

Find Alternatives to Holiday Fireplaces

Burn Cleaner, Burn Better Campaign Underway



For many families, cozying up before a wood burning fireplace or fire pit have been a holiday tradition. This is especially true for Christmas Eve and New Year’s Day. But if you want to give a gift of cleaner air and better health, there are alternatives to wood burning that can preserve both the holiday mood and our health and environment as well.

“Many of us don’t recognize the harm. We think, ‘it’s just one day, one little fire, what can it hurt?’ But the cumulative effects of burning wood can have serious impacts on air quality and harm hundreds of thousands of Arizonans with asthma or other breathing problems,” notes Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) Chair Gail Barney, mayor of Queen Creek. That is why MAG and its partners at the Maricopa County Air Quality Department encourage you to *Burn Cleaner, Burn Better*.

The smoke from wood fires brings a number of pollutants, including carbon monoxide, ozone and other toxins that can harm health. Of specific concern is particulate matter (PM). There are two types of particulates of concern in the Valley, known by their size in microns: PM-10 and PM-2.5. Both are so small they can pass through your throat and nose, enter the lungs, and may even get into the bloodstream. PM-2.5 is believed to pose the greatest health risk because these tiny particles can get stuck deep in the lungs.

Of note is that anyone can suffer from temporary symptoms due to high amounts of particulate matter

in the air. Children, the older adults, people exercising outdoors, and those with heart or lung disease or asthma are at especially high risk.

The Maricopa County Air Quality Department regulates the use of wood burning. This includes residential fireplaces, woodstoves and outdoor burning devices (like chimineas or fire pits) during periods of high smoke pollution.

During the winter holidays, the greater Phoenix area historically experiences extremely high levels of PM-2.5 pollution, primarily due to wood burning fires.

Pollution in the Valley is monitored by several air quality monitors located in and around Maricopa County. When conditions exist for levels to rise, state forecasters issue a high pollution advisory [HPA]. Once that happens, the Maricopa County Air Quality Department issues mandatory No Burn Day restrictions. This means you cannot use a wood burning fireplace, woodstove or any outdoor wood burning device, including manufactured logs. Fines for violating a No Burn Day range from \$50 up to \$250.



A technician works with a homeowner to place an air pollution reduction device in a wood burning fireplace.

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Message From the Chair



Mayor Gail Barney, Town of Queen Creek

We know that transportation is an important element in a successful future. The current half-cent sales tax that funds transportation in our region expires at the end of 2025. We are taking our first steps forward on a path to identify new transportation investments—investments that will continue to attract major businesses and connect Valley residents to the places they want to go.

To best frame the discussion, MAG has begun important work to identify the values and issues residents care about most. We will be looking for continued input from residents, commuters, employers and other community interests to help us better understand regional priorities. *(Comments can be provided at www.azmag.gov/comment.)*

A number of technical studies also support this work. Current MAG efforts include a plan for system management and operations, a commuter rail study, a transportation safety plan, and a regional transit study. Other studies involve freight issues and an Active Transportation Plan for a regional bicycle and pedestrian system in the Valley.

We are still at the trailhead of this important journey. We will need support from each other and our numerous partners in order to see

success when we reach the final destination.

On another important note, I was impressed by the Regional Council's show of support for Domestic Violence Awareness Month. It was inspiring to see Regional Council members wearing the color purple as a unifying symbol of courage and honor to the victims and survivors of domestic abuse. An estimated 87 people lost their lives due to domestic violence in Arizona last year, with at least 53 deaths occurring in the MAG region.

While those numbers represent a decrease in the number of fatalities in the region from the year before, they are far, far too many. And even as the number of deaths has gone down, the number of domestic violence cases overall has been going up, and has been on the rise for the last three years. I am proud of the continuing work of the MAG Regional Domestic Violence Council to respond to this issue.

Many of our member agencies displayed purple in their communities in support of October as Domestic Violence Awareness Month (see page 6). We need to continue to send a powerful message that there is no place for domestic violence in our homes, neighborhoods, workplaces, or schools. 



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

Mayor Gail Barney
City of Queen Creek, Regional Council Chair

Eric J. Anderson, *Executive Director*

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Arizona Department of Transportation



Visit www.azmag.gov and click on Regional Council.

