

Signs of Sun City's Past by Ed Allen

The Mystery in our Midst

While we don't know for certain the reasons for, or who came up with the idea for circular streets in Phase 2, there are some important clues. John Meeker was a man of vision, and became head of Del E. Webb Development Co (DEVCO) in 1966. By then, Phase 1 had been laid out with traditional, straight N-S and E-W main streets like 103rd, Peoria, and others.

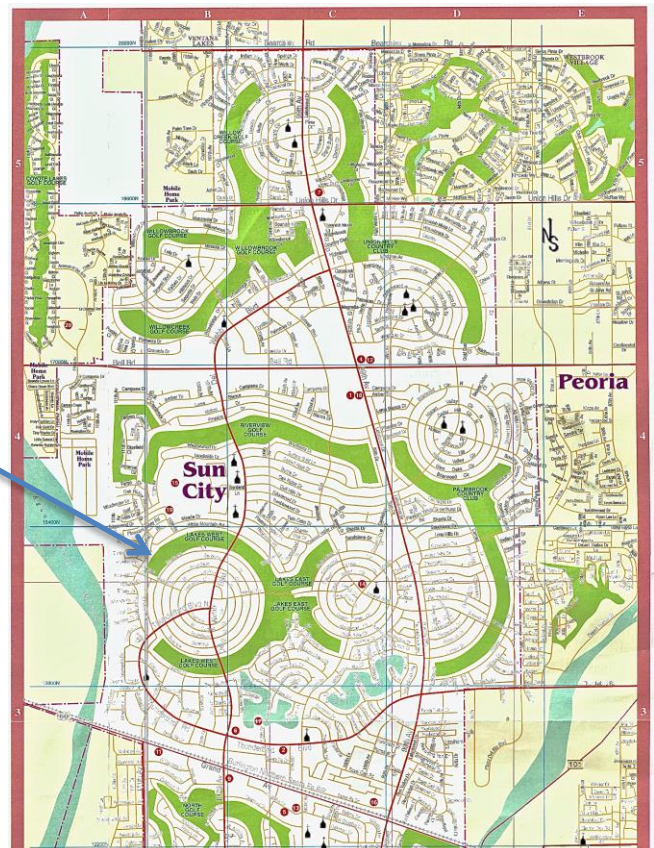
His attention no doubt became focused on Phase 2, which he sought to make distinctive. Viewpoint Lake, for example, would be the first man-made lake in an Arizona community.



We know Meeker felt he was building more than houses, creating a sense of “community” and belonging. The circular nature of that first area in Phase 2 was a way to break up the expanse of Phase 2 into small neighborhoods where people could feel a sense of belonging. And in its center were shops, restaurants, a bank, and even a movie theater.



The circular idea also found its way into the design of Phase 2's first rec center – the round Lakeview Center.



The unusual circular layout had one more benefit – notice how the Lakes West Golf Course wrapped around the circular area. Golf course lots sold for a premium and this design helped maximize the number available.

Three more circular residential neighborhoods would be built as Sun City expanded. One had a rec center (Sundial) at the core; the other two had churches.

One story making the rounds was that the circular streets made it difficult for thieves to find their way out after committing a crime. That in turn made the area less attractive for crime – but that's folklore, not fact.