



Sahuarita's Building Inspectors Go High-Tech



Do you know what road will be extended through here to connect Beta Street to Duval Mine Road? Read about it on page 2.

October was Fire Safety Month...have you checked your house to make sure it is safe from fire hazards?

Go to the Town's website at <http://www.ci.sahuarita.az.us> and click on the "Building Safety" link to print your Home Fire Safety Inspection Checklist.

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If you have had a building inspection at your residence or business lately, you may have noticed a new tool that building inspectors are now using. Sahuarita building inspectors are saving time and money through the use of computers.

The Town's Building Safety Department is responsible for inspecting homes, businesses and other buildings in order to ensure that they are safe, structurally sound and comply with fire codes. To accomplish this, the Department has a highly trained staff knowledgeable in all aspects of building and fire codes.

After examining a building, an inspector typically fills out a handwritten form, called a correction notice, which gives the builder directions on items that need to be fixed. A copy of the handwritten correction notice would then need to be brought back to the Building Safety office and manually entered into the computer.

With all of the growth and new construction that have occurred in the Town lately, building inspectors are a busy team. In fact, over 17,570 inspection stops were performed in 2004 alone by a staff of just 5 building inspectors.

With all of those inspections, Building Official Andy Kelley realized that the process could be improved by introducing computers.

"The idea came to me while I was watching my son and daughter, who are both in college, do all of their homework on a computer," explained Kelley. "I remembered having to hand write out my assignments and then retying them on a typewriter when I was in college. It occurred to me that my building inspection team was doing the same thing and it was time to bring the process into the 21st century."

Sahuarita building inspectors now use laptop computers, rather than the traditional handwritten correction notice forms. A laptop accompanies each inspector in their work vehicle, allowing them to input their findings directly into a computer. In the past, inspectors had to return to the

office in the afternoon to input the day's results. This new technology allows inspectors to have up-to-date information on any permit while in the field. When they are back in the office, they only have to download the day's inspections and file the correction notices.

Building inspectors are also receiving printers for their vehicles, allowing them to offer a better service to builders around Town by simply printing out the electronic correction notice. Previously, builders had to decipher each inspector's handwritten notices.

Sahuarita's Mayor Charles Oldham is pleased with the results, "The Town Council always tries to encourage an atmosphere of innovation and creativity with the Town staff; the Building Safety Department is an example of how technology can be used to save time and money, while simultaneously improving customer service."

Building inspectors Art Hill and Jonathan Cornell are now more efficient with their laptops that they use in place of handwritten correction notices.



What is a CFD and how does it affect me?

The Town of Sahuarita recently formed its first community facilities district (referred to as "CFD"). You may be wondering what a CFD is and how it will affect you as a Town resident.

Arizona law allows citizens to join together and create entities known as special taxing districts. This means that citizens in an area can form a group and vote to tax themselves, via a property tax, for a certain purpose. One example that many people in Town may be familiar with is the Green Valley Fire District.

These special taxing districts are actually a new government, separate from the Town, formed for a specific purpose. There are many different reasons why people would want to create a special taxing district. In some cases, residents do it to receive government services that they would not normally receive or to enhance the ones they do.

A community facilities district is formed in order to build and maintain public infrastructure, such as bridges,

streets, parks and sewer systems in a developing area. By paying for public improvements through a CFD, a developer is able to build more (and better) public improvements. Ultimately, CFDs enable homeowners in the district to pay for these improvements through property taxes instead of higher home prices.

Sahuarita's first CFD, called the Quail Creek Community Facilities District, was formed in the undeveloped area of Quail Creek in the southeastern part of Town. ***Because only Quail Creek's undeveloped land is in the CFD, no current homeowners will have to pay the CFD's property tax, yet the existing Quail Creek residents, and in fact all the residents of the Town, will benefit from many of the public infrastructure to be built and maintained by the CFD.***

By forming the Quail Creek CFD, current Town residents will benefit in many ways. The CFD plans to sell over \$12 million in bonds early next year; money which will be used to build a great number of improvements for the Town. Some of the improvements, such as sewer system enhancements and

bridges will directly benefit the residents of the CFD, but most of the improvements benefit us all. ***The CFD plans to spend almost \$1.4 million by developing a new regional park, complete with sports fields and ballparks, picnic areas, a dog park and more.*** Other CFD bond proceeds will be used to build new public roads near the Quail Creek Development, including a new road providing access to the new Stonehouse Development southwest of Quail Creek.

Like all special taxing districts, the Quail Creek CFD is accountable for public money and is required to have a governing board that makes decisions about the CFD's finances and operations. Quail Creek CFD board meetings are usually held directly following certain Town Council Meetings. Check the Town's website at <http://www.ci.sahuarita.az.us> if you are interested in finding out when the next Quail Creek CFD board meeting will be held.

How Do I Get There?

An Update on Sahuarita's Roads Projects

The Town's Public Works Department has been busy improving our community's streets to make them safer and to help you travel around Town more efficiently. Here is a brief update on some of the projects that you may see around Town:

La Canada Drive Phase 1 (El Toro Road to Anamax Mine Road) - This project is currently under construction, the sidewalks are being finished and crews are beginning to add irrigation and landscaping, which are expected to be completed around November. The final layer of rubberized asphalt is currently being completed. The road widening at the U-turn intersections is under way. The entire project is expected to be completed around December.

Alpha Avenue Extension - The Town Council approved the construction contract for this project on October 10th. Construction is expected to start around December. The project will extend Alpha Avenue from Beta Street to Duval Mine Road and is expected to be completed in the summer of 2006. See photo on right.

