

Across *the* Back Fence

February 2009

News For Neighbors From The City of Mesa Neighborhood Services Department

Top 2 Bottom

Looking for an excuse to get dirty on a Saturday? Well, here is your opportunity. On February 28, over six hundred volunteers will participate in the first annual "Top 2 Bottom" event in Mesa's Council District 1. In partnership with the West Mesa Community Development Corporation, this community effort will focus on neighborhood beautification and cleanup projects including wall and bridge painting, tire roundup, rogue sign sweep, graffiti wash and alley clean ups.

This is a wonderful opportunity for District 1 residents to pitch in and clean up west Mesa "top to bottom" to truly make a difference in their neighborhoods. A direct correlation can be made between neighborhood blight and crime. If residents want to make their neighborhoods safer, this is one of the most effective methods to deter undesirable activity and display community pride. Cleaning up trash and debris helps prevent more litter. Painting over graffiti sends a message to street gangs that crime will not be tolerated in our neighborhoods. Cleaning alleys helps keep these areas safe by reducing criminal activity. Bridge painting is a simple way to add an artistic touch to a neighborhood. Like the art wraps that decorate utility boxes throughout Mesa, bridges are another interesting place to display art and show that residents are paying attention to and taking pride in every detail of their environment.

Businesses in the community have also jumped at the chance to help with the "Top 2 Bottom" event. Wal-Mart, Krispy Kreme, Renaldi's Deli and others have generously provided resources to make this event a great success.



The "Top 2 Bottom" event communicates that volunteering can be effective and fun at the same time. "Top 2 Bottom" is not just a typical service project; it is a mass volunteer effort that will canvass several neighborhoods. We want to show how much of an impact

volunteers can make in just one day when residents commit to making a difference in the community. You've heard the expression that there is strength in numbers – well, we are going to prove it.

To participate in the "Top 2 Bottom" event, please contact Mesa Volunteer Coordinator, Katie Brown at (480) 644-3705 or email katie.brown@mesaaz.gov. You can also call my office at (480) 644-5296 with questions or comments.

We'll see you there! -Councilmember Dave Richins, City of Mesa

District 6
Councilmember Scott Somers
Free Pancake Breakfast

Saturday, February 21
8-10 a.m.
Mesa Fire Station 205
730 South Greenfield

Meet your council representative and interact with various departments and other residents.

4 for Mesa

The City of Mesa has launched a pilot alternate work schedule program to run through year end, "4 for Mesa." Beginning Monday, March 2, 2009, a majority of City staff will work a compressed workweek from Monday through Thursday, 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. with Friday off. This includes Neighborhood Services staff.

"4 for Mesa" has four key components: energy, extended services, environment and employees. In March 2008, Brigham Young University conducted a survey on the effects of a compressed workweek for employees in city government. Their findings showed increased levels of productivity, ability to better serve the citizens/customers, fewer work-family conflicts, improved morale and better retention and recruitment.

Mesa Police, Mesa Fire and Parks, Recreation and Commercial Facilities will continue to operate their normal hours. Museums, libraries and the Mesa Arts Center will not be affected. Falcon Field and Phoenix-Mesa Gateway airports will operate on their normal schedules. There will be regular transit service and garbage collection will remain the same. Development and Sustainability as well as Engineering will continue providing construction inspections on Friday. City Court and the City's customer service cashiers will begin "4 for Mesa" on March 30, 2009.

Citrus Plants



Do you have backyard citrus trees?

Visit www.saveourcitrus.org

to learn more about Citrus

Greening Disease. For additional information contact Kristen Wagner with Maricopa County Extension Service at (602) 470-8086.

Play Ball The Cactus League Experience

A new exhibition at the Mesa Historical Museum, 2345 N. Horne. The exhibition walks you through a professional baseball timeline from the sports' barnstorming days before statehood to the inauguration of the Cactus League in 1947 to the present day with 14 teams playing the 2009 spring training season.

Features of the exhibition include a "knothole" fence where guests can peer at various images from baseball's past, an infield complete with vintage dugout and classic interactive souvenir, concession and ticket booths, all packed with history gathered from across Arizona and the United States. Visitors seeking more information as well as an extensive timeline on the Cactus League's history can visit a Web site created specifically for the exhibit at www.PlayBallExperience.com.

Archaeological Site Family Day

Do you know that West Mesa is the home of an important archaeological treasure? Tour this large, prehistoric Hohokam temple mound, view prehistoric technology demonstrations and participate in ancient games at this Annual Open Huse held at the site. A Free Pancake breakfast, sponsored by the Mesa Grande Community Alliance, will be served from 8 - 9:30 a.m.!

Saturday, March 7, 2009
8 - 11 a.m.
W. 10th Street and Date/Brown

Safety Always Matters

Did you know that even though you may not have natural gas in your home you might live in an area that has a natural gas pipeline? As part of the City of Mesa's on-going Safety Program, we regularly inspect our pipelines. On occasion, our pipelines incur damages that may result in leaks.

A leak may be present if you: Smell an odor, similar to rotten eggs, hear, an unusual hissing sound coming from a pipeline or see unusual changes to soil such as dead or dying vegetation.

If you suspect a problem (smell, hear, or see) involving natural gas, whether or not you're a customer call the City of Mesa any time, at (480) 644-4277 (GASS) or call 911.

Valuable Tax Credit

The EITC is a valuable but complex tax break. The IRS estimates that 20 to 25 percent of eligible taxpayers fail to claim the credit, which could put as much as \$4,824 into the pockets of a family with two children. Free help is available to determine eligibility and file to claim the credit at four Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) sites in Mesa. VITA tax sites will open starting Monday, Feb. 2 and will be located at Mesa Community College, Dobson Campus, Kirk Student Center, 1833 W. Southern Ave.; Mesa Community College, Red Mountain Campus, Acacia Village Computer Lab, 2305 N. Power Road; Mercy Housing Villas de Merced, 520 N. Mesa Drive and A New Leaf-MesaCAN, 635 N. Broadway Road. For more information visit www.mesaaz.gov/humansvc

How to Conduct Successful and Peaceful Meetings

March 19, 2009

6:00-8:30pm

Chandler-Gilbert Community College

Class registration is \$25 and includes a light dinner.

For more information or to register, please contact

The Leadership Centre

www.theleadershipcentre.org or (480) 732-7174



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