

Cancer Touches Everyone

"Charting Our Course to Discover a Cure" is the nautical theme of this year's Relay for Life hosted by the City of Peoria. For the 9th year, this fundraiser by the American Cancer Society will be held at the Peoria Sports Complex. This national event brings together over 3.5 million people across the country to celebrate the lives of those who are battling cancer, to remember the lives lost and to fight for a cure.

Prior to the event itself on April 25-26, there will be a number of opportunities to learn more about the Relay, to donate to this worthwhile cause, to join or sign up a team for the Relay, or to sign up as a survivor or a volunteer for this wonderful event. This is an outstanding opportunity for the Peoria community to come together for a great cause. If you are interested in learning more about Relay for Life or becoming a part of this year's events, please visit www.relayforlife.org/peoriaaz.

Neighbors Helping Neighbors

In today's fast-paced, high stressed, hectic world it is sometimes easy to lose sight of the things that really matter and are most important in our lives. It is important at those times that we take a step back, breathe, and stop to think about our friends and family, our goals and priorities, and our communities. When we take that step back, we can become refocused on what is truly important in our life; that is when we can commit ourselves to making a difference in this world.



Like every neighborhood in America, Peoria has families in need, neighbors who need help. If each one of us took the time to stop and look around, we could probably identify that neighbor. We may think that we don't have the time, the resources, or the energy to help that neighbor, especially in these difficult times. After all, we ourselves may be struggling, but isn't there something we can do? In an unsure time, strong neighborhood relationships can be very beneficial.

Perhaps one of the easiest ways to build a neighborhood relationship is through a block party. A block party gives us the opportunity to get to know our neighbors and to share stories, laughs and friendship. All too often we simply just come home, pull into our garage and head right inside. We are missing the chance to build relationships that can be helpful in trying times. A block party isn't a must though; we can start out smaller by simply welcoming a newcomer to the neighborhood, or picking up dropped newspapers and flyers from empty homes. These small actions can go a long way in crafting a stronger neighborhood.

To reach beyond our own neighborhoods we can also volunteer our time to an individual in need, or an organization that is trying to make a difference in the community. Through actions like these, we have the power to build stronger communities, a stronger city and a stronger social fabric.

"Giving frees us from the familiar territory of our own needs by opening our mind to the unexplained worlds occupied by the needs of others." ~ Barbara Bush

Willow District Update

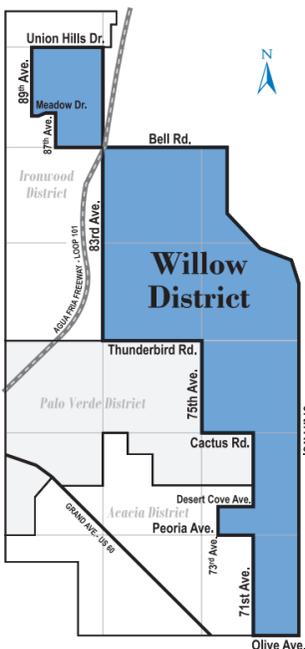
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Peoria Frequently Called Numbers

AM-PM Afterschool Program.....773-7137 E-mail: communityservices@peoriaaz.gov	Graffiti Hotline.....773-7094 E-mail: graffitihotline@peoriaaz.gov
Aquatics.....773-7137 E-mail: aquatics@peoriaaz.gov	Library: Main773-7555 Sunrise Mountain:487-5150
Barking Dog Hotline.....773-7040 E-mail: policedept@peoriaaz.gov	Parks Reservations.....773-7137 E-mail: communityservices@peoriaaz.gov
Block Watch.....773-7099 E-mail: policedept@peoriaaz.gov	Police Non-Emergency.....773-8311 E-mail: policedept@peoriaaz.gov
City Council Office.....773-7306 E-mail: willow@peoriaaz.gov	Utility Billing and Meters.....773-7160 E-mail: customerservice@peoriaaz.gov
Code Enforcement.....773-7226 E-mail: codecompliance@peoriaaz.gov	General City Information.....773-7000
Dial-A-Ride.....773-7435 Dial-A-Ride After Hours693-1043	Shopping Cart Pick Up Hotline.....1-800-843-2278

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Willow District Update



Commentary by Vice Mayor Joan Evans



CHALLENGES FOR 2009

You are all well aware of the economic struggles of our city, state and nation. This difficult time has created a need for the federal government to step in with a stimulus package to help bring our economy back to life. In addition to the steps being taken in Washington, DC, the state and city are also acting to help us get through these trying times.

Amidst all of this, we have some good news to report. Our bond sale was very successful netting an interest rate of 3.77%. Also, we were able to trim 6 million from the budget without cutting core services. Also, there are some housing projects starting in our city.

"Few things are as integral to citizenship as helping your neighbor, building your community, or making a contribution to the life of your country that leaves it a better place for future generations."

