

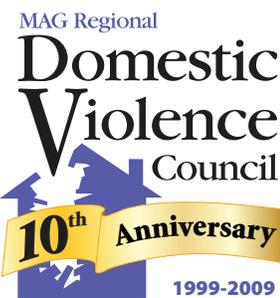
## MAG Regional Domestic Violence Council: Commemorating a Decade of Making a Difference

For nine years, Oralia Hernandez, a mother of six, endured brutal treatment at the hands of her abusive husband. The first incident had been on her wedding night, when—six months pregnant—her new husband choked and beat her.

“This was to become my dirty little secret that no one was to know about,” Hernandez said. “It started to become an everyday thing of him beating me up.”

The abuse was violent, reoccurring, and at times, life-threatening—Oralia barely missed getting shot by her husband when he drunkenly fired a gun at her, she said. She once was severely beaten in the parking lot at work. She was sexually abused, forced to watch her children bloodied when she couldn’t protect them, and isolated from friends and family. She remembers the first night her husband went so far as to chain her to the bed.

“That was the way I was to sleep from now on,” Oralia relates, wiping away tears. “You never think you’re going to get to the point where



MAG Regional Domestic Violence Council Chair Diane Enos gives Oralia Hernandez a warm embrace after she recounts her incredible story of abuse.

The MAG Regional Domestic Violence Council helps coordinate regional efforts to assist survivors like Hernandez.

you’re sleeping like your dog—well, I did.”

Oralia said she was scared to run away because her husband threatened to kill her and their children if she left him.

Finally, when her oldest son told police about the abuse, Oralia found the means and courage to escape with her children to the Sojourner Center, Arizona’s largest domestic violence shelter. Oralia was able to stabilize in the shelter and today helps other domestic violence victims.

What Oralia didn’t know until later was that her story was frighteningly similar to that of another Valley mother of six, who in 1998 was not as fortunate in finding shelter. That mother was murdered after being turned away from Valley shelters, which at that time could not accommodate the large family.

“Five days after her second phone call to Sojourner Center, her husband walked into the apartment where she was staying and stabbed

Continued on page 6

**INSIDE**  
*this issue*

Message From the Chair .....	2	Balance Highway Budget .....	7
Voices From the Council .....	3	Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation .....	8
Regional Profile: Mayor Meck .....	4	Commuter Rail .....	10
10 Years of Continuum of Care .....	5	Clearview Signs .....	11
DV Council (continued) .....	6	Calendar .....	12



# Message From the Chair



**Councilmember  
Peggy Neely**  
City of Phoenix

The MAG Regional Council has taken very seriously its responsibility to implement the Regional Transportation Plan funded by voters in 2004. However, under budgeting mechanisms outlined in state statute, we also have a responsibility to ensure that costs and revenues are in balance. In October, the Regional Council, working in concert with the Transportation Policy Committee, took painful but necessary steps to balance a \$6.6 billion funding gap in the freeway/highway portion of the plan (*see story, page 7*).

**“Plans and programs are not static documents. They need to be able to change with conditions.”**

Under the extraordinary fiscal challenges facing us, we had a very difficult task at MAG. After months of study and input, the Regional Council took the required steps to reduce the budget by utilizing a variety of management and value engineering strategies to reduce costs, while at the same time making some tough policy decisions that involved delaying \$4 billion in projects. By deferring these mostly later-year projects to a new, fifth phase of the plan that is beyond the 20-year life of the tax, we were able to bring the program into balance. This action was a necessary budget-balancing measure required by law.



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.

It is important to note, however, that we have been in a similar situation before. Proposition 300, passed by voters in 1985, assumed that sales tax revenues would continue to keep pace with historical growth. In the late 1980s, the savings and loan industry collapsed, causing a sudden sharp decline in revenues. The long-range transportation program was severely cut, corridors were eliminated, and projects were scaled back. Fortunately, additional federal funds were received, the economy ultimately improved, and the majority of the projects were brought back into the system. We are driving on those freeways today.

Due to the volatility of our economy and uncertainty regarding construction costs, our action at the Regional Council meeting included the caveat that the program would be reevaluated in 18 months to determine if any further adjustments are needed. We hope our situation will improve to the point that we can start pulling projects back into the 20-year plan.

Plans and programs are not static documents. They need to be able to change with conditions. I am proud of the Regional Council members who confronted the reality of the budget situation and made the necessary adjustments. It is the mark of a sound planning process, which recognizes that regional transportation decisions are best vested in local officials who are most closely connected to the communities they serve. 