Nogales Highway widening project - This project will be completed with the final layer of rubberized asphalt to be completed this month. As many of you have noticed, the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) has completed the improvement plans for I-19 and Duval Mine Road. A dedication and celebration of the project completion was held on October 29th.



Pictured above is the site of the future Alpha Avenue/Duval Mine Road intersection, west of the I-19/Duval Mine Road interchange and just east of the Safeway.

Hot Topics: Sahuarita Issues in the News

Conservation is the Name of the Game

The federal and state governments both unveiled campaigns in the month of October designed to encourage citizens to conserve energy. With all of the focus on this issue lately, it is fitting to discuss conservation as a "hot topic" and to challenge residents to incorporate some of these energy saving tips into their daily lives.

According to the U.S. Department of Energy, the typical U.S. family spends close to \$1,500 a year on home utility bills. Experts say that making improvements to your lighting is one of the fastest ways to cut your energy bills, as an average household dedicates 5% to 10% of its energy budget to lighting. The U.S. Department of Energy website states that using new lighting technologies can reduce lighting energy use in your home by 50% to 75%.

Will Care be There?

As residents know all too well, the Town of Sahuarita needs a local hospital. The nearest hospital is nearly twenty minutes away in Tucson. The time spent driving to Tucson could mean the difference between life and death in some life-threatening situations.

As such, one of the priorities of the Sahuarita Town Council is to attract a hospital to our community. This will help residents receive the health care they need and deserve. It will also help to draw other medical specialties that tend to cluster near hospitals. The quality of life for people in Sahuarita will be greatly enhanced with close, local medical care. For those residents that work in the medical profession, it will afford them the luxury of working and living in the same area.

One issue that stands in the way of the Town's progress in getting a hospital in Sahuarita is the availability and affordability of doctors. Other rural communities across Arizona are facing a similar crisis, with some doctors, hospitals and medical clinics closing and leaving rural Arizona for other states.

According to the Arizona Medical Association, one of the main contributing factors is increasing medical malpractice claims each year, which result in fewer medical liability carriers writing insurance policies for Arizona's doctors. If doctors cannot obtain or afford a medical liability insurance policy, they are forced to either leave the state or work in a different profession.

The Governor's proclamation encouraged Arizonans switch one 75-watt light bulb to a 20-watt compact fluorescent light. According to Energy Star, which rates energy savings for the government, if every Arizonan changed one 75-watt light bulb to a 20-watt compact fluorescent light, the savings in one year would total \$13 million. The federal government estimates that \$600 million in energy bills and enough energy to light 7 million homes could be saved if every house in the country made the light bulb swap.

There are many websites designed to help residents and businesses curb their energy usage. One suggestion is to perform a home energy usage audit to find ways to save energy. The website <http://energysavers.gov> features a home energy audit tool to help you get started. There are also numerous tips on other ways to conserve energy in your household or business. With winter right around the corner, now is a good time to begin.



The Towns of Sahuarita and Oro Valley working together to attract and retain hospitals, like the Northwest Medical Center in Oro Valley, pictured above.

The Town has taken action on a statewide level to combat this problem. We have partnered with the Town of Oro Valley and the Arizona Medical Association to encourage cities and towns throughout the State to talk to their state legislators about meaningful medical industry reforms.

Because Arizona's Constitution prevents any laws from putting caps on the amount of medical damages that can be awarded, groups like the Arizona Medical Association are working hard to come

up with solutions that address the problem without capping damages.

The Town of Sahuarita is proud to be part of the team that will work on solutions to increase the availability and affordability of doctors and to bring a badly needed hospital to the community.

For more information, go to the Arizona Medical Association's "Will Care be There" website at <http://www.willcarebethere.org>

Mark Your Calendar for the Fall Concert Series

Congratulations

Please help the Town congratulate some of our top-notch staff members that have been recognized for their hard work:

- A routine audit of the **Sahuarita Municipal Court** resulted in favorable findings. After the audit, the Arizona Supreme Court recognized the Sahuarita Municipal Court for maintaining high standards for cash management and internal controls.
- **Police Officer John Cotsonas** received special recognition by the Pima County Sheriff's Department for his work on a fraud case.

Did you know that you could enjoy great music and the beautiful weather at the same time in Sahuarita this fall? The Town of Sahuarita Parks and Recreation Department is hosting a free fall concert series. The first concert was on Saturday, October 15th and featured Way Out West. If you missed it, don't worry, there are still two more left.

The next concert is on Saturday, November 12th with blues music from the Wendy Adams Band. The final concert will feature the Take Time Band playing a wide variety of music on Saturday, December 10th. They were featured at this year's Fiesta Sahuarita and had great reviews! All of the concerts are from 2:00 – 4:00 pm at Sahuarita Lake Park (15466 South Rancho Sahuarita Blvd).

The concerts are free of charge, so make sure to bring your picnic blanket or some lawn chairs and a good time is guaranteed! There will also be vendors selling refreshments. If you would like more information, please contact the Town's Parks and Recreation Department at 625-2731.

About the Town of Sahuarita



The Town of Sahuarita was incorporated in 1994, but the area's rich history dates back much further as a mining and ranching community. Today the Town is one of Arizona's fastest growing areas as people move here for the scenic beauty and small community atmosphere. The Town's boundaries

encompass a 30 square-mile area and include rural settings such as the pecan groves on the Town's east side as well as many housing opportunities. While the official 2000 census figure lists the Town's population as 3,242, it has nearly quadrupled in size to approximately 13,000 residents today.

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