

City CONNECTION

December 21, 2011

A Weekly Publication for City of Phoenix Employees



David Cavazos

City Manager David Cavazos shares city's year in review

I don't know about you, but I enjoy reading those "year in review" news stories. They're informative, put issues into perspective and make you realize how fast a year can pass. Therefore, I'd like to offer Phoenix's own "Year in Review" for 2011.

January - The year began on a high note with January sales-tax collections, which were 12.5% higher than the previous year because of stronger-than-expected city holiday sales. That was the best January growth rate in General Fund sales tax since January 2005 and the first positive growth since 2008.

February - On Feb. 7, the Office of Emergency Management, in conjunction with the Fire, Police and Public Works departments and the Maricopa County Department of Public Health, participated in a tabletop emergency preparedness exercise. The scenario location was City Hall and the exercise involved an unknown substance/suspicious container.

March - The Phoenix City Council completed its review of the city's draft strategic plan and proposed mission statement. The plan focuses on 10 study areas: Economic Development and Education; Financial Excellence; Infrastructure; Innovation and Efficiency; Neighborhoods and Livability; Phoenix Team; Public Safety; Social Services Delivery; Sustainability; and Technology. Residents were given an opportunity to comment on the plan during community meetings in April. The last strategic plan was released in 1990 and had not been formally updated in more than 20 years.

April - City employees and the city received high ratings from residents who participated in the 2010 Community Attitude Survey. Asked to evaluate their last contact with a city employee, 95 percent said they were treated in a professional and courteous manner. And, 91 percent believe Phoenix is a good place to live. The survey is conducted every two years by an independent polling research firm.

May - The City Council's Finance, Efficiency and Innovation Subcommittee approved an additional \$5.7 million in savings for the city. Since the Innovation and Efficiency program began in January 2010, the city has saved more than \$40 million.

June - The City Council approved the 2011-12 budget. The balanced budget, which includes a general operating fund of \$1.06 billion, was achieved without layoffs, service reductions or increases in taxes or user fees. The city continues to do more with less. The 2010-11 General Fund budget, for example, was \$79.2 million smaller (7.2% lower) than the 2006-07 budget, even with an almost 6 percent increase in population and dozens of new facilities opening.

July - The city hosted Major League Baseball's All-Star Game at Chase Field and hit it out of the park. MLB officials, out-of-town visitors, local baseball fans and national sports writers agreed Phoenix was an outstanding host city. All-Star Week's estimated economic impact to Phoenix's economy was \$60 million.

August – Amid news that Standard and Poor’s had downgraded the federal government’s credit rating, Phoenix received word that its AAA credit rating remains intact. The city’s S & P bond rating is the highest among the country’s largest cities. Here’s how the cities stack up: Phoenix (AAA); New York City (AA); Los Angeles (AA-); Chicago (A); Houston (AA); and Philadelphia (BBB).

September – The city observed the 10th anniversary of the terrorist attacks by sponsoring the “Never Forget 9/11 Memorial Walk.” Hundreds of people joined the walk from Chase Bank Tower to CityScape, where a brief ceremony was held to remember the victims of 9/11.

October – The City Council approved the Public Works Department’s plan to begin collecting trash and recycling on the same day. The new process, which begins the first week in July, is more convenient for customers and will save the city about \$1.3 million annually.

November - The city hosted the National League of Cities Congress of Cities and Exposition at Phoenix Convention Center. The annual event brings together thousands of elected officials, federal agency representatives, business leaders and corporate partners from across the country to explore challenges and opportunities facing our cities and towns. Also in November, employees reached the \$1 million Community Service Fund Drive goal. In the past decade, city employees have raised more than \$13.5 million for the Valley of the Sun United Way and other agencies through the annual campaign.

December – Phil Gordon began his last month as the mayor of Phoenix. On behalf of Phoenix residents and city employees, we thank him for his years of dedicated public service. We’d also like to acknowledge the contributions of former Council members Claude Mattox, Peggy Neely and Bryan Jeffries and welcome Mayor-elect Greg Stanton and Councilman-elect Daniel Valenzuela. Councilman Jim Waring, meanwhile, has hit the ground running since his election to Council in August. Traditionally, December is a time when we say farewell to retiring city employees. We thank them for their service and extend our best wishes for a long and happy retirement.

And, we can’t close the book on 2011 without mentioning public safety. Violent crime in fiscal 2010-11 was lower than at any time during the past 10 years, except for 2009-10, which had a slightly lower rate of violent crime. Meanwhile, the average first-unit response time in 2010-11 was 4 minutes and 41 seconds compared with 5 minutes and 15 seconds in fiscal 2006-07. The credit goes to our outstanding Police and Fire departments.

Next year is shaping up to be another exciting year for the city, and you can help us get off to a good start by doing your holiday shopping and dining in Phoenix. When you shop in Phoenix, taxes from the merchandise you buy go directly to the city’s General Fund, which pays for such city services as police and fire protection, parks, libraries, senior centers and street maintenance.

The past few years have been challenging for the city, but thanks to you and the residents of Phoenix, I am optimistic about the city’s future. All of us here at the city appreciate your energy, dedication and commitment to making Phoenix the best city in the world.

PEOPLE

Three employees were elected to the City of Phoenix Employees’ Retirement System (COPERS) Board of Directors: **Elizabeth (Libby) Bissa**, Human Services; **David Hensley**, Aviation; and **Leslie Scott**, City Auditor. The effective term is Jan. 1 thru Dec. 31, 2014. For more information about the city retirement system, visit the COPERS’ website on phoenix.gov or contact Anna Martinez at 602-256-4323 or email anna.martinez@phoenix.gov.

Mark Your Calendar

Friday, Dec. 30 - “I Recycle Festival 2.” Bring personal documents, computer hard drives, even Christmas trees for shredding. 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Seventh Avenue and Camelback Road (northwest corner). For more information, visit phoenixrecycles.org or call 602-262-4820.

City Connection is published every week (except Christmas week) for city employees by the Public Information Office, 12th floor, Phoenix City Hall, 200 W. Washington St., Phoenix, AZ 85003. For more information about the publication or to submit story ideas, email cconnect@phoenix.gov or call 602-262-6213/TTY 602-495-2432.