**Peggy Neely**  
Councilmember, City of Phoenix,  
Regional Council Chair

**Dennis Smith**, Executive Director

**Matt Culbertson, Bob Hazlett, Kevin Wallace**, Contributors

**Kelly Taft**, Editor

**Gordon Tyus**, Graphic Design

## MAG Regional Council Members

### Executive Committee Members

**Councilmember Peggy Neely**

Phoenix, Chair

**Mayor Thomas Schoaf**  
Litchfield Park, Vice Chair

**Mayor Hugh Hallman**  
Tempe, Treasurer

**Mayor Marie Lopez Rogers**  
Avondale, At-Large Member

**Mayor Scott Smith**  
Mesa, At-Large Member

**Mayor Jim Lane**  
Scottsdale, At-Large Member

**Mayor James M. Cavanaugh**  
Goodyear, Past Chair

**Councilmember Robin Barker**

Apache Junction

**Mayor Jackie Meck**  
Buckeye

**Mayor David Schwan**  
Carefree

**Councilmember Dick Esser**  
Cave Creek

**Mayor Boyd Dunn**  
Chandler

**Mayor Michele Kern**  
El Mirage

**President Clinton Pattea**  
Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation

**Mayor Jay Schlum**  
Fountain Hills

**Mayor Ron Henry**  
Gila Bend

**Governor William Rhodes**  
Gila River Indian Community

**Mayor John Lewis**  
Gilbert

**Mayor Elaine M. Scruggs**  
Glendale

**Mayor Yolanda Solarez**  
Guadalupe

**Supervisor Mary Rose Wilcox**  
Maricopa County

**Mayor Vernon Parker**  
Paradise Valley

**Mayor Bob Barrett**  
Peoria

**Mayor Arthur Sanders**  
Queen Creek

**President Diane Enos**  
Salt River Pima-Maricopa  
Indian Community

**Mayor Lyn Truitt**  
Surprise

**Mayor Adolfo Gamez**  
Tolleson

**Mayor Kelly Blunt**  
Wickenburg

**Mayor Michael LeVault**  
Youngtown

**Victor Flores and Felipe Zubia**  
Arizona Department of Transportation

**F. Rockne Arnett**  
Citizens Transportation  
Oversight Committee



[www.mag.maricopa.gov/members.cms](http://www.mag.maricopa.gov/members.cms)





*This year, Fountain Hills is proud to celebrate its 20th anniversary. Our nearly 25,000 residents have worked hard to create a community of which we are proud. The beautiful parks, sculptures, cultural events, museum and vibrant downtown make this a great place to live and a great place to visit. The labels others have placed on our town include: "One of the Top Ten Places Raise a Family in the U.S.," by Parenting Magazine; "The Best Place to Live in the Valley," by Phoenix Magazine; and just this year Business Week named Fountain Hills the "Best Affordable Suburb in All of Arizona."*

— Fountain Hills Mayor Jay Schlum



*The town of Queen Creek is pleased to join with the city of Mesa, city of Phoenix and the Gila River Indian Community in celebrating receipt of an \$8.9 million grant for the expansion of the terminal facilities at Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport. The monies from the FAA's Military Airport Program will enable us to add 25,000 square feet to the existing Charles L. Williams Terminal, add two gates and increase customer capacity. The airport plays a significant role in the tourism and aerospace industries and attracts passengers from across Arizona and the Southwest, so this critical expansion will have wide-reaching benefits.*

— Queen Creek Mayor Arthur M. Sanders, who also serves as the chair of the Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport Board of Directors.



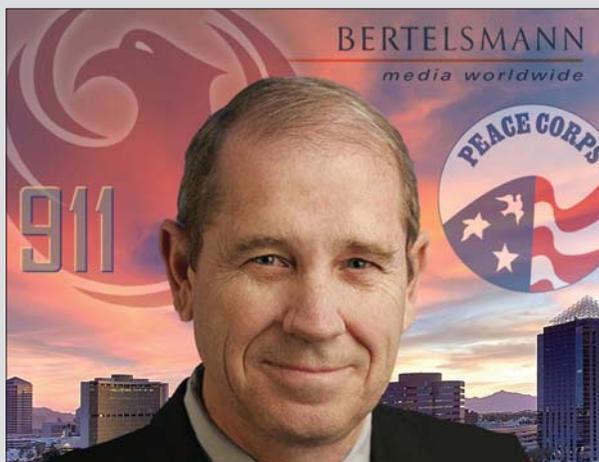
*The city of Chandler is charting a new technology path in the region that will both diversify and stabilize the community's job market well into the future. Called "Innovations," we're transforming a former Intel facility in west Chandler into incubator space. Given this economy, it is critical that we help grow our own companies and this is what this project will help accomplish. If we do not invest in ourselves now, how could we expect anyone else to do so?*

—Chandler Mayor Boyd Dunn



*Through the Luke Forward campaign, we plan to generate support from citizens living in every city and town in Arizona, so we can send a powerful message to our nation's decision makers in Washington, D.C., that there is overwhelming support in Arizona for the F-35 training mission at Luke Air Force Base. Protecting the current and future missions at Luke must be a statewide effort, as Arizona's military industry impacts each and every one of us.*

—Glendale Mayor Elaine Scruggs



The Maricopa Association of Governments honored Phoenix City Manager Frank Fairbanks at his last Management Committee meeting as he enters retirement with the presentation of a Resolution of Appreciation. Fairbanks, who served the city of Phoenix for 37 years, 19 as city manager, also served as chair of the MAG Management Committee from July 1998 to June 2000. During his tenure, Fairbanks helped the city win numerous national awards, including the Carl Bertelsmann Prize for the Best Run City in the World.

Fairbanks also received the National Public Service Award, the highest award given for distinction in public service by the American Society for Public Administration and the National Public Academy of Public Administration. In addition, Frank led the region on major issues including air quality, emergency 9-1-1 service, census efforts, and elections to receive vital transportation funding.

# Regional Profile: Buckeye Mayor Jackie Meck

## Roots Go Deep for Buckeye Mayor



Mayor Jackie Meck  
Town of Buckeye



His mayoral office looks out on the building where he was born, and he's never lived more than seven miles from that spot. His grandparents came to Arizona in the early 1900s from Tennessee, and settled in Liberty, just west of Town of Buckeye. His father served for 30 years as the town's judge, coroner and city magistrate. His wife, Verlyne has been tapped to write two books documenting Buckeye's history, and Meck, his wife, and his father have all been separately awarded Buckeye Valley Citizen of the Year (2004, 1988, and 1969, respectively). The couple's three children also grew up in Buckeye.

You might be hard-pressed to find another elected official in the country whose roots go as deep into the community as that of Buckeye Mayor Jackie Meck.