Voices From the Council



As the fastest growing county in the nation, Maricopa County has experienced unprecedented growth in the past decade. As we plan for how we will meet the transportation infrastructure needs of our growing and expanding region, it is imperative that we listen to our constituents and incorporate their interests in the planning process of the Prop 400 extension plan.

—Peoria Mayor Cathy Carlat

I recently had the honor of being named one of the 25 Fittest Mayors in America by HealthFitnessRevolution.org. I believe as community leaders, we must all stress the importance of wellness in our cities and proactively work to provide the amenities and resources for a healthier region.

—Chandler Mayor Jay Tibshraeny



Our residents recently engaged with us in drafting a Transit Feasibility Plan that will help shape our city's transportation future. Their input was invaluable. We look forward to working with MAG as we move forward, taking a holistic view in identifying transportation improvements that will support those across the Greater Phoenix Metro Area.

—Surprise Mayor Sharon Wolcott

Maricopa County works with dedicated and experienced partners across the Valley to provide critical services to those experiencing homelessness. This holiday season, I hope you'll join us in healthy giving that considers what's best for the community and the individual and which can help change lives for the long term.

—Maricopa County Supervisor Denny Barney



Diversification of sustainable revenue sources, innovation, business attraction and retention, and responsible growth are essential to the achievement of a balanced economy. Paseo de Luces in Downtown Tolleson combines award-winning public art, walkability, music and free Wi-Fi into a sense of place that serves as a microcosm of diversity and helps make Tolleson recession proof.

—Tolleson Mayor Anna Tovar

MAG Moment



Ten high-level government officials from Vietnam visited MAG and ASU in September. Topics of discussion included regional transportation funding and autonomous vehicles. 



Councilmember David Smith, Town of Cave Creek



The Weather Brought Him— The Town Keeps Him Here

Like many Arizonans, David Smith came here because of the climate. After 66 years of dealing with what he calls “the incredibly awful” New York weather, Smith moved to the town of Cave Creek nearly 12 years ago.

“My wife and I had agreed that it would be a good idea—once our children got to the point where they were able to handle a transfer—that we would move. And we moved to Arizona, and to the town of Cave Creek,” says Smith.

In Arizona, Smith found his sunshine. He also found a desire to get involved in his new community.

“Fairly quickly, I got involved in a number of things to do with the town. I was on the budget committee, and I’ve been on the budget committee for probably 11 years now. I got into a group called the Water Advisory Committee, which is concerned about water issues in the town. Then I got onto the Planning Commission, and became the chair of the Planning Commission. Then I ran for elective office, and I was elected a couple years ago to become a councilman.”

In his former career as deputy director of environmental health for the New York State Department of

Health, Smith handled everything from the AIDS epidemic to toxic waste dumps to the 9/11 cancer fallout. Today, he finds joy in being able to solve the problems of everyday citizens in a close-knit community.

“I just had a nice discussion with a couple concerned about trespassing on their property. They were wondering, ‘how do we deal with that, can the town do anything to help us, do we need to go to court to correct this?’ And I said, ‘Well, let me see what I can do to help you.’ And that’s one of the nice things about it, sometimes you actually can help people with their issues,” says Smith.

He also finds gratification in guiding the town’s annual budget toward critical issues.

