who have made a significant contribution to transportation in the state of Arizona.”

Nominees can represent government, private practice, construction, education or industry, but “must be a person whose contribution is noteworthy,” according to the Legacy Award Committee. Forty-two nominations were received.

DeBolske served as executive director of the League of Arizona Cities and Towns from 1957 to 1997. He was a staunch advocate for local government and was a prime mover in ensuring all of the cities and towns in Arizona are professionally managed through the council/manager form of government. He was instrumental in protecting cities and towns from raids on revenue sources, and assisted with legislation transforming the Arizona Highway Commission to the present Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT). In 1967, he helped create the Councils of Governments in Arizona and also formed the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG), which he led from 1967 to 1996. In 1985, DeBolske worked with the business community, ADOT, State Legislature and Governor to enable MAG to bring Proposition 300 to the voters in Maricopa County. The half-cent sales tax for transportation was one of the first of its kind in the nation and is largely responsible for funding the regional freeway system.

Other Legacy Award recipients, all of whom are now retired, included: (see photo above, left to right) James Attebery, city engineer for the city of Phoenix; Dr. Rudolf Jimenez, professor emeritus of the University of Arizona; John Ritoch, civil engineering consultant for Ritoch-Powell and Associates; Jim McDonald, former executive director for the Arizona Chapter of Associated General Contractors; Jack DeBolske; Sue Vaughan, accepting for her husband, Robert Vaughan, former director of the Yuma Metropolitan Planning Organization; Ed Hall, transportation director for the city of Phoenix; Katie Dusenberry, member of the Pima County Board of Supervisors and Arizona Transportation Board; William Ordway, former ADOT director; and Oscar Lyon, Jr., state engineer for ADOT. 

MAG Moment



Former MAG Secretary John “Jack” DeBolske receives the Arizona Transportation Legacy Award at the 60th Arizona Conference on Roads and Streets.



Madison Street Veterans

Veterans Helping Veterans

New Focus on Ending Homelessness



May marks the anniversary of one of the Valley’s most recent and unique homeless shelters. The MANA (Marines, Army, Navy, and Air Force) House is a 50-bed transitional living facility for homeless veterans that opened its doors on May 1, 2010. The facility is just one of a number of successful endeavors of the Madison Street Veterans Association, a peer-oriented charity in which homeless veterans come together to help each other.

the Madison Street Veterans Association was born. The association now has 80 beds reserved for veterans in the shelter. But the group wanted to extend its outreach beyond the shelter, and with the help of the Arizona Department of Veterans Services, its next move was to open an outreach center at the Andre House near Madison Street. The group’s director says it is a means for individuals who once served their country to continue to serve.

“We trained one of our homeless veterans to be a service officer, which means that he is able to help veterans start the paperwork to potentially get benefits that can be life changing for them. And we’ve had very, very good success doing that,” says Araman.

The outreach group’s success resulted in additional donations and an offer from the YWCA to utilize one of its facilities, which then became the MANA House.

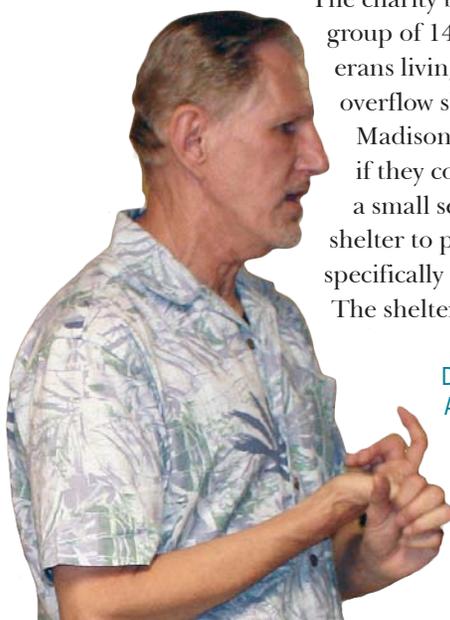
Araman says the reasons for homelessness among veterans are complex and often vary by era. Vietnam veterans, for example, returned to face animosity and a lack of support that became alienating. Other types of challenges exist for the most recent population of veterans, many of whom have done extended or multiple tours of duty.

“When they come back, they are coming back to a terrible economy, so homelessness among the returning veterans is about twice the national average,” notes Araman. “A lot of these guys are very young, so they didn’t have strong career ties to begin with...If they had a job, it may have gone away; in fact, the whole company may have gone away. And the social networks are just not there to be supportive of homeless veterans as they were in past generations. So what we are having to do as a country is to look for ways to augment the services that are there, not only to provide services, but also to provide an entry back into civilian life. But it’s very difficult,” says Araman, who adds that other issues such as post traumatic stress disorder or traumatic brain injury also make it difficult for some veterans to integrate into civilian life.