"I have a passion for my community, and it has been very much a part of my entire life. I was born here, I've never left. I love my community, and I'd just like to have other people love it as much as I do," says Mayor Meck.



Mayor Meck jokes with officials at the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the grand opening of the new joint National Guard/Army Reserve training facility in Buckeye in July.

Meck, who was elected to a four-year term as Buckeye mayor in 2008, previously served as Buckeye mayor from 1973 to 1975. He also served as a member of the town council from 1968 to 1975 and from 2002 to 2006. Mayor Meck says a lot has changed since his first stint as mayor more than 30 years ago.

"When I was mayor in the 1970s, our population was about 1,200, and we are at about 48,000 now. No one here in this community, including me, has ever seen the kind of growth we have experienced since we annexed lands in the 1990s. We are 650 square miles today, and Phoenix is 600 square miles," notes Meck.

While Meck says Buckeye has spent the past few years in "hurry up" mode to accommodate its rapid growth, he adds that the recent downturn in the economy has resulted in the opportunity for Buckeye to refocus its priorities. For example, three years ago Buckeye was issuing about 1,200 building permits a month. Today, the number is about 15 per month. For Meck, it's critical and prudent to use the slowdown to lay the foundation for the future.

"Unlike Buckeye, most cities grow their infrastructure from the center by putting pipe on the end of a pipe and growing outward. Instead, we have several large master-planned communities like Douglas Ranch—which is 35,000 acres just by itself—that are 20 to 38 miles from historic downtown Buckeye. Those developments are communities being built from desert or agricultural lands," says Meck. "We are a large ship and we need to turn the ship around and point it in a focused direction. The slowdown gives



Mayor Meck poses with a look-alike of the late Ohio State University Buckeyes football coach Woody Hayes during the fourth "Buckeyes in Buckeye Day" celebration in January.

us time to catch our breath, to back up and look at a big picture."

A longtime farming and business entrepreneur who has seen both success and failure in taking risks, Meck understands that things don't always turn out as you planned. "The economy dictates that we trim down where we can, and that may be the template for the future. Perhaps we do not need to get as large our projected plans. We may find out we can do more with less," he states.

In the meantime, Meck says his priorities remain education, solar industry, and healthcare. Without a stand-alone hospital, Meck has been working with as many as three healthcare corporations to develop a full-service medical center in Buckeye. So far, he says it has all been about rooftops.

"I've talked to them about starting construction, the sooner the better. In fact, I've even offered to take a shovel and start digging the foundation for them to get something going, even if it is an emergency center. Each of them come back and just keep saying, 'you know, it takes rooftops,'" says Meck.

Continued on page 5



Mayor Meck throws out the first pitch at the dedication of a new little league baseball field at the Earl Edgar Recreational Facility in Buckeye.

## Mayor Meck (continued)

Meck has also spent considerable time wooing solar energy companies. The city of Phoenix has committed to 1,200 acres of solar in a Phoenix landfill facility located within the town of Buckeye. APS is also looking at a solar facility 40 miles south of Buckeye, near Gila Bend, while another company, Sempra Energy, is looking at a 1,200 to 1,500 acre facility near the Palo Verde nuclear power plant. Another company is also looking at building a solar facility south of Buckeye, east of State Route 85.

“Each facility would require 1,000 to 1,500 employees to construct. After the construction, which is estimated to take five or six years, the solar companies estimate anywhere from 25 employees to as many as 120 regular employees, depending on the technology? Obviously, we’d like to get those jobs and supplies within the community,” says Meck.

When asked, “If you could give one gift to the Valley, what would it be?” Meck, who is the retired general manager of the Buckeye Water Conservation and Drainage District and a member of the El Rio Restoration Project Executive Committee, says he would clean up the Gila River.

“I was born in 1941, at that time, there was occasionally water running in the Gila River. We did not have the mass of salt cedar trees that are currently growing in the river. I would hope that someday we can take the Gila River resource and clean it up for trails and lakes,” says Meck. “The groundwater is very salty, and is a resource we need to preserve. If I could wave a magic wand, I would say clean water, clean air and lots of open space are what I would want for future generations in this valley.”

# Committee to End Homelessness Celebrates 10th Anniversary

After a decade of raising awareness, community support and millions of dollars for homeless programs in the region, the MAG Continuum of Care Regional Committee on Homelessness is marking its 10th anniversary.



Continuum of Care  
Regional Committee  
on Homelessness

The committee celebrates the anniversary as it begins implementation of the 2009 Regional Plan to End Homelessness, providing a fresh look at regional homeless issues and introducing updated action steps focused on ending homelessness in the region.

The MAG Continuum of Care Regional Committee on Homelessness was formed in December 1999, when the MAG Regional Council approved the process to coordinate federal funding applications at a regional level and tasked the committee with developing a coordinated, regionwide application process to address homelessness. The committee coordinates regional efforts to apply for annual McKinney-Vento homeless assistance funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). To date, the committee has helped secure more than \$172 million in funding, which has provided assistance to more than 50 homeless service providers.

“Individual providers used to apply on their own for the HUD funding,” said City of Tempe Vice Mayor Shana Ellis, who chairs the regional committee. “By coordinating the application process and prioritizing programs based on our regional needs, we have had significantly greater success in securing funding, to the benefit of all providers,” she said.

In March 2009, the MAG Continuum of Care Regional Committee on Homelessness officially announced its 2009 plan, which includes 30 new action steps in the areas of leadership and community support; community awareness and collaboration; prevention; housing and services; and education, training and employment. The committee’s first regional plan, developed in 2002, received national acclaim and is regarded as a best practice by similar committees nationwide. In 2005, MAG updated the regional plan; since that time, more than 88 percent of the identified goals have been completed or engaged.