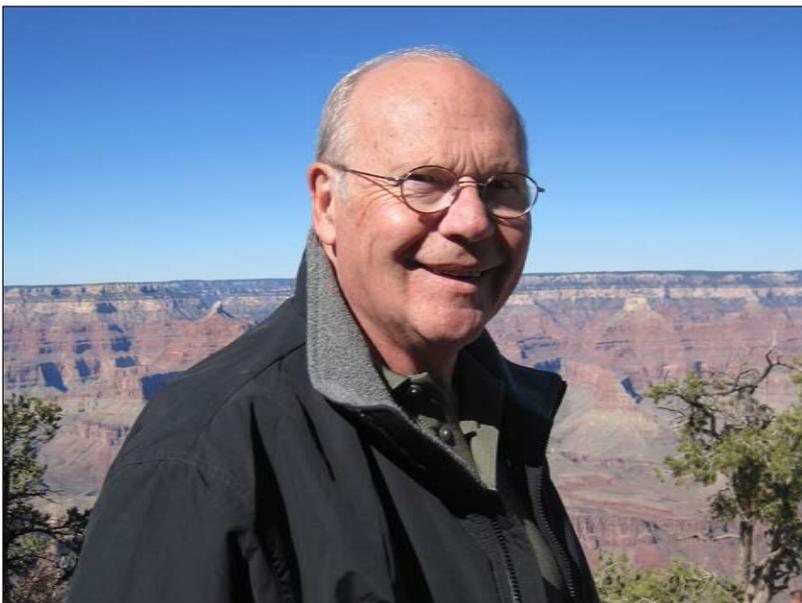
“We’ve directed several million dollars toward our water system. A number of years ago, probably 13, 14 years ago, the town bought an existing proprietary water system. And there are a lot of issues with it,” notes Smith. “We’ve been dealing with them over the past 12 or 13 years. Since I’ve been on Council, I’ve been able to convince people to move money in the direction of correcting a number of these issues.”

In his regional role as a member of the MAG Regional Council, Smith cites homelessness, infrastructure needs, and water issues as significant issues facing the region.

“The biggest challenge of all is inertia,” he says. “It is hard to get people moving in any particular direction. You have to do it both politically and with other support mechanisms such as the media. What I have noticed is that when something gets emphasized strongly in the media, it will all of a sudden become a big political issue.”

In his spare time, Smith enjoys reading “mostly escapist-type stuff,” although he notes his favorite magazine is *The Economist*. He enjoys watching television sports, “and my wife and I spend most every night soaking in our swimming pool.”

Councilmember Smith visiting the Grand Canyon.



Continued on page 5



Councilmember Smith (continued)

When asked what his one gift to the Valley would be, Smith considers at length. In the end, he remains mindful of community health issues.

“I think I would like to do something to deal with the opioid crisis,” decides Smith. “I think it is a crisis that never should have happened in the first place. It is one that started because of lack of oversight, and now we are having to deal with all of the problems that resulted from that. If I could do anything, I’d like to go back a few years and put on some controls over the way opioids were dispensed and in the long run, misused.”

Recently elected to his second two-year term, Smith says he likely will want to stay in public office beyond that if he sees things “going in the right direction.” No matter what, it’s a fair bet he will stay where the weather is warm.

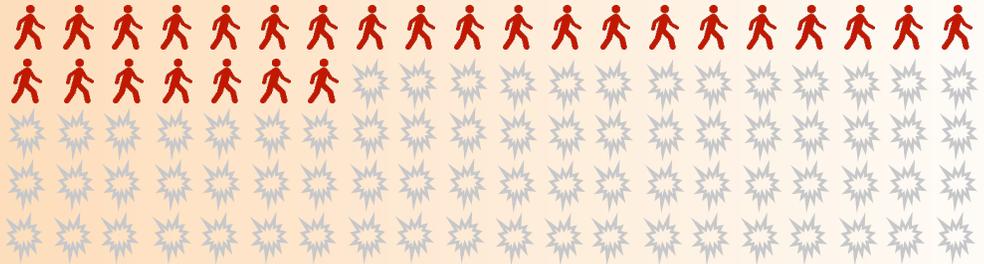
“I much prefer Arizona to New York, I have to say that,” he says.



Deadly Streets

Pedestrian Deaths on the Rise

27 out of 100 fatal crashes involve a pedestrian



Did you know that one out of every 100 crashes in our region involves a pedestrian? Or that the number jumps to 27 out of every 100 when it comes to fatal crashes? That means a pedestrian fatality occurs in nearly 30 percent of all fatal crashes in the region. More disturbing is that this trend has been increasing over the past five years.

While communities around the Valley work every day to improve safety, challenges include inadequate levels of funding available through the Highway Safety Improvement Program. During a recent Regional Council meeting, staff reported that over the past several years, local agencies in the MAG region have not been able to get funding from the dedicated federal funding for safety projects that is “anywhere equal to the crash trends demonstrated.”

