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Economic Reporter

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

THIRD QUARTER 2011

Mesa and Air Force collaborate to expand Air Force Research Lab into science and technology research center

Mesa City Council voted June 23 to authorize City Manager Chris Brady to sign an interim lease agreement between the City of Mesa and U.S. Air Force for the possession and reuse of the Air Force Research Laboratory (AFRL), located between Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport and Arizona State University Polytechnic campus.



The interim lease will eventually lead to full ownership of the AFRL by the City, which will maintain it as a highly classified facility. The City will lease the property to tenants that require this type of facility. The

City has reached an agreement with Alion Science and Technology, a Virginia-based defense contractor, to handle property management and business recruitment. The site is the only such secured facility in Arizona and is one of just a handful in the United States.

“Preserving a highly classified facility like the Air Force Research Lab gives us the ability to retain a significant number of the existing talent and attract additional high-paying, high-tech jobs,” Mesa Mayor Scott Smith said. “This is another success story for the City and its partners to support aerospace and education, two of the four pillars of the HEAT (Health, Education, Aerospace, Tourism) Initiative for economic development.”

The Air Force Research Lab is scheduled to close by September 15, 2011 and the Air Force has begun the relocation of staff, equipment and operations to Wright Patterson Air Force Base in Ohio. The AFRL opened in 1969 as part of Williams Air Force Base. It is the last remaining portion of Williams, which closed in 1993.

The interim lease is for two years with three additional one-year renewal terms. The lease will automatically expire when the property deed is transferred.

“This is a big day for Mesa and Arizona. We share the vision of continuing the legacy of this site by reusing this complex as the cornerstone of a science and technology research center including a wide range of academic and security industry organizations and projects,” Science Foundation Arizona, U.S. Air Force Lieutenant General (ret.) John Regni, pictured at podium left, said.

The agreement was achieved through the cooperation of several partners with the City of Mesa, including the U.S. Air Force, the City’s Economic Development Advisory Board, Science Foundation Arizona, Arizona State University and Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport.

For information, log onto www.mesaaz.gov/bettermesa/afrl.aspx.

Mayor Smith elected U.S. Conference of Mayors Second Vice President

Mesa Mayor Scott Smith has been elected U.S. Conference of Mayors Second Vice President. The election was held during the Conference’s 79th annual meeting in Baltimore, MD, June 17-20, 2011. Smith will become the organization’s president in 2013 and the first Arizona mayor to serve as president of the organization. Also taking office are Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa as President and Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter as Vice President.

“I am honored to be selected by my peers as the Second Vice President of the U.S. Conference of Mayors,” Mayor Smith said. “The Conference is the leading voice of America’s cities and I look forward to working with my fellow mayors on important issues that affect each one of us.”

Having a representative from Arizona as Second Vice President gives Arizona an added voice on the national level and a direct connection to the federal government on crucial issues such as job creation, debt reduction and transportation spending.

For more information, visit www.mesaaz.gov or www.usmayors.org.

Economic Development Advisory Board

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STAFF

William Jabjiniak, Economic Development Department Director

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 *by Bill Jabjiniak*

Propelling economic development Downtown

Mesa's City Council recently announced the Strategic Initiatives for Mesa: Economic Development; Quality of Life; Financial Stability; Regional Leadership; and Community Engagement. Spanning several initiatives, the vision for Downtown Mesa was defined as a thriving and vibrant urban center. Two major projects underway in Downtown are critical to achieving that goal:

Downtown alleyway utility construction project

The City of Mesa recently began construction on water, sewer and gas improvements in the north and south alleyways off of Main Street between Robson and Center Streets. The Fishel Company began construction June 8, 2011 with a 120-day construction period.

This project represents the City's continued investment in Downtown through replacement of the existing brittle and undersized utility lines. New water lines enable the City to provide adequate water pressure so that business and property owners may take advantage of the Sprinkler Cost Assistance Program (SCAP)- a reimbursable matching grant of up to \$10,000 for fire suppression. The program encourages the rehabilitation and improvement of buildings in a targeted area of Downtown Mesa. Applications are available by calling 480.644.3562.

Regular updates on construction are available through the Engineering Public Relations Office at 480.644.3800 and at www.downtownmesa.com.

30% Design for Light Rail extension complete

Upon approval to enter Project Development by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) last year, METRO began the design phase of the Central Mesa Light Rail Extension. Since that time, the project team has investigated the underground utilities, developed concepts for the station art and architecture, and initiated roadway design for light rail tracks. The design team reached the first milestone, 30% completion, in spring 2011 and on shared preliminary plans for the 3.1-mile extension in Mesa. Two major points of the presentation were public art and station architecture concepts.