In addition to its planning function, efforts by the committee include providing heat relief to homeless people during the intense Arizona summers by coordinating and publicizing water donation and refuge sites. This year those efforts resulted in donations of thousands of bottles of water.

The region receives valuable data from the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). The HMIS database collects information about the men, women and children living in emergency shelter, transitional housing programs and permanent housing programs through the region. At a 2007 national conference, the Maricopa County HMIS was recognized as one of the top three systems in the nation for tracking homeless data.



Oralia Hernandez

## DV Council (continued from page 1)

her 25 times in front of three of her six children,” recalls Sojourner Center Executive Director Connie Phillips. “I have to tell you that was a pivotal moment for me. It was one of those things that happens that crystallizes so clearly what has to be done...I felt culpable. I felt like there must have been something else that could have been done to provide the services this woman and her six children needed.”



Connie Phillips

Phillips was not alone in her grief or her concern. The tragedy galvanized the community and resulted in the formation of the Maricopa Association of Governments Regional Domestic Violence Council in 1999—providing the first forum where voices from across the region could come together to address domestic violence issues. Phillips was a charter member. Today, the Council is celebrating 10 years of making a difference in the lives of domestic violence victims.



Diane Enos

“Each member of the Council is committed to helping every person leave a violent relationship,” stated Regional Domestic Violence Council Chair Diane Enos at a press conference commemorating the Council’s 10-year anniversary.



Increasing the number of shelter beds, like this one at Sojourner, is only one challenge. Funding is also needed to operate them.



Attendees view a three-dimensional timeline detailing the progress of the MAG Regional Domestic Violence Council over the last decade.

“Today we come together to celebrate our progress and to pledge to continue making a difference in the lives of people experiencing domestic violence. The MAG Regional Domestic Violence Council has made tremendous strides in providing safety to those leaving violence behind them,” said Enos, who is also president of the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community.

Enos highlighted five of the Council’s major accomplishments during the past 10 years, including:

- The Council helped decrease the turn-away rate of families seeking shelter by more than 40 percent, the result of research showing the need for additional shelter beds that culminated in additional state funding.
- Awareness of, and training on, domestic violence in the workplace were increased through the establishment of a group known as Employers Against Domestic Violence.
- Methods for identifying domestic violence cases were increased by working with healthcare professionals to develop an evidence-

based screening question.

- Hundreds of teens were engaged in discussions about the importance of building healthy dating relationships, and helped develop a series of public service announcements. Over the last year, visits to the program’s Web site, [www.WebofFriends.org](http://www.WebofFriends.org), increased by 158 percent.
- Plans are now underway to increase access to affordable legal services by partnering with the Arizona Coalition Against Domestic Violence.

Enos noted that the work is far from over, and recent budget cuts threaten to undo much of the progress that has been made. A recent MAG survey found that at a time when needs have increased, nearly 70 percent of service providers who responded to the survey had eliminated staff positions in the last fiscal year, making it even more difficult to address demand. More than 60 percent reported that they plan to eliminate more positions this fiscal year as well. More than 68 percent of respondents reported that they had already reduced or eliminated services, while a chilling 76 percent plan to do so this fiscal year. 

# Policy Committees Balance Highway Budget

The MAG Transportation Policy Committee and Regional Council took steps in October to balance a \$6.6 billion deficit in the Freeway/Highway portion of the 20-year Regional Transportation Plan.

The two policy committees voted to approve a revised program utilizing a variety of approaches and solutions to reduce the gap between projected revenues and anticipated expenditures. Before the action, the proposed cost opinion for constructing the freeway/highway projects in the plan was about \$16 billion. But due to a decline in the economy and lower sales tax collections, revenues are projected to be about \$6.6 billion. Since \$3 billion in projects were already funded, that left a funding gap of about \$6.6 billion for completing the rest of the projects in the system.

Recommended solutions approved by the committees ranged from strategies focused on reducing project scopes or using value engineering and other cost-saving efficiencies, to deferring projects by placing them into a new 2026 to 2031 phase of the Plan.

“Anytime you have major changes that include reductions and delays to a Plan that was overwhelmingly supported by the voters who funded it is not a happy circumstance,” noted Transportation Policy Committee Chair Marie Lopez Rogers. “At the same time, most of the significant changes are proposed for the far outer years of the Plan. Our hope is that the economic climate will improve to the point where we can bring some of these projects back to their original schedules in the future.”

## Economic Challenges

In framing the economic situation that has led to the proposed Plan changes, MAG Transportation Director Eric

Anderson noted that there are more than 60,000 distressed properties in Maricopa County that have either undergone or are pending foreclosure. He noted that the sales tax revenue has fallen 13 percent from September 2008 to September 2009, and that these revenues are about the level of where they were in 2005.

“In other words, we’ve shaved about four or five years of revenue growth out of the picture—money that we won’t ever fully recover even when the economic situation improves,” said Anderson.

## Closing the Gap

To make up the deficit, recommended solutions fell into three key areas: management strategies, value engineering, and deferrals.