An Arizona Republic article dated July 2, 2018, reported that 52 pedestrian involved fatal crashes had occurred as of that date just in Maricopa County.

Using that number to project fatal pedestrian crashes through 2018, MAG estimates approximately 103 pedestrian-involved fatal crashes by year’s end. While no death is acceptable, that would represent a decrease from the 155 who died in 2017.

“We can only hope a downward trend is in our future,” said MAG Chair Gail Barney, mayor of Queen Creek. “Safety will continue to be a priority for MAG. It will certainly be a cornerstone of the next generation transportation plan, which would need to be funded through a future extension of Proposition 400, which sunsets in 2025.”

In the meantime, MAG staff, in partnership with local agency staff, will continue to explore low cost safety initiatives, including education programs. 

Pedestrian Fatality Trend



Seeing Purple?

During the month of October, Valley communities recognized Domestic Violence Awareness Month by lighting key city facilities and dressing in purple. The color is a symbol of courage and honor for victims and survivors of domestic abuse. If you or a loved one are experiencing domestic violence, please call 9-1-1 or **1-800-799-SAFE (7233)**. 



The MAG Regional Council wore purple and approved a resolution supporting



Phoenix City Hall



Surprise City Hall



Scottsdale Horse Sculpture



Mesa City Hall



MAG Building



Gilbert Water Tower



g October as Domestic Violence Awareness Month.



Glendale City Hall



Avondale Police Station



El Mirage City Hall



Tolleson City Hall



Queen Creek Town Hall



Peoria City Hall

Find Alternatives to Holiday Fireplaces (continued)

To make it easier for people to *Burn Cleaner, Burn Better*, the Maricopa County Air Quality Department offers a number of programs and partnerships. For example, a fireplace retrofit program modernizes fireplaces with pollution reduction devices and natural gas log sets. Newer partnerships enable people to receive discounts on propane fire pits.

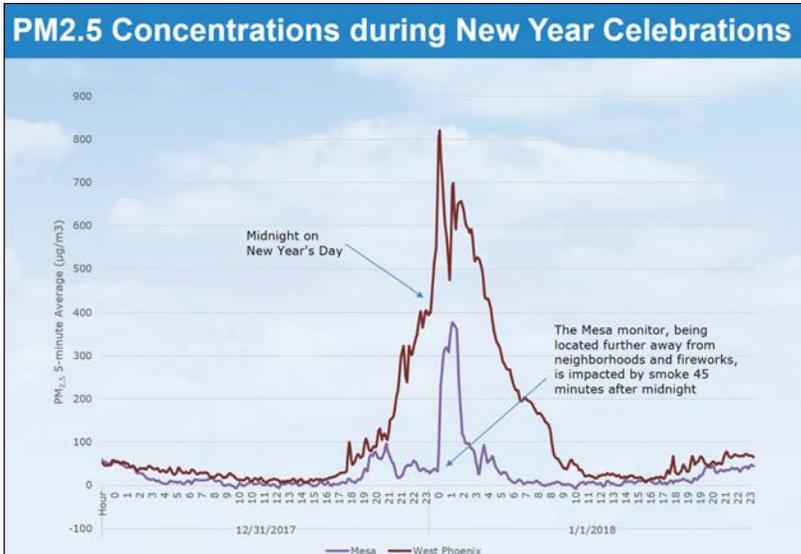
“Wood burning activities that occur during the winter months create poor air quality and can endanger the



health of our residents,” Maricopa County Air Quality Director Philip McNeely said. “The spirit of the season compels us to remember our neighbors and the impact that our actions have on others. Please, *Burn Cleaner, Burn Better*. If possible, convert your wood burning device to gas and abide by the No Burn Day restrictions.”

So let’s start an even greater holiday tradition: cleaner air. It’s a gift that can be passed down for generations. 🏔️

To learn more about steps you can take to reduce pollution, visit www.cleanairmakemore.com.



MAG Moment



In September, MAG hosted representatives from Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Mongolia, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Thailand to discuss Indo Pacific strategy and infrastructure development. The program is sponsored by the U.S. State Department’s International Visitor Leadership Program. 🏔️

Your Tax Dollars Working for You

Under Proposition 400 in 2004, Maricopa County voters approved an extension of the half-cent sales tax for transportation. This series highlights projects built under Prop 400—to let you know where your money is going and how it is improving your transportation experience.



