



District 2 News

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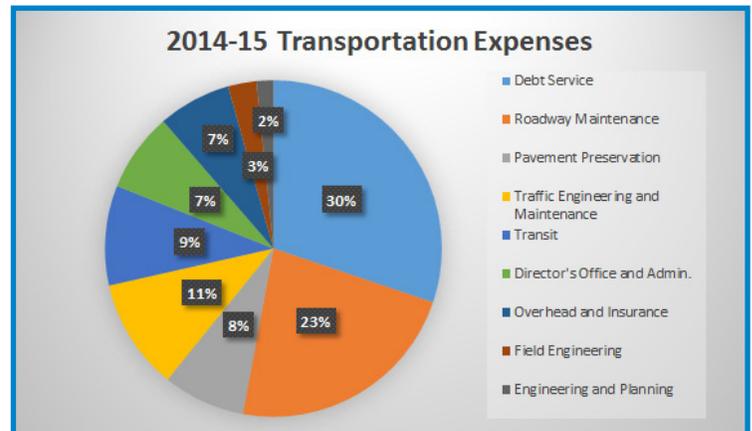
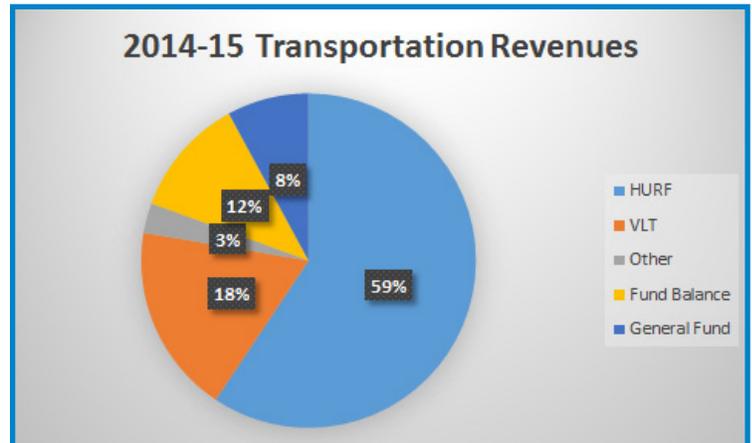
2015 Spring Edition

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Funding Roads: One of our Biggest Challenges

As we go about our daily routine, it's easy to see how our local roads are deteriorating. Whether it's a County, City, State or Federally-maintained road or freeway, it is clear that road maintenance is one of our region's greatest needs.



Pima County's transportation budget is \$63.2 million, much of which comes from the State's Highway User Revenue Fund (HURF). The two pie charts on the right illustrate this particular budget. For definition of terms and more information, please refer to the Transportation Funding brochure at webcms.pima.gov/government/transportation.

While the potholes and the problems are easy to see, finding solutions is more difficult. However, we are not the only community facing this problem. Across the country and throughout Arizona, communities have concerns with the condition of their roads.

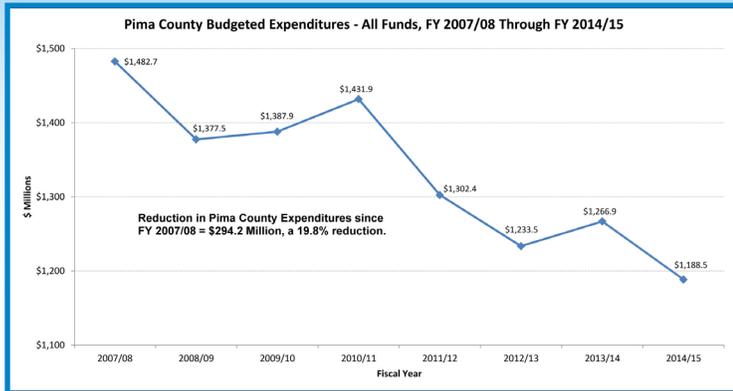
To deal with this worsening condition, over the past two years, the Pima County Board of Supervisors has funded an additional \$5 million from the General Fund for Pavement Preservation, becoming the only county to fund transportation from this source. These funds, however, can only be spent in unincorporated Pima County, which means that the 88% of us in District 2 who live in Tucson, South Tucson or Sahuarita won't see funds spent in our communities. For that reason, I have insisted that these funds be used for major arterial roads – or the roads that

we are all likely to use regardless of where we live.