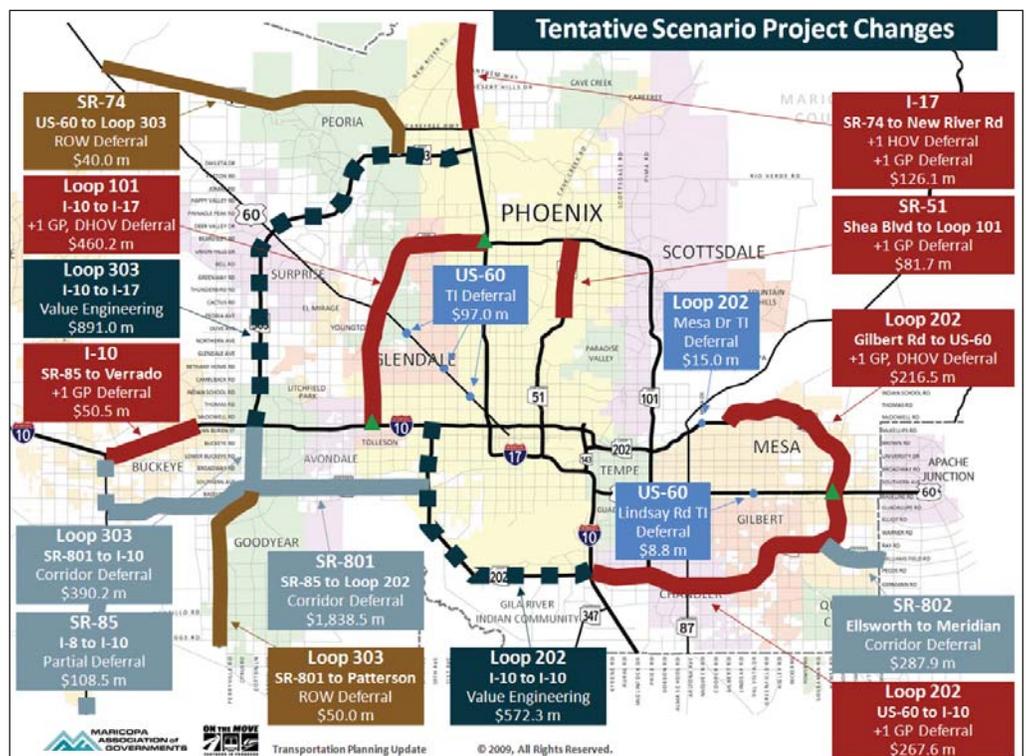
Proposed management strategies involved three sources of savings: construction cost savings due to lower construction bids, right-of-way savings due to lower real estate costs,

Regional Freeway and Highway Program Prop 400 Budget	\$9,421.2 million
Current ADOT Cost Opinion for the Regional Freeway and Highway Program	\$15,952.4 million
Projects Obligated thru FY2010	\$2,716.1 million
ADOT Cost Opinion for completing the Regional Freeway Program	\$13,236.3 million
<b>Available Funding for balance of Regional Freeway and Highway Program</b>	<b>\$6,610.0 million</b>
<b>Program Deficit</b>	<b>\$6,626.3 million</b>

and systemwide cost savings. The total savings projected for management strategies represented \$762 million in savings.

“Value engineering” strategies resulted in savings of \$1.7 billion. Among these proposals was reducing the footprint of the entire Loop 202 South Mountain Freeway corridor from an originally proposed 10-lane facility of four general purpose lanes plus one HOV lane in each direction, to an eight-lane facility of three general

Continued on page 9



# MAG Celebrates Native American Participation, Contributions to Region

MAG's membership includes three Native American Indian Communities: the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation, the Gila River Indian Community, and the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community. The leaders of these tribal nations serve on the MAG Regional Council and bring the voices of their communities to the regional table. To celebrate their continued contributions to our region, MAG is presenting a three-part series in which tribal leaders are asked to provide perspective on the distinctive challenges and opportunities experienced in these sovereign nations. Part 1 of this series focuses on the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation in the far northeast Valley.

## Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation

By President Clinton Pattea

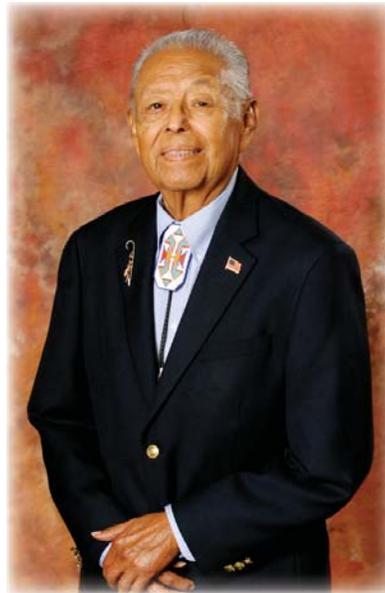
As legend tells us, the Yavapai people were born through the union of sun and water in Montezuma's Well. Although the current reservation is only 40 square miles, the Yavapai home once encompassed a region from the arid desert lowlands to the more northern mountainous area of the Mogollon Rim. Today, the

Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation, or Nation, is home to more than 1,200 tribal and community members.

While the history of the Yavapai people goes back centuries, the Fort McDowell Yavapai

Nation, formally known as Fort McDowell Mohave-Apache Community, was officially created by Executive Order on September 15, 1903, and years later changed its governing structure. On November 12, 1999, the Deputy Commissioner of Indian Affairs approved the Yavapai Nation's Constitution and a new era was born.

We Yavapai have always provided for ourselves. We farmed, herded cows, made baskets, and created a



way to survive in the harsh desert environment. However, over the past 160 years, we have had to overcome enormous adversity from outside pressures. For example, soldiers forcibly removed us on frequent occasions from our homeland. Years later, the Nation successfully fought against the Orme Dam, which would have flooded most of the reservation and forced the tribe to relocate permanently from Fort McDowell. Tribal leaders, the community, and others mobilized, refusing to give in. In 1981, the government withdrew the project.