Hail to Light Rail

When the Valley's first light rail passengers stepped on board December 27, 2008, they knew they had a convenient new alternative to driving. What they might not have predicted is how light rail has played a critical role in supporting vibrant, healthy, connected and economically competitive communities.

As Valley Metro and its light rail communities prepare to celebrate the 10-year "Railversary" since initiating 20 miles of light rail service, it is clear that ridership has exceeded expectations. But what else has this new transit service done to affect the communities around it? Valley Metro staff, in cooperation with member cities and other agencies, have spent the past year analyzing that question and have prepared a report to summarize findings.

The Quality of Life Report evaluated the changes in the light rail corridor over the past decade that make the region a better place to live, work and become educated. The report examines progress to connect communities, enhance customer experience, drive the economy, and foster community health.

"The Maricopa Association of Governments applauds the success of the first decade of light rail service in our region," said MAG Chair Gail Barney, mayor of Queen Creek. "The system benefits all communities,

whether they have light rail or not. It reduces overall traffic and improves our quality of life by providing important regional connections."

Examples of Valley Metro Rail's success highlighted in the Quality of Life Report include:

- Served 16.5 million riders in 2017—an increase in transit ridership of 487 percent since 2007 on the prior route (Red Line bus).
- Created more than 35,000 jobs within one-half mile of light rail since 2008.
- Increased by 50 percent the ability of riders to reach their destination without a vehicle transfer.
- Improved access to education. More than 5.5 million square feet of new educational facilities have been implemented in the light rail corridor since construction.
- Decreased bicycle and pedestrian collisions with automobiles by 50 percent and fatalities resulting from collisions by 10 percent in the light rail corridor.
- Helped riders save 15 minutes travel time during rush hour compared to the prior route (Red Line bus).
- Saw increase of more than 2,200 more affordable housing units in the light rail corridor since light rail construction.

The report will be available online after December 6, 2018. 

Downtown Mesa light rail station. Photo courtesy Valley Metro.





MAG conceptual illustration of a commuter train.

Farther/Faster: What Would Commuter Rail Mean for the Valley?

Did you know that if our region implemented commuter rail today, it would be one of the top 10 commuter rail systems in the country?

The Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) has updated its Regional Commuter Rail System Study, first conducted in 2010. The new study provides a fresh look at the proposed commuter rail system, projected ridership, cost estimates, benefits to the region, and other related data.

The proposed 110-mile system is based on four existing freight rail corridors

that would connect 18 community centers/urban cores and two airports. It would give a higher speed, longer distance travel option for commuters to a variety of housing opportunities, jobs, and entertainment and cultural centers.

“Commuter rail provides an intriguing alternative to other modes of travel, because the trains travel longer distances with fewer stops,” noted Gilbert Mayor Jenn Daniels, chair of the Transportation Policy Committee, which recently heard an update on the study. “I definitely see how this

is one option that could benefit residents in my community who want to travel across the Valley. In fact, the MAG study estimates that nearly 900 Gilbert riders would use the train daily,” she said. “Commuter rail empowers a broad range of valley commuters to come to Gilbert and invest their dollars in our community and enhances our workforce to support our Gilbert-based employers.”