~Sandra Day O'Connor

One example of what Peoria is doing is the creation of an interdepartmental task force to address the issues created from empty homes lost to foreclosures and to determine strategies to prevent more of the same from happening in our neighborhoods. Peoria also has to address the problems created from the hit our revenue streams will be taking as a result of this recession. Urban revenue sharing funds will be down and local sales taxes have declined because people are spending less. This highlights the need for Peoria to work in tandem with the state and federal governments to create a significant national economic recovery package that will stimulate the economy, provide jobs, and benefit the citizens.

There has been much discussion about the economic recovery package. While Peoria does not currently know what will come to our community, we do know what we are requesting:

1. We are requesting stimulus money to fund major projects in Peoria that are "shovel ready." Although the need very much outweighs the available funds, we are fortunate to have projects in the queue that have cleared all federal clearances and are ready for construction. All of the projects are under a strict time line with a "use it or lose it" stipulation. The idea is to get people back to work to stimulate the economy. We will soon know what projects will be funded.
2. We are asking for emergency assistance to help families meet their short term needs.
3. We are asking that there be programs that ensure the nation's financial markets are working well for cities.

We will know more in the very near future what projects will be funded. If you would like to be among the first to know, make sure you subscribe to my E-Alerts and E-News. The best way to sign up is to simply send an email to Willow@peoriaaz.gov and I will make sure you are added to the list.

What is your response to Justice O'Connor's call to civic responsibility?

What do you want to see happen in your community? Are you willing to stand with your neighbors to make your neighborhood a better place to live? Send me your ideas and let's work together for the good of our community.

Joan Evans

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Willow District



Keeping in Touch

One of the things I have enjoyed the most about this position is getting to interact with the citizens in the Willow District. It has been my good fortune to meet many citizens when I have walked the neighborhoods, knocked on doors, and met many of you at various functions. I am excited to offer you an additional way to keep in touch.

To better serve the needs and to improve the lines of communication of the citizens of the Willow District I have recently updated my web page on the city's website. Not only is this a great way to communicate, but in these difficult economic times, it is a cost-effective and inexpensive way to receive information about the Willow District and city wide events and news. The updated page will have a photo gallery section, an opportunity to sign up to receive "e News" and "e Alerts" via email in addition to a link to Willow District newsletters.

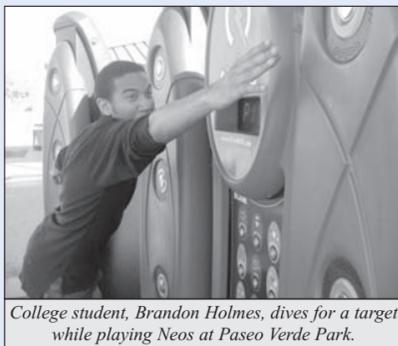


Vice Mayor Evans shares her favorite book with Sundance Elementary students.

If you want to "stay in the know" with what's happening not only in the Willow District but throughout the City of Peoria, I encourage you to sign up to receive "e News" and "e Alerts." It's as easy as sending an email to Willow@peoriaaz.gov asking to be put on the list. Your email address will not be shared and you will not receive any "spam."

New Equipment at Paseo Verde Park

If you haven't been to Paseo Verde Park lately you probably have not seen the fun new game recently added to the park, the NEOS. The NEOS is an interactive, electronic game for the whole body and for kids of all ages. The NEOS has a total of 9 games to choose from at 3 different levels. It has four towers with flashing lights, music and sound effects. Players have to run back and forth to race the timer or each other to slap the blinking lights.



College student, Brandon Holmes, dives for a target while playing Neos at Paseo Verde Park.

The NEOS is designed to challenge the mind and body, to encourage high energy play and to bring smiles and laughs to all who play. Don't be surprised if when you visit the park you notice people of all ages from 2 or 3 to those in their 70s or 80s enjoying the NEOS and being a kid again. NEOS is a game that even hard to please teenagers will enjoy. Check it out, you may even get hooked.

Arizona 2-1-1

The State of Arizona has created a resource that citizens can turn to for finding information about local emergencies as well as health and human service information. This resource is Arizona 2-1-1 Online and it can be accessed at www.az211.gov. In addition to being a good place to turn in times of emergency, this resource provides information on childcare, health care, senior services, and counseling sources. It is also a good place to turn when looking for information on government resources. Arizona 2-1-1 Online is just the beginning. Eventually this service will be available to Arizona citizens by telephone and will be accessed by dialing 2-1-1. The next time you have a health and human service or government related question and are not sure where to turn, try www.az211.gov.



2008 Constitution Contest Grand Prize Winner Emily Schutsky smiles proudly with Betsy Ross, Uncle Sam, Mayor Barrett, and Vice Mayor Evans

Community Action Program

The Peoria Community Action Program (CAP) located in the Community Center at 83rd Avenue and Jefferson provides social services assistance and meal programs for the elderly. If you are in need and want to learn more about help available from CAP, or if you would like to volunteer your time to help, please call CAP at (623) 979-3911.