In 1984, we operated a small bingo hall that provided a source of revenue to help support our community's needs. However, on May 12, 1992, the FBI raided our small Ba'Ja Bingo Center while SWAT teams

moved in and manned the rooftop. After many weeks of public outcry, the Tribal Council and I were able to persuade then-Governor Symington to sign a gaming compact that was a win-win, not only for the tribes but for the state of Arizona as well. This compact is what paved the way for the Arizona Indian gaming that you see today. Currently, Fort McDowell Casino is one of the premier gaming operations in the Southwest.

However, the Nation is not defined by gaming. Rather, it was the source revenue that led the way to economic advancement. Unlike federal, state and local governments, the Nation does not have its own taxing system or taxing revenue. Without taxation revenue, we depend on the companies the Nation manages and owns to support the infrastructure, healthcare needs, salaries, education, police, fire, courts, parks and recreation facilities, and all other expenses that are associated with maintaining the community. Various Tribal Councils have worked hard to construct and maintain a number of vital projects, including our school, fire, police and court building, our healthcare clinic, water and wastewater infrastructures—all paid from tribal resources.

Some ask, aren't these expenses provided for under the federal government's trust responsibility to tribes? The answer is an unequivocal "no."

Continued on page 9



## Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation (continued)

The federal government has never provided enough resources, and what funding it has provided has been far from reaching its intended purposes.

As in any community, healthcare, employment opportunities, education, and availability of quality day care are common needs. Due to our independent revenue streams, we have made progress in many of these areas, including providing health insurance, first rate education systems that have increased high school graduation rates from less than 30 percent to more than 90 percent, and on-site day care for working parents or those pursuing higher education. Our commitment to education extends to the larger community as we staunchly support and donate to Arizona's three universities as well as local schools.

What began as the small seed of bingo in 1984 became a springboard for progress. A number of enormously successful enterprises have grown from the resulting revenue stream generated by Indian gaming, strengthening the self-sufficiency of Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation. From premier golf courses to RV Parks to Old West adventure offerings to our renowned resorts and casinos, we offer a wide range of entertainment venues. These economic ventures mean more than just steady employment. They foster pride, demonstrate our historic work ethic, and advance a spirit of entrepreneurship that will undoubtedly create other economic landmarks in the future.

The journey from poverty to prosperity has established a bright future for our community. We are entrusted with and will continue to maintain this prosperity for our children,

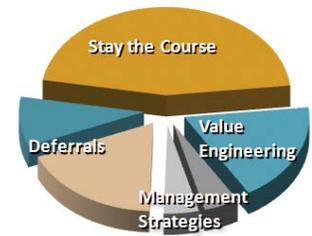
who are our future. The Nation's motto, "Never give up. Always give back," means we not only possess the spirit to overcome any challenge but are a very giving people as well. Our prosperity enables us to 'give back' to those around us. The Nation has provided millions to the state through its gaming revenue sharing, extending well beyond regulatory compliance. We have given to crisis centers, emergency shelters, schools, police and fire stations, veteran's services, healthcare needs for the disadvantaged, outside community events, and to a host of other worthy causes and community outreach services throughout the region, state and country.

The story of the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation is an amazing one. Throughout our history we have faced incredible challenges. Our self-reliance, unswerving commitment to our community, and incredible spirit have empowered us as individuals, families, and as an entire Nation to achieve greatness. Fortunately, the tribe has always brought forth incredible leaders—men and women who not only meet challenges, but who use them as inspiration to great achievement. Ultimately, they have helped to shape and carve a place for the future of this great Nation for the centuries to come.

As President of the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation, I welcome you to visit us at Fort McDowell. To those fellow MAG leaders, I personally invite you to come and break bread with myself and the Tribal Council. I know you will not only enjoy the great beauty that surrounds Fort McDowell, but I hope to provide an opportunity for us to become better acquainted. 🏞️

## Highway Budget (continued)

purpose lanes plus one HOV lane. In addition, staff recommended moving the most expensive segment of the corridor, between Lower Buckeye Road and Interstate 10 (Papago Freeway), from an alignment near 55th Avenue to utilize 59th Avenue and its existing right-of-way.



Management Strategies  
\$762.4 million

Value Engineering  
\$1,703.3 million

Deferrals  
\$4,125.2 million

Other value engineering recommendations involved the Loop 303 Freeway, including constructing an interim partial cloverleaf interchange at US-60/Grand Avenue, developing a lower cost alternative for the I-10 system interchange, and deferring construction of the freeway segment from MC-85/SR-801 north to Interstate 10.

The largest amount of savings in the tentative scenario—\$4.1 billion—came in recommended project deferrals to meet approximately 62 percent of the deficit.

"Although these projects are recommended for deferral, they are not removed from the Regional Transportation Plan," noted Mayor Rogers. "Instead, they become part of a new Phase V, representing fiscal years 2026 through 2031," she said. "This is an important distinction—these projects remain important elements of our Plan, they are just deferred elements of the Plan until our economic situation improves."

Deferral recommendations include delaying the SR-801 corridor (known as the I-10 Reliever Freeway), SR-802 (known as the Williams Gateway Freeway), and the southern portion of the Loop 303, from MC-85 to I-10. Additional deferrals include delaying construction of general purpose lanes for portions of Loop 101, Loop 202 and SR-51. At the same time, the proposed scenario recommends continuing to construct HOV lanes wherever possible, since they are relatively low-cost additions that will encourage carpooling and assist the region's express bus service.

Continued on page 10



# Commuter Rail Studies Nearing Completion

Three regional studies exploring the feasibility of commuter rail in the region are expected to wrap up in January 2010. The studies seek to define the requirements and steps that would need to be taken to successfully implement commuter rail service, which many believe could be an important future component of the regional transportation system.