The charity began when a group of 14 homeless veterans living in the men’s overflow shelter on Madison Street asked if they could utilize a small section of the shelter to provide services specifically for veterans. The shelter agreed, and

“The veterans got together and said...we need something here on the front lines that can help homeless veterans,” says Terry Araman, director for the association and a former Vietnam veteran who has himself experienced homelessness. “When a veteran becomes homeless, where does he go, whom does he contact, what does he do? So we opened the outreach center just for that specific purpose.”

At the outreach center, veterans can access telephones and computers to assist in securing jobs or applying for veterans benefits.



Director Terry Araman counts the many positive results for veterans since opening the shelter.

Continued on page 11

Veterans Helping Veterans (continued)

MAG's recent annual homeless street count found 247 homeless veterans living on Valley streets. Counting the number of homeless veterans was a new priority this year during the count, in which volunteers fan out to identify the number of individuals and families experiencing homelessness. (See story, right).



Councilmember Shana Ellis,
City of Tempe

“For the first time, the volunteers counted the number of homeless veterans on the streets,” says Shana Ellis, chair of the MAG Continuum of Care

Regional Committee on Homelessness. “Collecting data on the number and characteristics of individuals and families experiencing homelessness is a critical part of the local planning process. Being able to identify the number of homeless veterans will enable the community to better serve this population.”

The Obama administration has stated that its goal is to end homelessness among veterans within five years. With a stack of 200 applicants waiting at any one time for one of his 50 transitional living beds, Araman hopes that can be accomplished.

“Our aim is to end homelessness for veterans, but we want to end homelessness for everybody. We don't think that anybody in the United States should be homeless, veterans or otherwise. So our long range plan is to end homelessness entirely.”

For more information on the MSVA, visit www.MadisonStreetVeterans.org

Homeless Street Count

On January 25, 2011, volunteers fanned out across the region and counted a total of 1,749 people experiencing homelessness, a 36 percent decrease from 2010. The annual point-in-time count provides a snapshot of homelessness in the region. This year marks the second decrease in the number of people on the streets. Despite the decreases, providers say much work remains to be done to ensure all people have access to safe, stable housing.

These numbers reflect a count of homeless people on the streets and do not include people staying in shelters, doubled up (sharing housing with family or friends), or not seen that day. Historically, volunteers would determine a person was homeless through observation or knowledge of the individual's history. This year, for the first time, homelessness was determined using a survey in which volunteers more directly interacted with those counted. This more intensive method produces more accurate results, but also makes it more difficult to compare results with previous years. A decrease was also noted in the annual Homeless Shelter Count conducted by the Department of Economic Security. There were 4,304 people in emergency and transitional shelters on the night of the count, a decrease of four percent.

“A number of factors may be contributing to the lower number of people experiencing homelessness,” said City of Tempe Councilmember Shana Ellis, chair of the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) Continuum of Care Regional Committee on Homelessness. “Over the past few years, stimulus programs that provide eviction prevention for people on the verge of homelessness and rapid re-housing for people on the streets have had a positive impact in the community,” Ellis added. “For example, the Tempe Permanent Supportive Housing Pilot project is housing 35 chronically homeless people.” The impact of the federal stimulus funding seems to be making a difference on a national level as well. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) released 2010 national point-in-time counts last week which showed relatively no change from 2009, suggesting that federal programs, such as Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing, are responsible for curbing a potential increase in homelessness resulting from the recession.

Ellis added that the Human Services Campus has partnered with the Arizona Behavioral Health Corporation to provide housing for 47 chronically homeless people, and Project H3: Home, Health, Hope has housed 29 chronically homeless and medically vulnerable people. There are other coordinated efforts taking place within the community, such as monthly Project Connect events conducted by the Valley of the Sun United Way and efforts to prevent and end homelessness among veterans.

The homeless street count, organized by MAG with volunteer coordinators in the region, is part of a national effort to identify the number of individuals and families experiencing homelessness. The street count is part of the application to HUD for homeless assistance funding. The funding provides transitional housing, permanent supportive housing and supportive services to more than 53 programs in the region. This year, for the first time, individuals and families were surveyed to determine if they have ever served in the U.S. military. Fourteen percent of the people on the streets were found to be homeless veterans.