Also underway is a federally-required Environmental Assessment (EA) that evaluates this project's potential environmental impacts to the community along the corridor. An EA was released for public review last Fall. Following public review of the Final EA, the FTA will issue METRO a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) which signifies METRO has complied with all federal environmental laws. Receiving the FONSI authorizes METRO to proceed with real estate acquisition and utility relocations on the project.

Throughout the summer, the design team will develop the 60% design plans, integrating the art, architecture, and landscaping, further refining the roadway design and defining the real estate impacts of the project. Construction timing will also be addressed at this milestone.

For more detailed information, visit www.metrolightrail.org/centralmesa.

Phx-Mesa Gateway Airport breaks record passenger count

More than 250,000 passengers used Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport during the first quarter of this year, surpassing all forecasts.



“Thanks to the success of low-cost carrier Allegiant Air, Gateway is the fastest-growing commercial airport in the country,” said Gateway’s Executive Director, Lynn Kusy. “It’s remarkable considering in 2007, we accommodated 57,000 passengers and we’re now on pace to handle a million in 2011.”

Allegiant Air, the airports only regularly scheduled airline, has expanded service to 28 cities from 13 since the carrier’s inaugural flight to Cedar Rapids, Iowa, on Oct. 25, 2007.

Airport spokesman Brian Sexton said the March passenger count of 104,205 at the Charles L. Williams Passenger Terminal, set a record, and combined with January and February passenger numbers, the 250,557 is a record and higher than anticipated. This is a 20 percent increase from the first quarter of last year, which saw passenger traffic of 208,451.

For more information, visit www.phxmesagateway.org.

Container business expands into former furniture giant’s building in Mesa

“Thinking outside the box” is exactly what the owners of Arizona Corrugated Containers did in purchasing the 152,000 square foot former Levitz building in west Mesa. California Box Company (CalBox) owns Arizona Corrugated Containers as well as Tucson Container in southern Arizona. They were looking to expand their operations in the State and decided on Mesa because of the business-friendly philosophy of the City Council and City staff. Competitive pricing in the market was also a key element in their final decision.

“We are excited to be coming to Mesa with our newest expansion and operations,” CalBox President John Widera said. “This is a great location for our business with access to transportation routes and plenty of room to grow.”

The company manufactures custom-built corrugated paper boxes for southern Arizona and north central markets of Mexico. The new operations will be located at 225 S. Dobson which will undergo extensive renovations with an estimated capital investment of approximately \$10 million.

For information, visit www.calbox.com.

Arizona’s first dental school graduates its fifth class

Friends and family cheered as A.T. Still University’s Arizona School of Dentistry & Oral Health’s (ATSU-ASDOH) class of 2011 entered the Ikeda Theater at the Mesa Arts Center, for commencement ceremonies June 11.

The 59 members of ATSU-ASDOH’s fifth graduating class received their Doctor of Dental Medicine (D.M.D.) degree, eight of whom also received a Master in Public Health (M.P.H.) through ATSU’s School of Health Management (SHM). In addition, four postgraduate orthodontic program residents received their Doctor of Health Sciences (D.H.Sc.) degree.

The class of 2011 has a high percentage of graduates going into practice in community healthcare settings. Of the graduates going directly into practice, 65 percent are choosing community settings to serve the underserved. Nine are going into active military.

Another significant fact regarding the class of 2011 is the number of graduates going into postgraduate training programs. Thirty-eight students – more than ever before – will be going into residency programs across the country.

For information, visit www.atsu.edu.



New SCORE office in Mesa offers business classes

Greater Phoenix SCORE has opened new offices at the East Valley Institute of Technology (EVIT), 1601 W. Main, and will be holding classes on campus for East Valley entrepreneurs and small business owners. More than 12 events are scheduled for July including:

- July 9 – Business Foundation and Overview
6-9pm – FREE | EVIT, Mesa
- July 28 – Quick Books Basic
6-9pm – \$50 | EVIT, Mesa

Visit www.greaterphoenix.score.org for a complete schedule or call 602.745.7250 to register for a seminar or schedule an appointment with a mentor.

City of Mesa hosted 2011 U.S. Masters Swimming Short Course Championships

The Mesa Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB), Mesa Public Schools (MPS) and Mesa Aquatics Club Masters (MAC) hosted the prestigious U.S. Masters Swimming Short Course Championship swim meet, April 28 through May 1, 2011 at the renovated Kino Aquatic Center.



“Hosting an event of this caliber speaks volumes in the swimming world,” said Steve Hogen, MPS Director of Athletics. “Getting to this point has been a combined effort of community entities working together to host the swimmers, their visiting guests, and the coaches and swim clubs that will be traveling to Mesa for this competition.”