Funding to study the feasibility of commuter rail was included in Proposition 400, which extended the half-cent sales tax for transportation and was approved by voters in 2004. MAG initiated a Commuter Rail Strategic Planning effort to assess what would need to happen in Maricopa and northern Pinal counties to plan for and potentially implement commuter rail.



**Avondale Mayor**  
Marie Lopez  
Rogers, TPC Chair

“There is one element missing from our current transportation toolbox, and that element is commuter rail,” says Avondale Mayor Marie Lopez Rogers, who serves as chair of the MAG Transportation Policy Committee. “During the study process, we have sought and received feedback from neighborhoods, community leaders, businesses and municipalities. We found there is a very strong interest in commuter rail,” she said.

A planning and stakeholder coordination process began in February 2006 with the formation of a Commuter Rail Stakeholders Group, which provided input to help shape major policy recommendations for commuter rail in the study area.



**Tempe Mayor**  
Hugh Hallman

“A wide variety of stakeholders, from the public and private sectors, provided the impetus to further develop efforts to bring commuter rail to the region,” said Tempe Mayor Hugh Hallman, a member of the TPC and

a commuter rail advocate. “MAG consequently initiated three planning studies that take a comprehensive look at the potential effects and considerations of commuter rail.”

The first study, the Systems Study, explored the five potential commuter rail corridors identified in the 2007 Commuter Rail Strategic Plan to gauge the potential for each of the corridors. The study examined factors such as existing freight operations and potential opportunities for operating commuter rail in existing rights-of-way. The study also seeks to evaluate ridership potential and capital and operating costs.

While the Systems Study is taking a “macro” view of commuter rail in the region, the Grand Avenue Commuter Rail Corridor Plan is taking a focused approach to the implementation of commuter rail between Wickenburg and downtown Phoenix, along the existing Burlington Northern Santa Fe right-of-way. The study will include an inventory of existing rail infrastructure as well as necessary infrastructure improvements to implement commuter rail in the region.

The third study, the Yuma West Commuter Rail Corridor Plan, is looking specifically at the possible implementation of commuter rail along the existing Union Pacific Railway between downtown Phoenix and Arlington, west of Buckeye. Similar to the Grand Avenue study, it will review existing and future conditions and seek to develop a conceptual commuter rail operating plan.

The stakeholders group will meet in early 2010 to review the project team’s final recommendations, followed by a formal committee review process at MAG. 

# Highway Budget (continued)

## Public Input

In addressing the deficit, a number of public input opportunities were held to allow public comment on the strategies. At a public meeting October 13, 2009, and at the October Transportation Policy Committee (TPC) and Regional Council meetings, significant input was received regarding the Loop 202 South Mountain Freeway portion of the proposal. At the public meeting, a representative of a group of Gila River Indian Community landowners asked to receive a proposal for building the South Mountain Freeway on the community as an alternative to the Pecos Road alignment. During the TPC meeting, however, 11 members of the community spoke out against building the freeway, with most stating that while they did not want it placed on the Gila River Indian Community, they also opposed the current alignment that goes through the South Mountain, which is considered sacred to many in the community. During the Regional Council meeting, Gila River Indian Community representative Joseph Manuel requested that MAG and ADOT work with the tribe to discuss whether an alignment on community land would be feasible.

In addition to input regarding the South Mountain Freeway, public comment included concerns about the widening of Grand Avenue due to perceived safety issues, requests that the transit component of the plan maintain its current levels of service, a comment regarding the need for commuter rail and bus rapid transit as opposed to light rail transit for the I-10 freeway corridor, and comments requesting the committee to maintain flexibility and to ensure that light rail extensions serve population centers. 

# MAG Funding Provides Safer Road Signs in the Region



Workers install a new street sign in Mesa that uses the Clearview font.

Have you ever had trouble reading a street sign from a distance, especially in unfamiliar territory? For elderly persons and those with diminished eyesight, it is an issue that can create not only an inconvenience, but a safety hazard.

For cities with high elderly populations, street signs that use current federal standard fonts, or letter types, aren't always legible enough to someone who has diminished eyesight. Using funding from the Maricopa Association of Governments, Valley cities are making roads safer for their residents by installing a new road sign font that increases viewing distance and therefore reaction time.

The MAG Safety and Elderly Mobility Sign Project resulted in the distribution of \$400,000 to cities and towns to upgrade their road signs with a new, more legible font known as the Clearview font. Clearview is a state-of-the-art road sign typeface that reduces the “over-glow” effect (blurring around bright individual letters in street signs) and increases readability. The funds were allocated proportionally based on

the percentage of elderly residents (60 years of age and older), as calculated through the 2000 Census.

“Upgrading existing road signs to Clearview font dramatically improves sign readability, which improves safety for everyone on the road, especially older drivers,” said MAG Chair Peggy Neely, a councilwoman from Phoenix. “We see this improved technology as a strong investment in our region’s road safety. MAG will also evaluate the impact of this upgrade with a study conducted through Arizona State University.”

One of the first communities to begin the transition to Clearview font road signs was the city of Surprise.

“Surprise is listed as one of the top retirement communities in the U.S., and we expect that we are going to have a growing elderly population,” said Surprise Mayor Lyn Truitt. “That’s why these signs are so important. We want to make sure that the people who live here and come here to visit are as safe as possible,” he said.

Mayor Scott Smith of Mesa notes that nearly 20 percent of his community’s

population is over the age of 60, with a disproportionate number of elderly citizens involved in intersection accidents. He also believes that the new font improves safety.