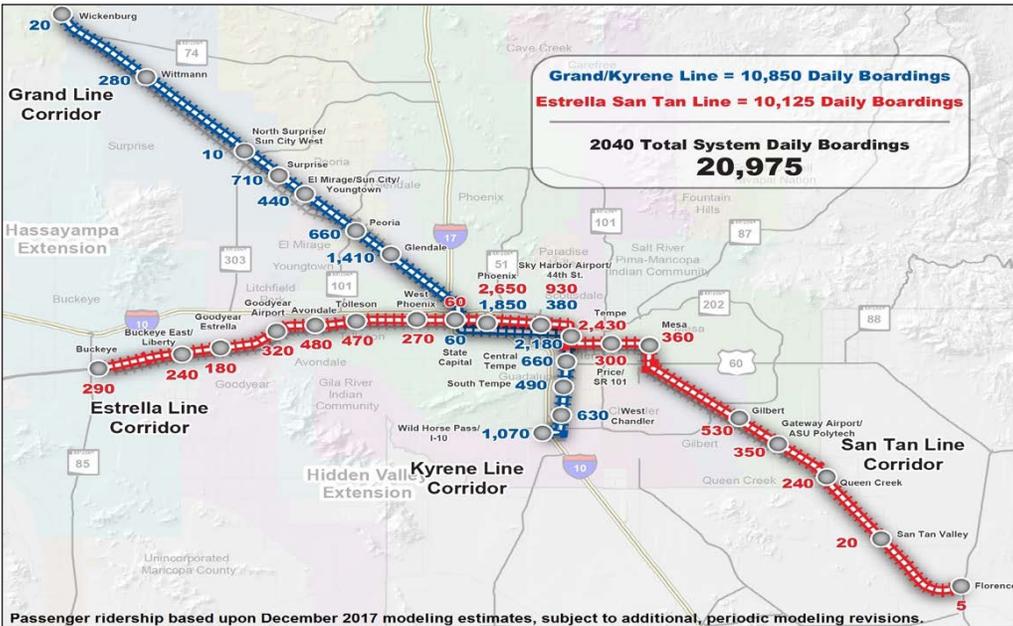
The study estimates overall week-day ridership of about 21,000, which would place the Maricopa region in the top 10 of commuter rail systems in the country. Capital costs per mile are estimated to be about \$24 million. With a fare assumption of \$3 dollars one-way, the estimated fare recovery is about 36-40 percent of operating costs.

It is not clear what impact the number of riders on commuter rail would have on reducing traffic congestion. Even in the metropolitan areas with the highest ridership of commuter rail, traditionally only about 4 percent of daily trips use public transit.

“Estimates on return on investment are exactly the type of data members need in order to make informed decisions about transit options in the next Regional Transportation Plan,” said MAG Executive Director Eric Anderson. “New transportation technologies also will be a factor, and more technical studies are needed to inform the policy discussion.”

Next steps for potential implementation include updating ridership forecasts, coordinating with the railroads, working out legal issues, and identifying funding. Rail operations would likely begin three to five years after funding commitments.

Passenger ridership model for potential rail corridors.



www.azmag.gov/commuterrail

Hey, Neighbor!

Local Governments in Arizona and Sonora Explore Economic Development Opportunities



Cross-border opportunities to improve the economies of Arizona and Sonora were the focus of an Ari-Son Megaregion meeting that brought together Valley mayors and recently-elected Sonoran officials. Ari-Son is a coalition of local elected officials from Arizona and Sonora who work together on economic issues of interest to both of the neighboring states.

About 140 business and elected officials met in late August to discuss the impact of Mexico's recent presidential election and to share updates on tourism and other economic development initiatives. Border communities in attendance were Douglas, Naco, Nogales, Sasabe, Lukeville, and San Luis.

"It is important to continue to build communication bridges between Arizona and Sonora," said Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) Chair Gail Barney, mayor of Queen Creek. "It was helpful to learn more about the newly elected leadership in Sonora and how we can best work with them to increase economic development in both our regions."

Mesa Vice Mayor David Luna, who emceed the event and is a member of the MAG Economic Development Committee, stated that a number of members from the new party in Mexico attended. The National Regeneration Movement (MORENA) won 53 percent of the popular vote in Mexico, with the president beginning his term in December. Although only in existence for four years, the MORENA party controls 53 percent of the Senate in Mexico and 61 percent of Congress.

"The MORENA party has incredible legislative influence over the majorities of both Congress and the Senate in Mexico," said Vice Mayor Luna. "There will be more consolidation of power in some of the gubernatorial elections as well as the mid-terms in 2021. This was a great opportunity to start bridging relationships with individuals from this new party."

The agenda included a welcome by Juan Ciscomani, senior advisor to Governor Doug Ducey on regional and international affairs. Other topics included a discussion of SkyBridge Arizona, the nation's first international air cargo hub to house both Mexican and United States customs. The service will be operated out of Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport and will enable e-commerce companies, manufacturers and other commercial interests conducting business in Mexico and Latin America to more efficiently transport goods between countries.