A possible source of funds is the user fee or, in Arizona, what is better known as the gasoline tax, which stands at 18 cents per gallon. It is among the 10 lowest in the country and has not changed since 1991. Since then, inflation has increased by 71 percent, construction costs have more than doubled, and passenger vehicle gas mileage improved by 46 percent. This resulted in Arizonans driving 71 percent more miles but only buying 52 percent more gas – meaning more wear and tear on our roads, but less revenue to repair and maintain them. For Arizona's gas tax to have the same purchasing power as in 1991, it would need to be 33 cents per gallon or almost double what it is today.

Adding to the problem is the fact that the Arizona Legislature has kept over \$1 billion in HURF revenues over the past 10 years that were intended to be distributed to cities and counties. This has also become a trend throughout the country, prompting voters in several states to adopt Constitutional Amendments to prevent legislatures from keeping or "sweeping" these road funds.

Again, finding a solution to this issue is not easy. More



funds are needed to address the problem and simply shifting funds or cutting budgets isn't enough. Since 2007, the County has cut more than 1,000 employees and \$300 million from the budget, but the cost to solve the problem remains much greater. I believe than an adjustment in the user fee or gas tax would be the fairest method for raising these funds because it means that the people who use the streets and roads pay for them. In late 2013, the Pima County Board of Supervisors passed a resolution asking the Governor and Arizona Legislature to consider raising the gas tax by 10 cents per gallon. Our purpose was to begin a real discussion about how to best pay for needed repairs to our roads.

At this point, in spite of our efforts and those of other counties and many in the business community, the State has not taken even preliminary steps to address the problem. We are going to need to find our own solutions.

During town halls and other community discussions throughout our District, I have heard a very clear message that roads must be a priority. To address this increasing need - and the fact that we will not be getting funds from the State - **I will propose that the Board of Supervisors include at least \$100 million for pavement preservation throughout Pima County, including the cities and towns, in a future bond election.**

Keeping Raytheon Jobs Here

We all know that Raytheon is the largest private employer in Pima County and that the success of the company is critical for the economic success of Pima County.

Not long ago, I learned that Raytheon projects were being built in Huntsville, Alabama, instead of Tucson, Arizona. I asked why these projects and the people needed to build them were going to Alabama. A delegation from Pima County had this and many other questions when we first traveled to Huntsville and then began a long but fruitful conversation with



the senior leadership of Raytheon. We discovered that a core concern was the fact that the Tucson plant was landlocked; it no longer had the physical ability to grow. We also discovered that by relocating one road – the Hughes Access road just south of Raytheon – that problem would be solved. And that's what we did.

With one vote of the Board of Supervisors on March 3, 2015, we approved the relocation of the road and kept the jobs in Pima County, allowing Raytheon to compete and to grow. The ground-breaking for this project took place on March 31st and is projected to be completed in December.

The Sonoran Corridor: Growing Our Economy



Key to the success of Pima County's Sonoran Corridor Economic Development Plan is the growth of critical infrastructure, of which the relocation of the Hughes Access road is an important element. Connecting major employment and logistic centers in our regions is the goal of the Sonoran Corridor, which takes advantage of several key transportation assets. Not only does the road relocation allow for the expansion of Raytheon, it is a first step to enable additional economic development.



The Sonoran Corridor will link I-10 and I-19, preparing us for the high traffic congestion that is anticipated for the urban core by improving flow through existing highways. Tucson International Airport is planning for the addition of a second major runway, adding capacity and making our region more competitive. And, lastly, the Port of Tucson provides an active intermodal inland port that provides access to surface streets and highways as well as railways. Together, these assets combine to increase opportunities for economic growth and allow us to compete in regional, national and global markets.

More on Pima County's Economic Development Plan

Earlier this year, Pima County released a draft of the 2015-17 Economic Development Plan. It can be found at www.pima.gov/economicdevelopmentplan2015.

The Appendix of the new Plan also includes an update on all key Action Items delineated in the 2012-14 Economic Development Plan. The proposed 2015-17 Plan builds and expands on many of those initial Action Items and serves as a road map for future investment and policy decisions in Pima County.

Higher Ground Turns Students Around

When the Tucson Unified School District (TUSD) announced the closure of Wakefield Middle School, as an alumnus, I felt a sense of loss. But as the old saying goes, as one door closes, another opens. The door that opened welcomed home Higher Ground, which now uses the campus for a youth and family resource center.



Higher Ground is a program that works with schools, teachers, parents, families, friends and counselors to jointly determine what is best for each student. An individual program is developed based on each student's needs and they deal with each student holistically. Many of their students begin with lower grades, but as they progress in their own program, their grades begin turning into As and Bs. When I saw the incredible difference they were making with young people, I wanted to know more, and I wanted to know how Pima County could partner with them to make an even bigger difference.