Mesa Mayor  
Scott Smith

“The safety of our residents is of utmost concern for us,” said Mayor Smith. “The fact of the matter is, as we age it is harder for us to read signs, especially at night. The Clearview sign project was really developed to address this problem,” he said.

Along with Surprise and Mesa, jurisdictions that applied for and received funding for the signs are Avondale, Chandler, Fountain Hills, Gilbert, Glendale, Goodyear, Litchfield Park, Paradise Valley, Peoria, Phoenix, Scottsdale, Tempe, Tolleson and Maricopa County. Funding was provided for sign production costs, such as materials, extra posts, mounting brackets and Clearview software. More than 3,000 upgraded signs were installed across the region.



Phoenix  
Councilmember  
Peggy Neely

Clearview font was developed in 2004 after a decade of research. According to findings from the Pennsylvania Transportation Institute, Clearview can improve sign reading distance by 16 percent compared with the traditional sign typeface, equating to an extra 80 feet of reading distance. Clearview font uses mixed-case letters and increased spaces between letters to reduce blur and maximize word pattern recognition and visibility. In most cases, it accommodates the needs of older drivers without requiring a larger sign.



Surprise Mayor  
Lyn Truitt

Some cities chose to also install advanced street name signs with the Clearview font, allowing drivers to read the name of the street well before the intersection. 



A Quarterly Newsletter Focusing on Regional Excellence

November 2009-January 2010  Vol. 14: No. 4

## Winter 2009-2010 Calendar

### November 2009

- 4<sup>th</sup>** 10:00 a.m. Intelligent Transportation Systems Committee
- 9<sup>th</sup>** 10:00 a.m. Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) Agency Workshop
- 10<sup>th</sup>** 10:00 a.m. Population Technical Advisory Committee
- 10<sup>th</sup>** 1:00 p.m. Street Committee
- 11<sup>th</sup>** Veteran's Day—Office Closed
- 12<sup>th</sup>** 1:00 p.m. Human Services Technical Committee
- 16<sup>th</sup>** 2:00 p.m. Continuum of Care Regional Committee on Homelessness
- 17<sup>th</sup>** 1:30 p.m. Bicycle & Pedestrian Committee
- 17<sup>th</sup>** 2:30 p.m. Planners Stakeholders Group
- 18<sup>th</sup>** 12:00 p.m. Management Committee
- 18<sup>th</sup>** 2:00 p.m. Building Codes Committee
- 19<sup>th</sup>** 10:00 a.m. Technology Advisory Group
- 23<sup>rd</sup>** 12:00 p.m. Regional Council Executive Committee
- 26-27** Thanksgiving Holiday—Office Closed

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

For confirmation call (602) 254-6300, or visit the Web site: [www.mag.maricopa.gov/meetings.cms](http://www.mag.maricopa.gov/meetings.cms)

### December 2009

- 2<sup>nd</sup>** 10:00 a.m. Intelligent Transportation Systems Committee
- 2<sup>nd</sup>** 4:00 p.m. Transportation Policy Committee
- 3<sup>rd</sup>** 1:00 p.m. Regional Domestic Violence Council
- 9<sup>th</sup>** 5:00 p.m. Regional Council
- 10<sup>th</sup>** 1:00 p.m. Human Services Technical Committee
- 10<sup>th</sup>** 1:30 p.m. Air Quality Technical Advisory Committee
- 14<sup>th</sup>** 10:00 a.m. Transportation Review Committee
- 14<sup>th</sup>** 2:00 p.m. Continuum of Care Planning Subcommittee
- 15<sup>th</sup>** 10:00 a.m. Population Technical Advisory Committee
- 15<sup>th</sup>** 12:00 p.m. Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee
- 16<sup>th</sup>** 2:00 p.m. Building Codes Committee
- 25<sup>th</sup>** Christmas Holiday—Office Closed

All meetings, unless indicated otherwise, will be held in the conference rooms located in the MAG offices on the second floor of the building, 302 N. 1st Avenue, Phoenix. The dates, times and locations of all meetings may change. Other committees not listed here may meet during these months.

### January 2010

- 1<sup>st</sup>** New Year's Holiday—Office Closed
- 6<sup>th</sup>** 10:00 a.m. Intelligent Transportation Systems Committee
- 6<sup>th</sup>** 1:30 p.m. Standard Specifications and Details Committee
- 12<sup>th</sup>** 1:00 p.m. Street Committee
- 14<sup>th</sup>** 9:00 a.m. PSAP Managers Group
- 14<sup>th</sup>** 12:00 p.m. Management Committee
- 14<sup>th</sup>** 1:00 p.m. Human Services Technical Committee
- 18<sup>th</sup>** Martin Luther King Holiday—Office Closed
- 19<sup>th</sup>** 10:00 a.m. Bicycle & Pedestrian Committee
- 19<sup>th</sup>** 12:00 p.m. Regional Council Executive Committee
- 20<sup>th</sup>** 2:00 p.m. Building Codes Committee
- 20<sup>th</sup>** 4:00 p.m. Transportation Policy Committee
- 21<sup>st</sup>** 10:00 a.m. Technology Advisory Group
- 25<sup>th</sup>** 2:00 p.m. Continuum of Care Regional Committee on Homelessness
- 26<sup>th</sup>** 10:00 a.m. Population Technical Advisory Committee
- 26<sup>th</sup>** 10:00 a.m. Transportation Review Committee
- 27<sup>th</sup>** 5:00 p.m. Regional Council
- 28<sup>th</sup>** 1:30 p.m. Air Quality Technical Advisory Committee