Santa's helper, Sydney Bosen, and Vice Mayor Evans display gifts selected for Peoria Children

What's Next for the Peoria Sports Complex Area?

We all know that the Peoria Sports Complex Area is already a great place to catch a spring training game or grab a bite to eat. That being said, the city is exploring the best possible way to develop this important part of Peoria into an even more user and environmentally friendly regional entertainment and shopping district. It is important that citizens of the Willow District play a vital role in any future development and changes to this area. After all, the Sports Complex is right in our backyard.

The study and potential designs will focus on everything from pedestrian and motor traffic to parking and environmental enhancements. Types of new entertainment, shopping, restaurants and business to attract, as well as the best appearance for this type of district will also be explored. Throughout the study, the city will be seeking input from all members of our community on the best way to proceed with any changes to this area. Your voices will be heard. I encourage you to become a part of this process as we move forward on the plan for this vital and vibrant part of our city.



The Sports Complex study encompasses all of the shaded area of this map.

If you would like additional information on this, or any of the other important development projects in the Willow District and City of Peoria, please visit www.peoriaaz.gov/planning. This website will give you all the information you need about this project and others.

City of Peoria's Faith Council

The City of Peoria's Faith Council, made up of various members of the city's faith community meets bi-monthly with Mayor Bob Barrett and other city staff to discuss ways to fulfill their mission. The stated mission of the Council is "to unite the faith community in service for improving the quality of life for Peoria's residents."

There are numerous ways for the Faith Council to help make a difference in your community. The Council has been involved in a number of projects including a community clean-up effort, involvement in Relay for Life to fight cancer, and even spreading the word about City of Peoria special events such as Pioneer Days. The Faith Council has also created a Community Choir to perform at various events throughout the City of Peoria. The Faith Council Community Choir's inaugural performance was at the 2008 Old Town Holiday Festival. It is through efforts such as these that the Faith Council is reaching out not only to their congregations but to the city as a whole. This is one more example of why Peoria is a great place to live and raise a family. Talk to your church leaders about taking an active part in this endeavor.

What Does "Peoria First" Mean to the Community?

If you have spent any time in Peoria's major retail districts lately you probably noticed new banners hanging on the light poles. Those banners are part of the Peoria First campaign. The campaign encourages Peoria residents to shop locally which benefits all residents by providing sales tax revenue which can be used on vital city services. Just what does this sales tax revenue pay for? It pays for police officers and fire fighters, parks, libraries, recreation programs and street maintenance. We rely on our sales tax revenue to provide the quality services you have come to expect from the city. Therefore, when you shop in Peoria, you are helping to insure that we are able to continue to provide the quality, core services you want and need.

If you haven't thought about where you shop in the past, I would encourage you to do so now. By choosing to shop in Peoria you are benefiting the community you live in. Plus, Peoria has a great variety of shops and restaurants to choose from. Whether you are at Park West, areas around the Sports Complex, the car dealerships on Bell Road, or shops and restaurants along Lake Pleasant Parkway or Happy Valley Road; Peoria has something to fit everyone's tastes. If you are looking for a great new place to try out in the Willow District, you might want to try 3 Tomatoes and A Mozzarella at 83rd and Thunderbird. Or if you are out walking your dog around Arrowhead, stop in at Salty Seniorita and take advantage of their pet friendly patio. Not only will you enjoy some good food, but you will be putting Peoria First!



The grand opening of 3 Tomatoes and a Mozzarella was molto bene!

"The strength of a community is its people. The strength of a business in a community is its relationship with everyone in the community."
~Work Smarter Now

Free Fun

Now that I have your attention, I would like to remind you that in these tough economic times it is still possible to enjoy a day out with the family. If you haven't done so recently, I would encourage you to visit one of the many parks in the City of Peoria. We have many great parks in Peoria, and Apache Park is one of those parks and it's located in the Willow District. Apache Park is located just east of 87th Ave and John Cabot Road, south of Union Hills Drive.

In addition to the tennis and basketball courts and playground, there is also an open grassy area for kids of all ages to enjoy. It's also a great place for a picnic, with four barbecue grills and picnic armadas. After enjoying a healthy lunch or dinner, you can then take advantage of the lighted walking path to work off those extra calories. Apache Park is a great place to take the family and enjoy a day of fun that will not cost a penny, and that is something we can all appreciate.



A Peoria family enjoys an afternoon walk along the new sidewalks along 67th Avenue

Pioneer Days

On April 4, 2009, you, your family, and neighbors can enjoy a full day of free and inexpensive activities at the City of Peoria's annual Peoria Pioneer Days Festival. The day kicks off with a bike ride around downtown Peoria at 9am. The parade will begin at 10am at 85th Avenue and Monroe Street. Following the parade will be the festival from 11am-2pm and will be filled with fun activities for the whole family to enjoy. There will be a petting zoo, pony rides, crafting activities for the kids as well as numerous vendor booths to visit. For more information visit www.peoriaaz.gov/specialevents. Come laugh and play in Old Town Peoria.