Higher Ground provides academic tutoring, high quality recreational programs, mental/behavioral health services, family support, college scholarships, mentoring, financial literacy, dropout prevention services, substance abuse support and much more.

Jansen Arias started the nonprofit Higher Ground program in 2007. Through strategic partnerships with other

organizations and the generosity of volunteers, Higher Ground is able to serve nearly 150 children and teens. Arias is passionate about the martial arts and has led his Higher Ground youth team to win many gold medals in Jiu Jitsu tournaments nationwide.

When I met Jansen and toured the Higher Ground facilities at Wakefield, I noticed that they needed help with technology. They hoped to offer courses in technology and needed computers and a network to make it happen. They were relying on WiFi and all the IT equipment and wiring was taken by TUSD when it leased out the building. As luck would have it, Pima County's Chief Information Officer had designed the Wakefield system earlier in his career so knew all that would be required. Pima County staff volunteered their time and set up a proper computer network for the students at Higher Ground. "Technologically, everything that we have was made possible with the help of Pima County," said Arias. He continued. "Now we are able to have 3-D design classes, the kids can use the internet for their homework, and soon we will be implementing a Re-engagement Center for 16 to 24-year-olds who have not yet earned a high school diploma."

I am excited that Pima County, with the volunteer help of our staff, was able to put surplus equipment to good use for our community.

More information about the amazing work of Higher Ground can be found at www.higherground.me.

Free Pima County Immunization Clinics

EAST OFFICE

6920 E. Broadway Blvd.
Tucson, AZ 85710
(520) 298-3888

- Monday to Friday 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- Closed for lunch from noon to 1 p.m.
- 3rd Saturday of each month 9 a.m. to noon
- By appointment; walk-ins are also welcome

SOUTH OFFICE

175 W. Irvington
Tucson, AZ 85714
(520) 889-9543

- Monday to Friday 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- Closed for lunch from noon to 1 p.m.
- 4th Tuesday of each month until 6 p.m.
- By appointment; walk-ins are also welcome

GREEN VALLEY/SAHUARITA OFFICE

601 N. La Cañada Drive
Green Valley, AZ 85614
(520) 648-1626

- Wednesday 1 to 4 p.m.
- By appointment only

For Special Summer Clinic Hours, call 243-7736 or go to our website: www.pimahealth.org

The information in this newsletter is provided as a public service. If you have any questions, please contact us. If you would like to receive them in the future, *please send your name, address and e-mail address to* Dist2@pima.gov or call our office. Thank you for allowing us to serve you.



Pima County Having Public Budget Hearings

As part of Pima County’s ongoing efforts to increase the transparency of your local government, I proposed and my colleagues on the Board of Supervisors unanimously supported an additional series of Open Public Hearings on the County budget this year:

Date	Subject
April 7	Overview & Elected Officials
April 14	Elected Officials continued, County Administrator and Central Services
April 21	Central Services continued and Community Resources
May 5	Justice & Law Enforcement (Non-Elected) & Public Works
May 12	Health Services & Board Discussion

All five hearings will begin at **1:30 pm** and will take place at the **Board of Supervisors Hearing Room** on the **First Floor of 130 W. Congress**. These five hearings will



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be in addition to the three Budget Public Hearings that are conducted annually as required by state law:

1. **Tentative Budget Adoption** – Board sets the maximum caps on the respective budgets.
2. **Final Budget Adoption** – Board adopts the budget.
3. **Rate Adoption** – Based on Final Budget and Assessed Value, tax rates are formally adopted.

During last year’s budget hearings, I expressed a great deal of concern about the additional need for transparency in the County Budget. Where the Board of Supervisors has adopted budgets based on requests made by the different county departments, elected officials and the courts, I wanted to make sure that there was transparency in the way those budgets were spent. I made very clear, “...that budgeting is the sole discretion of this board and NO one else in Pima County.” To make sure that we lead by example, we adopted a provision that mandates that we annually prepare a report for public release of all expenses made during the previous Fiscal Year by each of the offices of the Board of Supervisors.

I invite you to join us in person and learn more about the Pima County Budget process. This will be an Open Public Hearing so, if you wish, please fill out a green speaker card and comment or just listen to the presentations and testimony. If you cannot make it to the hearing room, you watch us on cable channels Comcast 96, Cox 96 or on our live webcast at www.pima.gov. Also, on days when the City of Tucson Council is not in session, you may watch the hearings on Cox 12.

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