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Economic Reporter

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER PRODUCED BY THE CITY OF MESA OFFICE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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Valley Metro delivers Light Rail to the Valley



December 27th marked the grand opening of the Main and Sycamore Light Rail station in Mesa. Thousands of people enjoyed food and live music while waiting for a chance to ride the train. The Light Rail grand opening signaled a “win” for regional planners and economic development officials who use examples such as Portland, Denver, San Francisco and Boston to show the effectiveness of mass transit and transit-oriented development. For the purpose of economic development, Metro’s Light Rail brings something more than a popular mode of transportation along West Main Street... it brings opportunity.

Proponents of light rail argue that rail transit increases community well-being by creating jobs, boosting economic development and property values, and reducing pollution and traffic congestion - at the same time providing drivers with an economical alternative to the automobile. Below are a few examples of the “opportunity” Light Rail has brought to other communities around the country:

- In Charlotte, transit officials claim that more than \$291 million in new development has been built near stations on a new 10-mile rail line. They say an additional \$1.6 billion has been announced for the rail corridor.
- In Denver, transit officials say 8.4 million square feet of new retail, office and government space has been built along its existing 35-mile rail network. In addition, there have been 11,000 residential units built near the rail line.
- In Dallas, a 2005 study showed that \$3.3 billion in new real estate investment was made or planned near light-rail stations from 1999 to 2005.

So what will Mesa’s Light Rail corridor look like in five, ten or even twenty years? It’s tough to say, but if we use nationwide examples as a barometer, we can anticipate plenty of development activity along the rail line. In response to a nationwide trend of redevelopment in downtown districts; Mesa will look to leverage the Light Rail for urban and transit-oriented development. The hope is to rejuvenate the city center by bringing more people, entertainment, jobs and culture to Downtown Mesa and along West Main street. Using the development results from the Denver, Dallas and Charlotte Light Rail lines; it’s encouraging to think of the possibilities in West Mesa, and downtown.



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The Economic Development Advisory Board meets the first Tuesday of every month at 7:30 am in the Lower Level Council Chambers (57 East First Street). All meetings are open to the public.



The Quick Jab *With Bill Jabjiniak*

Holistic Economic Development...

The business of Economic Development (ED) as it should be practiced today needs to become more comprehensive in order to compete successfully. As ED professionals it is time to catch up with our friends from the American Medical Association. We need to practice “holistic ED” to determine whether or not we get results.

In both the health industry and in economic development, that means dealing with the whole being - in one case that means the whole person and, in the other, all facets of the community. The idea is simple, to treat the whole person, to consider the many interrelated components to achieve the best and most productive results. Too often we do the same unproductive thing doctors have been criticized for in recent years – treat symptoms. Economic Development needs the same holistic approach. To concentrate solely on recruiting when companies already in Mesa need help in a variety of ways will likely result in the loss of opportunities in the long term.

ED is much more than marketing; it's more than business attraction, nor is economic development only the ability to put financial packages together. Economic development is the sum of its parts. Typical ED services may include: marketing, business recruitment, business retention and expansion, business finance, business advocacy, entrepreneurship training, technical assistance, workforce development, downtown development and revitalization, information clearing house, real estate development and reuse, infrastructure improvements, international trade, Brownfield's redevelopment and the list goes on.

It may help to put holistic ED in perspective if we take the holistic medicine analogy a step further and compare some of the key elements of economic development with different organs of the body.

The heart of any program is the local business climate. With a positive business climate that supports a broad range of activities essential to job creation, a community is strong and almost certain to thrive.

Community leaders can be considered the brain. Their plans and actions send messages to every segment of the community and determine whether needed activities are carried out effectively.

Community preparedness is the degree of readiness and attractiveness an area has to offer – in a very real sense provides the muscle that makes it possible for a community to get results. If an area lacks the infrastructure it needs to support healthy growth, nothing much will happen. But if everything from its water and sewer systems to its appearance and cultural amenities have been properly developed and kept in top condition, it will have the muscle it needs to both create jobs from within and very likely attract jobs from other areas.

The mind, separate and distinct from the brain provides the vision and perspective ED programs need, the ability to see more than existing schools and training programs, to have a concept of future plans on how to deal with companies' requirements.

In summary, ED is more than you thought. The odds are great that if we, as ED professionals and community leaders don't deal with all the prime elements listed above in a holistic way, our “patients” also known as our community is going to wind up even more in need than we are today. Like holistic medicine, holistic ED has the ability to do things that old fashioned symptom treating simply cannot do – become more comprehensive.

Mesa City Council approves the Gateway Strategic Plan



With the completion of the Loop 202 San Tan Freeway in 2006, a lot of attention has been focused on the growth and development of the largely vacant lands adjacent to the Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport. Recognized in Mesa's General Plan as an important sub-area for employment, a decision was made in 2007 to prepare a sub-area plan for Mesa Gateway. Given the size and scope of the planning effort needed in this area, a consultant (HDR Engineering) was hired in June 2007 to carry out this planning process. In addition to developing a land use plan, the consultant team was tasked with preparing an update to Mesa's Transportation Plan for the Mesa Gateway Area, consider how to make the greatest economic impact from the development of this area, and provide recommendations on how to finance the necessary infrastructure that will be needed for development to occur. The planning effort has resulted in three sets of documents:

- 1) The Strategic Development Plan
- 2) The Districts' Visions and Expectations
- 3) The Technical Memorandums notebook

The Strategic Development Plan document summarizes the key elements of the sub-area plan. This document spells out the great opportunity that exists within the 32 square miles by celebrating the area's assets and identifying the desired transportation systems for the area while acknowledging the challenges of growth. The community vision of the area, which identifies the economic goals and objectives, as well as an economic scorecard that ranks development opportunities for the area are also included in the plan. Lastly, this document provides some key implementation steps that will be needed to bring the plan to reality.