More than 1,800 swimmers registered to participate in the four-day competition. The Mesa CVB estimates that the event generated more than 3,500 overnight room reservations in Mesa and had an estimated impact of up to \$3 million on the economy when only considering out-of-state competitors. Thirteen Mesa hotels served as hosts for the participants.

U.S. Masters Swimming requires that athletes be 18 years of age and older to compete. This event garnered attention from athletes across the country currently in training for the 2012 Summer Olympics being held in London, England. The registered participants for the Mesa event are from all 50 U.S. states, Mexico and Canada.

Visit www.usms.org for more information.

Mesa’s opens newest library in 24 years

Mesa Express Library opened May 17, 2011, at Power Square (formerly the VF Factory Outlet at Baseline and Power Roads), 2055 S. Power Road. The Library is expected to attract additional residents to the mall and the increase in visitors should generate a positive impact to the stores in Power Square.

Dubbed as “MEL” this library is fully stocked with popular fiction novels, DVDs and audio books. Computers will be available for Library card holders to access the Internet, Library Catalog, and other databases. Free WiFi is also available at MEL.



MEL is open Tues. and Wed., 10am-7pm; Thurs.-Sat., 10am-5pm; closed Sun. and Mon.

Learn more at www.mesalibrary.org

Downtown welcomes new businesses

Recently, several new businesses have chosen to invest in Downtown by purchasing property and/or opening new business ventures.

- HeatSync Labs – 140 W. Main
- Royale Theater – 120 W. Main
- Urban Picnic – 218 W. Main
- Gotham Comics and Coffee – 46 W. Main
- Catholic Children’s Company – 111 W. Main
- Monsterland – 18 W. Main
- Floating Lotus Yoga Studio and Natural Healing Center – 202 W. Main
- The Rusted Nail - 158 W. Main St.

These new business investments further the efforts of the City and the Downtown Mesa Association to activate downtown, particularly after 5pm.

To learn more about investing in Downtown, email Melissa Woodall at melissa.woodall@mesaaz.gov or call 480.644.3854.



MESA IS GOING GREENER

New school in Mesa trains installers to capture the sun

Arizona has been pushing for a bevy of solar companies to produce a new industry base in the state. In response to consumer demand, a renewable energy technical school has opened in Mesa at 2158 N. Gilbert Road. eRenewable Resource Institute trains individuals seeking careers in the renewable energy sector utilizing hands-on working labs and seasoned solar professionals.



eRenewables' classes (entry- and advanced-level) focus on residential and commercial solar design, installation and compliance through Institute for Sustainable Power Quality (ISPQ) accredited curriculum. eRenewable also provides solar thermal training, BPI certification classes and weatherization. The school is an Arizona State Board for Post Secondary Education conditionally-licensed institute, ISPQ-accredited (issued by The Interstate Renewable Energy Council) renewable energy school and a North American Board of Certified Energy Practitioners approved institute.

Donna Marie Bertault, founder and CEO, sees a bright future for renewable energy in Arizona, "The new technology for storing solar energy offers the potential for Arizona to become the 'Saudi Arabia' of energy in the United States."

Visit www.erenewableresource.com or call 480.446.0400 for more information.

SolFocus completes the City's first solar installation

The City of Mesa, in partnership with Sol Focus, Inc., has completed the construction of the first public solar installation in Mesa, designed to supply power to Red Mountain Park.

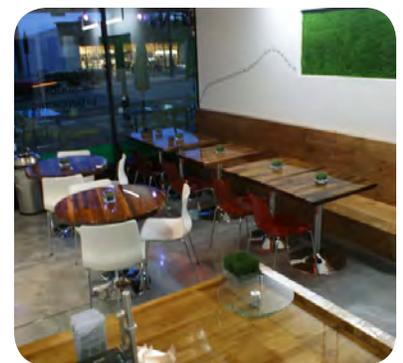
The 70.4 kilowatt (KW) dual tracking concentrated photovoltaic (CPV) system, manufactured and installed by SolFocus, will produce more than 168,000 kilowatt hours a year, supplying nearly 80 percent of the annual energy needs for the park's four softball fields. SolFocus uses a reflective design using mirrors and an optical system to concentrate sunlight onto high-efficiency solar cells. This technology, along with dual axis tracking to follow the sun's path throughout the day, allows for higher energy production output than traditional solar systems.

The new panels at the City's Central Arizona Project Water Treatment Plant across the street from Red Mountain Park are expected to save more than \$40,000 annually for the Mesa, Parks, Recreation and Commercial Facilities Department's energy bill. This amount is based on SRP incentive rates and the energy production from the arrays.

For information on SolFocus, visit www.solfocus.com.