The table below provides details of the street count results.

| 2011 Homeless Street Count Results | 2011 | 2010 | Percent Change (+/-) |
|------------------------------------|-------|-------|----------------------|
| Street Count Total | 1,749 | 2,729 | -36% |
| Adults | 1,683 | 2,493 | -32% |
| Children (under the age of 18) | 66 | 236 | -72% |
| Non-Chronic Individuals | 889 | 1,791 | -50% |
| Chronic Individuals | 789 | 615 | +28% |
| Families | 3 | 47 | -93% |
| People in Families | 8 | 142 | -94% |
| Youth on Their Own | 63 | 181 | -65% |
| Veterans | 247 | | |



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Summer 2011 Calendar

May 2011

- 3rd 12:00 p.m. Economic Development Committee
- 4th 10:00 a.m. Intelligent Transportation Systems Committee
- 4th 1:30 p.m. Standard Specifications and Details Committee
- 5th 1:00 p.m. Human Services Technical Committee
- 10th 1:00 p.m. Street Committee
- 11th 12:00 p.m. Management Committee
- 12th 10:00 a.m. Transit Committee
- 16th 12:00 p.m. Regional Council Executive Committee
- 16th 2:00 p.m. Continuum of Care Regional Committee on Homelessness
- 17th 1:30 p.m. Bicycle & Pedestrian Committee
- 17th 1:30 p.m. Dark Sky Stakeholders Group
- 18th 2:00 p.m. Building Codes Committee
- 18th 4:00 p.m. Transportation Policy Committee
- 24th 10:00 a.m. Population Technical Advisory Committee
- 24th 10:00 a.m. Transportation Safety Committee
- 24th 1:30 p.m. Air Quality Technical Advisory Committee
- 25th 5:00 p.m. Regional Council
- 26th 10:00 a.m. Transportation Review Committee
- 31st Memorial Day - Office Closed

All meetings, unless indicated otherwise, will be held in the conference rooms located in the MAG offices on the 2nd floor of the building, 302 N. 1st Ave., Phoenix.

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

June 2011

- 1st 10:00 a.m. Intelligent Transportation Systems Committee
- 1st 1:30 p.m. Standard Specifications and Details Committee
- 2nd 10:00 a.m. Technology Advisory Group
- 7th 12:00 p.m. Economic Development Committee
- 8th 12:00 p.m. Management Committee
- 9th 10:00 a.m. Transit Committee
- 9th 1:00 p.m. Human Services Technical Committee
- 9th 1:30 p.m. Regional Domestic Violence Council
- 13th 12:00 p.m. Regional Council Executive Committee
- 14th 1:00 p.m. Street Committee
- 15th 2:00 p.m. Building Codes Committee
- 20th 2:00 p.m. Continuum of Care Planning Subcommittee
- 21st 1:30 p.m. Bicycle & Pedestrian Committee
- 21st 1:30 p.m. Dark Sky Stakeholders Group
- 22nd 4:00 p.m. Transportation Policy Committee
- 28th 10:00 a.m. Population Technical Advisory Committee
- 29th 5:00 p.m. Regional Council
- 30th 10:00 a.m. Transportation Review Committee
- 30th 1:30 p.m. Air Quality Technical Advisory Committee

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

NOTE: Remodeling of meeting rooms will be underway during these months, so meetings may be moved or canceled.

July 2011

- 4th Independence Day - Office Closed
- 5th 12:00 p.m. Economic Development Committee
- 6th 10:00 a.m. Intelligent Transportation Systems Committee
- 6th 1:30 p.m. Standard Specifications and Details Committee
- 12th 1:00 p.m. Street Committee
- 13th 12:00 p.m. Management Committee
- 14th 9:00 a.m. PSAP Managers Group
- 14th 10:00 a.m. Transit Committee
- 14th 1:00 p.m. Human Services Technical Committee
- 18th 12:00 p.m. Regional Council Executive Committee
- 19th 1:30 p.m. Bicycle & Pedestrian Committee
- 19th 1:30 p.m. Dark Sky Stakeholders Group
- 20th 2:00 p.m. Building Codes Committee
- 20th 4:00 p.m. Transportation Policy Committee
- 21st 10:00 a.m. Technology Advisory Group
- 25th 2:00 p.m. Continuum of Care Regional Committee on Homelessness
- 26th 10:00 a.m. Population Technical Advisory Committee
- 26th 10:00 a.m. Transportation Safety Committee
- 27th 1:00 p.m. Human Services Coordinating Committee
- 27th 5:00 p.m. Regional Council
- 28th 10:00 a.m. Transportation Review Committee
- 28th 1:30 p.m. Air Quality Technical Advisory Committee

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