The purpose of the Districts' Vision and Expectations document is to outline the design criteria for the area which will contribute to the way in which this area functions, looks, and operates. The document asks that development design in the area will respect the desert environment through incorporation of sustainable de-

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Arizona Prospector promotes business relocation efforts

The Arizona Department of Commerce along with Arizona Public Service Company (APS) have launched a free Web-based tool to support businesses exploring Arizona as a relocation or expansion site. The Arizona Prospector provides information on available property and buildings (retail, commercial & industrial), workforce and consumer demographics, interactive maps and other business information.

Currently there are very few Mesa listings on the Arizona Prospector website. The City of Mesa Office of Economic Development encourages property owners and brokers who own or represent property in Mesa to utilize this site as a way to market their property. Recent research shows that close to 80% of the initial site selection screening process is now done online. If your property isn't readily available online, it may be passed over!

If you would like to list your property on the Arizona Prospector, please visit www.arizonaprospector.com and select the "Add Properties" link or contact Sally Odette with APS at 602-250-4240 or by email at sally.odette@aps.com.

Staff profile: Shea Joachim



Shea Joachim is the Economic Development Analyst for the City of Mesa. He is often involved with almost every aspect of the department including business attraction efforts, business retention visits, CDBG and Section 108 financing, impact analysis, tax incentive analysis, land-use decisions, strategic planning, development agreement negotiations and marketing efforts.

Shea earned a B.S. in Economics with a minor in Philosophy from Pomona College. Previous to working in the City of Mesa, he worked in the financial industry and has a strong background in business and consumer lending. Growing up in Hawaii, Shea became an avid surfer who gracefully rides the waves whenever the opportunity arises. He is also an enthusiastic golfer who is known for his ability to create fireballs when he drives the ball off the tee!

Recently awarded the Ben Warren Scholarship from the Arizona Association of Economic Development, Shea plans to attend the Arizona Economic Development Course this January. Shea also plans on enrolling in the W.P. Carey MBA program at ASU in the fall.

Shea Joachim can be reached at 480.644.3562 or Shea.Joachim@mesaaz.gov

-----HEADS UP!-----

Mesa City offices, including the Office of Economic Development, will move to a 4-10 schedule on March 2nd. Business hours will be Mon. - Thurs. 7am-6pm.

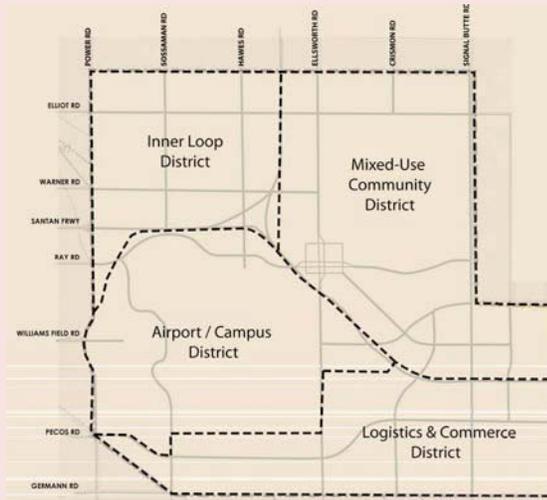
...Mesa Gateway Plan Approved

sign, appropriate development form, and suitable landscape design. Four districts (Inner Loop, Mixed-Use Community, Airport/Campus, and Logistics/Commerce) are identified within the Mesa Gateway Area based on their goals, focus, form, and character. Applicants will be challenged to meet the vision and expectations laid out in this document as they bring development proposals forward.

The planning process has resulted in the creation of several memorandums regarding transportation, economic strategy, utilities and various other technical memorandums. The purposes of the memos are to demonstrate the particular attention given to each topic during the planning process. Overtime, these technical memos can be updated as additional studies are performed or as market conditions change.

On December 8th, Mesa's City Council unanimously passed the Mesa Gateway Plan. The Plan will prove to be one of the most monumental documents in Mesa history. The combination of a growing airport, excellent freeway access and a world-class education institution has set the expectations very high for this area. The Mesa Gateway Strategic Plan will serve as the "playbook" to ensure that Mesa, and the region, maximize the potential of the Mesa Gateway area.

For more information on the Mesa Gateway Strategic Development plan please visit www.mesaaz.gov/mesa-now and click on the "Mesa Gateway Strategic Development Plan" link.



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DID YOU KNOW...

Mesa's Office of Economic Development has over 170 followers on its Twitter page! Visit www.twitter.com/MesaEconDev to see what all the fuss is about...

Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport serviced 41,008 passengers in November, up from 27,991 passengers in October.

EVENTS

Breakfast with the Mayor.

A candid discussion with Mesa Mayor Scott Smith. The Mesa Chamber of Commerce invites you to join them for "Breakfast with the Mayor."

When: February 6th, 2009 from 7:30 - 9am

Where: Mesa Hilton, 1011 West Holmes

The cost to attend the event is \$40.00 per person which includes breakfast. Register for the event online at www.mesachamber.org or call 480-969-1307.

SEATING IS LIMITED. CALL TODAY!



Fiesta District Design Project Update

For nearly two years, the Office of Economic Development has been working with PMC Consulting about future development plans for the Fiesta District, which includes Fiesta Mall, Mesa Community College, and Banner Desert Medical Center. The idea is to create a Fiesta District revitalization strategy, which includes developing a district brand, vision, identifying improvements, and defining a unique sense of place while improving the links between transportation and pedestrians.

The City and PMC have developed a Fiesta District Design Handbook which can be used to design, plan, fund, and ultimately build improvements in the area. The Mesa City Council is scheduled to consider adopting the handbook at its January 26 meeting.