Urban Picnic incorporates green practices

Urban Picnic located at 218 W. Main Street in Downtown Mesa, is a great example of a local "green" business. Owner Chris Ackerland incorporated green features into his new venture, using low and no VOC paints, soy-based epoxy for the kitchen floor and LED and fluorescent lighting.



Organic local produce keeps the menu fresh, healthy and tasty while supporting local growers, reducing the carbon footprint, and minimizing use of pesticides and fertilizers. Most of the take-out packaging is 100 percent recycled and biodegradable. Ackerlund also offers customers digital receipts via email rather than printing, and uses green cleaning products. Urban Picnic delivers within a two-mile radius and caters.

Visit www.eaturbanpicnic.com.

City of Mesa Office of Economic Development

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www.mesaaz.gov/economic

EVENTS



JULY

16

Small Town, Big Plans
70th Anniversary of Mesa breaking
ground at Falcon and Williams Field
Falcon Field & Phoenix-Mesa Gateway
Airport
www.mesaaz.gov

2, 3, 9, 10, 16, 17, 23, 24, 30, 31
Fiesta Mall Entertainment
2 - 6pm

Fiesta Mall, Lower Level
1445 W. Southern Avenue

9, 16, 23, 30
**Superstition Springs Center
Summer Concert Series**
7 - 9pm

Superstition Springs Center, Outdoor
Amphitheater
6555 E. Southern Avenue

AUGUST

4

Free Tax Workshops
7:30 - 9:30am
City of Mesa Tax Audit Department
Mesa City Plaza
20 E. Main Street, Room 170
[http://www.mesaaz.gov/salestax/pdf/
Quickstart_Flyer.pdf](http://www.mesaaz.gov/salestax/pdf/Quickstart_Flyer.pdf)

6, 7, 13, 14, 20, 21, 27, 28
Fiesta Mall Entertainment
2 - 6pm

Fiesta Mall, Lower Level
1445 W. Southern Avenue

SEPTEMBER

9-10

MAC Season Kick-off
Mesa Arts Center
1 E. Main Street

3, 4, 10, 11, 17, 18, 24, 25
Fiesta Mall Entertainment
2 - 6pm

Fiesta Mall, Lower Level
1445 W. Southern Avenue

Chicago Cubs new spring training facility progress

The City of Mesa and the Chicago Cubs announced the top rankings and selected firms for the master planning, programming, design, and construction consultant services for the new Chicago Cubs spring training and western headquarters facility pending successful negotiations and contract agreements with the both companies.



Populous has teamed with several qualified local firms such as DWL Architects in Phoenix and the EPS Group in Mesa. EPS Group Inc., a civil engineering firm and Saemisch DiBella Architects will work with Populous on the new facility.

The top firms in rank order for construction of the new facility to be built at Mesa Riverview Park were Hunt Construction Group (Hunt), Barton Malow, Mortenson Construction and Bernards/McCarthy a joint venture. Hunt was selected as the top ranked firm based upon the qualifications of both the firm and the team members designated for this project.

“I am pleased that Hunt has developed a Local Business Participation Plan and a Local (Mesa) Subcontractor Participation Program to maximize Mesa participation,” Chris Brady, City Manager, said. Hunt has completed more than 40 Sports Facilities including 13 Major League Baseball stadiums and six Spring Training/Minor League Facilities.

For more information, go to <http://mesaaz.gov/BetterMesa/cubs.aspx> or contact Ross Renner 480.644.2627.

Transforming West Mesa with new grants

Born from an idea of present City Councilman Dave Richins about five years ago, the West Mesa Community Development Corporation (WMCDC) is thriving in a 35-square mile area in West Mesa.

A not-for-profit 501(c)(3) corporation, the WMCDC is the focal point for reinvestment. Hundreds of philanthropic and governmental organizations have funds available for community improvement but no way to put them to work in our backyards. The WMCDC channels these funds into community and neighborhood improvement programs for local residents and employment stimulus programs for small business owners.

Recently the WMCDC received two grants in partnership with LISC (Local Initiatives Support Corporation) to help in revitalization efforts in West Mesa. One allowed the Washington/Escobedo Neighborhood to work with a select group of Harvard LOEB Fellows to plan the future of their neighborhood. The other grant focuses on the “Commercial Corridor” along the Light Rail alignment. This grant is funding commercial corridor consultants from around the country to help plan the transformation and development of a vital and unique gateway corridor (Main St. from Dobson Road to Mesa Drive) into a premier commercial and residential hub of the Valley.

The successes are the results of efforts of dedicated group of community leaders partnered with the City of Mesa, the City Council and other organizations to make positive changes in their neighborhoods.

For more information or to learn how to preserve or revitalize your neighborhood, contact Cynthia Dunham, Executive Director, WMCDC, at cynthia.wmcdc@gmail.com or 480.964.3751.