Along with Mr. Ciscomani, Mayor Barney, and Vice Mayor Luna, speakers included Intermestic Partners President and CEO Marco Lopez; Ramirez Advisors International President Luis Ramirez; Visit Tucson Executive Vice President Felipe Garcia; and Buckeye Mayor Jackie Meck, who chairs the MAG Economic Development Committee.

An optional economic development tour followed the meeting, with visits to ASU Skysong and Galvanize, a Phoenix incubator for companies building tech-enabled innovations. 



Mayor Barney addresses elected officials from Arizona and Sonora at the Ari-Son meeting.



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A Quarterly Newsletter Focusing on Regional Excellence

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Winter 2018-2019 Calendar

November

- 6th 10:00 a.m. Transportation Safety Committee (Ironwood)
- 6th 11:30 a.m. Economic Development Committee (Saguaro)
- 7th 12:00 p.m. Management Committee (Saguaro)
- 8th 10:00 a.m. Public Safety Answering Point Managers Group (Saguaro)
- 8th 1:30 p.m. Human Services Technical Committee (Chaparral)
- 12th Veteran's Day Holiday (Office Closed)
- 13th 1:00 p.m. Street Committee (Ironwood)
- 14th 10:00 a.m. Intelligent Transportation Systems Committee (Ironwood)
- 14th 12:00 p.m. Transportation Policy Committee (Saguaro)
- 14th 2:00 p.m. Building Codes Committee (Ironwood)
- 15th 9:30 a.m. Transit Committee (Saguaro)
- 19th 12:00 p.m. Regional Council Executive Committee (Ironwood)
- 20th 1:00 p.m. Active Transportation Committee (Ironwood)
- 21st 9:30 a.m. Maricopa Regional Continuum of Care Committee (Ironwood)
- 22nd Thanksgiving Day (Office Closed)
- 23rd Thanksgiving Holiday (Office Closed)
- 26th 1:30 p.m. Maricopa Regional Continuum of Care Board (Ironwood)
- 28th 11:30 a.m. Regional Council (Saguaro)
- 29th 10:00 a.m. Human Services and Community Initiatives Committee (Chaparral)
- 29th 1:30 p.m. Air Quality Technical Advisory Committee (Saguaro)

December

- 4th 10:00 a.m. Solid Waste Advisory Committee (Ironwood)
- 4th 11:30 a.m. Economic Development Committee (Saguaro)
- 6th 10:00 a.m. Transportation Review Committee (Saguaro)
- 6th 2:00 p.m. Regional Domestic Violence Council (Ironwood)
- 11th 1:00 p.m. Street Committee (Ironwood)
- 12th 10:00 a.m. Intelligent Transportation Systems Committee (Ironwood)
- 13th 1:30 p.m. Human Services Technical Committee (Chaparral)
- 18th 1:00 p.m. Active Transportation Committee (Ironwood)
- 19th 9:30 a.m. Maricopa Regional Continuum of Care Committee (Ironwood)
- 20th 9:30 a.m. Transit Committee (Ironwood)
- 24th Christmas Eve Holiday (Office Closed Half Day)
- 25th Christmas Day Holiday (Office Closed)

Parking is available under the building. Please ask for parking validation at the meeting. A transit ticket will be provided for anyone who purchased a transit ticket to attend a meeting. Bike racks are available at the entrance to the parking garage.

January

- 1st New Year's Day (Office Closed)
- 9th 12:00 p.m. Management Committee (Saguaro)
- 9th 1:30 p.m. Standard Specifications and Details Committee (Ironwood)
- 14th 12:00 p.m. Regional Council Executive Committee (Ironwood)
- 16th 12:00 p.m. Transportation Policy Committee (Saguaro)
- 21st Martin Luther King Holiday (Office Closed)
- 30th 11:30 a.m. Regional Council (Saguaro)

The newsletter is available at www.azmag.gov. Click on the MAG Publications link and then MAGAZine Newsletter link.

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

The dates, times and locations of all meetings may change. Other committees not listed may meet during these months. For confirmation, call (602) 254-6300.